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"The tunnels beneath this particular mountain are probably deeper and more problematic than most. Not really worth clearing out unless we were setting up a permanent base here. And part of the reason the Damall have existed for so long is that we don't do that. Keep moving, keep living." He shrugged and stepped around Mia. "We've got bigger things to worry about."

"But..." But a quiet little sensation in her told her to check it out. The fingers inside her, forever quietly plucking the strings that moved through her as she moved, continued to play their song, so quiet only she could hear them at the moment. But there was something else, too, something else pulling at her attention.

Mia stayed where she was, did her best to ignore the hundred or so dead hellbeasts that littered the ground, and stared past them toward the cavern exit, where the beasts had come from. It was like a compass in the corner of her eye pointing toward the tunnel, a teeny tiny thing that was easily ignorable, but it was there. Why ignore it?

"Can I... go down there?" she asked.

Romakus traded looks with the other tetrads as he turned around to face her again.

"I've explored a lot of those tunnels," Yulia said. "Me and my friend." With a smooth motion, the brute knelt down, and Yulia climbed up his arm to perch on his back and shoulder. "You're not gonna escape the Damall in those tunnels."

"I'm not looking to escape! I still wanna talk to Yosepha again, or Galon. I still... might need the Damall's help, and..." Mia grumbled, stepped around some corpses toward where the hellbeasts had come from, and thanked God again the angel rune gave her sandals. "I just wanna go check out the nests. Can I do that?"

Romakus raised a brow, and looked between his two tetrads. Julisa and Livian were just as confused.

"I'll stick with her," Faust said.

"Yeah, sure, we all will," Gallius said, and he gestured to the other two incubi.

Romakus gestured to Julisa. "Go with them?"

"Oh yes, I think I will." The four-armed mini-Vin stepped up to the big guy, and grinned up at him as she settled in beside him. "Hold hands?"

Vin rumbled down at her, and followed Mia.

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"Romakus is... hard to predict," Mia said. "I'm kind of surprised he's letting me come down here." She walked with Faust on her left, Gallius on her right, and the other two incubi behind her, Locutus and Oudoceus. Vin and Julisa walked in front, ready to kill anything that attacked. Nothing did.

"Romakus is?" Faust asked. "You're the one going on a random trip into the tunnels. The chance we find a soul or demon to eat down here is borderline none."

"Well, I mean, I am human. Probably. I could eat a hellbeast heart, right? For the essence?"

"There was a whole cavern of dead hellbeasts you could have eaten."

"Ah, yeah." She winced as she looked down. "I just... wanted to explore a bit."

"It's probably safe," Gallius said. "That's why he let you come down here. Hellbeasts throw themselves into swarms like that pretty hard. Their numbers are low now. And now that morning twilight's past, any remaining beasts are probably in passive mode."

"Does anyone actually know," Mia said, gesturing ahead to the dark tunnel before them, "why hellbeasts usually hunt at twilight hours?"wWw.N@véLwó(r)m.cóm

"We do not," Julisa said. "Did you not ask the angel? You two were sharing secrets."

Mia glared up at the huge demoness and did her best angry face. All that got from Julisa was a hearty chuckle.

"Yosepha helped me with this rune thing, but she wasn't exactly dumping secrets on me."www.noVéLWó(r)m.cóm

"Can you use their armor and weapons yet?" Gallius asked.

"I--hey, I'm not telling you shit!"

The incubus grinned. "Can't blame a demon for trying."

"Yes I can." She flicked his shoulder, hard as her little finger could. She'd never have done that with a normal demon, way too dangerous, but incubi were human enough her guard was coming down. Probably not a good thing, but it happened anyway.

His tail swayed faster, and both he and Faust licked their smiled.

"The Damall have orders to keep you alive," Faust said. "And honestly, we've been meaning to check out these tunnels more, anyway. Yulia's exploring wasn't exactly thorough."

"You think something could be down here?" Mia asked.

"Probably just beast nests, but you never know. Sometimes you find artifacts from the First War, if you go deep enough."

Mia perked up. "Really?"

"Yes. Everyone knows Lucifer and the Old Ones waged war against Heaven, millions of years ago. Not everyone knows the Old Ones were up to their own stuff in their respective provinces."

"You've been to the other provinces?"www.nóVéLwó(r)m.cóm

Faust shook his head. "Just across the Grave Valley from the Scar."

"From? You came from the Scar?"

"Gallius and me." He gestured to his fellow incubus. "We were born there."

"Oh, tell me! Tell me about stuff!"

The incubi laughed and recanted a tale as they walked. The tunnel was a single path for now, spiraling downward, and following it was easy enough. While they walked, Gallius and Faustinus told Mia about the Scar and the Grave Valley. The Scar was as Vin said it was, a giant canyon where succubi and incubi had more power than other provinces. Sex was even more common, naturally, and direct brutality less so. Apparently they even had fashion, and devoted a lot of time to harvesting fallo silk and beram skin; beram apparently being some kind of hellbeast bird. The Scar used scrying pools for music. And instead of using strength to settle arguments, demons lied, cheated, stole, and manipulated each other.

The Scar sounded a lot like Earth.

They had little to say about the Grave Valley. It was full of graves, and it was dangerous. The ruler of the valley, Azailia, was apparently close friends with Zel. Was. If she found out about what Mia did, and that David was involved, it'd make his journey through the province a million times worse.

The gang came to a fork in the tunnel. Everyone paused and listened, and while they could hear the screams of remnants, that was all. No roars, no clicks, no neighs, no skittering or hoof stomping.

Shrugging, Julisa took a step toward one of the tunnels.

"Um." Mia hopped ahead a bit and pointed down the other tunnel. "Can we go this way?"

"Why?" the tetrad asked.

"I... um... feel something?"

Everyone raised a brow, except Vin. He was probably used to her weird quirks by now.

"I say we go where the unmarked suggests," Faust said.

Julisa made the tiniest snarl. She didn't like being challenged.

"Why?"