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Vinicius, horns almost hitting the ceiling of the giant hallway, pulled his head back, and forward again as he leaned toward the battle.

"Wait! Don't!"

That wasn't Mia's voice. It wasn't Hannah's. It wasn't Adron's. It was one of the demons in the big dungeon, the torture room, one of the few still alive.

Hell devoured the room. Not the Hell Mia had spent the past eight days in. True, real Hell. Fire that defied reason devoured, burned, and destroyed. It flowed out of Vinicius's mouth before spreading out, almost like an explosion, or a chemical that devoured the air and spread into it. Whatever it was, however it worked, Mia lowered her hands and stared past Vinicius's back at the wall of flames.

Not just flames. An inferno.

"W-Wait. Oh god, Adron. Adron!"

~~~~~  
~~David~~

The rider jumped down the hole.

"What the--" David leaned over the balcony. How the fuck could someone wearing that much armor just... jump? The rider didn't move with any real acrobatics, or at least David hadn't thought he did from the little he'd seen of him. But somehow, the huge man landed on one of the balconies below David, and then stepped off it with casual familiarity to land on a dangling cage below. The chains that held the remnant-filled cages were thick and heavy enough they could hold something or someone much larger than the rider, and they rattled with impact as the rider jumped from one to the other.*www.NoVELtwOrM.com*

His axes were on his back, and a fresh layer of blood sizzled on their blades.

"Oh fucking shit."

The rider looked up, and David yanked his head back. Did he see him? No. The rider continued down, more chains rattling and giving him away. Had he seen David on the way down? Probably. But he kept going anyway, to get to Mia. He knew David was coming.

David risked another peek over the balcony. The rider continued down further, further, and hopped off onto a balcony and stayed there. Probably the floor Mia was on*www.NoVELtwOrM.com*

David looked up. Diogo, and the big shark demon with the flat head, were they alive? Hopefully Diogo was dead, so Jes and Doa would be happy. The shark guy though? He'd helped David, sorta, and he'd known Mia's name. Judging from his reaction, he knew Mia well and actually wanted to help her. Hopefully, he was still alive.

Part of David wanted to go back up and check. A much larger part of him kicked himself in the ass, and got running again, taking five steps at a time down the bone stairs. Get to Mia before the rider did, warn her, maybe stab the rider with his useless broken sword, anything! Figure out the details when you find her! That's what Mia would do.

Screams and roars continued above. The fighting had spilled into the spire from outside, or maybe the fighting was done, and Death's Grip's demons were all returning and had figured out the rider had gotten into the tower. They should have earlier, would have, if they weren't all so lost to their sin auras.

Must go faster. Must go faster.

Twenty-eight. Twenty-nine. Thir--

The huge metal doors on the other side of the inner, circling balcony, already partly open, swung open hard, and someone flew out of them, followed by a wave of fire. More than a wave. A maelstrom. Searing heat poured out over the balcony and broke apart like a splitting sea, and the amber waves crashed around and flowed down over the balcony as much as they shot upward with heat. David had to step back into the stairway to keep from getting hit by the flames.

They didn't last forever. Ten seconds later, the flames died down, and David peeked his head back up over the bone stairway he now lay on. The fire vanished, but some of the heat remained.

A vratorin sat on the balcony, behind one of the two open metal doors. The fire blast had pushed it open, and the demon must have used it as a barrier.

David sucked in a breath and moved toward the vratorin. Whoever they were, they weren't dead. Breathing, even panting, and eyes wide with pain. Eye. Half their body looked burned, some parts lightly, some parts quite a bit, including a chunk of the left side of his face, eye included. The eyelid was closed, but opening it would have just exposed the ruined flesh underneath, if he even could open it.

The vrat was big compared to other vrats, eight feet tall, and wore a few pieces of black armor. Judging from his size and the fact he hadn't been outside fighting with the rest, he was someone Zel considered important.

"Mia?" David whispered, squatting down beside the demon. "Where is she?"

Holy fuck, the poor guy. He must have been boiling with agony. But even as he twitched a few times, and his long tail jerked and tightened in a few spasms behind him, he aimed his remaining eye at David. Awareness dawned on him so clear it left David frozen.

"You're Mia's brother." He didn't whisper, but his voice was quiet, and exhausted.

"Yeah. She in there?"

"Y... Yes."

"And the rider? He in there?"

"Yes."*www.NoVELtwOrM.com*

David shivered, nodded, and gripped his tiny useless sword tight. His left arm was a massive dislocation risk, and even spinning too hard would probably pop it out of the socket until it healed properly. What chance did he have against the rider?

The sword wasn't completely useless. He'd killed a riiva satyr with it. If he tightened his shoulder up, he could move fine. If he was careful, his bare feet allowed him to walk on the -- now very hot -- metal floor silently. Sneak attack was his best option.

"Where'd all that fire come from?"

The demon sighed as his head leaned back against the wall of metal and bone. Fucked up as he was, he still had enough presence of mind to do it gently as his horns rested against the surface.

"Vinicius. Mia's new pet."

"New pet?"

"He spat out the fire, trying to kill the rider."

"Jesus christ. Did it work?"

"No."

After a heavy gulp, David pulled his eyes away from the half burned demon, and crept around the door enough to peek into the hall.

The rider stood there, walking deeper into the room, a large dungeon, as he picked up one of his axes from the floor. With both in hand again, he stepped into the room of fire and death, and headed toward the open doors in the back, where a four-armed demon waited for him that made every tetrad David had seen so far look tiny. He wasn't a tetrad. And Mia stood behind him.

She was alive, thank god. Alive, and according to the demon next to David, the big guy with four arms was someone named Vinicius, and Mia's new pet*www.NoVELtwOrM.com*

The smell was horrible, more of that burnt flesh smell that should have made him nauseous and want to vomit, but didn't quite do that, which made it worse. Demon corpses, human corpses, all trapped in metal and bone cells, or trapped in bone chairs, or crucified to metal walls, all waited inside the large dungeon room. All of it burned, only the metal withstanding the heat. The bones burned like wood, and the corpses inside sizzled and popped.