

1211

She'd been in Hell one week. She'd need to live here a year or more to come to any sort of accurate conclusion, at least. Ha, one week and she was already back in university mode, putting together a paper for her psych class.

"Yes. A lot of demons are like him. Most."

"Oh." She climbed down the giant table onto one of the giant bone chairs, hopped off, and sat on the edge of the raised section of her bedroom. Like a little mini cliff, maybe five feet high. "You... don't like that?"

He growled again, louder this time. "Demons are scum. They deserve death."

Oh. Oh shit. Mia climbed down the mini cliff and walked up to her bodyguard.

"You don't like demons... in general?"

Another grumble made her take a step back, but he didn't follow it up with anything. This was like trying to convince a wild animal she wasn't a threat.

"Demons are bloodthirsty, and suicidally violent. They are mindless. They give into their urges willingly, and..." He tucked into the corner of her room near the door, faced the door, pulled his tail around in front of him, and gently swept it her way. She tried to stand her ground, but his tail alone weighed more than she did, and the giant thing nudged her further back.

"Kas?"

"Leave me be." *wWw.©oVé(i)wo=M.cm*

Yeap, she'd pushed too hard, too far, too fast. It was nice to know there was more to her bodyguard than a quiet mountain of meat obeying orders, but she wasn't sure learning he was full of hate for his own race was much better. He was dangerous in a way she hadn't really considered.

"Just, one more question. Humans. What do you think of humans? And not the humans down here in Hell. I mean, you must have seen a scrying pool before, right? What do you think of most humans?"

If he noticed she was basically asking what he thought about her, he didn't say.

"Humans are..." Lowering his head, he let out a long sigh. "Stop it."

"I--"

"The aura. Stop it."

She winced and took another step back. "Sorry! Sorry. I... just wanted to get to know you, that's all."

"Why?"

She tilted her head to the side. "Why?"

He nodded.

She didn't see this coming. Why did she want to know about him? How could she not want to know about him? Didn't everyone want to know at least a little about the people they were around all the time? Humans did, anyway. Humans, even hyper introverted types, had at least a small desire to socialize a tiny bit, even only limited to the people in their immediate vicinity they had to interact with on a frequent, daily basis. Kas and Mia fit that mold.

She found the strings inside her, and muted them. The aura quieted, the vibration of the strings died, and it stopped flowing out of her into the world around her. Kas visibly tightened up again, muscles flexing lightly, posture hunkering back and down like an animal ready to pounce. His usual body posture, the 'I'm ready to stab anyone with my horns like I did that bitch tregeera' posture.

"I wanted to... get to you know, that's all."

He rumbled, a little louder than was probably good, but after a few deadly moments of silence, he clucked in his throat.

"I asked, why?" *wWw.mreLwOrm.Co@*

"Because! Because we're around each other all the time, and far as I know, it's going to stay that way for a while. I bet Zel has other demons watching me and protecting me, more than you and Adron, but you're the only who has to be around me twenty-four-seven. And you... you have sex with me. Adron too, but he's happy to talk. You're not. And I... I demand to know something about the demon who's been fucking my ass!" She ended the increasingly loud rant with a hearty stomp of her foot.

More silence followed, until the strangest thing happened, a unique noise she'd accepted she'd never hear. Kas laughed. A rumbling, deep sound, that almost sounded like a dolphin clicking except played a hundred times slower. It lasted a whole two seconds, and left Mia staring in amazement.

"No demon would ask to learn more about another."

"They wouldn't?"

"No."

"Not even Adron?"

Kas shook his head. "Don't misunderstand the vratorin. He enjoys interacting with humans. That's it."

"But... not you?"

He shrugged. "We trust each other. Mostly." *wWw.©oV@()w@()m.coM*

She matched his apathy by folding her arms across her chest. Unfortunately, she knew herself well enough to know apathy was an emotional state she could never achieve, and she probably had a big frown on. And somehow, Kas and his dragon snout mouth managed a small smile.

"Trusting each other," she said, "is enough to feel comfortable fucking the same girl, at the same time?"

"More than enough." He licked some of his teeth. "Trust is hard to come by between demons."

She scrunched up her nose, but slowly relented. "I guess... that means a lot to demons, doesn't it?"

"It does. Zel trusts no one. Not Saldavin, not me or Adron, and not Gorlus, wherever he's gone."

"Zel doesn't trust you? But she..." She did more than pick Kas to be her bodyguard. She joined him, and Adron, the first time they'd fucked Mia. Forever the oddly beautiful, alien-like queen of Death's Grip would be in Mia's memories, her hands on Mia's body, as Adron and Kas stretched her for the first time. And Zel didn't trust either of those men? "I suppose... demons sleep with a knife under their pillow, don't they?"

"I've heard that expression before. What does it mean?"

"It means you never feel safe."

He clicked once and nodded.

"So," she said, "are you willing to tell me anything about yourself? I can tell you about me." *wWw.mOveLW(o)Rm.com*

He snorted. "If it will shut you up."

She couldn't tell if he was serious, or was being a playful jerk, like Adron would. Either way, progress, even without her aura.

"I was a university student when I died. I'm nineteen years old. I--"

"Young."