

## CHAPTER 14: CONNECTING THE DOTS

Malach confidently strode down the halls. He was determined to find a particular demon and confess his feelings, excited yet extremely nervous since he wasn't sure what to expect of Xav's reaction.

He would either be pissed and lash out or... Malach wasn't exactly sure what the alternative would be. Imagining Xavion welcoming the angel with open arms and parted lips was almost humorous. Mal was starting to reconsider his choices again when he heard a faint cry coming from one of the passing dorms.

Not being able to walk away due to his caring tendencies, he approached the door where the distressed sound came from. It was slightly open so he gently knocked.

"W-who's there?" an unfamiliar voice sniled from inside.

"Malach," he answered quietly before pushing the door open a crack to peek in. He didn't recognize the boy curled up in his sheets, though the school was fairly large. "I heard crying from outside. What's your name?"

The boy sat up as he quickly wiped his tears, embarrassed by someone so popular catching him in such a vulnerable position.

"Ozaca," he whispered in a pained, broken voice.

The sound made Malach's heart wrench. "Hello, Ozaca," he responded in an equally soft tone. "Do you mind if I come in? You look like you could use someone to talk to."

Ozaca nodded after a few moments. He didn't know how much he was allowed to talk about or what the angel would be willing to hear, considering the circumstances, but gave in anyway. "I suppose I could."

Malach shut the door behind him and walked toward the bed. As eager to find Xav as he was, he couldn't stop himself from wanting to help Ozaca. How could he when the elf looked so upset?

His silver hair was tangled, purple eyes rimmed with red, lips swollen—probably from biting them so much to conceal his cries. It was a heartbreaking sight.

"Do you want to talk about what happened?" Malach asked in a delicate voice, sitting beside Ozaca on the bed.

"A... a boy," he mumbled almost inaudibly, "A boy happened."

The angel frowned. "What did this boy you speak of do? Did he hurt you?" He quickly scanned Ozaca's exposed arms to check for any signs of abuse. There were red handprints around each of the elf's wrists that appeared relatively fresh.

Ozaca's eyes welled up with tears again. "Not physically. He hurt my heart," he cried, crumbling into a ball.

Malach quickly went to hug the crying boy, wrapping an arm around him before freezing when he realized Ozaca wasn't wearing any clothes. A blanket was covering his lap, but it was very apparent that he was in fact naked.

"What did he do?" the angel hesitantly questioned, gulping as his pure mind innocently began to connect the dots.

Ozaca was too upset to be embarrassed anymore as he sobbed into Malach's chest. "He u-used me," he whimpered, "All he wanted w-was sex."

"I'm so sorry, Ozaca," the angel murmured, rubbing his large hand over Ozaca's upper back to comfort him. The intimate topic made him uncomfortable but tried to push his own feelings away in order to help the elf. "You didn't deserve that. Whoever he is surely must regret his actions for missing out on such a wonderful person. It's his loss."

"But he didn't even care! He left without a second thought!" Ozaca's voice broke in half as another wail escaped his lips.

"Shh, it's all right," Malach gently said, hugging the elf. "If he doesn't care, which I doubt is the truth, then that makes him even more of an imbecile. Why would you want someone like that in your life anyway?"

"I don't know." Ozaca pulled away to stare sadly at the angel who was desperate to help. "I'm more upset with myself for letting this happen. For allowing it to affect me and even agreeing to it in the first place."

"Don't blame yourself for another's heartlessness, and never be upset for expecting people to do the right thing. Maybe it wasn't a smart decision, but it certainly isn't your fault." Malach wiped a few tears away from Ozaca's face as he spoke.

"You're right," the elf sighed tiredly, gazing out the window in sorrow. "I never should've gotten with Xavion in the first place. Everyone says horrible things about him, but I didn't want to believe the rumors. I guess people have reputations for a reason, though," he chuckled with no humor in his voice.

Malach's hand dropped, his lips parting as he listened to Ozaca speak. "Xav?" he repeated as if he had heard wrong. He knew he hadn't. He just wanted to deny what he now knew as the truth.

Ozaca pushed his hair away from his face with a simple nod that made Malach's chest deflate. "I'm guessing that you don't like him either, seeing as you're rivals and all. We have something in common I suppose."

Oh how wrong the elf was. Mal would've laughed if he didn't feel like crying until he was physically unable to anymore. It felt unreal.

"How did it start?" Malach asked, voice now void of any emotion or sympathy like it previously did.

The elf glanced at him weirdly but continued. "He approached me between classes asking for a hookup. Then we came up to my room and... I'm sure the rest doesn't need to be explained." He awkwardly tugged the blankets up to hide the hickeys on his neck but it was too late. Malach had already seen them.

"So he's the one who asked first?" Mal wasn't sure why he was even questioning the boy anymore. Maybe he was hoping for a direct answer to make him feel better, but he knew he wouldn't be getting one.

"Yeah. I would never approach him first after we broke up."

The blonde's eyes darted back to his in alarm. "You two used to date?"

Ozaca shyly agreed, suddenly feeling uncomfortable despite all of Malach's kind gestures. The air between them just felt different now.

"Who broke up with who?" Mal asked further before noticing how uncomfortable Ozaca looked. "I'm sorry. That's none of my business."

"Wait, where are you going?" the elf said in confusion as Malach abruptly rose from his position.

"I have to talk to someone," he murmured, still sounding astoundingly different than a mere few moments ago. "I'll see you around, Ozaca. Feel better."

He bounded through the dorms, empty. All his excitement was now gone and instead replaced with dread, but refused to believe the elf's claims. Not until he heard it from Xav first.

Malach quickly reached the demon's dorm and knocked heavily on the door. There was no answer so, impatient, he forced it open on his own accord despite it being locked. The wood broke on its hinges and fell to the side but the blonde didn't even notice.

Xavion jumped up in surprise, staring at Malach who had burst right through the door. The demon was still buried in his thoughts and emotions ever since the hookup with Ozaca. Seeing Malach made his stomach lurch. He, unlike the angel, wasn't ready to admit how he felt.

"Did you copulate with Ozaca?" Mal blurted out, too heartbroken to even get flustered.

"What?" Xavion choked as his eyes widened, but it was obvious. His hair was damp with sweat, he was panting a little and his lips were slightly bruised, just like the elf's.

Malach stood there, silent. He forgot how to speak. He didn't know how to do anything at all when his heart was throbbing so erratically.

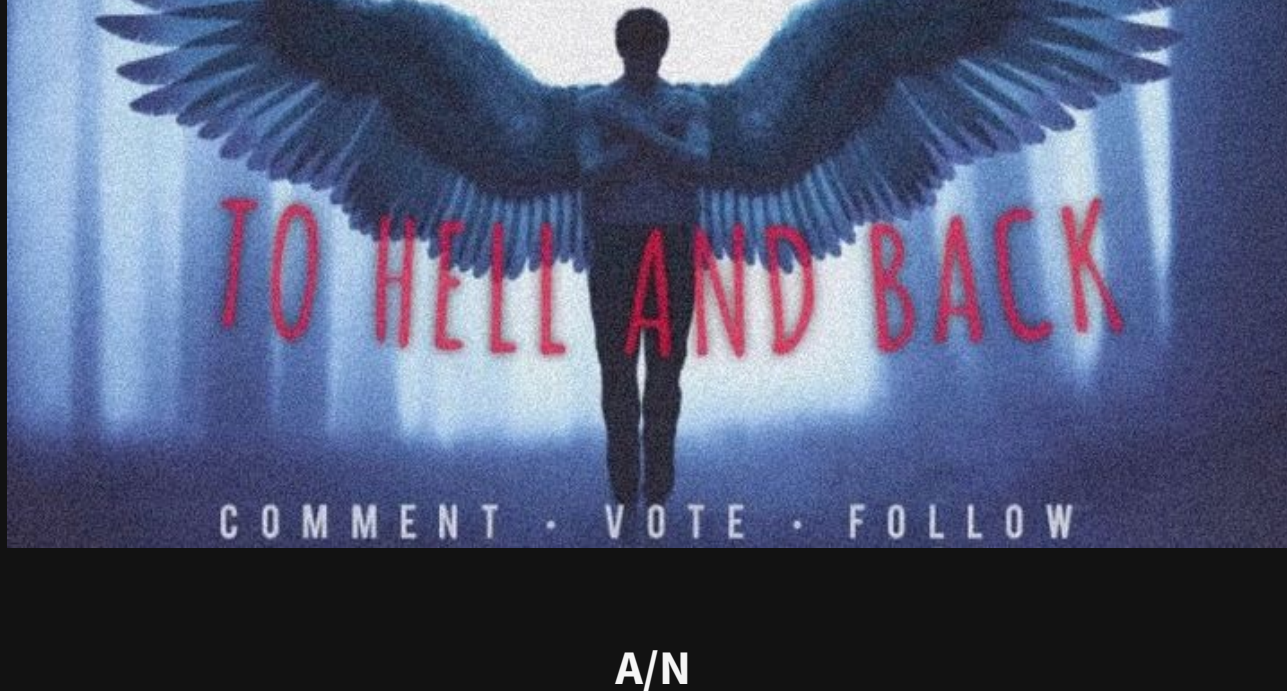
To angels, only those profoundly in love perform the intimate act. Sharing it with anyone else was betrayal. Malach knew the two weren't actually together, but it hurt just as much. It hurt so much.

Malach swallowed down the tight knot in his throat. He was so sure Xav liked him back. What a fool he was.

"Forget it," he said quietly. "I'll see you around, Xavion."

All the blood drained from the demon's face as Mal left.

That was the first time he had ever called Xavion his full name.



A/N

Poor Malach :(