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"I mean, if they want me to actually do what they ask? Yeah? Pretty big ask to send me around, what, two-thirds of Hell to reach this place, for some mysterious thing I don't understand? Its... almost like they don't want me to know."

The girls looked between each other, heads tilting slightly. Not being told stuff was par for the course, for them, because most demons just didn't care to inform each other about anything. Actively not being told something because someone wanted to manipulate them apparently hadn't crossed their minds.

Caera stopped, and the group followed suit.

"You think... we shouldn't go?" she asked.

"I mean, until we find something to tell us otherwise, we probably should go? That woman did save me, after all. So I guess I owe her. And if she isn't lying, it'd be a real shame if we didn't go, and all died for it."

Groaning, Jes hopped up onto a rock, and perched as she scanned the path ahead.

"Yeah. Saved my ass too, I guess."

"Then we go," Caera said. "Maybe we'll find out more along the way."

Along the way, across the Grave Valley, the Scar, the Red Pits, and the Navameere Fields, all to reach False Gate. Real name: Unholy Lands. Delightful.

"You think you are being manipulated?" Acelina asked him. And without missing a beat, she gestured for him to come walk beside her again, in the same way a master would demand their servant catch up.

The other girls didn't notice, and honestly, David didn't mind. Whatever social tactics would work to endear him to Acelina, he didn't know, and Mia wasn't around to ask. Playing nice seemed like a safe bet, though Caera had suggested bullying might work, too. But, alas, not like he could bully a demon nearly twice his height.

"I don't know," he said, stepping up beside her again. "But the stranger said if I run into any other unmarked, I need to avoid them or kill them, Something's going on, and that lady in the armor specifically said she wouldn't answer my questions."

"Zelandariel was correct, as she usually was," Acelina said, sighing as she shook her head. Even with her wings hooked on her shoulders so she wore them like a cloak, they still drooped. "Something is amiss. The angels dot the skies, and the imps and grems share strange talk. My love knew that with the appearance of your sister, pieces on the board would begin to move, and it was in our interest that she solve the mystery as soon as possible."

That was a surprising amount of information from Acelina. She didn't like talking about Zel, every word tinted with moroseness, but she'd just given them an olive branch, anyway. Even Jes looked back, one eyebrow raised, and David smiled and nodded to her. Look, see? She's useful.

"The angels made it clear," Caera said, "that we should avoid other angels, too."

"Did they now?" Acelina said, aiming her eyeless gaze upward as they walked. "Interesting. Perhaps not all is well in Heaven? Perhaps there is... dissension?"

Jes laughed. "If we get lucky, maybe they'll break out in a civil war? Let them have a taste of what every day down here is like."

A civil war in Heaven? Was that even possible? Even after running into those two angels, David had still been running under the assumption Heaven was an orderly, perfect place. Then again, he'd kinda figured Hell would be like that too, before coming. Organized, orderly, and obtuse, unknowable, and biblically eldritch. None of that was true. Yet.

If Heaven was susceptible to things like dissension among its ranks...

He rubbed his arms and followed the girls across the mountains of Hell. Next stop, the temple where a Cainite ambush had killed Caera's friends. After that, the Grave Valley province and its spire. After that, across several provinces to reach False Gate, or rather, the Unholy Lands. From there, hopefully they'd find a way to get to the Forgotten Place. The Frozen Heart, in the dead center of Hell.

An epic adventure, and one he very much did not want to do. He wanted to help Caera, but after that, he wanted to go back to what he was doing just an hour ago. Having ridiculous, amazing, life-changing sex with three absolutely amazing women. A lot of it. So much of it, his brain was still trying to process the insanity of it all and his new, amazing body.

Okay, yeah, sure, the body was completely perfect. In his wildest dreams, he wasn't still less than five and a half feet tall, but all the other stuff? Yeah, the rest was pretty amazing. More than enough sexual stamina for three women? Fucking awesome. An aura that, with a little effort, could make every nearby woman weak in the knees? Yeap, if he was still alive and had this body, he'd have been corrupted instantly. He'd have built himself a harem of dozens of women in a matter of days, and have spent his life doing nothing but fucking and playing video games. Even his usually obsessive need to figure things out, solve the riddle, uncover the mystery, all of that would have fallen to the wayside so he could have simply indulged in his vices if he had this body.

Hero of the story? Definitely not.

But down here, he had a mission. Save the world. And just because he was no hero didn't mean he was going to sit on his ass and let the world burn.

He set his eyes on Daoka, and watched her as she hopped ahead, leapt onto a boulder with her satyr legs, and looked ahead with her eyeless gaze. No way he'd let anything happen to her. No way.

As they got higher, David walked closer to Dao, and once she was close enough, he stepped in beside her until she noticed him. He didn't have to say a word. She slowed down a bit until they walked side by side, and she chirped down at him before leaning in and planting a kiss on his cheek. A few more chirps followed, and she gestured back to Acelina.

"She wants to know," Caera said, ahead of them a little ways, "why you aren't looking at her the way you look at Acelina."

Uh oh. **Ww.NeV(e)LW@Rm.com**

"W-What? I... I uh... um..."

Daoka chirped and giggled, shook her head, and again gestured back to Acelina.

"She's just playing," Caera said. "Acelina might be a bitch, but it's hard to deny a zotiva's body is quite something."

"As is our hearing," Acelina said with a snarl. "And I would never let any of you touch me."

Daoka giggled some more, slipped an arm around David's shoulders, and half hugged him as they walked. The only reason he wasn't staring at the satyr's huge breasts was the armor that covered them. Nodding and smiling, she clicked a few times, turned his head to look up at her, and kissed him. Not a long, deep, passionate kiss. She saved those for Jes. But there was no denying the strange way she doted on him.

Jes glided down from a boulder and fell in beside them on his other side. She leaned in too, and whispered in his ear, super quiet.

"Don't let that tall bitch fool you. Demons want to fuck humans. It's in our fucking... DNA, I dunno. **W(w)W.Ne(v)eLW@M.(c)oM**

"You don't have DNA." Probably true.

"You know what I mean. I, for one, want to see that pompous princess get pinned down and stuffed full of cock. Maybe jam that dick of yours right down her throat. **WwW.wv.eI(w)o@M.c(om)**

David gulped, and looked back over his shoulder at the tall woman. With her lips closed, Acelina's face was a purely black canvas, a flat surface of onyx that showed no features of any kind, save for the big black horns coming off the top of her head. When she bothered to open her mouth, it was straight-up scary how wide it was, and how full of shark teeth it was.

"I uh... I think she'd... you know... bite." He shivered from head to toe, and not the good kind.

Jes laughed again, shrugging. Daoka chirped in his ear, as if he could understand, and she tapped a couple of her claws against his jugular as she softly rubbed a lip against his earlobe. No translation needed. She liked Jes's idea.

Jes's idea was going to get his dick bitten off. **wv.w.nOvèWôRm.cOm**