

## 1366

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"Acelina?" he asked. "You think you can get around this?"

The demoness leaned forward over the pit slightly, and one of the remnants growing on the edge reached up over its lip for her ankle.

"Acelinal! You--"

She lifted her hoof and crushed the remnant's hand. Truly crushed, like a hydraulic press squashing a grape, and the hand broke apart into a mess of bone and flesh.

"I will be fine," she said. "Let us do this quickly."

David looked up at her and did his best to read her face. Pointless. Unless she opened her mouth, her face was a smooth obsidian mask that betrayed nothing. But his wasn't, and he knew he probably had 'worried' stamped on his face in big red letters.

Daoka clicked a few times up at Acelina, and tugged on her tail, too, pulling her away from the pit. David braced for the inevitable tongue lashing the huge demoness would give the comparatively small satyr, but none come. Whatever strange relationship the two eyeless demons had developed, it was enough for Acelina to listen to Dao, and back off from the edge.

The problem was, they still had to actually get around the pit. Caera already had lead, and most of the Las followed her, but Lasca stayed with David. Jes and Dao followed Caera and the other Las, then David and Lasca, then Acelina. Three feet of space between the cavern wall and the pit.

David wasn't afraid of heights, but anyone would be afraid of this, three feet to work with, and a painful death waiting for anyone who stumbled. If it was a video game, this would have been the section where he'd have been terrified of getting ambushed. Someone was bound to show up ahead, with a gun, and force him to run down the narrow path, avoid bullets, and do his best to not fall in.

Thank god that did not happen. They circled the huge funnel of death, and the cave tapered before opening up to another pit, again filled with remnants screaming and crying. No wonder demons were so desensitized to violence. Even a normal human would eventually grow deaf to suffering if they were surrounded by it twenty-four-seven.

They got around the second pit, and the cave changed. The next cavern was bigger, and filled with death pits, some partly overlapping. Like the lava rivers, finding a path around the pits would have been a nasty process of trial and error, but Caera knew the way.

"Watch your footing," she said. "The path shrinks." [www.p0v81w0r7m.c0m](#)

Acelina hissed and gestured out ahead of them with a torn wing.

"This is ridiculous. What led to such a concentration of remnants?"

"That was part of the reason I was exploring these tunnels," Caera said. "There are a lot of memories down here, more than even Zel knew. Belial was up to something down here, something fucked up if Hell responded like this."

"How do you know it was Belial?" David asked. [www.n060@ll\(w\)erm.com](#)

"The temple. We got another couple days travel to get there, and we should stop by Renato's hole first. He's past these pits. I know the way."

"The temple was dedicated to Belial? Not Lucifer?"

"I didn't get to see for sure, but I think so," she said.

David peeked down over the edge of the closest pit. [@wW.n0Vef@σRm.č0m](#)

"That doesn't sound like something Lucifer would allow."

"You knew the archangel?" Acelina asked, voice dripping with sarcasm.

"No, but, if someone's willing to go up against God and Heaven and all that, I have to assume they're pretty egotistical, right?"

"Maybe," Caera said. "Maybe God was a giant asshole, and Lucifer was trying to break free of those chains?"

"Satan was a revolutionary?" It wasn't the first time he'd heard that idea. Sympathy for the devil, and all that. "I guess we'll--"

Acelina let out a harsh hiss, and fell.

David threw himself to the right, straight over the pit. All the pits had the metal poles sticking out over their edges, and for the half a second it took his chest to crash down against it, he prayed it'd hold his weight. And Acelina's.

Thunk. The metal vibrated with his weight, and bent with the second impact of Acelina's weight suddenly pulling on David's wrist.

"Fuck!" Pain ripped through him, and every muscle clenched into steel as the great weight of the huge demoness pulled on him. The only reason she didn't dislocate his shoulder was her enormous wings, flared wide to catch air, but it cost her. She screamed, loud, a banshee shriek that crashed against the cavern walls as the holes in her wings, almost healed, tore open. But it was enough to keep her from ripping his arm off.

She got her free hand around the metal pole, snarling endlessly, but it got her weight off David's wrist. With both her hands on the metal underneath him, David was free to sit up, and stare down at the death pit and the remnants below who wanted them. Don't fall.

"What happened?" Caera asked. "What--"

More shrieks followed. They weren't Acelina's.

"Look!" One of the Las said, pointing down into the pit.

They all looked, and all of them gasped. Hands came out of the pit, tearing and grabbing at anything they could. Human hands. And then arms. Shoulders. Heads. Torsos. And legs. One by one, and then by dozens, remnants pulled themselves out of the swirling mess of gore, and climbed. And not all from the bottom. Some pulled themselves free closer to the pit edge, exposing the bloody rock underneath, only for another remnant to replace them. And then climb free, too.

One of them hung from Acelina's ankle. [wW.n0VetwoRm.coM](#)

"Begone!" Hissing, she kicked her leg hard, and the metal pole shook and bent more as the spire mother threw the dangling remnant from her ankle. The remnant came off, but their arm did not, and it dangled uselessly, fingers wrapped tight above her hoof.

"What the fuck is going on?" David yelled. The remnants and their unending screams only grew louder as more of them began their ascent.

"I don't know!" Jes yelled back. Unlike everyone else, she didn't so much as hesitate to tear up the first remnant that got out of the pit close to her. Remnants were soft, flesh and bone, and one swipe of her claws was all it took to almost split an emaciated woman in half. "Let's go back!"