

I have a vivid memory as a kid. I was walking with my father as he led me beneath our family library. I held his hand and forced myself to stay close. I was scared and I still remember why. My father led me down and showed me to this massive beast that was chained to the brick wall. The beast's wrists were covered in an engraved metal. It was several times larger than my dad and was only sitting against the wall, although inhuman, I could read its expression as irritated and impatient upon seeing my father, hardly registering me completely. I remember my father said something as he showed me off to the beast, presenting me forward.

I remember dying that day... My father did nothing to save me as the beast had closed its jaws around me. The rest of my childhood was a blur and I still can't properly explain what happened to me.

Flash forward to the present. My father is dead, I have a scar across my chest and belly button in the shape of an x that wraps around to my back, and lastly... Zaragoyle is still chained to the wall, and I can't do anything about it...

I work at the Library, as unsurprising as that is, but the weight of knowing that a demon rests just beneath these wooden floors is a bit distracting. I looked to the far right corner of the room and saw someone trip over, causing the person that they fell over to knock her coffee into herself. I rushed to get paper towels for her and help the guy up. I then saw someone else accidentally drop a book on their foot and give a surprised gasp in pain. Knowing who's to blame for this, I checked out the last of the people and quickly headed downstairs, not wanting to break away from my work hours too much. Just as I thought...

"Ah Alexander... Dear boy, have you come to graciously pay me a visit? I'm truly honored..." He said slowly, using one of his free paws to swat at the wind as he spoke.

"You're using your Bad Luck Curse again aren't you?" I said, crossing my arms as I faced him. There was a line of red paint on the concrete floors that showed where I was and wasn't meant to cross. He smirked, his fangs were huge and sharp.

Although the size makes sense, being that by his paw alone, it could wrap around my chest and I'm sure could crush me.

"... Well hello to you too. How's the shop by the way? I'm sorry I didn't ask sooner, it's just so hard for me to find time these days to just talk to you..." He says, his expression seeming sorrowful, yet it was clear as day that he was faking it.

"Stop it. Now! I have a job to do and you're distracting me." I tell him, practicing my authoritative voice against him in hopes that he understands that I'm serious. He smirks and shrugs, closing his eyes apathetically. I don't think my voice worked. Damn these psychology books for unruly children.

"Now why would I stop it if it means I get a free visit from my favorite human? If I'm to be honest... no, you can't handle that.." He says, holding his chin in consideration as he looks up at the ceiling and staring off into space, as if in thought. I didn't care to ask him why or what.

"Stop it, and I'll come back later today, you can threaten me all you want then." I suggest. His eyes glance back at me with a smile, before quickly fading and he thinks about it a bit more.

"What is it now? Hurry up." I demand, only to see his paw flip upwards and signal me to be quiet as he continues. It fell as he then began to speak, chains clanking about as his paws gestured about.

"Well I don't have much confidence in you, so why don't you leave your car keys down here as proof that you won't leave before you come back down?" He suggested. I sighed.

"If anyone else falls over, the deal is off, understand?" I try to keep the front up and seem strong. Zaragoyle smiles softly with closed lips and offers his oversized paw as an offer to shake my hand.

"I'm not that stupid.. Just stay well behaved until I get off work..." I say, admittedly, I fought the urge to offer my hand past the line just out of impulse of good manners. With that response of mine, He pulls his paw back and smiles even wider, showing his mass of blade like fangs as he chuckles quietly. Holding up my end of the deal, I tossed my car keys on the ground and jogged back up the wooden

stairs, only to see that the majority of the people had left and didn't bother putting their books back on the shelf. I dealt with the customers that were still there and cleaned up the books left out, counting the hours until I got off work.

With one flick of a sign, I was officially closed for the night, patting my pockets in search of my car keys, believing that I still had my car keys in my pocket. To my surprise, I found my car keys, but... I then get reminded of how haphazardly I tossed my apartment keys out instead of my car keys. The only reason I had agreed to his deal was because I knew that I could walk to my apartment and get my car keys back later! I groaned and reluctantly went down the stairs, dreading the thought of humoring this demon some more. I open the door behind my cashier desk and tread down, seeing him smile as he sees me. This time however, he was spinning my keys around his claw.

“Now... What took you so long? If I hadn't known any better, I'd assume you forgot...” He chuckled proudly. As I approached closer, he closed his paw around the keys and looked down at me with an annoying smile still.

“How did you get those if they were out of the ring?” I practically yelled at him while gesturing to the red line across the ground. I made sure to toss it out of his reach! He smiled and raised his tail to show next to him, slim and winding, contrasting to his large build. His body was layered with a thick coat of dark mahogany fur. There was a lighter side along his belly and lower chin that had apparently continued to the underside of the tail that I'd forgotten about. He also had dark eyes. Just glancing past them, you wouldn't be able to see the gray pupils that were hidden inside. He seemed like an animal similar to a canine with the shape of his muzzle and ears. Next to his ears were what are arguably still considered horns? There were small prongs of a bright goldish yellow color that poked upwards and created a small ring around the top of his head. They weren't structured like deer or moose antlers, so it's decently hard to put a fitting label on it.

“Now sit, we have much to talk about..” He smiled, using his free paw to gesture to the area that is just out of his reach. I did as he said, just wanting to play

along until he got bored. He then continued spinning the keys around his claw as he scanned me up and down with his eyes, not saying a word. I couldn't explain it and I ended up stiffening my body as I realized that he was looking at me so intently. He smirked again upon seeing my response.

"Alexander... that's a good name to have, wouldn't you agree?" He started, after the longest few seconds of my life. I nodded, unsure of where this was going.

"I guess so? Where are you going with this?" I asked impatiently. I crossed my arms again and glared at him in the eyes. He kept his cheeky smirk and didn't bother responding.

"What do you know about Goyles, Alexander?" He asked suddenly. I was caught off guard. I was even taken back a bit as he asked that.

"I... I don't know much about you guys if I'm honest..." I admitted. He nodded and repositioned himself to become more comfortable against the wall, though still thoroughly chained. I think I just signed up for a monologue...

"Well my species was led by the one and only Gargoyle. He led us to trample over some of you more arrogant humans... Each Goyle is born with a curse of their own. If one Goyle, certain *additions* are made, and the Goyle can grow in power. Naturally, Goyles are around the size of a human with small variations... Do you know how many Goyles I've eaten, Alexander?" He asked me, even leaning forward and showing me his fangs to emphasize his point. I tried my best to hide my fear, not knowing if he could sense it or not.

"H-how would I be able to answer that?" I scoffed sarcastically. He smiled again and raised his paws with 6 digits each pointed upwards.

"6 Goyles have fallen to me, giving me a rather generous boost to my body." He explained. I could hear my heartbeat and I knew that staying here is only going to put me in more danger.

"Get to the point, Zaragoyle." I demand. He softens his expression and leans back against the wall. As he relaxed some, I did as well.

"I'm getting there... If a Goyle manages to consume a human, their powers get a lot more dangerous... They also get a lot tastier in my opinion..." He says,

continuing in his slow tone of speech. I waited for a response and was only met with a chilling silence as Zaragoyle continued to stare through me. I could practically feel my confident facade as it dissolved. An extended silence filled the room.

“Now Alexander... You don’t trust me very well, now do you?” He says suddenly. I already wished that I just dealt with the customers falling over with his bad luck curse rather than sharing this space with him. MAYbe if I play along a little longer, I can get my keys back.

“You’re a demon chained to my wall after my father managed to catch you. I have no reason to treat you as anything other than vermin.” I scolded him angrily. He didn’t seem fazed in the slightest.

“I know better than to bite the hand that feeds me... So I hope that you can simply humor me. Please, Alexander... I don’t have much else to my name and it’s in both of our best interests if we learn to get along.” He pleaded, holding my keys delicately in his paw and glancing off to his side as he spoke. I began to tune him out and tried to leap and snatch my keys out of his paw, knowing that he doesn’t have a secure grip. As soon as I tried to grasp in the second that I reached unto his paw, it closed and pulled me against his chest and fully in his grasp. My head practically knocked into his chest as he raised my arm far above my head. It took a few short seconds for the fear to sink in as I looked up to see the sharp fangs only hairs away from my face.

“Awfully impatient, aren’t you? I figured that your father would have trained you much better than to act on the simple misguidance... Naughty boy...” He said, smirking and creeping his tongue across his lips as he looked down at me, fearful in his grasp. It was an understatement that I regretted my decision.

“L-let me go, Zaragoyle! Now!” I yell, struggling to keep any level of confidence in my voice. Zaragoyle laughed loudly and used his free paw to wrap around my lower back to ensure that I can’t leave as he let go of my hand, keeping my keys in his paw and keeping it above me.

“You truly don’t listen, do you...? It isn’t my intention to simply eat you. If I wanted to enslave you and escape these chains, I would. Now... this is going to be an

exercise in trust, dear Alexander...” Zaragoyle said slowly, opening his mouth and dropping my keys inside, bringing them down between his jaws. He then looked back down at me with the sight of his fangs piercing into my keys, only a fraction of the bulk and the blade sticking out. Frozen in this position, I then realized that he wanted me to grab my keys from his mouth. His fang filled smirk lowered closer to my apprehensive body as I saw his sharp fangs dig into the framework of my keys. Is he planning to break them? This isn't right.

“Th-this isn't funny! Drop my keys now! I'm leaving.” I said sternly, making sure to look him straight in the eyes. I tried to pull away from him in order to affirm my point, but he kept me in place. He shrugged, tossing his head up slightly and letting me watch as my keys slip a bit lower. I panic and try to quickly snatch it, only for him to raise his head slightly and let it just out of my reach. I felt as his paw seemed to hook around my waist as his fingers held me a bit tighter.

“If you kill me, you'll be trapped down here forever! No one even knows you're down here other than me!” I told him. He repeats the motion, only allowing a small sliver of metal left for me to grab onto as he faces me again. I took a deep sigh, reluctantly going along and raising my hand to slowly pinch the exposed metal and tug slightly, not wanting to break the metal. It seemed as if his jaws creaked open just enough for the keys to slip out. His tongue crept out as well, flicking against my wrist. As soon as the keys had exited completely, Zaragoyle lunged forward suddenly and snapped his jaws and just barely missed my face. I ended up falling into his lap and looking back at him as he smiled softly, his expression being snarky and overconfident as always.

“G-get off of me!” I shout angrily, getting up and quickly running to the opposite side of the room, watching his every move. It surprised me a bit to see that he leaned back against the wall.

“See? Now was that so hard to simply trust me? I told you that I wouldn't kill you, didn't I?” He asked, beginning to chuckle as he raised his paw to wipe saliva off his muzzle a bit.

“And to think that you still don’t trust me. I’m hurt, Alexander. Surely you have learned from this...” He sighed, faking another sorrowful expression as he talked.

“Yeah I’ll make sure never to go near you again.” I groan, lifting my keys and showing the dripping amount of saliva that he’d left on it. He immediately drops his mournful look and into abrupt laughter as he sees.

“I look forward to the next time we see each other, dear Alexander. Maybe you’ll even let me out of these chains and I’ll let you live a little longer?” Zaragoyle smiled, reminding me of his inherently evil nature as a demon to mock me like this for his own amusement. Or was what he was saying true? Is Goyle a species? Either way, I’m too tired to pay anymore attention to him.

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