

The Ghosts that sell Memories

Supernatural / Queer as Folk (US) crossover

Von abgemeldet

Part 08: ...Coffee. He figures they'll need it, too.

A/N: The chapter was supposed to be online last week, but work is eating me alive at the moment and I'm sorry for the delay. On the other hand, I hope the new year goes well for all of you up to this point and continues to do so.

For those of you not able to access the 'adult' chapter: let me explain that - despite of not planning on it - Brian invited Sam and Dean to stay at the loft until they finish the case. That's the only important bit that came off the last chapter; at least plot-wise. Now, carry on... ;)

Remember what he said about the not so easy figuring out part of the puzzle being ahead of them?

Yeah? Good.

Only he was wrong. Yup. It's worse.

Why, you asks? Well, let's see. Considering that these two kids are almost certainly from Colorado and died there too, 'cause how else would they be connected to the other killings, the place it started, and the chick that controls them? Which is great, just great. Given that the state of Colorado is not *exactly* on their doorstep, there's no way they can just go and ask around. But! Thank God for the internet and Sammy's mad research skills. *College paid off after all, huh, even in this job.*

After endless time of wading through websites and news archives and police recording and what the hell not, Dean's eyes felt like there were about ready to come out of his head, bounce across the floor to kill themselves jumping out of the window. Or something. And Dean is not so far behind. He's about to say something not so nice, curse really, when Sam sits up just a little bit straighter. Oh-oh. Dean knows that.

And he jumps at the opening. "Found something, college boy?"

"Uh yeah, as a matter of fact, I did."

"Thank God." He pushes the chair over to where his brother's sitting, earning himself a disapproving glance from another visitor. Oh hell, the freakin' chairs got wheels, for God's sake! Why do they have that if you can't push yourself around? Which is, he admits, a lot of fun. Yeah, yeah, yeah, kid at heart and all that shit. Dean, for once, just offers her his charming trademark smile, ignoring her otherwise. "What you got?"

"I found the two guests from last night. Or at least I think I did. Anyway. They are from Colorado Springs. Died a little over three years ago, which fits with the start of the killings. Somewhat," he relents, and Dean nods. "Article says they both died in their home, the neighbor had called the police, reporting that she heard horrible screaming coming from the house. When the cops arrived, the police found both kids with their throats cut, the girl a broken neck, too."

"There're pictures?"

"Uh, yeah, wait a second..."

It takes a little more than a second, maybe another minute to pull them up, but when Sam finally shows him, Dean has to close his eyes and look away. *Oh fuck*. When he can breathe again without feeling like throwing up, or punching a wall for that matter, he forces them back to the screen. "Jesus. Jesus!"

"My sentiments exactly."

"What are their names?"

"Uh... Stevens. Matthew, age fifteen, and Elisabeth Marie, age seven," he cites from the article. And isn't that just wonderful? "Neighbor, Janet H., reported mother, Julie Stevens, three times in the last years to the officials, but 'no one ever did anything,' the lady told a reporter, 'and now see what came of it. Those poor kids.'"

Poor kids indeed. "She in jail?"

"No, actually, she's not. Although, her then-boyfriend is." Off his confused look, Sam clarifies, "She hit them black and blue and what not, yes, but those injuries didn't kill them. Police report said those injuries were not enough to kill them. The way the girl's neck was broken..."

Dean slams his hand on the table. Hard. "Shit. Fuck." And the kids don't even know. But does it really matter? *Fucking hell*.

Sam doesn't say anything, but if his clenched jaw and the hard look is any indication to his mood, then Dean is tempted to say he'd have some things to say to that as well. His eyes focus on the one picture that doesn't make his gut curl, one picture that's not screaming of 'death' and 'violence,' showing the siblings playing with a dog in front of a frozen lake, both laughing.

They look so very different like this. Blond and brown hair not covered by blood and

dirt and... *Christ!* Dean swallows hard against the lump forming in his throat, coughing a bit to cover his coarse voice. "So we're gonna check the weeks after and before this then, huh?"

"Yeah, strange happenings?"

Nodding he reaches for his jacket. "Yep. And we'll find it." He gets up. "Get started, I'll get us some coffee." He figures they'll need it, too.

When he returns with two paper cups, the chick a few tables over is glaring at him again. Why, Dean has no idea. He didn't even flirt with her or anything. She scoffs when she notices him holding her eyes, not looking away. Oh for the love of... Enough is enough. He shoots a glare of his own before sitting down. "Here. Now, let's see what we got here."

"Lots and lots of work."

"Figures."

"Yeah."

It always is. It doesn't come as a surprise, not really. The only difference is, they do it long distance. There's no way to go back to Colorado. They don't have the time for that shit. Since the night of the new moon is weeks away, they'll look for a few smaller cases around Pittsburgh while trying to figure this out. No, not trying, he corrects himself. They will figure it out. They have to. There will be another killing during the new moon, always at least two per city. Dean doesn't believe the MO is going to change all of a sudden.

If it would, they'd be fucked. And not in a good way.

But. With enough time on their hands, they'll figure it out.

Thing is, the answer to all their questions is here somewhere, got to be in the weeks between these unfortunate kids' death and the first killings. It simply doesn't make sense any other way, so the key has to be right here in front of them. Something must have happened, involving a young woman and her father, possibly a violent death. Not much to go by, true, but it has to do; they did it all before. Talk about looking for a needle in a haystack.

After some more time - and a lot more coffee on his part - his brain is about ready to commit suicide alongside his eyeballs by jumping right out of the window or stabbing itself with a dull pencil until it's soup. And then escape the situation by dribbling out of his ears and down the drain. And... *Yuck*. What a nice picture that makes for. Oy. *That's it!* It's time to stop *right NOW* or go crazy. Since Dean's not so keen on the latter. "Let's get out of here. My brain feels like it's about to explode," he gripes, flinging the pencil away from himself.

"There's a brain in there?" Sam teases, tapping the side of said head. Innocent look

and all that, and oh yeah, definitely his bratty little brother. "Really?!"

"Oh, shut up, dude. Can we just get out of here? This place is fucking depressing me, and I need to get away from this chair. My ass is falling asleep as we speak and another hour and I won't be able to get up."

"Yeah, yeah, okay. I have to print the pictures at...", he cuts himself off, shaking his head softly. There's a small smile tugging on his lips and... *The hell?!* "Uhm... back at the loft anyway, and there's nothing we can do here that we can't back there. We might as well leave." They shuffle the papers together and lucky them! This time, they both get glared at from the chick. What's her problem anyway?!

"What's her problem?" Sam asks once they're out of earshot, unknowingly echoing his very thoughts.

"I have *no* idea."

"Huh. You didn't even hit on her."

Dean barks out a laugh. Yeah, sure, as if that required glaring. Ya know, like, at all. Instead of telling him that, Dean just shrugs and shakes his head. "Yeah, whatever," he chuckles. "Come on." They leave the building quickly, walking out into daylight or what's left of it, seeing the gray sky, rubbing his hands together. It's all too cold for his liking.

*_*_*

Far too many hours after they left the place, they find themselves back at the loft with Brian and Justin gone. It's not a bad thing per se, and it suits Dean just fine. Peeling himself out of layers of clothing, he throws his jacket over a barstool passing the kitchen and the rest onto his bag when he drags a new pair of socks that aren't wet out of it. The light is low, grey sky making the city look depressing, but he doesn't need it anyway.

In the background he already hears the printer working. Dean smiles. They can still work hand in hand without so much as talking things through; sometimes it's almost like Sam never left for Stanford, being out of the job for those four years. *Almost* being the operative word, 'cause he did and he was, but it doesn't matter now. He's back now, and later, well, he'll deal with later when it knocks him right over the head and says, 'Hi, you know later? I'm here!'

Until then, ignorance is bliss.

Or it can be, when he thinks about the reason Sammy is back with him. About fire and blond hair and the Smurfs. And fuck if that doesn't put a damper on his already not-so-freakin' jolly mood. Sighing he gets up from the floor, closing his bag.

The second he returns to the living room area, Sam hands him a folder full of prints; pictures, newspapers articles, police records, and everything in between. Or so it

seems, by the sheer quantity of it. And no, not just one folder, but two. And with a weak smile, Sam tells him that there's a lot more to come. Terrific. Sighing again, he takes a seat next to the couch table. There's a lot more room down here than on any other table or whatever in the loft.

He's still kinda speechless about them staying here. "Why do you think he is letting us stay here?"

And isn't it just great? Now Sammy boy isn't just Haley Joel, now he has good hearing and he can read his freakin' mind?

"Huh?" Very eloquent, but come on! You can't seriously expect him to come up with a witty reply now.

Sam shrugs. "I just... Brian doesn't seem like the guy to just have people stay over. I'm not saying he's a bad guy, I just think he's not very..."

"Trusting?"

"Uh, yeah."

"Neither are we."

"Yeah, well, when you put it like that..."

Dean smiles. "I don't know. I think maybe he's more freaked out about the ghosts than he likes to admit."

"Probably, yeah. Plus we--er, you saved his lover."

"Right." Not that it matters. "Or maybe it's just my charismatic and endearing nature, you know, my stunning looks? My witty sense of humor, my--" A ball of scrunched up paper hits him square on the shoulder. "Dude. What?" He smirks.

"Don't forget your spectacular modesty, Dean." Sam scowls. The effect is ruined when Dean looks up to see his brother fighting off a grin. "That one is overwhelming, I tell you. But seriously. Maybe it's a lot of things, not just one, huh?"

Dean shrugs, going back to the open folder. "If that makes you sleep better at night, dude."

"Hmm."

And maybe it's a little about what happened this morning, he thinks. Misplaced guilt, maybe, something. Looking at Sam, well Dean knows a thing or two about misplaced guilt, yo. Whatever. He doubts Brian invites a lot of people to stay with him, let alone people he doesn't really know. Plus, he so wants to get in my pants.

Yup. Definitely. And, well, not that Dean would object to that exactly, mind you. The

guy's obviously smoking hot. As is his blond. It's just not, well, practical to mix work and fun as tightly as this. In particular with his little brother right here. Well, okay, not this kind of fun. Leaving with a cute girl or two gets Sammy to roll his eyes and grumble for a bit, but he seriously doubts Sam would be as forgiving picking up their host. That's like wanting to have his cake and eat it, too. Not a good idea.

And then there's the little detail where said host happens to be a hot guy.

Nah, that's a good secret as it is. Namely, a secret.

Sammy doesn't have to know every little thing. Dean doesn't know everything about his brother either, so that's pretty fair. Right? Besides, it's none of his business since it doesn't affect Sam's life in any way at all. Or their job. And that's the most important thing, isn't it? If this can't be turned against him – them – then it's okay to have secrets.

Well, fuck me.

That's a route he doesn't want his mind to take right now. Or ever. And he's still thinking about it. Groaning softly, he furiously rubs a hand over his eyes. Stupid. He rolls his eyes at himself. How about stop daydreaming and get on with the job? Would be a good idea. Sighing, Dean takes a sip from the oh-so-nicely hot coffee and then does just that. The gruesome pictures alone should take his mind off the current thoughts in a heartbeat. There are bigger problems to conquer.

Only the door opening and closing makes him look up again. It feels like years later. A little confused, he takes a short look at his wrist. Well, time apparently really moves fast these days. Not years, but already over an hour since they came back here. Brian is dressed in a suit that Dean is sure costs more than anything he owns. In clothing or otherwise, sans Impala and guns, of course. And my God, can the man work a suit! Justin is dressed in slightly less formal clothes; nice blue button down shirt, dark gray cotton pants, and fitting sneakers. They look like they walked right out of one of the commercials for designer clothes.

The blond smiles as he sees them. Brian, on the other hand, frowns. And the first thing they hear out of the brunet's mouth is, "The fuck are you doing on the floor?" gesturing to the bunch of papers lying around. "You might not be familiar with the concept, but you sit on a sofa, not on the floor."

"Hilarious, smartass," Dean counters, "but since all of your *designer* furniture looks like it's made for a doll house, well, it's easier working down here. Room and all that, ya know."

Not missing a beat, he replies, "And what exactly are you working on down there, Dean?"

"My, wouldn't you like to know," Dean says, offering one of his own smirks, but no explanation.

Brian raises his brows, never breaking eye contact. "So, what are you doing, *Sam?*" Well, sure, if he can't get an answer from one brother, he might as well try the other.

And gets lucky. *Not in that way!* "Uh... research." Sammy and his good manners. Figures.

"Oh, yeah? And you're being so secretive? What's it on? Porn?"

Dean almost laughs when Sam *blushes*. Oh God! The kid's going to be his death, in more ways than one. Brian merely smirks once he turns and looks at his brother. But no. No, it's not porn, albeit he wishes to whatever deity there is that it was. Sam is already reaching for the pictures as the man – sans suit jacket and coat now – finally walks over. "I don't think you want to see--"

"What?" Brian fakes shock quite well. "Is it *straight* porn?" But it's already too late. The look in the man's eyes, the way they 'shut down' when he looks down at the picture in his hand, it says it all. No further mocking comebacks, no witty replies, no ill placed innuendo, just plain old shock.

"—this," Sam finishes quietly, lowering his eyes.

He has seen it, too. The amused sparkle went out in those gorgeous eyes so fast, mask firmly snapping in place. It's startling. Disturbing, even. It is, however, not truly surprising.

And Dean swears that he honestly doesn't notice the blond until he's standing right there. *Shit*. "Brian, fuck, you're white as a sheet, are you--" Blue eyes turn wide when he sees what his boyfriend? Partner? Whatever, is holding. "—okay? *Shit*. Oh shit." Sinking down on the sofa, almost falling down, he buries his face in his hands. Brian's hand finds the kid's shoulder like a vise, never taking his eyes off the picture.

He can't blame the kid for not wanting to see. Not really. It's disgusting, but even more than that it's sad. Two children murdered in their own home by their mother's newest fuckbuddy. A mother who hit her kids on a frequent base, like a sport, a hobby, a few broken bones and bruises day in day out being nothing special. To live in a home like that? Dean shakes his head to himself. He doesn't really want to think about it, but it must be cruel. So okay, their home hasn't been ideal - duh! – he knows that, but this?

So much worse.

Perhaps it's a different kind of hell than the Winchester men have been through, but it's still hell. And in contrary to these poor children, Sam and he are still alive.

The silence that follows is loud. So loud he can barely hear his own breathing or the traffic downstairs as light as it is. Looking over to his brother, he finds him looking right back. There's a familiar look in the kid's eyes, a look he knows he'd see in his own if he was to look into a mirror right this second. Schooling his face back into indifference – or trying to, anyway – they both go back to sorting through the

research. There's nothing they can say.

And truth be told, it takes an incredibly long time until someone finally does say something, piercing the silence like a needle would a balloon. He's not really surprised that it's Justin. "It's the... They are the... From..." he begins, not knowing how to go on. Dean takes pity on him.

"The ghosts from last night, yes," he agrees. Gentle.

It takes another minute or so of silence, but Justin finally utters the question Dean knew he – someone – would ask sooner or later; he still dreads this moment, though. "Wh—what happened to *them*?" And he's almost impressed at how the blond's voice doesn't tremble too much, doesn't break. The answer, however...

"You don't want to know," he assures firmly, eyes focused on the young man sitting there. "Trust me, ya really, *really* don't want to know."

When he looks up, blue eyes meet his, locking gaze, and he swears he can see the wheels turning behind them. Dean hopes that the blonde gets what he's is trying to say without actually saying it, something Dean can't – doesn't want to – name. That he's merely being honest, and that it is better not to ask any more questions. Questions he doesn't want to answer. He could, in this case he could, he read the reports – it's around here somewhere – but he doesn't want to.

There is simply no reason for the kid to know.

"Okay," Justin finally says, very softly and very sincere, swallowing hard. "Okay."

Dean nods, once, twice, then he's back to work. The sooner this is done, the sooner they can move on and get away from these fucking pictures. 'Cause don't you just *love* that? More freakin' death, more violence, and even more pictures he so doesn't want to look at. What's wrong with people, anyway, that they hit their own kids? Beat them black and blue? How can a mother or father or whatever do that to their own flesh and blood? Isn't there enough bloodshed, evil in the world already? Fucking stupid.

Just thinking about someone hitting Sammy... hurting him, it sends his blood pressure and stomach right on a roller coaster ride. Involuntarily, his tired eyes move from the papers in his hand to his brother not three feet away. It's stupid, he knows that, but can't help the feeling to make sure he's okay. Of course there are no bruises, no cuts. *Yeah, yeah, how freakin' foolish is it to actually expect something different?!* But old habits die hard, don't they? And looking after Sammy is what it all comes down to.

He did it his whole life, or so it seems. And he wouldn't change it for the world.

- TBC