

Oracle 592

Chapter 592 - Wish Granted

Even before reaching the area where Jake had spotted the Aether Dots cluster, they heard the clash of weapons, gunfire and emotional yelling of various kinds. It didn't take long for them to figure out who the different cries belonged to.

The first type was one of terror, or suffering, sometimes tinged with rage after suffering a painful wound or losing one of their precious comrades. The other cries were more bestial and inhuman, many of them reminiscent of the familiar shrill cackles they had learned to abhor and fear.

"Gobble?" Lord Phenix jumped abruptly as a vibration roused him from his nap. Unlikely as it seemed, he had managed to doze off in Jake's spacesuit. His skull hit the inside of the helmet and he immediately started to yelp in displeasure.

"Fucking bird, will you shut the fuck up?!" Shaktilar vociferated harshly, his eyes bulging with madness. "You want to get us all killed, is that it?!"

"You are by far the loudest screamer..." Melkree shrugged, staring at him as if he were a rare specimen among morons.

This made him snap out of it immediately, but he continued to glare at the turkey in warning. In comparison, Jake and his cat were much more collected.

"We came to take a look around and hopefully test our limits." Jake said, ending their bickering. His words sounded wise, but the lust in his eyes told a different story.

Shaktilar gulped for the umpteenth time that day upon witnessing his new Master's fighting intent, but if that was enough to shut him up, he was not reassured in the least. Nevertheless, it did not prevent a malicious gleam from flashing in his eyes when the others had their backs turned.

'Let's see if you keep giving me that speech in a few minutes... Maybe I'll get my freedom back before nightfall. I'll be the fastest freed slave in history, haha...'

Still, the Shyril had a very bad feeling. His faction had only met Jake's clone at the end of their expedition, but they had never ventured this far upstairs. Before they got this far, they would have encountered all sorts of alien and human creatures doped up on the Myrtharian Bloodline. Where had they all gone?

Not having his worries, Jake simply thought he should keep moving. He did, however, give up moving on land to avoid being spotted stupidly.

Using his Telekinesis and Light Control this time, Jake lifted his companions off the ground and made them invisible by reflecting light. This stealth mode wasn't perfect, but his ability to accurately reflect the images of the objects behind him was improving every day.

Melkree had already become numb from watching these repeated feats. It was as if Jake always had a trick up his sleeve. Shaktilar, on the other hand, was experiencing these skills for the first, or rather second time and his anxiety was only growing.

Less than a minute later, the group found themselves facing a large river of magma blocking their way. The sounds of the clashes had grown louder as they got closer and Jake could now make out who the screams belonged to. When he recognized the pain-filled howl of one of them, his expression changed drastically.

"Will!"

He didn't like what he heard and began to imagine the worst. It was the first time Melkree and Shaktilar had seen such a worried expression on this usually relaxed and cynical leader.

The force field around him intensified dramatically, causing the air around the group to hum and they magically accelerated, the river of lava flashing before their eyes in a split second.

But just as the group was about to reach the other side, something happened that dashed their hopes.

BOOOOM! VVRRRRSH!

A spindly, high-caliber lava ball split the surface of the water and sniped Jake in the head with the speed of a short-range missile. Even with his telekinetic shield and Silver Stone Skin activated at the last moment, his head was thrown violently to the side and the force field allowing them to hover collapsed.

Simultaneously, a thick, half-cooled lava whip whipped through the air in their direction, then just before impact branched into several vines at its tip that wrapped around their ankles. The portion of the whip buried under the magma exerted a slight tug, and the entire group was dragged into the lava.

SPLASH!

The resulting splash was comparable to the explosion of a large bomb, due in part to the relatively high weight of Jake and Crunch. Just before landing in the scorching river, Jake was jolted awake and managed to use his telekinesis to break his comrades' fall, but it was too late to protect them from the lava.

Fortunately, Shaktilar valued his life more than anyone else, and even with his damaged Soul he unleashed all his remaining mana in a powerful Ice Spell with a pained cry. The group was immediately sealed in a huge block of ice and it began to sizzle, generating a huge amount of water vapor.

"I won't last long, do something!" Shyril winced as he held his Magic Wand in both hands.

His abdomen was giving out a stunning aquamarine blue radiance. A faint blue light mingled with his lava veins, giving him unprecedented power, but his gray skin was withering away. On the other hand, the energy radiating from his body was fading fast.

Melkree quickly reached out with both hands, and woody roots sprang up and stuck themselves directly into Shaktilar's back. A pale green halo enveloped the Dryad's body and this life energy was immediately transferred to the Shyril.

But when her energy reached the alien, the young woman's expression changed abruptly.

"You're not al-"

At that moment, the iceberg in which they were trapped began to sink like a rock and the Shaktilar struggling ardently to save them became translucent before liquefying a few seconds later.

"A clone!" Melkree shouted with a flash of understanding.

On the lava river's surface, the real Shaktilar stood as best he could on an ice raft he had materialized just in time. The ice clone he had created was only a diversion to give the illusion that he was stuck with them. As he felt his connection to his Ice Doppelganger fade, Shyрил let out an evil laugh.

"Now all I have to do is take cover and wait to regain my freedom. Thank you, Jake. If it wasn't for your Myrtharian Body Passive, I never would have recovered so much in such a short time."

As he gloated like a madman, a thunderous headache far surpassing all previous ones pounded his skull, and he began to convulse on his ice raft. Blue blood began to flow from all his orifices, including his eyes, nostrils, ear and mouth.

"I damaged my Soul again..."

Shaktilar wasn't laughing anymore. He had never suffered such spiritual injuries and he was unable to assess their severity. What he did know was that they were not recovering as well as he thought they would.

'It's all because of this fucking Digestor! I hope you two kill each other!'

Shyрил had seen Jake get headshot, but he wasn't so naive as to believe that Jake was dead. After all, lava was his element. Everyone else was in danger, but not him.

As he was about to turn around and cast an ice bridge at the cost of another bloody coughing fit, the alien suddenly felt the lava beneath him swell as if a huge bubble was about to burst.

"Oh no..."

BANG!

His ice raft was catapulted into the sky by a huge geyser of lava and Shaktilar got his wish: to get out of the lava river as soon as possible.

Underneath this deep river of magma, the situation was quite different. Seconds earlier, when Shaktilar's Ice Clone had died, Jake had also come to his senses and taken control of the lava around them to prevent it from drowning them.

Lava was different from water. In addition to its unbearable temperature, its density was that of the molten rock that made it up. While Jake could easily control a certain amount of it, he also had to deal with the multiple layers of lava piling up above him.

Still, he had managed to isolate his group from the magma. Sheltered in a telekinetic bubble, Crunch, who had rolled himself into a ball to protect the turkey and Melkree, popped his head out of his shoulders and cautiously scanned his surroundings.

"Are we dead?" He meowed warily as he saw that they were bathed in light.

"Not yet, but it won't be long if I don't get us to the surface soon." Jake grunted as he massaged the temple hit by the lava ball. He had a lump as large as a hen's egg there and that was from protecting himself with his Aether, and his Silver Stone Skin before impact.

"I can't believe there was one ready to ambush us in that river... What the hell was it doing there in the first place?" Crunch complained, shaking his scorched fur without seeming worried in the least.

In comparison, Melkree and Lord Phenix had much more solemn expressions. With her telepathy, the young woman asked Jake,

"Is it still here?"

That was the question Jake didn't want to hear. His Myrtharian Eyes were on the lookout, and he was currently watching the enemy with extreme grimness. This thing was swimming around them at breakneck speeds, but with each circle it got a little closer.

Suddenly, something hit his telekinetic shield and a stream of lava seeped into the breach before he had time to close it.

"It is. If you want to survive, be prepared to endure some burns...."