Crowley's been annoyingly in love for six thousand years. What's another lifetime between friends?

Or: Aziraphale definitely fucks and isn't that just perfect?

It was still early days, years and years before Christ would make his humble appearance, when Crowley taught Aziraphale to hide his wings.

The sun was just setting when Crowley pulled him into the shadow of Akkad's gate. "What are you doing?" he hissed, clawing at Aziraphale's robe, dragging him deeper into the dark where they wouldn't be seen by the guards and merchants and rabble. Mesopotamia was becoming more crowded by the day. "You have to at least try to blend in." His hands, sharp of nail and thin on patience, flapped about an inch from Aziraphale's white plumage as if shooing it away.

"What do you mean, blend in?" Aziraphale said. "Wait, what's happened to yours?" He looked for the black wings, squinted a little harder, and then found them just beyond the veil. "Ah, there they are."

"Yes, and yours should be there too," Crowley insisted. "Put them away, you absolute mung bean." (Early stages, inventing curses.)

Aziraphale's eyes widened; Crowley was reminded of the Euphrates overflowing its banks. "But why?"
A put-upon sigh erupted from the demon. "Because if they see your wings, they'll know what you are."

"How is that a problem?" asked Aziraphale, who stubbornly believed that always being one's self was pleasing to God (since She had created it, after all). Crowley knew better. Knew that for some, that tack didn't always work out.

He tossed back the deep black hood he'd taken to wearing in recent decades, his slitted eyes glaring in the failing light of dusk. It hurt to look at Aziraphale; he fairly glowed.

"You'll scare them, angel," he said gravely. (He knew what he was talking about.)

"Oh." Aziraphale's wings dipped behind his shoulders. Crestfallen indeed. "I never considered that." He face crumpled. "It certainly explains the screaming and the prostration. I didn't set out to, but—Well, I suppose I do tend to reveal myself to mortals during high stress situations." He pursed his lips in thought, looking far too lovely.

"I say go for subtle," Crowley whispered into the angel's ear. "It's no good, you telling them, 'See here, I'm an angel, wings and all, so do this or that.' You have to make them choose it for themselves or else it doesn't—" He gestured vaguely.

"Doesn't count?" Aziraphale asked.

The demon shrugged. "Otherwise they're just frightened rabbits running, aren't they?"

Crowley didn't mention the other very good reason for hiding their wings: that humans were capable of amazing curiosity and even more amazing cruelty. If given the chance to net themselves a real angel or demon, they would. They were clever like that, figuring out things with their sigils and relics and such. Crowley had himself dodged several attempts at capture and had since learned that hiding his wings and his eyes was just good practice here on Earth. Saved a lot of awkward explanations, too.

Passing along that advice to the enemy was perhaps not the most evil thing he could have done, but Crowley's little meetings with Aziraphale, though brief, were the only bright spots in his Earthly assignment. He very much wanted to keep Aziraphale out of human-forged cages. He'd be very put out if the angel were replaced with one of the others; complete wankers, they were. This one, though….

He watched as Aziraphale frowned in concentration, his pure white wings fading out of sight, tucked away safely in the folds of space and time. Aziraphale shuddered with it, and it took all of Crowley's frayed self-control not to steady him with a touch to his arm. Instead he studied the angel's face as it shifted back into a semblance of peace, like the sea receding from the shore to reveal gleaming shells.

Oh, yes. This one was different.

Aziraphale opened his eyes. "How's that?" He glanced over his shoulder, checking his work. "Did I do it properly?"

Crowley's teeth bit into the fleshy inside of his cheek. He could still see the blazing white of Aziraphale's feathers if he really looked, but now it was a sight reserved for Crowley alone. And didn't that just burn deep inside, knowing he saw a part of Aziraphale that no one else could?

"Looks fine," he said instead of saying what he was really thinking.

There would be a lot of that in the centuries to come, he suspected.
And there was.

Time passed. Nations rose and fell; eras came and went; they agreed to take turns doing the homework for their respective offices. Thousands of years of Crowley not saying things because they shouldn't be said. They shouldn't even be thought or felt, that was the real problem. But try as Crowley might—and he did try—the sensation of warm wanting never truly left him when it came to Aziraphale. It might bank for a time, a pile of cooling ashes, only to flare up all over again over a look or a memory or a hint of Aziraphale's scent. Could be jealousy, he told himself. Could be simple obsession with that which he was not allowed to have. Except it wasn't. It was tender and needful and hopeless and a part of Crowley right down to his very essence.

It was really annoying.

Then came the late-night meeting at The Ivy. They were meant to be celebrating some little feat of cleverness—a tempting and a saving done two birds, one stone style as part of their double act. Crowley, seeing a champagne bucket bound for a table across the way, worked a slight demonic miracle in order to have the bottle sent over to their booth instead. With the baffled luvvie's compliments, naturally. Nibbling on canapes was all right for an angel, but Crowley wanted to feel bubbles bursting in his mouth.

"You never change, do you, Crowley?" Aziraphale said after the waiter had scooted off with the cork. His voice held that peculiar note of his, equal parts judgmental and fond.

"Oh, you're one to talk," Crowley sneered, sloshing champagne. "You've been wearing the same waistcoat for over a century. And the jacket, too, I expect." He pointed the rim of his glass at the offending articles. More bubbly splashed his wrist. "Seriously, can't you update your wardrobe? It's a new millennium, after all."

(It was 2007, in fact, less than a year before the Antichrist would show up.)

Aziraphale huffed and tugged on the bottom of his waistcoat, settling it more firmly across his middle as if preparing for a fight to keep it. "I'll have you know I've received a great many compliments on this ensemble," he said.

"When? 1892?"

It had been a joke, but Aziraphale's answering silence and fierce blush made Crowley pause in his next sip.

"Oh, that is pitiful," he said with palpable delight.

"It is not." Aziraphale sniffed. "It doesn't matter when it comes, appreciation is always welcome. And by the most discerning of tastes, mind you."

"Whose?" Crowley asked, draining his glass.

"Oscar Wilde's."

The champagne nearly shot from Crowley's mouth in a burst of surprise, but it was very good champagne, so Crowley managed to hold it at bay. He choked and sputtered a bit with the effort. Aziraphale, the picture of sincere concern, reached over and patted him on the back.

"Careful now," he said, "it'll go down the wrong pipe."

Crowley got his voice back in working order, just in time for his next volley. "Wilde!?" he howled.
"What were you doing cavorting with Oscar bloody Wilde?"

Aziraphale's brow furrowed. "You didn't know? I assumed you two had crossed paths, at least."

"No! He wasn't one of ours. Too," Crowley frittered a hand through the air, "artsy."

"Oh. Well, I found him very good company—once he relaxed and stopped trying to be so clever, that is. Rather sweet, actually." Aziraphale's smile was soft, his eyes far away, looking all the way back to the late 1800s. His fingers played idly with his waistcoat buttons. "You would have liked him."

"He would have liked me, you mean. Perhaps a little too much." Crowley leered, eyebrows rising.

"Oh, no, my dear." Aziraphale helped himself to another devilled egg. "You're not at all the right type."

"Oh?" Crowley couldn't help his affronted tone. "And how would you know his type, angel?"

Silence reigned anew. Aziraphale sipped his champagne and kept his gaze fastened to the dining room's crown molding, the picture of innocence. Crowley once again found himself flabbergasted.

"You didn't!"

"I did," Aziraphale said primly. "Twice." He reached for the bottle in its ice bucket. "Top off?"

Crowley remained frozen as Aziraphale refilled the glass that dangled in his slack hand. "Twice?" His voice was a strangled, weakened thing.

"Yes, it was much nicer the second time." Aziraphale grinned like a kitten that had gotten into the stores of cream. His eyes fairly twinkled. "He wasn't trying to be so clever, you see."

"But you don't—" Crowley squinted at him. He tried to picture it. Did so quite successfully. Had to stop. Too much velveteen being tossed on the carpet; too many artful curls tucked behind ears; too much damned skin bared in a tumble of agony. "You're not supposed to—"

"I am a being of pure love, Crowley," Aziraphale said, pouring for himself now. "I am meant to, to share that love with the, erm, everyone. In the human race, I mean." He picked up steam and moved away from his stammering. "Making love—physically, that is—isn't the only way to go about it, of course, but it's certainly not the tawdry thing you're making it out to be."

"I didn't say it was tawdry," Crowley said, "I just thought it was...beneath you."

"I'm not a *complete* snob." Said with the slight implication that Crowley might be. "Humans are very clever with their art and food and wine." He held up his glass to prove his point. "Why should I not enjoy those things? And other things besides?"

Crowley grumbled at that, then started in his chair and pointed at Aziraphale. "But wouldn't it have been adultery with Wilde? That's a sin, that is!"

"Not if all affected parties agree to it." Aziraphale drank deeply, not meeting Crowley's eyes.

The entire universe tilted on its axis. Crowley clutched at the arm of his dining room chair lest he be flung off the planet. "Are you telling me," he said in measured words, "that Mrs. Wilde. And you. Had. An *arrangement*?"

Aziraphale's eyes at last found his. "Constance was a wonderful woman! You don't understand,
Crowley; she was just as talented and passionate, and ever so lonely, and if I was able in some small way to give her a bit of solace—"

"You gave her something, all right," Crowley mumbled.

Angelic cheeks turned a telling shade of pink. "Crowley!"

"But you did, didn’t you? You diddled them both! I can’t believe it.” He sat back in his chair as if the weight of the revelation had shoved him there. So Aziraphale fucks, he thought. He wasn’t at all jealous to hear it; all right, maybe a little jealous. But mostly Crowley was impressed. Leave it to Aziraphale to find a way to bend all the Heavenly rules. The longer he knew Aziraphale, the more Crowley was convinced he was the only angel worth knowing. Christ, if those wankers upstairs ever found out what he'd been up to….

"There you go again, making it sound so vulgar." Aziraphale set down his glass, jarring Crowley from his thoughts. "I didn't think you, of all people, would be the hypocritical type."

"Hypocritical?" Crowley parroted. "What'd you mean by that?"

"Wagging your finger at me for going to bed with people when surely you've—!" Aziraphale stopped short. He stared at Crowley, angelic gears obviously whirring in his mind. "You….

Now it was Crowley's turn to drink and avoid his companion's gaze. The vintage really was very good.

"You haven't?" Aziraphale gasped. "But— No, that's impossible. You must have. You've never mentioned it, but you must have."

"And why must've I?" Crowley said with what he hoped was arch superiority.

"Well, it—" Aziraphale's pink tongue darted out to wet his lips in thought. Crowley watched it and seethed. "It's all part of temptation, isn't it? Luring people into compromising positions, coaxing them down the path of debauchery."

"Now who's being hypocritical?" Crowley muttered into his glass.

Aziraphale flushed. "I just meant that your lot seem to peddle the pleasures of the flesh alongside real sin all the time! Easier, I suppose, to have humans all muddled up, morally speaking, when they're—Well, when they're pliable. So to speak."

"Could be,” said Crowley noncommittally. It wasn't that he was embarrassed to have never done something that Aziraphale had; there were plenty of things Aziraphale liked doing that Crowley wanted no part in: Reading. Long walks. Wearing the same worn waistcoat until it disintegrated.

But the fact that Aziraphale was so shocked made it seem like Crowley had, in a way, let him down somehow. And that did not feel so wonderful. He drank more champagne and considered trying an egg. Better not, he thought. There was only one left.

"Then again," Aziraphale said slowly, "there are those who don't partake. And that's quite all right."

Oh. Crowley bit back a laugh. Leave it to Aziraphale to guess so wrongly and so sweetly. But if the angel wanted to think that Crowley wasn’t interested in fucking, let him. As long as it kept him from the knowledge that Crowley very much wanted to slip into bed, if only with Aziraphale.

He affected a shrug, nodded a bit. "Glad we've cleared that up, then," he said, and drank more.
"Oh, my dear." Aziraphale looked like someone had kicked a whole carton of blessed baby goats. "I am sorry. I didn't realize you—" He paused and took a deep breath. He also took the last devilled egg, which he chewed on meditatively. Swallowing, he started again. "It was terribly impolite of me to assume. Forgive me."

Crowley grunted, wanting the whole damned conversation to be over already. "Nothing to forgive," he said, and poured the last of the bottle into Aziraphale's glass, ignoring the angel's warm, relieved look.

It wasn't a lie, exactly. It was just an omission, just like he'd omitted telling Aziraphale how he'd felt all this time. Nothing new, really. They would just go on as they always had. No need for anything to change.

Except things did change. And one day, years later, Crowley found himself standing in the middle of a burning bookshop, screaming Aziraphale's name.

He couldn't sense him, couldn't smell him. Couldn't fathom a universe where Aziraphale, the silly ass, didn't exist. What did it matter if the world ended now? What did anything matter?

Crowley wondered between belts of whiskey if he should have done it differently. If he had told Aziraphale, would it—? No, probably not. Wouldn't have changed the fact that the angel was not his to have. There would have been a tight smile, an awkward moment. Sorry, my dear, though I'm very flattered—

Better to have the Earth explode, really. To Hell with it all.

Then: a miracle. Aziraphale, or a watery vision of Aziraphale, dribbled into the chair across from Crowley, and Crowley nearly wept in relief right there in the sticky pub.

Apparently Aziraphale was shocked to find him still on the damned planet.

"Plans changed," Crowley choked out, "Stuff happened." He hesitated. He was so rarely brave, but now he felt he had to be. The whiskey helped. "I lost my best friend." His voice wobbled and broke. There it was, out in the open at last. Surely there would be no mistaking what he meant by it. It felt oddly similar to falling, if falling involved a long hanging pause in the middle.

Aziraphale's face pinched the slightest bit. "I'm so sorry to hear it," was all he said in response. Kindly, softly, but all the same, there it was.

If Crowley had a heart at all, those words would have caused it to slump down toward his shoes and resolve never to make an appearance on his sleeve again. It wasn't what one hoped to hear after a bare-headed confession like that, but then again, it wasn't a surprise either.

What was a demon to do? Sober up, climb into a car, and drive burning all the way into the country to save the world.

Afterward, they would sit in a bus bound miraculously for London, alone save for the driver. Crowley was still vibrating a bit with the knowledge that they'd done it. Well, they hadn't. They'd done nothing but muck things up. But they'd seen it through and here they were. Whole. Safe, for the moment.

Together.

If he reached over just the barest inch—
"Oh, I'm sorry," Aziraphale said, breaking their exhausted silence, "I nearly forgot in all the excitement: this friend of yours, the one you lost today. Who was it?"

"Are you serious?" The lenses of Crowley's dark glasses twisted to stare at the angel. "You're really asking me that?"

Aziraphale looked back at him with gentle hesitation. "If you'd rather not speak of it, I understand. I just wanted to offer my condolences, my dear fellow."

For the span of a few eyeblinks, Crowley was certain Aziraphale was putting him on. Yet he could find not a trace of sarcasm or insincerity in that sweet face. His heart, already down in his shoes, sunk further below the bus carriage.

Aziraphale really didn't know.

Well...shit.

Crowley considered saying it was no one Aziraphale knew, or that it didn't matter, or that it was none of his business, but he'd gotten a small taste of what it meant to be brave today, so he thought maybe he could give it another go.

"Aziraphale," he said, his voice strangely steady, "I thought they'd killed you."

"Yes?" said the angel, leaning closer. His eyes still held their question.

Crowley nearly opened the window and flung himself onto the pavement. Why, he asked himself for not the first time, was he cursed with eternal love for this absolute idiot?

Some of his frustration must have shown on his face because Aziraphale's mouth opened on a little gasp. "Oh!" he said, eyes wide. "You were talking about me."

"Yep," Crowley said flatly, popping the P.

"Ah. I'm sorry, I didn't realize. What you meant, I mean."

"You really thought I was talking about someone else?"

"Well, you have plenty of friends. I just thought...."

Crowley squinted at him. Plenty of friends? Why did Aziraphale think—? Ah, right, because Crowley had told him so. Like a liar.

He adjusted his little scarf with feigned nonchalance. "Well, I meant you."

"Friends." Aziraphale frowned deeply, then covered it by beaming at him with the full force of a hundred flaming swords. "Yes. Of course we're friends."

"Good." Flatter than a pancake. A crepe, even. "Friends are good. Obviously." Better than one could hope for, really. Crowley turned to stare out the window at the nighttime passing by.

"Crowley?" Aziraphale waited for his gaze to swing back before saying in his soft voice, "I feel the same."

A damnable flicker of hope lit up in Crowley's chest. "You do?"

"Certainly." Aziraphale nodded, pleased. "You're my best friend too, of course."
Light extinguished. Face shuttered. "Of course." Maybe, if he was lucky, the bus would drive off a cliff.

Concern painted Aziraphale's features. "You must be so tired, my dear. You sound far from your usual sanguine self."

Crowley managed a weak smirk despite himself. How could he not love every inch of this ridiculous creature? "I'll be all right. Once we get back to mine, I'll just sleep for a week."

"Hm." Aziraphale frowned. "Perhaps we shouldn't get too comfortable. Our respective offices might make inquiries soon." His gaze was steady, resolute when it met Crowley's. "We should prepare ourselves."

"Yeah, probably." Crowley snuggled himself up against the cool window. "For now, though, think we've earned a minute to catch our breath." He closed his eyes, fully intending to just doze for a second, and woke up hours later in a different position entirely. His cheek was squashed against Aziraphale's shoulder and Aziraphale's chin was resting atop his head.

Crowley did not stir. He took a moment to breathe in the scent he'd thought he'd lost forever. To lean against his only constant.

This was enough. It would have to be. He closed his eyes again.

The bus shuddered to a stop. "We're here," Aziraphale whispered in his ear. "Are you awake, Crowley?"

Crowley feigned sleep for just a little longer, letting Aziraphale coax him with light touches to his knee, little words in his hair. He was evil, that much was certain. Only a demon would sink so low.

"Oh, you're dead on your feet. Come on, there's a chap."

Aziraphale led him into the building, a steadying hand on Crowley's elbow, and Crowley allowed it. He allowed it all through the lobby and the lift, all the way to the condo he kept on the top floor.

"I don't think I've visited you here for quite some time," Aziraphale said as he removed his hand. Crowley bit down on the protest that welled in his throat, letting the angel look around the place. "You've changed it. Of course you have. It's rather—" His gaze fell on the statue of an eagle taking wing. Crowley could see the gears turning, memories tickled.

"Tasteful and minimalist? Superior in every sense of the word?" Crowley said, drawing Aziraphale's attention away.

The angel took the bait, following Crowley down the long, dark hall in a huff. "I was going to say cold," he said. "Not in a bad way, mind. It suits you."

"Yeah," Crowley said coolly. "Does."

They passed into the atrium lined with lush greenery. Leaves shook as Crowley walked by. He could taste the plants' fear but also their curiosity at the angelic presence in their midst. Ah, yes, they were too young to have met Aziraphale before.

"I see that green thumb of yours is still in tip-top shape," said the angel, caressing the waxy leaf of a fig tree as they passed. "They're beautiful, Crowley."

"Don't call them that," he said over his shoulder. "They'll get too big for their britches."
"Oh, really." Aziraphale rolled his eyes, then, when he thought Crowley wasn't listening, he whispered into the foliage, "Quite beautiful indeed."

They passed through Crowley's study, still in awful disarray. Crowley stepped over the smeared remains of his erstwhile coworker. He'd miracle it clean later; too bloody late for it now. "I think I have a bottle or two of red in the pantry. Or is it white? Could be rosé actually. Anyway, help yourself to whatever it is. I'm going to bed." He slithered out of his jacket as he spoke, letting it fall to the floor.

"You're— Ah, I see. Still tired then?"

"Immensely." Off came the neckerchief, the waistcoat, the glasses, the belt. They all fell to the ground as he walked, clattering on concrete.

Crowley passed through the doorway to the bedroom. Aziraphale paused at the threshold and called after him, "Shall I wake you at a certain time?"

"Whenever you have to," Crowley said, and abandoned his vest and trousers in a similarly careless fashion, slipping naked between his cool sheets. Let Aziraphale get an eyeful if he wanted. Crowley couldn't be conscious a second longer (self- or otherwise), not when Aziraphale was in his flat, touching his things, studying the furnishings. Being...glowy.

He was out the moment his head hit the pillow.

Generally, demons don't dream. They lack the imagination for it. Crowley, as has been established, was different in this regard. His imagination was near-limitless. When he indulged in sleep, he could dream.

That night he dreamt of flying.

He was rocketing upward through the clouds into the thin, cold air. His lungs filled with it, clean and crisp. His wings felt strong, the muscles of his back flexing along with them, stray black feathers swirling in the wind. The stars were bright and new in the night sky.

One moment he was flying. The next he was falling. No more air, no strength, no starlight, just the Earth rushing up to meet him and—

Crowley sat up in bed with a gasp. Sweat trickled down his temples. He blinked and saw Aziraphale's face swimming before him wearing a worried look that managed to be lovely. His delicate hand hovered in the air between them as if it had just touched Crowley, then retreated.

"Sorry to wake you so soon," said Aziraphale, "but it's important."

Crowley ran a hand through his damp hair. He wished he kept a pair of glasses on his bedside table because at the moment his naked eyes were having a hard time adjusting to the sight of Aziraphale perched on the edge of his bed. The angel leaned in further.

"I have an idea," he said. "Just hear me out, is all I ask." And he began to talk.

Crowley heard, though he couldn't believe his ears. "Switch vessels? Have you gone completely off your nut!?"

"It could work."

"Or we could explode. That's what you said before, isn't it? That you couldn't hitch a ride in my
body because we'd—" Crowley mimed his hands into fireworks. "Oil and water, yeah?"

"I did think that initially, yes," Aziraphale said, "but I've been reading this last prophecy of Agnes Nutter's over and over and...Crowley, it's the only thing that makes sense to me." He was clutching the burnt scrap of paper in his hands, Crowley realized.

"Give that here." He snatched the paper and re-read the faint printed words. _Choof your faces wisely._... "It's just gibberish, isn't it?"

"She hasn't been wrong thus far," Aziraphale pointed out. He took back the paper and placed it carefully in his waistcoat pocket. "At any rate, I believe we should—give it a try. At least."

Crowley arched one brow. "You want to try switching bodies. With me. Even though we might bring down the building. Possibly the entire block."

"We'd be careful, of course. Go, erm, slowly."

Crowley swallowed. How much slower could he possibly go? He stared down at the steel grey coverlet, hoping to set it on fire with just the force of his glare.

"Please, Crowley." Aziraphale's hand settled warm and light over his. "This is what we're meant to do. I can feel it. Can't you?"

A short bark of laughter. He chanced a look up at Aziraphale and hoped his eyes weren't giving him away. "Faith and I aren't the best of friends, angel."

"Even after all that's happened?" Aziraphale shook his head. "No, I believe we can do this. I feel we must. And if it doesn't work then—" His eyes flickered along the coverlet now, looking for something that wasn't there. "Well, it won't matter, will it? Either we get killed doing this foolish thing or we'll be killed when they come for us. At least this way, there's a chance."

It made a sort of sense, put that way. Crowley considered that dying here with Aziraphale would be infinitely superior to being put to death alone. Although he preferred not to die stark naked, if it could be helped.

"Let me get dressed," he said, plucking at the sheets where they pooled around his skinny waist, "and we'll give it a go."

"Really?" Aziraphale lit up like the sun coming through the clouds. "Oh, Crowley, thank you!" His arms wound about Crowley's bare shoulders and for a moment, a rather stupid moment, Crowley thought perhaps he might get a chance to return the embrace.

But of course Aziraphale pulled away with a nervous little laugh before he could move.

"Apologies," the angel murmured. "It slipped my mind, how you don't go in for that sort of thing." He patted Crowley's leg through the covers before rising. "I'll give you a chance to make yourself decent."

Make myself decent, Crowley thought as he scrubbed a hand across his face. Might need another hundred years for that.

But Crowley did not have a hundred years, not even a hundred minutes. He clawed his hands through his sleep-mussed hair. Any moment now, he and Aziraphale would be trading bodies. Who knew what that would entail? Would the angel sense the truth once he inhabited Crowley's fleshy shell? Would Aziraphale find the place to be as disgusting as the inside of a sewer pipe? Why had he
agreed to this ridiculous plan?

You know why, Crowley told himself silently. He'd never been adept at refusing Aziraphale.

Right. Clothes first, existential crises later.

Crowley had always taken pains with his appearance, delighting as much as he was able in changing fashions, fine fabrics, all the myriad ways he could arrange his coppery hair. Now he selected each piece with grim decisiveness—he didn't look all that different from yesterday, but less rumpled, more pressed and polished. If he was going to explode with Aziraphale inside of him, he planned to look good doing it.

He found Aziraphale in the atrium, smiling at his plants and deftly pouring wine (ah, rosé after all) into two glasses cupped in one palm. The sun had not yet risen; all was still dark in the room. The angel glanced up at the sound of his footsteps.

"I thought we both might want a drink to—" He wiggled his shoulders a bit. "Relax. Before, you know...."

"Attempting something that might destroy us both?" Crowley took one glass for himself. "Good idea." He swirled the pink liquid around, wondering why he even had this on hand. Most of his wines tended to turn themselves into a lovely Chateau Lafite if given enough time in the pantry.

"Quite." Aziraphale clinked his glass against Crowley's, the chime of it echoing through the room.

Neither drank right away. A long moment passed, each in their own thoughts, until Aziraphale broke the silence.

"Crowley, if the worst were to happen, I—"

"Oh, shut it," Crowley drawled, slugging back his wine in one huge gulp. He wiped his mouth on his sleeve. "It's going to be fine. You're right, of course. It's all written down in the prophecy. Nothing to it."

Aziraphale looked at Crowley with those soft eyes that meant he knew Crowley was lying and was thankful for it. "You really think so?"

He shrugged. "Wouldn't do it otherwise." Turning on his heel, he strode out of the atrium. "Come on. Let's get this show on the road."

Crowley did not have a sitting room as much as he had a collection of brutalist furniture arranged in a haphazard oval with a stolen Rodin at the center. Aziraphale gave the statue a look of mild reproach before taking a seat (such as it was) on one of the highbacked chairs. Crowley decanted himself into the chair opposite, flinging one leg over the armrest.

"Right," Aziraphale took their empty glasses and set them aside. "How shall we, erm...?" He planted his hands on his thighs. "Begin?"

"You're the expert," Crowley said. "I haven't a clue."

"Well, I've never done this before. I wouldn't say I'm an expert!"

"Do you at least have an idea?"

Aziraphale's face underwent a series of elastic motions before settling on the determined jut of a chin.
"I do, in fact."

"So?" Crowley fanned his hand back and forth. "Get on with it."

"The thing is," Aziraphale said, "I think it might be best if we touch. A bit." He looked at Crowley with a grimace. "If that's all right with you."

"What, like—?" Crowley stuck out his palm as if ready to shake hands.

"Yes, let's try that," Aziraphale said, and grasped Crowley's hand in his.

They sat like that for a moment. Like a pair of tits.

"Nothing happened," said Aziraphale in surprise.

"Well, of course nothing happened!" Crowley tugged their joined hands up and down. "We've shook hands before and nothing happened then!"

"We have?"

Crowley thought hard. "Must've." At some point.

Aziraphale extricated his hand. "Then let's try another way."

"By all means—" Crowley frowned as Aziraphale leaned closer, right into his space, hands hovering around Crowley's head. "What are you doing?"

"Ah, I think it might help if— May I?" Aziraphale made a vague gesture toward the dark glasses Crowley wore. Crowley, unable to think of a reason to decline, gave a small nod. His eyes drifted shut out of instinct as the glasses were lifted away from his face.

"There," Aziraphale said in a whisper. "Much better."

"Is it?" Crowley opened his eyes and looked up at Aziraphale, who was now standing before him, looking far too wonderful.

"Oh yes." That blond head tipped sideways, considering. "You know, you have beautiful eyes, Crowley."

Crowley blinked once before looking away. He may have grumbled something in response; who knows what? What was he supposed to say to that, anyway?

Aziraphale's laugh was soft and not at all cruel. He put the glasses aside on the Rodin's plinth and reached for Crowley's face once more.

"Would it be all right if I...touched you?" he asked.

Crowley's tongue was unreasonably thick in his mouth. "I don't see the harm," he managed to say. "Shall I—?" He raised his hands uselessly in the air, mirroring Aziraphale's movements.

"Yes, I think that should do nicely." Aziraphale cupped Crowley's jaw in his hands, tilting his face up. Crowley, who couldn't reach as far from his seated position, let his hands fall to Aziraphale's wrists.

He swallowed. So bloody awkward, staring up at Aziraphale like this, having his face held. Was he supposed to maintain eye contact? It seemed impossible. His gaze darted away.
"Keep your eyes fixed on me," Aziraphale admonished, giving his cheek a little pat. "Try to imagine, I don't know...slipping into my body the way you'd slip into a new coat." His smile was weak.

Crowley made a face. "Sounds grotesque."

"It isn't! Come now." His voice and eyes softened. "Please. Try."

Deep breath in. He would try. For Aziraphale's sake. "All right." He opened his eyes, held Aziraphale's plaintive stare, and pictured how it would feel. To be a part of Aziraphale. To be held inside him, to surround him at the same time.

To be loved.

Something hot wriggled its way into the center of Crowley's chest. It spread golden through his torso into his limbs. Was he burning up? Was this just the prelude to some horror, some dangerous misstep, some loss as great as a Fall?

For a moment, he trembled. He felt his own hands resting on his wrists. One foot in his body, one in the bright glow of Aziraphale's.

"I think it's working," said Aziraphale, but Crowley only heard his own voice speaking.

Definitely burning. Heat like a star, like a supernova. "It's too much," Crowley gasped, but in Aziraphale's voice. "You'll be hurt, you'll turn to ash—" Was he back in the burning bookshop? He was screaming Aziraphale's name over and over; he must be back there.

"Crowley, look!" Cool hands on his arms, on his face. "Look, we're all right. It's all right. Don't you see?"

Crowley opened his eyes. Stared at himself. What an unfathomable sight, that old face of his lit from within by an angelic smile. Aziraphale laughed—a joyous, unpretentious laugh that had no place in Crowley's mouth.

"We've done it," Aziraphale said. He touched a thumb to Crowley's cheek. Crowley was startled to see it come away damp. "We've actually done it."

Crowley smeared a soft hand across his wet face. "These are your tears; I just want to make that absolutely clear," he said with a touch of anger. "It is so like you to start blubbering at the drop of a hat."

Aziraphale did not argue, only gave Crowley a smile that looked dreadful on his borrowed visage. "Quite right," he said.

Crowley took stock of their situation. Somehow in all the commotion they'd both tumbled to the floor. He was sprawled out on the thick rug too close to Aziraphale. (He refused to think of him as anything but Aziraphale, no matter whose skin he happened to be wearing.) Picking himself off the ground, he went in search of a mirror.

"Might take some doing to get used to this," he said as he hobbled a bit on legs stouter than he was used to. "When our bosses come for us, we'll need to be convincing."

"I agree," said Aziraphale. He tottered after Crowley, making a mess of his walk. "Dear Lord in Heaven, however do you manage these legs?"

"Took a few centuries to get it," Crowley admitted. He looked over his shoulder and gave his old
friend a raised brow. "Hope you're a quick study."

Stubborn resolution made Aziraphale stand straighter, walk faster (though not any more fluidly). "I am certain I will be able to act the part. We just need a bit of practice, that's all." He caught himself against the edge of a credenza as one knee gave out. "Oh, fuck."

"Did you just curse?" Crowley whirled on him, equal parts delighted and concerned. "Is it the evil influence of my body, d'you think? Turning you toward darkness?"

"No! I do curse sometimes! And anyway it's not as if your body is—" Aziraphale went quiet. He straightened, his eyes somewhere far away. It was as if he was remembering something he'd quite forgotten. Or finding something he'd thought was lost.

Crowley did not like that look on him. "Aziraphale?" He hobbled over and took him by the arm. "You all right?"

Yellow slitted eyes shifted to him as if surprised to see him there. "Yes, I'm fine," Aziraphale said. "I'm really rather…." He trailed off, blinking, then seemed to come back to himself all at once, grinning and beaming. His fingers went to fiddle with a pinkie ring that was no longer there, and so he stuffed his hands in his pockets instead. "But what about you? Will you be able to mimic me with any success?"

"Probably," Crowley hedged. He didn't see how he could possibly pass with less than flying colors. He'd spent the last six thousand years making a study of Aziraphale, after all. His walk, his speech, his way of being—it was all sadly memorized. Crowley fidgeted with his pinkie ring, unknowingly demonstrating his talents.

Together they made their way to the pantry, where plenty of gleaming stainless steel appliances offered a reflective surface. Crowley peered into the facade of his refrigerator—used primarily for wines that wanted chilling—and studied the face that stared back at him.

It was more than strange. In the last few thousand years, Crowley had been many things: the serpent, the temptor, the demon, the scourge, the plague, the darkness that dwells waiting within. Crowley had been all of those in his long existence, but he had never been beautiful. Not like this.

He traced the curve of his lips with his stolen fingertips and felt ashamed at the thrill this produced in his stolen stomach.

"Right," Aziraphale said somewhere by the cooker, "small steps to start with—literally. You must watch me and give me your opinion, Crowley."

Crowley wasn't very interested in watching his own body putter around the kitchen, but he tore away from the reflection all the same.

"Go on, then. Try not to fall on my face."

Aziraphale groused at the joke, but Crowley was fairly pleased. As he watched Aziraphale taking his body for a spin, his hands, used to having plenty of pockets to slip into, sought out a similar hiding spot in his new raiment. Finding one, Crowley's fingers closed round a scrap of paper.

Ah, he thought as he drew it out, Nutter's last thing. He cast his eyes over the paper again. Useless now that they were fulfilling its prophecy. Probably dangerous to keep about too. He reached for the hob and turned a dial to light the cooker's flame.

"How was that?" Aziraphale asked, huffing a bit from all his swaggering.
"One more turn," Crowley told him. "Think you've nearly got it." He held the bit of paper up to the flame, fully intending to incinerate the damned thing.

Then the ink changed. Crowley squinted at it in alarm. The prophecy faded and a new one took its place: *Tell hine, ye dew-beating cumberground.*

"Cumberground?" Crowley wrinkled his borrowed nose. "That's a bit harsh."

"What's that, Crowley?" Aziraphale called from where he'd oozed into the corridor.

"I said you're looking very good indeed," Crowley returned. "Maybe a little more hip?"

"More? Well, if you say so."

Crowley returned his attention back to the paper. He had no illusions as to what it was referencing. Tell him, indeed. He growled to himself. The witch had no idea what she was talking about. As if he could just mince up to his oldest, dearest (only) friend, puff out his chest, and say, Guess what, angel? I've been meaning to mention it but I'm very much in love with you.

To Hell with that. He turned up the cooker flame and lit the scrap afire, dropping it into the sink to smolder.

They did eventually learn to impersonate each other to a T over the course of a few hours. In the time before the sun rose, Aziraphale mastered how to smile in that Crowley-like way, like a snake that's caught sight of its dinner, and Crowley acquired the ability to beam like a beatitude in stained-glass. They also managed, with practice, to figure out how to switch bodies a bit more fluidly. They moved like each other, spoke like each other—there were times when Crowley wondered if they hadn't become one creature in two bodies. They were so, so close. Almost sharing the same mind, the same thoughts.

Except Aziraphale said something Crowley had certainly not been thinking: "Well, time to test it with the real thing, shall we?"

"What?" Crowley sat bolt upright from his already very uptight position in his chair, pretending to read a fat book. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, we should make sure these vessels will survive the, erm, punishments we'll be given. It does us no good playing each other if we end up dissolving anyway. Just a touch of holy water to make sure I'm ready, that's what we need."

"No," Crowley said with feeling. "Absolutely not."

Aziraphale gave him a look that was disturbingly spot-on. "I know you're worried about damage to your body, but we must be certain."

"No," Crowley repeated, rising from his chair. He didn't give a fig about his body, but if Aziraphale was wrong and his angelic spirit wasn't enough to keep him alive, Crowley would be forced to turn back the clock and really let the world end.

"No?" Aziraphale said in a mocking whine. He really was getting good. "Why ever not?"

"Because." Crowley cast about for an excuse. "You'd have to leave the flat to get yourself some holy water; we can't risk having you snatched up on the street before we're ready for my lot." He turned to the credenza and rummaged in a drawer for a stray book of matches. "We can make Hellfire right here in the comfort of home."
Hellfire, if you didn't know, needs none of the pomp and fuss that holy water requires. There is no priest (or anti-priest) necessary; anyone with the right tools and a bit of patience can cook up their own batch. Crowley happened to be well-versed in its distillation, Hellfire being the most efficient tool in the War That Didn't Actually Happen. Every good (erm, bad) demon was taught how to make the stuff and could do it blindfolded.

"I have to say," said Aziraphale as Crowley went about coaxing the fire to Hellishness in the grate, "I don't much like the idea of you sticking your hand in there as a test."

"I'll only do a pinkie," Crowley promised, and slipped the signet ring from his hand. "That way, if it burns clean off, you'll still be able to turn the pages of your moldy old books. Now stand well back."

Despite the nasty tone, Aziraphale must have heard the care behind the words. He looked at Crowley with a melting gaze and took the recommended step or two away from the fireplace. "Thank you, dear boy. But I was more concerned with— Well, if this doesn't work—"

"It will work fine," Crowley said, and before he could think too much about it, he stuck out his little finger and thrust it into the flames.

It only tickled. Crowley grinned up at Aziraphale, who was now hovering much too close at his shoulder.

"So it's all right?" he asked.

"Angel," Crowley said, "I think we might have them this time." He put his whole arm into the fire and laughed.

They were ready. And they did manage to thoroughly put one over both upstairs and down- with their little parlor trick. Crowley was especially proud of his impersonation of Aziraphale's sweet, melting eyes. He barked a laugh when Aziraphale outlined his own exploits in Crowley's shoes. They agreed such an achievement should be celebrated, and so Crowley took Aziraphale to lunch.

Had there ever been a more perfect lunch? A more beautiful dining room? Better company? Crowley sipped his champagne and felt...content. It was a strange feeling, peace. He was finally free to do as he pleased without Hell to pester him. And Aziraphale?

He smiled across the table at his companion, who was cutting into the smallest cake ever created and nattering on about different applications of buttercream. He could listen to his friend talk about nothing all day. Yes, his very best and oldest (only) friend. He would be quite content with that.

When the last glass was drained and the final macaron consumed, Aziraphale leaned back in his chair and said, "Shall we go back to mine? I'd quite like to see all those little additions you told me about."

"All right," Crowley said, signaling for the bill.

Once outside on the pavement, Crowley sniffed the air. Was it his imagination or did it smell of wildflowers? It was one of those rare summer days when London was not damp or muggy or overcast or boiling hot. It was a perfect day. You don't get many of those, even if you've lived six thousand years. Crowley felt they should enjoy it.

"Let's walk the long way," he said, by which he meant walking at all and not transporting in the supernatural fashion.

Aziraphale glowed at him. "A wonderful idea."
They walked through the loads of tourists clustered around Eros, up into the bustle of Chinatown, and through the winding Soho streets. Crowley took it all in with a sense of growing fondness. This was their world. He flipped a pound coin into a living statue's hat and grinned as the silly blighter came to life.

"Are you feeling all right?" Aziraphale asked as they continued on. "I've never seen you so— Well, carefree, I suppose."

"Feeling absolutely," he peeked over the rim of his dark glasses, "tickety-boo."

"Oh," Aziraphale grinned widely. "Good. Because there is something I wanted to— Ah, thank you," he said as they reached the door of the bookshop, which Crowley held open for him.

"Take a look at these. I believe our young Adam Young is a fan of the boy detective genre," Crowley said. He took off his dark glasses in deference to the low light inside and used them to point to the new books sat on their gleaming shelf.

"Yes, I see," said Aziraphale without so much as glancing at them. He turned to Crowley with a strange look on his face. Almost like he was worried, but that was preposterous. What did they have to worry about? "Crowley, I should like to talk to you. Now that we are able." He glanced around the pristine, empty bookshop.

"Talk? What do you mean?" Crowley's smile wavered but valiantly stayed in place. "We've been talking all afternoon."

"Yes, but not about—" Aziraphale twisted his signet ring round his little finger. "Not about What Has Happened."

Crowley, hearing the capitalization in Aziraphale's words, froze. His heart (and yes, he did have one) made a small hiccup in his chest. He knew he should inquire innocently about what Aziraphale meant, or make some joke, or do anything but stand there like a living statue. But he couldn't manage to produce a coherent sound.

Aziraphale began to pace. "The thing is," he said, "that when we switched bodies, I—I felt something. And I think it prudent to discuss whether or not you felt something too."

"Prudent?" Crowley croaked. Seemed like the wrong word entirely. He couldn't find anything prudent about it.

"Yes." Aziraphale stopped and stood firmly between Crowley and the door, his hands clasped protectively over his middle. "I shall be honest with you, Crowley. I think, after all we've been through, we owe each other that at least."

"You don't owe me anything," Crowley said. He fished his dark glasses from his breast pocket and applied them to his face. Hiding the eyes seemed—damn it all, prudent. He attempted to sidestep Aziraphale in a bid for the door, but the angel headed him off.

"Please let me say what I need to say," Aziraphale said. "You know I can sense love in a place, of course. Well, I didn't realize it at the time but a body is a sort of place, isn't it? That is, your body in particular. And when I was in it—"

Crowley held up one finger. "Don't. Finish. That sentence."

"I felt it," Aziraphale said anyway. His eyes were swelling rivers. "All of it. Miles and miles of it. And that love had a name; I could hear it." He hesitated. "It was mine."
"We are not talking about this," Crowley said, and shouldered his way past the angel. He wasn't going to stand there and be humiliated.

"Crowley!"

His hand was on the doorknob. The latch was moving.

"Come back here and listen to me!" Aziraphale cried. "Listen or I'll— I'll—"

"Or you'll what?" he demanded, whirling with venom in his mouth. "You'll never speak to me again?"

Aziraphale was pale as he stood in the middle of the shop. "That— It was the worst thing I could think to do, you know. Back at the airfield. To cut you away like—"

"Like a cancer," Crowley snarled.

"Like a limb," Aziraphale said. His eyes pleaded, his throat worked. "Dear Lord, don't you know?"

"Know what?"

"That I— That—" Aziraphale held out a hand. It shook, but his voice was steady. "Switch with me."

Crowley screwed up his face. "What, now? Why?"

"Just do it!" Aziraphale said. Then, softer. "Please." His hand extended further.

Could never deny his angel. With regret that he'd never picked up that skill, Crowley sighed. Strode forward. Placed his hand in Aziraphale's. Allowed him in, found a space for himself elsewhere. It was easier now, but Crowley still felt the bottom of his stomach drop away.

"Look at me," said Aziraphale in Crowley's voice. "Open your eyes and really look at me."

Crowley did so. His own face blinked back at him, though it was Aziraphale's goodness behind the yellow eyes. It was his sweet nature forming the shape on the mouth. Crowley looked as he'd been told to, but he couldn't do it for long. He looked away.

"Why is this so difficult for you?" Aziraphale asked. His hand, more gentle than it had a right to be, touched Crowley's chin and directed his gaze back where it had been.

He swallowed. "It's weird, isn't it? Seeing you wearing my skin."

"Why?" Aziraphale insisted. "What don't you like about it?"

"Well, it's— It's just me. Why would I bother staring at that?"

"I don't know, it's not so bad. I've been doing it for a few millennia." A smile touched Aziraphale's borrowed lips. "Crowley—"

"Why are you harping on this?" Crowley sighed. "I don't like myself very much, I suppose. Is that honest enough for you, angel?"

"How can you not like yourself?" Aziraphale asked.

"I mean, look at me." Crowley flicked a finger against the black lapels that Aziraphale wore. "Demon. I'm not meant to, am I?"
"There are a lot of things," Aziraphale said slowly, "that I don't think we were meant to do, but we did them all the same." He cupped Crowley's face in his hands. "All right. Come back here." A pulse of light and warmth, and they returned to the proper bodies.

Crowley's hands were still on Aziraphale. He felt an annoying sensation in his eyes and blinked rapidly. He wouldn't be able to blame the tears on Aziraphale this time if they fell.

"You're my best friend," he said through the struggle. Aziraphale had to know, before the end. Had to be reminded. Before he did anything that would ruin it all forever.

"Yes." Aziraphale's hand came up to caress Crowley's cheek. "You know, the Greeks did their best."

"They what?" Crowley frowned. He wasn't sure how the Greeks had entered the discussion.

"They had a few different words for love," Aziraphale murmured. "Four. Or seven, if you want to be specific. But in my time on Earth I've catalogued about two thousand and eighty ways to love someone. And the thing is, Crowley—" He gazed at him as if memorizing every bit. "I love you in every way, and I think you love me too."

Crowley's mouth fell slack. Must have misheard. A trick of the mind. Too much champagne. "What?"

Aziraphale plunged ahead. "You are my best friend, yes, and that is so very, very important. But you're other things to me as well. You're my confidant, my brother-in-arms, my secret, my confessor. You're—" He looked incalculably desperate. "You're my husband, Crowley."

Oh. Oh….

"Oh, angel," Crowley breathed.

"I just wanted you to know how I felt," Aziraphale began to babble, "because it seemed awfully silly to keep dancing round the subject, and every time I thought to bring it up, I worried that—"

Crowley leaned in and shut him up. What was a kiss, anyway? Mouths touching? It shouldn't have been anything special. And yet….

Wasn't so bad for a first try. Crowley thought it was pretty well done, actually. Their lips parted from each other, eyes meeting.

"Wasn't sure you'd be interested in that," Aziraphale whispered.

"I am very interested," Crowley said, and kissed him again.

After a few moments, Aziraphale broke free once more. "I don't want you to think," he gasped, "that I require you to show affection with any mortal concepts. Human inventions are all well and good for humans, but if you'd rather—"

Crowley nipped at his ear. "Sex," he said. "Let's try it, husband mine."

"Oh! Well, if you're absolutely sure."

Another kiss seemed to say it better than words. Aziraphale was positively liquid in Crowley's arms afterward. His eyes were glazed with the sort of happiness usually reserved for omakase.

"I keep a room upstairs," he said in a dazed fashion. "I hardly use it these days but—"
They were on the second floor in an eyeblink. Aziraphale made an approving noise while Crowley took a look around. The place was positively Victorian. There were cozy quilts and a cushy headboard and more embroidered pillows than you could shake a stick at. It was the exact opposite of Crowley's tastes, and he loved it.

"Oh, I should tell you," he said suddenly, remembering his lapse. He fumbled his glasses off his face and pulled Aziraphale close once more. "I love you. You know that, right? It's been well-established, yeah?"

Would he ever get used to being the focus of that angelic smile? "Yes, my dear, but it's nice to hear you say so all the same."

"I'll say it again if you like," Crowley offered, leading Aziraphale to the monstrously plush cream bed. "I love you, angel. How many ways, did you say? Two thousand-something?"

"And eighty-nine. If we're being precise."

"Of course we are. Now, I reckon I've got about two thousand eighty-eight under my belt so far. Just one left and then the whole list will be ticked. What is it you told me once? Physical love isn't the only way but...?"

"But it can be rather nice," Aziraphale said with a smile, "and not at all tawdry."

"Right." Crowley shucked his coat with a grin. "I'll just have to try not to be too clever."

"My dearest Crowley," said Aziraphale, cupping his face with his soft white hands, "you couldn't be too clever if you tried." His mouth quivered with good humor.

"Bastard," Crowley growled with unending fondness, and kissed him again.

The bed was as soft and fluffy as it looked. Crowley made himself at home in it and helped Aziraphale with ridding themselves of their clothes. When Crowley got to his very last layer, he paused, frowning down at himself.

"Why am I wearing an Edwardian bathing costume?" he asked.

"Well, I wasn't going to parade your body through Hell without a stitch of clothing," Aziraphale huffed. "You don't own any undergarments, Crowley! I checked every drawer."

Crowley began to laugh and couldn't stop. His sides ached with it, and he clutched them through the layer of wool. "Facing down the army of the damned and you were worried about my modesty?"

"I know I had no right to," Aziraphale sniffed, "but I may have been feeling a tad...proprietary."

"You idiot." Crowley rose to his knees to get his hands in Aziraphale's hair. "You had every right."

Aziraphale looked pleased as a cat swimming in cream. "Jolly good," he said, and divested Crowley of his bathing costume.

Crowley wasn't actually ashamed of his corporeal form—it was fine, was his feeling. A little bit leggy but not bad. Certainly nothing to write poetry over, though. So it was with a certain amount of ambivalence that Crowley lay back against the smooth sheets and let Aziraphale take stock of him.

"What?" he asked peevishly after an unreasonable amount of time had passed in silence.

Aziraphale sighed, his face all aglow. "I only wish you could see yourself through my eyes," he said.
"You're the most beautiful thing, you know."

"Am not," Crowley said on reflex.

Aziraphale pinched his thigh, eliciting a yelp. "Don't argue with me. You are." He stripped off his socks and got to work showing Crowley how serious he was about the topic.

Years and years ago, long before London was even built, Crowley had been the one to teach Aziraphale how to hide his wings.

"That's it," he said in Crowley's ear. "Oh, darling, you're doing so well."

On that perfect afternoon in the plush bed, Aziraphale was the one to show Crowley how to unfurl them once more.

"Angel—" Crowley bit down on his lip, wrapped himself around Aziraphale tight he could. They moved together, Aziraphale inside him, a part of him. Loving him.

"Let me see you," Aziraphale whispered. "Don't be afraid."

Crowley stared up into his beloved's face. Felt himself shifting. Half himself, half Aziraphale. Their bodies were shared, every sensation mingled between them, theirs to give and to receive.

He saw himself, just for a moment, the way Aziraphale did. And he felt it for the first time since his Fall. Felt the love that was meant for him.

They both gasped in the same voice. Black wings burst through the air, enfolding them in a shower of dark feathers. Aziraphale's appeared too in a swirl of white. The wings entwined and held them in an ethereal cocoon.

"Are all orgasms like that?" Crowley would ask later as they lay in bed against the avalanche of pillows. His coppery head rested on Aziraphale's shoulder so he could nose against the base of his throat, and Aziraphale's hand was in his hair, combing, petting. Their wings were still out, draped across the mattress in a tangle of primaries and alulae.

"Oh, no, my dear. Not even close." He dropped a kiss on Crowley's temple for no reason other than he could. "I'm afraid with you it's quite different."

"Better?" Crowley said, fishing blatantly now.

Aziraphale made a humming sound. "I suppose I'll have to gift you with some more mundane ones so you can make your own judgment."

"Oh, what a chore," Crowley drawled. He snuggled closer. Closed his eyes.

And dreamt of flying.

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