

## 1207

Wait. They were going to get food. Why come to the dens? Maybe some demons had some fruit hidden? Or... Mia forced down the rising panic surging through her, and looked around at the nearby demons as they all set eyes on her. [www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com)

So many alcoves, a sprawling network of tunnels, with dozens, maybe hundreds of remnants growing from and trapped between the stones. They squealed and screamed, and Mia looked away as a group of imps and grems, maybe ten, swarmed over a bunch of remnants and ripped them apart. Blood and guts and bones rained onto the stones. No one cared.

"What's this?" a stranger said. A demon approached, a big brute almost as big as Diogo. If Kas stood up straight, he might be a few inches taller, but Kas remained in his comfortable half crouched half squatted position, one hand to the floor, one forearm resting on a knee.

"Darrilius," Kas said, a quiet growl rumbling through his throat.

Mia looked around at the nearby demons. Kas and them were in a big room, with a dozen tunnels connecting, some at ground height, some above. Each filled with demons of various sizes, more and more gathering, every one with interested eyes -- if they had eyes. [www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com)

A vrat joined Darrilius's side, and then a tiger woman. They grinned as they met eyes with Kas's eyeless shark face, and they licked their teeth with the same sort of innate hunger all demons seemed to have all the time. The tiger and vrat wore bits of black armor and leather, and carried more than a few scars. The brute had scars, but with skin that dark and thick, he didn't bother with the armor.

"Kasimiro, come to join us down in the dens?" The brute snorted on a chuckle, and looked to Mia. "And the unmarked girl comes, too. Why's that?"

Mia opened her mouth, but a quick tap of Kas's tail on the ground shut her up.

"Fixing a problem."

"Ha, a problem? You Lilith fucker." The brute made fists and punched his palms. Those were some big muscles, on a big scary body. Brutes were the most human shaped of the demons except for the incubi and succubi, but their bodies had weird indents and protrusions along the muscles and bones, making them look a little more monster-y than the other demons. And like they were always in the mood for a brawl.

The atmosphere changed. Heat pulsed through it, and Mia's skin broke out in goosebumps as she took a small step back. Adron nudged her butt with his tail, but when she glanced up and back at him, his eyes were on the nearby demons, his usual grin gone. Hannah's hands tightened into fists. Demon talons gently scratched the stone ground as they flexed, ready to brace for a pounce.

Darrilius was using his sin aura. All the times Mia had felt the effects of an aura, it was sexual, but this aura surged through her and lit her insides on fire. Adrenaline pumped through her, her breathing and heart rate quickened, and she clenched her teeth together as she looked at the brute. An aura of violence. It was enough to have her looking for a weapon she could use to bash in some skulls. Her fear faded, replaced with more heat, and mental images of her biting into a demon's neck while she clawed out their eyes. She wanted to rip out skulls. She wanted to break bones. She wanted to fight. And more than just her, but every nearby demon in the cave looked ready for a fight.

Kas thudded his tail against the rock. "I told you if you stepped out of line again, I'd make you pay."

The brute came forward and glared down at Kas. His two buddies came up, too.

"I don't owe you anything."

Kas growled and clicked a couple times, less like a dolphin and more like a crocodile clucking their tongue.

"You killed two demons," Kas said.

"So?"

"You know the rules."

Darrilius shrugged. "They attacked me. I defended myself." [www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com)

"You have no proof of that."

"And you have no proof I attacked them first."

The shark shook his head, and his long, big horns almost hit Darrilius in the stomach.

"Seven other demons fingered you," Kas said, and he gestured to the group watching using his giant tail. "Considering your history, good enough for me."

That crossed a line. Darrilius snarled, and snarl turned into roar. He leaned forward and unleashed a wave of sound that almost knocked Mia over as it crashed into her, a roar that shook the walls and every demon and human in the cave. But it was his vratorin and tregeera friends that dove forward, past the big brute, and straight at Kas.

Kas didn't flinch, not to the roar, and not to the pouncing demons. The tiger lady was the fastest, and the first to die. Without even a grunt of exertion, Kas twisted his shark head and slammed it straight forward, directly at the leaping tiger. One of his horns pierced her open mouth, and went through the back of her skull. She twitched a few times, and died.

The vrat managed to reach Kas, but Kas was already in the motion of charging forward and standing up. Darrilius backed off enough to avoid the other horn, and the vrat jumping toward Kas didn't have any horns pointed at him. But Kas lifted up his closer arm at the same time, and the vrat crashed into an open palm throat first.

Then Kas stood up.

Darrilius stepped back again, growling and snarling, but hesitating. The dinosaur in front of him came up to his full height, and he was taller than even Mia guessed, almost reaching Zel's height as he straightened out. He held the vrat in his left hand at arm's length, and the seven-foot demon grasped Kas's much thicker wrist in desperation as Kas tightened his grip. Tighter, and tighter, until a quiet, muted crack filled the sudden silence.

The vrat dangling in his raised hand went limp. The tiger demon dangling from his horn already was, the talons of her feet not able to reach the floor. Kas rumbled in his chest and throat, and stood there, saying and doing nothing, as the vrat's talons twitched a few times in his final moments. The tiger lady's open mouth soaked Kas's huge horn in blood. The only reason blood didn't pour out of her like a flood was her heart had stopped, and the gravity kept it inside below the wound.

Kas let the now dead vratorin fall. Adron snorted, and pulled Mia and Hannah back and away. A vratorin like Adron, a bit smaller, but still, vrats weren't exactly helpless, humanoids with tails, raptor feet, and a pair of horns. Kas had killed him almost instantly. And the tiger lady was even bigger, stronger, heavier, and Kas stood there with her corpse hanging off him like she weighed nothing.

After a few more quiet seconds, he pushed her corpse off. The eight-foot creature landed with a much heavier thud than the vrat. With another growl, Kas took a step forward toward the brute, and Mia half squinted as she braced for more violence. But she didn't close her eyes, because whoever was pushing out that aura had her wanting to see more. [www.NoVelWorm.com](http://www.NoVelWorm.com)

For all Darrilius's sudden hesitation, he threw himself at Kas anyway, undeterred by the death of his companions. That made no sense. Kas had brutally proven his complete and total superiority, at least where physical violence was concerned, but the huge brute didn't seem to care. If anything, the hesitation was just time for him to find an opening.

He found one. Kas eventually leaned forward, and adopted his usual, more dinosaur posture. That was when Darrilius struck out, standing up tall and slamming both fists down like hammers, straight for Kas's shoulders. That was a lot of meat, hundreds of pounds of muscles and flesh and bone. Maybe Kas had expected the brute to hesitate longer, because Darrilius didn't miss.