

1375

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"Caera?" he asked.

Caera smiled, leaned in again, and kissed him again, and she didn't pull away this time. He did, and blinked at her a few times, but whatever was going through Caera's mind, she didn't feel like explaining it.

She picked him up.

"Whoa, hey. Caera?"Ww.noVefWorm.Com

On her butt, she put her legs out in front of her, and put him on her lap, facing her. She might not have been Acelina big, but Caera was still eight feet tall, and muscular. He was only a feather to her.

"You're right."

"What?"w@W.N@vefworm.com

"You're right about demons. We're violent, bloodthirsty, and obsessed about it. Even Daoka, sweet and innocent as she seems, can give into the urge as easily as any other demon. But..." With her giant claws holding his waist, she kissed him again, and rubbed her horns against the top of his head. "You're right that we're closer to humans than not. A lot of us try to ignore that, like Acelina, and Zel, but some of us know better."

"Oh. I mean, Jes told me some stuff about her life in the hatching pit, and Dao's Dao. And you, I... I mean, Mia and I have talked about psychology and social dynamics and stuff, and--"

She kissed him again, and this time didn't let him pull away. She set a pair of claws behind his head and neck, and held him close, lips locked. Caera had a very short, cat-ish snout, and it made kissing her a unique experience. Not that he was some sort of expert on kissing.

"You really are delicious, you know that?" she said.

"Delicious?" Uh oh.

She laughed. "Demons fight. We kill each other over nothing. Even just an argument is enough. And you've figured that out by now, I'm sure."

"Y-Yeah."

"But you, you damn little nerd, just couldn't let me stay out here and stew, could you? Which I was doing because I knew if I stuck around in that alcove, I'd get angrier and angrier, until a fight broke out. And that could get violent."

Gulp.w@w.@oVefWorm.Com

"That violent?"

"Yes, that violent. It's one reason Zel had that dueling law in place, to minimize needless deaths so she could bulk her army. And then the weak demons, usually culled by getting into fights with other demons, would get killed by Alessio and her demons from the Black Valley in another inevitable war." Caera licked her fangs and ran her claws along his scalp and through his shaggy red hair. "Traitors avoid demons who even so much as raise their voice. But not you, you persistent little nerd."

"Hey I--"

She kissed him again and hugged him tight. Maybe a little too tight, as air suddenly became an issue. After a few awesome, uncomfortable seconds, she relaxed, and he sucked in a breath.

"You know," he said, "on the surface, girls don't normally--"

She rolled and lay on her side, bringing him with her, and she set her teeth on his neck. Full on big bite, on his neck, like she was going to bite down and rip out his jugular. A gazelle, under a lion's mouth. He froze, but she didn't clamp down, content with nuzzling her fangs and other teeth against his soft skin for a bit before letting go, and replacing teeth with her long tongue instead.

"Demons aren't surface girls," she said, and she half squashed him with her body as she snuggled into his side. "The way you keep just... exposing yourself to me, while being all... nice, and honest, makes me want to..." A deep rumble worked through her, a purr, and she licked his throat some more. "If you had a number, I'd make you a traitor."

"Umm..."

"But you don't. Maybe that's why I like you so much. You're just so... I don't know. Something about you, the way you squirm, the way you talk so openly, it makes me want to eat you."

"Umm!"

"But in a good way. Not even in a sexual way. I just want to... I don't know. Keep you. I understand why Daoka likes you so much." She licked his cheek. "Even Kia and Marquez would have known to back off. They wouldn't have wanted a fight, because they'd have known how bad it could get, when a demon gets... bloodthirsty." It almost sounded like a dirty, tainted word, the way she said it. "Not you. You just walk right into the path of danger. You did it for your sister. You're doing it for me now."

"Well, uh, I mean, right now, I'm trapped and can't--ack!"

She bit his throat again, gentle enough to not hurt him, but it was a strange sensation, having his entire throat in her mouth, warm and wet and with a roaming tongue. Very vulnerable. Caera liked him vulnerable, apparently.

She let him go, licked him some more, kissed him some more, and sat up as she licked her chops. Slowly, she put a hand on his, and gently pinned it to the ground as she tested the size difference. So much bigger than his, and her huge claws highlighted her hand's feminine features.

He wrapped his fingers around one of hers, and she chuckled.

"I'm going to stay out here for a while," she said, "calm down, and watch and make sure remnants don't start pouring down the tunnel."

"You... want me to stay?"

Her smile softened. "Yeah."

He did his best soft smile, too. But even he knew he wasn't good at soft expressions, and it made Caera laughed.

"Done," he said, and he sat up with her.

She didn't have to ask. He got around behind her, sat against the wall nice and close, and pulled her giant tail onto his lap. Most demons had thinner tails, but Caera's tail was as thick as one of her thick legs. He got to work, dug his thumbs into the hard flesh and muscle, and massaged. Cleaned, too, wherever he found any small rocks, especially the ones in the scratch and bite marks.

"One of the remnants got me pretty bad," she said, "with a sharp rock. They used it like a knife."

"I can see that." A nasty gash decorated her tail close to her back, and he carefully plucked some dirt from the wound. Despite his fingers grazing the wound, Caera didn't flinch, and only occasionally made a hiss. "I'm surprised they know how to use rocks as a weapon. They're zombies... right?"

"Sort of. They're shells of their former selves, but there's still something left of the person they were. It wouldn't make for a good punishment if they couldn't realize they were being punished, right?"

He shivered. "I mean, I guess. I'd prefer to think this is just an ecosystem, without its own personal intent. But, I suppose that isn't how Hell works, is it?"

"No. Hell exists to punish the wicked."

"Biblical."

She grinned over her shoulder at him and gently pressed her big tail into his chest.

"I'll protect you."