

1133

"It tried to kill you."

"Me..."

"It tried to step on you, and slash you," she said. "And then... tried to drop a boulder on you, I guess."

He was right about what had happened, then. Part of him had been hoping he'd been imagining it, or just hallucinating. Damn.

"I mean, you don't think it would have gone for you after me?"

She managed a weak chuckle. "I was a much bigger threat than you. When you have your pick of targets, you kill the biggest threat first. Right?"

Groaning and nodding, he buried his face in his hands as he walked beside her. He knew that, too, but it made no sense.

"So, you... really have no idea what it was?"

"Not in the fucking slightest, David. There are no invisible... anythings. Not demons, not angels, nothing."

"Fucking--" Dao and Jes came into view, the two of them sitting against the ravine wall, hundreds of broken small rocks underneath them. David ran over to them, knelt down beside Dao, and looked her up and down. "You okay? You okay?"

Dao smiled up at him, reached with her shaky left arm, and ran her three claws and thumb through his shaggy red hair. The broken right arm and left leg looked straight, but they were swollen and twitching. They'd been set, but the breaks were bad, worse than Jes's.

After a few more stupid, pointless, panicked breaths, he squeezed Dao's hand.

"Caera's alright," he said. "Mostly alright. She hurt her head. *Www.novèL@.Rm.(c)OM*

"I'm fine," the tiger said, and she sat beside them. "You two, on the other hand, aren't going to be doing much for a couple days. We need to get out of this ravine, find some place to hide and recover, and I'll get us something to eat."

He squinted at the tiger. "You can barely walk straight."

With a heavy growl, Caera poked him with her claw. Or she tried, anyway. He stepped out of the way, and everyone saw the tiger try and compensate to poke him again, and miss again.

"I'm... fine."

"You're seeing stars, right? Maybe seeing double? Probably have a throbbing headache?"

Groaning, she gestured to the other two demons *@w@.E/vE/wor.m.c(c)M*

"They're worse off, and one of us needs to get food."

What would Mia do? Standing around analyzing shit was going to get them killed, especially if an invisible giant monster was hunting them, or, him. Mia would stop worrying about what they couldn't do anything about, and immediately deal with what they could.

"Let's... Do what you said, first. Let's get out of here and find a place to rest, and then we can figure out how to get everyone food."

Jes grabbed the mountain wall and forced herself onto her good foot.

"I've been through this area a few times in my life, fresh meat. So's Caera and Dao. There are no forbidden trees nearby, far as I know. So the only way we're getting something to eat, is if we eat someone." She gestured at her swollen ankle and wing arm. "And how are we--"

Caera walked over to the woman, and nudged her body against the gargoyle.

"Hop on."

"... you can't be serious."

"You're not walking. David isn't strong enough to carry you. *!w!W.N(c)vELw@Rm.coM*

Jes glared down at the tiger, but a few quiet clicks from Dao softened her anger.

"Fine. Fuck me, fine. Just, let me get Dao on there first."

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Of all the things he'd expected to get in the way of their journey, a giant invisible monster causing an avalanche hadn't even been in the top 100. And, much as he wanted to ignore the idea, Caera had been right. When it'd had a chance to attack either him or the incapacitated tiger lady who was twenty times more of a threat than him, it went for him. It'd tried to kill him. *w!w!w!O@e!wo@(!m).coM*

Dao and Jes, both sitting on Caera's back, Jes behind so her bad wing could hang and relax, nodded as they listened to him and Caera recount the event. But neither of them had anything to say. Just as confused as him, and in a lot more pain.

How they managed to sit on her back and not get a spike up the ass, he wasn't sure. Maybe the spikes could be moved around a bit, bent a little where they poked out? Mental note: ask Caera if he could play around with her spine spikes later. In the future, it'd be nice if he could jump onto her back to escape giant invisible monsters.

The ravine didn't go much further, but with Caera struggling to walk straight, and Jes and Dao both groaning quietly between clenched teeth, it felt like eternity. They were hurt, because something tried to kill him. And they all knew it was because he was unmarked, no need to mention that. Something weird was happening, something they didn't understand, and it'd gotten three of them wounded.

He looked down at his fingertips. Slowly healing, by demon standards. Healing ridiculous fast by surface standards. They'd be back to normal by tomorrow, and he'd be hungrier for it. He'd have to eat, too, and if Jes was correct, there was no fruit nearby. Which meant eating something else. Someone else.

Out of the ravine, there were low mountains ahead, small things they would have gone over when on the original path. But the ravine had taken them lower and lower, and now they walked a path as wide as a big canyon, with walls too steep to walk up. Climbable, but not walkable, which meant Dao and Jes weren't going up them until they were healed.

They found a cave, and with a big rock in hand, the closest thing he had to a club, David went in first. Death's Grip had thousands of little caves, with amber veins inside showing they were empty. It also had thousands of little caves with a few imps or grems hiding inside waiting to ambush people, or enough bloodgrip to kill anyone unlucky enough to trip in it, they'd ran into a few of both already. But this cave seemed fine.

Jes climbed off Caera's back, hopped on one foot, and sat down in the back of the small cave. It went deep enough you couldn't see the exit from the back room. Good for a temporary stop, maybe even for resting for a couple days.

Dao clicked, and held out her arm for David, smiling. He managed to return the smile, but even without a mirror he knew it was half-assed.

"Thanks," he told her, "for... taking the fall there, at the last second."

Dao shrugged with her one good arm, clicked a few more times, and continued to hold out her arm for him.

"Dao, you know you're hurt because... well, indirectly, because of me, right? You're not angry at me?"

She clicked a few times, tilting her head to the side.

"I know," he said, shrugging as he slipped under her good arm and helped support her weight. "I know it's not actually my fault something's trying to kill me and got everyone hurt. I'm not about to drown in misplaced guilt. But, still..."

Dao leaned in, rubbed her closest horn against the side of his head, and put a kiss on his cheek as he gently set her down on the ground next to the frowning gargoyle. How any demon could be as understanding as this satyr, he had no idea.

"Dao might be okay with that," Jes said. "But I'm not. We're working together to kill Diogo, and Tacitus and those Cainite dicks, remember? Giant invisible what-the-fucks weren't in the plan."

Groaning, he sat down a few feet away and wiped the sweat from his brow.

"You're telling me. I have no idea what's going on. I've had no idea what's been going on for a while. I'm just trying to get Mia, and then she and I will be out of your hair."

Dao clicked and shook her head.