

1378

The gold glow turned red.

The shift in color snapped her attention, demanded she notice the change. It felt different, less warm, and more... visceral?

She let go of the weight. The glow vanished, and Mia collapsed to her ass again, sweat dripping down her skin.

"Almost," Mia said. "Almost."

"Indeed. It takes less essence to maintain a rune, once equipped, but equipping it takes the most effort." Yosepha squatted down in front of her and patted her with a wing. "For a moment, I thought I would see you emerge, dressed as an angel. But--"

"Yeah, the color shifted. The feel of it shifted. It... It's different from yours."

"I suppose that was inevitable. We know your potram creates a different result than an angel's. Why wouldn't batlam?" Sighing, Yosepha turned and headed for the exit. "I can delay no longer."

"But--"

"If you continue to practice, you will eventually learn to use the rune. Each time you try, it will require less energy, and you will be able to summon it more readily to the mind. But you must be careful. We do not know what will happen, and whatever you do, you will garner attention. Stealth is your ally."

"Stealth, right. Sneaking across the hellscape with a giant bodyguard, I'm not sure stealth will be an option all the time."

"True. But... please, be careful, if you would?"

Mia smiled. "I will, definitely. And thank you. Thank you so much. I've been terrified about this journey, and you're the first person I've met that... you know..."

The angel returned the smile, far warmer than the battle warrior probably did with others.

"You are welcome."

"B-But, before you go, can I ask a favor?"

"Perhaps. What do you desire?"

"Since these runes seem to require touch to transfer into my head, they've got to be the same with David. I know I put these runes in his head when we touched when he rescued me. Touching you helped me make potram and batlam 'click', so I can try and use them. I... don't know if that's the only way to make them click, but, if you, or some other angel could find David, and help him too? That'd be... that'd be really nice."www.no(v)ElW©(r)M.(c)o@

Yosepha's smile faded.

"Mia--"

"Please? He's my brother. He literally ran into the spire, on his own, in the middle of a battle, to try and get to me. If there's anyone that'll get to the Forgotten Place, it's him. He's stubborn, you know? Stubborn like you can't imagine. You can trust him to make it.Www.n©©eLworm.c@m

The angel looked away and down the path she faced, and silence fell on the two of them. Mia had just asked something big, bigger than she'd thought.

"I will... see. I make no promises."

"Thank you! Even if you can't, thank you for trying."

Yosepha smiled at her again, almost like she hadn't expected Mia to say that.

"You're welcome."

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~~Day 40~~

~~David~~

"Thank you."

David froze, and looked back and up at the huge demoness. The rest of the group were ahead of them, and instead of the semi-brisk pace they'd been using since the angel attack, they'd slowed down. People needed to heal from their wounds, and the demons now took the time to clear out the bloodgrip enough for Acelina to get by, hence why she stayed in the rear with David. They also took the time to kill any remnants they found; no zombie ambushes again, thank you very much.

"I uh, what?"

"I would have died in that death pit. You risked your life saving mine when I did not ask."

"Oh. That. I mean, I... you're welcome? I didn't really think of it like that, you know? We're in this together. I kinda just... went."

"Yes.. So I noticed." The enormous demon sighed, and even with her wings hooked on her shoulders like a cloak, they drooped. "Don't tell the others."

"Tell them what?"

"That I... said those words."

He raised a brow and looked back at the demons ahead of them. The only reason they probably didn't hear Acelina, was all their grunts of exertion from destroying bloodgrip, and the screams of dying remnants.

"Yeah, sure, no problem." Demons had to keep up appearances, after all. And as much as that thought made him smile, it wasn't exactly strange, even among humans. Maybe a little juvenile, like high schools students who couldn't admit fault lest they damage their reputation, but it wasn't so juvenile when doing so could get you killed.

She opened her mouth just barely wide enough to show him a tiny shark smile before hiding it again.

"You saved me too, ya know," he said.

"You were within arm's reach."

"Yes, but..."

"And you are light and weak"--ow--"and easy to lift."

"Yes, but..."

She hissed down at him and whipped his back with her tail. Double ow.

"Must you make this so difficult for me?"

He grinned back up at her. "Sorry."

She growled, but it didn't have any bite to it.

"You are an interesting creature, David."

"You sure? I'm a dime a dozen on the surface.Www.NOvE!war(m).(c)o)m

"Hardly. You are persistent to a fault, and open your mouth when any soul down here would know to shut it."

"I... Yeah, that's true. I'm a complainer. I really have a tough time shutting up."

She laughed. "How annoying."

Smiling, he looked back to the path ahead. He didn't need Mia to tell him Acelina was more comfortable being mean than sincere, and honestly, it was kinda fun. There were more similarities between her and Jes than they realized.

And it'd hadn't been very long since the nine-foot-tall demoness with breasts nearly as big as his torso, had made him cum, several times. Her body coated in his cum, filled with it, and--

Acelina flicked him on the back of the head. Unlike a finger, claws hit hard.

"I can feel your aura. Stop that."

"Sorry. Sorry."