

~~Day 23~~

~~Mia~~

What was wrong with her? How could she get corrupted so easily?

It'd taken her a good hour of lying on her blankets in her room, covered in them, before her energy came back. And once it'd past, she covered herself in the heavy leather blankets, dug herself a burrow like a prairie dog, and stewed in embarrassment for the rest of the day. Part of her tiredness was from what had been the most exhausting workout she'd ever had, her first time having sex ever. Part of it was something deeper, something unusual that'd made her hungry, and she was terrified of asking about getting something to eat.

She peeked her head out from under her pile of blankets, at Kas. Adron was out and about, doing Adron things, talking to other demons and 'preemptively' keeping Mia safe from potential demons who'd eat her. Kas was to be her more hands-on bodyguard, and be with her all the time, every day. Kas, the shark dinosaur beast of a man, who half stood half crouched by her door, eyeless face pointed at nothing. Kas, who'd held her, hugged her tight, choked her, squeezed her, buried her in his giant arms, and fucked her ass until he flooded her insides with cum. Three times.

Oh god, she'd cum from that, from getting fucked in the ass, by a demon. Adron and Zel had watched her as Kas had lifted her, and they'd both grinned evilly as little Mia had climaxed. Not fair! By then, she'd been a tingling mess from head to toe! A kiss on the neck would have made her cum.

Which only made her feel more horrible, and she glared at Kas over the mound of blankets. They hadn't even given her a choice! Zel hadn't given her a choice. But two minutes in, she'd been horny out of her mind, practically dripping on the floor, and that was even before Adron had pushed his massive tongue into her.

Virgin no longer, in two ways. She had no idea how to feel about that.

Should she be angry they'd forced that on her, that Adron had used his sin aura on her? Yes. Should she be thankful that was how Zel had decided to test Mia's aura, by having her first time be with a demon she knew, and his friend, knowing full well they'd fuck her so god damn perfectly she'd cum her brains out? Much as it pissed her off to admit it, yes, that was a lot better than the other options Zel had, options other demons would probably have been glad to use.

The issue now though, was Zel had given Adron and Kas permission to fuck Mia whenever they wanted. Payment for being her bodyguards? Hell didn't have money. Maybe Zel just thought they'd do

their jobs better if they had incentive. But now Mia had to worry about this all the time, that those two bastards might grab her and fuck her at any moment! Grab her, pin her down, fill her with their tongues, and make her—

She hit her face against the blankets a half dozen times, grabbed her nearby silk toga, and wrapped it around herself as best she could while hiding her body from Kas. This was no time to devolve into self loathing because a couple demons forced her to orgasm a dozen times until her legs had given out! She had to... to... get control of the situation, somehow.

She marched up to Kas, and glared up at the beast. His long, thick tail was curled on the ground around him, so its tip rested in front of him, and spikes ran along its top all the way up to his spine and to the back of his head. His long, eyeless flat shark onyx head, dragon snout, and the two horns coming out its sides, gave away nothing, no expression she could read. If he was looking at her in the corner of his non-existent eyes, she had no way of knowing.

“I... thought you didn’t like me,” she said. It was probably the most pathetic way she could have approached the conversation.

Kas rumbled in his chest, deep, but quiet. “What?”

“You uh... you... you kinda...” Oh god how to say this? It’d only happened yesterday! “You... seemed to enjoy yourself. A lot.”

Slowly, the giant beast tilted his head to the side. He didn’t understand the question.

“You annoy me.”

She choked on a nervous laugh. “I noticed.”

He shrugged. “But you have more courage than most souls.”

“Oh.” She beamed. “Thank you.” She wasn’t sure if it was actually courage, or she was just tapped out on fear and couldn’t summon the emotion anymore. “But, um... you really... you really...” Slowly, she put a hand on her belly, the recent memory all too bright, how it’d felt to be so full.

“You’re annoying. You pester me. You should be more afraid of me. It makes me want to grab you. Fuck you. Hear you squeal.”

She gulped and took a small step back. “I...”

His quiet snort turned into an outright growl, and he hit the floor with his tail. Uh oh.

“I don’t like this aura of yours. I can’t resist or fight it. It’s there. It… tingles through me.” He lifted his giant tail, pointed it at her, and she braced for pain, but he gently tapped her in the chest instead. “I’ve never seen a soul who takes to sex so quickly. You are worse than any succubus in the spire.”

“That… That isn’t fair! It’s…” It’s what, not her fault? “This aura, it’s—”

“I don’t know why you have an aura. If all that ever comes out of you is a sexual aura, you don’t need one.” He gestured to her with one of his titan hands. “Every demon who sees you and your body wants to fuck you.” The most he’d ever talked, and it was to tell her she was hot.

She blushed harder, and covered her cheeks with her hands. Everyone was so damn blunt, especially her bodyguard. Kas had just admitted she was beautiful and sexy and she could have any demon she wanted, but with the condescending tone of ‘duh, dumbass’.

“Thanks… I guess.”

He snorted, made a tiny growl, and shrugged. She managed to peek back out from behind her hands, waiting for him to continue, but in typical Kas fashion, he said nothing more.

And because she was a fucking idiot, she decided to poke the bear. A little.

“Yesterday, my aura, it… it uh… it really hit you and Adron hard, didn’t it?”

The beast rumbled and pointed his eyeless head to the closed door beside him and its giant, white, barring teeth. No response.

Careful, Mia. If she said the wrong thing, the beast would take advantage of the new power Zel gave him. Did she want that? A part of her definitely did. That part, already fully corrupted at this point, wanted to feel the goliath of a monster demon wrap her in his arms, stretch her insides until she could barely breathe again, and spend an hour fucking her. Another part of her wanted to ‘fix him’, ‘change him’, and indulge in some stupid fantasy of making Kas a far more sociable, civilized man-demon. And of course have a best friend named Adron who’d frequently join him to fuck her.

She’d read way too much garbage erotica online.

“I… hope the aura doesn’t, I don’t know, make people do things they don’t want to do.” The aura made the whole situation even more complicated.

The beast managed a small shake of his head, another annoyed growl, and he pushed her away with his tail.

“It didn’t.”

She smiled. That stupid part of her entertaining idiotic romance tropes wanted her to go up to him, be a bit of a brat, poke his chest, tease him, and maybe—nope, nope, she wasn't going to suddenly act like an erotic stereotype. She was not a brat!

Okay, she was a bit of a brat, but not that kind of brat.

“And I... I guess I... what I'm trying to say is, that whole situation was... it was weird, but... I'm glad you and Adron didn't hurt me. That could have gone a lot worse.” She'd seen some women — and men — on the receiving end of 'sex' that was less than pleasurable. Some demons were fucking horrible. Adron and Kas weren't.

Kas grumbled, and unless she was going insane, he turned a bit more toward the door, head included, as if he was trying to protect himself from an awkward conversation. Very human body language from the very inhuman demon.

“Zel wants you kept safe, and unharmed,” he said. There was some hesitation in that voice, and a quiet inflection. He was dodging the real reason. Maybe he didn't want to hurt her?

“Either way, thank you.”

He clicked in his throat a few times before his tail lifted, and he nudged her away with the giant limb again.

“Don't use words like that outside of this room. You're asking for another demon to jump you.”

She smiled, held Zel's necklace in her hand, and paced around randomly in her bedroom. It wasn't really a prison or cage, since she could leave any time. But at least in the room, all there was was dangling chains, a giant pile of blankets, a table and chairs, and Kas. Out there, there were remnants, hungry violent demons, and who knew what sort of weirdness Hell was going to throw at her.

But she had to get used to it eventually. Betrayers were out and about, some of them even unprotected by their masters. Considering Zel was essentially Mia's master, she had even more reason to think herself safe, right? Especially because she had a bodyguard, two kinda, with Adron being sneaky sneaky. But then, every demon who noticed her lack of a mark all had one obvious thing on their mind: what did Mia's heart taste like?

“Kas,” she said, mind wandering back to yesterday, “you know Hannah pretty well?”

“No.”

“No? You said you've had sex with her.”

He grumbled before nodding. “Many times.”

Ugh. Men.

“So you like her.”

He snorted again. “Adron likes her.”

“And...”

He managed the most apathetic shrug she’d ever seen. “I like her ass.”

The urge to punch the giant dinosaur shark right in his big scary dragon snout hit an all-time high, and she clenched her little hands into little fists she was sure could break steel. So much for Kas secretly having a crush on her or something, some sort of social drama that’d make last night more intriguing. Nope. The jerk just liked asses.

Mia smiled, and wiped it away quick. Yes, it made her happy the giant brute of a creature with the body of a god liked her ass.. It was a nice, big ass, and she’d worked hard on it. But she wanted romance! Cheesy, stupid, fun, maybe dramatic, even melodramatic romance. With a healthy serving of sex. Kinky, crazy sex, with big hands choking her and spanking her and pinning her down while she gets fucked by her boyfriend and his enormous cock... and maybe his friend’s enormous cock, too.

“Her ass? That’s it?”

He shrugged again. “I prefer yours.”

God damn it. Again she blushed hard enough she felt her heartbeat in her freckled face. For all her interest in psychology, how the fuck was she supposed to navigate this blunt asshole’s attitude, especially when he had no eyes to read! And worse, because he had permission to fuck her whenever he wanted, she had to be careful with every word.

Ugh, who the fuck was she kidding? Her first time had been amazing, better than she could have ever imagined, and half of that reason was standing right in front of her.

What would Hannah do? Hannah would tell her to toughen up. Demons were direct with their desires, and if she kept letting it catch her off guard, it wouldn’t be long before she said or did something that’d put her in hot water. Then again, Hannah would tell her to spread her legs and take demon dick up to the lungs as often as possible, given how quickly the woman had joined Adron that night outside the spire.

“Yesterday, when we... joined Adron. He’d been using his sin aura, right?”

Kas clicked once and nodded. “I blocked it. So did Zel. Only you and Hannah were affected by Adron.”

“You can do that?”

“With sin auras, yes.”

Sin auras. But not hers.

“Do demons always do that, when having sex? Use that aura?”

Kas shook his head.

“Oh. So he was doing it because Zel told him to get me... ready.”

Another click and nod. Right, it wasn't like Adron would need to use the aura to get Hannah in the mood, given the girl's personality. That'd been entirely for Mia's benefit.

“Think Hannah is in Adron's room?” A room the vrat had gotten now that he was officially Hannah's second bodyguard.

Kas clicked once and nodded.

“I think I'll go pay her a visit.” Nodding, she touched her necklace, moved toward the opening door and its parting teeth, and stepped out onto the balcony, high in the spire. Kas groaned, and followed.

They didn't get far. Zel hopped up to join them, accompanied by Saldavin and Diogo. The two male demons, monstrous and enormous, both wore armor, slabs of bent black metal held snug to their chests, arms, and legs, by leather straps. Diogo wore far less, skin darker than the larger demon's and probably thicker, but he still wore more armor than usual. Something was up, and she was very tempted to ask.

No, bad idea. Zel did not look happy. Something happened that'd pissed her off, wiping away her usual playful exterior and revealing the cold, hard, throat-slitting brutality of the demon underneath. Not a bear worth risking poking.

Kas clicked at her a few times, earning a harsh glare from his master. Even her odd, amber horn in the center of her forehead glowed a bit.

“Gorlus has not returned,” she said to him.

Slowly, the shark turned his head back to Mia's room, and aimed it at the giant closed window. He clicked twice.

“We don't know,” Saldavin said. “He's—”

Zel gently hit the winged goliath with the back of one of her hands, before she gestured to Mia.

“Trouble forever rains on my horns. Come, Mia, we cannot wait for yet more chaos to dirty my doorstep. We have work to do.”

“Oh. Okay, I—ah!” She squeaked as a big arm scooped her up. Kas. She wrapped an arm around his neck, since his shark head leaned forward, making it the perfect thing to hook her arm around while sitting on his forearm. His neck was massive, and she hugged it snug while her other hand grabbed the horn in front of her.

It was a good thing she got a tight hold on her bodyguard, because the group wasted no time. Zel jumped down the spire’s center hole, the brute and the korgejin tetrad followed, and Mia and her bodyguard followed them. Back to the bone cathedral? No. They went deep into the spire, and deep into the guts of Hell, but they stopped shy of the bottom. A couple stories above the bottom, Kas let her off, and she sucked in a hard breath as she looked around

The depths of the spire were darker than the higher levels, with none of the fire sky’s light able to reach down into the guts of the tower. Fewer amber veins or hanging braziers also meant less light, which gave the increased amount of remnants better chances at grabbing her.

Adron, already waiting for them, stood among a few dozen dead remnants, body covered in blood. He pushed aside gore with his tail, and bowed slightly to Zel before stepping aside.

Zel paid him no mind. Across the bloody mess and metal floor of the balcony, she pushed open two massive doors of black metal decorated with skulls and chains, and stepped into a new tunnel.

“Adron, Diogo, stay here,” she said. They did, while Mia, Zelandariel, and Saldavin entered a world of metal and stone.

The tunnel didn’t have the usual flesh and bone everything else did. Instead, Mia’s bare feet walked on warm metal, and many skull braziers hung from chains, almost blinding her with the new light. The walls were metal, and covered in spikes, many holding either chains, bones, or what could only be torture devices, oddly shaped metal tools probably used to cut someone open without killing them. Zel didn’t pick one up, thank god.

“Um...”

“Do not worry, young soul. I do not bring you here to torture you. We are going to perform an experiment, you and I, painless, and you will return to your room later.”

“Oh. Good.” Nodding, Mia gulped down a few boulders that threatened to choke her, as the tunnel opened up.

It was a dungeon, and a torture room. There were cells, with bars made of the same sort of teeth the door to Mia's room was. No one was getting out of their cell unless Zel used her spire powers to let them out. There were chairs, made of the same bone, tilted back so anyone who sat in them would feel like they were visiting the dentist. Considering the torture tools on the walls, and the hundreds of bones and skeletons sitting in some of the chairs or in the cells, it might as well have been a dental treatment room.

The only reason the place wasn't covered in guts and gore, was Hell's propensity to absorb fleshy stuff, liquids and sweat and blood and guts and whatnot. And with every bit of wall, ceiling, and floor made out of metal, there didn't seem to be any remnants either. But there were still screams.

It didn't take long to learn why. They continued past rows upon rows of cells, the screams grew louder, and Mia forced herself to look away from the inevitable. Demons and humans alike were in the dungeon, being tortured. No one tortured them, but that didn't change they were held down by chains covered in tiny barbs. Every breath they took cut into them. Chained down to chairs, or strapped to walls against the many spikes covering metal surfaces, dozens of demons and humans were kept in perpetual agony.

"You might be surprised," Zel said as she walked the hall past victims, "how often a demon attempts to violate my rules, or a human attempts to steal what is not theirs. They surprise me, all too often."

Mia didn't look. She'd seen enough death and brutality in less than a week to put her in therapy for the rest of her life, and the only thing that kept it from eating her up from the inside out, was knowing this was Hell, and the people deserved it, hopefully. But even knowing that, it'd only be a matter of time before all this death and pain would screw her up.

Eventually, she put up both hands for horse blinders, and kept her eyes on Zel.

They stepped into a tighter hallway, free of cells and screams. It went on a ways, deep into the bowels of Hell, and it took a minute of walking along the warm metal before they finally reached two colossal doors at the end. Zel's amber horn glowed, and she pushed them open.

"Saldavin," she said. "Remain here."

The korgejin tetrad nodded, turned, faced the hallway they'd come from, and Mia and Zel stepped into the darkness.

"I can't see."



“Of course.” Zel’s extra horn glowed, just enough for Mia to see the big, empty, black metal room, as Zel reached past her and closed the doors behind her. Just Mia and Zel, all alone. Double uh oh.

Zel walked past her again, to the opposite side of the room, and pushed open another pair of enormous doors. The room was like an in between room, then, so people wouldn’t... what, hear whatever happened in the next room? Whatever the reason, Mia was happy to follow Zel into the next chamber and its light. Skull braziers hung from the ceiling, fire burning in their empty eyes, and Mia breathed relief as she stepped around Zel into the giant, lit space, before Zel closed the doors behind her again.

Something stirred, quietly, barely moving. Enormous, alive. It... He breathed, and Mia froze as the presence of the creature summoned goosebumps to her skin. It was strong. It was so very, very strong.

“Holy...” Mia sucked in a breath, and stared up at the new demon strapped to the wall.

“This, young soul, is Vinicius, a ragarin. Last child of Belial.” The demon queen chuckled as she walked up to the titan strapped to the wall, and poked him in the chest with one of her claws. “Perhaps there are others, but none that I have found. No. He is most likely the last.”

Vinicius. A very fancy name, and rolled off the tongue with all the flair of a big evil snake speaking elegantly. He did not look fancy. He looked like Kasimiro on steroids.

The titan who stood against the wall, trapped, was at least twelve feet tall, maybe taller, and anyone with two feet on Zel’s height might as well have been a t-rex compared to Mia. Her head didn’t even reach his crotch. His four arms were bound to the metal surface by black chains thick enough to hold a battleship’s anchor, and his giant, thick, very spiky tail was chained, too, the black metal snagged on its spikes. His thick legs stood on raptor feet, with a huge spike on each knee, just like his elbows. He could barely wriggle any of his limbs.

As much as he had that sort of dinosaur shape Kas had, he did look different. More spiky, thicker limbs, obviously taller, four arms instead of two like Zel, and most different was his face. He had a snout, just like Kas, but he had eyes. Scary, sinister eyes. Dragon eyes. If a dragon could have the same sort of scary demon, skull-like face so many demons had, Vinicius had it. Terrifying, powerful, towering, in that hyper-masculine way, especially when on a goliath body of muscle. No hair tendrils, unlike Zel’s long black tendrils, but his array of horns were both regal, and imposing.

One of the chains wrapped his snout. He couldn't open his mouth. But he did rumble, deep in his chest, a grumbling, bassy sound that flowed into the floor under Mia's feet.

"Child of Belial?" she asked, unable to tear her eyes away from the juggernaut and his chained, huge body. How could something so huge exist?

"Indeed, a child of the Old Ones. But, despite their title, children of the Old Ones spawn in the spire, same as the tetrad or any other demon alive today. But children of the Old Ones are called such because, so the tale goes, they were born by the hundreds in the early days after the births of the spires. They fought for the right to aid Lucifer, and for the right to live."

"The right to live." She forced down the urge to gag. "So, he is... is a child of Belial. Does that mean he looks like Belial?"

"No. But they do look specific to the spire which bore them."

That made sense then, to call him a child of Belial, since Death's Grip's spire was directly attached to Belial himself, or itself. What she found in Zel's book confirmed that.

Mia drifted in front of the beast, stood twenty feet away, and dared not come closer. He stared at her, dragon eyes of black and red cutting into her soul, and he rumbled again, like a mini earthquake. Just one of his legs was bigger than her entire body.

"W-Why is he... tied up?"

"Vinicius would gladly see me dead, for many reasons. He does not appreciate that I am the ruler of Death's Grip." Nodding, Zel walked up to the ragarin, and pressed her breasts to his chest. "Isn't that right, old friend? If only you had obeyed, I would not have had to ensnare you all those years ago." Zel looked so tiny compared to the beast, it almost looked like a romance monster novel's cover, the small woman pressing her body against the bound giant. They were both giants to Mia. "I keep him fed. Just enough resonance to keep him from starving."

Wait, she'd said years? The colossus had been locked down here for years? Always hungry? Oh god.

Vinicius growled, more heavy rumbles, but barely moved at all. He stared down at Zel with hard, burning eyes, but didn't squirm to try and get away from her. He was used to this.

"W-Why are you keeping him prisoner? Why not kill him? Or... eat him?"

"Because he is too powerful to let roam free, and yet too valuable to kill. Belor, last child of Abaddon, held False Gate for centuries against demon and angel alike, a testament of true might.

Vinicius could solidify my grip on this province for millennia. I must break him.” One of Zel’s hands reached behind her and gestured for Mia to come closer.

She did, hugging herself tighter with each step.

“You locked him up because he’s powerful? Did he do anything to you?”

“He wanted my spire. The fool.”

Mia clutched her chest through her silks, and met the giant prisoner’s dragon eyes again. Try as she might, she couldn’t wipe away the expression she knew she carried: empathy, and sadness.

Standing closer now, Mia squinted as she looked the titan up and down a few times. He had more spikes on his body than she’d realized, some on his quads and shoulders, a couple pointing backward from the back of his hard jaw, and some sticking back from the top of his head, along with his bigger, more impressive horns. He had spikes on the back of his forearms, enough of them they were practically a layer of armor on his otherwise naked body. From the way his chest — holy fuck that chest — jutted out slightly, he probably had a bunch of really big spikes on his back, too, that prevented him from pressing flat to it. He was just so, so big.

No, wait, he wasn’t completely nude. He had a collar on, a chain that looked not unlike Mia’s, but far tighter.

“Um, that necklace…”

“Ah. One of the tools I crafted using the spire, to attempt to break this old beast.” She stepped away, and fetched a small chain from the wall, another one that looked similar to Mia’s, complete with a small, glowing amber stone.

Zel clutched the tiny stone with one of her hands. An arc of amber light, similar but far gentler than the blinding arcs that’d come out of Lucifer’s book, reached out and attached itself to the necklace around Vinicius’s throat. A leash of amber light. Zel grinned.

“Pain.”

A loud, electric sound pulsed down through the arc of light, the light itself vibrated, and Mia braced for the roar. It sounded all too similar to the silly electrocution sounds she’d heard in a million movies, a zap zing zap sort of sound. And just like instinct told her it would, it pulled a roar out of Vinicius that made her jump away and cover her ears. The vibration flooded the room, and Mia almost screamed as the giant beast’s voice shook the walls.

Zel's smile only grew, as the enormous creature strapped to the wall by a dozen colossal chains took enough of a breath to roar again. But the zapping stopped halfway through it, and the quivering monster went limp. Even his tail, which had been shaking and fighting against the chains, flattened over the metal floor, still, while the creature breathed deep and heavy.

“That... That really hurt him.”

“That it did. I have tried for decades to break this brute, but for all the pain I have inflicted upon him, the only word he has ever spoken is his name.” Sighing, Zel lowered her hand, and the amber leash faded. She came up to the bound monster, and leaned back against him. Half flirtatiously, she pressed her side into his chest, and gently traced her claws up and down his massive chest and abs. If Mia didn't know any better, she'd think the child of Belial was using a sexual sin aura, with how Zel responded to him. He wasn't.

“He's not—”

“He cannot use his sin aura, half starved as I leave him. But, despite this, he remains resistant to mine.” Sighing, like a woman enjoying being denied, she pressed her breasts into his chest again, and teased claws down to his crotch. Ken doll, nothing there, penis secure inside his body. “I have bathed him in succubi and incubi, and have personally drowned him in enough sin aura to bring a soul to climax upon merely entering the room. I have even attempted to bend the power of the spire to entice him, to summon its power and burn arousal directly into Vinicius's flesh. He resists. I have yet to arouse him.”

Mia gulped. Oh no.

“You... want me to...”

Zel grinned over her shoulder at Mia, and gestured for her to come closer again. Sighing, she did, and Zel moved aside enough for Mia to stand directly in front of the panting beast. Zel had really hurt him, but he made no effort to communicate.

Mia's head stopped a couple inches below his crotch. She was an ant walking among gods.

“New dangers haunt my doorstep, little soul. Gorlus has not returned, and I am forced to assume he perished in some idiotic battle against the rider.”

“W-What? Rider?”

Zel nodded, and squatted down beside her, one set of arms resting on her knees while the other two reached out, one to press against the beast's giant leg, the other to gently hold Mia's shoulder.

“A terrible entity, a man clad in aera armor. He wanders Hell, disappearing for decades at a time. When he emerges, all he leaves in his wake is destruction, and the slaughter of hundreds of demons and souls alike.” She nodded slowly, eyes locked onto Mia’s. “He has been spotted nearby.”

Mia groaned and rubbed her face with her hands. “He’s here for me, right?” Her, or David. Could David be nearby? No, she was just deluding herself. Wherever he was, she’d have to look for him once she got out of here, not the other way around.

Zel grinned. “Perhaps. Do not think so highly of yourself that everything revolves around you, little soul. You are ignorant of your circumstances, which makes you a piece on the board, not a player.”

Mia rolled her eyes. “Thanks.”

Uh oh. That might have been a bit too far. Zel’s playful face shifted into an icy glare, and her grip on Mia’s shoulder tightened. Mia braced for broken bones, but Zel softened an instant later, her playful, seductive smile returned, and she let go of her.

“Would you prefer I dance around the truth and refuse to say it plainly?”

“No...” Though, she’d kind of expected Zel to do exactly that, considering how much she liked to act like a flirty, feminine girly sort. But, no, Zelandariel really was an icy, cold, direct kinda woman demon when she wasn’t playing.

“Angels dot the fire sky. The rider hides in my shadow. An unmarked soul with strange abilities stands in my grasp. Something is happening, and passivity will spell destruction. We must take control of the situation.”

“We?”

“We.” Zel leaned in closer. Again, Zel was twice as tall as Mia, and proportional. Her head was literally twice as tall, wide, and thick as Mia’s, so having the demon queen lean in close enough to kiss her was beyond unnerving. Her horns were almost as big as Mia’s arms. “Or I can craft a collar like Vinicius’s for you as well.”

Mia forced her eyes away from the demon queen, onto the monster strapped to the wall, still panting and recovering. Pain no bueno.

“So we’re... partners?”

Zel giggled. “Of course not. You are my pet. My slave. But better that than my prisoner, yes?”

“Agreed.”

“And as my pet, you and I will accomplish great things.” Nodding, Zel stood back up, and leaned back against Vinicius’s chest like was he furniture. “Or at least, so I hope. If you cannot do as I ask, then you will be at least a pet worth keeping, especially due to your ability to read the ancient language. If you refuse to try and use your aura as I demand, well...” She gestured to the beast behind her, and tapped a claw against his collar while she tapped a hoof on the floor.

Sighing, Mia forced herself to look up at the colossal demon and the comparatively small demon rubbing her body against him.

“So I just... use my aura on him?”

“Indeed.”

“It’ll hit you, too.”

Zel grinned. “Yes, but do not worry. I will not fuck you.” She licked her lips as she grinned down at her. “I will let Kas and Adron enjoy your pent up desires later.”

Mia squirmed. “I... uh... I’m not really sure how to... use the aura.”

Rolling her eyes, Zel nestled against the side of the beast, and had fun teasing her two right hands up and down his enormous muscles.

“For demons, it is a simple matter of reaching into ourselves, grasping our sin, and channeling its power into one of two desires. To battle, or to indulge bliss.”

Right. Demons had two desires they bounced between, fighting and fucking. It made sense those were the only auras they could produce from themselves.

“But, I don’t have a sin... thingamajig.”

“You do not have something inside you that you grasp, or flex, to unleash its power?”

“I don’t think so. It’s never felt like that to me. I just... I’m... me, and me kinda leaks out and affects people nearby. At least, whenever I feel... feel something.”

“Peculiar. You are quite the puzzle, unmarked one.” Nodding, Zel gestured to Mia. “Disrobe.”

Mia frowned. Zel grinned, and waited. Mia didn’t want to do this, didn’t want to use her aura and force a demon to obey; as much as becoming ‘horny’ could be considered obeying. The idea of someone forcing her into a sexual situation was horrible enough, and the only reason her first time had been enjoyable instead of horrible, was because she knew the two people who’d been with her, and

they'd been nice to her. Now Zel was asking her to force a sexual situation on someone else? It was like asking her to become a villain.

But she had no choice, and she knew it. Besides, Vinicius was a super old, big nasty demon. He was probably horrible, bad, evil and violent and probably deserved all the painful things happening to him. Right?

She gulped again, and looked his body up and down slowly. He did look kinda like Kasimiro, but more upright with more humanoid proportional arms and legs, except for having four arms and whatnot. His dragon head, with its skull-like demon features, its myriad of black horns, and his intense red gaze, were all... intriguing. He looked terrifying, but not ugly. A dragon demon, with enough human features to his shape that he fit right into her favorite monster domination stories.

“Um, I... I'm not really... I don't want to...”

With another playful giggle, Zel stepped around Mia, squatted behind her, set two hands on Mia's hips, and two more on her shoulders.

“You will be fucking no one in this room today, little soul. Calm yourself.” Nodding, Zel's claws slipped under the layers of Mia's white silks, and pulled them off. Mia didn't resist, and when her naked skin met air, the colossus in front of her rumbled quietly in his chest as his dragon eyes settled on her body. “Think of this as an opportunity to master this aura of yours.”

“Master?”

“Of course. It is a tool to be used, a skill to be learned.” Zel leaned down closer, put her chin on Mia's right shoulder, and looked up at Vinicius. “But it sounds different than a demon's sin aura. We should explore different avenues of practicing it. Perhaps you need but visualize something? Perhaps think about what Adron and Kasimiro will do to you tonight? I will make sure Adron knows to visit you, slip into your pile of blankets, hold you to him, pin you, and bury his tongue inside your slit while his pet Hannah caresses your body.”

Heat shot up through Mia's skin. Zel wasn't lying, and that meant, later today, Adron was going to show up in her room. He was going to do things to her.

“And Kasimiro,” Zel continued, “he will join. Perhaps he will be the one to fuck you, while Adron takes Hannah, and you two will hug each other, desperate for someone to hold onto, as your guard pours cum into your depths. Or perhaps, into your guts, if that is what you desire.” Oh god oh god. “But I think you will be greedy. You are one of the most sexual souls I have ever met. I think what you desire is to have both demons buried inside your stretched, aching insides. You want them both to hold you,

squeeze you, choke you, spank you, and to fuck you until you weep with exhaustion. And through it all, you'll want Adron's slave to massage you and kiss your breasts with the softness and finesse only a woman would understand, while the two beasts fuck you until you are sore, and begging for mercy as you cum, and cum, and cum." Every word dripped with eroticism, desire, and hunger. Zel liked the words she said, and she knew Mia liked them, too. Worse, Zel knew Mia standing there, naked, in front of the biggest demon yet, put on display like a trophy, would send tingles through Mia's body.

Zel didn't use a sin aura on her. She didn't have to.

Mia squeezed her eyes shut tight. The fuck was wrong with her? Why did her body respond so quickly to this? Yeah, sure, she'd read hundreds of erotic stories about big scary sexy monsters ravaging poor helpless ladies, but there was always a romance plot — usually a god awful silly romance plot — along with all the sex. And she'd loved them.

There wasn't any of that here. She liked Adron, and Kas and his asshole attitude were oddly fun, but there wasn't any romantic interest there. Maybe there would be, in the future? A twisted romance like between Adron and Hannah? But she didn't even know this demon, this Vinicius. All she knew about him was he was powerful, utterly gigantic, chained and bound, and now looked at her like he wanted to pick her up and use her like a flashlight. Considering he was twelve feet tall, and she was five, the flashlight comparison was too apt.

The monster rumbled more, heavy vibrations that flowed out from his chest into the metal Mia stood on. She stood four feet away from him, looking up at him, and her eyes locked onto his. Dragon eyes, red like Zel's, surrounded by black sclera, but oddly vibrant. And he stared at her with the same sort of hypnotized hunger she saw on every demon around her when her aura grew.

Eventually, her eyes slid down his gigantic, broad shoulders, his enormous chest, his waist and massive abs, and onto his crotch. Movement. Slowly, the flesh of his body softened, black becoming dark red, dark red becoming red, and just like with Adron and Kas, a penis emerged and grew from between his legs.

Penises. She blinked a few times. Nope, not hallucinating. That, was two phalluses growing between his tree trunk legs, one on top of the other, and they were getting bigger. And bigger.

"Ah. Finally." Nodding, Zel stood up, leaned her left side into the monster's right, and casually reached down with her right hands. Each right hand slipped underneath one of his growing cocks, and Zel shivered as she slowly stroked their undersides. Like Kas's and Adron's, they had bumps and ridges on them in a pattern that wouldn't be there for any other reason than to be pleasurable for whoever was



on the receiving end. And as Zel giggled and stroked the monster's lengths, they kept growing, until both were bigger than Kas's or Adron's.

They did stop growing, eventually, but not until they were thicker and longer than the dick Mia had seen Saldavin using on that poor woman a few days ago. Mia stepped back, and gawked.

"I... I um..." She forced her eyes back up to the bound monster's. She was forcing this on him, forcing him to be aroused. Bad! That was bad, and mean, and... and the look in his dragon eyes sent more tingles through her body. Vinicius ignored Zel, even as his fellow four-armed demon massaged the undersides of each of his ridiculously massive cocks with what was probably a perfect, practiced grip.

She knew that look. Adron and Kas — well, Adron anyway — had given her that look yesterday. But, coming from this behemoth, it felt different. It felt like she was standing in front of some ancient, terrible monster of pure strength, something that might not be willing or even capable of speech, something old and hungry, and it was looking at her like it was going to do more than fuck her. She couldn't tell what that 'more' was, but cold shivers mixed with the electric tingles working up and down her spine.

"It is as I thought," Zel said. "These auras you craft are not normal. They follow different rules." With a salacious moan, Zel pressed her breasts into the giant monster's side, and stroked his two lengths faster. "They are not as direct, as visceral, or as overpowering as a sin aura, but at the same time, they cannot be so directly resisted, either. How interesting. How... delicious."

~~♥♥♥~~

Zel's higher left arm hooked behind the monster so she could snuggle to his side, shoulders pressed into the nook of his higher arm and shoulder. Her lower left hand slipped underneath her silks, between her thighs, and massaged her clitoris with a gentle, leisurely pace. Her two right hands continued to stroke the beast's cocks, until a drop of precum dripped from the top one, onto the one below it, and soon another dripped from the bottom one.

"Zel," Mia said, "I... um..."

Zel didn't answer. She moaned, hugged her body tight to the monster, and stroked him faster. For all her words about power and dominance, she was lost to her lust too, same as Vinicius. Same as Mia. How much of that was because of Mia's aura, and how much of that was because Zel was, apparently,

very attracted to the titan she'd locked up for decades? The monster she'd trapped in her basement, who'd probably been ignoring her advances for all that time?

Mia took a step closer. She didn't tell herself to, but it happened anyway, and soon she was only a foot away from the tips of the two colossal shafts. Both of them bounced gently in Zel's grip, their fleshy thickness malleable enough to bend with gravity slightly. Mia came closer. The two girths, tips ripe and swollen blood red, smelled of sex, the insane demon sex scent that reminded her of spices, as if someone could distill the primal pleasure of fucking down into an exotic seasoning.

The two cocks bounced lightly in front of Mia's face, both bending down over Zel's hands with their ridiculous weight. And for some reason, Mia's body continued. Some part of her told her to back off, to stop. A much larger part of her wanted to continue, to pour out more of this strange tingling in her body out into the world, or at least into the room, so the two demons in here with her could ride her wavelength, and feel what she felt.

Mia reached up, and cupped the glans of the lower cock. Hot, and large enough it filled her palm, even bigger than Diogo's or Saldavin's.

"Could... this..." She couldn't get out the words. Could something this big fit into a human? It looked big enough Zel would probably struggle with it.

"I'm sure we can find out later," Zel said, grinning down at her. Fuck, a mind reader, or Mia just wore her thoughts on her face. "Perhaps another time, we can see if we can fit my prisoner into your tiny body?" Oh god.

"Could he even fit in yours?"

With a husky chuckle, Zel sped up her hands, both on herself, and on the monster's two length.

"Perhaps later, I will take one, and you will take the other? We can share."

That, was an idea. Zel, ten-foot-tall thin, fit, sexy, four-armed queen, sitting on and riding a demon that made even her look tiny. As she did, she could hold Mia in her many hands, and gently bounce her on a cock so big Mia was pretty sure there was no way it'd fit, even with her afterlife body's apparent durability. And something about the sizzling idea of Zel trying to fit a beast's enormous cock into Mia's little pussy, stretching and opening her more and more until her tiny slit finally spread around the hot, fleshy, firm-but-soft texture of Vinicius's glans, soon had Mia dripping.

Not only her, either. As Mia's aura poured out of her, Zel's moans grew to match. The demon woman stroked faster, and Mia opened her hand wide to grasp as much of the beast's girth as she could, just under the thicker edge of his glans. She lifted one hand, and did the same for the other cock as well.

She only had two hands, but two was enough to at least partly hold onto each cock, even though her grip could only half wrap each girth. Each with her trying to hold both of them, they both continued to bounce and bend in Zel's stroking grip.

Slowly, she leaned in, and planted a kiss on the beast's lengths. One for the lower, its tip in front of her chest. One for the higher, directly in front of her face. She placed another kiss, and another, and half closed her eyes as the monster rumbled. The purring sound was deep, and slow. Kas purred like a semi truck. Vinicius purred like a cruise liner, rolling heavy waves mixed with the back and forth of the ocean.

Whoever the young, redheaded girl playing with two giant cocks was, it couldn't have been Mia. Could it? Someone far more sexually confident, adventurous, and carnal was holding the beast's lengths. Someone else was stroking them. Someone else was licking them, and planting kisses on them. Someone else was looking up at the dragon, and getting lost in the almost dreamy, utterly terrifying, wholly hypnotizing way he stared down at her like he wanted to eat her as much as fuck her.

A wave of hot, thick cum gushed out from the lower cock, and Mia stared down at it as the stream came out squirting. It splashed against her chest, buried the whole of it in white, and dripped down her skin and hard nipples. Heavy, dripping thickness, and she couldn't tell if the tingling sensation it sent through her was because of its temperature, or something else. Whatever it was, looking down had been a mistake. The higher cock in her other hand followed a second later, and a heavy squirt of the fluid hit her in the forehead.

She pulled her head back enough to watch the squirting wave slow, before it turned into a waterfall that poured over her wrists. Cum covered her forehead, her face, and dripped down her cheeks and from her jaw. More than a little bit of it trickled down over her lips, and she licked some off before she could tell herself not to. Like Adron, Vinicius tasted like sex, like power and strange, exotic, enticing, and addicting spices.

More of it poured out of him, the following squirts not coming out with enough force to hit her again, but many came close, and splashed over her forearms as she continued to hold each glans. And, despite herself, she continued to squeeze and massage, matching Zel's rhythm. Both ladies milked him of cum until it flowed off her forearms, down her elbows, and joined the mess of white waiting for it on the floor.

She — or some redheaded slut who looked a lot like her — came in a bit closer, kissed the top cock again, and licked off some of his cum as her tongue teased circles around its tip. More rumbling purrs told her the monster loved it. His lower cock pressed to her chest, and she guided it so his hot

flesh rubbed against her breasts and nipples, coating each in more layers of his unending cum. It didn't stop. Mia didn't want it to stop. She kissed and suckled, and moaned quietly onto the beast's glans as the thick fluid overflowed her mouth and flowed down her jaw and neck, onto the mess covering her body.

Zel's moans pulled her eyes. The lithe creature of thin muscle and power was cumming, and she grinned down at Mia as she did.



The sound of the demon queen's voice woke Mia. She snapped her eyes open, let go of the chained monster's dicks, and stepped back.

Oh god. She'd made him erect, made him rumble with pleasure, made him cum, and she'd yet to even hear him say a word. She'd made him cum! Cum all over her, at that. This was way beyond fucking a stranger in a club! Which was also something she'd never done and had never planned to do. But, good god, the fuck did she just do?

Slowly, she looked back up at the bound dragon. His expression softened a little. The deep, heavy rumbles faded. The panting slowed. The heartbeat — oh fuck in the new silence she could hear his heartbeat — settled into a deep, constant, slow pace. He was still hard, though, and Zel continued to hold his two girths, gently milking them and spurring more big drops of white fluid that gently fell to the floor.

“For all your power,” Zel said, leaning in toward Vinicius, looking up at him, “it is this young soul that breaks your barriers? How the mighty have fallen.” With an evil, sinister little chuckle, she stepped away from the bound monster, and squatted down beside Mia once again. “You must feel powerful.”

“Powerful...” Maybe she did? Right now all she felt was a combination of arousal and guilt. “This aura, it's... I mean, it doesn't sound very useful. Making people horny doesn't sound like a useful tool for doing, I dunno, conquest-y things.”

“This is just the first step,” Zel said, and she ran the blunt side of a claw down Mia's naked, cum-drenched chest. It sent more tingles through her skin. “Diogo was correct. This aura of yours is unique, insidious, and nuanced. If you learn to harness it, you could...” A moment's hesitation. After a few seconds, Zel's grin returned, and she stood up. “Well, let your imagination wander.”

Let her imagination wander? What was Zel trying to do, corrupt Mia? Turn her into a partner in crime? What could she do that'd Zel would find useful, walk down the hall and make all nearby demons want to fuck her? She already had that problem, since all demons were apparently horny twenty-four-seven. Or maybe Mia could do more with the aura, if Zel was right and Mia could harness her power?

Or Zel was wrong. Maybe Mia couldn't harness her power. Maybe her weird unique aura thing wasn't a tool she could master, a blade she could sharpen and wield, but something else, something useless to Zel. Which put Mia's life on the line again, if true.

"This has been a wonderful experiment," the demon queen said. "More of your nature is unveiled." Nodding, she put the small chain she'd used to hurt Vinicius back where she'd found it.

Mia looked to the bound monster instead. He was still horny, both of his giant cocks dangling with their immense weight, but he'd definitely calmed. He probably wouldn't have been horny anymore if she dropped her aura, but she was still covered in cum and standing naked in front of a goliath of a demon man. Even on a normal day, Mia was a hornball. Right now she was dripping.

She gulped, met eyes with the dragon, and mouthed 'sorry' as obviously as she could while Zel had her back turned.

"Now, come," Zel said. "I have a mountain of troubles to manage. We will attempt new things in the future."

"O-Okay." With that, Mia picked up her clothes and followed Zel out of the cell, but not before glancing back at the bound beast.

Vinicius. The colossus looked at her as she walked away, four arms bound, snout wrapped in chain, and red eyes reflecting the flames of the braziers. He'd been resisting Zel for decades, maybe longer, and Mia had managed to bypass his defenses, easily at that. He must have felt horrible.

So naturally the first thing Mia wanted to do was find a way to help him. David would tell her that was dumb, because who the fuck knew how nasty, evil, and vile a beast like that was? But god damn it, some stupid part of her couldn't help but imagine her freeing him, discovering he was a tortured soul, and then helping him overcome his anger! And of course in the mean time, developing a romance, and becoming the mate the beast would cherish, protect, and utterly ravage with awesome sex every night.

She slapped herself in the forehead. Splat. Oh fucking god she was still covered in cum.

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Zel let her wipe away some of the mess before going back out, thank god. And Hell absorbed a lot of it, too. The thick, white coating on Mia's skin faded away, sucked up by Hell's air, and Mia went back to her room tucked away in Kas's arm.

Kas grumbled a few times on the trip back up to her room, Zel above, Adron below.

"You can't turn it off?" he asked.

"Turn it—oh, right, the aura." Sighing, she shook her head. "I'm trying."

Her bodyguard growled, and set her down on the floor once they got back up to her room high in the spire. He wasn't happy she was radiating a big sphere of 'sex sex sex' energy wherever she went. Well, neither was she.

She had to learn to control this. If demons could fuck without engaging their aura, there had to be a way for her to at least control it a little.

"Kas, Adron," Zel said, and she gestured to Mia, "watch her closely. Saldavin and I have work to do, with Gorlus missing and the rider on our doorstep."

Both demons nodded, and Zel left.

Both demons looked at Mia, and Adron put on the biggest grin he'd ever seen.

"Should I get Hannah?" he asked, licking a fang.

Mia frowned at him, but, who the fuck was she kidding? Even as she glared at both assholes with the angriest expression she could muster, she nodded.

Adron saluted, and disappeared, leaving Mia alone in her bedroom with the giant dinosaur. And the giant nine-foot dinosaur prowled toward her, licking his teeth as he did. Gulp.

"You still can't turn it off?" he asked.

She whined and shook her head. "No. I can't. So get over here and do what I know you want to do."

He stopped, stood still for a few long moments, and took a step back toward the corner of her room near the door away from her, even as his skin reddened.

She sat up on her pile of blankets and raised an eyebrow.

"Uh..."

Slowly, the shark settled into his usual crouch position, and turned his head to face toward the door. He said nothing.

“You, um... you’re not going to...”

“No.”

This asshole. This giant fucking asshole. Yesterday he’d picked her up, pushed his tongue into her guts, fucked said guts, and had pumped her full of enough cum she thought she’d pop like a water balloon. Now he didn’t want to!?

Or, was he feeling bad about it? Was Kas even capable of feeling bad about it? Ah fucking god damn it, it was easier to think of him as the asshole bodyguard who might fuck her any time he wanted to. If he started doing things like actually respecting her boundaries, she might start liking him.

“Why not?”

He said nothing, only grumbled, and clicked once.

She squirmed. “I... I mean...” Well, fuck. Yeap, there was no getting around it. Adron was right. Kas was right. She was a hornball on a whole ‘nother level, more than she’d ever suspected. After giving a giant dragon’s two dicks a blowjob, her body had been burning hot, and Zel hadn’t even used her sin aura to get Mia all worked up. She’d just talked to her, teased her, and told her about the things Kas and Adron would do to her. That’d been enough to light her up like kindling.

She’d been looking forward to getting ravaged by them again.

Groaning, she squirmed, looked around, squirmed some more, and slammed both her palms against her blankets.

“Please?” Her whole body blushed. She probably looked redder than her long red hair. “B-But, only if you... want to...”

Kas rumbled, pointed his head her way, and licked one of his big, scary fangs. He’d liked what she said.

He prowled toward her, loomed over her, lowered himself onto her body, and took her. She melted into the act, carnal, mindless, and it wasn’t long before the first orgasm took her. Adron and Hannah arrived moments later, and soon Mia was, again, full to bursting. She loved every minute of it.

Mia was horrible, utterly horrible. Why was this so good? So much for her fantasies about being romanced by a sexy, scary, handsome monster, someone who’d sweep her off her feet to a big gothic castle. This was a lot closer to being a sex toy.

Apparently, she liked that fantasy, too.

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~~David~~

He was distracted, so distracted not even Dao and Jes, kissing and hugging and rubbing their bodies against each other, could keep his attention for long.

Caera sat closer to their little cave's entrance, keeping guard while Dao and Jes finished healing. There was increased activity from the tower yesterday, and it'd only gotten worse. More gargoyles and bat demons glided around, and even vrats and brutes combed the mountains. It couldn't have taken them long to find Gorlus's body, so they had to be searching for the rider. Or maybe, searching for David. Maybe Mia had told them about him? She wouldn't have done that unless she thought it was a good thing to do, or maybe if they tortured her within an inch of her life. Much as he loved his sister, he doubted she could handle the tortures demons in Hell were capable of. He knew he couldn't.

Torture, but extreme bliss, too. Case in point, Dao and Jes, naked and semi aroused, sat together, Dao's legs up and around Jes's waist, and the two of them hugged each other snug, complete with back rubbing and neck kisses. The way their large breasts squashed together was hypnotizing, and Dao made sure to keep her arm out of the way so he got to see it. She was trying to seduce him.

And somehow, it just wasn't working. He tried to watch, but his eyes drifted down, and he frowned at the ground between his legs. He had a sex aura he could push out and make everyone nearby weak at the knees. He had a giant dick. He had three gorgeous demon women all happy to fuck him, get fucked by him, and more.

But if he stopped analyzing and being negative about his life circumstances, it'd be a first. It didn't happen. The only thing running through his mind, was thoughts of deadly armored knights with two axes, giant invisible monsters, and his sister being tortured or exploited inside the spire. The spire. So close, and so far.

"Hey, fresh meat," Jes said, and she poked his leg with her tail. "What's got you so down? Daoka and me are the hottest demons this side of Hell, we're naked and rubbing on each other, making out in front of you, and you look depressed? The fuck? Where's the aura?"



He winced, but didn't look up.

"Sorry, just thinking. Lot of things keep getting in my way, our way, and I'm starting to think this isn't going to work."

Dao clicked a few times, and gestured to him. A long, annoyed sigh from Jeskura followed, she slid her legs out from under the satyr, and crawled over to him instead. Both demons sat beside him, and the redness faded from their bodies. No more softness. He'd ruined the mood.

"Sorry," he said.

"Yeah yeah," Jes said, shrugging. "You gotta learn to chill."

Learn to chill? He groaned and rubbed his face.

"Caera was right. You watch the scrying pools way too much. Did you grow up watching 90s action movies to learn slang like that?"

Chuckling, the gargoyle slipped her closer wing between him and the wall he sat against, and hugged him with it until she forced him to lean against her side.

"Not wrong."

Dao clicked and chirped, and nodded enthusiastically, before she leaned in and rubbed her closest horn against his head.

"She wants to know why you can't chill," Jes said.

"She did not say 'can't chill'."

"How do you know? Speak Hellian?"

"No. How can anyone speak it? It's clicks. I can't hear anything distinct."

The gargoyle shrugged. "Get ears like ours and you'll hear more. Now"—she poked his chest with her tail—"tell me what's bothering you so much?"

"You know everything."

"Yeah but that's just the usual crap, right? Shit always happens." She said it like getting buried in an avalanche of horrible shit was a perfectly normal thing, and surviving it was, too.

He eyed the gargoyle, squinting. It couldn't have been sex that put her in such a good mood, right? Just a few days ago she'd been pushing to basically leave him.

"My... aura... What's it doing right now?"

“Uh, nothing? I don’t feel anything.” She tilted her head, one eyebrow raised. “Why?”

“Because you’re acting differently.”

“I am not.”

“Yes you are! You’re acting differently, and now I’m paranoid I’m making you guys do things you don’t want to do.”

She rolled her eyes and poked him in the stomach this time, hard enough he winced and pushed the tail away.

“It’s an aura. You can feel it when you use it, right? Same for us.”

“I know, but I thought... maybe it, I don’t know, left a persistent effect or something?”

“A persistent effect that did what? Told me to be nice?”

He winced again, looking down. “Yeah.”

Dao clicked several times, sounding a little more angry than he thought the chirping sound could, before she slipped a hand around his neck, pulled him away from Jes’s wing, and brought him down and down until his head landed on her lap. She helped him get on his butt so he lay on her lap, and before he knew it, Jes had his legs up so they rested on her lap, too, his butt on the ground between the two ladies.

“This is exactly what I’m talking about,” he said, gesturing to the pampering.

“Ugh, you really want to have this conversation?” Jes asked.

“I think so, yeah.”

Jes thumped his stomach. He sat up with a jolt and grunt, and Dao, clicking and smiling, pushed his head back down on her lap.

“I guess if Caera was willing to talk about shit, I can too.”

Caera, about twenty feet away, snorted once, but said nothing.

“You don’t have to if you don’t want to,” he said.

Shrugging, the gargoyle slipped her tail up onto his stomach, and let it rest there, gently swaying left and right.

“I talked to Dao, and we’ve both decided that we want to keep you.”

“Oh. As a pet.”

Her tail pressed down against his belly button. “Got a problem with that?”

“Nope. Nope.”

“And, talking to Dao, she made me realize something, I guess. It’s... because Dao and I were really happy, when Leos was with us.”

David tensed. Leos, the incubus Diogo had killed. He’d been avoiding the topic, halfly because Jes was the sort of person — demon — who’d hit him for asking. He didn’t need Mia to warn him the gargoyle had a volatile personality.

After a heavy sigh, Dao leaned back, and combed her claws through his hair. Judging from the sound, she was reminiscing about her old friend.

“We want things to go back to the way they were. We want to just enjoy our little slice of Hell, be with each other, and have our little plaything between us.” Again, Jes poked him with her tail, this time in the chin. “And... And maybe I do want to see what happens.”

“What happens?”

“What happens. You know shit’s going to happen. All the stuff that’s unusual about you. That invisible thing. The rider showing up. Something’s going to happen.”

“I thought you wanted to avoid all that stuff.”

The gargoyle nodded. “I did, but... I talked with Caera, too.” Again, the tiger lady made one of those tiny chuckle snorts that sounded more natural on a real tiger than a demon, but she didn’t interrupt. “She convinced me. I want to see what happens. Ideally we’ll keep you alive, and when the crazy shit comes and goes, we can go back to living happy little lives, the way it’d been when we had Leos with us. And hey, who knows, maybe something special will happen and we’ll all benefit? I wouldn’t mind being rich.” She laughed at her joke. Hell had no money.

Dao clicked a few times as she tilted her head back down, and gently scratched David’s chest with one hand, her other still combing his hair. He’d fall asleep if it weren’t already day. His afterlife body didn’t care for naps.

“I mean, that does sound pretty awesome,” he said. “What about Mia?”

“Hey, if we can get your sister, she can join us. I bet she’ll be a great fuck, too.”

“What? No no no no, no no. No.”

Laughing, Jes teased her tail down his abs. “Fine fine. Maybe we can find another group of demons for her to fuck? Or you know, maybe we could all join a big group? The Damall might take us in. In fact, I bet they’d love to get their hands on you and Mia.”

Right, the Damall. Troublemakers. A group of demons that purposefully caused problems for the spires.

“Can we trust them?”

“No idea. Caera?”

Caera shrugged, and kept facing the entrance. “The Damall might be a good option. I don’t think the crazy shit coming David’s way is just going to stop, and maybe they’ll have answers. But…”

“But?” David asked.

“But, they have their own goals. They’re not just going to let us join them for asylum. We’d be joining guerrilla fighters, who are all determined to cause chaos.”

“That does get in the way of what I want to do,” Jes said. “Fuck me, I just want to be left alone, me and my lover and her pet boy toy. Is that so much to fucking ask?” Grumbling, she traced a claw down his chest, next to Dao’s claws. “But… I mean, I do still kinda want to see what’s gonna happen, too.” After a few quiet seconds, she looked away, and a small smile snuck onto her lips. “Dao wants to keep her pet alive, no matter what we do. So I guess I’m gonna stick around.”

He was tempted to eye her suspiciously, maybe remark he thought maybe there was something else going on in her head. Maybe she actually liked him? Maybe—

“You just want him for the sex,” Caera said, prowling over to them.

Dao chirped a few times before she smiled down at him, huge breasts hanging over his head. They were dark red, firm, not aroused, but that was the smile she used when she had sexy thoughts on the mind.

“Dao’s right,” Jes said. “Dude has the dick of a tetrad and the aura of an incubus. It’d be a shame to not indulge.” More than Dao with sexy thoughts, then.

Caera chuckled as she lay on the ground beside David, leaned in, and rested her chin on his shoulder.

“Well, until the patrols die down, we got nothing to do but hide out in here. We should go hunting again soon, but for now, I’m forced to agree. It’d be a shame to not indulge.”

David gulped, and looked at the beautiful tiger lady's face only inches from his, before he looked up at Dao. Right before his eyes, her enormous breasts softened again, more than they'd been moments before with Jes, until the giant pillows brushed against the tip of his nose. His aura hadn't awoken yet, either.

"What if I say no?" he asked. It took a mountain of effort to not stare up at the glorious boobs a literal inch above his face.

Dao clicked a few times, shook her head, and frowned down at him. Without eyes or eyebrows, frowning consisted of scrunching up her nose. It was adorable.

Jes laughed, slipped out from under his legs, and straddled his waist. Her body had softened, too.

"Look, I know you're the type to think about shit until it kills you. You need to get out of your head more, fresh meat. Shit happens. Apparently even really crazy shit happens, like invisible monsters and the fucker riding showing up." Oh god she was giving him the 'roll with it, adapt' speech.

Caera laughed, leaned in, and kissed him. "If demons sat around, thinking about shit a tenth as much as you do, David, none of us would make it out of the hatching pit."

Right, the hatching pit. No wonder demons were able to keep going, keep moving, and not let shit bog them down. Unlike him. He wanted to curl up in a corner, brood, and think about all the shit happening to him and his sister that wasn't fair. The random deaths, getting kicked out of Heaven, and now being the target of a bunch of people, for who knew what reason. He wanted to disappear into a hole, duck and cover, wait for things to calm down. But he had to get Mia safe, first.

Much as his inner voice screamed at him to figure out what was happening to him, to solve the puzzle, another voice screamed at him to not do anything stupid, and to stay alive. His eternal duality, forever tearing him apart. Solve the puzzle, figure out why, or just walk away before his obsessive need to figure shit out got him killed. In the past, 'get him killed' was really just whether he should annoy the school bully, or see what happened if he did some fun science experiments with gasoline. Now, it was really about life or death... in the afterlife.

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They waited for twilight. Why they called it twilight, he didn't know, but they couldn't really call it sunrise or sunset, dusk or dawn. The sky of fire, a maelstrom of swirling flame during the day, died down to glowing embers at night, and the amber veins in the ground and rocks softened, too.

Demons didn't like the twilight hours. Supposedly the hellbeasts were more active during that time. Why hellbeasts weren't their most active in the middle of night, he didn't know, but Hell was a strange place with strange rules.

Ideally, their little group would have stayed in the cave until night, but demons did go out at night sometimes. Common hunting time for demons, on the prowl for souls to eat. Twilight hours were dark enough for demons to sneak around though if they were willing to risk it, and avoid detection by other demons and humans, and hellbeasts too. The problem was, according to the girls, moving during twilight was a gamble. One mistake and you were a hellbeast's meal.

Demons hated hellbeasts for one very specific reason: you couldn't eat them. No resonance to eat. Hellbeasts, on the other hand, loved to eat demons, and humans too. It was a weird food chain.

The four of them crouched along, and David learned the meaning of a leg workout. Just like his other hunt with Caera, having to crouch, squat, and creep along on toes and fingertips meant burning exhaustion in the quads until more than a few drops of sweat ran down his body. They worked their way up, slithering around big rocks, until the nearby mountains grew distant, and the point of the mountain's top grew into a sheer cliff face he wouldn't be climbing without gear.

He almost asked about getting on Caera's back, but pebbles in the ravine below shifted, no louder than a pin drop. It was enough. The four of them flattened to the rocks, turned, and peeked down into the darkness below.

Something slithered, something massive. Black skin roamed over the stones below, making less noise than anything that big should have, and its thickness nudged up against the walls of the ditch it swam through. If it had legs, David couldn't see them in the heavy shadows or through the walls of rock. It moved like a snake, or a worm, or maybe a lizard with short legs. Its back was covered in spikes, and its head looked more an alligator's than any sort of snake.

The damn thing also had to be at least fifty feet long.

He gulped, and nudged Jes. She nodded slowly, and made eye contact with him long enough to let him know that yes, she was scared of this thing, too.

They sat, and waited. The serpent creature moved along unhurriedly, exploring, not making a sound as its colossal body pushed past the stones. It didn't need armor with onyx skin. Maybe it had a

red vulnerable belly, but with the way it moved its underside never exposed itself, planted flat to the ground. And he didn't want to find out. Him and the girls were just taking a trip out to see if they could get some sort of update on what was happening to the spire, no need to rush themselves into an early grave.

When it was gone, everyone took a deep breath.

"That," Jeskura said, "was a fucking wurm."

"A worm?" he asked.

"Wurm." She emphasized the 'erm' sound.

"Oh. I mean, it does look kinda worm-ish... and snake-ish, and crocodile-ish."

"It can get pretty fast when it wants to," Caera said. "But like you saw, they're normally slow, and silent. They slither around in the tunnels and catch humans and demons off guard."

He shivered. Something that big slithering around in dark tunnels? Nightmare fuel.

"Why does it hunt only during twilight hours though? If it can hunt in dark tunnels, why would the time of day matter?"

Jes shrugged. "Hellbeasts just prefer twilight hours."

"Might have something to do with Hell herself," Caera said. "She gets quiet and dark for night, almost like she's going to sleep. Hellbeasts are born of Hell. They bask during the day, sleep at night, hunt between."

"But, aren't demons born of Hell, too?"

"The spires aren't Hell's. They're Lucifer's." Shrugging again, Caera went back to the wall they'd been about to climb. "Get on."

He grinned, got on her back, got his arms around her shoulders, and held on tight as the tiger lady got vertical. Up they went, with Jes and Dao having no trouble following, the gargoyle using her claws, and Dao using her gravity-defying wall hopping skills, just like a mountain goat.

High up on the mountain, with no fear of being spotted by demons, the four of them stood at the top of a rock ledge, and stared out to the valley below. The climb took over an hour, but he'd been adamant it was worth doing. He wasn't sure if he'd been right.

The spire buzzed with demon activity. No hellbeast with half a brain would approach it, so the demons felt comfortable doing whatever it is they did in the valley around the spire. Little demons

jumped from the tower, and glided down to the huge spikes below. Some perched near dangling skull braziers, and munched on things in the light they provided. Demons grouped up and chatted. Some got into fights, but short lived and non lethal. They were too far for David to see any details, no matter how hard he squinted.

“I’d give my left nut for some binoculars,” he said.

Dao chirped a quiet giggle, rubbed a horn against his head, and clicked a few times.

Jes snorted on a laugh she fought to keep quiet, but even after David gave her an evil eye, she refused to translate.

“If we ever get to False Gate,” Caera said, “maybe you can figure out how to make some.”

“We’re going to False Gate?”

The tiger shrugged. “You can’t honestly expect to hang around Death’s Grip for eternity, right? Shit’s going to happen and force you to move. Either that invisible thing again, or the rider, or maybe Zel, or maybe some angry angels looking to smite things. Something’s going to happen.”

Dao and Jes both sighed at Caera’s words.

“You don’t know that,” David said. “Maybe there are other unmarked souls out there, and they can... I dunno, attract all this attention I’m getting?” Just saying the words made him feel guilty. Passing the buck onto someone else? Bleh. “Maybe—”

The four of them spun around as a breeze hit them. It’d felt wrong, out of place, and sure enough he was right.

An arrow struck the ground at his feet. It was gold. He took a step back, but behind him was a sharp fall down onto rocks and more steep ground. Fuck.

White feathers swung out, a flare of gold hit his eyes, and he fell to his knees as he clutched them. Blinding pain, literally. Unable to open his eyes, he forced down the need to cry out, some part of his brain still able to hold onto the fact they needed to be quiet.

He braced for something to hit him, maybe bite him, stab him, grab him. Nothing followed. He knelt, clutched his eyes, and squeezed them tight as they fought off the burning white orbs that still penetrated his vision. Noise erupted around him, the grunts and growls of his protectors, and the quiet but heavy flapping of white wings that buried them in more air.

“Quiet.” A voice he didn’t recognize. A woman’s. Heavy thuds followed, and then silence.



After a minute, the searing white orbs in his vision faded, at least enough he could open his tearing eyes and see what'd attacked them. But he knew already. There was only one thing in the afterlife — far as he knew — with white feathers. Like Caera had just said, angry angels looking to smite things.

Two angels stood before him. One of them had a sword and shield half the size of the giant shields he'd seen on the stairs to Heaven, a woman with dark skin, and she had her blade pointed down at Caera's exposed throat, her armored boot pressed on Caera's chest and pinning her. The angel's only bit of exposed skin was the T slit visor of her shining silver and gold armor, but visible in the darkness of twilight hours. Her eyes were obsidian. Bits of white silk hung from between the joints of her thick, beautiful, extravagant armor, similar to the angels he'd seen on the stairs of Heaven, if a bit less bulky.

Her wingspan was massive, borderline ridiculous. Her shield had a quiet glimmer, catching the ember light of the darkening sky, and her sword blade was a literal mirror, silvery, and perfect. She looked a bit over six feet tall, tall by human standards but from what David remembered, normal for an angel woman. Maybe even a little short. Definitely short compared to Caera and Jes, and about the same height as Dao. But the little angel stood on Caera's chest with violent confidence, face hard, eyes locked on David, not even breathing heavy.

Beside her stood another angel, a man, seven feet tall. His helmet left his face exposed, and the armor wasn't nearly as thick, with more sheer white silk exposed around his joints. He held a bow in his hand, a glorious thing of silver and gold, and a bowstring that shined. The nocked arrow held the same mirror blade on its tip as the woman's sword, and the arrow was aimed straight for Jeskura. His bronze eyes grinned at Jes. Tan skin. Long dark hair. Ridiculously attractive, of course. All angels were, apparently.

He had one of his feet on Daoka's throat, the satyr pinned on her back. At least the armor didn't look as heavy as the woman's, and Dao could breathe, but she didn't struggle to escape. If she did, the other angel would push her sword straight through Caera's neck. And Jes wasn't pouncing at the angel because she'd get an arrow through the face.

Situation assessed, David slowly held up his hands.

“Uh... hi?” Angels were nice people, right? Nice, beautiful and handsome, heavily armed, heavily armored, and in control of the situation.

They hadn't looked nice, when he'd bounced off the gate to Heaven. They'd looked surprised. Some of them had looked ready to kill him. The big angel had looked ready to obliterate him.

The woman sneered. “So it’s true. You really are unmarked.”

With a heavy gulp, he nodded, and brushed some of his shaggy red hair from his forehead to prove it. Talking was good. He might not be good at it, but it was still good, better than getting shot.

Sighing, the woman peeked toward her fellow angel, frown unending.

“You were right.”

The man chuckled, nodding as he kept his smile pointed at David, and arrow still pointed at Jes.

“Not me. Romakus.”

“Could you not say the demon’s name?”

“If you didn’t want people to associate him with you, you should pick a better bed fellow.”

The woman ground her teeth, eyes hardening.

“He is not—”

“You know Romakus?” Caera asked. Mistake. The angel pressed her sword down, and the tiger hissed as the blade cut her, like someone gently dragging a scalpel across skin. Holy shit that was a sharp sword.

“Wait!” David said. “Wait. Don’t hurt her, please.”

The man raised a brow, and leaned in toward his friend.

“He has empathy.”

“He hasn’t proven that.”

He shook his head, without taking his eyes off David.

“I’m pretty sure he does. You feel that?”

She ground her teeth. “The unmarked are dangerous. You can’t just—”

“Romakus was right. I can feel the aura, and he’s genuinely concerned for these three.”

“And we should spare him because he feels empathy for demons?”

The man rolled his eyes. “Uh, what’s Romakus supposed to be?”

The woman didn’t like that. Her eyes flared, and her wings spread out far, blocking out the mountains behind them. Angels may not have been big compared to demons, but holy fuck, David found himself struck frozen in awe, with a healthy dose of fear mixed in.

The man grinned at David. "Alright. Let's talk."