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Another tunnel, the inside of a gutted snake again, rib bones all around with only the occasional amber vein, a floor of bone, and remnants absolutely everywhere. There was no avoiding the mess this time. Zel used her four hands and her horns, and effortlessly slaughtered through the dozens of men and women that reached for her. The remnants came out of the floor as much as the walls and ceilings, and Zel crushed them under her hooves.

Adron and Kas played cleanup duty, walking and killing remnants before wiping the gore off the bone path with their tails. Talking was pointless. The remnants, blurs in the darkness, eyes lit up by the few amber veins just enough for Mia to see some of them, numbered in the thousands. How long did they stay down here, clawing at each other and getting nowhere? How long did it take a remnant to starve to death, with nothing but the screams of other remnants to keep them company? **Www.n(ov)elw(ø)Rm.c(ø)m**

She did her best to ignore the squishy, warm wet stuff under her feet.

It didn't last forever. Eventually the tunnel ended, and Zel stopped. It was almost pitch black, with only Zel's extra horn providing any light this deep in the tunnel, and she made short work of the remnants nearby. They splattered, the black door soaked with crimson, and the red liquid trickled down over the engravings and sculptures in the door. Its surface was a myriad of skulls, surrounding one big skull in the middle that looked beyond strange, beyond reason, without any sort of shape she could understand. It had horns but they came out in weird places. It had eyes but it had several, and not in any orientation that made sense. It had a mouth, but it looked like something you'd find on a lamprey.

Zel's horn glowed, the strange eyes of the two doors skull pulsed once with amber, something clicked, and the demon queen pushed open the doors.

Light flooded them. Mia covered her eyes, groaning until they adjusted, and followed the three demons into the colossal room. A black surface surrounded them, no flesh. Giant chains dangled from the ceiling, just three, and each held an enormous skull brazier of black, twenty feet overhead. The ceiling must have been a hundred feet up, maybe more, all rock, and the room was easily ten times as wide. A small army could have fit down here.

Kas closed the doors. How there was oxygen down here to breathe with all these fires burning, Mia didn't bother thinking about. The silence was deafening, not a single remnant in sight, not a whisper broke through the doors, and all around them was complete stillness.

And before them stood a cathedral.

"What the fuck," Mia said, and regretted it immediately. Her voice echoed, and she didn't like the way it sounded as it warped and distorted **Www.n(ov)elw(ø)Rm.c(ø)m**

Zel, impervious to spooky sounds, giggled and walked toward the cathedral.

"Come, unmarked one. We will learn much together, you and I." And the look she gave Mia over her shoulder sealed the deal. If Mia didn't repeat the apparent miracle she'd performed earlier, Zel was going to try out that evisceration torture on her she'd mentioned.

"What kind of place is this?" Mia asked, jogging up to follow behind Zel. Kas and Adron followed behind Mia this time.

"I'm not telling." **Www.n(ov)elw(ø)Rm.c(ø)m**

"Uh, what?"

After another feminine giggle, Zel stopped before the cathedral, and gestured out to it with all four arms.

"I cannot have you biased, to perhaps lie to me. I have clues as to what we will learn, you and I, but you will remain ignorant." So much for getting a little info before going inside.

Cathedral was maybe the wrong word. Castle? It was a wall of metal, except... no, no it wasn't. In the dark it looked like black metal, but as Mia came closer to the towering door, ice shot up her spine. It was bone. Not bone growing out of the ground, like everywhere else in the spire. The cathedral was made out of bones, charred, and stacked together. Thousands. Tens of thousands. Fucking millions. And unlike the white bones she'd found everywhere else, in their strange shapes that allowed the demons to make furniture, or grew out of walls to create doors, these bones all looked perfectly normal, and human. **Www.n(ov)elw(ø)Rm.c(ø)m**

The door behind her had been bone, and the door in front of her was made of nothing but skulls.

Mia took a step back and stared up at the wall. There were windows, but no glass, and what she'd thought were metal bars before, she could now see were more bones, stacked vertically and connected at their ends. The cathedral's front didn't reach the cave ceiling, but it came close, and the top raised into a point, topped with circle patterns of carvings she couldn't clearly see from so far. She didn't have to. They were wreaths of human skulls.

Zel's horn glowed, and she pushed against the two huge doors, far bigger than the ones they'd just come through. The bones rubbed against each other, but didn't break or crumble, as if something had cast and molded them in rock. Petrified bone? No chance. But it sounded like rock, maybe some pebbles, and looking down only confirmed. She'd thought she'd been walking on rock, but the ground was nothing but endless black bone, slightly shifting under her weight, and never breaking, not even under Zel's hooves.

Oh god, even the walls were black bone, stacked sideways. Probably the ceiling, too. Oh fucking god.

"What is--"

Zel snapped her glare at Mia, and Mia winced as she froze. Okay, no questions allowed, at all.

The spire ruler stepped into the cathedral, and Mia followed, eyes first staring down at the various shapes and sizes of bones she walked on -- all human -- before she looked up.

It really was a cathedral, sorta. She expected to find a ceiling closer to her head, but the inside of the building was basically hollow, almost like the main chamber of a church. Looking back to the middle of the room, she half expected to find pews with how huge it was, but nope, instead she found pillars, each reaching the ceiling, each made of charred bones stuck together, thick enough she wouldn't have been able to get her arms around them.