The Ineffable Apple Tree
by sandean_cas

Summary

“How dare you have spots!?” he demands, shaking the potted nuisance. It trembles under his grasp; as it should. It’s shamed him in the worst of manners.

“I should drop you from the terrace.” He muses, delighting in the way it shivers at his words. He’s probably doing the wretched thing a favour anyway. If it can’t motivate itself into good health, it will just sit among the other healthy plants and suffer; feel shame at it’s rickety appearance and want to die.

“Or the shredder if you prefer.” He says, making sure it’s loud enough for all the plants to get the memo.

“You things have one job.” He chastises. “And you disappoint me every single time.”
Of course, they don’t reply; just sit there, their leaves shaking terribly.

Glancing down at the monstrosity in his hands, he’s suddenly enraged.

“Grow better!” He shouts, as he tosses it over his shoulder without even a backward glance. The others would stare at its corpse until he feels like cleaning it up and they won’t forget their place and purpose.

“Goodness gracious!”

Crowley whorls in an instant, wincing as he noticed the figure under the dirt and pebbles.

“Aziraphale!”

Crowley scowls in disgust at his pathetic excuse of a house plant.

“How dare you have spots!” he demands, shaking the potted creature. It trembles under his grasp; as it should. It’s shamed him in the worst of manners. What sort of demon allows his decorations to have spots? Certainly not Crowley.

Anything but perfection is absolutely not tolerated.

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“Goodness gracious!”

Crowley whorls in an instant. He would recognise that voice anywhere.

“Aziraphale.” He calls, rushing over, not bothering to sashay his hips as usual.

“I do say, this is quite a kerfuffle.” He mumbles from his spot on the ground.

“Apologies Angel.” He says as sincerely as a demon can. He glares once more at the wretched plant that hurt his companion. “It’s this stupid thing’s fault.” He grumbles, dusting the dirt off Aziraphale’s treasured jacket. Crowley would never understand his obsession with the old thing, especially since the trends had long since shifted, but, it’s enough for him that Aziraphale has some
sort of attachment to it.

Standing, he lends the angel a hand, pulling him to his feet. Petulantly – well, mostly out of spite – he kicks the roots of the plant and glances at Aziraphale’s jacket once more. No stains. Just as pristine as always.

“You just pop by now?” he wonders.

Aziraphale doesn’t seem to hear him though, his eyes are trained on the plant.

“Would you like me to incinerate it for you?” he offers.

“Goodness gracious no!” Is Aziraphale’s vehement response.

Raising a hand to appease him Crowley gets back to the task at hand. “What brings you over angel? Feel like colluding with me on a demonic mission?”

Aziraphale gives him a tight smile. “You don’t have missions anymore.” He pokes at Crowley’s shoulder in a way that, if anyone else dared to try, Crowley would turn them into a lizard and squash them. “We are our own team now, remember?”

“Course I remember.”

The angel’s eyes flit downward once more and Crowley rolls his eyes. “I really can dispose of it if it bothers you that much.”

Crouching, Aziraphale cups his hands together, gathering the soil and the roots into his hands only to gently rest it in the pot.

Crowley frowns in confusion. “Can’t you see it’s defective?”

“No it’s not.” He argues. “In fact, I think it just needs a bigger pot.”

“What?” Crowley is aghast; his angel is making excuses for this stupid, incontinent plant… what has the world come to?

“This isn’t your regular house plant Crowley.” He says, “This is a special plant.” Despite his disgust with this supposed ‘special plant’ Crowley listens, if only because his angel enjoys sharing the random things he’s read about in books. “This is an apple tree.”

He glances at it. “No it isn’t.”

“Are you questioning my intelligence?”

“I certainly am questioning mine.” He murmurs.

“Why don’t we fetch a larger pot?” Aziraphale suggests. “And we can grow it together.”

“Why would we do that? It’s like having a child.”

“Crowley.” Aziraphale blushes. “It’s like having a tree. We can even eat the apples when it’s big enough. Wouldn’t that be lovely?”

“You mean, wouldn’t it be lovely that I change into a snake and try to convince you to eat from the forbidden fruit.”
A small chuckle rewards him.

He always… adores making Aziraphale smile.

“Righo.” Aziraphale gestures to the door. “Time to go shopping.”

Something suddenly clicks for Crowley.

“I suspect you’ll be by often to… check on the plant.”

Aziraphale nods once, his eyes darting left to right. “To check on the plant of course.” He says, somewhat absentmindedly. He’s suddenly elated that he tossed the plant away. He might just buy it an expensive pot. Even some plant food.

Maybe the thing has some use after all. Sure, now he knows it can grow apples, but it also gives him something that no tree could ever grow; Aziraphale, at his house, possibly every day until the plant dies. That gives Crowley the perfect opportunity to spend more time with his angel. At his apartment. To spend their time in any way that suits their wiles. And maybe… just maybe… Aziraphale will tell him; ‘You’re going at exactly the right speed Crowley.’

And just like that, the apple tree precipitously is his most prized, beloved possession. He would give just about anything to ensure its survival.

Crowley glances at the thing, cradled snugly in Aziraphale’s grasp. This thing will live to be thousands of years old. He will make sure of it.

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