

# Herox Prison.

“Welcome demon, to Herox prison.” The non-humans tower over her. The fierce leader of these insignis, their elite, has his hands planted deep into his pockets.

Weeping, Nitarva hides her fragile face in the folds of the straitjacket, which they made her wear. Blood cakes the left side of her face from where they struck her.

They laugh at her horrid realization; she will die here. Every choked bellow is the sweetest of music. Every vain sprawl to free herself, the most exquisite play.

She never harmed no man, retained herself for their mercy, but they are without such. A meaty vice is taken on her chin. His jaw works slowly, meticulously. “A red scaled female, true blooded Zein. It is at the oldest 14.” His eyes narrow before he adds: “Probably will not make it.”

Hauling her to her feet by her collar, he demands: “Stand straight.”

With immense nausea from his former assault, she fights as not to stagger and for her life.

Sustaining solely on shallow gasps of breath, she is hurtled into a multicolored herd of dragyns. If their eyes are not full of tears, they are terror.

Rows of pathways stretches in three levels; thousands of tiny cells sit on their sides. Walking on the elevation are those disgusting humans. They carry their rifles like themselves: with vigilance.

Pale light slips into this hell on Luxia as the gate creaks open. Walls of hundreds of feet surrounds. They are lined by even further reaching towers, Jaded and spiked.

Dearing a glance over her shoulder, she sees a nightmare materialized, a castle: Herox prison. All sharp angles, slanted roofs. It sits in layers, every window illuminated with a red gloom.

“Keep walking!” The whip lashes, pain shoots up her back in thin spikes. She stumbles but carries on into the rows facing her new home. “Kneel!” All, they drop.

From the wall they watch, the humans, ready to take lives without grief.

On his way to fasten the short chain to her collar, again the Elite takes her chin. He doesn't smile or emote, only watches for a second.

Thunder roars in the near distance. No wind reaches behind the walls, but the sky still darkens.

“Want to make a bet?” The female insignis with the silver ponytail asks. “Depends.” The Elite crosses his arms. “The red one. If it dies, lunge is on me.”

With no more than a suppressed chuckle, he shakes on it. Their heels strike echo all the way back to their post, under the slanted roof.

Nitarva gasps with a shocked welp, as the first droplet hits her nose.

Catching the eyes of the next dragyn, a white xian, she finds her own fear mirrored. Thunder cuts into her ears, downpour pounds all around her.

As drizzle quickly fades to torrential rain, clicking heels can be heard again. Walking under his umbrella he says: "We have capacity for 30... let's say 25 of you. That means that eight out of every nine of you will succumb. As you sit here waiting, think of the lives you've taken; the terror you've induced-"

"I never did nothing!" Cries out a voice, that of a child.

Like a cobra strike the elite draws and fires faster than a single neuroid can fire. Silence follows, only broken by his stroll back to his outpost.

Drenched to her very core already, her tears are lost. Glaring hopelessly into the heavens, she can still hear her mother's calm humming.

She did nothing to deserve this. She was born a scaly being not by choice. Fright taking hold entirely, she bites down on her chain. She rips and tears, struggles in vain against the straitjacket. If only they would end her before she can suffer, but no.

The buckle tethering her to her fate slides across her back, never further than a couple of inches from her fingertips.

She screams and thrashes, begs for mercy. The rain hurts now, every droplet a bullet against her cold-blooded dragyn body. Hurt and weak, barely able to keep her eyes open, she gives up. Ready to be freed from the pain, she looks to her left and finds the cold dead eyes of the white dragyn. Only one remains on her left: a large zein; no one on her right.

Her weak heart skips a beat, as she is dislodged from the chain. Her breath no longer billows. Every loose cobble drills into her side, as she is dragged into shelter of the elite umbrella.

“Guess that’s lunch.” The gruff voice of the Elite sounds from above. “Very well Judy, you always have had a keen eye.” She is lifted by the nip of her neck, paralyzed with fatigue.

He was shot between the eyes, perfectly symmetrical. Killed instantly for defacing by the truth. “Do you wish to live, dragyn?”

Choking on her collar, she gasps across frostbitten lips: “Please.”

“Spit.” He takes her chin, and she does. Spews her nonexistent dignity, which retrospectively hurts worse than any bullet.

“This one will serve well enough.” He peels back her upper lip; his fingers burn all but literal fire against her deeply frozen skin. “Let Zoca know that it is waiting on her, and that it is mine.” He speaks the name ice cold, which settles fear in Nitarva’s core by its mention alone.