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Eventually the tunnel opened up more, and the amount of remnants nearby dropped off to almost nothing. No longer a tunnel, but a full cave, big and open, with an enormous throne in the back center.

The decoration motif went from bad to worse. A few remnants grew out of the stone ceiling above, but a few also sat inside cages that dangled from the ceiling from chains. They looked like people, fully intact, but a second glance proved they were remnants, sputtering and groaning, twitching inside their bird cages. The metal bars that held them were rusty dark metal, and drops of blood fell from them onto the stone, drawn from the remnants by their serrated and spiky inner edges. 589. 542.

Chains hung from other places on the ceiling and walls, covered in barbs, many with skulls dangling from their bases and hooks. Mostly human, but more than a few skulls looked demon, complete with massive sharp teeth, and black horns. More than a few hung from alcove entrances, almost like bead curtains... of death.

Demons stood by, watching, guarding. A couple brutes, naked, and again with no genitalia of any kind, with enormous muscular bodies almost pure black. But she'd seen one of the brutes naked and having sex, and a lot of his body had been red, and not a Ken doll.

One of the demons looked like a gargoyle demon, but different, no arms, but her wings were arms instead. A bat demon? She hung upside down from one of the cages, ignoring the remnant inside drooling and bleeding from broken fingernails. 631. High numbers for the people in cages.

The throne itself was a seat carved into the slope of rock against the back wall, and it was massive. And the person who sat in it was, too. Another brute, naked, and nearly ten feet tall. Huge even compared to the other brutes. The demons she'd seen having sex all looked redder, but this brute was almost pure solid black. If the color of the skin meant how hard or tough it was, this brute -- probably Diogo -- was as hard as stone.

A succubus sat on the right arm of the throne, wearing a loose piece of... silk? White silk, partly see-through, something that hung over her shoulders and was tied across her breasts so it dangled loosely over her legs. An incubus sat the throne's left arm, with the same sort of ridiculous, perfect proportions the succubus had. Not as tall as an angel, but the red skin and short black horns did absolutely nothing to detract from his perfect, lean, muscular, fashion model physique and face. Both had thin devil tails ending in spades, and they waved slowly behind them as both looked to Mia. Their jaws dropped.

Diogo stared down at her with eyes too small for his huge skull-like demon face, and he slid his jaw to the side slightly, causing his huge teeth to click once. She'd become the center of attention.

"Diogo," Brennus said, "look what I found out by Adam's Blood." He shoved her forward, and Mia stumbled. She almost fell to her knees, but managed to get her bound hands out and press against Diogo's right shin. Hard as metal.

She slowly looked up at the colossal monster, and gulped. He was literally twice her height. And somehow, despite the lack of horns or wings or tail or spikes, he looked more terrifying than any of the other demons. No genitalia though. A good thing, hopefully.

"She's unmarked," he said, voice rolling over her with enough bass she felt her teeth vibrate.

"Yeah. Thought that might interest you, or Zel."

Mia forced herself to stand up straight as she looked up at the titan, ignoring the beautiful creatures on his throne's arms. The demon with muscles as big as her entire body was a little more distracting for the moment.

Diogo leaned down toward her, set an elbow on his leg, and frowned. The fact his skull-like demon face was capable of bending to show emotion made him more scary, not less. He raised an eyebrow, and from so close, she saw the bald creature didn't even have eyebrows. The skin was just slightly darker there, too.

"Why are you unmarked?"

"I... don't know."

He growled, and Mia shivered as the vibration went up through her legs.

"Start talking, fresh meat," Diogo said, "or I will simply eat you and be done with it. I am sure an unmarked must taste unique."

He didn't know what an unmarked would taste like, and from how everyone was staring at her, it was the first time any of them had seen an unmarked person. Not a deal breaker for getting eaten or killed, though. If demons had any rules they followed, she didn't see any. They weren't going to return her to Heaven because of the mistake that'd sent her here.

God, she hoped it was a mistake.

"I... I was at the gate of Heaven." Better to not mention David. If he was still alive, she wanted to keep it that way. "I'd just died, so I walked up the white stairs and got to the gates. But when I tried to enter, it blocked me. All the people there, and the angels, they were all confused. No one knew what was happening, and then suddenly a portal opened under me, and dropped me off... here."

"In Hell," Diogo said with a quiet, all-too-sinister chuckle. "That is very unusual." Nodding to himself, he leaned back in his throne, still watching her with his red and black eyes. "A wise move, Brennus, bringing her to me."

Mia managed a quick peek over her shoulder at Brennus. The vrat put on a smile, half nodding half bowing to the giant brute, and he gestured to Mia with his tailwww.n@wElworM.com

"I didn't see any other unmarked, but a lot more demons than Loria and me were there at the drop. Some humans got away, too."

Diogo snarled. "Last thing I need is more fresh meat joining that idiotic cult."

Loria nodded and fluttered her wings a couple times.

"I did kill a Cain worshiper yesterday," she said, "but the problem is getting worse. Won't be long before they start attacking, probably around Adam's Blood."

"Agreed," Diogo said. "Caera, I'm going on a trip come rekindling. Get out here."

One of the demons watching from a high alcove climbed down the wall, head first, like a cat, huge claws digging into the stone grooves on the rock before it leveled out. She sauntered toward Mia on all fours, wearing the same sort of armor as a lot of the demons, black metal chunks and big demon skulls strapped to her with leather straps. She had two big black horns, black tendril hair, and spikes covered her spine, her armor conveniently avoiding the spikes that ran all the way down to her very thick tail.

She stood up on her hind legs once she got close, and Mia stared up while Caera looked down. She had a big scar across the right side of her face, and it left a nasty dent in her right horn, too. And she had a very slight snout, not enough to make her look inhuman but just enough to give her a slightly catlike face; lion or tiger, not house cat. Combined with the wide mouth filled with very sharp teeth, she looked awesome, sexy, and terrifying.

"Field trip?" she asked, voice deeper than the gargoyle's, but nowhere near as deep as Diogo's. "We going somewhere?"

"I'm visiting Zelandariel. She'll want to see this unmarked. You're staying here and keeping these idiots in line."w(w)(w).@()@eLw@Rm.@óm

Zelandariel. What a mouthful. No wonder Brennus called her Zel.

Caera frowned as she continued to look at Mia while talking to Diogo.

"That'll take four days, one way."

"It will."

"And if those Cain fuckers attack while you're gone?"

"That's why I'm leaving you in charge." Nodding, he gestured to Caera. "In the meantime, keep an eye on the unmarked. If I wake to find her dead tomorrow, I'll be having your heart for breakfast."

After a few seconds that snapped tight with tension, Caera sighed and nodded.

"Alright." The tall demon motioned for Mia to come. "You're staying with me tonight, then. Don't want anyone eating you and getting me killed."

Nodding, Mia forced herself to not gulp as she stepped up to the woman, and then beside her as Caera ushered her toward the big hole in the wall she'd climbed down from. Caera stuck close behind her, and growled at the other nearby demons as they walked past them. Not a very stable or trusting group. Good, that'd make things easier.

Mia had to do what they said. She had to shut up, and just do what everyone said. If Diogo was taking her on a long trip through the mountains to see his boss, then even with a bunch of demons helping him, that'd be her best chance.

And when she found the opportunity, she'd kill him, escape, and find her brother.

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