

## 1265

~~David~~

They found a little alcove to hide in. Much as Jes and David wanted to get back to Dao and Caera pronto, Jes insisted the quakes probably stirred up hellbeasts. That meant danger, like that big snake thing they'd seen.

Unfortunately, the alcove wasn't very large. A bottleneck entrance was a good thing, but with Acelina's huge body, they didn't have much room to sit and rest. But they made it work, somehow.

Jes squatted down between him and Acelina, and glared at the big demon as she cuddled up beside him. Soon, the two of them were sitting, backs to the wall of the circular room, and Acelina sat on the other side, facing them. The nine-foot-tall demon's legs were so long, her hooves reached all the way past David's legs and almost reached his side.

"I'm taking a nap first," Jes said. "David, stay awake and watch her."

"You don't want to stay awake with her?" he asked.

"At least one person with claws should be awake for shifts. Sure, this big-titted bitch can't beat me in a fight, but she can beat a lot of things." Jes wiggled a few times as she got comfortable. "Just yell if she tries to kill you. I'll make sure she dies for it."

"For it... So, you won't be able to stop her from killing me first."

"Nope."

"What if she tries to kill you first? You're the one sleeping."

"I'm sturdier than you. She'll fuck up and I'll kill her. Or, I'll get mortally wounded, but I still kill her. Worst-case scenario, she kills us both, has no one to protect her anymore, probably runs into a demon who thinks she's worth more as a source of food, and eats her. Or she runs into a hellbeast who won't even think about it." She shrugged, leaned in, and gave him a very Daoka-like headbutt. "It's fine, just watch her. In a couple hours, you can sleep."

Wincing, he forced himself to look at the giant demon. Was she looking at him? No way to tell. Her obsidian head betrayed no facial features, a smooth mask of darkness that covered her entire bald head, and some of her neck. Her big horns looked amazing, beautiful, like a big crown that sat tall and wide.

"Jes..."

Jes was sleeping. Eyes closed, wings wrapped around her and shoulder nudging against David's, the gargoyle was out like a light. One of the few joys Hell offered, easy sleep during its night cycles. And as long as he didn't start yelling, she'd keep sleeping.

"It is just us," Acelina whispered, head aimed at the alcove entrance. "I do not hear any hellbeasts, either."

"Got good hearing?" His whispers lacked the hiss of a demon's.

"I may have lived in the spire my whole life, but only a fool thinks the spire is safe, easy living for a demon. I have killed my fair share, and not merely uppity hatchlings."

"Scary." He did his best to not look at her body and her absolutely ridiculously huge breasts that didn't match how tiny her waist was at all.

"You're not scared of me. That is... frustrating. That strange aura of yours craves only sex."

"Sorry! Sorry. I uh... I guess I like demon women."

She snorted softly, head still pointed out of the alcove.

"You say that word so easily. [Ww@.m0v@?w0tm.Com](mailto:Ww@.m0v@?w0tm.Com)

"What, sorry?"

"Yes."

"... sorry?" He smiled, hoping to get a chuckle. No chuckle. "Much as I bet you hear it a lot from a lot of souls, it genuinely seems like Mia and me don't belong here, in Hell. We're pretty fucked without demons helping us."

"I noticed as much from your sister. And Zelandariel was hoping to have her aid in the trials to come."

"Trials?"

Acelina managed a shrug. With her wings draped over her shoulders and thumb claws hooked together against her collar, the subtle motion made them shift slightly, just like Jes's would. Wings were beautiful, and sure, Acelina's were oddly thin and skeletal compared to gargoyle wings, but still, they looked amazing. And huge.

"You really do have no control of your eyes," she said.

"Ah, sorry. But hey, at least I was looking at your wings this time, right?"

That got a chuckle out of her. Small, barely more than a snort, but it was something. That was good. Much as he didn't like to think he was, he knew he was fishing for some evidence that Acelina wasn't an absolutely horrible cutthroat bitch that'd kill him the moment she had a chance.

"I should be thankful you are as you are," she said. "But, if Zelandariel truly is dead, and it is because the rider came for the unmarked, then... [Ww@.f0vE#W0RM.com](mailto:Ww@.f0vE#W0RM.com)

David waited for the inevitable 'then you're to blame' part, but it never came. Maybe she didn't want to say that part out loud. Maybe she knew it wasn't a fair statement.

If only she knew the truth.

"Sorry." [Ww@.m0v@?w0tm.Com](mailto:Ww@.m0v@?w0tm.Com)

Another small chuckle. "You're insufferable, and far more passive than your sister."

"Yeah?"

"Yes. She would fight, but for the lack of claws."

"That sounds like Mia."

After a heavy sigh, Acelina aimed her blank face at him. When she spoke, only a sliver of her sharp teeth exposed themselves, giving him only the smallest hints of her emotions.

"I am not your friend."

He put up both hands. "Didn't say you were."

"Then why did you stop Jeskura from killing me? Or suggest bringing me along at all?"

"Want the truth?"

"Yes."

"You're not gonna like it."

"Irrelevant." [w@W.m@velw0r.com](mailto:w@W.m@velw0r.com)

Irrelevant. How many times had he said things like that?