

“Hey guys,” I grinned as I came out of seclusion, taking notice of how much closer the various ceilings were. I’d been down in the basement for hours, just being at peace, and growing even more accustomed to the rage. That earlier outburst where I attacked... a wall... *and lost*, was quite embarrassing honestly! But all it meant was that I needed a bit more practice before I used my new magic actively. I’d already proven that I could live and thrive no matter how dangerous my instincts may be.

“Ooh! You’ve gotten bigger!” Elfracim exclaimed, running circles around me. “You look awesome!”

“Thanks! I haven’t seen my new self yet actually, but I’m sure that’s true!”

“Haell,” Moonwash approached me next, “I want to know everything.” She paused. “We’ll talk about it later.”

“Sure! I have *soo* much I want to talk. I don’t know where to fucking start!”

The rest of them also congratulated me, Granuel asked where my wings were, and my parents had new clothes ready for my new fit.

“Sorry again about earlier...” I told them as I accepted the change of clothes. “I was... I activated my magic, which made me mad, and then the pain that I felt made me mad, so then I activated the wrath mana again and... you get the picture. It just fed into each other over and over.”

It truly took me for a loop. Menace magic did not behave like this. I never experienced such a massive and undesired flare-up of it just for wanting to activate it.

“It’s okay. You already explained it well enough. We’re quite fine, Haell.”

“Just make sure to be safe. I know you’d still use it so... train properly.”

“Yeah,” I nodded strongly. “I will.”

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I hurried back to my room after greeting my folks and showing them I was perfectly fine. Alone once more, I took in my bed, the desk beside it, and all the other furniture nearby. They had inexplicably shrunk, and so did the room itself. Who made all my things smaller, and *why*??

I chuckled. I knew that wasn’t what was going on. I crossed the distance to the mirror with newfound ease and beheld my new form.

It was... not really that different than before. But that was only to be expected. *Of course* I didn't change to the same extent as going from a human to an imp. But what did change today, were definitely things to celebrate and be proud of.

My features were stronger now, more regal, scarier in that beautiful way. My body had become significantly bigger, but only a bit wider in proportion. I stood at a respectable 2 meters in height.

I saw in my goat-like eyes as I stared at myself, an abyss like no other. It looked different than before, almost perpetually angry, but not quite. It was an emotion that I couldn't quite place. If I were my enemy, I would have pissed my skirt right then and there.

And then of course there were my wings. I felt them break through my back like a bird hatching from its eggs, sweeping away my torn clothing and unfolding fully into a sight that obscured all others. My wings were large, they spanned further beyond my arms, and they only made me look all the bigger. Like I was larger than life itself, my visage demanded attention, and woe be anyone who chose to ignore it.

Not for the first time, I felt envious of everyone else who got to see me from an outside perspective. How beautiful of a sight must it be to see a demon descend from on high like a furious avenger? That was a great idea, I should do that later.

*Right... I should stop sucking so hard on my own supply.*

For a good short while, I just stood there, mesmerized. I basked in the glory of my own appearance, I felt the euphoria of my new existence. I wasn't anywhere close to done yet, not after the Demon Harbinger soul feat that I got, but this was what I'd been fighting for. This was the dream that I'd held, this was the existence that I craved, and now a lifetime later, it had finally been fulfilled.

I must not forget this accomplishment, I must remember to be proud. Whatever challenges may await, I had the weight of a dream fulfilled behind me. It was a tailwind that would stay with me til the very top.

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"...and then I was like, connected to this larger thing, and it wanted to stay that way. If I stalled too long then it would've happened, and I would now be gone. Forever."

I was sitting with all The Harvesters and Elfracim as I explained what I saw during my evolution.

"Well don't do that!" Angerly exclaimed. "Don't be gone!"

"Of course she won't," Granuel crossed his arms. "She promised to go on our caravan."

“Yes, that’s right,” I laughed. “If it weren’t for the caravan then I might have just decided to become god. Who knows?”

“Don’t you hate god?” Therick mumbled, then switched topics. “But at this point, I do just assume you can handle it. So great job.”

“Wow, really? Weren’t you the one most against it?”

“Well, someone here has to be the voice of reason.”

“And that’s Granuel. He had a good point about the caravan. How would I go with you if I were existence itself?”

“Wouldn’t you always be with us if that were the case?”

“Oooh! Good point. You’re the voice of reason after all.”

After making some more small-talk about how I nearly died *again*, Moonwash summed up her own conclusions.

“What I got from this is that everything is magic, but we’re usually separate from the wider world of it, however that boundary can be broken under specific circumstances.”

“Exactly!” I told her. “That thing I was connecting to, melting into, it had to be magic. Especially since I got this weird species evolution option that was just [Magic.] There was no description or anything like the other two! Just magic! I think it means that I’d be subsumed into the greater existence that is ‘*Magic*’ as that boundary permanently disappears. But I can’t be sure because I was never given an actual description!”

“Magic is weird!” Elfracim affirmed. “I’ve never heard of these boundaries being completely broken thing, but rituals are definitely the fabric of magic or existence itself *looking* at you. That’s what elven knowledge is on the matter, at least. Magic surges and the mana in your environment *reacts* during a ritual. I’m not sure how it’s helping, it’s not typically serving as the fuel, rituals are full of mana already, but the ambient magic definitely... hugs the ritual.”

“*Daww*. I like hugs,” I joked.

“Maybe that’s why you’re able to do mini-rituals,” Moonwash said, “You hug the magic.”

“That’s true,” I hedged. I couldn’t really tell if she was joking here, but her words definitely rang true. “Even Elfracim hasn’t ever heard of becoming part of the fabric of the universe, like what I almost did. Although that’s weird. We don’t have any other firsthand accounts of changing species, but Mutations *are* enhanced with outside materials regularly! Or well, it’s very very rare, but it happens.”

"I've studied the topic, and the descriptions that I got, including from Salaire and Biggie, mainly describe it as a pain that tears apart the affected Mutations as it is rebuilt," Moonwash explained.

"I've never had a Mutation changed myself," Elfracim corroborated, "but that's about consistent with the accounts my people have kept."

"Hmm...." I hummed thoughtfully, grabbing my chin in a thinking pose and all. "That's not what my species has experienced."

"You're the only demon!" Half the room retorted and I laughed along with them.

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"Time to fly!" I shouted to the Piss Hunters and Harvesters, *and* Elfracim and Astan in this faraway clearing today. No one else was around, so I was free to test out my new Mutation. I could tell that it was fully charged, and so I allowed them to unfurl from my back, through the hole in my shirt, and then beyond. I made for an imposing sight with my wings spread out to their full size like that. I could just charge at them right now while they were intimidated and rip them apart!

But I would not do that. Today was a happy day.

My wings flapped once. A strong gust blew through the grass and nothing else. I worked my wings some more, barely able to rise, but there was a sort of feeling there. Something just on the tip of my membranes...

I pulled, and pulled, and pulled on that feeling until suddenly a palpable sense of power thrummed through the air and I lifted up. A gust of wind followed in my wake, and it made the hair of my companions flutter.

I giggled, like an innocent child who had found their first innocent joy. I continued to laugh as I rose higher and the ground sank further away from me. It felt so freeing to be unrestrained by the hold of gravity. I fell in love in a way that did not expect. I thought I'd like flying, I thought I'd very much enjoy it, but I didn't think it'd be a borderline spiritual experience!

"Wow."

"Our baby's flying!"

"Go Haell!"

"Don't go too far!"

"You're amazing."

I waved back at my adoring fans as I rose even higher. My wings strained harder as I reached for heights ever greater. Every meter that I climbed felt like a monumental achievement, and I actually started crying out of pure joy. It was like all my lives, I'd been chained, and only now had I finally broken free!

"YES!" I cackled without shame as I rose above the canopy. I was fully exposed as a demon right now, but we'd traveled pretty far where no one should be just for this. And even if someone saw me, they wouldn't really know what they saw. Anyone too close would be shot down or *discouraged* by Elfratim. So I let go of those worries for now as I focused on the beauty of the moment.

"I'M FLYING!" I shouted the obvious. My wrath demanded that I bombard the people below, but they were just having fun. They were cheering and waving as I hovered there in the air, and I didn't hesitate to put on a good show. I twirled and twisted around in midair, dipping and rising in a primitive sort of dance. It was like walking for the first time, only much harder. I tried to orient myself, I tried to control my flight, but I overshot every time. I wasn't discouraged, however; on the contrary, I only felt excitement at the prospect of learning!

"Wow..." I took a moment to slow down once I was satisfied, to just explore and take in my surroundings. The horizon was vast, and somehow it felt so much more grand than before. The impenetrable barrier range to the east was ever imposing, but now they also lit a fire in me as I imagined what it would be like to scale those unconquerable heights. The sky itself seemed to wrap around my demonic form in a tight embrace, giving me a feeling of acceptance, joy, and freedom.

The floodgates opened, and I cried once more as I allowed this one eternal moment to sink in. My lips quivered as I finally felt the full weight of all that I'd accomplished, the power that I'd seized, and the metaphorical chains that I'd shed aside. It hit me all at once, and the world had never looked so bright and hopeful.

Here and now, I felt like I could truly go anywhere, and achieve whatever my hearts desired.

Even if one of those wished to end the universe.

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I sniffed and took a deep breath, without caring to even wipe the tears and snot off my face. "I'm gonna try flying around!" I announced.

"That's what you've been doing!" Therick shouted back. The flash of anger that followed at the jab flowed through me like water against a... waterproof thing.

"Yeah! But I'm gonna do it better!" My new body did come with new instincts other than just *RAGE*. I angled my body just right, and then I flapped my wings hard, bringing me roughly westwardst in a very unsteady flight. I maintained my course, but I was steadily losing ground. I got so focused on regaining altitude that I noticed all too late that I was about to crash into a tree!

"Gah-!" I exclaimed, just before the collision happened. Wood dug into my face, the force rattled me to my bones, and the tree shook and leaves fell against the weight that I carried. I groaned in pain, I balled my fist in fury, I was under attack and I wanted to rip apart whoever had dared!!

No... wait. No...?

The change was so abrupt that it gave me whiplash. I took a step back from my feelings, and my temper whimpered as if splashed with cold water.

...Yeah. That's going to be a continuing problem.

My wrathful instincts existed as a sort of feeling that was always directed at literally everything, *including myself*, all at once, at every moment in time. I could coexist with it well enough normally, but it could definitely get worse really fast if given a reason to, no matter how stupid. Especially if I were blindsided and surprised.

I groaned at how troublesome it would be as I glided back down to the ground. Already, I could hear their laughter from below, and I felt like snapping at them and saying horrible things, but that would just be stupid. I'd totally laugh at them too if they were defeated by a tree.

"Hae!! How many fingers am I holding up!?" Angerly held up her palms as she ran towards me. Everyone else was following behind her.

I rolled my eyes. "All of them. I'm *fine*."

I allowed them to fuss over me as they pleased, but no one was truly worried over such a minor thing as crashing into a tree. Instead, they were mostly excited over my new ability to

fly, but not nearly as excited as I was. It was a wonderful experience, and I would get to have it many more times from here on out!

“Maybe you’re having this much difficulty figuring out how to fly because of your weight,” Moonwash said, once things had settled down. She had theorized before that the reason my wings needed to be charged was because of how heavy I was, and my lack of Hollow Mutations. Hollow Mutations such as Hollow Flesh or Hollow Bones didn’t actually make parts of the body truly hollow, but they inserted packets of materials that typically provided a little bit of constant *lift* to their bodies, effectively making them lighter. These materials were usually a lot less dense, and a lot less tough, than the surrounding flesh or bone, hence why they were called Hollow. Presumably. No one knew how Mutations were named anyway. They certainly weren’t *actually* hollow.

“Are you calling me fat?” I smirked at Moonwash’s earlier remark

“No. I’m not,” she answered easily. I had trouble reading if she even registered the joke or not.

“I don’t think it’s because of my weight,” I decided to finally give a serious answer to Moonwash’s query. “I mean, it certainly doesn’t help. But flying is so different—and amazing! It’s so much more complex than walking, so I’ll need a lot of practice to be able to make even simple maneuvers. But I’m sure I’ll get the hang of it soon, and even fumbling around like this is so much fun!”

“I see. That makes sense. I believe in you, Haell.”

“Thanks. I believe in me too!”

I was about to run off and get back to flying when Moonwash made a sudden request.

“You mentioned that it’s a wonderful feeling. Can you carry me up there so I can feel it too?”

“Huh?” I answered intelligently. “Well. Um. Sure...?”

“Thank you.” She hugged my waist, and I felt the blood rush to my face, but I wasn’t some clueless teen. I hugged Moonwash back, I embraced her tight, and then I took flight to the thundering beats of my two hearts.

A smile blossomed upon my face as a cool breeze rustled my hair and ran through my demonic body, and the grin only grew wider as I felt the warmth of my special friend. She was silent through the journey, and so was I, but her presence alone gave the freedom that

I'd already come to love so much more depth. I loved her, and the sheer and painful intensity of that feeling easily overshadowed the wrath.

"It's beautiful," my good friend commented. She hardly had a good view pressed into her chest like that, so I finagled her into a princess carry. The action was awkward, and my flight jerked and twisted as I tried, but that only brought forth a burst of giggles from my mouth.

"You're right. It's even more beautiful now," Moonwash said as she stared into the horizon, and then at my face. I got lost in those dark brown eyes, and what I found at the end of that long journey were my lips pressed against hers.

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Stop! Hael! Stop! I'll have to rewrite and redo so many scenes if you kiss—

Nope. Too late. Fucking make more work for me why don't ya.

Grumble grumble.