



**Celestial Harmonies: Cider & Cocoa**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Let from editor .....	4
Staff list .....	4
Interview with the cover artists .....	5
Art and fic	
hot cocoa and scarf, Anne Simon.....	8
Autumn Happiness, Pati Bu. ....	9
Get Lost with Me, Krista .....	10
A Gift-Wrapping Catastrophe, Lady Divine .....	13
Under the Snow, Oloreheri .....	17
Rage Against the Ineffable Machine, BT.....	18
Family Fireplace, Oloreheri .....	26
Tartan Blanket? Really? .....	27
It's Warm Inside, L. Holly.....	28
Christmas Under the Stars, Zoe .....	33
Blanket Wing, Ca .....	34
The Adventure of the Angel Detective, Di.....	35
The Forest Picnic, Juliet .....	52
Decorating for Christmas, Bobla Blubb .....	53
Hastur and Ligur Discover Halloween, GCB.....	55
Heaven is Here With Me, Kieran Pierce .....	58
Love on Thin Ice, Jo .....	65
Under the Tree, Connie Yves Riba Kottmann .....	66
The Last of the Great Frost Fairs, Bentley .....	67
Warmth, Marcus .....	74
Beneath the Tree, Cyn Syn.....	75
Old Memories, GCB .....	76

## Cover Art Submissions

Augenblickgotter .....	79
Anna .....	80
Oloreheri.....	81
L. Holly .....	82
Activity eBook cover, Zoe .....	83

Reader,

Thank you so much for reading our Cider & Cocoa zine! We received a lot of support for this issue, and we look forward to planning future issues with the continued encouragement of fellow *Good Omens* fans.

I would also like to especially thank our contributors. We received more submissions for this issue than we did with our last issue. A zine is nothing without its contributors, so we're very thankful that we were seen by so many talented artists and writers. Please support our creators on their personal accounts listed with their works.

Our goal was to create a wholesome zine for the autumn and winter, and I believe that we achieved that!

Di, editor-in-chief



## STAFF LIST

Marcus, fic judge

Krista, fic judge

Cross, planning

Cyn, art judge

Ally, art judge

Micha, fic judge

Di, editor-in-chief

INTERVIEW WITH HOWIE  
ZINE COVER ARTIST

**What about Good Omens motivates you to create? Is it the characters? The story?**

I think it comes down to who Crowley and Aziraphale are as characters; there's a lot of room to explore with them since they have a long history/ there's something intrinsically fascinating about beings who have been here since creation, who got to watch and guide humanity.

**In general, what do you like to create with art? Are there any specific tropes you like to focus on?**

For fan works I bounce between angst in my writing and fluff for my art; I love to see the characters happy and warm when drawing them.

**What else have you worked on outside of your work on this zine? Any other art? Writing? Baking?**

During the pandemic I've defo gotten more into baking (joined the sourdough starter crowd) but I've always enjoyed cooking with friends, it's nice to keep it up even if it's just myself. I've written fic more recently in the last year or so, but that mainly stays in my notes app rather than going to AO3.

**Cider or cocoa? Tartan or black? Turtlenecks or fishnet socks?**

Cocoa, black, turtlenecks; I like to believe I'm more like Crowley but I know irl I have Aziraphale soft vibes.

**Is there anything you'd like our readers to know? Are you open for commissions? Have any big projects you're working on?**

I am open for commissions, that's the pinned post on my tumblr main (inaudiblysticky); I have examples of work I've done for my dnd group. If anyone wants to read extremely self indulgent Doctor Who fic, I'm on AO3

as Theyjustwalkrightoffthedamnthing (which also features a unfinished TAZ wip).

INTERVIEW WITH ZOE  
ACTIVITY EBOOK COVER ARTIST

**Who's your favorite Good Omens character to paint/draw? What about them makes them an interesting subject?**

I love to draw Aziraphale because of his overall aesthetic. Everything about him is so wholesome and soft and I feel wholesome while drawing him.

Also, Michael Sheen's face and hair are very aesthetically pleasing too.

**Where do you draw inspiration from when you're drawing or painting?**

From a lot of different places! Sometimes I start with an idea for the painting and then look for the best way to make it come across. Sometimes I see a photograph and think 'this is so cool I have to show everyone how cool this is' and draw something from that photograph (having Pinterest boards really help with that). Other times I'll just be in the mood to draw a horse or an old village and find ways to fit an idea around that.

**How long have you been an artist? Is it something you've taken classes for, or are you mostly self-taught?**

Other than childhood doodles I've been an artist for 7-8 years. I've taken a few online courses, read books, learned from Youtube videos, etc. I try to learn as much as I can!

**Cider or cocoa? Tartan or black? Turtlenecks or fishnet socks?**

Cocoa, tartan, and turtlenecks!

**Is there anything you'd like our readers to know? Are you open for commissions? Have any big projects you're working on?**

I'm hosting a David Tennant themed art collab over on Twitter, send me a dm if you'd like to join! (@NavyBirdArt)

I also have a TeePublic store with shirts, mugs and prints, and other things! (Navy Bird)





"hot cocoa and scarf" by Anne Simon, creativerocket on Instagram and creativerocket-jpg on Tumblr





"Autumn Happiness" by Pati Bu., patibu\_art on Instagram

GET LOST WITH ME  
KRISTA

"Now, I do believe we should take the left path."

"No, we just turned left—" Crowley gestures vaguely at the map in Aziraphale's hands, "—and it brought us around in a circle!"

A pause, eyes flickering from the hand-drawn map to the two diverging paths. "I'm almost certain this looks different."

"S'corn! It all looks the same!"

Aziraphale gives him an unimpressed look over his shoulder before turning his attention back to the map and heading down the left path. For what it's worth, Crowley throws back his head and groans before following behind him.

This isn't how he wanted the night to go.

When he found out the angel was also traveling to America for an assignment, Crowley invited him along to a local fair. '*Plenty of opportunities for blessings, I'm sure,*' he promised while imagining all the things they could do together. Perhaps he'd get a chance to take the angel on a romantic Ferris wheel ride, use a demonic miracle to stop it right up at the top where they could get a perfect view of the stars. Maybe he could miraculously win Aziraphale the biggest prize at every game booth, rigged or not. And, if the angel felt peckish, *well...* He could buy him every fried food monstrosity the fair had to offer, and they could both laugh at the ridiculousness of humans and their efforts to fry everything in their path.

Instead, Aziraphale had caught sight of the corn maze as soon as they bought their tickets and dragged Crowley towards it, exclaiming, "Oh, *do you remember* the turf labyrinths?" Before the angel even finished recounting their first experience with mazes in Rome, he was pulling Crowley inside.

And now, they're lost with no hope of escaping with Aziraphale as their navigator.

But Crowley has *plans*. Real big romantic ones, thank you, and he's not letting a maze get in the way of them (not like it did in 1720).

"Angel," he starts, speeding up until he falls into step beside Aziraphale, hands shoved into his pockets to fight off the cold. The angel in question barely glances up from the map. "You know, we don't have to stick to the

paths. Could slither right through the row here—" he points at one section of the map, "—and avoid this whole 'lost' business."

"It would make this easier," Aziraphale agrees easily, "but that's not very sporting of us, my dear boy. And it would be breaking the rules."

Crowley bites back the impulse to say that rules are meant to be broken. That wouldn't really help him achieve his goal of getting out of here, would it? Time to try tempting from a new angle.

"You're right." He takes a few long strides and moves in front of Aziraphale, stopping him. "But there's a lot we're missing out there."

"Like?"

"Like all that fried food! Did y'know Americans are frying Oreos now? Don't know if it goes all soggy in the middle, but they're a hit."

"I always thought the 'fried food craze' was a bit of your work."

Crowley makes a noncommittal noise that sounds a bit like, "Ngh."

He is, in fact, responsible. Bit of a mix-up happened when he tried to influence the culinary world for Aziraphale's sake, not that he's going to admit it. "*Ignoring that,*" he says, "we're also missing...the rides! Yeah, loads of those. And games, too."

"I suppose so."

Aziraphale still doesn't seem convinced, and it might be unbecoming of a demon, but Crowley's getting desperate. If nothing else, he wants to make it to the Ferris wheel on time. Again, big romantic plans to put into action!

"C'mon, angel, work with me. The Ferris wheel is miraculously empty at the moment, and we could enjoy a ride all to ourselves. Stars probably look great up there."

"Well," Aziraphale lights up with a smile, tucking the map away in one of his pockets, "when you put it like that, my dear."

He loops one of his arms through Crowley's and starts leading them down a few twisting paths. It takes Crowley's brain a few minutes to catch up with this new development, having previously been occupied with a successful temptation.

"Wait, you put the—You've known the way out of here the whole time?!"

"Well, of course. It's quite a simple path once you look at the map a few times. Lots of right turns."

Crowley splutters. "Then—What? Why were you taking us in circles earlier?"

"I was simply enjoying my time with you," Aziraphale states, and it'd be sweet if it weren't for the smugness in his smile he thinks Crowley can't see. "And it's a lot of fun to rile you up, dearest."

"You're a bastard, you know that?"

"Oh, shush! I'm ready for my very romantic Ferris wheel ride now."

The Ferris wheel ride is rather romantic. The stars are beautiful and Aziraphale even more so, especially when he turns to smile at Crowley and takes Crowley's cold hands in his, promising to keep them warm for the rest of the night.

*Krista can be found at ineffablepuns on Tumblr and AO3*

A GIFT-WRAPPING CATASTROPHE  
LADY DIVINE

"Oh... dear... *demon in bloody Hell!*" Nanny Ashtoreth stretches stiff arms above her head, yawns with a hand cupped over her mouth. "What time is it?"

Brother Francis, curled on the floor by the foot of the Dowling's twelve-foot Nordmann Fir, his body snaked around an empty cardboard roll that once held shimmery blue-and-silver Christmas wrap, a holographic bow stuck to his forehead, blinks his eyes open. He rolls his head to check the clock hanging on the wall, narrowing his lids when the numbers swim in and out of view.

"It's tomorrow," he replies, cuddling up with the tube again.

"Tomorrow?" Nanny groans, yawning a second time. "Oi! Wasn't it yesterday seven hours ago?"

"Sounds 'bout right," Francis agrees. "At least we finally got all the presents done. They're spoilin' that boy within an inch of his life, I tell ya."

Nanny grins, flashing pearly-white fangs. "Yes! Isn't it perfect?"

"Why we couldn't use a miracle to wrap them, I'll never understand," Francis grumbles, scowling at the late...or rather *early* hour.

"*Beaussse the Dowlingsss are ssstill roaming about!*" Nanny answers in a hiss. "Wouldn't do for us to get caught out now, would it? And *we*?" She tuts in disgust. "More like *I*, thank you very much! You curled up with your cardboard lover there after wrapping a sum total of five presents, then passed out!"

"I was here with you in spirit," Brother Francis says, struggling his way to a sitting position. "That's how angels operate. And it obviously helped. Look at the wonderful job you did!"

Ashtoreth huffs. "You're lucky you're cute, *Brother Francis*. Wot between this and the way you snore, you'd be spending the rest of the night underneath that Christmas tree otherwise, trussed up like a turkey to boot!"

"My spine thanks ya for your leniency." Francis arches his back, which cracks loudly like a walnut smashed underfoot.

Nanny Ashtoreth rolls her eyes. His spine he could use a miracle to fix, she thinks. *That* no one would notice.

"And I do not snore," Brother Francis adds, climbing shakily to his feet.



"No? Then a freight train must have been re-routed through this living room without my prior notice."

She shakes her head, starting the equally long task of cleaning up, the urge to snap the mess of paper bits almost too difficult to resist. As it is, she'll be fishing tape out of her hair for the next hour, but don't ask her how in the Heaven it got there.

"I'm exhausted!" she moans. "Positively tuckered! The minute my head hits my pillow, I'll be out like a..."

Nanny's eyes fall on a thin cardboard box with holes along the sides sitting a foot from the tree. She tilts her head, drawing a blank as to why it didn't get wrapped with the rest of the packages.

Or what is supposed to be in there.

"Oh, right," she mutters to herself when she remembers, opening the flaps to peek inside.

She doesn't recall exactly *when* the tuft of fur, claws, and teeth stopped making noise. It must have fallen fast asleep waiting for Nanny to finish. Mrs. Dowling had instructed Nanny to deliver the kitten to Warlock's room after the presents were wrapped, but Nanny decided to keep the thing with her, squirrel it up to her room when they're done, and wait till morning to introduce it to its new master. Satan knows that the second that kitten climbs its furry butt onto Warlock's bed, he will be wide awake, and there will be no keeping him from coming downstairs to raid the tree.

Demons don't necessarily need sleep, but Nanny would appreciate an hour or two of shut-eye after the night she's had.

Nanny Ashtoreth moves the flaps of the box aside to get a glimpse of the kitten she chose special for Warlock. Satan never takes an interest in choosing presents for his son, but Ashtoreth feels he would much approve of the ball of spit and vinegar she chose.

Nanny stares into the box; stares long and hard. Stares until her slotted eyes cross.

"Uh... Brother Francis?"

"Yes, my dear?"

"Have you seen Jezebel?"

"Why, yes," he replies, twisting his spine from side to side, working the kinks out. "Yes, I have. Adorable little creature. Warlock will simply adore her!"

"A-ha. And when did you see her last?"

"Well..." He pauses to think, giving his belly a good scratch "...she was kicking up such a fuss about being cooped up in that box. So, I let her out to stretch her legs. She stopped by for some scratches and a snuggle, but I think she ran off. She's probably hiding somewhere under the tree."

"That's what I'm afraid of. I don't want her sharpening her claws on any of the three hundred presents *I* just finished wrapping."

"She's only a kitten, love. I doubt she'll be able to make it through ten presents. If that."

"Ha... ha," Nanny Ashtoreth deadpans. "Easy for you to say..." Nanny straightens, going completely still as she leans an ear towards the center of the room. "Did you hear that?" she whispers.

"Hear wot?" Brother Francis asks, lowering his voice to an appropriate level.

"Listen."

Nanny and gardener stand quiet and still, but only Nanny Ashtoreth knows what they're listening for. Then Brother Francis hears it—a small, pathetic meow, soft and muffled.

"I definitely heard that," Francis says.

"She sounds like she's in trouble." Nanny Ashtoreth walks carefully around the living room, listening at the walls, the cabinets, close to the floorboards, trying to figure out where the meowing is coming from. "We have to find her! She's the one thing Warlock wanted most this Christmas, and I would rather not bring her back from the dead!"

"We will find her, my dear. Have a little faith."

Brother Francis follows Nanny's lead, getting down on his hands and knees to search under the furniture, the sofa cushions, the throw rugs, and inside the empty tubes of wrapping paper, until he hears the meowing again, more clearly now...

... coming from underneath the tree.

"I told you!" Brother Francis sits back on his heels, beaming in triumph.

"She's under the—!"

A new sound joins the meowing—a frantic scratching. Nanny Ashtoreth's eyes go wide.

"She's not under the tree!" she cries. "She's inside one of the presents!"

"How in the world did that happen!?"

"I don't know!" Nanny's hands find her hair, fingers pulling anxiously at what's left of her once neat chignon. "She must have hopped into one of the boxes without us noticing! She is a very tiny kitten, after all. Wait..." Nanny turns on Brother Francis with the speed of a viper. "Everything *I* wrapped was pre-packaged! *You* wrapped his new coat, blazer, and slacks! Those had to be folded and put into garment boxes! That means..."

Nanny Ashtoreth and Brother Francis stare at the presents stacked thigh high around the tree, meticulously wrapped using seven different styles of paper, each with a coordinating bow or flourish of ribbon curls as per Mrs. Dowling's specific instructions.

From the silent upstairs, a door creaks open. Footsteps patter softly on the wood floor. A giggle follows.

"Santa?" a high, giddy voice calls from above them. "Santa, is that you?"

Nanny Ashtoreth glares fire and brimstone at Brother Francis. Francis's trembling lips part, the first thing he thinks of tumbling out before he can stop it.

"Oh... *poop*."

*Lady Divine can be found at lady-divine-writes on Tumblr, White Queen Writes on AO3, and LadyDivine91 on Instagram*



"Under the Snow" by Oloreheri on Tumblr and Instagram

## RAGE AGAINST THE INEFFABLE MACHINE BT

*December 2009*

Aziraphale put another log on the fire and sat back in his armchair with his cup of cocoa, warm and content in spite of the rapidly falling snow outside. It had taken fewer miracles than the angel had expected for the Dowlings to keep their gardener over the winter.

It was a completely illogical decision, of course, but humans were prone to making illogical decisions at times. It helped that Mr. Dowling was away far more often than not, and Mrs. Dowling was the type of person with no one to confide in whom she didn't have on her payroll. Brother Francis was the ideal sort of listener, openly sympathetic only to the person speaking to him and helpful only as far as that person would like. Nanny Ashtoreth, on the other hand, always told blunt truths with a devilish smirk playing across her lips. If she hadn't been the only person who could calm Warlock down when he was upset, she would have fallen out of favor with Mrs. Dowling long ago.

It had been a year and a half since the birth of the Antichrist and almost that long since Aziraphale and Crowley had donned their disguises and begun their plan to thwart the apocalypse. Not that Aziraphale felt as though he had done much thwarting so far. Crowley tried to bring the baby Antichrist out to the garden as often as possible, but there was no competing with the influence of a nanny. Warlock was cared for by Nanny Ashtoreth for all of his waking hours and a significant number of his sleeping ones, and the result was a child who was far more comfortable with Hell's representative than with the angel who lived in the cottage at the edge of the Dowling property.

"Fuck's sake, were you the one to miracle up a snowstorm?" Speak of the devil—or the demon, rather. Crowley slammed the door shut behind him, snarling at the snow that had drifted through. He kicked off his heeled boots and shed his faux-fur coat, shivering all the while. "It looks like a bloody winter wonderland out there."

"I did not 'miracle up' anything of the sort," Aziraphale said serenely. He took the knit woolen blanket from his lap and threw it at the demon. Crowley grumbled about the color (a lovely light taupe), but he wrapped it around himself nonetheless, curling up on the squishy sofa he still wouldn't admit to liking.

"Well, there shouldn't be snow this far south," he said. "I specifically decided to live in London because we never get snow—"



"That's a bit of an exaggeration."

"—and we're practically in Sussex, so by all rights, we should be having *less* of this—this *rubbish*."

"There, there," Aziraphale said, blissfully unaware that nobody had ever said 'there, there' in the history of the world. "I'm sure it will melt away soon enough."

"And it's not just that," Crowley said. "It's all this *Christmas*."

"Why, my dear, I thought you liked Christmas," Aziraphale said, handing Crowley a steaming mug of black coffee. The demon curled his hands around the mug and brought his nose almost close enough to touch the surface of the liquid.

"I like the rubbish bits of Christmas," Crowley said. "The traffic jams, the packed stores, the passive-aggressive family dinners, the commercialism. And all the sinfulness is made ten times worse because people feel as though they ought to be *happy*. There's greed, there's avarice, there's self-righteousness enough even for your lot. It's *invigorating*. What I hate, however, is the fact that it's *Christmas*, and whether you like it or not there are going to be traditions that mitigate the full soul-damning potential of the season."

"For example?" Aziraphale said, hiding his smile in his cocoa mug.

"For example," Crowley said, "the greenery, and the baubles, and the bloody fairy lights. Putting people in a good mood even when they ought to be feeling miserable. And, of course, there's the *hateful* tradition of Christmas number ones."

"Ah," said Aziraphale. He knew exactly where this argument was going. It was the same one they had been having for the past 5 years.

"I mean, the *existence* of singing competition shows is bad enough, though the anger and envy they create has damned more than a few souls. I claimed that I invented them, you know, back when it was just Pop Idol. But X Factor, *X Factor*—" Crowley took a deep sip of his coffee. "X Factor represents everything wrong with the cookie-cutter, milquetoast music of today. There's no fire, no showmanship, no *pizzazz*."

"I don't think that anyone could say that the young people on those shows lack pizzazz," Aziraphale said as neutrally as he could.

"What would you know? You *like* that rubbish. Don't think I haven't seen you watching it with Mrs. Dowling while *I've* been stuck looking after the baby. You have no taste, either of you."

"Be that as it may," Aziraphale said, "it isn't as though Christmas number ones are such a terrible tradition. Wasn't that one of yours?"

"All the more reason," Crowley said waspishly, "for a celestial being such as yourself to disapprove of them."

"They're just a bit of fun."

"They're just a bit of over-commercialized *trash* is what they are. There hasn't been a decent Christmas number one since 2000."

Crowley looked as though he was going to continue, but then he froze. Oh, dear. Aziraphale recognized that look all too well.

"My dear boy—" Aziraphale started, picking up the coffee pot in a vain attempt to distract his old enemy.

"Of course," the demon said slowly, "nowadays one would be surprised to learn that the Bob the Builder theme became the Christmas number one by legitimate means. One would expect it to have been a meme, in fact."

"A...A *meme*?" Aziraphale said, not sure that he even wanted to know.

"Oh, you wouldn't understand, angel. It's internet culture."

"But—"

"Which of course makes this all the more viable as a solution. All I need to do is find someone with the same burning hatred for Simon Cowell as I have—"

"He is rather popular, though—"

"—which shouldn't be a problem. If we were in America it would be a different story, of course, but this is England. People have been thinking Cowell's what's wrong with music for years." Crowley was grinning now, a proper devilish grin. "Yes, I'll just find the right person, make a few sockpuppets to grease the wheels...Oh, this is going to be *fun*. I just have to find the right song."

"Crowley, if you decide to abandon our plan to *avert the apocalypse* in order to *ruin Christmas*, I'm afraid I will have no choice but to thwart you," Aziraphale said seriously. Crowley just chuckled.

"You can try, angel," he said. "You can certainly try."



Aziraphale perched his reading glasses on the end of his nose and frowned at the headline of the paper. Being a celestial being, he didn't truly need reading glasses, but he felt that they lent him a certain *je ne sais quoi* as an antique book dealer. Crowley had taken the blanket and the sofa again, looking like a cat who knew that it was about to get the cream.

"But it says here that this Jon Morder fellow tried to rig the Christmas number one spot last year as well," Aziraphale said.

"Yes, that's what makes it perfect," Crowley said, wriggling excitedly in a particularly snake-like manner. "I gave the push it needed to go viral, and it was a *quite* small push, but the humans did the rest all on their own."

"But last year he suggested Rick Astley's old hit—"

"Tried to Rickroll the whole nation," Crowley said proudly.

"I...am not aware of what that means," Aziraphale said. "But regardless, this new song—is it one of yours?"

"Well, now I *know* you have no idea who they are. No, they're on your side, angel, if they're on either of ours."

"But the name is, well, it doesn't quite sound Christmassy, does it? Peace on Earth and goodwill and all that."

"Oh, on the contrary," Crowley said, "'Killing in the Name' by Rage Against The Machine—"

"Is *not* Christmassy."

"Is *so* Christmassy. Christmassy in the same way as *A Christmas Carol* and— and *Die Hard*. It's *subversive*."

"This human you're using for your wiles called the competition '*X Factor bitches!*'"

"Okay, one, have you ever been on the internet? And two, I never claimed that this was going to be a wiles-free experience. I'm just in it to annoy Simon Cowell."

"The X Factor single," Aziraphale said righteously, "was donating its proceeds to *charity*."

"And you may find, if you bother to finish that article, that people are being encouraged to donate for this one, and to a better charity, in fact." The amount of offense in Crowley's voice was perhaps less than becoming for a supposedly evil demon, though Aziraphale knew better than to credit the old serpent with *true* evil. Still, it took him reading to the end of the article to really believe that Crowley was telling the truth.

Well then. He might have to buy and listen to this single after all.



The last time that Aziraphale had wanted to buy anything that could be considered a *single*, 45s were still in vogue. A quick perusal of the local stores' music sections was enough to tell him that not only 45s but vinyl records, in general, had all but vanished, and even tapes seemed to be rather scarce. He had never found the need to use a CD, and there didn't seem to be any of those by Rage Against The Machine in the nearest village anyway. Aziraphale came to the disquieting realization that he would have to download the song from the internet.

Now, Aziraphale was not aware that one usually has to go through all sorts of pain in the process of hooking one's computer up to the internet. This is especially true when, strictly speaking, one owns an ancient computer that had been discontinued before WiFi existed as even a concept. Nevertheless, when Aziraphale booted up his computer and opened the never-before-used browser, he was greeted with internet speeds that NASA would have drooled over. He looked up the song, went to its Wikipedia page since that was the first result to come up, and found that there was a hitherto nonexistent function that allowed him to buy the single through Wikipedia and without any means of payment in sight.

He looked up the charity that the newspaper had said was being supported by the contender for Christmas number one. Once again, no credit card was needed to make a donation. And if the unexpectedly large amount of cash that the charity in question, Shelter, found in their bank account had been syphoned from various billionaires, well, that was Aziraphale's business alone. It was only then that he finally opened the file and began to listen.

It was not the sort of music that he would say he preferred.

It was very loud, for one. The singing was less singing and more screaming. And as for the lyrics—well, you certainly wouldn't be allowed to play that on the radio. He had to wonder how they planned to even reveal it as the Christmas number one if it did beat the latest X Factor offering. It was not

the sort of thing that Aziraphale thought would put anyone in the Christmas spirit.

Crowley had said that Rage Against The Machine was on Heaven's side if they were on anyone's. There hadn't been anything Heavenly in the music, but there *had* to be something he was missing. No matter which side they found themselves on, Crowley had never lied to him before.

So Aziraphale decided to listen once more, *really* listen.

*Some of those that work forces, are the same that burn crosses  
Some of those that work forces, are the same that burn crosses*

Well, he could certainly see the subversiveness that Crowley had been talking about. And the message, however crudely put, was certainly a sadly true one. Yes, he could see how the demon would see this as Heavenly work.

*And now you do what they told ya  
And now you do what they told ya  
And now you do what they told ya  
And now you do what they told ya*

And there was the anti-establishment aspect as well. The condemnation of blindly following the evil that plagued the world, the mocking of those who would stay lockstep with authority...Now that he was listening to the song more closely, Aziraphale could only question why Crowley would be so enthusiastic about the song. There was certainly nothing devilish here.

*Those who died are justified, for wearing the badge, they're the chosen whites  
You justify those that died by wearing the badge, they're the chosen whites*

Then again, it wasn't exactly Heavenly, either. It was loud and confrontational, and Aziraphale knew that at a certain point it became vulgar. More than that, though, the song was endorsing a point of view that was wholly, wonderfully human. The last thing Heaven wanted was for its angels to question the ineffable authority of God, but for humans, their guides were all inevitably flawed. He envied that, sometimes, the ability to question without it being some flaw in oneself.

*And now you do what they told ya, now you're under control  
And now you do what they told ya, now you're under control*

Because there was something a bit, well, *sexy* about it. Like all those rock 'n' roll stars that Crowley loved to emulate. There was something attractive about a bad boy, a rebel, someone who took no shit and had no hesitation



about talking back when the world didn't seem to be going precisely to plan (or to Plan). The point was, it wasn't an angel's place to be that sort of force in the world, but in the guiltiest and most self-indulgent part of his celestial being he could admit that he liked it.

*Yeah! Come on!*

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*

Although, from a certain point of view, trying to influence the Antichrist and avert the apocalypse could be seen as doing just that. Being a rebel. Talking back to the ineffable.

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*

There was a time when an angel would have Fallen for that.

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*

Aziraphale was somewhat baffled by the fact that he hadn't Fallen already.

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*

But that was the trick of it, wasn't it? He had decided, despite all that Heaven said, that the apocalypse was wrong. He had decided that Crowley was *right*. And still, knowing all of that, he felt the same way. He still stood by that decision.

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*

He stood by that decision. It was the first time he had really sat down and acknowledged that he stood by the decision, that there was any decision to be stood by at all.

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*

*Motherfucker!*

Perhaps Rage Against The Machine was a Christmassy band after all if they could bring a sense of peace on Earth to an angel who was defying Heaven.



The Christmas charts were announced on a Sunday, thankfully, which meant that it was Crowley's day off from being Nanny Ashtoreth. It wouldn't have been half as fun if Aziraphale had been forced to listen to the charts alone. To make things even better, it was snowing again, though this time Aziraphale would have had to admit that he had miracled up a cold front the previous night.

The fire was roaring, the cocoa and coffee were made, and the demon had once again taken both his wool blanket and his sofa. Aziraphale had even put up a small tree with blinking, multi-colored fairy lights, which had caused Crowley to glare and mutter about forced holiday cheer and sweatshops in China.

"Shouldn't you be encouraging the latter, my dear, being a demon and all?" Aziraphale said.

"Shut up," said Crowley. Aziraphale hummed, content with one-upping the demon, and fiddled with the ancient radio dial.

They had to sit through far more modern music than Aziraphale had listened to in years, but he was familiar enough with the current type of pop from the X Factor, so he didn't mind. Crowley, on the other hand, squirmed and hissed and complained almost constantly, though Aziraphale did notice some unconscious head bobbing whenever another song by Lady Gaga came up. But it wasn't after the last notes of "Bad Romance" had faded away and the first few notes of what the DJ had called the "unexpected number 2" started that Crowley jumped up from the sofa.

"Ha ha! Yes!" he yelled, pointing his middle fingers towards the ceiling. "Suck it, Simon!"

"The X Factor winner's name was Joe McElderry this year," Aziraphale said, trying not to laugh at the demon's antics.

"Shut up, Aziraphale, you know what I mean." Crowley was bouncing on the balls of his feet, looking openly delighted in a way Aziraphale had never seen before. "Fuck yes! X Factor, eat my—"

"This is a rather good song, really," Aziraphale said, grinning when Crowley stopped his celebration to glare at him. But when the opening riffs of "Killing in the Name" started, Aziraphale couldn't stop his foot from betraying him.

"Oh," said Crowley with a slow, wicked grin. "Oh, you *like* it."

"I believe you were the one who said that this was one of *my* side's tunes," Aziraphale said stiffly. Crowley laughed.

*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*  
*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*  
*Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me!*  
*Motherfucker!*

*BT can be found at flibertygigget on Tumblr and AO3*



"Family Fireplace" by Oloreheri on Tumblr and Instagram





"Tartan Blanket? Really?" by Nic, Wasleichtesart on Tumblr and Instagram

IT'S WARM INSIDE  
L. HOLLY

It's cold out.

It is so.

*Bloody.*

*Cold.*

It's actually relatively not all that cold, considering how it's almost December, but Crowley plans on complaining anyway. He *was* originally a snake, after all, and they *are* cold-blooded, which doesn't help. Plus, he's made his home in *England*, of all places—it's practically legally mandated that he complain about the weather daily, regardless of whether it's seasonally-appropriate, or clear, or neither of those, or whatever.

So, he finds himself grumbling at eighty-something miles an hour down the road, shivering in the driver's seat of his car, even with the thick wool scarf he's wearing wrapped around his neck and an equally thick jumper covering his torso.

"*Winter*," he mumbles with mild venom in his voice. "Make the weather cold as anything for three months out of the year, yeah, *great* idea, *fantastic* idea."

He hasn't tried any demonic miracles to add some heating to his antique of a car—mostly because the thought hasn't crossed his mind, what with every thought currently occupying that space consisting of *cold, cold coldcoldcold*—

He gives up on the now-*Best of Queen* CD that's been playing for the whole drive and switches over to the car's radio if only to give one of his hands something to do so that it doesn't freeze to the steering wheel or something.

It shouldn't be of any surprise to him (it *shouldn't* be, but it *is*, just a little bit) that Christmas music would start playing the moment it tunes in. And there's Christmas music playing on the next station he switches to. And the next one. And the next one. The one after that has someone calling in to play some Christmas-themed quiz game on the show to win some amount of money, but they're back to the Christmas music, too, pretty much the moment she gets the final question right.

It's not so much the subject of the song itself that chills him even further—Christmas is just fine in his opinion, Jesus was a nice enough bloke, he



deserves the birthday celebration. It's instead the *sleigh bells*, the damned sleigh bells in the intro of every song that comes out of this season, that bring scenes to mind of being stuck riding through snow that he can practically *feel*.

He puts the CD back on. He'll take *Another One Bites the Dust* for the third time in one day (he'd been busy, so it had been a fairly long drive, hence the repeats of the album) over more of *that*.

Then tragedy strikes.

Traffic. Exactly what he doesn't need right now.

Stuck out in the winter cold with a hundred-odd other ticked-off drivers, half of them honking their car horns so vigorously it's like they're *deliberately* trying to drown out Freddie Mercury's voice. What a *lovely* position to be in.

He restrains himself and chooses *not* to do something utterly mad out of pure frustration, like bite a chunk out of the steering wheel. Instead, he takes a moment, pulls his chilly hands from the wheel, and rubs them together, trying to get some friction and heat in them. He even breathes just a little bit of hellfire over them, which helps for a second, until the cold air hits them once again. Then they're freezing again, much like every other part of his body right now.

With a huff, he shoves them under his armpits in some vain attempt to thaw them with whatever body heat he could possibly be putting out.

After that, well... there's not too much he can do to solve the main issue at hand that wouldn't require more memory-erasing miracles than he can be bothered with for the moment.

So he resigns himself to waiting *all of this* out.



It's all fixed immediately upon setting foot within a certain bookshop. He shuts the door behind him, shutting out the blustery winter winds, and sighs in relief. The whooshing and howling outside fades away, and the bell above the door replaces the noise and announces his arrival with a little ring.

For the first time since he left his flat, he finally feels... *not* cold.

"Oh, angel!" he calls in to the shop, teeth still chattering slightly. "'s just me! You there? Got you some treats!"

Said angel steps out from behind a bookshelf with a bright smile on his face.

"Ah, hello, dear!" Aziraphale says and places the thick tome he's holding back on its spot on the shelf before walking over to close the space between himself and the demon. "I'd thought I wasn't expecting you until later, I—oh, you're wearing the scarf I gave you! How is it?"

"Wonderful, love. Perfect." Crowley says, with a smile of his own (Aziraphale's is just too damned infectious), then gives his angel a small kiss on the cheek. "Thank you."

Aziraphale, unexpectedly, leans back from the kiss and gently touches the spot where Crowley's lips had just been. He looks down towards the demon's hands—where there's a small box that he's now noticing, alongside the whiffs of a delightfully sweet smell emanating from it, both of which he's disregarding for the moment—and, with a concerned look, holds out one of his own.

"Crowley, would you give me your hand, please?" he asks.

"Already did at our wedding, didn't I?" chuckles Crowley, nervous at the angel's expression.

"Darling, *please*."

Crowley relents and places a hand in Aziraphale's, who gasps at the touch.

"Goodness *gracious*," the latter exclaims. "You're ice-cold!"

Crowley isn't given a chance to protest before he finds himself being gently manoeuvred through the shop and plonked on the old sofa in the back. A moment and a snap of angelic fingers later, and there's a thick blanket draped around his shoulders and a hot water bottle in his lap—with the box suddenly moved to a table nearby.

"Aziraphale, wh—?" he starts to question, though he doesn't exactly complain.

"We've *got* to get you warmed up. Now, I know you're not the hot chocolate type, but it does help keep oneself nice and toasty. And I've got a few, ah, cheeky recipes that we can use so we don't have to abandon our plans for a few drinks tonight," Aziraphale says, pressing a kiss of his own to Crowley's cheek. "I'll just go get a couple of mugs prepared—back in just a tick, dear."

Aziraphale turns to head for his small kitchen but is stopped by a cold hand softly grasping for his own.

"Hmm," Crowley hums, tugging his partner towards himself. "Nope."

"No?" the angel asks, confused but letting himself be led.



The demon gently coaxes Aziraphale into sitting beside him on the sofa.  
"Nuh-uh."

"Why not?"

"No need for it. And no need for this," Crowley places the hot water bottle on the arm of the chair. "Or this, really." Then, he takes the blanket and drapes it over Aziraphale's shoulders as well as his own. "Just... this."

With that, he leans on Aziraphale, cuddling up to him and nuzzling into his neck.

"Better than *any* mug of cocoa or hot water bottle, you are." He wriggles a little, as though attempting to get even closer, and closes his eyes contentedly. "I can feel myself warming up already."

The image of Crowley pressed against his side brings a smile to Aziraphale's face. And to the touch, it actually seems that Crowley is, amazingly, right. It's probably just through leeching off of his body heat, but, still, it's such a lovely thought to him that he could do this for him.

"If you say so, darling," he says, and wraps his arms around Crowley.

"I say so," Crowley says, smirking.

He relaxes into Aziraphale's hold. Truly, *truly*, he feels *warm* now, at last, sweetly warm from head to toe, tucked up against the softness of his angel.

"By the way," Aziraphale pipes up. "What's in that box you've got there?"

"Oh," Crowley passes the box over to him. "Some doughnuts. Grabbed them while I was passing that one place you like."

Were Crowley's eyes open, he'd physically see Aziraphale's smile growing ever softer at his words.

"Crowley, dearest—*oh*, you are so sweet to me, thank you," Aziraphale sighs. Then, he gives Crowley another kiss.

"No prob, angel."

"Hmm... you know what would go lovely with these?"

Crowley cracks open an eye. "What?"

"Hot chocolate. And you're not stopping me from getting any this time." Aziraphale chuckles. "Be right back, dear."

*L. Holly can be found at lollyholly99 on Tumblr, LollyHolly99 on AO3, and LollyHolly999 on Twitter*



"Christmas Under the Stars" by Zoe, NavyBirdArt on Twitter, navy.bird.art on Instagram





"Blanket Wing" by Ca, disgustiphage on Tumblr

## THE ADVENTURE OF THE ANGEL DETECTIVE DI

1892

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, old boy. I just hadn't had time to read the newest story."

Aziraphale sat his magazine on his desk with a satisfied smile. Crowley slipped his sunglasses onto his nose.

"How'd he do it this time?"

Aziraphale's eyes were bright. "Well, it's about a racehorse gone missing and a murdered trainer. And you know how it goes. Someone was arrested, but Holmes doesn't think it adds up. The horse can't be found, and the man who was arrested doesn't have much use for the horse.

"And—oh, this is the best part—Holmes knows that it couldn't have been him because the dog on the grounds didn't make any noise in the nighttime. It would have barked if a stranger were around the stables. The thief had to have been someone the dog knew. So, it was the dead trainer who was trying to steal the horse. And it was the horse that killed the trainer—kicked his head in. You'll have to let me read this to you some time. It's one of the finest stories yet."

Nothing excited Aziraphale like the Sherlock Holmes stories did. Every time a new adventure was published in *The Strand*, he ate it up and told Crowley about it for days until he caught himself rambling and apologized, blushing.

But Crowley adored how Aziraphale spoke about the stories. He liked the twinkle in Aziraphale's eyes and his excited talking. He liked how Aziraphale could lose himself talking about the little details of the characters and plots. And when the stories were bound and printed and sent out to bookshops, it was like Christmas for the angel. He proudly displayed them in his windows and, for once, allowed his customers to buy up every copy (with, of course, one set aside for his personal collection).

"You'll need more than just your jacket, angel. It's cold out."

Speaking of Christmas, the holiday was only a week away. The ground was coated in a very fine layer of snow (that would no doubt melt by that afternoon). The air was frigid, and Crowley's cheeks had stung on his walk to the bookshop. It was the weather that Aziraphale loved but Crowley could do without.

He had thought about escaping to the Mediterranean for the season. Somewhere to escape all the holiday cheer that went around London. But Aziraphale had asked if they could spend Christmas together and even hinted that he had a gift hiding somewhere in the shop waiting for him. Crowley could hardly say no. Especially with the promise of a gift.

Aziraphale wrapped his scarf around his neck and pulled his gloves over his hands to complete his off-white ensemble. He flipped the store sign to “closed” on their way out.

Crowley gripped the head of his walking stick as they walked through the dusting of snow. Thinking of whatever Aziraphale had gotten him for Christmas was nerve-wracking (yet exciting, since Crowley loved a good gift). The angel was so damn thoughtful. He probably bought Crowley a nice, new pair of sunglasses that wouldn’t rub against his nose or a new coat that would keep him warm. Maybe even a scarf, commissioned by the finest knitter in London with the finest wool.

Usually, they didn’t celebrate holidays. They didn’t hold much meaning for supernatural beings, but Aziraphale had been swept up further and further into Christmas as the decades went on. The year before, he had gifted Crowley a new pair of gloves. They were lined with fleece and kept his bony fingers delightfully warm. They were the nicest things Crowley had ever received, and yet Aziraphale said that they were “not much” and that he’d “do better next year.”

The pressure to get Aziraphale a gift was crushing Crowley every day. Nothing he could think of was enough for the angel, who deserved a world full of the finest goods.

He could pay for a trip somewhere. Take Aziraphale to the continent for a week. Or maybe take him to a bookstore like his and offer to buy him as much as he could carry out the door.

Whatever it was, it had to be better than anything Aziraphale would ever give him.



Crowley had an idea.

He sat in front of his list of gift options for Aziraphale, and it clicked. Petty crime.

Aziraphale was so enamored with Doyle's stories and spoke so openly about how much he admired Holmes's wits that he had to secretly fancy himself a detective in his own right.

Crowley's cheeks heated up thinking about Aziraphale wiggling at the chance to flex his deduction skills. No doubt he would jump at the chance to investigate a small crime—where no one was hurt of course.

Crowley began to set it up. He would need actors and the perfect crime. Maybe a stolen brooch. Or a small theft of a neighboring store in Soho. What was the winter story that Doyle had written? A precious gem shoved down the throat of a goose being fattened for Christmas dinner?

On his shelf, barely touched, sat a printed copy of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. He had bought it from Aziraphale when they first arrived. It was the very first one out of the box. Crowley snagged it, said he wanted to see what the fuss was about, and dropped a few coins in Aziraphale's till. He had yet to read further than the first five pages.

But that night, he picked it up and settled in his chair, and began reading the first story for inspiration. And then the second. And then the third. And by the time he finished the book, the sun was high in the sky.



Christmas Eve, Crowley picked up a goose and carried it to Aziraphale's shop.

"Oh, dear, don't drag it through the front," Aziraphale said, eyebrows drawn up. "You'll leave feathers everywhere. Take it up to the flat, and I'll be right there."

Crowley didn't enjoy carrying it through the shop, either. It was limp in his hand, and the body thumped against his legs on the way up the stairs.

He tossed it onto the kitchen table and peaked out the window. There was only half an hour left before Aziraphale's gift would be in place.

Finally, Aziraphale came upstairs. He smiled at Crowley, as usual, and traded his jacket for a cardigan before setting his eyes on the goose.

"Oh, you got a fat one!"

Crowley nodded. He had picked up the fattest goose he could find, partaking in a little gluttony and greed himself. Sure, it would be better suited on the



table of a family of five, but Crowley wanted the opportunity to see Aziraphale brighten at the sight of it.

"Mind if we have a drink before we cook it?"

Aziraphale grabbed sherry glasses, and Crowley strolled over to the small window to take his permanent seat. He could see the first actor, by the name of Jim, take position. He was dressed in ill-fitting clothes of a cobbler, borrowed from a local theatre, and stood under a street lamp across the street. The foot traffic and carriages were thinning out as much as they would for a Soho evening.

"You wouldn't believe how many people came in today looking for last-minute gifts." Aziraphale handed a glass to Crowley. "I told them that they weren't going to find anything in my shop. Everything recent has been whisked off the shelves since last week, and I wouldn't trust anything else to someone who waits until Christmas Eve to buy a present."

Crowley hummed. Mrs. Mabel, who owned the flower shop across the street, peeked outside. She was a delightful woman who was more than happy to participate in Crowley's premeditated mystery. She fancied herself an actress in her younger days, she told Crowley, and quite liked Mr. Fell.

"What are you looking at, dear?"

"Huh?"

"What are you looking at?" Aziraphale pressed against Crowley and looked out the window.

"Uh... just... people-watching. Lots of opportunity for sin tonight, you know."

"I doubt *that*."

"Why? You just had to shove people out."

"It's a holiday. Everyone's generous and full of kindness and love. You can feel it all over the city."

"Maybe *you* can."

Aziraphale turned back to the goose. "You can, too. Don't try to deny it."

The traffic on the streets thinned out.

*Right on time*, Crowley thought as his third actor, who would go by Worth, strolled up to the flower shop and began pounding on the door. His shouts could be heard from Aziraphale's flat.

"What's going on?" Aziraphale asked.

"Some drunk being loud."

Jim calmly walked up to Worth and put his hand on his shoulder. It was shoved off just as planned. Mrs. Mabel opened the door, turned Worth away before returning inside, and locked her shop behind her.

"Looks like you're not the only being pestered by late shoppers."

Aziraphale peeked outside to watch Worth pace the sidewalk and Jim return to his spot under the streetlight. He hummed. Crowley tucked his left hand out of sight, his fingers positioned for a snap, and held his breath. The next few minutes were crucial for him.

Worth began pounding again. Bystanders took no notice. Jim tried intervening, one more time.

"Fuck," Crowley mumbled right as Worth swung and clipped Jim on the jaw.

Aziraphale returned to watch Worth pick up a rock on the side of the street and chuck it through the window display. He gasped in horror.

Crowley snapped and all police constables heard and saw nothing. The street significantly thinned out as everyone about to turn down it realized that they had forgotten a package at a store about to close or that they really must turn around and get home before it gets any darker. Any bystanders still around looked over their shoulders at the smashed glass but didn't register what they had witnessed.

"We need to do something!" Aziraphale said.

"Police can handle it, angel. And that man is there." One more swing and Jim collapsed against the storefront. "Okay. Maybe he isn't."

"Poor Mrs. Mabel must be terrified."

Aziraphale rushed out of the kitchen. Crowley only raced after once another miracle ensured that no one saw Worth climb in through the window.

"Angel!" Crowley cried as he ran down the stairs and through the bookshop. The angel could move fast when he wanted to. And when he believed that he needed to. "Wait for me!"

Crowley threw his coat and hat on and followed Aziraphale into the street.

He watched Aziraphale very nearly miss getting run over by a carriage and cursed under his breath. The damn angel was supposed to be having a good night not getting run over by horses.

Worth ran off with a basket tucked under his arm just as Aziraphale was approaching. Crowley knew that he would take a left and disappear in a convenient crowd of people and wait at a vacant flat Crowley rented out for the night.

"Are you alright?" Aziraphale asked Jim, helping him to his feet. "That was a nasty spat."

"I think so." Jim touched his hand to his head.

"Crowley, be a dear. Climb in and check on Mrs. Mabel? And maybe unlock the door so we can get our friend inside."

Crowley sneered at the sharp glass that didn't dare rip his trousers or scuff his boots. He stepped up onto the display case and jumped down. Mrs. Mabel, standing in the middle of the shop, winked at him and covered her mouth with her hands.

"She's okay!" Crowley called out.

He raised the gas and opened the door to a very worried Aziraphale.

"Oh, let him come in. I saw the whole ordeal," Mrs. Mabel said. Her eyebrows were creased and her voice shook. Crowley had to give her credit for her acting. "Did he hit you terribly hard?"

"Not too hard, ma'am."

Worth didn't hit him at all.

Aziraphale led him to a chair and insisted that Mrs. Mabel take a seat as well. Crowley shivered as a breeze swept through the broken window. He wished he had his gloves and scarf.

"Did he harm you, Mrs. Mabel?" Aziraphale said. "What did he take?"

"He only took one of my larger arrangements. It was right over there." She pointed at the table against the wall. Flowers were strewn over the floor. "He ran back out in the blink of an eye. Didn't even look at me."

"He was pacing like a puma outside," Jim said. "He wanted in desperately. I heard him say to you—Mrs. Mabel was it? Pleased to meet your acquaintance—I heard him say to you that he needed in for only a second. Only to buy one thing, and then he'd be out of your hair."

"I should have just let him in." Mrs. Mabel pressed her hand to her cheek, which Crowley thought was overkill. "I should have just let him buy it—that basket was one of my most expensive. Now I'm out nearly seven pounds."

She was not, in fact, out seven pounds. Crowley had bought that arrangement earlier that day when he told her that it would most likely be roughed up in their scheme. It only just dawned on him, standing in the drafty shop, that he could have asked her to set out a decoy of wilted flowers and maybe a broken basket she had been meaning to throw out.

Aziraphale looked at the table and strolled over, his lips pursed. He looked over the displays, gently checking them.

"He must have known what he wanted," Aziraphale said, looking back at the window some distance away. "Otherwise he would have grabbed the first thing he could grab. And who robs a florist for their flowers? I hope you don't take offense, Mrs. Mabel, but surely the money in your till is worth more than an arrangement he'll squash in his arms on his way out. And there must be other florists open in London to go to if he was so desperate."

"You're quite the Sherlock Holmes, aren't you?" Crowley asked.

He caught a smile appear on Aziraphale's face for a second. A second was all Crowley needed to feel secure in continuing.

Aziraphale composed himself. "I'm just merely... making observations."

"What else do you observe?" Crowley asked.

"Well," Aziraphale walked over to the smashed window, arms folded behind his back, "he had to have targeted this shop. For whatever reason, he wasn't going to stop at anything to get inside. Think about it. There's a florist on every street corner. He must have passed a few before he got here. And surely not every single one was closed. I know that Mrs. Mabel only closes early in winter because her arthritis objects to the cold."

Mrs. Mabel nodded. "I was about to warm myself up with a hot fire."

"So, why smash a window for a basket?" Crowley asked.

Aziraphale blinked. He lifted his chin and cleared his throat. "I don't know."

"Yet."

Aziraphale nodded and then his brow furrowed. "Shouldn't the police have come? Hasn't anyone noticed the ruckus?"

"Uh... they're probably busy," Crowley said. "With kids causing trouble and all that since they have school off tomorrow."

"What would they even do?" Mrs. Mabel asked. "Tell me that an old woman such as myself shouldn't be living and managing a business on my own? Write a note of what happened and then never catch the man?"

Crowley would have to shake her hand after such a performance. It tugged on Aziraphale's heartstrings for sure for he sighed and his shoulders slumped.

"No one would put even a fraction of the thought you've already put in, Mr. Fell," she said.

And that was what sold it, Crowley was sure. It was the same theme as the Holmes series. A man who put in more care and effort into solving crime than the police would. A man who devoted his life to righting the justice system.

"I know that we were about to prepare dinner, old boy," Aziraphale said. "But I do believe I have to prioritize Mrs. Mabel's case—er, her predicament—before eating. I think I'll spend some time here and around town to try to find the man."

Crowley smiled. "Mind if I join?"

Aziraphale's face brightened. "You would come with me?"

"Like your very own Watson."

Aziraphale attempted to school his features but failed. "Mrs. Mabel, Mr.—I'm sorry I didn't get your name."

"Howard, sir."

"Mr. Howard. Please, sit in my shop while we go out. It's warmer inside than it is in here."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Fell."

"Thank you kindly, sir."

"We shan't be long."

Aziraphale and Crowley returned to grab more outer layers and their walking sticks and to settle Mrs. Mabel and "Mr. Howard" in the front room. Aziraphale brewed a pot of coffee in a miraculously short time (he insisted that it was already brewed when the disturbance began) and took a moment to thank Jim for helping when no one else would and to tell him that God would reward him. Something in Jim's eyes made Crowley turn his back and wrinkle his nose. He adored his angel, but the little salvations Aziraphale

promised made him physically recoil. It wasn't anything that could be helped. It was his nature.

Aziraphale asked for a general description of the man, and they left. The usual crowd was out again.

"Where are we going?" Crowley asked.

"Oh... well..." Aziraphale looked around the street. "I suppose we should go back to the shop and look around. See if anything can be found."

Crowley snapped his fingers behind his back as they crossed the street. A torn shred of a jacket pocket would be found amongst the glass and on the floor would be a few shillings and a business card. They were waiting, perfectly, for Aziraphale to see them in the low light.

"Let's see what we have here." Aziraphale stepped through the broken glass with Crowley's hand steadying him. He bent down and picked up the card with his handkerchief, mindful of the glass. "Can you read this for me, dear? I don't have your eyes in this light."

"It says, 'George F. Cushing. Barrister. 459, Suite C, Whitehall, Westminster, England.'" Crowley flipped it over. "There's a note written on the back. It just says, '10 pm. No later. Knock loud.'"

"Do you think we should go there?" Aziraphale asked. "10 pm isn't for another two hours. If the man is going to meet someone there, we could be waiting for him."

"What do *you* think?"

Aziraphale tucked the card into his coat pocket. "I think it's worth a try. It's not too far from here if we can get a cab."

Crowley was already on the side of the road, extending his walking stick into the air. Cabs always stopped for him and sure enough one was pulling over within seconds. He held out his hand for Aziraphale as the angel climbed in.

They sat in silence for the entire drive. Undoubtedly, Aziraphale was deep in thought. Crowley could only imagine the excitement and anxiety spinning around in his head. He could see him worrying his walking stick, rubbing the silver hand against his gloved hand. But he could also see the determined furrow of his brow and the serious glint in his eye.

It was the most confident he had ever seen Aziraphale. The nervous angel was now so certain in his actions and thoughts. It made Crowley's chest feel a little tight. It made his stomach flip a little.



Out of joy, he told himself. Aziraphale needed something to bring his spirits up. It had been a rough century full of ups and downs, and the novelty of the bookshop opening was beginning to wear off.

Most of it was due to the Holmes books, Crowley thought. He didn't want to give himself too much credit. He would never have gotten Aziraphale out of his shell (even just for one night) without them. Maybe he could spare a miracle in favor of the Doyle guy. Make the books the most famous in all of Britain for centuries to come. It would benefit his angel greatly if he always had new people to discuss the books with.

When their cab arrived, Aziraphale laid a generous payment in the drivers' hand, receiving a cheerful "Merry Christmas!" in return. Crowley turned away from the holiday cheer and stood in front of the barrister's door.

"The lights are still on," he said when Aziraphale was by his side. "Should we knock?"

Aziraphale nodded but didn't move. Crowley could see his confidence waver.

"Go on, angel. What's the worst he can do to us?"

"We don't know if he's working with that thief."

"We don't know if he's innocent, either."

Aziraphale steeled himself, squaring his shoulders, and stepped forward. He balled his hand into a fist and knocked firmly. Crowley knew that Mr. Cushing would be waiting by on the other side of the door, pockets lined with a heavy cheque Crowley had signed the day before.

Cushing opened the door just wide enough to poke his head through. "What is it? I was just about to lock up—"

"Mr. Cushing, is it?" Aziraphale asked.

"Yes?"

"We're here on *very* urgent business, my good man. We're sorry to disturb you, but there was a break-in nearby and your card was at the scene."

"My card?"

"Yes. A business card. On the back, it says to come no later than 10 pm and to knock loudly. Do you know anything about this?"

Cushing blinked. With a sigh, he opened the door and stepped aside to let Aziraphale and Crowley in. He led them through the hallway, past the waiting room, and into his office.

"I'm A.Z. Fell. I have a bookshop in Soho." Aziraphale took off his hat and held it close to his chest. He spoke with a directness that impressed Crowley. "And this is my colleague, Mr. Crowley. There's a florist across the street from me, and it was burgled—somewhat. A man broke in through the display window and took a specific arrangement in the back of the shop. We're trying to learn more about what happened, and the burglar dropped this right inside."

Aziraphale pulled the card from his pocket and handed it over. Cushing looked it over. He turned it around and, recognizing his own handwriting as planned, sat down heavily behind his desk. There was a moment of silence where Crowley worried that Cushing had forgotten the plan. He had the biggest part but had assured Crowley that he, too, was something of an actor in his youth.

Crowley would have to keep tabs on current child actors just in case he wanted to recycle the idea in a few decades.

"Do you remember who you gave it to?" he asked.

"Please, gentlemen, take a seat, and I'll tell you my story."

Just a dramatic pause then. Crowley shed his dramatic coat and gloves and eagerly sat down on the sofa across the room in preparation for the tale he knew he was about to hear. Aziraphale's eyes were wide and attentive, directly across from Cushing.

"I gave this card to a man by the name of David Worth. His brother was arrested earlier this week. He hadn't been doing well. Financially, that is, and he has a wife and two little girls. Desperate men do desperate things, Mr. Fell. He tried to rob a flat. Neighbors heard the commotion and slipped out for police. He barely made it out the front door before a constable got him.

"Now, I'm one of the finest in my field. I guaranteed the family I could get him acquitted. It was a petty thing he did, and police are over-eager to arrest. There was no property damage, and he didn't even make out with anything. He felt too guilty to grab anything in the end. I could easily get him off with the minimum consequences. It was supposed to be such a small case.

"But you see, Mr. Worth's brother was supposed to have his court hearing a week from now, and the judge decided yesterday that it would be pushed forward to be *two days* from now. You'll understand that I run a business. I can't offer my services for free." Cushing laughed nervously. "Mr. Worth

hadn't paid for his brother's fees yet, and I told him that I would need the money by tonight if I were to continue on with his case."

"You threatened to drop his brother's case on Christmas Eve?"

"Mr. Fell, I have my own bills to pay. If I let one man pay late then what's keeping all of my clients from paying late? And where I will be then? I'd be a poor man. I've become comfortable with how I live. And you have to admit that Whitehall does have distinction to it. It wouldn't be the same if I were a common lawyer assigned to whatever drunk stumbles through the street. I think I've earned the right to be a bit picky with my payments. Besides, Mr. Worth knew my prices when he came to me."

"So, this was all caused by your own greed?"

"I wouldn't call it greed. I call myself *comfortable*. And there's nothing wrong with having a little extra money around."

"They do say that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. You do know that, Mr. Cushing?"

Cushing smiled. "Are you a religious man?"

Aziraphale paused. "You could say that."

Crowley began to wonder if he had gone too far. He could see an angry blush rise on Aziraphale's face, creeping up his neck and to his cheeks. He didn't want the angel to be in any actual distress. He didn't want Aziraphale to get hurt or worked up and have to fixate on how terrible humans could be the day before Christmas.

He feared, even more, Aziraphale using a miracle and throwing a wrench in his plans. Or using a miracle and a dozen eyeballs popping out with glowing, holy light, and scaring his actor to death.

"What did Worth do when you told him you needed the money?" Crowley prompted.

"He was angry. Naturally. He didn't know where he was going to get the money from. He wouldn't dare ask his sister-in-law—he's been looking after his brother's family. Making sure they're cared for. It wouldn't be right to ask them for money out of their meager savings. Even if they had enough to cover what he needed. He spent all of yesterday trying to find something he could pawn or any quick jobs he could complete.

"Mr. Worth came to my office late last night when couldn't find enough money and told me that he would try borrowing money from a co-worker

and asked me to not give up the case yet. First thing this morning, he was right outside my office, pacing like a mad man. He said he couldn't find anyone to lend him the money. I suggested a bank. He said he had tried the banks, but he already owes them money from a previous loan. I said to him, 'Without money, I can't work.' He called me an evil man after that. He said, 'You're fit to be a Dickens villain,' and ran off.

"I didn't see him again until lunchtime when he told me that he found a way to get the money. He said he found someone to lend him the money, but he didn't have it on him at the moment. He looked nervous. Pale and twitchy. He didn't look me in the eyes, but he did say that he would try to get the money to me before I went home for the night. Whoever was lending him the money just needed a little more time. Something didn't feel right with that, but I agreed. I told him he could have until 10 tonight—hours after I usually go home. I was feeling generous, you see, with Christmas being tomorrow."

"Generous, indeed," Aziraphale huffed.

"That was when I gave him the card with the time and instructions written on the back. Just in case he forgot. He didn't seem very clear in the head when I sent him on his way."

"How do you think he found the money?" Crowley asked.

"Well, there are men all over London willing to lend money out. There are men around who look for his sort. He'd have to work off his debt to them for another year, but he would have the money for tonight. I assumed that that was what he meant. But what did you say happened, Mr. Fell? He robbed a florist?"

Aziraphale tapped his finger against his lips. "He came in through a smashed window, but he didn't steal anything more than a single arrangement. And even then, he spilled half of it on his way out. I believe that something was planted there, and he only needed inside the shop to grab it. Do you think there was money hidden in the shop?"

"Oh, who's to say? These money-lenders are sneaky if they can't meet with their victims face-to-face."

"That's a shame. There's been an awful lot of trouble caused by all of this. I do have to agree with Mr. Worth on one thing, I'm afraid."

"What's that, Mr. Fell?"

"You are an *evil* man."

Crowley hid a smirk behind his hand. Cushing, to be fair, was not as cruel as he posed for Aziraphale. He had his soft spots, he told Crowley. But the demon was well-acquainted with his type. They bowed to greed every time.

"Do you believe that he'll still be here before 10?" Aziraphale asked.

Cushing, who was truly put out by being called evil, nodded with a frown. "He was determined to get here."

"If you don't mind, then, we'll wait with you. Mr. Worth has some explaining to do, and I'd like to see to it personally that you promise to represent his brother in court. I think it's the least he deserves."

Aziraphale rose and took a seat next to Crowley with a huff. Crowley sat back casually, at least satisfied that Aziraphale had taken the route he had anticipated. Of course, Aziraphale would wait it out. He would sit in that office for days if it meant settling so many nerves and wrong-doings.

Cushing lit a cigarette at his desk.

"Are you alright, angel?" Crowley whispered.

"The absolute *nerve* of that... that *swine*."

"Steady on. You know his type. Only concerned about getting his expensive tobacco stuffed in his cigarettes and his expensive port in his cupboard."

Aziraphale wrung his gloves in his hands. Crowley pulled them out of his fists before the stitching was ruined.

"It's alright, angel."

"But how can humans be so cruel? On Christmas of all days."

Crowley officially declared that his gift was too much for the angel. He should have known that Aziraphale was far too fussy of a character to look over what Cushing was doing—even if there truly was no brother in trouble.

He cared about humans in a different way than Crowley did. He wanted them to be safe. Usually. There were times when some very nasty ones got what they deserved, and Aziraphale would turn a blind eye. Possibly towards a cafe.

But Aziraphale's was the guardian of the eastern gate. He was in Eden with the first two. He had a special connection with the humans that not even Crowley would ever fully get. And sure, they were sometimes annoying when they stayed too long in the bookshop. Or when they tried buying things in the bookshop. But Aziraphale loved them all nonetheless.

While they waited for Worth, Aziraphale stared straight ahead. Occasionally, he looked to Crowley and offered a tight-lip smile that Crowley returned.

When they returned home, Crowley would miracle the goose to be perfectly cooked with sides of potatoes and vegetables. He would pour Aziraphale a fresh glass of sherry and remind him that he was going to treat the angel to a shopping trip the day after Christmas. And hopefully, everything would be alright.

There was a distant pounding at the door half an hour before 10. Cushing rose to his feet and walked out without a word.

"I hope this doesn't cause any more trouble," Aziraphale said.

Cushing returned with Worth close on his heels, rambling incessantly. He was a young man with sandy, unkempt hair, and freckles across his innocent face. His coat, out of fashion but treated well, was unbuttoned. His tie was askew.

"He's nothing more than a child," Aziraphale said under his breath.

When Worth saw Aziraphale and Crowley, he froze.

"I didn't know you would have guests."

"This is Mr. Fell and Mr. Crowley," Cushing said.

"I own the bookshop across from Mrs. Mabel's flower shop," Aziraphale said. Worth lowered his head. "We watched you break in."

"Do you have the police with you?"

"No. Mr. Cushing explained the situation to us, and I honestly don't think you're the one worthy of a jail cell tonight. I do think you owe us an explanation, though. And an apology that we can extend to Mrs. Mabel."

Worth looked between Aziraphale and Cushing and Crowley. He sat down.

"I couldn't pay Mr. Cushing," he said. "I tried to scrape together the money, but I couldn't get it all so quickly. I found these men who promised to have something for me that I could pawn off. It was a sort of situation where they knew someone who knew someone who could help."

"They told me they would drop off jewelry at the florist's in a basket in the back of the shop. They've done it before. Your area is a commonplace to plant things. I tried going there while the shop was still open—I didn't want to break in. I really didn't. But I had been at work and then with my sister-in-law and nieces, and I couldn't sneak away before the shop closed."



"What was planted in the shop?"

Worth dug into his trouser pocket and pulled out a necklace and a pair of earrings. They were fake. Crowley had borrowed them from the local theatre's prop's department. "I was told to pawn them myself, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. They're probably stolen from some poor woman, and I was going to turn them into the police. And I came here to tell Mr. Cushing that I'm sorry, but I can't make the payment."

Worth had put on a wonderful show. He kept his head down, picked at his nails, and labored his breath as if he were holding back tears.

"Don't worry about the payment," Aziraphale said. "I'll pay for Mr. Cushing's services. And I suggest in the future, that if you need any legal help, you choose a more honorable man to represent you or your family."

Worth's eyes widened. "Are you serious, sir?"

Crowley had anticipated this. With infinite money to be conjured out of thin air, he had considered Aziraphale would offer to pay. Just as he would eventually pay to get Mrs. Mabel's window repaired.

"Yes. No one deserves what you've been through—though, I do still insist on an apology."

"Of course. I regret it terribly. I *deeply* apologize. You can tell that woman that."

"Thank you. We'll give Mrs. Mabel the message. Now, Mr. Cushing, you and I have a cheque to discuss."

And there were none, of course. So, when Aziraphale pulled out his cheque book (that had miraculously appeared in his coat pocket), Cushing held out his hand.

"There's been enough trouble," he said. "And you're right. Both of you. I've been quite cruel."

Aziraphale furrowed his brow. Crowley shifted in his seat. He was *also* expecting Aziraphale to rejoice at the news as soon as he heard it. Not hesitate at the generosity.

"Why the sudden change of heart?" Aziraphale asked after a few seconds of tense silence.

"Well," Cushing looked to Crowley, "I'd just like to get home. It's late. And it's Christmas Eve."

"Yes, but you were defending yourself just an hour ago. You said that you can't let a single payment be late—let alone forgiven."

"Let's just say that your, er, response has made me rethink what's best for myself."

Crowley jumped to his feet and tugged at Aziraphale's elbow before he asked any more questions and made the men go even further off-script. "Let's leave it. We have a goose at home."

Aziraphale eyed him suspiciously as well but nodded. "And we have a window that needs fixing."



The goose was perfectly cooked, the sherry was plentiful, and both men had more than their fair share of both.

Crowley laid stretched out on Aziraphale's sofa, sound asleep. He looked quite innocent, Aziraphale thought, tucked out from a full tummy and an exciting evening.

It had begun to snow. Aziraphale sat at the window to watch it hit the empty streets and settle on the cobblestone. He expected it to stick and build up into a thick layer for children to play in in the morning, and so it did.

Across the street, Mrs. Mabel's shop window had been miraculously replaced and kept out the offending cold better than it had before. It was more durable than her last one. Aziraphale made sure that it would hold against any actor's rocks in the future.

What a thoughtful demon he had. No wonder the poor thing was so tired. He had planned perhaps the best gift Aziraphale had ever received—and a future shopping trip on top of it!

"You do spoil me, dear boy," he whispered. "I'll have to outdo you next year."

The angel draped a blanket over Crowley, to ensure that no chill could reach him. Crowley would wake up in the morning, refreshed and warm and with a plate of breakfast and hot tea by his head and his present (a lovely scarf commissioned out of the finest wool) waiting for him at the table.

Aziraphale would see to it.

*Di can be found at Mostweakhamlets on Tumblr and AO3, and at [patreon.com/dievans](https://patreon.com/dievans)*



"The Forest Picnic" by Juliet, funkyferretdoodles on Instagram





"Decorating for Christmas" by Bobla Blubb, ringading on AO3, Bobla Blubb on Patreon and Instagram

## HASTUR AND LIGUR DISCOVER HALLOWEEN GCB

The night was clear, the air cool. Music could be heard in the distance, as well as the laughter of children. It was something that would make anyone smile. Or at least anyone who wasn't a Duke of Hell.

Hastur was standing just outside of the cemetery's gates. He had rolled up a tobacco cig and was slowly sucking on it, as he hadn't lighted it up yet. He had scared a group of teenagers who had been brave enough (or foolish enough) to enter the cemetery at night, for reasons unknown to him. No matter, it was fun watching them wet themselves when he made himself look rotten and decomposed.

There was a crunch behind him. Usually, he would be more paranoid, but he knew exactly who was lurking around behind him.

"Hail Satan, Ligur."

"Hail Satan."

Ligur slinked forward until he was standing next to him, eyes switching colors on occasion. "Has anything of interest happen tonight?"

Hastur grunted. "Not really. Made some humans run away squealing like rats, other than that it has been a rather dull night."

He thought a bit and added, "They did look rather strange, these humans. They hardly looked like humans. If their scent wasn't so obvious, I would have thought that they were fellow demons."

Ligur squinted his eyes as he thought this over.

"That's strange. What do you think it means? Some sort of ritual in honor of our Master? Do they want to become demons as well?"

"Don't know."

"Should we investigate?"

Hastur didn't usually do much 'investigating', but it did sound like something he should be doing. It might make him look more intelligent and dignified. Not that he already wasn't, but if he could rise up to an even higher position than Duke because of 'investigating', he would do it.



"Yes, we should. The humans ran off in that direction. Let's go."

They left the dark cemetery and had to walk for only 20 minutes to see the nearest neighborhood. The humans in their costumes were not the only strange thing. For some reason, they had found it necessary to carve vegetables with gruesome faces and place them on their entrances. They also hung fake corpses and insects around the trees along with streamers in the colors black and orange. Sounds of hollow, evil laughter could be heard drifting in the wind at intervals accompanied by screaming and, for some reason, delighted laughter.

In contrast to this, the air was filled with sweet, sugary smells. They discovered the source when they got closer and saw humans coming out of their houses with bowls filled with chocolate bars and other assorted candies to offer them to smaller humans dressed in increasingly odd clothing.

The humans from the cemetery did their best to look like demons, but these ones varied. Many were colorful and included masks and useless gadgets that dangled from belts. Others had fake wings and obnoxiously sparkly wands and fabrics. Some clearly tried to look scary, but their small size took away anything that could be intimidating. Even smaller humans were dressed as the vegetables they had outside their doorsteps. They were all carrying bags that, after observing closely, were being used to carry the sweets being acquired from the house humans.

Neither one of them noticed that they had accidentally slipped away from their lurking and had become visible until they heard an amazed "Wow!" from below them.

A tiny human, male from the looks of it, was staring up at them with wonder in his eyes. He was dressed in ragged clothing and the makeup on his face seemed to indicate that he was pretending to have risen up from a grave.

The demons were perturbed. Why wasn't this tiny human afraid of them? They were terrifying, were they not? Glancing around they realized that being surrounded by humans pretending to be demons, they were practically invisible. Was this what that Flash Bastard meant by "blending in."

Hastur's attention was returned to his front when the little human pulled on his sleeve and took his hand. A couple of pieces of candy were placed on his palm and on Ligur's.

"You didn't have any candies, mister! Your costumes are amazing, you should be getting a lot of candies!"

With this, the boy took off, catching up with his friends. The demons looked at each other in confusion. The humans dressed up as demons and got candy in return? Was this a sort of bribe? Did the humans get punished if they didn't give the dressed-up humans candy?

After going around and getting an explanation from a very confused teenager (who surely thought they were foreigners), they learned that they did, in fact, get punished. It was this 'Trick or Treat' chant that caused it. If you didn't come forth with the 'treat', your house would then be covered from top to bottom with nasty, messy things like eggs and toilet paper.

Satisfied with their discovery, they returned to Hell (carrying their bounty of sweets. Humans were surprisingly eager to give them sweets after seeing them) to tell their fellow demons about the holiday where humans acted like demons. They could use this.

*GCB can be found at ZimVader0017 on Tumblr*

HEAVEN IS HERE WITH ME  
KIERAN PIERCE

*O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams  
That bring to my remembrance from what state I fell, how glorious once  
above thy sphere.*

— John Milton, Paradise Lost

If Aziraphale fidgeted any more, he was going to drop his cocoa.

The angel set his winged mug down and sighed. It had begun raining, drops quietly pattering on the windows of his bookshop. Just like it had started to when he and Crowley had met at the wall in the Garden of Eden. He couldn't stop thinking about a conversation they had had earlier this week, in which... *oh good Heavens, really?* in which Aziraphale had confessed his love. But it had been too soon, too much at once for the poor demon. Crowley had basically frozen, and had finally eked out that he believed he didn't deserve such a love; that he thought himself too broken for someone so pure.

Had Aziraphale really expected anything different? No... maybe. He had tried to console his dear, but Crowley had fled the bookshop and had driven the Bentley even faster than usual. Aziraphale had been giving Crowley space since then, his hands refusing to stop shaking with the nervousness of how to fix it.

The angel shifted his thoughts to something more trivial. He was honestly growing a bit tired of the latest cocoa recipe he had put together, which had a tanginess from its orange infusions, but he felt a change was in order. Aziraphale liked to change things up when it came to food and drink; always trying new flavours, but never miracling them. *That* was too easy. He smiled; Crowley appreciated it when they went out to discover new food and drinks that Aziraphale liked, although Crowley rarely ate. He *did* always like to watch Aziraphale eat, at the least. Maybe he wouldn't be against just a small outing... and Aziraphale *did* need an excuse to try to convince him of his worthiness, as much as the demon *would protest*. Now, *who's doing the tempting?* he thought to himself, smiling primly.

Aziraphale remembered he had several lifestyle magazines lying about; in one of them, he had found a section all about chocolate boutiques and cafes. Wonderful; he hadn't even miracled that. There was one in Hampstead called *Chocolate Paradise*, which offered luxury chocolates and delectable cocoa, but he also noticed from the pictures that the walls were painted with forest and plant scenes. Crowley would love that. It would relax him, although the name might not, but Aziraphale could work with that. The

angel moved to phone Crowley, accidentally stepping on a copy of *Paradise Lost* that he'd forgotten to shelve. He picked it up, noticing the book had opened to a section of book IV: *Never can true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep*—No, not this again. He sighed and re-shelved the book. Had Crowley been reading it? He didn't know, and best to keep it hidden away for now, for fear it would make the poor dear's emotional state worse.

Aziraphale sighed again and dialed Crowley's flat number from his rotary phone. This wasn't going to be pleasant, but Crowley would expect that he would check in on him. Crowley never did well with conflict, always choosing to run away. Yet, even when he was mad, the demon would always pick up. And if he wasn't at home, he would have Aziraphale's calls forwarded to his mobile.

"What." It wasn't even a question; Crowley sounded sleep-drunk, and maybe a little... weak? Sad?

"My dear boy..." Aziraphale evened his voice out so as not to give away his sadness. "I do hope you're alright. I thought I would call to make sure you're okay. I know... I know I made things... strange between us for now. But... if it's alright with you, I'd like to take you out and cheer you up a bit. You deserve that, at least." *You deserve the world*, he thought, but held back telling Crowley anything else deep for now; the demon might very well pass out at the sound of it.

There was a second or two of silence, and the despairing drawl came: "I can't, angel."

"You *can*," Aziraphale tried to say firmly, without sounding harsh. "But—I understand. I frightened you. I was out of line. I'd like to correct that."

Nothing.

"Th—there's a cafe I found in one of my magazines that I'd like to go to—" He steadied himself. "I think you'll feel better after going. Namely, because they do have some delectable treats that I love—"

"—You weren't out of line", Crowley interrupted.

*Okay. Finally.*

"You can tell me your feelings, angel; it's just... hard for me to think—to accept any of it yet."

Aziraphale listened patiently and offered, "That's okay. And—there's a surprise." He wished Crowley could see the little wiggle he did just then.

"A surprise?" Aziraphale could almost *hear* Crowley roll his eyes. "If this is a ruse to get me to watch your magic act again, I swear to Satan—"

"It's not that!" Aziraphale huffed. "And don't make fun; you know how much I enjoy it. But anyhow, I'm not giving any hints."

"Technically that *was* a hint, angel."

"See," Aziraphale smirked, "you're feeling better already."

They had had, at least, *some* conversation on the way to Hampstead (consisting mostly of Aziraphale urging Crowley to slow down), although Aziraphale did try earnestly, *repeatedly*, to make small talk on London restaurants. He could tell Crowley listened, but the angel did not receive much beyond the occasional grunt. "Well," Aziraphale said as they neared the cafe, "you'll like this place."

An ever-so-slight smirk. "Is it spooky?"

"What? No, it—it's just—you'll see! I said no hints!"

Crowley muttered under his breath and sped up as Aziraphale held on for dear life... er, well, preventative disincorporation.

The boutique was located in a gorgeous brick building with white window heads.

"No, no, no... *seriously?*" Crowley said upon seeing the sign, shaking his head. Aziraphale could tell he was tolerating this little excursion for his love of watching the angel eat.

Aziraphale, for his part, could not contain his excitement. He adored boutique cafes and had been salivating over the pictures in the magazine. Each boutique cafe was completely unique, and he loved learning about the ingredients, about what made the offerings *special*.

He opened the cherry wood door for Crowley.

"After you..."

He heard the demon scoff at that, likely remembering being called a "foul fiend" before Aziraphale had offered him the door at the bookshop.

*That was eleven years ago...* Aziraphale reminisced. *Seems so far away now...*

The boutique featured pristine white walls and hardwood floors, tiers of chocolate piled high in every direction. There were seemingly sky-high displays in the center, and boxes of every color of the rainbow lining white shelves against the wall. And then, of course, there was the *heavenly* smell, the aromas of chocolate and fragrant fruits filling the air. Aziraphale

remembered this was one of the reasons why he loved Earth so much, internally laughing at the irony of using that word for chocolate, of all things. *They don't have chocolate in Heaven... it's considered sinful... but here I am tempting a demon to it... oh, dear.*

Grinning like a child, Aziraphale promptly ordered the salted caramel hot chocolate, some luxury dark chocolates for himself... and some white chocolates for Crowley, just in case. He noticed Crowley circling the back shelves, pretending to look at the chocolates. *He's so handsome, Aziraphale tried not to blush... especially with how he stands out among the white shelving... stark, copper hair wearing sleek black...*

"Here", Aziraphale shook it off and made a move for the sitting area, "isn't this wonderful..."

He was attempting to get the demon to look at the charcoal-gray chairs, the colour and modern style matching that of his flat. "And there...", he started, motioning towards the back wall of the cafe, "is the first part of the surprise."

He saw Crowley perk up a little to look at the mural he had pointed to, depicting a forest with leaves all along it. He made sure to grab them a table next to it.

"See? It's beautiful, isn't it?"

"It—yeah." Crowley mumbled.

*Always hiding.* He could tell the demon was pleased; touched, even, but was trying to hide it. Well, 6,000 years had been an exercise in patience; what was another afternoon?

"Please, dear, sit down."

Crowley slouched across from him, arms crossed, his head sagging a bit.

Aziraphale knew that none of this would be easy, but he needed to start somewhere.

"Now," Aziraphale said gently in between sips of his hot cocoa after munching on the candy and making sure Crowley was paying attention (he had rejected the white chocolates; Aziraphale put them away for later), "I wanted to tell you that I understand the source of your feelings. You are drawing on your history with your fall, and with Hell, to define yourself, but I'm telling you that it doesn't apply anymore."

A blank stare, then: "Please don't tell me that's the other part of the surprise."



"No—well, not directly—but you wouldn't let me say anything at the bookshop the other day. I was going to tell you that I understand where your hesitation is coming from. I didn't mean to impose anything on you or invade your boundaries." He paused and looked away. "I should've asked you what you were ready for, not just forced my feelings on you."

He saw Crowley shift uncomfortably in his seat, his Adam's apple move (ugh, why that name?), his arms still crossed. He hadn't been looking at Aziraphale since he'd made that jab.

*Won't you let me hold you?* It was so painful to hold back. "I'm trying to say I'm sorry, my dear. Will you please look at me?"

He expected a glare, retort, and a scowl to boot, but the only thing he saw on Crowley's face was sadness. He had learned over the millennia to read the demon's aura, and he could sense now that he *wanted* to tell him something, but couldn't, or wasn't ready.

"It's okay, dear boy... you don't have to say anything now. You don't have to decide anything. I just wanted to let you know that yes, that is how I feel, but I won't try to rush you. I want you to know that I'm here for you, and accept you as you are. Look", he exclaimed, getting up and grabbing Crowley's arm as the demon whimpered, "here is the other part of the surprise."

The whimper turned into a low growl as Aziraphale pulled him toward the other end of the boutique.

Above the stark white shelves rested another mural, a curved forest canopy, covering the entire ceiling in the back area.

"Look how beautiful that is," Aziraphale coaxed as Crowley gasped in awe.

"It looks like—" Crowley stepped forward, directly under the mural, now understanding the café name. Aziraphale thought he could see a beam of light coming from somewhere on the ceiling, bathing Crowley in its pale glow. Crowley must have seen it too, because he looked around for its source, although neither of them was sure what it was. Finally, Crowley was still, looking up at the forest, and Aziraphale thought briefly that perhaps he was reminiscing.

*I hope I haven't hurt him with this... I only wanted to show him what I think of him...* Aziraphale worried, but he knew that Crowley knew better than to think Aziraphale would ever mock him like this.

"It—I—" Crowley fumbled for words, shifting his hands into his pockets. "Why have you done this?" his voice broke as he tried to fight off tears; teetering toward the edge of anger, Aziraphale noted.

*Oh, no. Please—*

"Hold on, Crowley," said the angel reassuringly as he stepped under the mural to take Crowley's hands in his. "You see, my point in showing you this is to remind you of the *only* place Eden needs to be. You are here, with me, and that in itself can be your own Heaven. We are here, *together*; *that* is our paradise". He hoped it made sense. "And", he added nervously, hopefully not ruining the entire conversation, "you will always be an angel to me."

Now *he* was crying. He hadn't meant for that to happen...

Crowley took a few seconds to process all of this before his lip began trembling and Aziraphale embraced him. "Oh... come here, my dear. I'll be listening when you're ready." He held the demon while the poor darling sobbed, performing a small miracle so no one noticed them.

When they were both finished sobbing, Aziraphale wiped Crowley's eyes (those gorgeous orbs that reminded him of the stars) and asked mischievously, "Now! Would you like some hot cocoa, dear boy? It will certainly warm you up".

"Well, actually I b—bought you some—" Crowley blubbered, and a beautiful white square box with satin ribbon appeared out of nowhere. Chocolate pearls!

Aziraphale gasped. "What?! When did you—?"

"Don't worry, I *bought* it. I just—y'know, miracled it so you wouldn't see."

That cheeky grin. Aziraphale blushed.

"You *devil*," he teased, setting the chocolates on a nearby table. *He understands where I'm coming from now, at least... we will get there... at some point.* "So. About getting you that cocoa."

Crowley beamed at him as they continued to hold hands, tear stains still visible past his glasses. "Love to," he whispered.

Back at the bookshop, the copy of *Paradise Lost* managed to launch itself off the shelf, opening briefly to a section of Book I before closing, and then dematerialising completely.

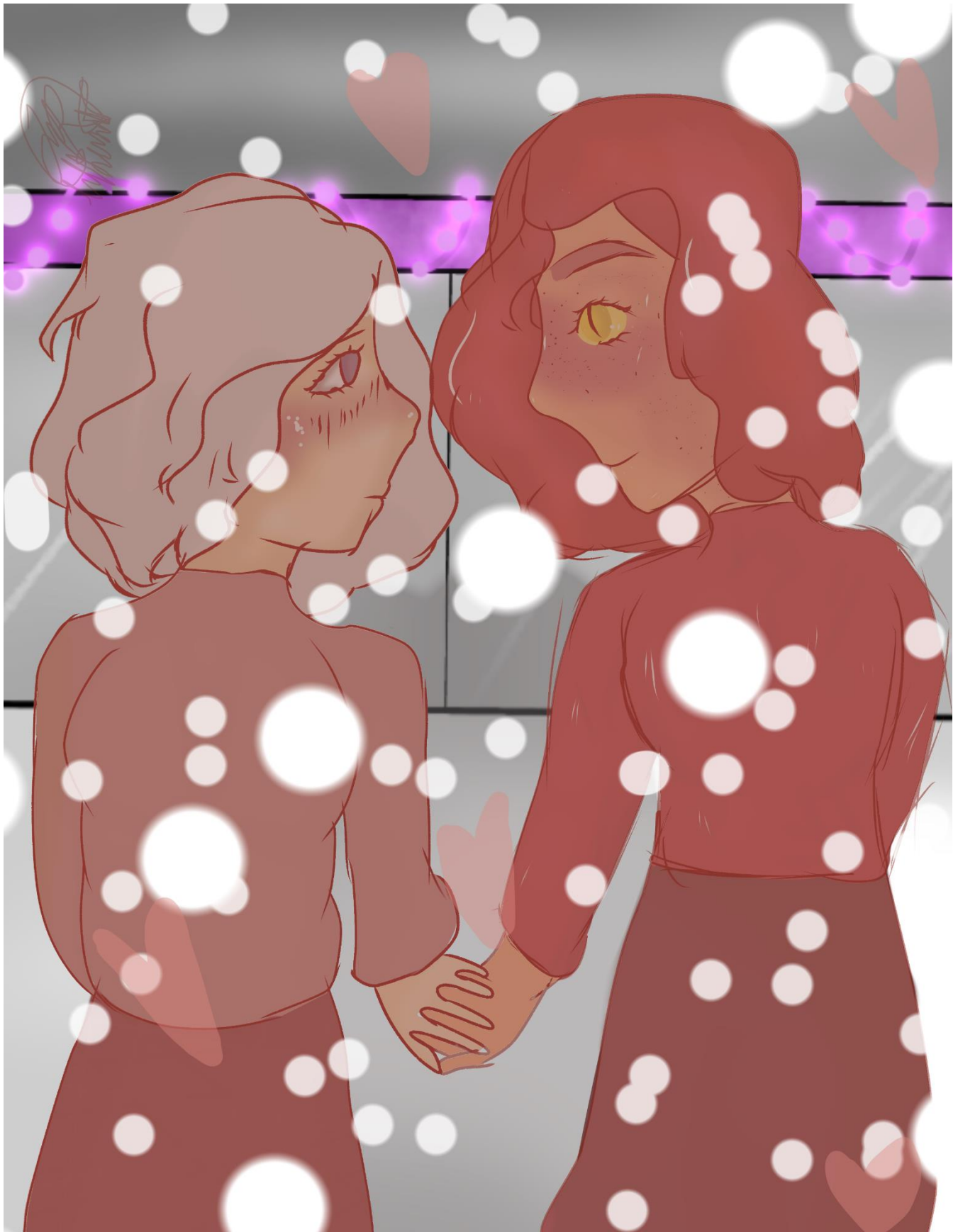


*A mind not to be changed by place or time.*

*The mind is its own place, and in itself*

*Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.*

*Kieran Pierce can be found at SentientBentley on AO3 and sentientbentley on Twitter*



"Love on Thin Ice" by Jo, lil.hum.\_.art on Instagram



"Under the Tree" by Connie Yves Riba Kottmann, Yvesriba on AO3; conniekottmannart on Instagram, Tumblr, Patreon; Connie Kottmann on Facebook; conniek on Twitter; conniekottmann.com



THE LAST OF THE GREAT FROST FAIRS  
BENTLEY

*River Thames Frost Fair, 1814*

It was late January when the tents started appearing on the frozen river, attracting curious crowds who wished to celebrate until the temperatures rose enough to break up the ice. Many gathered to walk the various booths of goods being sold, to eat a little of the oxen being roasted right on the ice, and participate in the many games being played on the river, such as nine-pin bowling.

The buzz spread through London quickly, even reaching those who spent most of the wintertime holed up where it was warm. Word had even got back to the angel in her bookshop who then begged the demon to accompany her to the Thames. Aziraphale wasn't usually one for crowds but frost fairs were rare enough she was willing to make an exception. Crowley leaned on the till a sceptical look on his face as a wide-eyed Aziraphale requested he escort her, a book clutched to the bodice of her gauzy off-white dress. She had developed the romantically dramatic attitude of an upper-class young lady, much to Crowley's annoyance.

"I cannot go alone. It would be unseemly for a lady to be seen out by herself at the fair. You must accompany me."

"It's cold out. Besides, you do possess the ability to shape-shift. If it's that important, you can always look male."

"Please, Crowley?"

"Why? I just want to spend a lazy day inside your warm bookshop. Look at it like this... You won't have customers because they will all be down on the river. It can just be you and me spending the day in conversation." He stepped closer to her, lips brushing the curls falling in front of her ears.

"Maybe snog a little, if that's not too scandalous."

She flushed before steeling herself for a response. "On cold days like this, you nap most of the time."

"You should like that! It leaves you plenty of time to read."

"I want to go to the frost fair," Aziraphale pouted while sliding the book she held back into its place among the shelves.

"I don't."



She was silent for a while before switching tactics by turning admiring sky blue eyes towards him, a bright smile upon her face. "Is that a new coat? It does look so dashing on you."

She admired the fitted cut of it and of his tight-fitting trousers that showcased those long legs. He looked every inch the Regency dandy despite sticking with his usual black.

"Flattery is not going to get you anywhere."

Aziraphale wasn't above dangling carrots, as close to temptation as that was. "I will do the next assignment you get that's not too far away. I cannot leave the bookshop for very long, Gabriel will notice. No need to return the favour."

Crowley considered it a moment, taking off his tinted spectacles to clean them with a red handkerchief as he mulled it over. "All right. Done."

Reluctant to shrug back into his black carrick coat, he forced himself to put it on anyway while Aziraphale retrieved her outer wrappings which consisted of a celestial blue pelisse coat, fur muff and wrap, and an off-white bonnet to go over her loose blonde bun. Buttoning the frog fasteners of the pelisse, she beamed her brightest smile at Crowley. He rolled his eyes before putting on his top hat on his head, determined to not have any fun. Aziraphale could have fun for both of them as far as he was concerned, he thought as she finished wrapping up in her warm outerwear.

"Come on, angel. The ice is going to melt by the time you get ready."

They stepped out the door, Aziraphale threading her arm through Crowley's before stuffing her hand in her muff. The cold slammed into Crowley, causing him to silently suck in a breath before saying a few choice words about the chill under it. Beside him, Aziraphale's breath puffed visibly before her, forming a perfectly round cloud that only confirmed what Crowley knew—it was too cold out here for his liking. But a deal was a deal, and he had made one with his angel. They crunched through the snow still left on the pavement, Aziraphale careful not to get her delicate half-boots too wet. Why Aziraphale enjoyed the flimsy women's fashion of the day escaped Crowley, but maybe she had been attracted by the soft pastels and gauzy, ethereal-like fabrics. Crowley hailed a hackney carriage, not wishing to walk in the chilly weather.

Taking Aziraphale's hand, he helped her into the cab, climbing in behind her after telling the driver to head to the fair. With a jerk the carriage was off, bouncing along the snow-filled roads of London, making Crowley wonder if motion sickness was any better than freezing out in this weather. It thankfully wasn't a long ride to the Thames.

"Oh!" exclaimed Aziraphale as they reached the riverbank.

Looking out the carriage window upon it, her eyes grew wide in excitement. Tents were set up over the river, crowds swarmed over it and the sights were enhanced by the smell of cooking food, the scent of roasting ox being the most prevalent. She turned to Crowley, clutching his arm tighter and laughed as she began to get caught up in the excitement.

Dragging him forward, she headed out on to the ice itself, the demon keeping a tight grip on her to prevent her from taking a tumble while navigating the transition between solid ground and ice-covered river. He didn't know how she was going to stand in those boots. His were sturdy ones meant for riding and even he felt himself start to slip as they walked out onto the Thames. But he noticed Aziraphale had no trouble despite the soft leather soles she walked on.

"Careful," he said simply as a precaution.

"I'll be fine. If an angel can walk on water, then they can walk on ice, too. It's the same substance, different state."

"Oh. Didn't know you had that ability."

She hand-waved it off like it wasn't anything extraordinary. "What shall we do first? Ice skate? Get some cocoa? Oh, look! They're selling hot apples!"

Pulling Crowley off in the direction of the woman carrying a basket on her head full of the fruit, covered with a towel to keep it warm, Aziraphale accosted her and paid for two apples. She handed one to Crowley, who sniffed it before watching Aziraphale eat hers. He never really did enjoy apples as they proved themselves to be a troublesome fruit for him. But if it made Aziraphale happy, he would eat one.

Biting into it, he found it really was not that bad tasting and rather warming. It would do for now until the chill returned, forcing him to search out some coffee. Aziraphale finished hers with gusto, vanishing the core while looking for the next exciting attraction.

They decide to explore the tents, finding one selling pies and another commemorative silver spoons, while a third had a small printing press on it where one could buy a card with one's name and the date printed on it while waiting. Aziraphale bought one as a souvenir. Setting the type, the man running the press quickly got to work. Aziraphale chatted with him about books, enquiring if he printed those as well, delighted that he replied in the positive. He handed her the freshly printed personalized card. She thanked him as she looked at it while they exited the tent back out into the cold, much to Crowley's annoyance.

"Miss A.Z. Fell. Printed on the frozen Thames by M.G. Printing Co., 2 February 1814," she read before handing it to Crowley. "You have pockets. Can you hang on to this for me, please?"

"Of course." He vanished it back to the bookshop, instead.

Taking Crowley's arm again, Aziraphale moved on, stopping to watch some performers, including magicians. She was enamoured with the human version of magic and sleight-of-hand while Crowley remained unimpressed. Still, it was Aziraphale's day, so they stood watching the magicians perform their works, Aziraphale standing with head tilted to one side as she attempted to suss out how exactly they made it look like they were performing real magic tricks.

Her interest in magic would grow until she finally studied under John Maskelyne later this century, although her grasp on the craft would always be shaky. Crowley snorted as he watched the magician before them palm the coin, making it seem like it had vanished into thin air. The man bowed as the crowd applauded his trick, Aziraphale taking her hands out of her warm muff to clap along with them.

"He palmed it then put it in his pocket," Crowley muttered, unimpressed by the so-called feats of magic.

"I do wish to learn such tricks one of these days," said Aziraphale.

"Why? You can do miracles. Wouldn't even need to palm the coin. You could just make it disappear entirely."

"Where's the fun in that?"

"I find it efficient. Let's go. I'm getting cold standing here."

They did not get too far before the ice beneath them began to shake, making both angel and demon wonder if the river was starting to thaw despite the many days of below-freezing weather. Crowley took Aziraphale's hand, ready to miracle them both back to the bookshop should cracks start to form.

They needn't have worried as it was only another piece of showmanship being performed on the thick layers of ice. This time it wasn't cartwheelers performing acrobatics or magicians making coins disappear. This was a handful of animal trainers leading a full-sized elephant across the ice down by Blackfriars Bridge. The behemoth strode its way across, Aziraphale watching nervously with every step it took. Crowley set a comforting hand on her shoulder, patting in a reassuring fashion.

"It's not going to break through. The ice is too thick. Just a publicity stunt."

But Aziraphale watched it until it stepped up on to the far bank and was herded off to wherever its trainers were leading it before she heaved a sigh of relief.

"I haven't seen one of those since Hannibal crossed the Alps."

"It's all right, angel. Let's move on. Didn't you say something about ice skating?" He was smiling at her, holding two pairs of metal skates that could be strapped on to their boots.

"Oh, Crowley!" Aziraphale clasped her hands together in delight, the fur muff pushed up on one forearm.

"Ready?"

With a wave, they were wearing the skates, neither one of them prepared for how ice skating actually worked. Aziraphale laughed when Crowley slipped, landing not only on his tail bone, but his pride. Grumbling, he stood up, now steady, and took the angel's hand, leading her carefully over to the skating area, push of the blade by push of the blade.

She wobbled considerably while he stayed upright as if he had been ice skating his entire life. Crowley winked at Aziraphale, putting a hand around her to keep her upright as she pushed off with her skates in a cautious manner. She was now afraid of falling since she was balanced upon two thin blades of metal. Confused by his sudden ability to remain upright, she looked up at Crowley.

"A little demonic miracle. I can't be landing on my..."

"Language! I know what you're going to say."

"... backside. It's embarrassing."

He kept an arm around her, pulling her in scandalously close for the times. It did not matter as no other couples paid them any mind. They started with Crowley's arm a steadying presence around her waist until she became used to the skates. Thinking she was ready, he moved off a little, only having his arm linked with hers while she stuffed her freezing cold hands in her muff to warm them. She was still careful, going slow and not doing anything very exciting on the skates, but she was enjoying herself. Crowley found he was, too. It was such a joy to watch Aziraphale have fun outside the bookshop, even if it meant putting up with the inconvenience of cold weather. He felt a slight twinge of guilt for refusing her at first.

Aziraphale hit some uneven ice, causing her free arm to fly out to the side and Crowley to grip her that much more firmly as she threatened to fall on the frozen river under them. Laughing, she recovered, getting brave enough with Crowley by her side to pick up some speed. They circled the skating

area with the others—couples in love and daring young men who skated in fast circles while doing the occasional trick. Crowley would have been more than happy to show them up if he didn't have an angel to assist. Instead, he watched the show-offs wondering how many stunts they could perform before one of them ended up on the ice. He should have been watching what he was doing but didn't realize this until Aziraphale had pulled him off balance again despite his miracle. Unable to correct, they both went down in a pile, Crowley practically on top of Aziraphale.

His breath caught as he looked into her sky blue eyes staring back at him. She looked beautiful even here with her back on the cold, wet ice.

"Sorry," he whispered, reaching down to kiss her; a soft, chaste touching of lips that was most acceptable in public.

"Don't worry about it, Crowley," she replied as he helped her back on her feet, cheeks glowing.

He held her closer again, telling himself it was because he didn't want her falling again, but he wasn't fooling either of them, and Aziraphale was willing to play along. They made a few more rounds of the skating area before Aziraphale had had her fill, which suited Crowley fine. While they took off their skates, Aziraphale spoke of wanting to find the bookseller who had a booth out on the ice to which he agreed because booths meant warmth. Weaving through the crowds and poking around here and there, they located it near the London Bridge, Aziraphale hurrying in to check out their selection. Amused, Crowley followed along behind.

"You're a bookseller. Why do you need to go to other bookshops?"

"Because it is always possible they have something I don't."

He let her browse as long as she liked. This merchant had a brazier and Crowley took full advantage of it, standing close to it to warm his cold body as Aziraphale used six thousand years of expertise to search out any rare books the merchant might have for sale. But even a warm demon got bored with waiting and Crowley's impatience soon pushed him out the door to search for foodstuffs. Aziraphale would be hungry so some pies or maybe some of that roast ox wouldn't come amiss.

He found a stand selling small fruit pies and bought a couple before following his nose further down to where the roasted meats were. Paying a couple of shillings, he bought two slices, bringing it all back up to the bookseller where Aziraphale still was combing through every single book. Poking his head in the entrance, he attracted her attention.

"Angel."

She turned to look at him, a manuscript in her hands. He showed her his purchases and the smell reminded her how peckish she was. Signalling she was going to go pay, she headed for the till while he waited outside the booth, a miracle keeping the food warm. It wasn't long before Aziraphale appeared, the book wrapped up in soft cloth and carried in both arms. Crowley began to walk to the shore, the angel not objecting as she ate her slice of roasted ox as delicately as one could without utensils, the book now tucked under one arm.

"Here. You don't need to carry that." Touching it, Crowley vanished it to the bookshop where it would be waiting for her by the till.

He gave her a pie as they waited for a carriage for which she thanked him. Business was brisk for the carriages and Aziraphale was able to finish her pie before Crowley became cold and impatient enough to miracle a free carriage for them. Again helping Aziraphale up in it, he gave the driver the bookshop's address. Aziraphale laid her head on his shoulder appreciative of what he had done for her this afternoon. The swaying carriage took them home.

In the warmth of the bookshop, they stripped off their outerwear, hanging up coats and setting aside hats and bonnets. Heading to the backroom Aziraphale made tea, bringing out a tray laden with everything needed for tea service to set on the table in front of the couch where Crowley was lounging as he waited for her. She sat down and offered him a cup.

"Thank you, angel."

"No, Crowley. Thank you. I did so much enjoy today."

Taking his head in her hands, she gave him a most grateful kiss that he returned eagerly. Tea forgotten for the moment, the angel and demon snogged on the couch before settling in to enjoy their hot drinks. Once the tea was consumed, Aziraphale covered their shoulders with the blanket draped perpetually across the back of the couch and the two spent the evening talking about the Frost Fair while they cuddled close. It would be the last of them. The Thames would never again freeze over solid like it did that cold winter in 1814.

*Bentley can be found at The\_Bentley on AO3*





"Warmth" by Marcus, corrodedbattery on Tumblr





"Beneath the Tree" Cyn Syn, CynSyn on Ao3 and Patreon, amadness2method on Instagram and Twitter

## OLD MEMORIES GCB

Classic Christmas tunes were playing softly around the bookshop. While he didn't necessarily enjoy when customers came in to disturb his peace, during this time Aziraphale's hostility towards potential buyers diminished greatly. He also accepted Adam's suggestion of having books he didn't particularly care about around the shop to prevent unwanted conflicts.

He amassed a good amount of children's books, something he had never considered until his godson inspired him with the Just William collection that had been included after A.Z. Fell and Co. was restored. He found that while he did not entirely trust children around his most prized and rare books (a rather traumatic memory of Warlock chewing on his baby books ensured that), he also enjoyed the sounds of the children excitedly dragging their parents into the shop to show them the book that had caught their eye.

It was a joyous moment when young minds were inspired to read, especially when it was their own choice. Many university students who visited him for his reference books had told him how their enjoyment of reading had been wrenched from them because they had been forced to read books they weren't interested in, and he found that very sad. He briefly wondered if that had happened to Crowley, the demon often said that he didn't read.

While reshelving the books in the back room, he saw a book that looked out of place on one of his shelves. He tutted, thinking it was one of the previously mentioned demon's pranks until he saw which book it was.

It was a black book filled with illustrations of beautiful galaxies and nebulae. "The Home Planet" it was called. He did not own this book, not properly at least. It was one of Crowley's collection, regardless of how many times he insisted that he didn't read or have books. The demon must have left it there by accident without Aziraphale's notice. He wondered how long ago that was. The book itself was one of the most modern in the bookshop, published in the 1980s. Perhaps Crowley had it with him when they were discussing the Antichrist.

It was bookmarked with a stray piece of paper. Carefully opening it to the page, he found himself looking at an image of Alpha Centauri. It really was lovely. He did wonder why Crowley was so insistent on going to that star system in particular. He decided to return the book to him, wrap it up in a nice festive paper to make it a surprise.



Crowley came into the bookshop to find a package with his name on it sitting innocently on top of Aziraphale's desk. He inched closer to it, lowering his sunglasses to look at it properly. He snorted at the holly leaf-covered paper and picks the gift up. He figured he should wait for it to be Christmas to open it as it's tradition, but he's also a demon, so he could open the package whenever he wanted to as well.

He still waited for Aziraphale's permission once the angel came into the room from where he was fetching a bottle of wine when he heard the Bentley outside.

"Hello, my dear. I see you found my gift."

The angel looked up at him after setting the bottle and two glasses on a nearby table, his eyes softening at the sight of the demon unconsciously clutching at the package.

"You can open it now if you want. It's only two days before Christmas anyway."

"Ngk. Sure, of course, angel, was about to do that."

He carefully peeled away the paper and then stood there staring at the book. He then gently turned it over to verify that it was, in fact, his own copy of the book returned to him.

"I thought I had misplaced it. It was here the whole time?"

"I found it yesterday while reorganizing my books in the back room. It looked like it had been shoved in between the other volumes."

"Must have left it behind when those angelic jerks came around that one time unannounced."

He opened the book to an often looked at page and found a beautiful bookmark, clearly handmade, with an elaborate snake design on it. On the back of it, written in elegant cursive it was written *'Happy Christmas, my dearest Crowley'*.

"I thought you needed a proper bookmark."

Crowley took Aziraphale's hand and kissed his knuckles.

"Happy Christmas, angel."

*GCB can be found at ZimVader0017 on Tumblr*



# CELESTIAL HARMONIES

VOL. 2



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# Celestial Harmonies



## Cider & Cocoa

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