

## Oracle 572

### Chapter 572 - Moral Flexibility

Cobra was somewhat slow and fragile, but its bites were lightning-fast, and its poison highly venomous. His hood and scales could also hypnotize his victims, compensating for its poor speed. Keeping it close to him and his dragon was the best way to take advantage of its faculties.

Last but not least, Chimera was the main fighter of their squad, even more ferocious than Charizard and Vulture. Despite his potential, his dragon was still young and could not compete with this highly versatile hybrid predator. It hasn't shown much until now, but the beast was strong and fast despite its mass, and its eight spider-like legs ending in clawed pads allowed it to operate on any terrain, no matter how rough it was. Will had seen him snapping in half a big tree with his mandibles a few minutes earlier and this scene had made a strong impression on him.

Once they were each at their posts, it wasn't long before they encountered their first wandering goblin Digestors. Like the ones Jake and Ingranus had encountered, these ones seemed to be there only to hunt, but became hysterical and bloodthirsty as soon as they crossed them.

The first dozen or so were butchered by Chimera, while Vulture mauled a few more in a short aerial battle. As their Aether and Spirit Levels slowly rose, Will politely suggested to the two strong beasts that they spare some of the injured goblins for his own benefit.

Although he didn't like to get his hands dirty, a merchant like Will wasn't one to pass up an easy profit. Of course, a portion went to his Dragon, while the Cobra also received its share. Selfishness under the guise of altruism was his kingly plan to achieve greater strength without effort.

When they were about to take a break, Red Urchin detected a presence and Vulture immediately charged at it, ready to tear it to pieces with its talons and beak. Chimera also charged furiously, leaping from tree to tree like a jumping spider.

**BOOM!**

An oppressive spiritual aura exploded from the epicenter of the collision, mercilessly pushing the two creatures back. Losing control of its wings, Vulture let out a pained high-pitched cry before crashing down at a 45 degree angle, crushing a dozen trees. Chimera only backed up a few steps, but the beast was reeling dangerously as if drunk, its eyes cloudy and unfocused.

Even the Red Urchin that was passively levitating further away was affected by this Spiritual Burst. An intangible sphere automatically erected itself around its spiny body, completely neutralizing this invasive energy.

Will and Charizard rushed to assist their companions. He already feared the worst when he saw the power of this aura, and his heart sank when he recognized the newcomer.

It was an elegant Nawai man wearing a green velvet coat with a long collar, woolen pants and brown leather boots. His great coat opened in the front to reveal a muscular naked torso without a bit of fat. Coupled with such psychic energy, there was only one of Bhuzkoc's subordinates matching the description.

"Hello there." Fumdalf greeted them as he retracted his killing intent. He was accompanied by two other Fourth-Ordeal Nawai warriors wielding a long sword and a mace respectively.

The Nawai mage had also recognized this human. Because of the Myrtharian Body passive, all Myrtharian Nerds had common physical traits: golden-silver eyes and hair, long translucent canines and claws, a tall stature, a developed musculature, and an abnormally high body temperature.

These mutations were not as extreme as Jake's, but the longer they had been enjoying the Myrtharian Body passive, the more pronounced these physical traits were likely to be. Will hadn't really exploited the potential of this Faction Skill, but he was still one of the oldest members. Even without meaning to, it was hard not to change.

Instead of greeting him back, Will promptly equipped an assault rifle whose bullets had been reinforced with Grade 2 Penetration and Hardening Encoding. Each bullet processed cost 500,000 Aether points. It was lavish spending, even for him.

"Leave!" Will commanded like thunderclap, infusing his voice with Charisma Aether.

The two Nawai warriors at the mage's side nodded their heads and turned back with an indifferent air as if this decision came naturally from themselves. Yet, as they were about to merge into the forest, Fumdalf grabbed their shoulders, preventing them from moving any further. He whispered something in a guttural language and the two Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers turned green with anger, an emotion more bearable than shame.

"Nice trick." Fumdalf complimented with a faint smile. "But it's not enough."

The next moment, it was Will who changed his expression when Cobra, who until then had been content to pretend to be a scarf, abruptly constricted the dragon's throat before pressing his fangs closer to Charizard's neck, its jaw stretched wide open. Compared to him, Fumdalf had neither moved, nor uttered anything.

That said a lot about their level difference and the very nature of their powers. Next to Fumdalf, Will was just a bug that the Nawai mage could squash with a single thought.

"What do you want?" Will asked alertly, before shrugging and relaxing his guard.

If this guy wanted them dead, all he had to do was snap his fingers. With his two brainless companions obeying him at the drop of a hat, he didn't even have to move. Chimera and Vulture might be able to put on a fight, but only if they could resist the enemy's control.

On that subject, Will had no confidence in them. In the end, they were only beasts. Only Red Urchin was reliable, but it was definitely not a melee fighter. It would be trashed by all the players present in hand-to-hand combat, with the possible exception of Will himself.

Observing the many subtle variations in expression across the businessman's face, Fumdalf chuckled inwardly and affably proposed while spreading his arms.

"Hey, do you want to form a temporary alliance? As you should know by now, this is a dangerous place... Together, our chances of survival are much better."

Will considered his offer for a moment before countering with his opponent's exact wording,

"And why should I trust you? As you should know by now, my boss is here to kill your boss."

The Nawai warrior armed with the long glaive immediately shot him a murderous look. If Fumdalf gave the order, he would chop him down with his blade in a heartbeat. The other warrior armed with a large steel mace pursed his lips, but his reaction was much more tame compared to his colleague.

On the other hand, Fumdalf's smile stretched as he received this confirmation. I don't fucking care if this moron dies. I need a smarter leader.

That didn't mean that he considered Jake and his band of misfits as an option. What he meant by a smart, competent leader was an Evolver with a higher Ordeal count than he had and preferably with a stable mentality.

Nawai males were limited in this respect, so joining another tribe would not do him any good. Despite this, he was still a male and his aggressiveness and libido were well above normal. His sense of morality was also much more flexible.

His reply to Will showed the extent of this flexibility.

With no warning, Fumdalf somersaulted with an unreal side step, reappearing in front of his Fourth-Ordeal compatriot with the glaive, then a translucent blade radiating a faint grey light appeared in his left hand as he lashed out with it like a serpent. At the same time, a Soul Arrow was unleashed from his glabella, shooting straight into the forehead of his mate.

The Nawai warrior did live up to the prestige of his four Ordeals and raised his weapon in time to parry the eerie sword, but there was nothing he could do about the Soul Arrow, except to take it directly.

As it went through his skull, he groaned from the splitting-headache, his mind going blank for a second, but even if he could respond in time his efforts would not have been enough.

Instead of taking advantage of his former ally's daze to alter his stroke's trajectory, Fumdalf's spectral blade continued its course, passing through the Nawai warrior's solid glaive without the latter offering any resistance. It was as if the two weapons were not operating on the same plane of existence.

The translucent blade then stabbed straight through the Nawai's throat before following up with a horizontal sweep that was supposed to behead the enemy. No blood spurt, and no rolling head came to confirm the murder.

Instead, the Nawai warrior's neck remained unharmed while his body was still frozen in the same defensive stance. His face, meanwhile, which for a few milliseconds had been racked by a pounding headache, was now completely relaxed, his eyes eternally blank.

He was dead. At least, his soul was.

Will and Charizard gulped with difficulty as they understood the gruesomeness of this dastardly technique. ' So, this is a real Soul Spell.'

This was not the kind of spontaneous Soul attacks that Jake and the others were able to concoct on the fly. This Spell could slice a Soul! Had Svava been there, she would have been shell-shocked to learn that there existed spells capable of accomplishing, if not outshining, the prowess of her Bram Sword.

"What are you doing?! Are you betraying our Shibai tribe?" The other warrior yelled, huge veins congesting his face in outrage.

If Fumdalf didn't know that his ostensible anger was fake, he would surely be dead by now like his comrade. With a sneer, the mage Nawai spat hostilely,

"Peh, you know why I'm doing this, Isskhar. Bhuzkoc is no longer fit as our tribe leader. If we keep following him, he will drag the whole Shibai tribe down. Don't tell me you haven't figured that out yet? Our tribe has been stagnating since our Fourth Ordeal. It won't be too long before it starts to decline. Bhuzkoc is becoming scared of risking his life! I know it, and I'm sure you know it too, he won't take the Fifth Ordeal. Its excuse to slowly solidify and build up our forces is bullshit! For Benos' sake! We completed four Ordeals within a week and we've been doing nothing but bullying people and whoring about ever since! Don't you feel ashamed?! I'm so utterly humiliated that I can't even stand my own reflection in the mirror."

With a hopeful face, Fumdalf held out a hand and said softly,

"Will you fight with me, brother?"

The man named Iskarr wavered for a long time, his expression contorted because of his dilemma between betrayal, the promise of a glorious future, and remaining loyal to his decadent tribe doomed to extinction. Ultimately, he made his mind up and a firm, determined look replaced the confusion.

"I will."