

## 1083

"Hannah," Caera said, grinning down at the woman. "If you don't do what your master tells you, I'm going to tie you up and leave you for Diogo to fuck until something breaks, and Adron can't stop me." She leaned down closer, and half growled half purred at the quivering betrayer. "Adron treats like you're made of glass. Diogo won't."

This, was gentle? Mia gulped as Caera's threat landed, and Hannah's eyes opened wide.

"Okay! Okay, I... I had a few, hidden in different places. One's right here." She gestured to the blankets, in a specific corner.

Adron laughed. He knew one fruit had been there, but he'd made a sexual game of making Hannah say it out loud. Mischievous.

Caera chuckled as she let the girl go, prowled around toward Mia, gently nudged her aside, and lifted up the corner of the thick leather blankets. Sure enough, there was a divot in the rock, just big enough for what looked like a small piece of red fruit, spherical, and without the shine of most fruit. The more Mia looked at it, the more it looked like a hunk of flesh in the shape of a plum.

The tiger demon motioned for her to come as she prowled out of the alcove, and waited at its entrance.

"You bringing her on the trip, Adron?"

"I think I will," he said, earning a small groan of annoyance from Hannah.

"Well then don't break her." Nodding, Caera started down the tunnel again, and Mia jogged after her. *w@. (n) (o) v E L W (o) r m. c o m m*

But she did manage to get a peek back into Adron's alcove before it vanished from sight. The big, handsome, scary demon turned Hannah around, laid her against his chest, and wrapped a hand around her throat. He choked her, pinning her head to his sternum, while his other hand reached between her thighs and caressed her clitoris. No hard thrusting. Maybe that'd come later, but for now, it seemed clear Adron was going to focus on Hannah's pleasure, making her squirm as he buried her bliss. And from how her eyes rolled up and her body went half limp on him, she really, really liked his huge hand around her throat.

It looked amazing.

Mia gulped as she forced herself to look away and caught up with Caera. If this kept up, she was going to have to masturbate before she did something really stupid. One day in Hell and already the insanity of it all was fading into background noise, and the only thing she could think of was sex. The aura Adron had been radiating certainly hadn't helped. The only reason Mia wasn't dripping down her thighs, was thankfully enough leftover Hell-shock to keep her body from getting too horny. Horny, but not too horny.

Caera, still walking on all fours, tossed the fruit back to her, and Mia snatched it out of the air. It did feel like a chunk of meat instead of a fruit, and it was warm, too. Blergh.

"Eat."

"It's..."

"Yeah, I know. Just eat it, before a demon takes it from you. Unless you're happy going on a four day trek through the mountains hungry like you are?"

That was the other reason Mia wasn't tripping over herself horny after watching Adron. The damn hunger deep in her bones and gut was not pleasant, and she couldn't ignore it, either. It felt like she was starving in a place food wouldn't be able to fix.

She took a deep, heavy breath, and popped the fruit in her mouth. Sure enough, it tasted like meat. Good meat. Really good blue rare meat. Meat and blood so warm, it sent pleasant tingles out through her limbs, and filled her up. A tiny fruit that settled her hunger in a matter of seconds.

"Good, right?" Caera asked.

"Very. Very weird, and very good. *W W . n o O e l w o R ( m ) . c o M*

"And very rare. You find a forbidden fruit, you eat it or hide it. You might not need to eat essence except to heal, but us demons need resonance constantly. Fruit has both. Understand?"

"Not in the least."

Laughing, the big tiger lady gestured at Mia.

"You're a human soul, right? Even unmarked, you're still a soul. You're filled with resonance, something you gathered, or attuned really, while alive on the surface. Now you're in Hell, and the resonance is sealed inside you. It stays there, in your heart, ripe and ready for a demon to come along and snack on."

She put a hand on her sternum. "Oh... *(w) W w . N o v E l w o r m . c o M*

"Demons turn their resonance into essence. Essence is how you exist. Run out of essence and you wither away and die. Unfortunately for humans, demons can't absorb essence. We have to keep hunting for new resonance, from humans or other demons. And, fortunately and unfortunately for humans, you can't turn resonance, yours or anyone else's, into essence. You have to scavenge for essence itself, munching on the bodies of demons, other humans, or the beasts of Hell if you're strong enough to take one down."

Oh god, that was one extremely fucked up circle of life. *w w w . N o ( v ) e l w o r m . C o m*

"Thanks, for telling me."

Caera grinned up at her. "You have no idea how strange you are, saying things like 'thanks'. Be careful or you're going to grab someone's attention."

It was Mia's turn to laugh. "I'm already being dragged to see the ruler of Hell, right? I--"

"Of Hell? Fuck no. Zel is ruler of the Death's Grip spire, but that's just Death's Grip. There's nine spires."

"Oh... Hell is a big place. Er, I mean, is it, actually? How big is a country here?"

Caera shrugged. "Hard to know, hard to measure. No one's run the ring of Hell since Cain, tens of thousands of years ago. And that's just what some of the runes I've found say. They could be lying. My friends and I, we found..." Slowly, the tregeera lowered her head, shaking it.

That was as very human reaction. The way Caera lowered her eyebrows and looked down. The way her shoulders slumped, even walking on her hands. The way her head hung, as if someone had just thrown a weight around her neck. That was a sad demon. More than that, that was a demon who didn't want to talk about some shitty things in her past.

The vrat had said she had a stick up her ass. Caera didn't seem like she had one, but if bringing up memories of her friends -- probably dead considering her reaction -- reestablished said stick, it might not be a good idea to bring them up. Yet.