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Yosepha was unmoved. She walked away, but stopped short of taking to the sky. Galon remained, frowning as he looked down, and un-nocked his arrow.

"We came here to confirm what Romakus told us, David, not to help you.

"Why not!? What did I do to deserve any of this!?"

"We don't know."

"You... don't know?" *www.novelworm.com*

The angel shook his head. "We don't know. But if you want to keep your head, just stay out of the way. Or not. You're unmarked. You can die and return to the Great Tower without having to spend any cycles in Hell. Probably."

David ground his teeth and glared daggers into the angel.

"I'm not going to do either of those things. I'm not going to just sit around and hide." Much as that idea was growing more and more appealing, despite his obsessive need for answers. "I need to know what's happening. I need to find out what's going on. And... Can't you just take me and my sister back up to Heaven, with the other unmarked souls? Away from here?"

"No. You're different from them, I know that much. I don't even know if you're human, David."

David stood there, while the weight of Galon's words threatened to drag him back down to the ground.

"Can... Can you at least find a way to tell Mia I'm alive?"

The angel sighed, met eyes with David, and silence fell on their strange little group for far too long.

"Maybe," he said. "Maybe. As for you, if you're sure you have to get involved, then find Romakus and the Damall. They might help you." He raised a finger. "Might. They might also decide to eat you, or throw you into lava."

Wonderful.

"They have a group in Death's Grip?" Caera asked. "Where are they?"

"On the Death's Grip and Black Valley border," Yosepha said, looking over her shoulder. "War brews. We were investigating that, as well."

Angels investigating demon activity. Finally, a little information he could use for some context.

"Thanks, for... for telling me at least something."

Galon chuckled. "I don't envy you, David. Something big is coming, and useless as this hilarious warning is, all I can risk telling you is the only reason we didn't kill you is because Romakus told us not to. Any other angel is probably going to kill you on sight."

He gulped. "Me, but not demons?"

Galon nodded, but smiled and gestured to the three demons with a wing.

"How'd you make friends with three demons, anyway?"

The three ladies looked between each other before scowling and growling at the angel.

"Fuck you," Jes said, and she held up a middle finger.

Galon laughed yet again, waved, and backed off to join Yosepha. A hard flap of their wings was all they needed to get into the air, and Jeskura's jaw dropped. Hovering, Galon turned to face them again, and the bow in his hands popped out of existence in a small puff of gold light.

"The soldiers of Avinoam and Ravid are a lot nicer than many of the Heavenly Islands, David, and few engage with the Damall like we do. I'm not kidding. If you see other angels, avoid them." He offered a casual salute. "Good luck."

Both angels took to the air, and despite the radiance of their wings and armor, it was only seconds before their bodies mostly blended into the settling embers of the fire sky. A minute later, they were borderline invisible.

David and his three protectors stood in stunned silence. No need to check around for any eavesdropping demons. The angels wouldn't have ambushed them like they did without being sure they were safe to do so.

"That... was scary," Caera said.

Jes and Dao both nodded, and pat each other on the shoulders as they checked each other for wounds. The fight must have been worse than he'd figured.

"I can't believe it," David said. "They just... showed up out of nowhere. Dropped on us from the sky."

The tiger lady nodded as she prowled back toward the mountain wall, away from the cliff edge. "They were playing nice. I've never seen an angel fight, but some demons have. The stories are horrifying. These two were being very... gentle."

Dao clicked a few times as she gestured to the tregeera.

"Yeah, I know," Caera said. "But even if they hadn't ambushed us, that mikalim would have easily killed the three of us."

"Mikalim? The woman?" David said. "She'd called the other guy a... *gabrielm?www.novelworm.com*

Caera nodded. "I don't know anything about the higher angels, no one does. But the foot soldiers, there's mikalim the warriors, rapholem the defenders, and gabrielm the caretakers. That woman didn't need the other's help to take us down, if she'd wanted to."

Oh, damn. Seeing Caera, an eight-foot-tall tiger lady of muscle and claw, being afraid of a small -- relatively speaking -- angel, only as tall as Daoka, was numbing. Words were words, but Caera legitimately looked scared, and she dragged a claw on the stone as she shivered a few times.

"I guess... we got really lucky," he said. "And--"

Dao walked past him, gave him a harsh slap against the back of the arm, and began the trek back down the mountain.

He stared at her back, blinking. "Uh..."

Sighing, Jes came up beside him and slapped him in the back of the other arm.

"Ow! Hey! The fuck did I do?" *www.novelworm.com*

"Oh I dunno, basically begged the angels to get you out of here because it's a horrible place and you'd happily leave everyone here behind except your sister the first moment you can?"

"I... I..." Ah shit. His head slumped, shoulders too, and a new silence fell on them. "I didn't even... I mean..."

Jes rolled her eyes and walked after Dao, but not before whacking him in the back with her tail with a little more force than was probably necessary. Double ow.