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She was angry. It was a wonder she wasn't using her sin aura; they'd be dead if she did. But she had enough control to keep her anger limited to herself and was happy to unleash it on every remnant that so much as got close to her.

Dao got a little too close, and Caera turned, standing on her hind legs, and raised a hand, claws out.

"Caera!" David yelled, running forward, but the Las stopped him. Tiny, but they had big wings, and he couldn't get around them without knocking them over or risking falling into one of the pits. All he could do was stand there as Caera, eyes wide with bloodlust, stared down at the satyr.

Dao, hands raised to block the potentially fatal claws, clicked a few times. Whatever she said, Caera growled, turned back to the path she walked, and on all fours, resumed the slaughter.

Everyone fell into a routine quick, crushing and killing remnants in formation. Caera stopped rushing so far ahead, and moved slower, taking her time and killing remnants that got behind her as much as in front of her.

"How much further!?" Jeskura screamed at the top of her lungs, but even that sounded quiet among the growing screams of the remnants. They weren't just making random noises anymore. They were screaming like monsters.

"Three more pits!" Caera yelled. "Come on! They're getting faster!"

Not exactly right. The remnants plodded along not much faster than a regular zombie might, but the amount of them was increasing. A lot. [www.NoVeLwOrM.CO\(m\)](#)

"Is this your doing, boy?" Acelina said, gesturing out to the death pit to their right. More remnants crawled up the slope of gore.

"I don't think so? I don't feel anything. No aura."

"I feel panic!" Jes yelled. "That's your aura!"

"Well I'm sorry that I'm panicking!"

"That doesn't mean you need to create an aura making us panic!"

"I can't control it like that!"

"Fucking try!"

He squeezed his eyes shut for a fraction of a moment, looked for the fingers inside plucking the strings that flowed through him, and he muted them, like palm muting on a guitar; which meant there was still sound, but at least quieter. It was enough.

They pushed through the path. It shrank down to only a foot wide at one point, and the remnants didn't care, reaching for their ankles from the all-too-close pits. Acelina handled it better than he figured someone her size would, but she did, using the metal teeth poking out from the pit edges to keep her from falling in when she needed to. The Las got off the path entirely, and hopped from metal pole to pole, slashing and bashing remnants as best they could, particularly around [David.wWw.NoVeLwOrM.CO\(m\)](#)

The impas and gremlas wanted to run. He could see it in their eyes. Skittish, like Jes said, but every so often they looked his way, and something stern and... courageous, cut across their faces. They fought, even though one slip meant their death. Acelina was big and strong enough the death pits didn't spell immediate dismemberment for her. Gremlas and impas, not so much.

The batlam rune glowed in his mind, and he reached for it. Nothing. Something was missing, wasn't clicking. It wanted him to use it, equip it, wear it, and use whatever gold light it'd summoned before to defend himself, but it refused to align with his brain. Like a Rubic's cube that he couldn't solve.

He didn't need to. A remnant caught his ankle, pulled, but before he fell into the pit, Acelina grabbed his hand and yanked him free. Without so much as a word, she put him back on the path, and crushed the hand that'd grabbed him under her hoof.

The path was covered in blood, Caera's slaughter ahead drowning the stone walkway in crimson liquid. Daoka slipped. David opened his mouth, but before he could say anything, Laara reached down from a metal pole, grabbed Dao by her horns, and pulled. Damn strong for a little creature. She got Dao up high enough the satyr grabbed the metal pole, pulled herself up, and jumped back onto the path, straight onto the back of a remnant walking toward David.

She chirped at him with a big smile, turned, and followed Caera through the maze. [www.NoVeLwOrM.CO\(m\)](#)

It didn't last forever. It felt like it, sweat pouring down David's body with each step until it joined the mess of blood and fingers underneath him, but they made it to the other side of the cavern. He almost tripped at the finish line, but Acelina grabbed him again and righted him. His next step was also a trip, and she didn't grab him, but at least he fell forward onto the expanding path as they walked past the last two death pits at the end of the cavern.

A tunnel waited for them, same as the others, full of bloodgrip and uninviting, but compared to the pits, it was paradise. There were hundreds of remnants behind them. Groaning, screaming, they climbed out of the pits, and where remnants would usually claw at each other, these did not. Something else had their attention. Freedom? Or, David? It didn't seem to be David they focused on specifically, and their crazed eyes stared at every demon and David with equal hunger and rage.

Hundreds turned into thousands, maybe more, and the lumbering, half-dead souls marched their way.

"Let's go," Caera said. "I know the way to the temple from here."

David glared at the tiger's back, down at his bleeding legs, and then back at Acelina and the blood trickling down her limbs. Everyone was out of breath, the Las especially, and they half walked, half dragged themselves along beside David and Dao. Dao looked back over her shoulder at David, eyeless gaze tired, limbs dangling. Exhausted.

"We need to find a place to rest," David said, and he jogged past the Las and Dao to get to Caera. Not so easy with bloodgrip everywhere, and Caera doing her best to keep a good pace. With a horde of zombies chasing them, he didn't blame her. But that wasn't really the reason she was moving so fast.

"Later." [www.NoVeLwOrM.CO\(m\)](#)

David checked back again. Acelina wasn't limping, but she wanted to. The only reason her wings weren't getting caught on the vines was some effort from her, doing her best to keep them up and out of the way, but they were huge and didn't have the same spring as Jeskura's or the Las'.