

1243

--David--

Apparently, in the few minutes since David had left Diogo and the shark demon upstairs to fight the rider, a lot had happened. Diogo no longer had his left arm. Any of it. The rider -- must have been the rider's axe, since the wound looked burned -- had cut his arm off at the shoulder joint, so only a few inches of the limb remained. That didn't matter to Diogo. He roared down at the fallen rider and marched toward him, like he wasn't coming straight toward an ancient, deadly myth who'd disarmed him. Like he was going to win this fight.

No wonder Jeskura was terrified of this guy.

The rider stood back up, looked at Diogo, turned enough so he kept the brute at his side, and looked at Vinicius. The much, much bigger demon came closer, and entered the entrance hall of the dungeon, trapping the rider. Not really trapped, though, considering both demons were injured.

"Vinicius," Diogo said. "Who released you?"

The dragon shrugged lightly and flicked his giant tail toward Mia at the other end of the dungeon. *www.NoV@Worm.com*

Diogo snarled. "And where is Zelandariel?"

The four-armed monster said nothing.

"Where is Zell? Did you kill her?"

The monster still said nothing. He didn't have time to. The rider had to pick a target before he got surrounded, and went with the one-armed brute right in front of him.

Diogo wasn't so easily taken down. Maybe he'd learned from getting his arm chopped off, because he sidestepped an oncoming downward axe damn fast, and again punched out with his only arm. The rider ducked under it, and his other axe came up. Diogo stepped back. Definitely a lesson learned. *www.NoV@Worm.com*

The axe glowed red, and more fire flooded the hallway. The flames poured over Diogo, and the demon roared with rage and pain as ember waves buried him. He jumped back, and the arc of flame crashed into the ceiling of black metal before it exploded outward and poured down over the walls. Fire could not be aimed so easily. Fire went where it wanted, and that was everywhere.

"Vinicius!" Mia yelled. "Do--" She spun around.

Someone behind Mia, way behind her, opened a pair of black metal doors. With the fire blocking David's view, and Diogo, and the rider, and now Vinicius as the monster got up, David couldn't see who. Someone with a black face, tall, and spindly wings.

"Vinicius, get me to my brother!"

With an annoyed snarl, the four-armed giant turned around, and scooped up Mia hard and fast, zero attempt to be gentle. But with his bleeding arms, he hugged Mia to his chest, and covered most of her body with his. Demons could resist flames, but they weren't impervious to them. Even Vinicius had to be careful of the hotter spots, particularly the rider's axes.

And David could do nothing about it. As Diogo backed off from the rider, snarling and wiping flame from his skin, the rider turned back and faced Vinicius again. Vinicius's arms were all busy, though. Why was he listening to Mia? Why was he risking his life for her? And who the fuck was that demon way in the back hallway Mia was desperate to get away from?

Stuck between a rock and a hard place. Diogo was half a demon, and already on the backpedal as a fresh wave of fire threatened to burn his skin off. Vinicius needed to get past the rider and couldn't fight, but Mia somehow had the power to make him try anyway. The rider wasn't going to just let him run past, though. *www.NoV@Worm.com*

David tightened his grip on his tiny broken sword, and--

Lost the tiny broken sword. Someone behind him yanked it out of his grip hard enough to almost dislocate his good shoulder, and David spun around with the sudden yank. Falling on his ass, again, and bruising his tailbone, again, he looked up at the fresh addition to the chaos.

It was the half burned demon. The huge vrat threw himself past Diogo and straight onto the rider's back, and wasted no time. His left hand grabbed the rider's helmet and pulled his head to the side, and his right hand came down and stabbed at the rider's neck. It hit something in there, something that wasn't metal.

"Adron! Get out of here!" Mia screamed, her eyes peeking up over one of Vinicius's hands. The heat haze wasn't enough to block out her wide eyes streaming with tears. Afraid for the demon apparently named Adron, or because she was currently going through an inferno?

The rider fell to a knee, but before David could jump for joy, the armored man got back up, with a broken sword sticking out of the side of his neck, up between helmet and shoulder. Whatever Adron had stabbed under the helmet hadn't done much, and the rider rotated an axe in hand, preparing to swing it backward at Adron.

Vinicius had other plans. He crashed into the rider hard, and knocked him and Adron over like a football lineman hitting a toddler. Adron went flying, and soon Diogo did too as Vinicius continued forward, each step vibrating the whole spire with the sudden momentum as he tackled everyone in front of him. The only thing that kept David from getting run over was his small size and pressing his body tight against the wall.

"Get Adron and my brother and close the door!" Mia's voice, puncturing the roars of battle and fire, turned Vinicius around at the exit. He listened. For some reason, he listened, and grabbed Adron and David.

One hand for the sweating, panting Mia, one hand for David doing the same, one hand for the broken, exhausted vratorin, and one hand for the hole in his gut. Now that David was floating in the air in Vinicius's grip, the hole in the giant monster's stomach was visible, and blood trickled from it down over the demon's leg. Holy shit, just one of his legs was as big as all of David, thicker and wider, too.

Once out on the inner balcony, Vinicius used his tail and slammed the two doors closed. And in one of the most iconic, perfect displays of sheer ridiculousness David had ever seen, the twelve-foot four-armed monster sat in front of the doors.

"This will not hold the rider for long," he said. "He will summon his strength and open it eventually."

"Hopefully after he's finished Diogo off," David said. "Can--"

Vinicius put the three of them down. Adron collapsed immediately, and Mia ran to his side.

"Adron! Oh god, are you okay? Oh god oh god. Vinicius, you fucking asshole! You almost killed him! I didn't tell you to--David! Oh god, David!" Mia threw herself at him and hugged him. "You're alive! I didn't know if you were alive, and--"

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