A Kingdom For a Book

by Luki

Summary

Reborn has decided it's time for Tsuna to prove his negotiation skills in the Ultimate Vongola Negotiation Trial. Visiting a certain shop in London, and leaving with a book.

Notes

I've been obsessed with watching Good Omens and fallen straight into a new fandom. I had 2 crossover ideas for the show, either with KHR or Librarians, and decided to do this one because it was by far the shorter one! Inspired by the deleted scene Neil Gaiman read out regarding goons trying to threaten Aziraphale's shop, and Shadwell's comment about Crowley's being mafia. Based mostly on the TV show, but definitely using Book!Aziraphale's attitude to selling his stock.
Tsuna, Yamamoto, Gokudera and Ryohei are in Italy, having breakfast with Nono and his respective guardians when it happens.

The Tenth generation had been invited (or, translated into civilian, abducted in the dead of night the day after graduating middle school) to spend the summer break at the Vongola Mansion. However, Hibari had been...forceful, in his refusal, while Mukuro and Chrome had declined and vanished before anyone could talk them into it. Lambo, while excited at the idea at returning home, had refused to leave Nana alone, and had been given the ‘very important job’ of protecting the woman while the teens were away.

Tsuna rather sorely wishes he could have traded jobs with his young lightning. The ‘break’ part of the trip had turned out to be very apt, because tutoring on Vongola grounds was ten time worse than in Namimori, where Reborn had to at least *pretend* he was bound by foolish things like land ownership, Hibari’s territory issues and physics. The hitman had been enjoying every minute of Tsuna torment, to the surprise of absolutely no one. As such, nobody is really surprised when Reborn walks in and slaps four airline tickets on the table.

“‘It’s time for your Vongola Negotiation Trial,’” he says, as if it explains anything.

Granted, it’s Reborn, so explanations have always been optional. If not for the fact that the man-turned-baby-and-now-rapidly-going-through-puberty-again-teenager always landed on his feet, Tsuna would swear blindly that he just made things up on the spot.

“What’s a Vongola Negation Trial?” he asks, mostly to get things over with. If he doesn’t ask what Reborn is talking about, Yamamoto will, which will set Gokudera off on a giant rant only 2 people in the room can follow, and it’s just too early in the morning for that.

To his surprise, Nono is the one that answers, folding his hands and smiling at his heir.

“It’s a right of passage for all young Mafioso” he explains. “Especially those in line for boss positions. It’s a test to show your intelligence, charisma and skill at obtaining objectives.”

Yamamoto laughs and leans over to wrap an arm around Tsuna’s shoulders.

“This’ll be easy Tsuna,” he says. “Those are some of your best qualities.”

“Hieee?”

“Don’t touch the Tenth so casually!” Gokudera hisses at the rain, before his face does some spectacular muscle rearranging to smile at Tsuna.

“But he’s right Tenth! This will be a cakewalk for you,” he insists.

“Sawada can negotiate to the extreme!” Ryohei agrees.

“What? But I’m not good at-”

“Regardless,” Reborn say, talking over him. “As the future Decimo, your role will require exceptional negotiation skills. Granted, this is something you have proven to have a knack for, so this is merely a formality to prove your prowess.”
Tsuna stares at the delighted faces around him and sighs.

As much as he wants to keep arguing, he’s acutely aware of the pointlessness of such an act. At least a ‘negotiation trial’ probably won’t be as violent as Reborn’s usual training. If they have to leave the country, the man can only have so long to-

Oh crap...he’s sending them to a war zone isn’t he?

“Hieee...”

The hitman pretends he doesn’t hear Tsuna’s squeak, and pulls out what appears to be a photograph from his suit pocket.

“The Ninth gave me a selection of possible outbreaks and riots that require ceasefires” he explains. “However, as your tutor, I believe in pushing you to great things, and for that reason, I have decided to give you the toughest negotiation challenge known to man.”

Tsuna pales as he watches Nono’s guardians pale, the man himself leaning forward in something resembling horror.

“Reborn, you can’t possibly be planning to send him there...”

Tsuna watches in astonishment as every other Mafioso in the room lean back in their chairs and tense, the photo dropping from Reborn’s hand to the desk.


“...I’m sorry, what?” Tsuna says, just before the entire room erupts in full on outrage.

“Reborn, you cannot be serious-”

“There are limits to your madness-”

“At least give him a fighting chance! A gang war in Nicaragua started a few days ago, send him there!”

Tsuna can only stare at the horrified Mafioso in pure confusion, before picking up the photograph. It boasts an old brick building, with an older gentleman on the stair just exiting the door. He’s dressed a good century out of fashion, but there’s a presence, even in the photo, that makes Tsuna feel he’d look more out of place in modern clothing.

“This is Mr. Fell?” he asks, once the yelling calms down. Everyone in the room sort of glance at each other, before sagging back down into their seats and leaning on the table.

“One of them” Nono replies. “The book store has been open since the 1800’s, passed down his family, and has been the bane of many a collector. There are few rare texts, especially of the biblical or prophetic nature, that Fell & Co do not possess.”

“But, then why is it a bane?”

The entire room offers a mirthless chuckle.

“Because the Fell family go to extreme lengths to make sure they never part with a single volume” Coyote explains. “It hasn’t so much as broken even since it opened. We’re not even sure why they have the bookshop rather than just a private collection. It’s got to be some kind of tax thing, though
we’re still not sure what considering how immaculate they appear, but regardless, just because those books are in a shop, does not mean they’re for sale.”

“...Has anyone ever succeeded?” Tsuna asks. Everyone immediately turns to Reborn, who is wearing his trademark look of smug, and Tsuna sags.

“Let me rephrase. Has anyone human ever succeeded?” he rephrases, and Reborn chuckles.

“There are stories that suggest the sixth Manachelli boss managed to make it out with a ‘wicked bible’” he tells him. “But given that all ten known copies are currently recorded elsewhere, nobody believes it.”

“Tsunayoshi...” Nono begins. “While I have full trust in Reborn’s decisions, I must tell you that there is no dishonour in failing this trial. Many Mafioso have failed. Even Xanxus could not pry a volume from Fell’s hands.”

“Xanxus tried?” Tsuna squeaks, and Yamamoto gives a low whistle while Gokudera splutters. Nono just nods. “Nearly every family has attempted it in recent history, with no victors. As such, if you reach a point where you feel you have exhausted every avenue, please retreat, and I will insist upon a different challenge.”

The Don glances over at Reborn.

“That will be acceptable, yes?” he asks the hitman. Reborn merely adjusts his hat.

“I have full confidence in my student,” he replies. “But I can accept those terms. What do you say Dame-Tsuna?”

Tsuna drops his eyes back down to the photo. Takes in the unassuming man and the shop.

Well, at least it’s not a literal war zone.

Looks like he’s going to England.

All things considered, Tsuna finds himself pleasantly surprised by London. While the architecture is western and the streets crammed with people of every colour and shape, it lacks the sheer chaotic violence that seems to encompass Italy each time he sets foot there. Instead there’s this subconscious politeness that everyone acknowledges exists (although not necessarily acted upon) that his Japanese upbringing just finds pleasant. While he’s certainly not about to up and move, it’s less of a culture shock than his first unchaperoned visit to Rome.

His guardians seem to be enjoying the trip too. Ryohei’s exuberance and yelling get him some amused looks, and Yamamoto has been taken photos since they got off the plane. Gokudera’s had a giddy look on his face, and while he’s not mentioned anything, Tsuna spotted him grabbing a handful of pamphlets from the hotel’s tourist section regarding ghost tours. He’ll have to remember to ask Yamamoto to ‘guard’ him one night so Gokudera doesn’t feel guilty about slipping away.

In fact, Tsuna is surprisingly optimistic about the whole thing, right up until they reach the area of Soho and gets hit with the sheer oddity of the shop. His trio of guardians, equally enamoured by London’s streets, quickly spot the issue itself.

“How is this place still standing?” Gokudera asks, glancing around at street just on the outskirts of Chinatown. Most of the buildings are big name retail brands, expensive bistro bars or chain coffee shops. They’re also tiny, skinny buildings huddled together side by side. The dull red building on the
other hand, takes up a significant chunk of the corner. “It’s got to be the only independent building on the street.”

“It’s really well located too,” Yamamoto says, pushing up on his tiptoes to look inside the windows. “My Dad would kill for this kind of location, but there’s no one inside. There should at least be a few window shoppers, right?”

“This is insane,” Gokudera continues muttering. “Surely the local council would have slapped a compulsory purchase order on the owner by this point.”

Ryohei is frowning too, walking forward and frowning at a sign on the door.

“These opening times are crazy to the extreme.”

He’s not wrong. Tsuna almost finds himself gaping at the ramblings provided. This shop’s opening hours are the business equivalent of a 100 sided dice roll. Judging from his expression, Gokudera can’t decide if he’s frustrated or impressed. Yamamoto already had his phone out and snapping a photo for posterity.

Astonishingly enough though, while the opening hours are few and far between, the shop is currently open, and with a very put upon sigh, Tsuna pushes the door open and steps inside.

His plan is simple. Walk in, find a book that looks particularly cheap or badly damaged and then hope his intuition helps him struggle through the haggling.

Unfortunately, this plan immediately hits a snag when he walks into the shop and feels his intuition goes crazy. There’s no danger or alarm...it just...really, really doesn’t want to be there. It sort of does the mental equivalent of whimper and curl up into a small ball underneath a metaphysical table, and Tsuna wants to about-face and walk straight out the door.

Unfortunately, that isn’t an option, because his three friends are still blocking the way, and Gokudera is already hyperventilating, eyes locked on a bookshelf that’s almost changed colour from the amount of dust.

“Is that a first edition Liver De Coloribus Coeli?” he squeaks. “In a bookshop?”

Tsuna has absolutely no idea what a ‘liba de colour bus’ is, or what is so surprising about finding it in a bookshop, but he leaves his right hand to salivate (already the bomber has about five books in his arms, clearly forgetting the odds of leaving with any one of them), and walks around the room.

It’s huge, there’s no other word for it. Not that it had looked small from the outside, especially compared to it’s neighbours, but Tsuna hadn’t realised it took up both floors. He’d assumed the second level would be living quarters or storage, but no, there’s even more books, with the room designed almost like a compass.

The building itself doesn’t seem dangerous, but there’s definitely something off about it. There’s an odd damp smell that sticks in your nose and is decidedly uncomfortable. The books themselves are in no clear order, strewn about almost haphazardly, and not a single staff member in sight...which is definitely odd considering Tsuna has it on good authority that this is a store that ‘sells’ the literary equivalent of diamonds. There should at least be a guard, surely? Or a locked case for the truly valuable items?

His intuition peeks out from underneath it’s metaphysical table just long enough to nudge him in the direction of a back room, but the closer he gets, the more awkward the building feels. He tests his
intuition by doing an 180 and walking towards the door, and is utterly baffled by the feeling of 'yes! Yes! Do that!' that follows.

“Is it just me?” Yamamoto begins as he inspects a half empty bookshelf near a window, hand rubbing the back of his neck where hair is standing on end. “Or does this place feel really unpleasant?”

“It is extremely uncomfortable” Ryohei agrees, leaning next to the door, and that has Tsuna standing up a little straighter. It’s one thing for his intuition to be upset, another thing entirely for Ryohei to feel the same.

Gokudera seems to realise this as well, because he’s paused in his manic search for books to glance around the building.

“It’s as if the building itself is telling us to go away,” he concludes, and his face lights up.

“Maybe it’s a ghost? A real, live UMA here in London. This shop is old, it’s entirely possible. Dammit, I should have brought some equipment!”

Yamamoto is grinning at the bomber, and Tsuna sags. Any desire to leave has quickly vanished in the wake of ‘supernatural-oddities-are-afoot-Hayato.’ Yamamoto even digs out his phone and starts taking photos of the building.

Their attention is only drawn away from his storm when he hears the rather dismayed gasp that comes from the other side of the room.

‘Customers, oh dear.’

Tsuna swings round to take in the very well dressed man with fluffy blonde hair, who looks very disappointed to see them.

‘Ah, hello,’ Tsuna begins, frantically trying to remember his English lessons. ‘We, um, looking for, ah-’

“I speak Japanese” Mr. Fell interrupts. “But you really should leave now. I don’t have any books young gentlemen like yourselves you would be interested in.”

He utters the words with the same tone a cheating spouse used to distract their partner while their lover sneaks out the window. Gokudera however, doesn’t seem to notice, almost skipping towards him, gesturing to the half-dozen books now in his hands.

‘I need all of these!’ he says in English with a grin. ‘Name your price. I can’t believe they were all just sitting in the open.’

This just makes Mr. Fell go from nervous to horrified, and Tsuna winces. Gokudera’s forgotten the point of this whole trip – the books must be truly incredible for his right hand to be this obsessed. Which doesn’t bode well for anyone.

“These books aren’t for children,” Mr. Fell replies with a strained smile. “Please put them back where you found them.”

Gokudera’s smile vanishes.

“Are you kidding? There’s a genuine ‘Anatomy of a Chupacabra’ and ‘Fantasy of a Star’s Soliloquy’ in here. You know how long I’ve been looking for copies of those?”
“They are extremely rare,” Mr. Fell agrees. “Which is all the more reason to put them back before you damage them. Please, some of those volumes are fragile.”

He moves to take the books forcibly from Gokudera’s hands, and the teen moves back. Before Tsuna can even consider interjecting, Yamamoto is already slipping between the two with a smile.

“Won’t you reconsider?” he asks. “This is a book shop, we’re book buyers. Everything can work out, don’t you think?”

Yamamoto’s easy going grin can and has eased the ire of more than one Mafioso over the years, but Mr. Fell however is not included in that number. He’s looking even more upset at being kept from his stock.

“This is doing nothing to convince me you can have ownership of such valuable items,” he says. “They’re not trophies to buy on a whim. Do you even know what they cost?”

“We have money,” Ryohei offers, and Mr. Fell scoffs.

“Money does not buy respect or protection,” Mr. Fell replies, and glares when Gokudera snorts in laughter.

Tsuna isn’t even certain how he does it. His intuition twinges, and he thinks he hears a finger snap, but quicker than the eye can follow, the man has plucked almost every book from the bomber’s hands, vanishing them under the counter. Gokudera only stops gaping in shock when the man returns to grab the last few books in his hands, clutching them tightly to his chest.

“Fuck you! I’m not leaving without them!” he swears. Mr. Fell just purses his lips.

“Yes you are. Put them on that table this instant, or I will be forced to do something I’d rather not.”

Tsuna’s intuition spikes. The man isn’t bluffing, and Tsuna doesn’t have the information to know exactly what he’s promising.

“Gokudera, drop them” Tsuna pleads, and while Gokudera looks at him in dismay, something in Tsuna’s face makes him capitulate. Tsuna is far more relieved than he should be when the bomber submits, placing the books on a nearby table with almost tender care. A hand brushes the top volume with a move one would almost call tender had it not been from Gokudera, while Yamamoto tugs at his other arm.

“I’ll be back for you,” he whispers, only to turn and scowl at Mr. Fell as he’s guided to the door. The book owner seems quite delighted that everything went so smoothly, but Tsuna hesitates as he reaches the door.

“I can’t leave London without a book from this store,” he tells Mr. Fell. The man nods in realisation, and then gives him a tight smile.

“Then I hope you enjoy London,” he says. “You’ll be here for some time.”

The man moves forward and ushers Tsuna out the door. He stumbles as he trips on the top step - only saved from falling down the lot by Ryohei - and turns to see Mr. Fell lock the door and swing the sign from Open to Closed.

“What an asshole,” Gokudera growls, kicking at the door.

“Now I get why everyone got extremely worried when we came here,” Ryohei agrees. “He’s an
extremely challenging opponent.”

“He didn’t even give us chance,” Yamamoto says, apparently bewildered. “He took one look at us and just insisted we leave.”

Tsuna nods as he pulls away from the boxer, gingerly walking down the steps.

“Lets go to the hotel,” he says. “I think we might need to call some people.”

His friends grin as they head down the street, shoulders loosening when they realise Tsuna isn’t all that upset about getting kicked out. To be honest, he’d have been more surprised if they hadn’t been. It’s not like he’d expected to succeed on the first try.

But maybe it’s time to get some more data to work with.
Chapter 2

With one failed attempt under their belt, they end up having lunch in Chinatown before heading back to the hotel to regroup and debrief. Tsuna and Gokudera end up sitting on one bed, Gokudera nose deep in a laptop, while Yamamoto leans back on another, and Ryohei slumps the wrong way round in a chair.

“I see why the Ninth didn’t want us to come here,” Yamamoto says. “Do you think the owner knew who we were?”

Tsuna shook his head. “No, I think he would have treated us that way even if we weren’t Vongola. There was something about that shop...it just felt wrong.”

Ryohei frowns. “That’s strange to the extreme. This could be challenging.”

Gokudera is nodding, digging up the research he’d been tinkering with even before they arrived.

“Okay, so that building? It’s been there since the 1700’s,” he explains. “That’s when Soho was built up for the aristocracy, and the book shop’s been around since then. Which is pretty damn impressive considering the wealthy all more of less fled mid 1800’s when there was a cholera outbreak and the neighbourhood took a serious dive. I don’t think there’s a lot of business in London that have been in the same building that long, and if they did, they’re a lot more successful. At this point, A.Z.Fell & Co should be a historic monument or tourist attraction just due to it’s existence, but it’s only reputation—”

At this he tosses his hands up in the air in disbelief.

“-Is a handful of websites for rare book dealers bemoaning it’s existence! There’s a 3000 word essay on here that’s just analysing the opening times! I’ve never seen a white noise spot as bad as this outside of the mafia! It shouldn’t even be possible without mist flames!”

“Are we sure they’re not?” Yamamoto asks, head tilting.

Tsuna shakes his head.

“No,” he insists. “I don’t know what it was about that building, but flames weren’t involved. Besides, it’s too obvious in its refusal to sell.”

Everyone gives a slow nod at that, and Tsuna bites his lip.

“What we need it witness accounts,” he says. “We need to know what doesn’t work.”

This quickly results in Gokudera frantically tapping on his laptop again and setting up a video call with Dino in Italy. When he learns where they are, his face flinches – as if he’s just watched a man bellyflop from a high dive.

“Reborn sent you where?” he asks. “The Ninth can’t possibly have approved that.”

“He wasn’t happy about it,” Tsuna admits. “But...it’s Reborn. You don’t really tell him no.”

Dino grimaces. “I feel for you little bro. I wish I could help, but I’ve never tried my luck against the devil of Soho.

“The devil of Soho?” the four repeat, and Dino chuckles.
“Oh, it’s kind of an in-joke among people who’ve tried,” he explains. “The shop is on a crossroad, and someone one suggested you’d probably have to sell your soul in exchange for a book from A.Z. Fell, and it kind of caught on. Plus, according to Christianity, devils or demons are supposed to be fallen angels, and they guy ‘is’ called ‘Fell,’ so...”

Tsuna guesses it’s probably funnier for the Italians, because Gokudera’s openly cackling. Although that said, Ryohei is also grinning, so maybe he’s a fan of the crossroads story. The boxer does often enjoy American music...

“You might as well give selling your soul a shot though,” Dino continues. “Because I don’t have the slightest clue what else would work.”

Yamamoto frowns, leaning back in a stretch that almost looks painful.

“If we can’t buy a book, can we just buy out the shop?” he asks Dino, and Gokudera brightens.

“The Baseball Idiot has a point. I mean, this is Soho, and that shop can’t be making enough to stay in business. Can’t we just buy the building, or bribe the owner?”

“You really think nobody ever thought of that?” Dino asks, eyebrows raising. “The Fell family are loaded; they own that building, and they’ve never accepted a single offer.”

“Then we’ll make it a really good one. Reborn said our credit limit was unlimited for this-”

“Ten years ago Mr. Fell was offered five times what the building was worth and he didn’t even think it over” Dino interrupts. “And if you think you can scare him out, think again. People have tried everything from hiking his electric bills to bribing the council to shut him down for health reasons. I hear the building was even set on fire once. Nothing sticks, and it always comes back round to whoever tried their luck. An awful lot of enforcers change careers after a run in with A.Z. Fell.”

Dino sounds a little bitter by the end, and Tsuna frowns.

“That sounds a little personal,” he says. “Did Reborn try and make you go?”

His self proclaimed older brother suddenly finds it very hard to meet his eyes.

“No, but let’s just say I have it on good authority that one of the reasons my family ended up in such dire financial straights is because my grandfather tried to ah...convince Mr. Fell to move into a building owned by my family so he could have regular access to his collection,” Dino says. “A week later, there’s a freak accident with our accountant’s computer systems that sees 60% of our assets frozen while a record of all our recent financial dealings was sent first class to the local police department. By the time we cleared it up the money was gone.”

Gokudera does a full body flinch.

“How-”

“I don’t know. And I don’t want to know” Dino tells him. “Some of those financials weren’t even supposed to have a paper trail. When my negotiation trial came up, I told Reborn I wasn’t setting foot in that shop. That I’d try and negotiate peace in Korea before I went to Soho.”

Yamamoto whistles, and Tsuna’s optimism sinks even more.

“Where’d you end up?” Tsuna asks.
“Guinea-Bissau,” Dino says. “Came out of it with only two bullets wounds too.”

“...That's...good?” Tsuna offers, frantically trying to remember exactly where on a map that was, and Dino shrugs.

“Better than Xanxus any way” he offers. “He was lucky to get out intact.”

Yamamoto immediately lights up. “Oh yeah. The Ninth said he’d tried.”

“Let's call the Varia, to the extreme!” Ryohei agrees.

“Not sure how useful he’ll be,” Dino warns as they say goodbye. “His tactics weren’t really compatible with you.”

That’s hardly news to Tsuna, but a list of what definitely won’t work is better than no list at all at this point. Yamamoto is already punching in Squalo’s number.

Two minutes later, Tsuna is wondering how far he can be from a video screen without appearing offensive, because Xanxus is glaring like he wants to reach through the computer and strangle Tsuna for the crime of bothering him.

Which, to be fair is Xanxus’s general mode of being, but Tsuna hasn’t survived this long by getting complacent. Given his life, it’s not impossible Xanxus has figured out how to do it.

At least the Varia commander is taking his question seriously – the glare had almost vanished when Yamamoto had explained just where they were.

“Whatever you do, don’t steal one” Xanxus warns when Yamamoto finishes up, and Tsuna finds himself leaning forward.

“You stole one?” he says. “I thought the requirement was legal purchase.”

“I was getting desperate!” Xanxus snarls, almost defensively. “Fell-Trash is impossible to reason with. Not that it did me any good. Cost me three weeks, my bodyweight in pride and a Lightning Guardian.”

At that Tsuna pauses, and glances to the corner of the screen where he can see Xanxus’s guardians, Levi included, not-so-subtly listening in. Xanxus rolls his eyes.

“Parasol-Trash is number 2” he tells him. “Huge improvement over Belias, I assure you. Idiot walked out with some old folio under his jacket, figuring we could negotiate after it was in our hands. To this day, I have no clue what happened to him, but that folio was on display in the window next morning and Fell’s creepy ass boyfriend was wearing Belias’s shades when we walked in.”

“Boyfriend?” Yamamoto asks, and Xanxus chuckles.

“Oh trust me Trash, you’ll know him when you see him.”

In the background Lussuria is fanning himself with a hand, while Squalo is glowering and inching closer to the screen. Tsuna ignores both of them.

“You didn’t try to find out what happened?” he questions, and Xanxus glares.

“Of course I fucking did!” he snaps. “Even had the lightning member’s we brought along tried to put
on the squeeze, but both of them are mental steel traps. If anything, threats just amuse them. Two of Belial’s closest tried physical violence – the boyfriend has this classic car, beautiful piece of machinery; I’ll give him that – smashed out every window and made it clear we were coming back to finish the job. Car like that can’t be easy or cheap to fix.”

“It didn’t work?” Gokudera asks, and Xanxus shakes his head.

The trash left the hotel to get drinks, next thing I know the shark trash is getting a call from the hospital about them.”

The Varia boss jerks his head back, and Squalo freezes for a second, before slinking up to his boss, not even pretending to be subtle in his approach anymore.

“Were they still alive?” Tsuna asks, not sure if he wants to know. Xanxus merely glares at Squalo, who reacts as though it pains him to answer.

“Voi, they lived,” he says. “Looked like they’d been run over by that stupid car a couple hundred times, but they lived. Not that it mattered to us, both of them up and joined a monastery in New Zealand the second they were released!”

Yamamoto frowns. “New Zealand? When you abandon your old life to join a monastery, don’t you usually get to somewhere like Tibet or something?”

“Voi, according to them, they picked New Zealand because there aren’t any snakes there,” Squalo snarled. “Don’t ask me why, never had a problem with them before.”

“Yeah, and that car come morning?” Xanxus adds. “Perfect. Condition. After that, I cut my losses while I still had something to lose.”

“It was their own fault for making compensation jokes about the darling’s car!” Lussuria defends from the back, and Xanxus throws a wine glass in his direction.

The Varia side of the call inevitably descends into a brawl, and little advice is coming. All Tsuna’s managed to gather is, stay legal, screaming is pointless, and don’t threaten his associates or their possessions.

Tsuna silently vows that Gokudera must never enter that building unaccompanied.

Also, before the screen cut off completely, Lussuria popped onto the screen with one final titbit.

“Oh, one more thing. Don’t flirt with the boyfriend,” he says with Bel half in a headlock and the screen on it’s side. “Crowley-darling seems to think it’s funny, but it ticks Mr. Fell off no end. Not sure how he did it, but I got food poisoning whenever I ate out the rest of the time we were there. Ciao!”

The screen immediately goes black, and as a group, Tsuna, Gokudera and Ryohei all glance in Yamamoto’s direction. The teen immediately starts pouting.

“Why are you all looking at me?” he whines.

“Because out of everyone in this room who would think it would be funny, you’re the only one who’d actually try his luck, Baseball Idiot,” Gokudera snaps, and Yamamoto’s lip quirks, point taken. After so much time hanging around Squalo and Reborn, Yamamoto’s baseline for appropriate behaviour and etiquette will never recover – not that there was ever much to save, if Tsuna’s being entirely honest.
In the end, after looking at a spreadsheet of the opening hours Gokudera has on hand, they decide to hold off this evening, and try again in the 40 minute window that there should be just before lunch.

Who knows, maybe Mr. Fell will be more agreeable after he’s eaten?
Xanxus and Lussuria’s warnings are suddenly made extremely vital when they wander up to A.Z. Fell & Co for the second time, because there’s a badly parked classic car right in front of the store. It’s the kind of vehicle Tsuna imagines Reborn will drive the second he’s grown tall enough to reach pedals again, which means Mr. Fell must have company over. Company that according to the Varia, will probably make the book seller even worse to deal with.

The building still feels like it’s wallpapered with Mukuro at their most insane, but at least his intuition isn’t shrieking any more. It is however, suggesting that he make a beeline for the back room, though Tsuna isn’t quite sure why.

Mr. Fell certainly isn’t happy to see them again. He must have been watching the windows, because he’s already in the front room and glaring at them in disappointment.

“Good morning to the extreme!” Ryohei says, because he’s an idiot and an optimist and that wins more people over than you’d think. Mr. Fell however, isn’t swayed.

“I do hope you’re not here to waste my time again,” he says. “I’m a busy man you know.”

Gokudera, eyes already scanning for the books he’d tried obtaining yesterday, gestures to the empty room with wide hands an a scowl.

“With what?”

“...Stock taking,” Mr. Fell offers, and pulls out a clipboard Tsuna swears he wasn’t carrying a few seconds ago. “It’s a busy time, very intensive. Really not the best time to browse.”

“Sounds toughs, maybe we can help,” Yamamoto immediately offers with a smile. “Maybe we’ll even find a book you don’t want around any more.”

Mr. Fell doesn’t seem amused at the offer, but his face gets even darker when they hear chuckling coming from behind him. A few moments later, another man slinks out from behind him, sauntering with a gait Tsuna didn’t know was possible without dislocating your hips. While he’s wearing glasses, it’s clear he’s staring at the four of them as he moves, before spinning on a heel and collapsing in a plush chair near a window that’s in full view of the counter, sprawled like a bored king on his throne.

“Hey, was that chair always there?” Yamamoto asks, and Tsuna frowns, because he’d been wondering the same thing...

“So, you’re the ones that got Angel all worked up,” the man says, grinning as Tsuna’s guardians inch closer. Tsuna can only stare back, eyes flitting between the book shop owner and his companion.

Wow. He knows people look at Tsuna and his Guardians and wonder what they have in common, but this is a whole new level of opposites attract. The red haired man lounging on the chair is dressed to the nines in black, the clothes clearly high end fashion that manages to look comfortably loose and impossibly tight at the same time. Yet he moves with an easy casual grace, stretching in an almost unnatural way where he sits.

Years of mafia interactions and his own intuition know it takes a lot of effort to make that boneless, snakelike movement look natural, but there’s something about him that makes Tsuna think it actually
Gokudera clearly hates him on site, if the angry bristling is anything to go by. Ryohei is just grinning, and Yamamoto quite happily lifts his phone and snaps a photo of the man. But all of them are hanging back, pointedly ignoring Mr. Fell and letting their attention wander around the store. This is Tsuna’s mission, and they seem happy enough to leave him to it.

He wonders if Crowley will interfere, but when he glances over, the man is still happily sprawled in a chair that should be far too small to allow sprawling, wearing a grin that reminds Tsuna of Byakuran.

Oh. He’s not here to support Mr. Fell. He’s here for the entertainment. Tsuna didn’t see that one coming. All he needs is a bag of popcorn.

He almost wonders what Lussuria saw to justify flirting with the man. It doesn’t seem like he’d be the Sun’s type - he’s too lanky and doesn’t look like much of a fighter. Although that said, he clearly likes fashion, and he’s surprisingly limber considering there doesn’t seem to be much muscle under his jacket or jeans, and he seems to find great enjoyment in chaos if his reaction to them is anything to go by, and-

Okay, in retrospect, Tsuna completely sees why Lussuria decided to try his luck. He has a feeling Crowley has never found a can-never-meet-the-parents ‘bad boy’ trope he didn’t immediately fall in love with. He even has a facial tattoo for gods sake. Even Dino didn’t go that far.

His intuition pokes him again as that thought crosses his mind, and he frowns. Why is a tattoo important?

He shakes it off. Whatever it is, it’s not going to help him buy a book, so it can wait till later. Gokudera had proven yesterday that genuine desire for a particular title won’t get him anywhere, so he might as well go for the other approach.

“If you’re doing a stock take, are there any books you’re looking to clear?”

“Yes!” Tsuna insists. “I don’t mind which one!”

“Any book?”

“Yes!” Tsuna insists. “I don’t mind which one!”

“So you don’t care about the book itself?”

“Of course not,” Mr. Fell insists, sounding almost insulted. “None of my books are any less valuable than the other.”

“That’s impossible,” Gokudera insists. “There has to be at least one that’s damaged or of less interest. You can’t have a store this old without picking up excess stock.”

“I assure you, I’m very picky regarding my books,” Mr. Fell replies. “There are no cheap airline paperbacks or self help books on my shelves. Every single item in my collection is unique and special in its own way. If that’s what you want, I believe there’s a Waterstones two streets down.”

“I told you, I have to buy a book from this store, and we’re not leaving until we find one you’re willing to part with,” Tsuna says. “You don’t want us here, and we don’t want to bother you more than we have to, so surely there’s something you can sell?”

Mr. Fell stares at him, eyes narrow.

“Any book?”

“No!” Tsuna insists. “I don’t mind which one!”

“So you don’t care about the book itself?”
Tsuna almost agrees, only for his intuition to spike. Mr. Fell is watching him with something similar to triumph.

“Which means, any book I sell to you will not be treated with the respect it deserves,” he says. “You do not care about the book, and cannot be trusted with its welfare. Even a book in poor condition deserves a proper home.”

Tsuna sags against the counter, silently cursing how easily he’d slipped into the trap. There’s also snickering from Crowley’s side.

“Then is there a book you don’t have?” Tsuna asks, slumped on the antique wood. “One that you would be willing to trade for a different book?”

There’s a flurry of movement, and he looks up to see Mr. Fell look quite put out.

“Of course not!” he insists. “I will not be...tempted, into trading one for another. And it wouldn’t solve the original problem – you do not care for the book you would leave with at all.”

Tsuna winces. Right, and that’s the problem. Except not, because if care and respect were all that mattered, Gokudera would have left with a library yesterday.

Speaking of which, Gokudera is growling again, but continues to stay back and check out the shelves, probably looking for his targets, while Mr. Fell watches Tuna with curious eyes.

“Perhaps you can answer a question,” he asks. “Why so desperate to obtain a book from this specific store when you clearly have no interest in them?”

Tsuna looks up and frowns. “Would it help if I did?”

“Not at all,” Mr. Fell replies, without a single ounce of sympathy. “But you don’t particularly fit the mould of those who come here for the challenge.”


He doesn’t even need to look at his Guardians to know they’ve all suddenly found whatever they’re looking at astonishingly fascinating. Tsuna mulls the question over, wondering what the right answer would be.

Well, he’s always preferred honesty. Might as well toe that line as far as he can go.

“Education,” he says. “I’m supposed to be inheriting the family business, and my teacher told me if I wanted to prove myself as a negotiator, I need to strike a deal with the hardest dealmaker he knows.”

“Oh, you’re one of those,” Crowley says, leaning forward in his chair and watching with more intense interest than before. “Did not call that.”

Mr. Fell also looks quite surprised, and Tsuna doesn’t need his intuition to realise both men have completely understood and translated what he didn’t say. Perhaps they’re more involved in the underworld than Tsuna had thought– Crowley at least, certainly looks the part.

...And there’s Gokudera, glued to his side as the situation tilts again. Mr. Fell glances over at the protective Storm, before shaking his head and staring Tsuna down.

“Well, I’m sure your teacher and family can arrange a different test for you,” he says. “Convincing
me that any one of my books should leave this building in the hands of someone who does not appreciate it is quite impossible.”

“It’s not impossible to the Extreme!” Ryohei insists, startling Tsuna as he appears behind him. “Reborn once succeeded.”

“Who?” Fell asks, and Tsuna frowns. Surely the man would remember the handful of people who did pry a book from him?

“Reborn?” he says, and then falters on how to describe the hitman, since he has no clue if the man came before or after the curse. “Italian? Fedora, dark eyes? Greets people with ‘chaos’ or ‘Ciaossu’ because it’s more fun that way? Possibly had a chameleon?”

Crowley suddenly starts snickering, and he sees recognition dawn in Mr. Fell’s eyes, before it brightens into something more humorous.

“Ah, yes. Him. That was...an interesting experience. Left with an insect bestiary, I believe.”

For some reason, this sets Crowley off even more, laughing into the arm of his chair for reasons unknown. Given that the topic is Reborn, Tsuna really doesn’t know if he should pry.

Yamamoto on the other hand-

“How did he win you over?” he asks, popping up on Tsuna’s left and leaning on the counter. “Bet it was chaotic, right?”

Mr. Fell huffs, though he’s still grinning. “All I will say on the matter is that in all my years in this shop, nobody has ever tried his method before or since.”

“Don’t suppose you’d tell us what it was?” Tsuna asks, somewhat desperately, only for Crowley to clear his throat.

“Don’t even think it Angel,” he chimes. “It’s a test – be bad of you to help them cheat.”

Mr. Fell scowls. “So, my dear, why don’t you step in and tempt them with an answer?”

The grin the owner receives is wide and wicked.

“Not as much fun.”

...There is an entire novel being read between the lines here, and Tsuna’s intuition is being astonishingly unhelpful. That conversation was important, he just can’t figure out why.

“Fine, you wont tell me,” Tsuna says, and randomly grabs a book on the edge of the counter. “So what will it take for you to part with this one? Give me the craziest scenario.”

“That doesn’t exist I’m afraid,” Mr. Fell replies, deftly plucking the book from Tsuna’s hands. “You wouldn’t be interested in this at all.”

“I think we established that wasn’t an issue,” Gokudera snaps from his post, and Tsuna reaches for the book.

“You can’t have it in a shop if it’s not for sale,” Tsuna insists. “So tell me what-”

“Oh look at that!” Crowley interrupts, bringing the room to a standstill. He glances at a watch before standing up and adjusting his glasses. “It’s time for my lunch reservations. Angel, can I tempt you?”
Mr. Fell lights up.

“Oh yes! Sounds delightful. Now pop along everyone, I need to close the store.”

The man has actually come from around the counter to swing Tsuna round by the shoulders and half push him out the door. He’s so quick about it that they’re almost at the door before any of his Guardians react – although given the squawk that he just heard Gokudera give, Crowley may be escorting them just as quickly.

“But I thought you had stock ta-”

“Yes, yes, but it’s time for a break. Now off you go!”

Tsuna blinks, and next thing he knows, the Tenth Generation are shuffled onto the doorstep yet again.

“Anyone else Extremely confused?” Ryohei asks, and if that doesn’t sum up the entire situation, Tsuna doesn’t know what does.

Day two doesn’t go much better.

They all collect in the building and literally start scouring for a duplicate, or a book that they can possibly buy or trade in better condition to barter with. Crowley’s car is parked outside, but the man can’t be found, so they don’t have an eager audience. Since they aren’t actually trying to buy, Mr. Fell is surprisingly agreeable and leaves them to it, although he spends a lot of time tending to a very large snake. They quickly learn to keep eyes on the shopkeeper though, because said snake keeps showing up whenever they’re out of the man’s sight and giving them the fright of their lives. Tsuna nearly fell over a balcony with a shriek on more than one occasions after reaching into a shelf and feeling warm scales instead of leather and paper.

Unfortunately, it’s a lost cause. Literally every single book in Mr. Fell’s collection is one of a kind, and in great condition. Gokudera starts muttering that so many books being this pristine is impossible, but they leave disheartened and empty handed.

On Day three, Ryohei had suggested that they just be Extreme, look up the price of a book, drop twice the highest price they can find on the counter, and then just walk out (Sometimes Tsuna despairs at how loose with rules his self-proclaimed Brother has become). It’s not exactly negotiation, but it’s worth a shot. When they walk inside again, they grab the first random book, and while Brother and Yamamoto distract Mr. Fell by grabbing random books or taking photos of the building. Mr. Fell has a quite impressive photo collection on a wall in the back room Ryohei happily snaps to keep the man’s back turned.

However, when they get back to the hotel to report a success, the money is back in their bag, and there’s no book. Gokudera honestly looks like he’s about to implode, and spends a good hour muttering to himself while trying to figure out how Mr. Fell pulled off that sleight of hand.

On day four, Gokudera suggests that they call up Mukuro and ask the second best manipulator they know to come give them a hand. It shows how desperate Tsuna’s right hand is that he even considered it. Not that it does them any good – while Tsuna does manage to make contact with Mukuro via Chrome, and the Mist looks genuinely interested in possibly coming to help, the second they mention Crowley, Mr. Fell’s companion, Mukuro goes an almost impossible shade of white.

“You know him?” Tsuna asks, and is genuinely astonished to see the Mist shudder.

“Nope,” Mukuro says, looking the most unnerved they’ve ever seen him. “Nope, nope, nope.”

The call immediately cuts off, and by the time Tsuna manages to get Chrome back on the phone, Mukuro has vanished, and isn’t even answering his fellow Mist any more, so that avenue’s definitely blocked. Although Gokudera is suddenly very interested in making Crowley a job offer if he can put that kind of fear into the Mist.

(Gokudera will always hold a grudge for the whole body-possession incident. Tsuna can’t really blame him).

With no other ideas, Tsuna isn’t quite ready to face the shopkeeper they’d tried to hustle the day before, so shakes his Guardians for a few hours to wander London. While he’s not a fan of being alone, he hasn’t really had the option in years. It’s a novelty to be allowed out solo – he ‘may’ have alluded to both Gokudera and Yamamoto that the other would be with him, but he’ll let himself feel guilty about that later.

He eventually finds himself winding through a local park, wandering next to a lake, his intuition pricking up every other second when he started passing several benches with men and women dressed in business suits. While there’s similarities, he’s pretty sure they’re not in the same ‘business’ Tsuna is, so he lets his intuition lead him far, far away from anyone suspicious, and settles on an empty bench to watch the ducks swim around the lake. They eye him up as they pass, but when it’s clear he has no food, leave him alone and go about their business. It’s quite therapeutic to watch.

Why does Reborn think he can do this? This is so far out of what the Hitman normally throws at him that Tsuna literally has no frame of reference. Mr. Fell cannot be accidentally befriended, fought into submission, or rescued from some manic insanity, and that’s kind of wiped out the Sawada Tsunyoshi play book.

He gets that it’s not impossible to win Mr. Fell over, but the man loves his books. That’s clear enough from the fact that he and his family having spent centuries pouring money into a financial hole despite there clearly being enough interest for them to have a booming business. Even if he could somehow leave with a book, he’d almost feel guilty about doing so. Which is insane, because it’s a book. That’s for sale. In a shop. What even is his life now?

He knows it’s technically only been a few days, but he hasn’t got the slightest idea how to go about this without crossing morally questionable lines. Mr. Fell doesn’t make sense. What kind of bookshop owner doesn’t sell his books?

It’s a question that he’s still pondering when someone sits next to him on the bench, and is only brought out from his musings when he feels an arm brush up against his back, lying on the back of the seat, and looks up to see Crowley looking over with a grin.

“Tsuna wasn’t it? How about you and I have a chat about your little situation, hmm?”
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Yeah so this started getting longer than I wanted and so it’s gained another chapter. Posting this so I can at least say I updated and focus on GC so I can MAYBE get that updated before the end of the month and then flee the country before the hoards of hopeful Out of This World fans start pressing me for the update I guestimated for August...

When Aziraphale hears the bell at his door ring, he huffs and steps out the back room, fully expecting to see the group of Japanese teens that have been hovering in his store for the past few days. He starting to wonder if he should push to make them leave, but to be honest, compared to the last few insistent attempts to buy a book, the young Tsunayoshi has been, well, harmless. There hasn’t been a single threat, or warning that involves matches or flames. While the teens are clearly involved in something less than legal, they don’t seem ready to to use it to get their way.

However, it’s not the group, but only the silver haired teen, scowling behind an unlit cigarette, and grits his teeth.

This one, on the other hand, could become a problem.

“Oi, I need to talk to you,” he says in perfect English, stalking up the angel.

“Where’s the rest of your group?” Aziraphale asks, choosing to ignore the ire. If he remembers the conversations correctly, his name is ‘Gokudera...

“Not here,” Gokudera snaps. “They wouldn’t understand what’s necessary. I’m the only one who gets how this goes.”

He all but shoves his way past and heads for the back room. Aziraphale mentally counts to ten before following him inside. Gokudera has dragged a seat to the table, leaning forward while he waits for Aziraphale to join him. Which he does, reluctantly, and Gokudera reaches for his cigarette, only to remember that it’s not lit and backtrack with another scowl.

“The Tenth needs to succeed here,” Gokudera insists. “As his right hand, I can build the framework for the agreement. Tell me the conditions, and we can both get back to our normal lives.”

“Oh, you’re not going to demand the titles you desired?” Aziraphale asks, genuinely thrown. Gokudera shakes his head.

“I mistepped that day. I neglected to put the Tenths needs ahead of mine. While I still want those books—”

He takes a moment to glare at the book keeper.

“-That’s a war I can fight another day. For now, I need to focus. Too many people come here looking for books, there has to be something you keep back with expectations of parting. I want to know what we need to do in order to get it.”
“And if I don’t cooperate?” Aziraphale asks, and Gokudera bites his cigarette so hard it’s nearly snapped in two. It’s clear he’s trying to hold back something, so Aziraphale decides to give him a nudge, discreetly snapping his fingers under the table. “Be honest with me.”

“I want to break in at night, steal every book I want then blow the place to high heavens, asshole,” Gokudera snaps, before paling and slapping two hands over his mouth. Aziraphale raises his eyebrows.

“Really? That seems rather out of sorts with the rest of your group, don’t you think?”

Gokudera’s eyes narrow, and slowly drops his hands to reply-

“I wouldn’t. I want to but I wouldn’t, because it would make the Tenth upset and I try really, really hard to be the kind of person that doesn’t make him upset any more and WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU JUST DO TO ME!”

Gokudera slams his hands on the table and glares down at the angel, looking panicked and about ready to blow him up, so Aziraphale quickly cancels out his little truth-telling miracle, leaning back with a smile.

“I value honesty,” he says. “I just wanted to know your plans. You value your friendship with your ‘Tenth’ quite a bit.”

Gokudera flinches...then relaxes when he realises his mouth isn’t immediately going off, and sits back down.

“He’s the best thing that ever happened to me,” Gokudera explains, hands clenched. “My own personal salvation, even if he doesn’t believe it. He’s why I’m here, and why I’ll do whatever it takes to win you over his way.”

Aziraphale cocks his head, and smiles.

Oh dear. He’s starting to like this short tempered child, he’s everything an angel wants to see. A human that’s sinned and tempted, only for another human to show them the light and bring them onto the proper path. A sinner turned good – or at the very least attempting to smooth out the edges.

“The book I sell you will be kept in immaculate condition?”

Gokudera grins back. Finally, they’re getting somewhere.

“I can guarantee it. No one will ever be able to so much as touch it.”

“Then how will anyone read it?”

Gokudera, halfway ready to answer, freezes, processing the question, and Aziraphale gives him a smug smile.

Because while he’s impressed at the teens attempt, one is not supposed to be rewarded for good behaviour.

“A book must not just be protected. While they are precious treasures, they are also vital tools. A book kept for collective purposes is a book kept for the wrong reasons.”

“...Are you FUCKING KIDDING ME?”
Back at the park, Tsuna can’t help but let out the tiny ‘Hieee’ as Crowley leans in.

“W-what, how did you follow me?” he squeaks. Crowley grins in reply.

“Oh it wasn’t that hard,” he explains. “Seen you pop in and out of the store enough times to have an idea of where you’d be staying. When I spotted you on your own, figured I couldn’t resist having some one on one time.

Got to admit though, surprised to see you solo,” he continues. “That little group of yours seems pretty tight. Silvie’s quite the attack dog. How’d you get him to let you out?”

Tsuna blushes and looks away. “I-uh, might have told each of them I was going out with the other.”

Crowley bursts into laughter.

“Nice, well done. Quite the little troublemaker in training aren’t you.”

“N-No!” Tsuna insists. “I’m not, I mean, it’s not like I want to! I just...I just needed a little time to myself!”

“Now, now, don’t get upset,” Crowley chides. “No judgments here. But if you don’t want to lie, why don’t you tell me everything? Quite tempted to find out your full story.”

The man leans in, and Tsuna flinches, his intuition spiking, even as he thinks he hears a finger snap near his ear.

“Come on, you know you want to tell me.”

The words are almost on the tip of his tongue. He’s so exhausted at keeping secrets and having people not believe him even when insanity is everywhere, spilling out everything to a near stranger sounds so overwhelmingly tempting…

“...You’re doing something to me,” Tsuna says, snapping up straight and staring over at Crowley, eyes tinted orange. The man’s eyebrows raise in surprise.

“That’s a neat trick,” he replies. “Most people don’t notice.”

Most people don’t have a hyperactive six sense that’s been honed around a hitman with a sadistic streak, Tsuna thinks, but merely places a hand on Crowley’s chest and pushes him back.

“Well I do, stop it.”

Crowley is far too old to be pouting, but that’s definitely what he appears to be doing.

“You’re really no fun,” he says, dropping his head down to move Tsuna’s hand away – only to freeze when he spots the Vongola ring on Tsuna’s middle finger.

“Now where did you get that?”

Tsuna frowns, glancing at the ring, wondering what exactly grabbed the attention of a non-mafioso. Before he can ask, Crowley has already grabbed his hand, lifting it up and staring at the ring from behind his shades.

“How on Earth did you wind up there?” he mutters, and Tsuna yanks his hand away.

“Hiee...”
While he can’t see his eyes, Tsuna’s certain they’re focused on him.

“Y-you recognise this ring?” he splutters, because while he’d suspected the man to be involved in the underground, recognising this specific ring in London isn’t something he’d expected to run into. Tsuna has a sinking feeling he’s going to need to call Reborn about it.

Crowley, for his part, looks far too eager to grab his hand again, but refrains and leans back on the bench.

“No, just didn’t expect to see such a fancy rock,” he claims. “Quite rare those are. Love to hear that story...”

Tsuna however, clams up and starts eyeing the exit across the lake. Crowley follows his movements, and huffs.

“Oh fine, down to business then,” he mutters. “What’s it going to take to get you to leave the Angel alone? It’s always fun the first couple of weeks, but then it just gets boring and repetitive and I’d like to avoid that if possible. He gets so blessed fussy about these things.”

Tsuna frowns, and glances over at the man.

Well, nowhere did it say he had to negotiate with Mr. Fell…

“We don’t really want to bother him either,” Tsuna insists. “But our request is pretty simple. We need to buy a book. If you want us to leave, tell us how to do it.”

“Well, if you want a story, I can certainly trade it for a story,” Crowley says, grinning once again. Tsuna internally winces as his intuition and a strange need to talk battle in his head.

“Everything I know is telling me that’s a bad idea,” Tsuna says.

Crowley shrugged. “Nothing’s free brat.

Tsuna frowns, going over the odds, before a rather awful thought comes to his head.

“It wouldn’t work for us,” he realises. “That’s why you’re offering. Whatever Reborn did, it was so…Reborn, that we couldn’t copy him.”

The man beside him pouts, and tosses his head back.

“Aww, you figured that out too quick,” he moans. “I thought I’d at least be able to tempt something out of you.”

Tsuna frowns.

“Then tell me anyway,” he asks. “Now that I know it’s worthless, you’ve got no reason to keep it secret.”

The man’s eyebrows raise, only for his smirk to become sly.

“Oh? Think you might be able to copy it regardless?”

“You want us to leave,” Tsuna replies. “This is how we leave. By knowing how to win. Tell us what he did.”

The man grins.
“Are you sure you want to know?” he purrs. “You really think you’ll be able to replicate it.”

“Reborn never gives me something impossible,” Tsuna insists. “Even if it doesn’t always feel like it. Please, tell me, how did he do it?”

The grin beneath sunglasses is almost snakelike in it’s glee.

“Oh why not,” he laughs. “Might as well crush that last little bit of hope you have.”

Tsuna leans forward.

“I believe it was some time in the 80’s” Crowley begins. “From what I remember, he wrote and self published a highly coveted book regarding the history of insects that’s still used in Entomology today, and when Angel grabbed one for his collection, he offered up an autographed hand written final draft with unseen additions in exchange for the brand new copy. Angel’s never been able to resist a one of a kind, autographed original.”

Tsuna’s face falls.

“He...published a book?”

“A very popular and sought after one.”

“And traded the unabridged final draft for a book Mr. Fell probably only had for a day and could replace easily?”

“More like a week, but got it in one.”

Tsuna thinks he might start crying. Instead, he drops his head into his hands and moans. He hates his tutor. Him and the ridiculous number of alias and degrees he has.

“Sorry kid, them’s the breaks,” Crowley continues. “Fact is, Angel never gives up his books. To him, that collection is perfect, and he won’t change that for all the honeyed words you and your friends can offer.”

He’s expecting it to be a death blow, something to sink the teen into true despair and more open to sharing things he knows he shouldn’t (starting with those rings – last he checked, those rocks should not be in the hands of humans). Crowley has pried plenty of trainee criminals and Mafioso into breaking their precious secrecy laws with far less – really, why do so many criminals still cling to religion when they’re so bad at following it? Not that he has any room to talk, but-

He’s not expecting Tsuna to freeze, head lifting from his hands in shock.

‘Oh my God,’ he says.

‘Oi, no need to bring her into this,” Crowley mutters. Tsuna doesn’t appear to hear him.

‘Mr. Fell will never give up any of his books,” the teen continues. “They mean too much to him. Everything in his collection has value. That’s the solution. How did I miss that?’

To Crowley’s apprehension, a wide grin has started to take over Tsuna’s face, and he starts to have the sinking feeling he’s just done something good...

“What?” he says. “What did I say?”

Tsuna however, just bursts into laughter, and Crowley rears back as if the sound is contagious.
Before he can question it, Tsuna has jumped to his feet, and is running towards the exit.

“Thanks Mr. Crowley!” he hollers back. “You’re a really nice guy!"

Crowley splutters and lunges to his feet, but Tsuna is already out of the park before he can hear the reply.

“Wha-I AM NOT!”

“Here’s an idea,” Gokudera snaps, slamming the door of the hotel room shut. “Let’s kill him and forge a will saying he’s leaving the shop to us.”

“Wouldn’t work to the Extreme,” Ryohei offers from where he sits cross legged on his bed, not looking up from his phone. “Squalo sent an email of all known attempts, and that’s been tried twice. Mr. Fell is Extremely hard to kill.”

“Well trying would make me feel better!” he snaps back.

That had, quite possibly, been the worst 30 minutes of his life. He'd spent ages trying to get Mr. Fell to offer up a weak spot, only for the man to effortlessly deflect his efforts to the point where he had to leave or blow something up. It's humiliating - thank God the Tenth wasn't there to see it.

He then turns to Yamamoto, who had been staring out the window when he came in, but is looking him over with a frown.

“Where’s the Tenth?” Gokudera asks. “We need to go over our next strategy.”

Yamamoto’s frown just deepens.

“Isn’t Tsuna with you?” he asks. “He said he was joining you in the lobby.”

Gokudera goes white. “No. He said you were meeting him in the lobby...are you telling me the Tenth is out there without any protections?”

His voice is frightfully high pitched by the end, and Yamamoto eyes the door, with concern.

“Should we go look for him?” he asks.

“Sawada is Extremely fine,” Ryohei insists, tapping away on his phone. “He’s the best protection he can have, to the Extreme.”

“That’s not the point and you know it Turf Top!” Gokudera snaps. “He’s the heir to the Vongola! He should never be out without backup!”

Yamamoto winces. While both of them have a point, the idea that Tsuna is out there without someone at his back is very unsettling. God only knows that if they let the teen out of their sight for too long, he’ll inevitably discover some kind of centuries long feud or villain that the Vongola inevitably have to clean up in some way or another.

However, Yamamoto’s starting to realise that if Tsuna isn’t with Gokudera...

“Wait, if he wasn’t with you...Oh man, I thought Tsuna told you not to go there on your own?” Yamamoto asks, starting to smile, and Gokudera flushes red.
“I didn—he never actually ordered it,” he splutters. “And I just needed a better read on the guy!”

Yamamoto’s grin doesn’t falter.

“And?”

Gokudera just growls, and turns his attention to Ryohei, who is still focused on his phone.

“Who are you even texting right now?” Gokudera snaps.

“Lussuria,” Ryohei offers, and Gokudera almost feels a glimmer of hope.

“And?”

“He wants me to find out where Crowley buys his sunglasses,” Ryohei says, texting back. “I’ve told him I’ll ask nicely next time, to the Extreme.”

Gokudera starts strangling the air.

“Did he text anything useful?”

Now Ryohei looks up.

“There’s an underground fighting ring three streets down he thinks I’ll enjoy to the Extreme?”

Gokudera goes an alarming shade of red, mouth opening to unleash hell—

—only for a pillow to be whacked in his face by Yamamoto, who holds it close to keep the unholy screaming down to minimal levels.

When the pillow is removed, Gokudera still looks frustrated, but a whole lot calmer.

“Good call, Baseball Idiot,” he mutters, refusing to look either of them in the eye. Yamamoto laughs, tossing the pillow back on the bed, only to freeze as all three of them hear a key card opening the lock.

When Tsuna walks into the room, his eyes register all three of them, and he winces.

“Hiee...I was hoping at least one of you wouldn’t be back yet,” he moans, only to be beset upon by an upset right hand.

“Tenth!” Gokudera wails. “What were you thinking? This is a foreign nation! We have no allies here, you can’t just walk the streets in broad daylight!”

“You could have just told us where you were going Tsuna,” Yamamoto offers. “It’s not good to trick us like that,”

He gives a smile that could melt butter.

“Won’t fall for it next time.”

Tsuna internally sighs. Yamamoto is probably going to be extra clingy the next few weeks just to prove a point. Gokudera’s going to be equally proud and agitated at his fellow Guardian for it no doubt.

Gokudera is eventually coaxed to release Tsuna’s shoulders from his desperate grip, but before he
can tell them his revelation, his right hand is already straight into planning mode.

“Mr. Fell is beyond frustrating,” he insists, chewing on an unlit cigarette. “I think he actually enjoys toying with people, but he likes honesty. He’s good at getting people to admit things.”

“That seems to be a common thing with him and Mr. Crowley,” Tsuna admits.

“Well, that shop’s been open for centuries, right?” Yamamoto says. “Someone has to have bought a book at some point. We might just have to look further back to figure it out.”

“Actually,” Tsuna tries. “I-”

“Maybe we can ask locals to the Extreme,” Ryohei interrupts. “I read online that a someone has a book that their great grandfather bought from Mr. Fell in 1920. We should ask Mr. Fell what he did.”

“There’s not much to be found there,” Gokudera says. “I’ve been scouring the internet boards and just about everything is hearsay or just shy of urban myth. Very few people have any legitimate advice.”

Tsuna smiles.

“Don’t worry about it,” he says. “Actually, I was speaking to Mr. Crowley and-”

He stops, thinks about what Ryohei said, and glances over in confusion.

“Brother, it wouldn’t have been Mr. Fell in 1920,” he says. “It would have been his relative, and I doubt he would have told stories of failures to keep books.”

Ryohei frowns.

“I’m not wrong. It was extremely him in 1920.”

“How can you possibly think that?” Gokudera says with frustration. “Even you know time works Turf Top. There’s no way that asshole was anything more than a baby back then, if alive at all. Why would you even think that?”

Ryohei stands a little straighter at the challenge, and hastily presses a few buttons on his phone before facing the screen towards them.

“Because on the wall of photographs in the shop, he is in every single one, to the Extreme.”

The photo on screen isn’t stellar, given the small frame, but they can definitely make out the man sitting at a table in some kind of restaurant. Tsuna leans in with shock.

“Put it on the computer,” he says. When Ryohei complies and they get a bigger image, Gokudera’s eyes narrow, then skips to the next photo.

And the next, and the next.

Some are in colour, but most are sepia or black and white, all clearly old – not the fake gimmicky dated that’s popular for tourists, but genuine archive images. All featuring the same man. By photograph number eight, he leans back in shock.

“It can’t be him.”

“It’s him, to the Extreme!” Ryohei insists. “He’s even wearing the same jacket in most of them!”
“So the family’s frugal!” Gokudera snaps.

“But, look at this—” Yamamoto offers, swiping between the third and fifth photo, which both feature Mr. Fell with another gentleman. “That’s the same guy, I swear, but he’s at least 20 years older between photos.”

“Maybe he just has strong genetics,” Gokudera snaps, and Yamamoto laughs, one hand playing with the Vongola ring around his neck.

“Yeah, we can hardly argue against that.”

“No,” Tsuna says, eyes focused on the screen. “It’s him.”

They all frown.

“How can you be sure?” Yamamoto questions, and Tsuna merely skips back a few images to one of the oldest photos, and points to the corner.

It’s been taken in a park, with Mr. Fell standing near a lake, in the park Tsuna had just come from, outfit practically identical to the one he’s been wearing the last few days. But he’s not what Tsuna is focused on.

In the back of the photo, leaning on a bench almost out of sight, is a man dressed in the era’s style, only completely black.

It’s hard to make out details in such an old photo, but Tsuna is certain he’s also wearing very dark eyeglasses. And sprawled out the same way Tsuna had seen him do less than an hour ago.

“Because that’s Anthony J Crowley,” he says.

“...Holy shit,” Gokudera says, eyes wide.

“Oh wow...”

“I told you, to the Extreme!” Ryohei insists. “Mr. Fell is Extremely old.”

“Old?” Gokudera laughs. “Let’s try immortal.”

“He can’t be immortal!” Tsuna insists. “That would be cr-”

The teen stops himself just in time.

Who is he kidding? On a list of craziest things to ever happen to him, an immortal bookshop owner and his partner wouldn’t even make the top ten at this point.

In fact...

Tsuna stills, Crowley’s reaction to the Vongola ring suddenly hitting him like a bullet.

“Hieee...I think...I think they might be like Kawahira.”

That gets his guardians attention. Both Yamamoto and Gokudera straighten, eyes instantly going for the door and windows, as if the two men are suddenly going to smash through. Ryohei immediately puts his phone away and moves to Tsuna’s side, form tense.

“Why do you Extremely say that?” the boxer asks, and Tsuna looks down at his ring.
“I ran into Mr. Crowley outside,” he explains, which doesn’t calm down his friends at all. “When he saw the Vongola ring, he-I don’t know, he didn’t recognise the symbol, but he knew the stone.”

“...We’re going to need to leave London, aren’t we?” Yamamoto asks, looking stressed. Tsuna can’t really blame him, but he offers his Rain a smile.

“I don’t think it’s that bad,” he insists. “While he recognised it, he wasn’t willing to actually do anything about it. I don’t think he really cares outside of maybe learning how it’s now a ring.”

“Wait, he didn’t know?” Gokudera asks, and Tsuna shook his head.

“Kawahira did say he was supposed to be one of the last,” he offers. “But maybe there were others who survived. Who didn’t know what Kawahira did.”

Gokudera takes the theory with his usual stride, and Tsuna’s relieved to find all the teens finally backing down from their tense states.

“Maybe that’s right,” Gokudera says. “But if its true, this got a lot more dangerous.”

Tsuna grins.

“Actually, it doesn’t matter,” Tsuna says. “Because I think I finally figured out how to buy a book from Mr. Fell. Listen to this...”
A week later, Crowley saunters into the book store to find Aziraphale leaning on his counter, staring at a brown box with utter befuddlement.

“Morning Angel,” he says. “How do you feel about a late breakfast?”

“Hm? Oh, yes...maybe not just now.”

Crowley frowns, eyes flitting down to the box, and leans on the opposite side of the counter.

“What’s got you so bothered?” he asks. “Normally the B-word has you halfway out the door by now.”

Aziraphale shakes his head and gestures to the box.

“Sorry, sorry, I’m just – this arrived this morning on a truck. Apparently I ordered it, but for the life of me I can’t remember what it is.”

“Huh, that is odd,” Crowley says, leaning in and giving it a sniff. “Doesn’t smell edible, pretty sure that’s paper. Sure you didn’t order something tempting off the net?”

The angel gives him a mocking flare. “I don’t order from ‘the net,’” he replies. “And I haven’t been to any auctions or book stores recently.”

He takes another look at the packaging, a finger tracing the logo on the side. It looks a little like a cartoon lion sitting on a clam.

“Hamaguri Publishing? Not one I know.”

Crowley suddenly starts chuckling, and Aziraphale tenses.

“Crowley? What did you do?”

“Me?” Crowley laughs. “Absolutely nothing. I just happen to know that Hamaguri sounds quite Japanese.”

It only takes Aziraphale a few seconds to register the importance, and his eyes close in a wince. The demon keeps chuckling.

“What about those brats? Haven’t seen them around recently.”

Aziraphale stands, leaning back from the box.

“No. They haven’t been around for a few days,” he admits. “I had Gokudera appear one afternoon, and then the lot of them arrived just before I closed, asked a bunch of random questions and disappeared. I’d rather hoped they’d given up.”

“Not a chance,” Crowley insists, leaning back himself. “This must be their next move. Want to do the honours?”
He reaches for a letter opener sitting in a pot by the side of the register, but Aziraphale beats him to it, clutching the small replica of a certain flaming sword in his hand, and quickly slicing it through the tape. When the top is opened, his eyes widen in horror.

“Oh, no...”

Crowley bursts into laughter again as Aziraphale gingerly moves the packaging out of the way and lifts up the first book, identical to the dozen others inside. The cover is a bright red, and has a little cartoon of a baby in a suit and fedora in the corner. He can only grimace at the title, declared in big white letters:

Negotiation for Dames.

“What in heaven’s name is this?” Aziraphale says. “One of those ‘basic life skills for Dummies’ books?”

Crowley grins and lifts one out, flicking through the pages in amusement.

“Some kind of knock off by the looks of things. You know, I thought about taking credit for those.”

Aziraphale winces. “I did too. Rather glad I didn’t to be honest.”

Crowley grins and tosses the book back inside the box. “Same here. Risky ground, all things considered.”

“But why on earth would they be sending me a box of self help books?” Aziraphale asks, just as the door opens to reveal the instigators in question.

“Oh good, they arrived to the Extreme!” Ryohei announces, walking in with a smile matched on each face – except that of Tsuna, who looks a little sheepish. Aziraphale gives a tight smile.

“Good day,” he greets. “I had rather hoped you’d left.”

“You know we can’t, Mr Fell,” Tsuna replies. “Not without a book.”

Aziraphale glances down at the box again and raises his eyebrows.

“I’m relatively certain that you said you had to buy a book,” he says. “I don’t think giving me one counts.”

Before he can answer, Gokudera has slid in front of his ‘boss,’ with a grin that wouldn’t look out of place on his favourite Demon’s face. “Give? Who said anything about give? You bought those books for stock. We’ve got the order form and everything.”

Aziraphale blinks. “I...beg your pardon?”

The silver haired teen produces a printout with a cackle. “Here, see? Last week, Mr. Fell and Co ordered a dozen of the very first book Hamaguri Publishing produced. As a special promotion for our first customer, you didn’t even have to pay anything.”

Crowley immediately grabs the sheet, glancing over before grinning, and handing it to Aziraphale.

“Got to admit, that looks like your phone number,” he says. “Some one from this building made a phone order.”

The angel swipes the paper, and thinks back to the last time he’d seen the group. They had been hell
bent on catching his attention, but since they hadn’t been trying to steal books, he’d not paid that much care...and the black haired one had been out of sight when he’d tried to wrest a title from Gokudera.

“See, last week, I was taking to Mr Crowley,” Tsuna begins, ignoring the way the shopkeeper immediately turned to glare at other man. “And he made me realise you love your collection. And how unique and special it is. You’d never sully it with something that wasn’t truly special, so if you ended up with something cheap and tacky, you’d be happy to get rid of it.”

“Oh I don’t know about that,” Aziraphale mutters, still glaring at Crowley, who is finding a patch of wall very interesting right now.

“Originally I thought we could just give you a book to sell us,” Tsuna explains. “Like one of those airport paperbacks, but then I realised it wouldn’t count. We had to make sure you ordered the book officially.”

“Sorry for the delay, but it took a while to make the logo, and then make the stock, to the Extreme,” Ryohei offers.

“You set up an entire publishing company, just to get these in the door?" Aziraphale asks. “Isn’t that rather, ‘Extreme?’”

“Please, it’s the Internet Era,” Gokudera counters. “Took five minutes to set up a website and register a web company. God bless online Capitalism.”

“Oh I assure you, she had nothing to do with it,” Crowley snickers, and Aziraphale rubs a hand over his face.

“You really thought I’d put these in my shop? They’re hardly my usual stock.”

“Oh, but they are,” Gokudera replies. “We made sure of that. Check your records.”

Aziraphale frowns, but opens the drawer he’d been hiding the stock take checklists away. He only has to lift a few pages to find the addition, happily inserted between his cherished titles.

“Thanks for doing your stock take while we were here by the way,” Yamamoto offers with a smile. “Would have been hard to get access to your stock list otherwise.”

If Crowley has to hold in his laughter any more, his body might actually combust. Aziraphale gives him a pointed look and jerks towards the back room with his head. The demon has genuine trouble making it there, but manages to hold in his cackles until after he closes the door. When he’s gone, the angel shakes his head and stares at Tsuna.

“Why in heaven’s name would you send me so many?” he asks, and Tsuna gives a sheepish smile.

“Because we had to do it right,” he explains. “We needed to set up an official company, and set up an official order from this store, and make sure they were on your stock list, otherwise we couldn’t say the book was purchased here. And if we only sent you the one book, you might just throw it away on principle, or keep it on the grounds that it was ‘one of a kind.’ An entire package, you’d probably try to send back, and that gave us time to get here.”

Yamamoto raises a hand. “Plus, printing to order is really expensive and the only place we found willing to do a rush job insisted on 12 minimum.”

Despite himself, Aziraphale feels a smile starting to crawl onto his face, and the group step closer
with hopeful grins, as their boss plucks one out from the cardboard.

“Well?” Tsuna asks, holding up the ludicrous item. “Would you be willing to sell us a copy of Negotiation for Dames? I’m happy to pay any price.”

Aziraphale gives in, and lets himself give a genuine chuckle.

"You, could be quite terrifying in a few years, Mr. Sawada," he says. "Well done indeed."

Tsuna goes slightly red at the compliment, and Aziraphale walks over to his register.

"Now," he says. "Exactly how does this thing work again..."

The shopkeeper finishes signing the hand written receipt with a flourish of ink, and happily hands it over.

“There we are,” he says. “Enjoy your hideous self-improvement book. I hope you don’t mind if I burn the rest of the copies?”

“Aww,” Yamamoto whines. “But we worked really hard on them.”

“I drew all the illustrations to the Extreme!” Ryohei insists.

“Guys, he legally owns them, he can do what he wants,” Tsuna tells them, looking over his shoulder. “And lets be honest, they’re not actually all that good.”

‘Most of it what lifted from other books on the subject,’ he thinks to himself. ‘And all the additions Gokudera included are too complicated for anyone to follow. He’d probably be doing the world a favour by burning them.’

Aziraphale might be reading his mind, because he’s glancing back into the box with a look of distaste.

“Perhaps I’ll keep them after all,” he muses. “I can hand them out to any other little would-be heirs and save myself some trouble.”

Gokudera’s eyes light up.

“Second printing? We could turn some profit and help you ou-”

“No!” Tsuna yelps, swinging round and cutting off his right hand before he runs down that rabbit hole. “There will be no more printings! Besides.”

He holds up the book and smiles.

“If he does, it could cheapen our achievement. Congratulations guys, we did it!”

The three teens grin.

“Mission accomplished!” Yamamoto says, while Ryohei gives him a thumbs up. Gokudera happily walks over to grab the book himself.

“I can’t wait to show the bronco this,” he says. “Who says you can’t get a book from the Devil of Soho?”

Aziraphale makes a strangled sound, lunging over the counter in shock and letting the box collapse.
to the floor.

“The what of Soho?”

Before Tsuna can answer, there’s frantic footsteps coming from the back room, and Crowley all but lunges into the door way, arms braced on the door frame. Behind the glasses, Tsuna’s pretty sure his eyes are all but bugging out of their sockets, wearing a grin that goes from ear to ear.

“The what of where?”

Everyone glances at each other, before all turning to Tsuna, who winces.

“Oh, um, I guess you didn’t know?” he says. “That’s kind of what people who try and get books from you call you. Because your shop is on a crossroads? And you’d rather sell your soul than a book, and, um…”

Tsuna bites his lip, because it sounds so embarrassing to explain this to the person in question. Especially since Aziraphale looks like Tsuna just told him he’d murdered his whole family and drowned his puppy for good measure. His mouth keeps moving reminiscent of a goldfish, unable to speak, but everyone’s attention quickly leaves him, when they start hearing a high pitched sound from the inner doorway.

Crowley has burst into laughter – hysteric to the point that his legs give out and he ends up on the ground, slamming a fist into the floor as he tries to contain his glee.

It’s enough to help the book seller recover, because he swings to face the cackling man

“Crowley! Do not tell me this is your doing?”

“Oh heaven’s no, Angel!” Crowley manages to splutter out, rolling onto his back and wrapping his arms around his torso, legs flailing. “This is so much better than anything I could ever do!”

Tsuna glances at his friends, who are all wearing grins at the man’s reaction. He doubts he’s much better – he’d forgotten the man’s pet name for his partner. The man in question just sags on the counter, hand rubbing his temple.

“There will be no living with him after this,” he mutters, though Tsuna can definitely see the smile he’s desperately trying to smile.

When Crowley recovers, he pulls his legs under him and leans back on one hand, while the other sets his glasses back in place.

“This might just be the best day of my life,” he announces, still wearing a mad grin. “Such a naughty Angel, Aziraphale.”

He doesn’t even bother to glance in the man’s direction, merely pointing a finger in the back room’s direction.

“You will be dropping this, my dear. I assure you.”

From the way Crowley’s grinning, Tsuna highly doubts it. But as he glances for the door, and spots Gokudera still looking wantonly at the shelves, he finds his mouth opening almost against his will.

“Can I ask why you refuse to sell?” he asks as he turns back. Mr. Fell almost looks surprised at the question. “I mean, if you don’t want to sell, why even have a shop in the first place?”
Mr. Fell smiles, and glances round the room.

“I simply needed a place to store them,” he explains, and Tsuna’s jaw drops.

“But...why not just have a private collection!” he exclaims, and Mr. Fell frowns.

“Greed is a sin!” he insists. “I couldn’t hoard all this away forever. With a shop, people are welcome to read.”

“What?” Gokudera yelps in horror. “That’s just false advertising! Why not just open up a coffee shop with a library or something?”

Aziraphale shrugs. “I like the shop?”

Gokudera growls low in his throat, and when Tsuna sees him start to reach into his jacket, he silently gestures to Yamamoto, who happily sweeps in.

“Well, time to go,” Yamamoto offers, grabbing Gokudera by the shoulders and steering him by the shoulders. “Let’s vent your frustrations elsewhere, buddy.”

“But-him, the, so much...die...”

“I know, I know, big, deep breaths, Gokudera.”

“You can scream outside, to the Extreme!” Ryohei offers, quickly following the two, and Tsuna falls in line, glancing back at two of the stranger people he’s met in recent years.

...And that’s actually saying something at this point.

“Thank you for the book,” he says. “And please don’t take this the wrong way, but I really hope we never meet again.”

Crowley grins and gives a mock salute, while Aziraphale gives an amused wave, and Tsuna happily lets himself out the door.

“So, should we fly home tonight, or celebrate in London?” he asks his Guardians as they walk down the street. He knows for a fact that Gokudera hasn’t made it to any of his ghost tours.

“Celebrate to the Extreme!” Ryohei insists, and Yamamoto laughs.

“Yeah, now that we’ve got the book, we can finally relax.”

Gokudera however, forces himself out of his mumbling to glance back at the building.

“I don’t know,” he says. “I mean, we accomplished our goal, but Tenth, we still don’t know about their connection to...you know, that guy.”

Gokudera shudders and glances around, as if merely talking about Kawahira could summon him, and they all frown.

“W-well, we don’t actually know that they’re connected,” Tsuna offers. “Just that they know about the stones.”

“And that they’re extremely old,” Ryohei adds.

“I’d rather not tempt fate,” Gokudera says. “Last time I was alone with Mr. Fell, he did something
that made it impossible to lie. I couldn’t even stop talking. If they decide to chase us, we might end up breaking omerta.”

Tsunas frowns. “Actually…when I met Crowley, it was really hard not spill everything I knew about Vongola. He said something, and I just wanted to start talking and never stop.”

The trio pause on the street.

“Really?” Yamamoto asks. “That’s not like you.”

Tsunas nods. “I don’t know. To be honest, it almost felt like he was...tempting me into doing it.”

Gokudera pales. “You know, they say demons can tempt people into almost anything…and angels seek truths...”

The teens stand motionless, glancing at each other.

“It can’t be,” Tsuna says. “You don’t think that nickname’s actually literal...”

Everyone’s eyes glances between each other, before they burst into laughter.

“No way, to the Extreme!” Ryohei laughs.

“Yeah, even our lives aren’t that crazy. We have enough self-proclaimed demons running around without thinking we’ve met an actual angel and demon,” Yamamoto says.

“I know none of you are all that religious, but I am way too Catholic to be having this conversation,” Gokudera begs, still looking a little pale. “Can we please go before my brain gets locked on this topic?”

Tsuna winces, and pats his right hand on the back.

“Oh, sorry Gokudera,” he says. “We’re just being stupid. Let’s just get back to the hotel, and we can forget all about this.”

“Sounds good to me,” Yamamoto agrees.

“Extremely good idea!”

From a corner window, Crowley releases his miracle to hear their words, and lets the blinds fall back into place.

“Huh, I really thought they’d figured it out.”

At his side, Aziraphale smiles.

“Well, it’s probably for the best my dear. Probably wouldn’t be too wise to have members of the criminal underground knowing our little secret.”

“Still a pity though,” Crowley says. “Not often you meet a Mafioso that didn’t spot the signs.”

“Yes, but most of them were clearly raised in Japan, not Italy,” Aziraphale offers. “Christianity never quite managed to get a leg up there.”

Crowley smirks. “Right. Give Tsunayoshi a few years of Italian indoctrination, and one day he’ll
wake up in the dead of night in horrified realisation.”

Aziraphale nods. “Poor boy. I hope it doesn’t affect him too badly. How on earth does someone like that end up in a position like his?”

“Some people are just born under unlucky stars, Angel,” Crowley says. “Though I’d feel more worried for the criminal underground. It’s due for a shake up if that’s the next generation running round.”

Aziraphale smiles, and then hesitates as he remembers something else they’d eavesdropped.

“But what was that about stones?”

Crowley leans away from the window, and starts heading towards the back room again.

“Oh, didn’t you notice? They were all wearing shards of holy rock on their fingers.”

The angel stills, before quickly chasing after the demon.

“Truly? I didn’t sense anything.”

“Neither did I at first,” Crowley explains. “Didn’t even realise what I was looking at still it was practically under my nose. It was hidden under all that criminal sigil pomp and circumstance, but it was a holy relic alright.”

He happily falls into a seat as Aziraphale enters the room, and the angel looks puzzled, grabbing one of his own.

“But, how in heaven could something like that fall into the hands of mortals?” he asks. “I mean, the only time anything like that ever happened was...oh dear.”

“Angel?”

The shopkeeper has gone quite pale.

“Do you remember an Angel that often took blessings in Japan?” Aziraphale asks. “Became quite fond of food before he fell? We used to meet every now and then for a meal, he knew the best ramen restaurants.”

“Wait, wait, I remember now, yeah,” Crowley says. “He got really into the Tale of Genji and changed his name, Kawakara or something, right? But he didn’t fall.”

“I think it was Kawahira, my dear,” Aziraphale corrects. “And you’re wrong, I’m sure he fell.”

Crowley frowns and leans up from his seat.

“Uh, no he didn’t. Last time I saw him was a few centuries ago on Earth, and he was still clean as a whistle. I’d have noticed that kind of hygiene in hell’s briefing room.”

Aziraphale pauses.

“But...well...he can’t still be an angel,” he insists. “There was the whole incident.”

“What incident?” Crowley repeats, and Aziraphale waves a hand.

“Oh it was quite the scandal,” he says. “He and another Angel, Sepira, I think, were given the duty
of protecting some rather valuable heavenly artefacts, and did a rather poor job of it I must say.”

Crowley grins and raises his glass.

“Glass houses Angel. I seem to remember a flaming sword that went missing for a few thousand years.”

“Yes, well,” Aziraphale huffs. “At least I didn’t break items filled with holy power into seven pieces and nearly start a heavenly war with human soldiers.”

That has Crowley interested, feet hopping off a table and planting on the floor as he leans over.

“What?” he gapes. “I didn’t hear anything about this.”

“It was in Italy my dear,” Aziraphale explains, and Crowley winces, nodding in understanding. Italy has always been a sore spot for demons; with so much consecrated ground they basically spend any time there playing hopscotch. And to be honest, once the Mafia really got up and running, it did a pretty good job balancing out the Catholic Church, and neither Heaven or Hell saw much point in bothering with the country.

Although granted, these days it was hard to tell which organisation was on what side, not that Aziraphale or Crowley were going to poke that dilemma too closely.

“To be honest, I only really heard about it after the fact myself,” the Angel continues. “The relics were literally built into the foundations of the planet. Their destruction could have set off Armageddon early. But Gabriel insisted they’d found a compromise and everything was settled. I never saw either of them in heaven again so...I assumed they’d fallen.”

Crowley shook his head.

“Trust me Angel,” he says. “If Hell had gotten wind of that, no amount of consecrated ground would have kept old ‘Lucy and the rest of his lot away. They’re not in Hell.”

Aziraphale frowns.

“...Perhaps I should be more concerned about this,” he says, only for Crowley to wave it off.

“I wouldn’t worry about it Angel,” he insists. “Those rings had at least a couple of centuries on em. If nobody’s noticed yet, I doubt it’s your problem. Though maybe I should risk the consecrated ground and check out Italy in a few years. Something tells me that group is going to be hilarious when they inherit. Might even get another commendation out of their antics.”

The angel rolls his eyes.

“I thought you were holding off on taking credit after the Tumblr incident?”

“Oh come on Angel,” Crowley says with a grin. “Holy powers, Mafioso, Italy, and an honest man in power. How could anyone pass that up?”

Despite himself, Aziraphale smiles.

“Well, it has been a long time since I had good gelato,” he admits. “Perhaps we could just pop in for an update in say...ten years? Unless they burn something to the ground before then, anyway.”

Crowley grins.
“It’s a date, Angel.”

Chapter End Notes

...And done! Thank you for letting me play in two universes that probably shouldn’t have gone together, but gave me a lot of fun doing so!

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