

The hapless charr doctor Kay had been on a stroll before he found himself impeded. He'd been lost in thought, daydreaming and wound up walking out from the wooded cover and into the open. It was a well-travelled path, yet all the same it seemed no one else was around. Instead the charr had found himself encountering what he assumed was some kind of spill. It would be a very strange place for anyone to have actively dumped anything, after all.

It had started with a trail on the ground, one which he could barely see unless the light hit it just right. It stuck to the grooves in his footwear, making each step require some effort, yet it was thin and flat to the ground. Just his luck that grass should be sparse in this area, making it harder to see where it stuck that down.

He had to fight to get it to let go. Tugging on one foot, sharp pulls with the muscles, careful not to lose his footwear. After a few more tugs his leg came free, landing again in a safe spot, though his other leg needed similar struggling before he could move on.

After that first snap free enough of the stuff cloyed to the bottom that every step was tacky, though his subsequent blunders into the near invisible substance were more easily overcome, needing just a single strong step each time.

Kay began wandering his way back to the road, grunting with the inconvenience, his breath laboured in the respiratory mask of his from the constant efforts.

A few steps more and a shadow fell on him from behind, the sun hiding behind a cloud, no doubt. A light, wet noise alerted him otherwise, as the shadow itself wobbled.

An eerie white blob rolled along the ground! The surreal sight of it sent a shiver down his spine, it was slick, wet, dripping a clear liquid that had formed the very trail he had to prise out of.

Frozen for just a moment, Kay realised whatever this thing was it had noticed him, quite possibly *because* he'd stepped on its trail. It drifted towards him, had he been on solid ground he might even have been able to outrun it yet it was closing the distance with his sticking steps. Worse still, the creepy thing was silent except when it occasionally quivered and gurgled!

"Back away you weird monster! I'll call the guards and they'll be far less kind than I!" He warned it, he just had to find the edge of this slick sticky trail!

The trees, they'd help, if he made it back to them maybe the blobby thing would be dissuaded if not totally impeded.

Unsurprisingly it said nothing, creeping ever closer to him. The awkward pursuit continued, the slow but determined paces of Kay couldn't outpace it.

Several steps between him and the trees were all that was left when he felt it snare his ankle. A soft but stretchy grasp that flowed around, sliding up the leg and fully coating his raised foot. "Ah!" He cried as it rose upward, pulling him, fouling his balance and sending him with a

heavy thud to the floor. “Someone? Help!” He tried to call. The blob pulled his leg up and back into itself while also trying to tug the other one. It was stuck strongly enough to the floor at the knee and toe that he would have struggled to lift it. It seemed the blob used that instead to pull itself closer, drenching over the top of him.

When his knee had been fully enveloped the yanking tug broke the grip the floor placed on it, from a distance one could only see the fallen doctor’s form reaching to an escape as the worrisome mass pulled him gradually up. His tail and hips vanished into the smooth monotone goop, next, with another firm and strong yank he was snapped out of the ground and inside. Afforded one last swirling look of the trees before the gooey drips pressed over his mask and actively seemed to shove him inside!

The blob quivered and shook where it held him, compressing down and shrinking in the process. Kay felt the forces growing harder and heavier, bending his body to curl up, he was on his back now, trying to kick and punch for freedom.

The surface of the blob undulated, gently rounded dents forming in the wake of the doctor’s attempts. In his head his shouts were loud, echoing around him, yet not even a bird would have been startled from the noises that made it loose. Those sounds were as weak as though someone were mumbling under a pillow.

It stood still for a moment, turning inert but for the futile thrashing, then it began to roll in a focused direction. The weak “Hmmmph! Mmmmmmhph!”s of Kay, moved with it as he was haplessly spun inside while being pushed at all angles.

Even as thick and heavy as the charr was due to his natural physique, the blob maintained its amorphous form, the compression working to ball up its capture.

There was something else shifting as well, in the disorienting dizzying motions he felt his legs and arms being pulled in a deliberate manner, at first he thought it was just getting him into its centre, away from the surface yet as it moved he realised it pushed back harder in the same spots, drawing his legs up, tucking his arms down across his front.

“Mmmmh! Mmm-mhfff!” A few moments later he couldn’t prise his wrists from each other without facing overwhelming stretchy resistance. His ankles felt roughly lined up with them, too, stuck into a ball-like shape. Even his head was starting to feel restricted.

It felt at least half an hour, possibly a whole turn of the clock, before the gooey mass halted. It squashed around him, making him grunt one last time before he felt a shift. The tension released, ejecting him like being spat loose.

Before he’d even landed, he felt an all encompassing coating that creaked against his movements, snapping audibly back as it confined him. A thick mass of the goo stayed around his head, a sturdy solid line tracing from under the jaw to where his hands were held, and then his legs were trapped to leave the feet parallel to those!

The mask on his head seemed to defy the goo, letting it slop off and reveal his head, though the mesh of his air filter caught a lump of it! Not so much that it blocked the passage, yet still his calls for help were muffled to useless whines.

“Ooohoho, let’s see what our RO-3r brought us this time!” A voice called out. From the cadence of it, Kay could tell it was an Asura before he saw the short figure waddle into view. Soon he was surrounded on three sides, with two Asura grabbing the sturdy length that was trapping his neck to his arms and tugging on it to right him, backside on the floor. His tail popped free, too, whatever directives the blob possessed saw it unnecessary to deal with that, apparently.

“Oh my, it’s a charr! Finally another strong creature and the coating looks firm! Caught good, are you?” The asura asked, directing the question to Kay’s body, rather than his face, making it clear it was not only rhetorical but that Kay’s very presence was just another detail.

“Huh, it certainly did hold but... should these be this rounded?” A short, even by Asuran standards, woman remarked, poking at his revealed feet.

“Mmmh?!” He grunted. “Hllh, mmh shmmmh!”

A blunt metal tool was pulled out, buzzing at a frequency that seemed to part the rubbery goop that had stayed cloyed to Kay’s body. His feet were cut loose, with the Asura poking around the revealed feline beans. “Huh, that explains it. No claws.”

“Ugh, so it wasn’t a fair test? What a let down. Plus it looks like this one’s got some kind of respirator on... him? This a male or female?”

“Rhmmph?! Wh-s-snhmmmm!” Kay grunted, his toes twisting and trying to pull out of range of their touch, yet they continued like he wasn’t there.

“Who cares?” Another replied.

The other Asura shrugged. “Well, respirator, no claws, looks like a weak soft specimen. C’m on RO-3r ,we were counting on you!” She said with a groan. “At least it’ll let us test the replacement systems! Bring the bits over, krewe!”

“Whnnn yh mhhn?!” He tried to ask. The Asura came from his blind spot pushing something around his already squishy coated neck. Solid metal clipped around from both sides, using the sturdier parts restraining Kay to lock onto. He managed to get a view as they pulled another bit. Shackles on a bar, sporting some familiar elements from the manacles that charr had used in the past, yet with Asura tech where the lock might be. They snagged his ankles and wrists, joining the solid bar to fix him in position and then whirred gently before clipping.

“Perfect, it lined up smoothly and it looks like it’s engaged. Hah, no getting out of these.” The first speaker among them said, grabbing the bars and yanking. Kay felt the ground shift, the whole of him being moved with them.

“Right, what do we do now?”

“I guess run a check on RO-3r and send it back out for another.”

“You got it.” The short team said speaking purposefully around Kay.

“Mmmh, mhhh!” He yelled, louder than before, making one of them turn their head.

“Guh, you’d think they’d fit that thing with a mute function. Well, disappointing as this result is, there’s still the containment.”

“Yeah, we can see if it’ll at least fit the right subject when it comes in.”

Kay looked frantically between them. The gooey part of the restraint seemed to be weakening, wherever it touched metal it seemed to become inert, but the metal itself was more than sturdy enough to hold a charr warrior, let alone the bookish scholar. Were they just ignoring him because the mask was adding a layer of anonymity? They certainly didn’t look or act like Inquest members either!

The Asura moved out of the way before the stomping of a golem shook the floor. It lifted Kay in its arms, the charr struggled for all he was worth, completely ignored by the callous few that had stayed.

All he knew was he was underground- there was no way they had built this facility in an easily spotted location-, and the golem pulled him deeper. “Mmmh, plhhhh!” He begged, hands and feet wiggling.

None of his squirms so much as budged him from the golem or the steely solid metals that held him. He was pulled into a long corridor, red and green lights lay outside of doors a short distance apart. He was pulled toward a green one, the portal sliding open, rather than a cell, like he was expecting, there was a shape, like an unravelled box. No, that was exactly it! “Whh, w-whhhmph!”

They ignored his cries, the unravelled frame pushed out and the golem rotated him, shoving him into it. Mechanisms moved around him, folding the box shut, with the Asura themselves pushing the last bit to a close. It was a snug fit thanks to the gooey rubbery coating that he still struggled inside of, the holes in the box lined up with the metal restraints.

They magnetised perfectly into position as the box sealed around the charr, leaving the top of his feet and his head on display while sealing up the rest of him, save for his thick tail that flailed in panic.

“Yeah, looks like a good fit to me.”

“Seconded, I’ll make sure to swing by and see if anything’s changed.” One Asura said to another, without a glance at Kay they flicked a switch and the box was ratcheted back away from the corridor, the door sliding shut behind them casting him in a dim light within the cell.

“Whh! Whhh! Yh-yh hmmm lmmmh hmmhh!” Yet, from the dim buzz of their voices, he knew the Asura didn’t hear him in the slightest. They hadn’t even removed the goo from his vents. He only hoped that would happen naturally, given that the box he was inside seemed to be loosening what hugged him. Though what they would do with him now... he was powerless to guess or to resist it.