

Defining Heaven

Rating: G

Summary: Dean Winchester had never given much thought to heaven. He hadn't wanted to go there. -- *15x20 Coda/Fix-It*

Author's Note: Not my best one, but I needed to get this out, even though it's past five a.m. here, I have been up since 1 a.m. and I really need to sleep and try not to cry anymore.

If anyone had ever asked him how he defined his perfect heaven, he would have described this.

Driving the empty road in Baby, relishing in the freedom of going wherever and whenever he wanted, no hunts ahead, no lives to save, to responsibilities to fulfill.

The sun was warm as it shone through the treetops, the world dipped in a soft golden glow, the street lined by proud trees of lush green.

Heaven, indeed.

Dean Winchester had never given much thought to heaven. Not in a positive, look-forward-to-it way at least. Last he checked, heaven wasn't the place one actually wanted to go; a big mess, a prison for souls, damned to relive one moment of their lives over and over without ever knowing.

He hadn't wanted to go there.

The thing about heaven was, though -- when the right people were in charge, it had a chance to be good.

And it was good.

Jack had done them proud. The boy they had raised together, he, Sam and Cas, had taught about life and love and family. The boy who was now out there, righting the wrongs, and doing it instinctively perfect.

Dean breathed in the fresh forest air and smiled.

Yes. Perfect.

Still, there was this strange twinge in his heart, as if something was missing. Someone.

Sammy, of course. He'd be around sometime, someday, he knew.

His parents -- well, he could see them anytime. Bobby was there, and everyone else - Jody, Donna, Claire, their hunter friends, their extended family that never ended in blood - would follow, when they had hopefully lived their lives to the fullest on Earth.

Maybe under Jack as God, even people like Garth and his family would be allowed into heaven.

Yet... that wasn't all.

Jack had reshaped heaven with the help of Cas, Bobby had said.

But Cas had been gone when Jack had assumed God powers. Cas was in the Empty.

Or was he?

The road was still there, as was the sun, the light breeze, and the feeling of freedom. Still, Dean's smile faltered.

What if his best friend, his... his... --What if he was around here somewhere? Why hadn't he shown up? Appeared out of thin air, like he always did?

Was he even still their Cas, *his* Cas? Or had he maybe returned to his duty as an angel, a servant of God? Did he still remember their time together, their moments, what he had said when---

On a thought, Dean was back at the Roadhouse, found Bobby looking curiously, then knowingly at him, smirking, winking. *There is more to see.*

Down the road, a ten minute walk, the trees and bushes turned into a field, a wide plane of another shade of green. In the distance a cozy cottage could be spotted.

His parents' house.

Time to go home.

The wind danced around him as he slowly walked along the uneven pathway, and it reminded him of that breath of air that had always announced an angel's arrival. They were curious, these things you remembered when you were left alone and in peace with only your thoughts as your company, and when--

"Hello Dean."

He stumbled. Caught himself. Closed his eyes. Opened them again.

No one there.

Shaking his head, he scolded himself for giving in to hopes and fantasies. For being ungrateful. He should be thankful for what he had gotten here; he *was* thankful. That twinge, that emptiness, it was going to be filled by his brother, as it was supposed to be.

Another step. And one more after that. Carry on and be happy with what you are given.

The so familiar sound of fluttering wings he managed to ignore.

The even more familiar human shape appearing several steps away amidst the field he couldn't.

No.

He *did not want to.*

"Cas," he breathed, and unbidden yet not unwelcome tears denied him a clear vision of the angel. "You're... here."

"Of course I am, Dean." Slow steps brought him who was once again clad in his trademark trenchcoat to the dirt road, and in reaching distance of the human.

"I thought you were... I mean, Bobby said, but... how did you..."

"Jack. He brought me back here."

"Why didn't you come to us, to--- to me?" Castiel smiled warmly.

"Angels are not supposed to be on Earth. Our place is here, in Heaven." Dean's heart, for a moment readying itself to dance of joy, sank once again.

"So... you're a soldier again?"

"I am whatever I want to be. And... wherever I want to be." Even a Dean Winchester couldn't miss the emphasis put on that *wherever*, or what it implied.

Wordlessly, he stared at his friend, a single tear rolling down his cheek.

He didn't know how it happened, or when. How long they had been standing there, or who moved first. He didn't care either.

All he knew was that Cas' arms were around him, and Dean's were around Cas, and he never wanted to let go again. He had once too often in the past.

"Don't you *ever* leave again," Dean grumped into the other's neck. "You hear me?!"

"I won't, Dean, I promise. There'll be no more reason to leave," was the soft reply.

"Good, because," he pulled back a little, until he was able to look at Cas, but his arms still held on, "if this is my Heaven, I make the rules, and there is no more leaving and losing of people I love."

The smile on Cas' face was gentle and content, much like the one it had held right before the Empty had taken him, but this time it lacked that note of sadness. The tears in the angel's eyes glistened in the afternoon sunlight, reflecting happiness and affection.

"Dean--"

"I love you, Cas," Dean confirmed quickly, then breathed out a laugh of relief. Finally, it was out in the open. That bottled up emotion that had weighed so heavily on him, smothered by fear and duty. "I love you." Once said, it became easier when repeated, and the taste and feeling on his tongue were that of the sweetest pie he had ever had, if not better. "I have for so long. I just wish I had understood it sooner, had not been so--"

"It is okay, Dean. I know. I understand. We don't need to dwell on the past."

Nodding lightly, Dean brought up a hand to cup Cas' face. Gently his thumb caressed the angel's cheek while their eyes exchanged what words could not have expressed properly.

There was a moment between seconds, an easy-to-miss movement, a combination of leaning in and pulling close, and their lips touched, tentative and shy, as their bodies once more fell into each other. And just like their love had grown slowly over the years, their kiss as well was deepened without the need to rush, guided by feelings and the simple longing to be with each other.

And as he held the angel, the *man* he loved in his arms, Dean Winchester finally understood.

Heaven is defined by what makes you happy.

Heaven is the place where your happiness finds fulfillment.

Heaven is the place where your heart finds home.

The End