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Mia stood beside Hannah, and the two women stared on and down, the only thing they could do. Jumping down meant breaking bones, or doing exactly what Scilra said, getting trampled and eaten by a bunch of big horses with ram horns and -- probably -- sharp teeth.

The basilisk's rolling came to a stop, and the creature turned its gaze back to Adron. Animals from the surface, from Earth, didn't usually suicide for a meal unless they were starving to death. But the basilisk didn't look emaciated. It looked like a well-fed, short-limbed, wingless snake-faced dragon, stomach almost hitting the ground as it threw its weight at Adron.

Adron tried to get his sword up in time, but it wasn't there. It'd been hooked on his back, but rolling down a hillside had tossed it. He ducked instead, and the creature's head slipped past Adron's by inches. It'd struck out first, like a snake, before the rest of its body caught up and it collided with Adron straight on.

Down they went, on their backs, and again the battle turned into a wrestling match.

"Shit. Shit shit shit." Mia snapped her eyes around. Find something, find anything.

Hannah didn't so much as move. Her eyes were wide, and her hands froze together in front of her. It almost looked like she was praying.

A noise vibrated through the valley. Quiet at first, a gentle rumble that almost wasn't there. But as Adron wrestled with the lizard, it grew louder, and louder. The hundreds of black horns in the valley each turned, and hooves gently patted the stone ground. The herd didn't move, yet, but slowly the distant creatures stomped the ground with their hooves more and more, until the rumbling grew loud enough it couldn't be ignored. It only got louder, as some of the horses reared and slammed their hooves down, hard, while some of the smaller ones hopped in place from side to side.

Slowly, they moved. Almost in perfect unison like a school of fish, the huge horses walked in Adron's direction. They didn't charge, not yet, like they weren't in a hurry to catch prey. Maybe they thought it better to let the fight play out? A level of intelligence more than a little unsettling. But either way, they were marching straight toward Adron.

Adron was the only demon around that Mia sorta kinda almost trusted. Fuck just standing there and watching him die. She leaned forward, and stuck a foot out over the edge--

Only for Scilra to yank her back, against the mountain wall. At least this time she caught herself before her skull cracked against the stone. *w.NoveL.w@rm.čom*

"Diogo will have my hide if you I let you go down there," she said.

"We have to help him!"

Scilra stared at her, blinking.

"You'd risk your life for him? You barely know him."

"I didn't plan to die for him, but I'm not just going to watch him die, either!"

The tiger continued to stare at her, as if Mia spoke some alien language. A weird stand-off, but it gave Mia a second to notice a decent rock beside her. She grabbed it, groaning as her fingers struggled to get a good grip. Must have been as heavy as one of her heavier kettlebells. *ww.n@E(i)@O(r)m.©om*

"Fine. I won't go down there." Mia got up, lifted the rock up to her shoulders with both hands, and marched back up to the edge, beside Scilra. The tregeera got ready to grab her, but Mia didn't give her a reason to.

She threw the rock straight down at Adron.

"Incoming!"

Again, everyone still on the path looked at Mia like she was insane. Even Adron, on his back with one hand out holding the creature by the neck, looked Mia's way. More importantly, the rock caught enough velocity and bounced enough it made a racket, enough to grab the giant lizard's attention.

And, because life -- or the afterlife -- was a fucking bitch, the rock didn't roll straight. So much for it crashing into the lizard. It bounced around, hitting uneven surfaces as it rolled, chips flying off as its harsh sound echoed through the valley, almost as loud as the rumbling herd. The goorts weren't walking anymore. They'd started their charge.

Adron got his huge raptor feet under the distracted lizard, and kicked him off. Demons were damn strong, and the giant creature, bigger than Adron, flew back maybe ten feet. Mia's rock crashed into the lizard's back left leg, and the creature shrieked. It hadn't made much noise before, but when its leg bent sideways at the knee, the creature made up for its silence with a banshee scream. *@W@.n.e.r.e.L(w)RM.C(©)m*

Adron didn't hesitate. He got back up, and ran. Not a glance back or a look to the basilisk, Adron full-on sprinted back up the hill, and soon had to use his hands as the slope tilted underneath him.

The basilisk tried to chase, but one step on its broken leg and it fell to its stomach, shrieking and hissing. The rumble grew louder, until it was thunder. But no matter how loud the sound grew, it wasn't enough to drown out the cries of the wounded lizard as it stared up at Adron with big, red and black snake eyes.

They weren't demon eyes. Instead of black outsides with a red ring inside and a black pupil like a demon's, the lizard's eyes were red on the outside, with black slits in the middle. Red snake eyes.

Despite wanting to watch Adron, Mia couldn't tear her eyes away from the giant lizard, as a dozen goorts surrounded it. It was bigger than them, and it snapped at them, hissing between snake strikes. But being bigger than them also made it a big target, and one of the goorts charged it from the back, head aimed down at its prostrated body. The goort drove its inertia and weight down at an angle into the lizard, and judging from the shriek that followed, it broke something in the creature.

They charged again and again, and only when the lizard stopped striking at them with its snake head did they close the distance, and stomp it to death. Dozens of hooves, crashing down on the leathery, scaly skin of the big lizard, heavy enough to break but not heavy enough to pierce. The lizard twitched and hissed, gurgled, and died. And the goorts dug in.

So, that was nightmare fuel. Mia couldn't have nightmares anymore, thank god, but the way the moose... goorts, opened their mouths and ripped the lizard's thick skin open, spilling its guts, was disgusting. It was like a school of giant piranha, tearing and shredding, somehow managing to avoid biting each other as they pressed side to side to fit in close and take a piece.

Adron climbed up the slope, swordless and probably bruised, but alive. Despite how steep the slope got under the lip of the path the rest of them stood on, Adron climbed without issue. Claws were useful climbing tools, almost like an ice axe, especially when they were that thick and strong.

He pulled himself up onto the ledge. For just a second, it looked like Hannah was going to hug the demon, but instead she came up to him, and poked him in his side against the armor.

"Adron you fucking idiot!" *@W@.n.e.vê@wó(r)m.(©)Om*

The tall demon smiled down at his slave.

"You missed me."

"You nearly died! You... fucking idiot. I can't kill you if you die."