

## CHAPTER 23: CONVINCING

Xavion raised his hands, jaw clenched with furrowed brows as he attempted the day's assignment. He was alone in the court heard as most students retired to the practice rooms a er class was finished or had a group of friends to practice with. The demon preferred being alone anyway. There was a lesser chance of potentially embarrassing himself that way.

Xavion grit his teeth as muted blue sparks weakly ejected from his palms. The assignment was creating a force field of energy to block all forms of magic weaker than the wielder's ability. Because of his status, he should've been able to easily block everyone's attacks except for someone like Lucifer or Yahweh, but his mind wouldn't allow him to concentrate long enough to do so.

Xavion growled in frustration as he only conjure a compact sphere of energy. That day in class Malach had already gotten a sizable force field covering the front of him. His tainted brain always somehow brought him back to comparing himself to the angel. He was supposed to be equally—if not more powerful than Malach, but it didn't feel like it.

"Fucking hell, how does that shithead do this?!" Xavion spat, throwing up his hands in frustration.

Xav heard low chuckling behind him. Startled, he whipped around. Usually he'd be able to sense if anyone was coming up behind him, but he'd been so engrossed in his magic that he must've tuned out his other senses.

He wasn't surprised to see Malach as the culprit of his mockery. The way Xavion's frustration and anger slowly dissipated as the angel grew nearer was infuriating, but he couldn't deny the pleasant feeling that forged deep inside his chest.

"How long have you even standing there watching me?" Xavion grumbled, trying his best to sound annoyed.

"Long enough to tell you've been struggling. Do you even understand the material Professor Aech taught us?" Mal asked in a murmur as he brushed a stray lock of hair out of the demon's eyes.

Xavion gulped, heat rising in his cheeks. "Of course I do," he said in a strained voice. He wanted to be angry, but he couldn't when Malach was looking at him so tenderly.

"Then what's the issue?" Malach asked, tilting his head slightly.

"I just can't concentrate. It's nothing serious."

"Why can't you concentrate?" Mal hummed, tempted to lean in for a kiss from the way Xavion's lips parted in hesitation.

You Xav wanted to say. But he didn't. Because he couldn't.

"I don't know, I guess I'm just stressed. It's nothing," the demon answered somewhat honestly.

He flinched away when Mal attempted to caress the side of his face. The blonde frowned but lowered his hand in understanding. They were in public. It's was too risky.

"Do you think it would help if we went somewhere a bit more private?" Malach suggested. "I told you I want to help you practice your magic. What if we went to Heaven? There would be less distractions for you there."

Xavion paused. He had been thinking about whether or not to accept Mal's help. He didn't quite understand the material, though it was his fault for barely paying attention in class. He always assumed he would just pick it up with practice, but as magic got more difficult, his speed of learning slowed. He needed Malach's help, but he was too prideful to ask for it.

And a demongoing to Heaven was a whole different ordeal. Angels naturally hate demons. Xavion knew he'd be chased out of the golden gates in a heartbeat. Just the suggestion was preposterous.

"I can do it fine myself." Xav took a step back. "Now go away before I kick you in the nuts. I mean it."

Malach sighed. "I'm serious, Xav. I think I could really help you make some progress." His voice lowered to an alluring whisper as his eyes dipped down to the demon's plump lips once again. "Besides, I want spend some more time with you."

Xavion cursed under his breath when he felt his cheeks heating up. It was muted beneath his dark complexion, but was still noticeable enough for Malach to grin happily. "Even if I agreed, we can't. There's too much of a chance of people finding us together. They would spread rumors and the news would get to Lucifer, then he'd kill me himself."

"Listen," Malach spoke gently as he fought the urge to pull Xavion in for a well-needed hug. "Lucifer isn't physically capable of going to Heaven, so there's no chance of him finding us. I have private quarters where we won't be disturbed, which means you won't have to be anxious of other people seeing. And I can be with you to help practice more effectively. It's the best option, Xav."

Xavion hesitated as he tried to come up with an argument, but ultimately knew Mal had a good point. And they'd get to have some uninterrupted alone time together. The offer was almost too appealing.

"Won't all the angels in Heaven hate me, though? I'm a demon. Dressing me in white robes and a golden crown won't change that."

Malach shrugged. "You'll be with me, no one would dare disrespect you. I wouldn't allow them."

And that's how Xavion found himself ascending the stairway to heaven, grumbling behind Malach who happily led him up. The sky was getting brighter and brighter and quite frankly hurting Xavion's eyes a little bit.

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Xavion trudged miserably a er Malach, groaning in protest for the eleventh time. "I really don't want to do this," he complained to the grinning angel who didn't appear concerned in the slightest.

Malach reached down to grab Xav's hand, pulling him forward as they approached the gates of Heaven. "It'll be fine, Xav. I promise."

"But everyone's going to be staring," Xav whined as Malach tugged him along. "And give me back my hand, dumbass. I don't want to cause more attention than you're already forcing."

"Angels are known for their kindness. No one is going to bite you," Mal said teasingly. "If anything, they should be afraid of you biting them"

"As if," he snid ed. "I'd probably catch a disease if I did. Who knows what you vile creatures are up to behind closed doors. I bet you all use your knees for far worse than praying."

Mal tilted his head to the side in genuine confusion. "Like what?"

"I meant—you know what? Never mind." Xavion shook his head as Malach continued to look at him, not understanding. "Let's just go in and get this over with so I can go home and sleep."

Xav held his breath in anticipation as Mal led him inside. He mentally prepared himself for the blatant stares or rude comments, but as the pair walked through the gates, no one said a word about his specie. In fact, they only received warm greetings in return.

"Welcome home, Malach!" an old angel said warmly. "And welcome, Malach's friend. I don't believe I've seen you before."

"Hello, Orieve," Mal said politely, nudging Xavion to do the same.

The demon looked at Malach unsurely. He had planned on avoiding everyone, but Mal didn't seem too concerned, so he awkwardly went with it. "Uh, hey, I'm Xavion."

Orieve was short with blonde hair that had a bit of white peeking through the strands from her many years of livin. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Xavion. I'm surprised I haven't seen you before. I know quite nearly every angel around."

Malach responded before the demon got a chance, "Xav isn't—"

"Very social," Xav finished for him. "I don't go out much."

Mal looked at him, distraught, but didn't say anything. Orieve nodded, looking a bit skeptical, but remained quiet otherwise.

"We should get going, now. I have a busy day planned," Malach said to Orieve as he grasped one of Xav's wrists and tugged him back a little.

"Very well." Before they could get away, Orieve reached out her hand to Xav. "It was lovely meeting you, Xavion. I hope to see you two again before your departing."

Xavion glanced down at her hand, wrinkled from age. Not wanting to be rude, he hesitantly shook it, watching in confusion when she yanked her hand back with a gasp.

"Orieve?" Malach questioned as she looked down at her palm before staring in Xavion's eyes in shock. "Is something wrong?"

"No, no. Nothing at all!" she replied in a sweet tone despite looking like she'd seen a ghost. "You two must be going on your way now!"

The old angel quickly dashed o before either man could say a word. Xav crossed his arms, tucking both his hands beneath his armpits.

"She knows," he said in a clipped tone.

"So what if she knows you're a demon? There's no rule disallowing you to be here." Malach brushed it o. "And if there was I'd change it anyway."

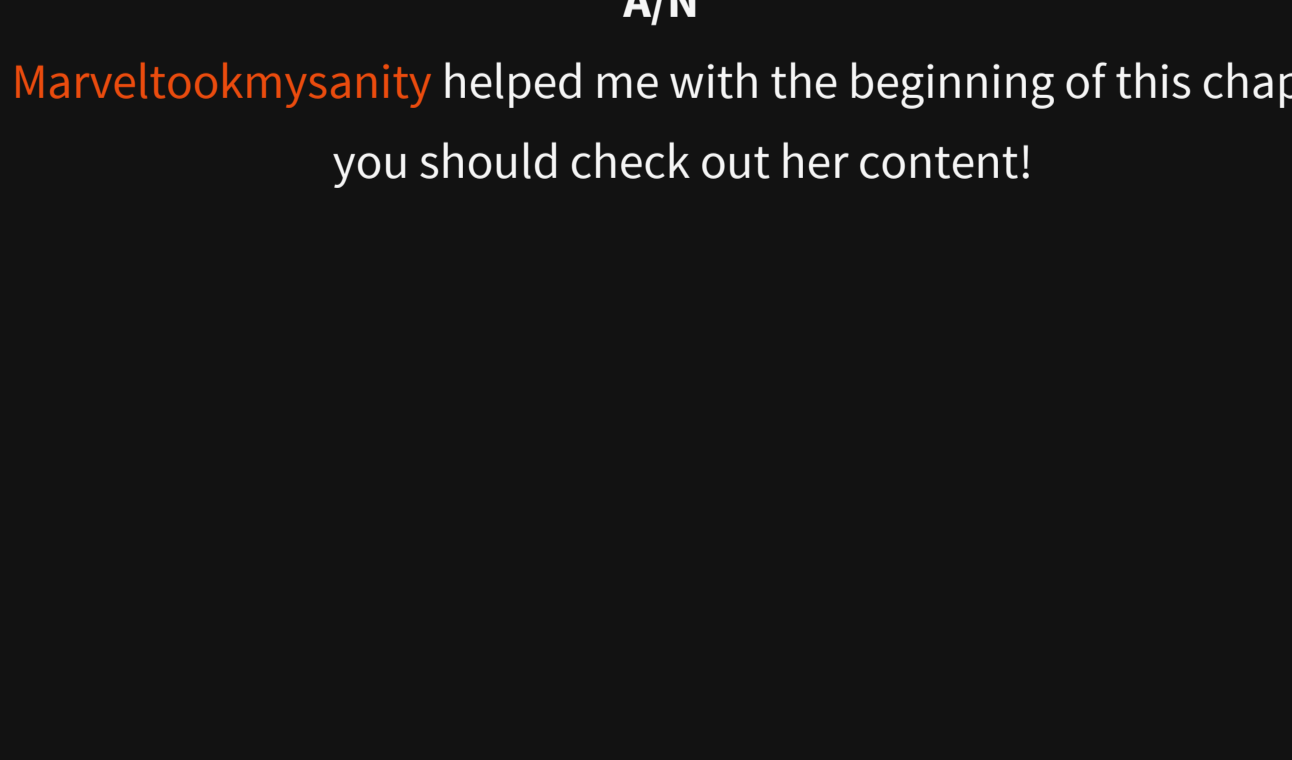
It wasn't against the law for species to be in their nonnative realm, though it was an odd occurrence since there wasn't any need to. Most o en demons had no reason to be in Heaven, and angels had no reason to be in Hell. Hence the peculiar reaction from Orieve.

"She probably ran o to go tell everyone that a demon is in Heaven. I bet they're all going to come out any second with pitchforks to stab me," Xavion grumbled bitterly.

Malach gently stroked the side of Xavion's face, sighing when the demon pushed away his touch since they were in public. "No one is going to do anything bad to you, Xav. Especially not with me around. I wouldn't let them if they tried."

"Oh please," Xavion snickered. "I'm not afraid of a few puny, specist angels. I could take all of those old fuckers in a heartbeat."

Malach grinned in amusement. "Then you should have nothing to worry about. Now come on, let's go somewhere a bit more private."



A/N

Marveltookmysanity helped me with the beginning of this chapter, you should check out her content!