

1400

"In self defense!" He forced himself to his feet and stumbled back away from the angel. "I don't want to hurt anyone! Why are you attacking us? Me!?"*Ww.nðvefW0rM.Cóm*

She paused, as if the very act of talking to him defied her reality, as if unmarked were obviously not capable of a conversation, and yet here he was trying to have one. But he'd killed her friends. Rage replaced her surprise.

"The unmarked must die. The council has decreed it!"*Ww.0vélW0R(m).cm*

"Why!?"

The angel slammed her sword down against the ground, its tip sank a couple inches into the bloodied rock, and she rested on it as she aimed her ruby eyes as if she could incinerate him with a glare. She pushed out her damaged wing and fought to straighten it. Considering all the enormous, broken rocks that surrounded her and the dozen large dents in her armor, several boulders had hit her, big enough to kill a demon. That armor was strong.

She didn't answer.

"I don't want to hurt anyone," David said. "I'm... just trying to help."

"Help? An abomination would--"

"I am not an abomination! And that other unmarked with all these Cainites under his thumb? I killed him! Not Shaul!" He swung his arm around and pointed it at her. She flinched, expecting a spike up the gut, but whatever weird thing that'd let him control the environment was gone. Not that it mattered. He hadn't tried to summon another spike, anyway.

Daoka clicked a few more times, earning some growls from Jes.

"Don't listen to Dao," Jes said. "Kill the bitch."

Dao shook her head and gestured to the two dead angels. Bits of the woman rapholem Tzipporah were everywhere, ripped to shreds, some pieces of her insides still on the broken barbs of the first spike David had summoned. Her armor, giant shield, and long spear were gone, poofed out of existence. The male mikalim Shaul still sat on the other spike, dead, crotch and lower abdomen split open, legs dangling and cooking in the lava that continued to leak out of his sizzling guts. His upper half wasn't much better, with chunks of flesh melting off as more lava trickled up into his insides.

He looked worse off than a remnant.

David looked back at Dao, and she continued to look at him with her eyeless gaze, mouth trembling, blood flowing down her stomach and legs. The sword had gone through her. She was going to die if they didn't do something now.

"Just... get out of here," he said.*w(w)w.nOveLw0Rm.C0M*

"What?" Jes, Acelina, Caera, and the angel said.

David gestured up at one of the high tunnel exits. "I don't want Heaven as an enemy! And I don't want to hurt anyone I don't have to! I'm just trying to... to help." Fuck. How to explain this without telling the angel what his plans were? "I don't know about the other unmarked, but I'm not like that Greg guy, okay? I just want to help. So, please, just go."

"David!" Caera prowled over to them, limping with every step. "She tried to kill us. Tried to kill you! She took my eye!"

David winced. "Can you... regrow an eye?"

"Only if the wound was minor." She aimed her ruined eye at him. It was not minor. Moriah had cut the tregeera across the face, a line that ran from the top of her forehead, down her eye, and down her cheek. He could almost see the bone past the blood. It'd make for a big scar, and a lifetime problem.

Daoka clicked louder, and gestured to the David and Caera, but her arm fell, some blood leaked from between her lips, and her head lulled to the side. Still alive, breathing, but fading fast.

"Can you help Daoka?" he asked the angel.

Moriah snarled up at him and again tried to flap her damaged wing.

"I am no gabriem. It is not in my power."

So gabriem had the power to heal. Good to know.

"Then get out of here before I change my mind." Before she realized he couldn't do what he'd been doing five minutes ago. How he did that was a mystery that could wait until Daoka wasn't fucking bleeding to death.

"You cannot be serious!?" Acelina yelled, but she stayed with Jes, patching Daoka up as best they could. But the leather bandages did little.

"I am serious!" He gestured back at the angel. "Get out of here!"

The angel stared at him, and then at the tiger she'd permanently maimed. Caera was two seconds away from jumping the angel and ripping her throat out, but she looked up at David with her one eye, growled, and slowly took a step back.

He'd beg for her forgiveness later, but Daoka was right. He had to let her go. If all that happened here was three dead angels, that'd lead to more angels hunting them down, a lot more. Maybe they thought all the unmarked were horrible, like this Greg person? Maybe if they realized not all of them were, they'd stop trying to kill him?

Or she'd just report his location to her superiors immediately, and come back with an army. Hopefully, David and the girls would be out of here by then. All eight of them.

All eight.

"I'm not leaving without the bodies of my friends. I will not let you devour their hearts!"

David glared at the angel as he gestured to the bodies. The only thing left of the rapholem were chunks of gore, and her shredded torso. Even her heart was mincemeat. The other angel was a roasting marshmallow on a stick someone had stuck too close to the fire.*W0(w).h00é1@ðrm.cðM*

"They have no hearts left to devour," Caera said, and she clawed at the ground with a set of claws. "Get out of here before I kill you, anyway."

The angel looked at the bodies of her dead comrades. From this close, David could see through her helmet's t-slit opening, and tears trickled down her dark skin. She set her ruby eyes back on him, a host of emotions screaming so loudly across her face it almost bowled him over. Hate, rage, mourning, disbelief, it all punched him in the gut, and he looked down as he stepped away.