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The rider whipped his head around in time to see the child of Belial's enormous tail smash into him. Four hands holding onto one pillar, legs pressed to the other, Vinicius roared with animal hunger, and maybe a little frustration, as the target of his anger fell into the depths.

The rider plummeted for a whole second. A flash of fire lit the darkness. Light could not penetrate the void below, but amber flames erupted from the rider and lit the walls of the trembling canyon. Mia did not blink. She watched, head turned and forced to look down over her shoulder below her, with the way David held her to his chest and with Jes holding his shoulders from behind. She watched, as enormous wings of black bone erupted from the rider's back, and wretched themselves in flame.

The fire wings roared, loud enough to be heard over the rumbling canyon walls that continued to spread out. And the rider flew.

"Oh shit oh shit oh shit," David said. He had a much easier time looking down than her, and his voice trembled. "He... He..."

He wasn't flying. The rider's giant black wings of red flame caught the air, same as the gargoyle demon holding David, unable to gain height. He glided across the canyon, and with speed Jes couldn't hope to match, crashed into the side of the canyon wall, the side Jes was gliding toward.

But he was nowhere near their position. In moments, he'd glided across a canyon hundreds of meters wide, and slammed into the stone wall hard enough the impact was like a gunshot echoing through mountains. Both axes on his back again, the rider's body pinned against the stone, his terrifying wings vanished in a puff of flame, and he began the climb.

"How!?" David yelled.

"I don't know!" Mia yelled back.

Oh thank god he climbed slowly. Very slowly. For all his invincibility and power, he couldn't climb for shit. No one should have been able to climb a cliff wall while covered in heavy gold armor, gauntlets included, but the rider managed. He climbed sideways as well, toward one of the tunnel holes in the cliff wall. On the same side of the canyon Mia, David, and Jes were currently flying toward, yes, but nowhere near them.

They'd escaped. Mia and David had a chancewww.NoV@Lworm.com

"Fuuuuck you two are heavy together!" Jes roared, snarled, grumbled, and tossed out some curses Mia had heard other demons say. Things like 'by Lilith', 'by Lucifer', and 'pile of bones'. But she also sounded perfectly happy being angry and using English curses. Or, Estian curses. What would a French person hear?

Jes had no chance of getting them back to the top of the canyon wall, but she hadn't hesitated to aim them at the canyon wall opposite of the spire, even when they'd been closer to the spire. Maybe she had friends on this side? Whatever the reason, she aimed straight for it, and as they got closer, she aimed for one of the tunnels in the wall.

If the tunnel connected to whatever tunnel the rider was aiming for, Mia was going to cry.

Jes got them closer, and closer. And then not so closer. Her forward glide aimed more and more down, speed fell, and Mia squeaked as she looked down at the darkness again. Whatever waited there, its invisible gaze followed her and her brother. And unfortunately, Mia and David were getting closer to it by the second.

"We're gonna hit the wall!" Jes yelled. "Hang on!"

~~David~~

Oh god, not again.

He didn't know where to look. At the void below them and the invisible thing inside it that might as well have been the size of forever, or at the oncoming cliff wall about to flatten his already flattened nose? It had some grooves, chunks, a few handholds he knew he could climb, assuming his arm didn't straight rip out of its socket. The problem was, they weren't starting the climb from the bottom. They were going to slam into it, and Mia was in his arms.

No choice.

Jes did her best. She really did. She got an arm out from under his shoulder, held his and Mia's weight with one hand, and crashed into the wall with her one free hand out in front of her. Her claws and talons found grooves in the giant sheer cliff face, and her descent came to a quick halt.

Unfortunately, her slamming into the wall with David dangling from one arm was more chaotic than two bikers playing chicken. David got his good arm around Mia and she let go of him with one arm so she could half dangle from his neck, half hug his side and face the wall, but it wasn't enough. They hit and hit hard, and a new wave of pain ran through his body as all of his weight and Mia's weight pulled on his bad shoulder.

He scrambled to get his feet onto the wall, on a rock, a stone, a non-existent root, anything, but the surface crumbled. Pebbles fell, rocks peeled and broke away under his toes, and he screamed with frustration as he did his best to hold on and failedwww.NoV@Lworm.com

Wait, he was holding on. He looked up.

Jes, latched to the wall by her claws, had one hand wrapped around his left wrist, while her wings flared and flapped like a bird, desperate to not fall down the glass window they'd just hit. Her tail flailed behind her, but he knew she couldn't lift anything with it. She might be able to climb up if David wasn't limiting her to one hand, maybe.

"Jes!"

"Fucking climb! Tell your fucking sister to climb!"www.NoV@Lworm.com

"We can't get a hold of anything like this!"

"Grow! Some fucking! Claws!" With a roar, she sank her talons deep against some rocks, until the scraping noise of their sharp tips fighting for a ledge sent painful chills through David's body.

"Mia," he said. "Can you--"

"I'm trying!"

Mia was in the same position he was. She had one hand free at least, but with one of her hands clenched around his wrist and her whole body dangling and half turning -- ow -- as she dangled from him, she couldn't get a grip on the wall, either.

David, hanging from the arm of one woman, and with his sister dangling from his other arm, could do absolutely fuck all. Every moment sent scalding pain down through his shoulder. His broken nose was an afterthought. All he could do was pour his focus into squeezing Jes's wrist, and doing the same for Mia.

He risked another peek down, past Mia, toward the void below. It was the invisible monster again, or something like it. Same feeling, same sensation, same nothingness that'd tried to kill him and nearly had with an avalanche. This time, it was using a canyon.