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The busty demoness, nine feet tall and with a solid black, eyeless, featureless face, stared down at Mia with pure rage. Her arms flexed, her small tail flicked left and right behind her like an agitated cat, and her large, spindly wings flared wide enough to fill much of the large room. She bared her huge, white shark teeth in her wide, scary mouth, and they stood out almost beautifully against the obsidian canvas of her head.

"You! You did this!"

"I... uh..." Mia, squeezing the keys tight, backed away toward the door and hallway.

Acelina stepped toward her, and her hooves hit the metal floor hard enough the clop sound resonated. Her red silks, draped and hanging over her shoulders, threatened to fall off, but the tall demoness didn't care. After a couple of steps, she went from a fast walk, to an outright pounce.

Mia squeaked and jumped back, and Adron ran in front of her. **W.W.n(e)vêLwarm.Co@**

"Acelina, the fuck are you doing!?" Adron caught the woman by the shoulders and brought her forward momentum to a stop. Tall -- and curvy -- as Acelina was, and a foot taller than Adron, the vrat had a good amount of muscle to him, enough to stop the spire mother in her tracks.

"She killed Zel!"

"It was self defense. Zel was going to kill her."

"I don't care if Zel was going to remove her intestines and use them as a sex toy on Saldavin!" Again, the tall demoness came for Mia. Again, Adron pushed her back. More than pushed her back, he gained ground. Slowly but surely, Adron moved the zotiva back against the side wall, and he pinned her there. Spire mothers weren't all that physically strong compared to other demons, apparently.

Auras were a different matter. It poured out of her like a tsunami, and Mia almost fell over as the urge to fight hit her. Fight, bite, tear, claw, do anything and everything she could to draw blood and inflict pain. She clenched her jaw, ground her teeth, and looked down at her hands before her eyes locked on the vratorin and zotiva.

No. Don't. Get the leash. Unlock Vinicius.

"Adron, do--"

Adron, still pinning Acelina against the wall, threw his glare over his shoulder at Mia instead, and struck her cold. He had murder in his eyes, rage, and bloodlust. Shit.

"Adron, we have to... resist..." Fucking god, the heat running through her veins was almost pleasurable. She wanted to meet Adron's gaze with her nails, and claw out his eyes. She wanted to take the key in her hand and ram it through the softest part of his body: the throat. She wanted to... to...

"Fight," Acelina said. "Fight. Rip each other apart. You want her heart, Adron. You want to taste her heart, the heart of an unmarked. You want to rip her open, shred her, devour her."

Even with all the hate flowing out of the tall demoness, the words coming out of her sounded almost sexual. She probably would get off on seeing Adron rip Mia to bits.

"Adron!" Mia forced herself to stand up straight. She hadn't even noticed she'd been in a hunched position, ready to pounce Adron and hopefully kill him and eat his heart before he could do that to her. "Adron, don't... let her..."

"Adron? I--holy fuck!" A new voice. Mia and Adron both spun around. Hannah stood in the doorway, short blond hair a mess of sweat, and blue eyes wide.

Acelina's aura faltered for a moment, long enough for Mia to rip her eyes away from the two demons. Get Vinicius. Don't think about anything else.

With a heavy snarl, Adron shoved Acelina back hard, and the crack of her horns and skull hitting the wall vibrated through the room. She fell, and Adron's snarl turned into a roar as he pulled back his claws.

"Wait!" Mia yelled as she snatched the tiny chain off the wall. A second later, it sat around her neck, Vinicius's leash replacing the necklace she threw away.

"Wait?" Adron, standing over the stunned demoness, one hand clutching one of her bony wings and the other ready to cut open her throat, kept his glare on Acelina. Acelina's aura had diminished enough Adron was no longer bordering on mindless, frothing-at-the-mouth rage, and smart enough to keep his eye on the spire mother.

"Wait. She's just upset about what I did. She doesn't deserve to die." Mia you fucking idiot. If you leave her alive, you're going to regret it.

Hannah came closer. "Uh, what's going on? What--holy fuck! Again! Oh my fucking god is that Zel?" Jaw dropped, Hannah crouched down beside the dead demon and touched her shoulder. "What the fuck!?"

"Hannah," Adron said, voice dipping into a deep register very much not like Adron, "why aren't you in our room?" **W.W.novêL@ôR@.Co**

"The door opened. All the teeth doors opened! Souls are running around like headless chickens, and--Mia what the fuck are you doing!?"

"Freeing Vinicius." **W.W.novêLw@r.M.co**

"What!?" **W.W.nôveLw@r.M.co**

Mia managed a quick smile for Hannah, before she got on her knees underneath Vinicius's legs. The biggest key was the size of a small sledgehammer, and she had to use her muscles to get it into the hole. Click. She tried to twist, but it didn't budge. She grabbed the flared end with both hands and twisted with every bit of strength she had. Click. It turned. The huge padlock holding the center chain down to the metal floor unhooked, and Vinicius rumbled as he leaned forward. Still locked up, chains latched onto the wall hooks.

"I really think we should kill her," Adron said, a set of claws held to Acelina's throat.

Somehow, the eyeless demon and her featureless black face -- save for the large, deadly set of very sharp white teeth -- looked to Adron, then to Zel's corpse, then to Mia and Vinicius, all with... sadness? Frustration? Regret? Trying to read her expression was harder than Kas's. But it was enough to let Mia know she'd feel sad for the rest of her life if Adron killed the demon. Because Mia was an idiot and let her empathy decide for her.

If David were here, he'd kill her for that.

"Don't," Mia said. "She's a bitch, but she doesn't need to die for us to get away."

"She loved Zel, Mia. She's not going to stop until you're dead."

An anchor wrapped itself around Mia's heart and yanked her down into the metal floor. She'd known Acelina liked Zel, and worked for her of her own desire, but love? Adron might as well have cut Mia's throat instead.