

## Oracle 596

### Chapter 596 - Big Brother

'It can speak!'

Jake should have expected it, having heard some of the goblin and orc Digestors babbling a few nonsensical lines, but amazingly he was still shocked.

For one thing, his other clone hadn't uttered a single word, but more importantly, they had the same voice. The Digestor's voice seemed to have a certain reverb, as if he were speaking into a microphone, but it was still his own voice, albeit dehumanized.

If the previous clone he had just killed could be considered his retarded gray twin with amnesia, this newcomer was more like a sociopathic older brother.

They were still as similar as two peas in a pod, but this time Jake was the punier of the two. This Digestor was a head taller than he was.

It may have seemed like an insignificant detail, but this thing had his Silver Myrtharian bloodline. With his growth and increase in Body Stats tending to decelerate, a head difference meant that his clone was most likely at least twice as strong as him.

But even so, Jake didn't consider running away for a second. He had just prevailed against himself and his confidence was on fire. It was his most unreliable Myrmidian trait kicking in at the worst possible moment.

As if to encourage him, Jake distinctly felt his Aether stats spike and his Spirit Body even rose to level 19 after a long stagnation at level 18. His clone didn't drop anything, but that was precisely why he was ready to face this even stronger newcomer.

The sheer fright and pitiful state of Shaktilar did not make him doubt either. He'd had confirmation of that with the clone he'd just killed. They had his powers, but not his memories or experience. Heck, the dead Digestor couldn't even shift his Aether correctly to strengthen or speed up his attacks. That was how Jake had chopped his head off, slipping into his blind spot without the alien being able to react.

'Even though this clone looks stronger, if it's like the last one, it's doable.' Jake made up his mind, but the way he clenched the hilt of his saber gave away that his instincts were not aligned with his thoughts.

After all, there was something unique about this one.

Seeing Jake raise his weapon in a defensive posture, the clone chuckled again.

"Ugh, another brother of mine? No, this one is different. His skin is not grey like ours. Is it an original?"

Jake and the others listened to the alien monologue with a guarded expression, especially Shaktilar who had taken advantage of the respite to keep running.

"Come back here." Jake ordered stoically without giving the Shyril a glance.

Upon hearing the order, the Ice Mage stumbled and his legs braked against his will. Unable to resist, he turned around and obediently started walking back to his master.

"N-no, please, let me go. It's just suicide!" The alien whined with a deranged grimace distorting his face.

"All the more reason to keep you as a meatshield by my side." Jake smiled, but his gaze was still riveted on his clone.

ROOOOOAARRR!

A terrifying roar exploded several kilometers away from them coming from the central volcano, causing a small earthquake and several landslides. The remaining lava at the bottom of the river a few meters away from them rose about ten meters like a geyser, but did not fall back immediately, giving the impression that a curtain of lava had just been drawn.

The cooling lava from the tsunami that had ravaged the surrounding land when Jake had summoned his spaceship instantly turned white-hot again and some particles were plucked from it, all converging towards a certain spot inside the crater of that same volcano.

"What the hell was that?" Jake looked at his arm and found that he had goose bumps. 'I'm afraid?'

Even more jarring, the clone Digestor in front of him was sporting the same gravity.

"No more time for fun. I'm sorry for my brothers, but it's survival of the fittest. Whether you're the original or not, you have to die so I can live longer."

Jake wasn't sure he understood all of his insinuations, but he didn't need to. For when his clone made this statement, an overwhelming spiritual pressure fell upon them.

Crack!

The rocky ground beneath his feet cracked and his legs buckled imperceptibly before he could pull himself up. The lava particles caught by the roarer in the distance crashed back to the ground, and the few plants and trees present creaked.

"Gravity?"

Jake lost his composure for the first time. He didn't know how to do that! At first he rationalized the situation as Telekinesis, but he changed his mind when he saw that this gravitational field was affecting absolutely everything within sixty meters.

Glancing behind him, he saw that Melkree had turned back into a sapling to speed up her recovery and was unable to move, while the turkey still hadn't regained consciousness. The addition of this gravitational field combined with this spiritual pressure suggested the worst.

"Shaktilar, protect Melkree. Crunch take the bird to a safe place and try to find the others."

"Meow!" Crunch nodded, then his body squeezed in on itself forming multiple folds of fat, and when he released the tension, his body was catapulted into the air at supersonic speed, escaping the gravitational pull in a blink.

"Why am I the one who has to protect Melkree..." Shaktilar grumbled in despair, two streams of tears silently running down his face.

Jake didn't care about his slave's moods. Once his orders were given, his mind turned entirely to the clone in front of him. He could feel it. This foe was something else.

His own killing intent pulsed forth from his body, his will to fight consolidating until it was almost palpable. Slowly, but surely, he activated all his amplification skills.

'Warrior Silver Myrtharian Trance, on.'

His Body Stats were instantly quadrupled, the highest allowed at level 3. His body heat increased distinctly and a faint golden aura surrounded him.

"Warrior Silver Myrtharian Skill, on." The clone in front mirrored him, audibly repeating the name of the technique as if to mock his efforts.

'Spiritual Silver Myrtharian Trance, on.' Jake muttered inwardly without letting himself be provoked.

The power and sturdiness of his Spirit Body was also multiplied by four. The same faint golden aura, but with lighter tones wrapped around his Spirit Body as well as the Aether Soul Core lodged between his eyes. His Myrtharian Eyes began to glow ominously with many stars.

"Spiritual Silver Myrtharian Trance, on." The Digestor growled scornfully.

This time the alien beat him to it. His already gray and ribbed skin took on a metallic sheen and the chitin exoskeleton already forming a perfect armor on his body extended like liquid metal to his face except for his eyes, forming a complete armor without any flaws.

The transformation went even further than that and Jake saw pipe-like growths form on the top of his "gauntlets" and behind his elbows. There were many other oddities on this chitin armor, but when he saw a stream of plasma jetting out of it he understood.

Unwilling to be intimidated, Jake tried to emulate this, but to no avail.

The surface of his body, including his skin and hair, turned metallic except for his eyes. The metal layer grew thicker, especially around his throat, neck, face, chest and other vulnerable areas, forming a second natural armor, but the result was paltry compared to what his clone had just pulled off.

Still, Jake looked a little more like his Digestor clone now.

'Silver Stone Skin, on.' Jake gritted his teeth as he stared at his clone.

Seeing that his opponent was finished with his preparations, the clone tilted his head and sneered,

"That's it? That's it? I got carried away for nothing, it seems. Let me show you, then."

"Gravitational field, on."

"Heat, Light, Earth, Metal Enhancement, on"

"Aura of Vitality, on."

"Energy Shield, on."

" ... "

"Invisibility, on."

Jake's face flinched as he watched his clone activate an endless list of buffing spells, some of which he had never heard of before. However, he resisted the urge to escalate things with Bloodline Ignition, or his Purgatory. They were his last resort. The Aether Sun Core would be of no use against his clone. At least not at close range.

When Jake could, he tried to mimic his clone, but he soon realized he couldn't do it. Not in a combat situation. For example, he didn't really have an Invisibility Skill. The one he had learned to use on his own exploited his Light Manipulation Skill to pull off this lopsided spell. It wasn't something he could activate by flicking a switch.

When his clone finally stopped spouting new spells, silence returned, but the suffocating tension reached its peak. Jake clutched his saber's hilt and the clone did the same, swinging a heavy greatsword that he had the courtesy to flaunt before turning it invisible as well.

With his Aether vision, this invisibility didn't really matter, but it added an extra hassle to deal with in the coming fight. This would be the first time Jake would have to fight while dealing with both levels of vision.

They stared at each other for a few more seconds, and Jake sprang into action first, taking the initiative. The only thing he managed to hear before spewing his guts out while flying in the opposite direction was Shaktilar shrieking in a panic,

"DON'T FIGHT HIM HEAD ON, OH MY GOD!"