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Vin glared down at the angel, and new malice burned in his eyes. Noah struggled to his feet, but something in his leg didn't agree with him, and he fell to a knee with a loud groan. He tried again, and again the leg didn't work. He flapped his wings, but something inside him was broken, and every attempt he made to get up ended with him falling. With how Vin had hammered on him, it was a wonder the man could even lift his shield. His boots had left a small crater from Vin's hammer punches.

"Azreal, Noah," Vin said, and he put his foot on Shir's head. "Remember last time? You deserve this." Chuckling, he leaned onto his leg, and the angel underneath screamed as his thigh dripped red liquid onto her.

"Vin, don't!" Mia said, looking over his shoulder down at the helpless, wingless, broken angel.

"They attacked us."

"I know, but don't!"

"They tried to kill you. Not me. You."

"I know! But... but, just don't, okay! Just don't!" She looked at Azreal still in Vin's grip, his drooping wings, and his amethyst eyes. He was confused. She looked Noah's way. Same thing, big silvery eyes showing confusion, and aimed straight at her.

Vin growled over his shoulder at Mia, and looked at her from only inches away.

"These two angels have been a thorn in my side before. They die. The woman dies first. They will know pain."

"I said no!"

Vin, staring right into Mia's eyes, put more weight onto his leg, and again the angel screamed.

Mia, staring right into Vin's eye, poured her will and intent into her necklace. An amber beam shot out from it, like an arc of electricity, straight into the small black chain wrapped snug around Vin's neck, and the demon roared as he fell to his knees.

--David--

Opening his eyes wasn't easy. Someone was holding his eyelids down with anchors. He stirred, groaned, fought against the heavy weight, and eventually forced them open.

Chirps and clicks rang through his ears, like song birds waking up him up three hours before his alarm did.

No, wait. He wasn't alive anymore. He was in Hell, and the only chirps he heard anymore were from demons, one in particular who had a habit of holding his head on her lap and running her claws through his hair.

Look at that, same thing happening again.

"Dao," he said, blinking up at her. "What... What happened?" He tried to sit up, but she gently pushed him back down with her other hand and shook her head.

"You lack horns," someone said, someone haughty, and mean. Acelina. "If you had horns, your skull would not be so easily struck."

He groaned, louder than he probably should have, according to the memories coming back to him. Right, they were being chased by angels. The angels had said 'halt', and then unleashed a gold beam of energy at them. Rock met face. He raised a hand and poked where a new wave of pain said hello, and he groaned again. Sighing, he closed his eyes and melted back into Dao's touch.

"We're safe for now." Caera's voice. From the familiar sound of claws on stone, she'd prowled over and sat beside him. "The angels caused a cave-in."

"A cave-in?" he asked. "Are we trapped?"

"Nah," Jeskura said in the distance. "But we don't know where this tunnel goes. I haven't used it, and neither have Dao or Caera. And naturally Bitch McTits hasn't, either. *Www.NoVèlWOrM.Com*"

Some clip clop sounds announced Acelina marching off toward the gargoyle, but David kept his eyes closed. A headache was settling in, and the last thing he needed was watching the two winged demons fight. Hearing it was bad enough.

"Look at this," Acelina said. "I bleed from a dozen wounds!" A pause. "Several dozen!"

"We're all bleeding," Jes said. "If you'd spent time learning how to navigate--"

"How could I learn to be smaller than I am?" A loud hiss followed. Not a fight hiss, but a pain hiss. "I am..."

Dao clicked a few times, and the two winged demons sighed, heavy and long. Silence followed, until some stirring in the rocks told David Caera now lay next to him *W.NoVèL(w)OrM.Com*

"You okay?" she asked.

"Yeah, I think so. Throbbing in my head."

"Understandable. You took a rock to the face. *Www.NoVèlWOrM.Com*"

He nodded, regretted it, groaned some more, and cracked his eye open enough to look up at Dao. Lines of blood ran down from her head and shoulders, and under the slabs of metal armor and leather straps. If her shins were half as bad as his felt, they'd be coated in blood, too.

"You okay, Dao?"

She smiled, chirped once, and ran her thumb along his lips.

"I'll be fine. How's everyone else?"

"I took a few scrapes," Caera said. "Tunnels like this are a pain, but I've run them thousands of times. Jes and Dao, not so much, and they're both pretty cut up. Jes has some small wing tears, too." *(w)W.NoVèlWOrM.Com*

"And Acelina?" he asked.

Caera raised an eyebrow slightly, but smiled at him when Acelina scoffed.

"She's the worst off," the tiger said as she nodded Acelina's way, down the tunnel. "She's still standing, but she's pretty torn up. Neither she nor Jes will be gliding anytime soon, and healing wings takes time. Acelina could take a week or two before she can glide again."

"I will survive," Acelina said.

Jes snorted, but at least she didn't say anything.

"Those angels," David said. "They didn't hesitate to try and kill us."

"They probably know what you look like," Caera said. "Think those other angels ratted us out?"

"Maybe. Can angels lie?"

"Of course they can lie," Acelina said. "They are angels, not some embodiment of righteousness."

"I... guess, yeah. Heaven and Hell are a lot more real and visceral than I ever figured they'd be."

"Very real," Caera said, and she smiled down at him as she ran the blunt side of a claw along his cheek. "But I get what you meant. I doubt they lied. No, I'm pretty sure the angels just figured out what you look like, or saw four demons leaving the spire with a human and just figured they better investigate. And when we ran, they figured it'd be better to--"

"Shoot first and ask questions later," Jes said.

Acelina groaned. "Here but an hour and you are already addicted to the scrying pool."

"Scrying pool?" David asked.