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More clicks, faster this time, and Dao turned to unleash the barrage of deep dolphin sounds at the gargoyle beside her.

"Hey, I believe you! He shouldn't be here, but he is. What, you don't want Diogo and Tacitus dead anymore?"

Dao sighed, but stopped hopping, slowing to a lazy walk, but still holding David to her chest, one arm under his back, the other under his legs. She shook her head and leaned in toward Jeskura, clicking softly and slowly.

Jeskura sighed and leaned in as well, and the two of them bumped foreheads before sharing a quick kiss over David's head. Oh, interesting. Demons in love? It was enough to make him forget his feet were bleeding, for a few seconds.

"I say we still take him to see Diogo, but fine, we'll try and keep him alive. We have to do something before he kills us, or before Tacitus catches you. Unless you want that fucker on your ass again?"

Dao nodded, but clicked a few times, higher pitched, and bouncy *w(w)W.n0@Elw0rm.c0m*

Jes laughed and nodded, and flicked David in the head *w(w)W.Nó0e0@0rm.co0*

"She likes you. You're the only human she's ever met who isn't an asshole."

"I... thanks. But, uh, you haven't met other humans who've just pretended to be nice?"

"Oh yeah, plenty. They always have the biggest number."

"Biggest--oh, the number. So that's really a number that tells you how... evil someone is?"

She nodded as her and Daoka resumed walking *w(w)W.m0r0l(w)0r@.c0m*

"I'm just a gorgala trying to get by, fresh meat. Not like I know shit about anything. You want answers for the big questions, ask Zel. But yeah, from personal experience, the bigger the number, the bigger the asshole. And tastier."

Daoka clicked and trilled, and hugged David to her chest armor tighter. Thankfully his groan of pain was enough to get her to lighten the grip.

"And Dao seems to like you, like you're some puppy."

"Th--you know what puppies are?"

"Ha, yeah. I'll show you later." Nodding, she slipped into a big crack in the side of the mountain, wings snug to her back. Dao followed.

The crack in the stone twisted and turned, like a vein, and it got very close and tight in a few places. Dao made it work. She didn't want him walking, and if she was gonna treat him like a pet, he wasn't going to say no.

And if they were still gonna take him to see Diogo, that was good, too, if that's where Mia was. Assuming she was alive.

He shut his eyes tight. She was alive. She had to be alive.

The darkness of the claustrophobic tunnel disappeared, erased by amber light, and he forced his eyes open. There were literal amber veins on the walls, bathing them in its strange glow. Amber wasn't supposed to glow, but this stuff did, and the light wasn't static. It pulsed, ever so slightly, like some sort of... slow heartbeat.

Jes walked ahead of them, and came to a stop as the thin tunnel hit a dead end. The amber light showed her grabbing some sort of giant, thick bone, something that must have belonged to a creature's leg, something at least thirty feet tall when it was alive. Whatever it'd come from, it was strong enough she used it as a lever, and pushed a boulder as tall as them aside.

It was a cave, hidden behind a boulder. Once they were inside, Dao set him down on the ground, and the two demons worked together to push the boulder back into place. Not an easy feat.

David didn't move, but he did look up and around at the big cave, its roof fifteen feet overhead, its walls well lit with amber veins. It had plenty of alcoves, too, some long enough he couldn't see how deep they went. All in all, it seemed like a cozy cave, compared to caves he'd seen pictures of. There was even a bed.

He raised a brow, still on his ass, as he looked at the bed. Someone had taken some stones and bones, and made something like a bed frame. The blankets were piled in layers, some brown, some dark red, and squinting for some detail revealed they were actually leather. He almost said something stupid, like 'that can't be comfortable', and then reality slapped his brain. His feet were bleeding from walking on stones, and every single inch of Hell he'd seen so far looked beyond uncomfortable. Those leather blankets were probably the most comfortable place in the entire...
dimension.(w)wW.n0V0lw0(r)m.co0

Only now that he had a second to really pay attention did he even notice all the bones around, skulls in particular, a lot of them sitting on alcove edges. Most of them weren't human, and some of those skulls were very large. Plenty of them hung from chains, black metal somehow bolted into the stone ceiling, except not bolted. Just, merged, as if it'd grown out of the stone.

"Alright, you stay there." Jeskura scooped him up by his wrists, lifted him, and dropped him down by a wall not too far from the bed, the uneven floor putting him at about the same height as the bed. Before he knew what was happening, she grabbed some rope, black, almost like cord, and tied his hands over his head to some bones that came out of the wall, their ends trapped in the stone, like bars. That was strangely convenient, and made absolutely no sense. Nothing about this place made sense.

"I... don't think I can move that boulder." He nodded to the giant rock blocking the exit. "I can't escape." Hopefully there were some cracks in the walls somewhere for air, because for some reason, his ghost body still needed to breathe.

"Yeah but that doesn't mean you can't stab me in the face while I sleep." Shrugging, the gargoyle stood up and backed away, smiling at him. "Damn it's a good thing we found you when we did, fresh meat. Lot of demons out there want to get on Diogo and Zel's good side, and they wouldn't give two shits about throwing you to him for a free upgrade on the respect ladder."

The gargoyle talked far too much like a human would. It was unsettling.

He looked up at where his wrist was bound to one bone, a foot to the side and above his head, and the same for the other. Not tight enough to cut off circulation, if that was a thing in Hell, but tight enough he wasn't going anywhere. He might even be able to fall asleep.

"Thanks," he said. "For... for helping me."