

The Thing About Thoughts By Scribblesinink

Sam leaned against the low wall, ignoring the chill that was slowly seeping through his jeans. Dean was pacing nearby, taking large, impatient steps and grumbling under his breath. Sam tuned him out; Dean had never been good at waiting, and he had plenty of other things to think about.

"Hey, Sammy? Sam! Are you even listening?"

Sam glanced up, realizing Dean had been talking to him. He hadn't heard a word.

"Geez, what's going on in that freaky brain of yours? You look like you're a million miles away." Dean stuffed his hands deep into the pockets of his jacket and raised his shoulders against the cold. "Aw, c'mon, don't tell me you're actually upset about leaving this place."

Sam shrugged and stared off across the parking lot. They hadn't stayed long enough for him to start liking it; they never did. And he'd known it wouldn't last, anyway. Besides, Truman High was just a school, no different from the other dozen or so he'd seen over the past couple of years. Still... for a short while, he hadn't been Sammy-the-new-kid. Hadn't been the weird one; the freak who lived in a motel or squatted with his brother and father in an abandoned house; the outsider wearing hand-me-downs that never seemed to fit quite right. For a couple of weeks, he'd been just Sam Winchester: a normal kid. A boy who'd been cool, and who'd had options.

He'd liked *that*.

Dean had turned away from him and picked up pacing again. He glanced at his watch, mumbling, "Come on, Dad."

"Mr. Wyatt says I don't have to go into the family business."

"What?" That sure got Dean's attention; he twisted around to stare at Sam. "'Course you do. You're a Winchester. Soon as you're old enough—and big enough—," he smirked, "—you'll be a hero too. And then we won't have to go to crap-ass schools like this and pretend we're normal."

"There's nothing wrong with normal." Sam toyed with a strap of his bookbag. "Mr. Wyatt says I don't have to do anything I don't want to do."

"Oh, he does, does he?" Dean snorted. "Well, you better not let Dad hear any of that

garbage. You know he's not gonna stand for it."

Sam didn't answer. He didn't think he could make Dean understand what Mr. Wyatt's question had meant to him, or how weird it had been to have a grown-up ask him what he wanted. To be talked to the way Mr. Wyatt had talked to him.

There may be three or four big choices that shape someone's life. And you need to be the one that makes them.

"I can't wait to get the hell outta here." Dean had turned away again, and Sam knew the conversation was over. "This place sucks."

A horn honking drew their attention, and a moment later the growl of the Impala rumbled through the still air. Sam pushed off from the wall and hefted his bag onto his shoulder. He glanced up at the building. Barry was looking down, and Sam waved goodbye before getting into the car.

An instant later, Dad was pressing the gas pedal to the floor, and Truman High fell away behind them. Dean's warning echoed in Sam's mind.

You better not let Dad hear any of that garbage.

He stared at the back of his father's neck, at the strands of dark hair that curled over Dad's collar. Dean was right; Dad wouldn't understand.

So Sam never mentioned Mr. Wyatt again. But you know what's the weird thing about thoughts? Once they take hold, you never can *un*think them. And you can never forget.

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