

## 1364

"Yes. The gabriem are well versed in how to heal an ailing mind. The pains of the surface are unique, and many strike the soul so deeply, they leave scars. For many humans, they stay in Heaven until those wounds heal, and for some, it can take centuries of deep, often painful conversations with gabriem who have seen the rise and fall of entire civilizations. Or, a conversation with a fellow soul, guided by a gabriem for the two to meet and share their pains."

"Wow. That's... That's the kind of stuff I got into psychology for."

"Oh?"*w.w.w.(n)ové@W@rM.cOm*

"Yeah. I wanted to help people. But, I mean, I aimed to be a psychologist with a specialization in sexuality."

"Of course."

Mia frowned. Yosepha held a neutral gaze. Either she was being sincere, or she had the best poker face. The former, definitely*WwW.N6Ve#wórm.(e)om*

"I'm kind of surprised Heaven is so cool with sex. I mean, it's pretty common for religions to treat sex like it's bad, or should only ever be done post marriage, you know?"

"That... is a complicated question, and one better suited to the gabriem. Suffice it to say, sex has indeed caused many problems for humans. Some of the greatest sins in the history of mankind have been due to sex or sexual desires, by both sexes."

"But, that's like blaming a weapon for violence and not the wielder."

Yosepha held up a hand. "I am not the one to ask. But here in the afterlife, you cannot acquire resonance. All resonance here in the afterlife is that which has been brought by those who lived on the surface. Acts that could be considered... potentially problematic, do not exist in Heaven or Hell, at least not as far as resonance is concerned."

"Resonance... I don't suppose you can explain to me how all that works? Why angels and demons need it? Why the universe works the way it does? Why--"

"No. It is not my place, and I am no expert in the nature of our universe. But, I can tell you that resonance is acquired from the surfaced based on you, your choices, your desire to aid, and your desire to harm. It is experience."

"Experience." It wasn't the first time she'd heard the idea that life itself was about experiencing it, so that a greater being or entity could somehow experience it through its smaller pieces.

David probably would have made some dumb, quiet little joke about experience meaning leveling up. She would have laughed, too.

"Here in the afterlife, you may have noticed demons do not go through the same... mental gymnastics, when coming to terms with their actions. They are simpler than humans, in a way, as are angels. Perhaps we lack the spark needed to create resonance. Perhaps it is the surface itself that creates the resonance, and souls absorb it. I am not sure. It is not how the afterlife works. The rules here are different."

"What rules?"

"Exactly."

Mia laughed and buried her face in her palms.

"So what you're saying is, all the reasons the surface came up with rules and stuff, none of that really applies anymore?"

"Correct. In Heaven, for the better. In Hell, for the worst."

Sighing, Mia nodded a few times, but a kernel of a thought built up inside, and despite her attempts to stop it, she smiled.

"It's not... always, for the worst, right? The sex is--"

"How lucky you are," said a new voice.

Both girls snapped their heads to the alcove entrance. Julisa stood there, and her largest talon gently tapped the ground as she grinned at them and licked her lips. How could a demon that huge be so quiet?

"Lucky?" Mia asked.*@wWw.nov(e)@w@rM.cOm*

Without invite, Julisa sat down with them, and towered over them. But her body language was anything but imposing. If anything, she looked excited to be talking with them.

"Is this what the scrying pools call... girl talk? Speaking of sex and boys and our boss who doesn't appreciate our efforts?"

"We speak of greater things than such small-minded concerns," Yosepha said, glaring.

Mia slowly raised a hand. "I like talking about sex and boys and, if I had a boss, a boss who doesn't appreciate my work. But, that last one isn't really girl talk."

Julisa laughed, brought around her tail, and poked Mia in the thigh.

"What else would girl talk include?"

"I'm... not entirely sure. I've never been that close with other people, not as a teenager, anyway. But according to really shitty TV, girl talk should include taking bad pictures of each other with our phones, showing off new clothes, talking about music and TV, talking about the bitches at school making our lives miserable, stuff like that. And boys."

"The size of girths?" Julisa asked, tilting her head to the side.

"Did... Did you come here just looking to talk about Vinicius?" Mia clutched her necklace. "You want me to force him to fuck you again, don't you?"

With a heavy sigh, Julisa's tail poked at her again. It was almost as long as Mia was tall, and thick as Mia's leg at the base, but Julisa was gentle.

"Please?"

Oh god.

"No! No I'm not going to force him to do anything."

"But you enjoyed yourself last time, did you not?"

"I..."*wWw.n(e)V@lW@Om.cóm*

Julisa leaned in closer. "Perhaps you would prefer to take the beast inside you this time? I could help." And imitating last time, she held out two hands in front of her and wiggled them left and right, like she did when pushing Mia down onto Vin's tongue.

"Aren't you Damall a little more concerned with big things?" Mia asked, doing her best to suppress her blush. She couldn't. Ginger curse. "Like... big, political war things?"