

1279

~~Day 31~~

~~Mia~~

Dead, for a month. In Hell for just over two weeks. The amount of things that'd happened to her in that time was insane.

And yet here she was, bored out of her fucking skull. Days! They'd been stuck in the tunnel for days! Multiple! She groaned and dragged her feet, and dodged the billionth bit of bloodgrip vine barely lit by amber veins on the cave walls.

"I'm tired," she said.

Vinicius said nothing.

"My feet hurt."

Vinicius said nothing.

"I'm going out of my god damn mind, Vinicius! How much longer is this damn tunnel?"

The giant monster groaned and sighed, both quiet sounds that his enormous body made loud, regardless. He stopped and set a hand against the wall. No denying it. He was tired, too. Tired, and hungry, exhausted and worn and practically drooling.

"I don't know. They change with the centuries."

"You could just say you don't remember, you know. You were locked up for a couple hundred years. Not like I expect you to actually remember these tunnels."

"Then why ask?"

"Because we've been down here for... what, four, five days? I like to talk to myself, but you're here, so you have to listen to me talk to myself."w(w).Novel(w)0tm.c0m

He grumbled, and said nothing.

"What, you didn't talk to yourself when you were alone in Zel's dungeon?"

"No."

"Why not?"

He turned his head enough to aim one dragon eye at her. Angry, annoyed, or intrigued? It was hard to tell with him. Not Kas hard, but hard.

"Why would I?"

"Because..." Because why? Why did humans talk to themselves? It wasn't like all humans did, but she certainly did, and she knew her brother did. It was important for organizing her thoughts, and for helping her not go insane. "Never mind. Demons aren't humans."

He snorted and resumed the walk. But a minute later came to a stop and held out one of his four hands. No need for Mia to question him. They'd been traveling together for so long she recognized his motions. There was noise up ahead she couldn't hear yet.

It didn't take long before she heard it, and recognized it. Remnants. Not a lot of them, maybe a dozen spread out around a wider section of tunnel. The poor souls were wrapped in bloodgrip, most half growing out of the stone, some with only their arms and heads free, and one with only their head free of the rock. All of them bled horribly, screaming and crying, twisting and making the vines rip their skin open, as if doing everything they could to make their pain worse.

"Poor souls," Mia said. "I... I really wish we could--"

Vinicius reached down, and with three of his hands, scooped up three remnants, and ripped them from the stones.

"Vinicius!"

The demon rumbled in his chest, an annoyed and tired sound, and he swallowed down the flesh of the remnants. No effort made to get only the heart, he opened them up and either dumped their organs into his mouth, or bit into them and swallowed half their torsos in a single bite.

Mia covered her mouth and looked away. No good, she had to cover her ears after, and clenched her eyes tight as the screams of remnants filled the background. It didn't matter how hard she pressed on her ears, she couldn't completely block out the sound of breaking bone and gnashing teeth.

At least the monster worked fast. He finished the twelve remnants in thirty seconds.

Mia lowered her hands, gulped down the non-existent food her body wanted to vomit, and forced herself to turn around. Her imagination didn't lie. Limbs, guts, bones peeled of soft remnant flesh, blood, it was everywhere, especially on Vinicius. His dark red skin was now drenched in crimson, and it borderline flowed down his neck as he chewed.

"I... I thought remnants didn't have any resonance or essence to eat?"

"Only traces," he said. He did not bother wiping his mouth.

"I know imps and grems eat remnants, scavenging and stuff. But Adron said even they don't get much sustenance from them, and they're tiny."

Vinicius nodded and began the trek forward again. No need to say it, she could see it in every lumbering step, and the way his grumbles and growls came more and more frequently. He was starving.

"How long... How long?"

"I don't--"

"I meant about you. How long until you... I don't know, can't move?" She would not say 'starve to death'. There were enough bad omens and bad luck coming her way, no need to tempt fate for more.

That got another grumble out of him, but nothing else. He marched forward, tail almost brushing the ground as he walked, like it was too heavy for him to keep up. He made no effort to avoid stepping on the soft bodies of the dead remnants either, and Mia again had to look away to keep from seeing them get crushed.w(w).Novel(w)0tm.c0m

In a matter of hours, the blood would all be gone, absorbed by Hell herself. In a day, all the gore. And remnant bones were soft, too, so they'd only last a few more days, maybe less, before the tunnel would be clean again. Demons, and souls who hadn't died in Hell yet, their flesh and blood didn't last any longer when they died, absorbed into Hell. But their bones lasted. You knew you were heading into dangerous territory when you found old bones.

They found old bones.

The tunnel opened into a cavern, big enough the amber veins didn't light up the ceiling very well. What amber veins she could see up there were half blocked off by massive stalactites. No stalagmites on the ground, though, as if someone had removed them. A smooth cave floor?

There were giant statues around, made of the dark metal so much stuff in Hell was made of. No, not giant statues, just of giant demons. Tetrad demons. Some sat, some stood, all of them waited near the wall of the giant cave, some on thrones of rock, some in epic poses with sword in hand, and some in sexual positions. Tetrad demons may have seemed small compared to Vinicius, but they were still huge, ten-foot-tall creatures that made other demons look tame.w(w).Novel(w)0tm.c0m

Korgejins like Gorlus and Saldavin, with hooves and giant wings. Gorujins, they had wings too, but raptorial feet instead, and a tail. And for the ladies, bolstars like Zel, with hooves and four arms. Fujaras too, also with four arms, but with raptorial feet and a tail.w(w).Novel(w)0tm.c0m