

1224

Okay Mia, think, analyze. Was Zel trying to get back on Mia's good side because she realized she had to, to get Mia's brain working the way she wanted? Yes, certainly, but was she actually in a good mood, or was it an act, and she was one second away from eviscerating Mia and making her eat her own guts? Down here in Hell, Mia could probably survive that, and she very much didn't want to know what her afterlife guts tasted like. She didn't want to die either, and learn if she'd become the first unmarked remnant, go straight to the Great Tower or whatever, and... any of that.
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Hearing a demon call her sexual desires 'endless' was also a strange thing. Demons fucked all the time. All the time! They had bigger sex drives than her, surely. Ugh, she could already hear David say something dumb like 'denial is not just a river in Egypt'. Well, he was a hypocrite, because he was just as bad as her, and the only reason he didn't spend six hours a day jerking off was he had a refractory period!

"I uh... I think I'm pretty satisfied in that department, you know? Adron and Kas, they... know what they're doing." Those two assholes had taken her virginity. She still wasn't sure how to feel about that. Should she feel anything at all?

"And yet you cannot go five feet without that strange aura of yours tingling with sexual desire."

Damn it. Mia blushed and squirmed. One minute, Zel was threatening to torture her, the next she was making Mia wriggle with embarrassment. How the hell was Mia supposed to tell if Zel was the evil, horrible bitch she thought, and lying to Mia about everything, or if Zel was actually maybe, kinda, a little bit nice, and trying to find a compromise with Mia?

She met eyes with Vinicius again. He stared down at her, made the tiniest nod he could toward the bolstara tetrad, and a heavy, quiet, sad rumble vibrated through him into the floor.
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Loud and clear. Don't trust Zel.

Slowly, Mia set eyes on the rod in Zel's hands as the demon queen turned and faced Vinicius with a raised, confused eyebrow. Her plan was to control Vinicius using those rods. Maybe she'd risk it and try to use it on Mia, too, and risk Mia dying? Whatever she was going to do, Vinicius risked another look down to Mia, and shook his head again.

Zel stabbed him. Another scream poured out of his body, and Mia squeaked and looked away, but not fast enough to avoid seeing Zel sink the jagged-tipped rod with the spikes through Vinicius's soft flesh where she'd stabbed him yesterday. Blood gushed from the wound, splashed over Zel, the rod, and the floor. Getting stabbed by a piece of metal probably barely warranted a grunt to a creature like Vinicius, but the rod did something to him that had him shaking from head to tail, and roaring and screaming through his closed mouth.

"Stop!" Mia screamed. "Please, stop!"

Zel slowly looked down at her, eyes hard, playful gaze gone yet again and replaced with something harder, colder, and meaner. Uh oh.

"He is a mindless brute, and engine of destruction, little soul. Nothing more. Do not pity this creature. He has slaughtered far more souls than I ever have."

"I... I know, just... please, I can't try and make the aura if I see him like that."

With a heavy grunt, Zel yanked the rod out of the beast's gut. Bits of flesh came out with the spikes, and more blood splattered against the walls as she whipped it clean.

"Empathy. You will have to forgive me, young soul, if I am not familiar with it."
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"Demons don't feel empathy?"

"Of course we can. But who would choose to be so limited?" Shrugging, she licked some blood off the rod, and her long tongue slid between the spikes with familiarity. "Now, we have wasted enough time. No more talk of sex, or Hell. For now we will focus on building your aura."

Mia forced herself to nod, and looked up at the bleeding demon. Valzanal's rod put him through pain Mia couldn't even begin to imagine, and seeing a beast of a creature that big and tough and strong, hurt that much, made her nauseous.

"I... I'll try again."

Zel eyed her, and showed just the tiniest hint of her jaw muscle clenching.
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"See that you do."

Nodding, Mia looked for the strings inside her. The more she got used to looking for them, the better she got at feeling them, like learning to flex a muscle she didn't know she had. The strings weren't a part of her, they passed through her, and something inside her could find them, touch them, and pluck them. She'd tried to visualize them a lot more yesterday, and with progress, she got better at finding them. Not necessarily using them, but at least finding them, instead of aimlessly wandering through her own thoughts and imagination, like walking through fog in a dream.

Whatever weird mystical fingers she had inside her that could pluck the invisible strings around her, they did their own thing if she got aroused. But right now, the last thing on her mind was sex.

She looked down. Better she didn't look at the gaping wound in the monster's stomach, or the hard look in his dragon eyes. Better she remember what Zel and Adron told her about Vinicius, that he was a killer, a demon who went berserk and slaughtered everyone without a second thought. Better she imagine herself wielding the leash of such a creature, wielding him like a tool, instead. Like, maybe, a princess, with her well trained dog?

Mia would never treat a dog like a slave, though. She'd love her dog, if she'd had one, love him and hug him and pet him and take care of him.

Zel growled. "Begin." Again the demon's jaw clenched. Her patience had run out.

"I'm trying. I--"

Zel snapped up straight, and Mia jumped back from her with a squeak, prepared to block an incoming rod. But Zel didn't raise her weapons, or even look Mia's way. Slowly, she looked up at the metal ceiling and around at the metal walls, and motioned with her one free hand for Mia to quiet down.

Mia gulped down hard, and looked back to Vinicius, only to find him doing the same thing as Zel. He stopped breathing, and the room went dead silent as the three of them listened.

Thump. A quiet, bassy noise so deep Mia felt it more than heard it, subtle enough Mia's own heartbeat felt harder. Mia opened her mouth, but Zel shot her a glare quick and sharp, and stabbed Mia through the face hard enough Mia almost fell over. Sure enough, as Mia stood there frozen under Zel's angry glare, another thump softly vibrated the metal around them. And then another.

"Stay here and continue."

"W-What? I--"

Again, Zel stabbed her with her icy red glare.

"Stay here, and continue your work, little soul. And when I return, I expect to feel that aura of control, weak as it may be. If I again find you succumbing to your sexual urges, I will. Punish. You. Understood?"

"U-Understood."

Zel was being nice with her words, but not with her eyes. Punish did not do justice what she meant.