

Oracle 585

Chapter 585 - A Devil!

Far from getting the cooperation he had hoped for, Shaktilar, who was still as tormented and deranged as ever, let out a gut-wrenching howl and ice stalactites suddenly sprang from his body, sealing the mage under a thick layer of ice covered with frozen spikes.

"Am I really that scary?" Jake muttered as he nervously scratched his chin in genuine puzzlement.

"Um, um." Crunch, Melkree and the Orange Turkey nodded with perfect synchronicity.

"Then, should I kill him for good?" Jake raised the question aloud to himself and the others.

As terrified and harmless as he was at the moment, he hadn't forgotten what kind of scum Shaktilar was. His reputation as a racist, cruel, sociopathic aristocrat preceded him, and he had not hesitated to enslave men, women, and children of any species other than his own to finance the development of his faction.

Shyрил may not have been a lecherous, stupid barbarian like Bhuzkoc, but in some ways he was far worse. At least the Nawai leader was partially driven by his impulses and traditions, while Shaktilar had the poise and brains to behave differently.

Jake thought at first that Shaktilar was just a speciesist and only acted that way with other people, but he had seen many Shyрils among the refugees, many of them serving in the Red District. Their lives were miserable and indecent with a surprisingly high death rate from infections and other transmittable diseases.

What these enslaved pachyderm aliens had in common was that they were poor commoners, often with physiques more puny and ungainly than those in Shaktilar's faction.

In Oraclean, his faction was called "Blue Blood", and that spoke volumes about his ambitions and convictions. Killing this kind of individual would not be a big loss for anyone.

"If you force him to sign a Slave Contract, you will, by extension, get back all the Slave Contracts in his possession." Melkree timidly suggested as she observed the huge pitted block of ice that Shaktilar had walled himself in.

"We can also kill him and it will amount to the same thing. Wasn't that what we intended to do with Bhuzkoc?" Crunch meowed mischievously as he pretended to slit his throat with one of his claws.

"To be honest, I've never tasted elephant meat. I don't mind telling you that I'm a little excited," the cat added, smacking his lips.

The turkey gobbled excitedly as he flapped his wings frantically to support his buddy's suggestion. Within hours, they were already thick as thieves as if they had known each other for years.

'Xi?' Jake probed his 'second conscience' opinion as a matter of principle before making his decision.

Honestly, he didn't give a damn about Shaktilar's fate. Whether he lived or died, Jake reasoned more in terms of benefit/disadvantage ratios. The truth was that he was more inclined to save him at the moment.

[Force him to sign the contract.] Xi supported his inner desire, as she often did. [To begin with, this will allow you to interrogate him without him disobeying. Given his position, he should know a lot of things you don't. Besides, even if he's in bad shape, he's still a Fourth-Ordeal Evolver. One more ally in this dungeon can't hurt.]

'We think alike. If you weren't in my head, I would have married you.' Jake smiled delightedly before realizing what he had just said. 'Forget what I said.'

Xi didn't speak again after that, but Jake was too embarrassed to apologize. Now that he had his Oracle AI's blessing, he complied immediately.

"Shaktilar, get the fuck out!" Jake growled ominously as he landed a crushing punch in the ice block, shattering a few stalactites in the process.

A casual punch from Jake could deliver a force of over 150 tons. The ice sphere in which Shaktilar had imprisoned himself was no match for him. Under the impact, it was smashed off, the ice block ricocheting five or six times against the walls of the cave before losing its inertia.

Shyrul's eyes bulged with terror as he anxiously stared at the rapidly spreading cracks in the ice, while he held on tightly to his Magic Wand to maintain the spell. It was a waste of time.

Once Jake warmed up, he went in with his hands and feet, savagely pounding the ice sphere like a punching bag. After seven or eight blows, the ice prison exploded and a nauseated and dazed Shaktilar toppled before his feet.

"Xi, I'm not sure this kind of ally is going to help us much in this dungeon..." Jake was more than a little wary as he stared at the alien's haggard, desperate face. For a faction leader, he was a sight to behold.

[All the more reason to question him!] She replied aggressively. [If he's that weak, getting him to sign the contract will be a piece of cake.]

At least she was still willing to talk to him, Jake consoled himself inwardly as he listened to her admonition. Their time was running out, so he grabbed Shaktilar by the collar and pressed his bracelet against his.

[Shaktilar Zakal, Shyril. (Mental state: traumatized. Soul whole but fragmented.)]

[Aether Storage: 712M points.]

"It should indeed be easy." Jake understood the alien's behavior better. He still had his Soul, but it had suffered heavy damage.

What was most shocking was how poor he was. He had finally realized that billionaires like him were not that common among low-rank Evolvers. Even with thousands of people under his command, his fortune was less than what Jake was passively earning with his Purgatory in a day.

Now that he was a little less ignorant about the topic, he knew that Rank 7 Digestors were a threat to Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers, while Rank 8 outperformed most Fifth-Ordeal Evolvers. A Rank 7 yielded about 750 Aether points, and 3500 for a Rank 8. Even selling blood and bodies, it was difficult to accumulate a considerable fortune in such a short time. To get that rich, the Aristocats had to be terribly efficient and that was only possible because of Mufasa and Shere Khan.

To make matters worse, Shaktilar had an entire faction to manage, and unlike Bhuzkoc, he was not selfish, and in fact was quite proligate. As long as his subordinates were Shyrils and part of the aristocracy they were entitled to the best treatment.

Jake regretted that the Oracle System didn't allow him to force defeated prisoners to sign a Slave Contract, but on the other hand it was a good thing if he was ever in the same position. Shaktilar had to be willing.

Good thing, they were not in the Oracle Shelter. Mind Control, Torture and other brainwashing methods were totally acceptable. Pretending to look at the time on his non-existent watch, Jake exhaled with little enthusiasm,

"No choice. Someone has to do it... "

AAARRRRRRRGGH!

A few Soul Arrows here, a few Spiritual Eye Beams there, the result was soon felt. The Shaktilar's roars of pain covered the noise of the blizzard and Jake quickly got the hang of it.

Xion Zolvhur's Soul Stone had many Soul Spells and documentation on the subject and Jake was a talented student. A few minutes later, Shaktilar had his empty gaze locked in his like a zombie, drooling and arms hanging down. The good thing was that he wasn't screaming anymore.

At that moment, Jake had moved the torture session into his head and Shaktilar was trapped in his own mind, trapped in a nightmarish illusion. As he was slowly skinned alive, then regenerated to start the process over and over again, only a few minutes had passed outside. With his mental stats and his Soul Power, Jake could easily change the time ratio to one to fifty or sixty.

Between each torture, an illusion of Jake would appear to heal him and whisper sweetly in his ear that all he had to do was sign the Slave Contract and his torment would end. He also dangled incredible rewards and privileges in the form of billions of Aether points, thousands of Aether Skills and several Grade 10 and higher bloodlines.

Jake had to admit that Shaktilar had a strong will. He may have been a racist and a speciesist, but his beliefs were firmly anchored in his mind. Despite the ravages his soul had suffered, he was still able to subconsciously resist his brainwashing.

Jake didn't know if it was the terror it evoked in him or sheer determination that allowed him to resist for so long, but it was all to his credit. Eventually, though, minutes became hours and Shaktilar gave in.

"I'm willing..." Shyril rasped out with a cough. He had already coughed up so much blood in this illusion that he barely had the strength to whisper.

"What? I didn't quite hear..." Jake repeated mockingly, turning a deaf ear.

"I'M WILLING! Damn it, I'll sign it. I'll sign this fucking contract!"

"Okay, okay. You should have said that earlier." Jake laughed and patted his shoulder as if they were old friends.

Then he placed the Slave Contract in front of his eyes and Shaktilar received the notification. He sighed regretfully and agreed to make a pact with the devil. The next moment, the illusion disappeared and the cave reappeared before his eyes, along with a Melkree, a cat and a turkey wearing bewildered expressions.

The devil who was responsible for his injuries and this endless nightmare was also in front of his eyes, staring at him with a deep indifference. If there was a positive point, it was that after what he had just undergone he had calmed down. Shaktilar had now a conviction: The thing he had met and this human were not alike! The original was much worse!

"Welcome to the Myrtharian Nerds."