

## 1210

~Mia~wWw.NeO&/@OrM.com

The buzz didn't go away. Adron and Hannah eventually left, leaving Mia with Kas, and the buzz continued. Whatever had been in the demon's heart, it settled her hunger and made her feel alive. It made her want to get more. It made her want to sink her teeth into more meat, more flesh, and this time drink down the blood.

"Can you feel that?" she asked. She sat on the giant table on the raised half of her bedroom, legs dangling off the side, and faced toward the other half of the room. Kas crouched on the floor below, beside her pile of leather blankets. Up here, she could look down at him, a vantage point she'd never really enjoyed before.

Kas pointed his eyeless shark head up at her, clicked once in his throat, a hard cluck sort of sound, and nodded.

"What's it feel like?"

After a few seconds pause, the shark dinosaur tapped a claw on the floor.

"Your aura is telling me to..." He paused again, and looked down. Embarrassed? "I don't know. I feel... energy." Okay not embarrassed, just confused, same as her.

"That's what I'm feeling, yeah. I feel like I could go run a mile, climb a tree, do a slam dunk, and do some parkour." And go a few rounds in the ring, sex or fighting.

Kas didn't respond.

"You don't watch scrying pools a lot like the others, do you?"

He slowly shook his head and clucked once in his throatWw.(n)Ov&lWcrM.co@

That was it. Or at least, part of it, why he felt so different to Adron. Much as Adron was an eight-foot-tall demon, he talked a lot like a human. Did they have scrying pools down in the hatching pit? Probably, considering how smoothly he talked in human terms.

Kas wasn't like that. Kas was a demon, the kind stories about demons painted in her head, or at least one of the kinds. Violent, angry, full of rage. Maybe someone she could practice her psych skills on?

"Kas," she said. "... noticed you don't really talk to the other demons, or hang out with them. The ones in the dens seemed to know you, but they were all scared of you." Awesome as it'd been seeing a bunch of demons afraid of her bodyguard, it also meant Kas didn't have many friends. Did demons even want friends? A good reason for the conversation, to learn more about demons, and her bodyguard.

"They are afraid of me."

"Oh. Because you're one of Zel's enforcers?"

He slowly nodded, and aimed his head toward her closed door. But he didn't say anything else. Getting him to open up about even the tiniest thing was going to be like pulling teeth.

Maybe it didn't have to be? Some therapists used soothing background music, specific colors for their walls, decor like plants, and even scents and incense, to create an environment where patients could open up. Therapy was always tough on the patient. It was like visiting a dentist and asking them to poke the painful cavity, with the eventual goal of fixing the cavity so they could chew food again. But dentists had local anesthetic to make that less painful. Therapists had nothing but the environment and their words.

She was different. She had this weird crazy aura thing. Not only that, Zel told her to practice it, too.

How to do this how to do this. The strange, tiny vibration in her heart almost felt like... like... a vibrating string? Or a vibrating instrument? She couldn't grab and force it to do what she wanted, like the demons did with their sin auras. So, run with the instrument analogy, then.

She visualized the strange sensation in her heart, and tried plucking it like a string, or blowing on it like a wind instrument. Nothing. But, maybe... if she could feel what she wanted to do, and not just visualize...

She wanted to create an aura of openness. She wanted Kas to not be on guard all the time. She wanted him to relax.

She remembered an acting class she took in high school, about feeling emotions. She pictured the emotion, visualized it. Felt it. She moved her fingers, touched air, and found... it.

Bingo. It was there, in the emotion. She had to hunt it, find it, and pull it up out of herself. Like, playing an instrument, except the instrument was herself?

Kas visibly changed. His crouching position settled, and instead he sat in a classic cat pose, on his butt with arms straight down in front of him between his knees.

She smiled. "How'd you become an enforcer, Kas?" Okay so this was a little manipulative. But it was important.

He said nothing for a few seconds, but eventually pointed his head up at her.

"I killed a lot of demons, in the hatching pit. I killed a lot of demons outside the hatching pit."

"A lot? I thought demons killing demons was a normal thing."

"It is. I killed more."

Yeesh. A chill ran up her spine, along with the memory of Kas holding out his hand up high, and cracking the neck of a vrat, while a dead tiger lady hung off one of his horns. She banished the sensation and emotion quickly. If this weird aura of hers required her to control her emotions and play them like an instrument, she had to get good at ignoring other emotions.

Physically moving one of her fingers, she plucked an invisible string while envisioning them as best she could. It resonated, and the vibration flowed out of her. It wasn't so much that her emotion controlled the aura, but... something... close... It was almost like there was something around her, something she needed to be in the right state of mind to touch, to feel, to hear. The demon heart had jolted her awareness of it, and the more she felt for the vibration, the more it felt like instead of being controlled by her emotions, the weird vibration ran parallel to themWWw.NiOv&lWOrM.com

It wasn't exactly coming out of her, but... was localized around her? She'd never been one for writing in a diary, but now was definitely the kind of situation that needed it. Drifting through fog in search of some mysterious magical force she could sense but couldn't smell, touch, taste, hear, or see, was frustrating. Yoda would have had trouble with this.

She took a deep breath.

"I wanted to ask about something, Kas. And don't answer if you don't want to. But, when you confronted Darrilius, it seemed... kind of personal."

He growled, low and deep, like a singing crocodile.

"He was scum."

"Scum?"wWw.NOv&lWOrM.com

"A murdering bastard who deserved far better than I gave him."

"I mean, I get that he was pretty horrible, but... Don't take offense, but I kinda got the impression a lot of demons were like that? And I mean, it makes sense, with the way you were born and raised, and the way your food source is all horrible people." Just saying it made her wince. Hannah was in Hell, too, but she'd changed. Surely other people had, too? Then again, how many didn't change, and were just horrible people through and through, and those were the only people by far and large demons interacted with?