

## 1315

~~David~~

The tunnels of Death's Grip shared the strange secrets of Hell in ways the mountaintops didn't. Sometimes the amber veins along the walls converged and circled a pile of bones where something nasty had happened. One case in particular showed a classic example of hate, with two demon skeletons strangling each other, and the remains of their skeletons locked in place by bloodgrip vine. Another display, locked in time by metal, showed four demons with swords skewering their chests in some sort of ritual the girls didn't know

In some tunnels, statues grew, and one chamber held an assortment of tetrad demons, the center one apparently Valzanal, the old ruler of Death's Grip. She was surrounded by other tetrad, giant ten-foot-tall demons that made even Acelina look small. The males, gorujins and korgejins, had two giant wings, while the women, fujaras and bolstaras, had no wings but four arms. All the guys had their dicks out, fully grown, and plenty of them sat in positions that provided easy access to anyone that wanted to sit on them.

And for some reason, a lot of the lady tetrad had a penis, too.

La... La... one of the La gremlas hopped over on her hooves, giggled as she hugged one big demon's giant dick, and gave its tip a kiss. Gross, except not gross, not in Hell, where body residue never lasted. It was, essentially, a perfectly clean giant black metal dick. And about the same size as David's. Maybe a little smaller? Hello ego stroke

Jes poked him with her tail and shook her head. Right, right, don't think about sex. Impas and gremlas were perfectly sexy in their strange, slim shortstack kinda way, and seeing all four of them giggle and hug and quick kiss while dancing around and between the legs of the tetrads was strangely fun. And exciting, hence, Jes poking him with the tail.

"Imps and grems can think maybe five minutes into the future at most," Jes said, behind him and lips next to his ear. "I know you want to fuck four sisters at once--"

"I don't--"

"But bad idea."

"You told me already."

"Then stop looking."

"They're our guides!"

Jes chuckled and gestured. "Our guides are obviously just trying to mess with you, David. You're human, so they like you, want to fuck you, and want to eat you. They're playful little bundles of destructive chaos. Remember that."

"I am!"

Daoka leaned in over his other shoulder and clicked a few times

"Dao's right," Jes said. "Think about--"

Caera, ahead of them along the path through the cavern, snarled back over her shoulder.

"Think about the fact we're going to run into Cainites," the tiger said, without bothering to whisper, "lots of them, with apparently hellfire-infused weapons. Think about the fact angels attacked us, on sight, are probably looking for ways to get into these tunnels right now, and the only reason they probably won't find us is they don't know these tunnels like our guides do."

"Yes yes!" one of the impas said. "Trust Lasca."

"Lasca, right." Nodding, David picked up the pace a bit to catch up to the other impa. "Lasca, you--"

"I'm Laara!" She pointed back to the original impa. "That's Lasca."

"Oh." Eyebrow raised, he turned to Lasca.

"I'm Lasca," she said, nodding. Okay, confirmed, Lasca randomly talked about herself in the third person. Or maybe all impas and grems did that. The fuck did proper grammar matter to demons at all, he supposed.

"Lasca, you have any idea where the Cainites got the fire weapons?"

"Nope."

"You're sure?"

"Nope nope."

"Uh, nope as in you're not sure?"

She shook her head. "Nope nope nope."

Yeap, he was overthinking this. He asked if she knew, she said nope, and was going to repeat the word if he asked about nuances.

"Okay. How about, these Cainites that suddenly started using dangerous weapons. Do you know where they came from?"

"Cainites everywhere! Claimed all the tunnels."

All the tunnels? Gulp.

"Any place where they're grouped up? Lots of them together?"

"Does it matter?" Caera asked, catching up to them. "We keep killing them until we find the ones that killed Kia and Marquez." After a long growl, the tiger lady glanced back at the tetrad statues and the bones that surrounded them, growled, brushed some bones aside with her tail, and prowled alongside David. No matter what he said, nothing could penetrate the new angry shell Caera wore. Maybe Mia could, but David was more likely to accidentally throw gasoline on the fire than anything else.

"Dozens of them!" Lasca said, turning and walking backward. "Dangerous!"

The new tunnels they walked had little bloodgrip vine, and the impas and grems felt comfortable hopping around, making noise, and being silly. Caera did not appreciate that. She growled, and the spikes along her back and spine stuck up a little straighter.

"Then we just be smart about how we approach and kill them," Caera said. "We find a secluded group, kill them, David dresses up in their gear, we use him as a distraction, and keep killing every group we run into."

It wasn't the best plan, but it was a plan, and plans seemed to be something most demons didn't bother with or cared for. Humans, on the other hand, sometimes used them, and since Cainites were souls that'd worked together to survive Hell, they might be just a bit too smart to be so easily tricked. Then again, the two he'd met before, the ones who'd jumped Jes and Dao, they'd been suicidally hungry and depraved. They hadn't behaved human, or even sounded human. More like, psychotic cannibal raiders. Which, they were, now that he thought about it.

"It matters," David said, "because a group of souls suddenly having access to weapons you can't normally get, is weird. The timing is weirder. If we don't do this right, we'll all get killed. I was hoping we'd get a little more time to figure things out, but I know, I know, we can't take forever with angels on our ass."