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Jeskura, still behind Acelina, reached down, and lifted the lowest hanging bit of the bigger demon's wings off the ground. Acelina glanced back, and David braced for yelling. None came. Acelina sighed, set her eyeless gaze back on the path, on David, and her posture relaxed a little, limping included.*www.NovellworM.com*

"Not later," David said to Caera. "We're torn up. I'm bleeding. You're bleeding. Everyone's bleeding, and exhausted."

"Renato is only a day from here. We can get there before twilight if we hurry."

Shit, Renato. The tregeera had a bunch of reasons to push it.

"Caera, we're not going to be able to help anyone if we get there beat up."

"Then don't get beat u--" She hissed and yanked back a hand from some bloodgrip, and a new gash ran the length of her forearm. It wasn't shallow.

"Caera! Slow down!" He risked another quick peek back. The remnants were way too slow to catch up, and they couldn't navigate the bloodgrip beyond stumbling over it and continuing on with a host of new wounds.

"Remnants on our ass, walking free!" Caera said. "Cainites ahead of us with imbued weapons? Renato might be dead! We can't wait!"

The horde was quickly becoming a distant shadow in the huge tunnel, hidden behind wings and layers of bloodgrip the girls had to weave around. Only the Las were navigating the mess without hurting themselves.

He did the only thing he could do. He grabbed Caera's tail.

Caera snapped her eyes back at David, stood up, turned, and glared down at him. He stared back up at her.

"Remember what I told you?" he yelled up at her. "I fucking remember! Well, this is me getting in your way, because you're going to get us killed! Slow the fuck down, and find us a place to rest!"

This had to be what Daoka yelled at her earlier, because Caera glared down at him with the same animal fury. She was halfway gone berserk from the look she was giving him. A demon.

Growling deep in her chest, she lifted her gaze past him to the others. David didn't look, but he could hear the girls panting, and Jeskura and Acelina both cursing as they probably hurt themselves on more vines. Dao chirped a few times from behind him, and set her claws on his shoulder, but he kept his glare on Caera.

After a few long seconds, Caera sighed, turned back to face the path, and resumed her march forward on all fours, more slowly this time.

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"Here," Caera said. "I've been here before."

It took them a while to find a place, taking several branching tunnels, but they didn't run into any problems other than the winding path being a pain in the ass. At a certain point, there weren't any more vines though, and the tunnel connected into a bigger tunnel that Caera seemed to know. She knew the way forward for sure, now.

The alcove connected to the big tunnel by a winding path that blocked line of sight, and had a small, tapered entrance. Easy to guard. Unfortunately, it wasn't a very big room, not even as big as the last one, and everyone got shoulder to shoulder as they sat down. Caera sat by the entrance, and David stood with her.*www.NovellworM.com*

"You've been here bef--" David bit his tongue. She'd been here before with her old friends, then.

Caera opened her mouth, but she stopped herself instead. David didn't dare look at her. They'd had a moment yesterday, but now he might have ruined that, yelling at her, getting in her way. So, painful silence instead. Normally he was perfectly comfortable with silence, and he'd made it clear to Caera he wouldn't hit her with empty platitudes, but this hurt.

He took a breath and forced himself to look at her. Her eyes were still full of rage, and pointed straight ahead at the exit path, as if the enemy was already running down the tunnel into their little room.

"I'm gonna check the other girls," he whispered, and backed away.

Acelina sat in a very un-feminine way, which was a first, but she had to so Daoka could get access to her legs. The satyr clicked quietly as she plucked a thorn from Acelina's hoof, and showed it to David.

"Fucking hell," he said. "That looks nasty. That hurt?"

"Not in the hoof," Acelina said. "But, given time, it would crack the hoof, and then I would be unable to walk for weeks."

"Yeesh."

Daoka clicked in agreement, got on her back, and held up her hoofs to David.

He smiled as he squatted in front of her and checked her hooves. It was easy to forget sometimes they were actual hooves, and not high heels, especially with how they made Acelina and Daoka walk with a strut. But hooves they were, glorified toenails, and susceptible to damage.

"You girls need horseshoes," he said, earning some giggles from Dao, but an annoyed scoff from Acelina. He dug his fingers into the hard surface and traced its undersides, looking for imperfections. Nothing. "You're good."

"Me next!" both gremlas said. They got on their backs in front of him and waved their hooves up in the air.

It was too cute. David couldn't help but laugh, and he sat down in front of them and got to work. Much smaller hooves, and tracing them didn't take any time at all. But it earned some giggles from the little critters, so he did it a few times, anyway.

Jes rolled her eyes and slapped them both across their stomachs with her tail with one good swing. Both squeaked and dashed away.

"Meanie!" Latia said, daintiest of the Las. She hugged her fellow gremla, but it wasn't long before they were giggling again, and again approached David. This time, they kept David between them and the gargoyle, until they could squat beside him and touch his arms. They didn't do anything, they just wanted to touch him and check his wounds.

"Do we plan to speak of the problem at hand?" Acelina said, shifting to sit-lean on her hip in her usual way. "Remnants rise!"

"I've seen them walking around before," Caera said. "A few years ago, near here."

"And you did not think to mention this?"

"I didn't see them again after that. I thought it was just Hell being random, as she has a tendency to do."

With an annoyed hiss, Acelina gestured down at her body. Her wings were torn up again; maybe not as bad as they'd been after the angel attack, but still. She had at least a couple dozen small cuts and scratches on her, not bleeding anymore, but that didn't mean she wasn't in pain.

"Every step we take, we are injured. Me most of all."

It was Jeskura's turn to hiss. "And of course you matter most of all."

"That is not what I meant!"

David put up his hands. "Ladies, can we--"*www.No(v)elL@rm.Com*

Caera joined them, and glared at everyone as rage dripped from her eyes.

"You all probably think this is my fault, dragging you all on some vengeance quest."

Acelina snarled. "Is that--"