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Dao nodded and gestured past Caera. A scrying pool sat nearby, two feet off the ground and maybe four feet wide. Underneath it was a mound of skulls stuck to a wide, smooth, pillar-like rock, creating an arful -- if macabre -- thick base for the big, shallow pool to sit on. It sat in the middle of the small cave, and the ground around it was smooth. A glance down the tunnel proved more bloodgrip waited to tear up their shins, palms, and wings, but near the scrying pool, it was clear.

It wanted people to come sit, and watch. Sure enough, Jes was doing just that, sitting on her butt with knees out and legs crossed at the ankle. Her tail sat still on the ground behind her, bloody and ripped wings hung to her shoulders, and from the angle, David could just barely see one of her eyes. She was in pain.

"Louder. I want to hear," the gargoyle said down at the pool.

The scrying pool listened. Noises flowed up from the pool, and while David couldn't see over the lip of it with his head on Dao's lap, he recognized the sound immediately.

"Jes," he said, chuckling, and hissing as the throbbing in his skull punished him for it, "don't watch those new superhero movies."

"Why not?"

"They're horrible and they'll rot your brain." *www.novelsworm.cfm*

She gave him a very Acelina-like scoff, smiled at him over her shoulder, and looked back at the pool.

"Think those angels are gonna chase us in here?" David asked. "I mean, use that beam again and punch a hole through... that?" A weak hand motioned to the pile of rocks blocking off the tunnel from the way he assumed they'd come from.

"I doubt it," Caera said. "I mean, I don't know. I've never dealt with angels. Acelina, you're old. How about you?"

"Never directly. But from the few encounters I have been alive for, the angels are surgical and determined. If they believe they saw an unmarked, and if it is their order to kill the unmarked, then yes, they will come for us."

"Fuck," Jes said. "Don't suppose they'll just assume their attack killed us? Like people in TV shows would?" She gestured to the scrying pool. "You know, not double check and stuff?" Everyone looked at her. She sighed and shrugged. "Never mind."

"Let's just be thankful they didn't chase us in here, yet," David said. "Dao, help me up?"

The satyr frowned and sighed, but she helped him up, regardless. And for some damn reason, David gestured toward the scrying pool, and Dao took him to *itx-w(w).o(v)eL(w)orm.cfm*

"I think I need a minute," he said, "before we start running for our lives again. Mind if I watch something?"

Laughing, Jes gestured down at the big, flat pool of shadowy, silvery liquid currently showing a movie that absolutely sucked. Blegh.

"Scrying pool, show me..." Fuck, did he even want to watch something? "Show me... my old room, from when I was at university."

It did just that. A blur, a swirl, and nostalgia hit him so hard only Dao and her arm kept him from falling over. Almost three weeks in Hell. Over a month since he'd died. He'd never been much of a smartphone guy, but the computer and the internet had been his life, and they sat at his old desk, silently calling his name. Programming. Video games. Porn. Well, he didn't miss the porn. His new sex life was amazing and was pretty much what he would have wanted if he'd gone to Heaven. But even in Heaven, he probably would have asked to have his room back, and his computer. *www.novels@orm.cfm*

He thought small and had little ambition, but was that so wrong? It took so damn little to make him happy, to make him content. But here he was, looking at a scrying pool showing him a live feed of his old bedroom, dark and only lit by the sunlight that slipped past the curtain. Judging by the look of it, it'd been cleaned, but his stuff was still there. A quiet bedroom that would have fit him like a glove. A quiet bedroom where angels wouldn't have been coming to kill him.

Unless they had something to do with why he died in the first place?

"Scrying pool," Jes said. "Show me the hottest girl at David's school, who's also doing something sexy."

"Oh come on."

Jes laughed, and the pool obeyed. Lucy Daniel, tall and busty -- by human standards -- was taking a shower.

"Think I haven't seen that already?" he asked, and he gestured down at the pool. "I spent the first week of being a ghost spying on this."

"Perv."

He laughed. Jes laughed. Someone else laughed.

Daocka and Acelina both unleashed a couple loud clicks as they aimed their eyeless gazes down the tunnel. And like they'd shot their own lasers into the black, something in the dark squeaked, clicked, and scampered away.

Caera growled, got on all fours again, and started down the path.

"What was that?" David asked.

"Imps and grems."

"We worried about them?"

"No."

"Then, no reason to hunt them down, right?" he asked.

Caera stopped, paused, and looked over her shoulder at him, eyebrow raised.

"I suppose not, but..." Sighing, she came back and shook her head. "With demons cut off from the spire, even if they think Zel is still alive, any demons we run into aren't going to respect the dueling law anymore. Assuming they were going to in the first place. There's a good chance anyone we run into is going to fight us."

"Not everyone," David said, gesturing to Acelina. "And it's not like all demons always try to kill each other, right?"

"No, but it's not uncommon."

"Then how about we don't stir the pot unless we have to?"

Acelina scoffed, but instead of throwing some insults his way for being 'soft', she tended to one of her wings. Torn, bloody, and full of holes. Her legs weren't much better off. None of theirs were. They needed a little time to heal.

Dao and David sat down, and David looked back to the pool. *www.novels(w)orm.cfm*

"How about... Scrying pool, show me... a bonfire or campfire by the ocean, somewhere where people aren't talking."

The scrying pool did as ordered. There wasn't even a pause, just instant response and then the noise of popping and crackling wood, and waves hitting sand and rocks.

"Boring," Jes said, frowning.

"Yeah, it is. S'why I love it. It's good background noise, for sleeping or working. Listen to it and let the come and go of the sound help you relax." He smiled at the gargoyle and rested his temple on Dao's shoulder.