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"Please, tell me," she said. "Please!"

Both angels looked at each other, and both of them winced, only visible because of how radiant and beautiful their eyes were.

"If they won't tell us," Vin said, "we make them."

His words pulled the pin on the tension grenade, and all the angels rushed in. The one with the giant shield came first, shield up and spear poking out from the side, and feet rooted to the ground. Vin spun and hit him with his tail, opposite the spear, and the angel spun to face it in time to take the giant wall of red muscle directly in the shield. The angel slid across the stone like he was on ice, but with his shield's bottom lip grounded, dragged, and tore up the stone as he moved back. He came to a stop just before his back and wings would have hit the wall.

The angel tried to stab the tail, but Vin spun around again and pulled his tail with him, just in time to face Noah and slash down with two of his good hands into the angel's smaller shield. Noah went down, hit the ground on foot and knee, and bounced back up, sword poking straight out from him like Superman flying with his fist up and out. Vin brought up his already stabbed hand to block, only to get the sword straight through it, right up until the sword's guard pressed to his palm.

Vin roared down at Noah as he closed his fingers down on the angel's hand, and squeezed. Blood squirted from the around the blade as Vin clamped down, and Noah roared back at the giant demon as they met face to face. They knew each other. From the look in Noah's eyes, they knew each other well.

Vin spun around again, and backhanded Shir. She'd leapt at their back, sword up and aimed directly at Mia, but Vin smashed her to the side, and only her shield kept the spikes along his forearm from hitting armor. Noah came along for the ride, sword hand still in Vin's grip, lifted his legs, and drove his feet straight into Vin's chest. With a flap of his giant wings, air crashed into Vin and Mia, a hurricane of power summoned by a flash of gold from his blackened feathers, and Vin stumbled back as the angel yanked himself free of the titan's grip.

The angel with the spear leapt in, but didn't fly. He stayed low, got underneath Vin's arms, and summoned a gold light to his shield again, not a giant wall, but something that rooted him. The ground around his feet almost exploded, sinking a few inches around his boots and cracking outward in all directions. Only then did he stab out with his spear and sink the mirror blade into Vin's side. The only reason Vin didn't roar, was his deep panting as he struggled for breath.

Shir took to the air, and Noah followed behind her. Before Vin could turn his aggression on the rooted angel under his arms, Noah dove for Vin's head, and his sword glowed as he aimed the blade and his whole body down like a missile.

Vin ducked in low and slipped past Noah and underneath him. Mia yanked her head in close to her bodyguard's bloody shoulder, and her heart stopped as something ran along the back of her hair, an inch away from her scalp. By the time she turned her head around, Noah had landed on the ground next to Vin's tail, and some of Mia's hair fell in the corner of her eye.

Shir came in after, diving the same way Noah had. Expecting Vin to turn and go after Noah, no doubt. But Vin ignored Noah, even as his old enemy turned and stabbed Vin in the tail, sword glowing yellow. Whatever the angel was doing, it was draining Noah, exhausting him, and the angel roared like he was deadlifting a bus as he swung the sword to the side, cutting through the side of Vin's tail down its length. Blood gushed out and soaked him.

Vin didn't turn to face him. He reached up with his three good arms, and yanked Shir out of the sky. Only when the woman angel was in his hands, her arms pinned at her sides, did Vin spin around and knock Noah aside with his bleeding tail, while stepping away from the shield angel with a back hop. The angel with the shield had no way to pursue, and Noah hit the ravine wall again, hard enough he landed in a slump. But Noah wasn't the goal *www.novélworm.com*

Roaring at the angel in his grip, Vin threw Shir down hard, and again got his giant talons on her already bleeding back. But he didn't rake her open this time. He grabbed her wings instead. *www.novélworm.com*

"Vin!" Mia said. "Don't--" *www.NOVÉlWORM.com*

He ripped her wings off.

The following scream turned Mia's blood to ash. White, bloody feathers rained down on them, slowly drifting back and forth in the hot air, before gently landing on the fiery rocks.

"Shir!" the other angel yelled, unhooked his feet and shield from the ground, and jumped toward them. Vin had no choice but to back up to avoid another poke as the defensive angel got between Vin and Shir.

And with a smoothness that was almost a dance, Vin again backed away, turned, and brought his two lower arms down at Noah. Noah got his shield up in time, but now that Vin didn't have to worry about Shir, he was free to unleash his rage upon his old enemy. He smashed two hands down, and two more, using his bad hand and arm as if they weren't injured, and forcing a huge gush of blood from the shoulder wound onto Mia. But it was enough to pin Noah to the ground, buried under his shield. How the angel managed to not get smashed into pulp as Vin slammed all four hands down like hammers upon his shield, Mia couldn't fathom, but Noah, pinned to a knee under his shield, held strong.

Vin spun again. Mia hadn't heard it, but the angel with the big shield came at them again. The moment they had, Vin slammed his tail into him, and the giant gash in the huge slab of dark red muscle splattered blood across the canyon. Vin didn't care. He hit the angel hard, a hit he'd planned, a hit he'd baited, and the angel smashed against the ravine wall again.

Snarling and growling between his exhausted pants, Vin reached down, grabbed the shield angel with two hands, and pulled off their helmet with a third.

"Azreal?" Vinicius said, chuckling as he glared down at the angel in his hands. "This is no coincidence. You came looking for me." More sinister chuckles. "I am going to enjoy this." Two hands holding the angel's torso with arms pinned to his sides meant the angel couldn't stab back or raise their giant shield, and Vinicius took full advantage. He roared down at the angel's head, opened his mouth, and raised the angel's skull until it was nearly between his teeth.

The angel was a handsome man, with tan skin, and short, messy dark hair. Mia met Azreal's eyes for only a split moment. Purple. Amethyst. And he looked at her with an unknowable mix of exhaustion, weariness, and... jadedness?

No bite came. Vin snapped his head up instead, roaring and turning to look down at the angel. Not Noah. Shir. Crimson dripped from the two stumps where Shir's wings had been, red soaking over the remains of the few feathers along the back of her armor where the stubs emerged. On shaky legs, she held her sword and shield in front of her, a fresh coating of Vin's blood soaking the blade, and new blood dripped down the demon's side.

She collapsed. The energy went out of her like someone cutting the strings on a puppet, and she hit the ground on her stomach. Her sword and shield poofed out of existence, and her armor followed suit, leaving nothing more than a tall woman in loose white silks not dissimilar to a toga, soaked in blood, with pale skin and long red hair.

She tried to get up. She failed.