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"The war between the spires went on for thousands of years until the angels killed Belor, around two thousand years ago, which pretty much stopped the spires from fighting each other. Fighting so directly, at least. Whatever advantage the weapons and armor Belor thought the arms he produced would give him, it didn't work out, in the end. They're not as useful to demons as you'd think. They're heavy, get in the way, and claws cut almost as well as swords and axes."

They were damn heavy, that was true. Demons were strong enough to wield them, but being strong wouldn't be enough when trying to wield a fifty-pound sword, and the sword David had tried was probably a small one. Combating the balance, while also wearing even more weight in armor, would be the problem. One swing and you'd spin around or fall over or get thrown to the side, anything.

"The Old Ones--"

"Very old demons," Caera said. "Supposedly created by Lucifer themselves. Or at least they worked directly for Lucifer. So goes the legends."

"Wow. And there's an anvil at the bottom of the vortex?"

"A big one, supposedly."

"You haven't seen it?"

"No. False Gate is too far, and too dangerous, ever since Belor died."

"Really?" he asked. "You'd think it'd be less dangerous."

"You'd think. It's not."

He was tempted to ask for more information, especially about Belor and the anvil, but Caera dropped it so fast he knew better than to pick it up. Look at him, picking up on social cues.

They walked on, and on, and on. Endless paths, each step a pain in the ass, no path worn smooth. Thankfully the demons didn't move faster than him, and on more than one occasion, he had to slow down for them to catch up. They didn't like cardio. Good, because he fucking hated cardio. Going for long walks and listening to audiobooks and podcasts was how he did his cardio when he was alive, and without something to listen to, it was torture. For the demons though, they genuinely seemed to struggle with it.

"Break?" he asked. They'd stepped down into another ditch crevice in the rocks, and it went deep enough he felt slightly safer than usual inside it.

Daoka clicked a few times, came up beside him, kissed his cheek, and sat down against the wall of the mountain. She was panting.

"I get that you want to find your sister," Jeskura said, "but holy fuck dude, slow down."

Watching the gargoyle, also panting, slump against the wall beside Daoka, was satisfying. For all the times Jeskura had teased him, she couldn't keep pace with him, not after six hours of non-stop walking at least.

"You can all easily beat me in a race," he said. "But a long hike is where you draw the line?"

Grumbling deep in her chest, Caera pushed against his back hard enough he stumbled forward, straight onto Dao and Jes's legs. Dao clicked between some giggles, picked him up and set him between her legs, facing away. He tried to sit up, but she wrapped her arms around him, pinned his back to her chest armor, and rubbed her cheek against the top of his head. He wasn't going anywhere.

"Demons," Caera said, a snarl mixing into her voice as she lay in front of him, her side to him and the others as she got comfortable, "are not humans. We burn through resonance doing things. It won't be long before we need to eat again."

"Lot of similarities between demons and Earth predators," he said. "At least, the mammal ones. A big reason humans won -- sorta won anyway -- the evolution game is we learned to walk upright, and saved a massive amount of energy that way. We learned to hunt with tools, walked prey to complete exhaustion, and poked them to death with spears."

Dao clicked a few times.

"You got that right," Jes said. "That's why zombies are so scary, too."

He laughed. Zombies were scary when he was a kid. As an adult, a young one at that, they didn't even register on his fear radar.

"I think demons are a lot scarier," he said.

Jes shook her head. "You can't be that scared of us, getting horny around us all the damn time."

"Well... I mean..."

"Some demons out there like using their sin auras to do things to humans. Some like to stir them up, get them angry and violent. Some like to make them horny."

"Like a succubus or incubus?"

Jes nodded. "Yeah, volaras or volarins do that all the time, since they aren't very strong, and their sin auras are powerful as fuck. But any demon can use their aura, tilt it toward that desire, and push it out to try and influence everyone with it." She poked him in the side with her tail, and Dao clicked a few angry times as she swiped the tail aside. His new bodyguard. "But, I haven't used my sin on you. Neither has Dao. You're the one using yours on us."

"I don't know," Caera said. "Right now, I can feel something, but it doesn't feel like sin."

"Just wait till he's looking to fuck again. It's like getting bowled over by a goort."

The tiger chuckled as she watched him. "I look forward to seeing that." There was a touch of huskiness in her voice that sent a tingle up his spine.

Dao clicked happily, chuckling as she slipped a hand into David's shaggy red hair, and combed it with her claws. Never, ever, had anyone done that to him, caressed his scalp like that. He melted, and his eyes half closed as his head relaxed back against Dao's sternum [Ww.NoveLWorld.CoM](#)

"I... I um... I guess I've always liked... you know, like art of demon girls, monster girls, things like that." No point in being shy about things like that, not with these ladies, not after last night. "I'm definitely not alone. Millions of guys -- and girls -- like it too, if the internet is any indicator of reality."

"True," Caera said. "But usually when fresh meat come down here, the new reality sorta crushes those silly fantasies."

"Not for this kid," Jes said, poking him with her tail again. Dao caught the tail and squeezed, and Jes let out a small yelp as she yanked her tail free. "Not that I can blame him. We are fucking beautiful. And hey, maybe you're part demon? It might explain the aura, and the dick."

"Humans can't be part demon," Caera said. "How would that even work?"

"I don't know, but I know what I felt. That was an aura. He's clearly not human."

David groaned, but Daoka slipped both her hands into his hair again, and the world melted away. Claws, gently scratching his scalp, while the undersides of her fingertips massaged. Being touched so tenderly, he'd no idea it'd feel like this [Ww.NoveLWorld.CoM](#)

"He's clearly human," Caera said. "He's got a reservoir of resonance inside him and he's not burning through it. What else has that other than a human? Even angels burn through their resonance."

"What do you know about angels?" he asked. "And... And Heaven, and stuff." The place he was supposed to be.

"Not much. Only a few runes speak of them. But demons figured out some things, after the few times angels got involved in our wars. Angels use resonance, same as demons. They burn it off to create essence, same as us, and they can use the essence to summon armor and weapons."

"Oh wow."

"There were a couple accounts of angels using some bright light to block attacks, and another about using a bright light to heal wounds." [Ww.NoveLWorld.CoM](#)

"Double wow. Can demons do anything magical like that?"

"Just the sin aura," she said. "Though, if you're strong enough, you can create hellfire."

"Hellfire?"

"Zel can do that," Jes said. "I don't know if it's because she's got the spire crown or because she's just damn old. But I once saw her execute a demon who'd step out of line, by breathing hellfire on him. It was terrifying. She turned the guy into ash and melted the fucking blackstone around him. Basically turned the fucker into meera metal." [Ww.NoveLWorld.CoM](#)