

Kelsie watched, numb, as the iron bars screeched and groaned before slamming shut with a resounding gong of finality that she felt deep in her bones. She stood there for a moment, staring at the retreating back of the corrections officer before turning around to take in her new home. The rusted metal box, which was an abysmal excuse for a bed, only held one sheet and one blanket. No pillow. Her eyes scanned the square space, noting how the paint peeled from the walls and the burgundy-tinged dark spots on the floor where some unlucky sap met his end. The circular contraption in the corner of the cell only served to stoke the flames of her almost-forgotten anger.

"What a shit hole," she mumbled to herself.

"What's that? You don't like your new home, Newby?" Kelsie glances back at the gruff voice to find a guard dressed in the typical black and gray camouflage uniform, only this one had decided to remove his helmet. His face was round and intense, though that might be contributed to the glare he was sending her way. The guard had piercing gray eyes tapered by shoestring brows and an aquiline nose. Though, her gaze couldn't help zeroing in on the scar that split the right side of his lip, pulling his tawny skin so that he appeared to have a constant sneer.

"Are you deaf? Speak when you're spoken to, Slime!" Spit flew from his mouth as he barked at her. Kelsie followed the path as it landed on the floor.

Kelsie turns so that she's facing the guard fully. "I have no issues with my accommodations, sir." Kelsie knew his type, the kind who liked to lord their perceived authority over others that were so obviously stronger than them. It probably got him rock-hard.

His eyes narrowed. "You shouldn't. It wouldn't matter if you did because no one here would give a shit. All you slimes belong here because you're all fucked up people who do fucked up shit."

She wasn't. In fact, Kelsie was innocent. Though, if naivety was a crime then she'd have been number one on the list of most wanted. Of course, she said none of this to the guard. She'd had enough of people laughing in her face and not believing her. I guess I should give them congratulations since they succeeded in silencing me so well, she thought. But Kelsie was done talking. No, they wouldn't listen to her so she decided they would feel every drop of rage that she carried within her. Revenge; that's what she was saving all that rage for and she wouldn't waste it on some pissant of a guard.

Kelsie dipped her head slightly, showing deference. "Of course sir, we *all* belong here." She could practically feel his glare burning a hole in the top of her head but she didn't raise it to see. She didn't raise her head until he marched away, but not before hissing at her through his teeth.

With a deep exhale, she goes about spreading the sheet and blanket across the metal slab before laying on her back to stare at the concrete ceiling littered with cobwebs and god knows what else.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. Kelsie had plans—big plans—that involved graduating from the tactical academy and getting assigned to Renegade. Renegade was an elite strike team for the United Aeronexus Federation or UAF. The UAF was the space branch of the human government that specialized in intergalactic trade agreements and aero defense. The defense operations division was separated into strike teams who fight against and with different species of aliens, go on salvage missions, and get to travel the galaxies doing whatever they want and Renegade was the best of the best. Of course, it wasn't all peaches and cream. Kelsie knew and understood the risks that were involved in being a UAF agent but she still wanted to be one of them.

But that was all over now. Once anyone was sent to Finem Mundi, the colossal three-ring prison floating out in the deadlands of the universe, they were considered dead. The name literally meant 'End of the World' in the old tongue. A fitting name really. Only the most dangerous, unredeemable, and vile criminals were sent here. These were the people that society was okay with throwing away, leaving them to suffer whatever fate they deserved. Kelsie was one of those same people, callously dismissing these people as unworthy and not worth the time. Perhaps they weren't, but that didn't really matter now did it? She was here in the same space as them, she was one of them now.

"You shouldn't antagonize them," a tiny voice says.

Kelse sits up, looking around for the person speaking to her. Her cell remains empty.

"I'm over here." A knock comes through the wall behind her. Her shoulders tensed. How'd they know she was looking for them?

"What do you want?" She asks, careful to leave the bite out of her tone. Best not to make any enemies just yet.

"I just wanted to—" Just then, a bell rings loud enough that Kelsie could feel the vibrations through her planted feet. It is quickly followed by the clanking of release hatches.

The gate to her cell slid open and Kelsie watched, anxiety churning in her gut, as species from all over the universe slithered, crawled, and walked past her cell. She was really in hell now.