

CHAPTER 38: WAITING TO DIE

TRIGGER WARNING: Violence, gore, kind of suicidal ideation

When Xavion awoke, the first thing he noticed was his brain that felt like it had been severed in half from an unbearable migraine. The second thing he noticed - as he tried clutching his head in pain - was that he couldn't move any of his limbs. In fact, he couldn't move at all.

"Wha..." Xav slurred, attempting to jolt to the side but remaining still as his eyes finally focused.

That's when he noticed a third thing. He was floating horizontally, in the air. Floating.

Strands of Xavion's dark hair hung beneath his head with his arms and legs practically glued together. They could've been for all he knew.

Then his brain started to piece together what happened. If he was here - wherever here is - that meant his plan didn't work. That meant Lucifer was still alive.

And that Xav wouldn't be for much longer.

"You've got horrid memories in here," a so voice whispered, tired and empty sounding.

Xavion inhaled in surprise from the unexpected presence. He would've jumped ten feet in the air if he could.

Qarinah's hands hovered above Xav's scalp as she searched through his memories, performing the activity as casually as if she'd been merely knitting a sweater. Like she read people's minds as a hobby every Tuesday night.

The small room was dark expect for the faint glow a few machines behind them emitted and a trail of dark red dust that surrounded Xavion's floating frame.

"No child should have to experience something like this," she whispered in horror, eyes filling up with tears as a mirage of Nethum's bloodied corpse appeared from above Xavion's head.

His body felt hot, overcome with intense heat despite the room's cold temperature. But the magic wasn't the reason why. He felt so exposed having a traumatic memory out in the open - even if Qarinah had been there.

An impatient voice interrupted his thoughts. "Have you made any progress yet?"

It didn't take long to register Lucifer's raspy voice. If Xavion could move, he would've jerked up in fear from the man's presence.

After having a moment to think, he closed his eyes and pretended to be unresponsive. He didn't know what else to do in such a situation.

"I haven't found what you're looking for," Qarinah answered, continuing to search through his memories as the two conversed. "He's fighting it, even unconscious."

Lucifer groaned, stepping closer to Xav. "If he wants to make this difficult, he can go ahead. He'll lose every time."

The man shoved Qarinah aside and impatiently took her place as he begun digging through Xavion's mind himself.

The next thing Xav knew, there was a light breeze and everything felt too bright. He stumbled forward before colliding with a tall shrub.

"What the hell?" Xavion murmured as his eyes adjusted to the light.

There were hedges all around him. As he looked side to side, he realized he was in a maze of some sort.

"Fucking Cyfrin," he exhaled in frustration, punching one of the plants. "This is the last time I listen to a goddamn word that dumb bitch says."

Xavion sighed before he finally began to walk, the sound of cicadas emitting a shrill hum filling his ears. As he searched, his shirt clung wetly to his skin as he sweat under the sun's unforgiving rays of heat.

It only took about six minutes of aimlessly wandering around before he grew hopeless.

"This is ridiculous," he groaned to himself. "I'm fucking done. I give up!"

He sat on the dirt with an annoyed huff, refusing to go any further. He'd had enough.

A wisp of wind blew a stray piece of hair away from his face. The sound wasn't out of the ordinary at first, until it morphed into laughter.

"Giving up so soon?" Lucifer teased, but Xav couldn't see him anywhere. "I wish I could say I'm surprised, but I expected nothing more from my failure of a son."

Xavion's fists clenched in anger as he scrambled to stand upright. "I'm no son to you!" he spat, "And you've never once been a father to me."

"You think I wanted a son? Just when I think you can't possibly be more naive," he mused. "I only needed you for power, but it turns out you're useless."

Pain erupted deep in Xav's chest. It wasn't like he hadn't already known that. It was just different to know it rather than actually hear such a cruel statement.

A large knife suddenly fell from the sky, landing an inch away from Xavion's foot. Attached to it was a small slip of paper. Xav bent down to read it, his heart dropping when all he read was "run", written in what appeared to be blood.

The sound of footsteps hurdling toward him suddenly overwhelmed his senses. He recognized it as Lucifer's hounds. They'd been set free.

After grabbing the knife, Xavion bolted away from them, running through the maze with new determination. He still had no clue where he was going, but running was better than being chewed into pieces by a bunch of bloodthirsty hounds sent by Lucifer to kill him.

He could hear their growls from close behind as he desperately searched for the exit. One of them almost reached him as it tried to snap its jaw around his ankle, but he kicked it in the face before it got the chance.

It let out a pained howl before it flew backwards, knocking a couple other hounds off their feet as well. The others were fast, but Xav was faster.

He couldn't find the exit, though he did see a portal at the end of one of the maze's rows. A hound was hot on his heels, so Xavion bolted forward as fast as he could and lunged face first into it. Just as he was about to make it through, it got ahold of his shoe and sunk its teeth into his foot.

"Fuck!" Xav shouted in agony as venom was injected from its fangs and into his skin.

Using his free leg, he kicked off the shoe the hound was latched onto, scrambling the rest of the way through the portal before closing it.

Xavion clutched his ankle, grimacing at the huge gash that was bleeding profusely. The sensation of the venom was nearly unbearable, but it wasn't enough to kill him. Just enough to hurt like a bitch.

"If the hellhounds were enough to bring you to your knees, this is going to be very painful for you," Lucifer spoke again, sounding amused. "Or, you could give up now and give me what I want."

Xav didn't know what Lucifer wanted from him, but he'd rather die than give it to him.

"You think this is pain?" Xavion laughed. "You've already inflicted the worst torture on me anyone can experience. I'll die before I help you."

Lucifer didn't respond. Xavion tried to stand even with his injury, wobbling as he searched his surroundings. The portal had brought him to a graveyard.

Xav limped forward, following the pathway. One of the graves stood out to him. It looked just like all the others, except this one had Nethum's name written across it.

His heart clenched, but he said nothing. Instead, he knelt down and paid his respects to his lost friend.

"You didn't deserve this," he whispered, placing his palm on the soil as if he were trying to hold Nethum's hand one last time. "Your poor family didn't deserve this. I'm so sorry, Neth."

Unlike his own sorry excuse of a family, Nethum's had been very loving. They were shortly executed after protesting their son's murder - also by Lucifer. Having his grave placed was the last thing they'd done before being killed.

Xavion's eyes closed as tears rolled down his cheeks. This wasn't the kind of torture he'd been expecting. This pain made his foot feel like nothing.

A scream then filled the air. Xav almost didn't recognize it as his own. Not until he realized that a filthy, decaying hand had reached through the grave to grab Xavion's. It was Nethum's hand.

He tried to back away, horrified by what was happening, but the corpse refused to let go. It tried dragging Xav down with him, like Nethum had been holding a grudge even from the grave and wanted Xavion to suffer for what happened.

Trying not to panic, Xav grabbed the knife he'd kept from the maze, and sliced Nethum's hand clean off. It still clung to his wrist even detached.

He turned and threw up onto the ground, wrenching the hand off before chucking it away. He knew was going to have nightmares about this for the rest of his life - though he figured it would be ending soon anyway and didn't matter.

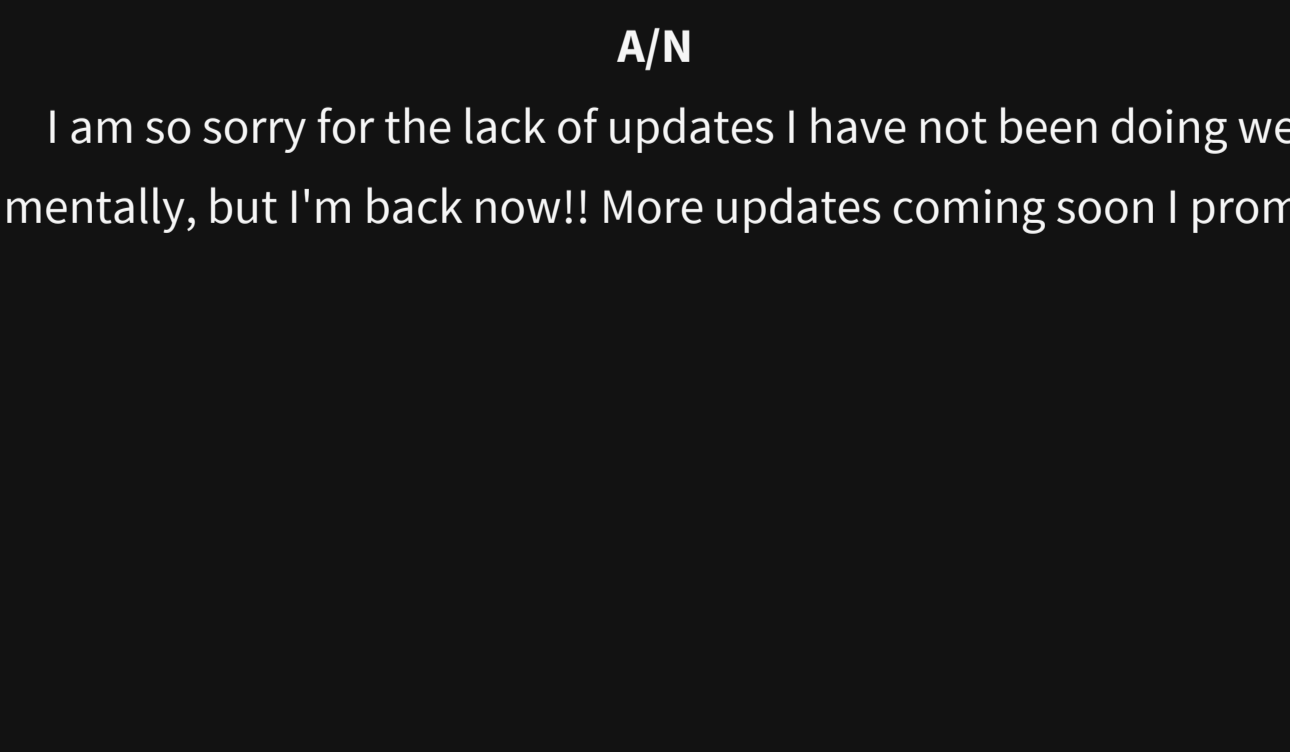
Even if he endured all this pain, physical and emotional, Lucifer would win just like he always did. This was pointless. He was suffering for nothing.

"You win!" he yelled, falling to his knees. "I give up. You can take whatever you want. Just let me die already!"

Tears were dripping down his face as he waited. He was waiting to die.

It was relieving, almost. Knowing that he finally wouldn't have to be in pain anymore. All he could recognize anymore was pain. But now he could finally be free.

He didn't have to hurt anymore, now he could just let go. So that's what he did. Xav let go.



A/N

I am so sorry for the lack of updates I have not been doing well mentally, but I'm back now!! More updates coming soon I promise!