

## Chapter 1 - Breaking point

Ortheke's frail body was slammed back-first against a wall, clawed hands crashing to the sides of her head, unbearably hot breath burning her face as he screamed his disgust of her. She shut her eyes and retreated into herself, like she always did when the voices or seeing the dead became too much. She just tuned them, and the person she thought was her lover, out. There was a lot of doubt about the latter fact though.

He'd never flown into such a rage before, and yet she hoped it would pass and he would be loving with her again. She wondered why he was angry, but was too afraid to ask, just assuming it was her fault, like possibly everything was...

The lack of response from her seemed to only anger him further, and Ortheke yelped as a fist collided with her face before she could even react. It was followed by another, and another, the Broken trying her hardest at blocking them with her bulky forearms. She felt blood run down from her nose, and her eye hurt.

Doubt began clouding her already blind loyalty to him. This wasn't how lovers treated each other, was it? It wasn't supposed to be so one-sided? Shikari said she deserved better... or did she? He saw the pained snarl, and the doubt in her expression, and lashed out at her, clawing her across the face, and leaving a single deep gash surrounded by smaller ones. Ortheke screamed, as she was grabbed by the front of her shirt and thrown roughly to the stone floor, the air knocked out of her lungs. At this point her entire body hurt, and her mind was overwhelmed by fear and pain. Yet she still tried to get up and drag herself away. She couldn't make it very far, as pain erupted in the end of her tail, crushed like an earthworm under a heavy foot. The broken wailed, and collapsed completely to the floor, face down and buried in her arm, muffled sobs and weak pleas escaping her. But nobody came to her aid...

Her body twitched when burning claws tore her shirt away. Her consciousness was already slipping away, and she couldn't even scream anymore as searing pain pressed onto her back. It pinned her, burning and burning, until she blacked out, hoping to never wake again.

She didn't remember coming to her senses several hours later, in a pool of healing waters. Apparently she'd somehow crawled out of her room, and was found, and brought there. She didn't really remember the following few weeks, except the bitter, gnawing feeling of wrongness in everything, and going through the motions like one of the constructs she faintly recalled guarding the Exodar. The wrongness grew into a realization, that she was never loved, and was merely used, and that burned away any vestiges of blind drugged love and loyalty Ortheke had. Like the Hour of Twilight the cult preached about. She still felt numb, but also felt a bitter resentment, and a desire to avenge herself. Maybe she did deserve better?..

## Chapter 2 - The deal

It has been weeks since Ortheke was found badly burned at the door to her room, and brought to the healing pool. Her physical wounds have closed since then, leaving behind scars. However, her mind was still raw. Her former roommates, both ascendants now, never left her side, and she was grateful for their company. It helped ease her mind somewhat, knowing that if He came for her again, she'd have protection. Still, the pain and despair festered inside.

Eventually, the grief turned into hatred and a desire for revenge. However, Ortheke had no power to do so. She could ask Shikari, the worgen ascendant had no love for the flame upstart herself, and seeing her friend in such pain only deepened the disdain Shikari held. But also she wanted to do it herself. To see the flame die in the half elemental's eyes. To have him impaled on elementium spikes. To rob him of the precious chance to bring about the end of times. And this was the point where Ortheke reached out with her mind, praying to the Old Gods for power to enact her revenge.

To her surprise, a voice answered to her. It didn't carry the familiar slithering quality of the court of N'zoth the cultists usually called out to, and it seemed subdued and far away, but Ortheke wasn't picky. A name was revealed in her mind.

"Y'shaarj"

It was unfamiliar, but the krokul didn't waste any time searching for mentions of it in the archives of the bastion. She spent all her free time going through book after book and scroll after scroll of recorded Old God lore. A bleak task, considering most of it was among the ramblings of the authors driven mad by knowledge not meant to be comprehended by mortal brains. On top of that, the amount of free time she had lessened drastically as her talent with elementium bending was noticed. In a way, she was grateful for it. Being busy all the time meant she could focus on something other than the mental anguish she was in.

All she found were hushed mentions of a dead god, torn from the bowels of Azeroth long ago. It didn't make any sense, but what in serving the Old Gods did? Y'shaarj wasn't as dead as it was believed, Ortheke supposed. Or she was hearing a voice of a dead god which was within the realm of possibility as well. She did have a talent for perceiving the dead. It hasn't seen much use, but once it was the core of her work as an Auchenai priestess.

Y'shaarj would speak to her in her dreams. He didn't have a visible form in the dreams, appearing as an entity of smoke with seven green eyes. The eyes alarmed the krokul, the colour way too similar to that of Fel energy, but deep down she knew Y'shaarj was not of the Burning Legion.

"There is so much torment in you, and yet you persevere, mortal."

"What else can I do? I already tried jumping off the portal platform. Was caught in mid air. Then I realized I want revenge slightly more than I want to die. I run on pure spite at this point."

"Spite is but a more subdued form of anger."

"I guess?"

Their next conversation didn't come until weeks later. Y'shaarj had a more defined form in this one. That of a serpentine creature covered in purple scales with giant ram's horns on its head. Up close, Ortheka could see that the god was wounded. The central eye was missing from its forehead, and there was black blood pooling underneath the creature. Despite herself, she felt some degree of compassion towards the being, even as she knew Y'shaarj didn't want it.

"You want revenge, do you not?"

"Yes. But I lack power to enact it. I called out to the Old Gods, and you answered."

"You are mistaken. You have power. Your anger, fear, despair, hatred, wounded pride. All my domain. I can show you how to harness them."

"I sense a "but" coming. I'll have to do something for you. Some kind of sacrifice. Would the one I want to destroy suffice?"

"Yes, but also no. I seek revenge of my own. On the one you may know as N'zoth."

"You want me to fight an old god in an empty fairground at midnight?"

"I need a servant to bring me back to life."

Ortheka fell silent within the dreamscape. The pain reared its head once again.

"I'll do it." She said, knowing deep down in a more rational part of her mind she'd probably regret it.

The mindscape shifted, and Ortheka found herself floating before the wounded God. An enormous hand with three gold talons reached for her, and the tip of one claw touched her forehead.

"Give your power a name."

"Scorn."

"So be it, Sha of Scorn."

## Chapter 3 - Vengeance

Ortheke woke up with a start. She had dreamed of the dying god again. The dream felt all too real, as it often is with dreams of the Old Gods.

The krokul pondered over the conversation she had with the entity calling itself Y'shaarj as she got ready for another day of trying to ignore the healing burn scars on her shoulders and back, and pushing down emotional distress in favour of serving her cult. Y'shaarj had promised power to her so she could have her revenge. There was a faint feeling of something being different as Ortheke thought of the deal, a sense of something lying in wait inside her, ready to come out when she needed it the most.

Thinking of the deal she had made with Y'shaarj inevitably brought about concerns about fulfilling her end. She'd have to take the dying god and make him alive again, and she didn't have the faintest idea of how to even start. She pushed the anxiety down, resolved to deal with that later, as she put on her robes.

She arrived at her new post, inside the forge where she had been helping shape elementium for the cult's weapons. Most cultists could bring the metal up from the ground and shape into spikes and constructs without a forge, but this, she was told, was a more delicate task. It was one weapon, one that she was told would wield unprecedented destructive power. She wasn't told much more, aside from instructions on what shape to give the elementium spikes, and so she got to work, side by side with a worgen ascendant named Morrha, who had a similar job. Ortheke had befriended Morrha before the worgen's ascendance, and their friendship survived despite the odds. It was nice to have a friend around, Ortheke thought. If he tried anything again, she'd be safe. This time.

Something was off today, though. The flames stoking the forge didn't burn as brightly. Morrha noticed, and went over to the fire and stuck her arm into it, heedless of the heat, and rummaged through it.

"Looks like the flame cores have burned out," She proclaimed, turning towards others, her arm still glowing red from the flames, "We have fresh ones, right?"

The cultists scrambled towards elementium containers by the wall. Ortheke finished shaping the spike she was on, and stepped back from the forge. There wasn't enough heat to continue the work on the weapon, so Morrha dismissed the cultists and Ortheke, and headed out to procure the reagents needed. A beginning of a plan started forming in Ortheke's mind, probably as far as it would get, but it was still something. She knew exactly where she could get a flame core. The core served as a heart of a fire elemental. Or a fire ascendant.

Gehennus strode down one of Bastion's many eerily empty hallways without a care in the world. After all, what would a newly ascended fiery werewolf care about? He was about to learn that the hard way, as a vaguely familiar hunched figure blocked his path.

"Oh? You dare to approach an Ascended one?"

Ortheke didn't reply, only raised her arms. Gehennus heard the metal shift behind him, and spun around to see that the hallway was now blocked by elementium spikes. Another sound told him that the same happened in front of him. He turned back to the krokul, a barrier of twisted spines behind her. Glowing purple eyes full of so much grief and hate met his burning ones, and this time, maintained eye contact. The fool was challenging him, Gehennus thought derisively. He'd just finish what he started then, and be on his way to more important things. Except he didn't get a chance, as more spikes erupted from the very floor, and impaled his limbs and torso. He let out a guttural howl, unable to move.

He could only stare as the krokul he had brought into the cult and used for his own entertainment started changing into something completely unfamiliar. First came the eyes, two more pairs opening around the ones she already had. Then her hands turned skeletal and dark, tipped with glowing white talons. The same thing happened to her intact horn. Then came the swirling smoke, obscuring the krokul from view, and from it emerged a new entity, born of pain and grief and desire for revenge. The creature towered over him, regarding him with a cold glare of her six eyes.

It would be the last thing Gehennus ever saw.

A few hours later, the torn smoldering remains of a lupine fire ascendant would be found in that hallway, with no trace of the spikes, or what did it. Gehennus, despite his status of an ascendant, seems to have made one too many enemies.

At the same time, Ortheke walked back into the chamber, her posture confident for the first time in forever, and calmly placed a flame core wrapped in elementium spikes into the forge together with the few others Morrha had gathered. Morrha has noted the change in her friend's mood, but decided to ask questions later.