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Sighing, Jeskura shook her head as she sat down on a big boulder. They were almost out of the ravine between the two big mountains, the bigger one called Adam's Back according to Jes, but they still had a bit to go. Jes or Dao took thirty second rests frequently, usually on top of a ledge or big rock, something to give them visibility of the area.

"Okay, yes, for fresh meat Hell is always Hell. But for demons, sometimes it's good, sometimes it's not. Zel's got it up her ass to get ready for another war, so the bailiffs are cracking down, trying to get all the demons in Death's Grip cooperating. And they're not gentle about it. If we don't want to be part of the horde Zel is bound to eventually summon, the bailiffs kill us." Flaring her wings, she looked out to the ravine exit, growling, tail flicking left and right behind her. "Diogo killed our friend Leos to make an example. I'm going to kill him to make an example. First Diogo, and then Tacitus, so he leaves Daoka the fuck alone."

The look in her eyes made it clear, it'd be a bad idea to ask about Leos.

"So, um, assuming this Diogo demon, assuming he, uh... jumps out of the way of the rock you intend to roll onto his head. What happens after that?"

She snapped her red eyes down at him, and he froze.

"Then I roll a bigger rock. We got some time to set this shit up before we take you to him. We'll make sure the traps are good."

Something clicked into place about his two companions, and he winced as he looked past her down the ravine. It opened up, exposing the landscape, the distant red river, and more distant mountains. And rocks. And mountains. And stones. And mountains.

"Good luck setting up a trap that you can just... roll down a hill. This isn't some kinda dense jungle. This whole place is just big, open, and easy to fly over, right?"

"Demons can't fly."

"What?"

Jes stretched out her wings and gestured to them and their soft, red undersides.

"Demons can't fly. Glide, sure, but can't fly. Only angels can do that."

He nodded, taking his chin into his fingers. Good to know, good to know.

"So, the traps. There going to be netting?"

"Nope."

"Spike pits?"

"Nope."

"Uh... some hellbeast or whatever, that you can unleash?"

"No."

"Is there--"

"What's the problem, fresh meat? We're gonna set up some traps with Zreeg's help, dump a bunch of giant boulders on Diogo and his group, and kill him. I don't see the issue."

It clicked into place again. He'd known people like her in the past, people who wore their thoughts on their sleeves, and talked big game. They even had the enthusiasm and will to pursue those pursuits, right into the dumpster fire their plans inevitably became.

Jeskura was a dumbass.

He looked at Daoka, and found her nodding as she looked between him and the gargoyle. Even without eyes, he could see her totally trusting expression, the satyr putting her utmost faith in her lover.

Daoka was also a dumbass.

But, they were a pair of dumbasses who'd saved his life, and were plenty strong. And at least compared to the imps and grems he'd seen, and the other demons on the river, they were nice. He owed them.

"Okay, rolling boulders sounds great and all, until you try to do it. I know you're both strong, but it won't be easy. You'll have to roll a lot, and it's not like Diogo and his crew are just going to stand there and let themselves get flattened." He came out of the ravine a little further, squinted, and analyzed the mountains as best he could. "Will they have to go near one of the cliff walls on their trek?"

"The most common path from Gorzen Eye to the spire runs through a ravine, with a mountain on one side, yeah."

"A ravine, like this one?" He gestured around.

"Yeap."

He nodded, stroking his chin some more. "Then you might be able to set up a pincer trap. Or hammer and anvil, roll a bunch of rocks down from the ravine end toward them while you run at them from the back. Or maybe, if we're lucky, and Zreeg is as strong as you make him sound, you might be able to create a small avalanche. Find some really flat cliff face and smash the base of it, and it'll come tumbling down." Assuming Hell followed the laws of physics, which seemed suspect at best.

Jes and Dao looked at each other, said nothing for a few seconds, before Jes hopped down off her perch and came up to him.

"You got a brain?"

"What?"

She poked him in the forehead with her right wing's thumb claw.

"Brain. You're smart?"

"I uh... I think so."

"Think so?"

"I mean, high school was a breeze, and I was doing my second year at university without any trouble? So, I guess I am? A bit?"

She eyed him, leaned down until she was only a few inches from his face, and poked him in the chest again.

"You're a shitty liar, fresh meat. Come on, tell me the truth. What's going on in that head of yours?"

He groaned.

"I'm... very smart." Might as well. "Not a genius or anything, but yes, I am very smart. Honestly, when I realized I was being sent to Hell, I figured it was either because I have the sex drive of a bonobo, or because I'm proud. Very proud. I am very smart."

Jes stepped back, and smiled.

"I knew there was something I liked about you."

"I'm smart?"

"Nah, fuck that! I mean, I'll use that, it's useful." She came up, stood beside him, and wrapped one of her wings around him. He fit snug against the side of her chest and armor, and he gulped as he looked up at her. "You have no idea, fresh meat, how absolutely fucking oblivious most souls are to their own shit. Most of them can't even believe they're shitty enough to warrant being sent to Hell. Fucking nasty shits who don't know themselves in the fucking slightest. Not you, though."

"Really?"