

## 1062

"Alright, unmarked, you get to live your first day in Hell. You're coming with me." He scooped her up like she weighed nothing, and threw her over his shoulder so her stomach rested flat against the sheet of metal bent around it. It hurt. [www.novelework.com](http://www.novelework.com)

She didn't make a sound. She didn't move. All she could do was stare out toward the river, the shore covered in thousands and thousands of bones, and the humans being slaughtered like cattle. Some of the demons laughed, clearly enjoying themselves. Some didn't, frowning as they jumped humans and killed them. All of them made an effort to get a kill, and get a heart to eat.

She wanted to cry, but her body refused. Shock? She didn't know what shock felt like. It was a miracle she was capable of thinking at all. Every part of her wanted to close her eyes and pretend none of this was happening. Pretend she was back up at the gates of Heaven, surrounded by friendly angels, welcoming her into paradise.

She forced herself to stare out at the river and watch more humans get eaten. A dozen humans ran down the river, with a giant brute of a demon following them. He didn't have horns like the others, but his face was even more skull like, and he must have been nine feet tall, bigger and bulkier than the demon carrying Mia. He roared as he closed in on the group of humans, and came to a stop when one of the humans landed at his feet.

One of the other humans, a woman, had grabbed the nearest man, yanked on his shoulder, and had thrown him down. It was how you outran a bear, right? You didn't need to be faster than the bear, just faster than the person you were with.

It made Mia want to puke. How could someone do something like that?

Because they were in Hell.

She watched and scanned the river as it grew further and further away. Where was David? He'd grabbed her and put himself between her and the water when they landed, and he'd hit hard. Maybe he couldn't get up from the water? Maybe he'd drowned? Maybe he was already dead? Maybe one of the demons had jumped him and tore his heart out and eaten it. [www.novelework.com](http://www.novelework.com)

Tears blurred her eyes. Now she could cry. But before everything disappeared in a blurry mess, she looked at some of the humans nearby, their corpses on the ground around her.

They had numbers on their foreheads, in their foreheads, as if someone had carved them into their flesh with a knife. The demons hadn't done it. One of the people crawling out of the river, a demon behind them kicking them and forcing them out onto the shore, had the number 189 carved in their forehead. She saw one corpse with the number 284. Another with 402. Another with 134... no, 133? Did it change?

She tried to make out more numbers, but they disappeared under tears. She went limp, ignored the pain of her body crushing into the demon's shoulder, and cried.

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~~David~~

Hands grabbed him and threw him onto shore. The only reason he knew it was a shore, was because he was vaguely aware he'd just been drowning. Attempts to open his eyes blurred everything red as he stared up, and it took a second to realize it was for two reasons: the water he'd been drowning in was red, and the red sky was on fire.

The sky was fire.

He groaned and tried to sit up. Mistake. Pain shot up through his left arm, and his groan morphed into a yelp as he laid back down. A quick glance at the shoulder showed the normally round shape of it was kinda drawn out and down, and thinner. Oh, his arm wasn't in the socket.

Someone overhead blocked his vision of the fire sky, and smiled.

Demon? Big sharp white teeth, big fangs, black and red eyes, big black horns. Demon.

Oh, right. He'd fallen from Heaven, through some sort of portal, down through a hole filled with screaming dead people, through a gate that he almost recognized from Stargate. He was in Hell. They'd been falling toward a red river, and--they.

He sat up, pushing himself up with his good arm, and looked around. [www.novelework.com](http://www.novelework.com)

"Mia? Mia!? Mia where--"

The demon standing over him slammed him back into the ground, hard enough to knock the wind out of him, and his skull bounced against the stones. Except, whatever his head hit, shattered, softening the impact to only headache-inducing instead of concussion-causing. Soft rocks? He turned his head enough to see the shards of white.

Bone. Bone had shattered under him. And the shore was covered in them. Hundreds. Thousands? Tens of thousands of bones, and many of them were getting crushed under the feet of demons, and nearby fleeing humans. None of them so much as looked his way, let alone came to help him. Many of them were being torn open, screaming death shrieks as their blood poured into the red river, dyeing it.

"No mark," the demon said. Male voice, gravely, scary, slightly higher pitched than David expected. [www.novelework.com](http://www.novelework.com)

"Mark?" David asked.

"No mark." The demon poked him in the forehead with a big claw, almost hard enough to draw blood.

"No mark," another demon said. David turned his head enough to see another come close, similar to the other one but not quite the same. He could see distant demons with male and female shapes, some with tails, some with wings, all of them varying degrees of big and tall, to very big and very tall. But the demons near him didn't seem any taller than four feet. And there were half a dozen of them.

They had black eyes with red irises, mostly human faces with too-big scary smiles, black horns sticking up from their foreheads, and red and black skin. Three of them walked around on hooves, the other three walked on raptorial feet, black claws digging into the rocks and bones. They wore armor, bits of metal held on by leather straps, and skulls dangled off them from metal chains. The fact they were all four feet tall, instead of huge like the others, didn't make them any less scary. He was going to die to a swarm of piranha, instead of one hungry shark.