

~ Day 50 ~

The monotone dripping of water droplets hitting the cold stone ground of the room and the Mistress' manic muttering were the only things my senses were able to pick on. For two whole days, the Mistress had furiously attempted to break me, while simultaneously injecting my body with various unknown substances.

Once she had learned of my astonishing healing speed, she hadn't wasted the opportunity to dissect and torture me while this 'transformation' of hers was changing my body. But something was obviously wrong with how she reacted to the progress of my transformation. From what she was muttering and doing over the last two days, she had grown consistently more unstable and seemingly even afraid for some reason.

I wasn't sure, but it seemed that her breaking my mind was essential to the process. However, I simply wouldn't break. No matter how much pain she inflicted, no matter how much I screamed, the flame within me that was my undying will, burned bright. I did not know exactly what came over me, but I simply knew that if I gave in, I would suffer something much worse than merely an untimely death. So the flame that represented my undying will within simply burned through any haze that was pain or despair and filled my mind with a relaxing calm.

By now, I had already long lost my ability to see when she gouged out my last remaining good eye, but I had gained something else in exchange though. Ever since I had become adept in utilizing my presence, I could use it to locate other entities around me, and even vaguely sense my immediate surroundings.

But now, being robbed of my vision and almost all other senses, that ability of mine had become vastly improved. By now, it was almost like having a second vision, and I could see the entire room that I was in with my mind itself. Although the sense became weaker, or rather vaguer, the longer away it was I tried to look. But essentially, I had acquired a 3D picture of everything around me, projected directly inside my head. It didn't matter if it was in front of me, or behind me, I could see everything in a monochrome image displayed in my mind's eye.

Actually, the improvement to my mental sense wasn't the only thing that I had acquired surprisingly enough. I've actually gotten a new trait. But this one I wasn't so sure if it was good or bad. From everything I've gone through, and what I knew, it wasn't hard to guess that this was the transformation of my body that the Mistress had induced by injecting me with all those vile and unknown substances.

| Trait |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name |
| -Shadow Constitution- |
| Your body has been twisted and tainted by the corrupting tendrils of the shadows, causing your body to have a high affinity towards the element of shadow. |

Although my stats hadn't really increased immensely as Felendren and Morgath had, I guessed that whatever the Mistress had tried to do to me was only partially complete. The insane woman still muttering to herself like a crazy person suddenly stopped when the rumbles of a powerful shockwave shook the entire room we were in.

The frown she creased her face turned into confusion, then horrid realization, and then into maddening insanity. Without even sparing me a second glance, she stormed out of the room and disappeared into the corridor. Although I was still conscious and noted all this, I still had a hard time focusing or even comprehending what was going on as I was fatigued beyond what my body should be able to handle.

The two days of unending torture had put a serious drain on my **Lesser Eldritch Vitality** skill, and it had already stopped healing as my body couldn't support the skill any longer. With this fatigue and exhaustion, my mind simply couldn't register how much time went by due to everything in my head just fading out into each other, but the hurried steps of somebody small running along the corridor brought my mind back to a somewhat lucid state.

The figure that entered my sense was unmistakable, and if I had been able to smile, I would've. Stopping when he reached the table, Mika the child drow, gawked in horror as he saw the absolutely brutalized state of my body. He was obviously disbelieving that I was even alive as he checked multiples times that I was still alive.

But he didn't waste any more time though and begun immediately unlocking the various shackles and straps fastening me to the table. It didn't take long before he managed to remove all of my restraints, but when he saw that I didn't move at all he became increasingly worried. I wanted to speak to him, but I couldn't with the state that I was in.

What he did next shocked me though, and I couldn't help but feel some warmth in my heart as suddenly went over to take a sharp instrument from one of the tables. He then walked over to me and suddenly cut open a small wound on his wrist, letting warm and fresh blood spill down into the mouth he held open.

The taste was heavenly. I hadn't eaten anything for days, and the continuous healing of my body had stolen any and all nutrients, leaving me hungry beyond all belief. With each drop the delicious sanguine liquid, I could feel vitality storm throughout my veins and strength slowly but surely return to my body.

However, before I could even have enough strength to lift my arm, the dull thud of something sounded out, and I was robbed of the blissful blood that had begun suffusing my body. While I was drinking and reveling in Mika's blood, I had completely shut out all of my other senses, so I hadn't realized a particularly diminutive greenskin that I loathed to my very core, having entered to room with us.

Upon recognizing the small but fat form of Jeerbal in my sense, the flame within me flared blazingly with unrestrained resentment. The disgusting little cretin had hit Mika in the back of his head with that beloved rusty branding iron of his and was now snickering condescendingly at the dazed Mika who was clutching the back of his head in a fetus position due to the severe pain he was in.

"Gikikikikkuk - you little maggot git, what do you think you're doing with the Mistress' property. Just because she's occupied fighting with those lousy warlords, you think you can go behind her back like this, hmm?" - Jeerbal

Mika obviously didn't respond, instead, he just turned around with an expression that portrayed the evident fear and pain on the kid's face. That didn't dissuade Jeerbal even in the slightest though, rather it seemed to only encourage him as he immediately started to ruthlessly beat Mika with that accursed branding iron.

While Jeerbal wielded no great strength in his thin arms and fat body, Mika was still just a child with a weak body, so being repeatedly hit by solid metal over and over again started to bruise and draw blood across his pale skin. Each dull thump that sounded out was followed by a muffled cry, which seemed to literally cut my heart.

But I could do nothing but scream internally as my body was still unable to properly move. The sudden scream that tore from Mika's throat indicated the Jeerbal had started to use the business end of the magical tool instead of blunting his body, and if not for me already have lost my eyes, they would've been bloodshot by the sheer strain I put on my body to get it moving.

Mika was a child, he couldn't handle such things and if I didn't crush this depraved creature now Mika would surely die. From my sense, I saw that the drow was barely holding on. From just sensing his presence, I could tell that it wasn't just his body that was suffering, something greater, more spiritual, had been severely damaged by the wicked instrument. His soul was being mutilated.

The sight of Mika's presence fading and waning ever so slowly was the last jolt needed before the flame burning within me, that was the Undying Will of the Conqueror, needed to take a evolve and take a qualitative leap. Suddenly, the flame flared to become a ball of fire, resembling a star, a radiant sun, and amazingly it seemed to almost take physical form as heat welled up within my chest and spread out to envelop every cell of my body.

With it, an immense and boundless power saturated my muscles, and the cloudy sky that was my mind suddenly had all burn away, leaving only absolute clarity.

Although such massive revelations were taking place on the table behind Jeerbal, he didn't even notice as he carried on with his beating of Mika. But the sudden thump of something landing on the ground behind him made him stop swinging the metal rod in his hands and look behind him.

The sight that entered his beady little eyes made him almost faint right then and there. Standing in front of him was the bloodied and utterly marred figure of a one-armed Micheal

whose eyes had turned from hollow and gored holes to translucent and intangible balls of fire that seared his soul as he looked into them.

Utterly stunned, the gremlin didn't budge an inch as his mind was under the assault of a mind-rending pressure, but for some reason, his mind didn't tap out, almost as if... something was intentionally keeping him conscious...

All of sudden, the rusty branding iron that the gremlin was holding disappeared and repeated in the hands of Micheal. Beads of sweat rolled down Jeerbal's warted face and the rolls of fat on his body jiggled as his body trembled in terror.

With a kick, the petrified body Jeerbal twirled around and landed face-first on the ground, his arm laying splayed limply to the sides while his knees being the only things still holding his body up due to his stiffened legs.

This of course had hurt Jeerbal, and he grimaced in pain, but he was similarly confused as he wasn't sure why he had been put in this awkward position, his ass strutting up into the air. He needn't think long before the sudden realization of what Micheal intended to do merely moments before it happened.

A shriek that woke even the ghosts slumbering in their tombs sounded out, one of such intensity and pain that you could hardly believe it even could be produced from a living being. But the screams didn't end there, and a cacophony of pig-like squeals and the shrill screeches of Jeerbal sounded throughout in entire subterranean dungeon of the Mistress' domain.

What Micheal had done, was to shove the gremlin's own branding iron's business end up into *his* end. The sight was truly something horrid, as the diminutive gremlin's body had definitely not been made to have a long metal rod shoved ruthlessly up into its rear.

Skin had been ripped, flesh had been torn, and his intestines were mangled. The gremlin's insides had been utterly ruined and blood had started pooling beneath the entry. But just as Jeerbal thought that was the worst pain he could ever experience, a sinister and wicked smile stretched across Micheal's terrifying face.

That was the last moment before Jeerbal's world turned into a hellscape of agony, the last thing he would ever know in this world.

Micheal had activated the branding iron's magic from inside Jeerbal...

Ignoring the diminutive greenskin that was laying on the ground with glassy eyes and foam frothing from his mouth, I quickly went over to Mika who was barely even breathing. Taking Mika into my one-armed embrace, my heart that had been filled with satisfaction from the revenge enacted was immediately replaced by heartache and worry.

Seeing the one person who truly cared about me ever since I came to this damned city in a state like this, it felt like my heart had been torn apart. While I was a ruthless killer and hated my enemies like no other, I similarly loved and cared for those close to me even more fiercely.

Looking into the dim eyes of Mika, I locked gazes with him. The intangible balls of fire that had been swirling in my eyesockets had now turned from an orange and fiery red to a soft crimson, and instead of harming the soul like it did with Jeerbal, it seemed to almost heal Mika's injured soul, or rather hold it together.

Although I was only holding it together, it was like trying to hold onto sand as it simply slipped out of your hands. In desperation, I propped Mika onto my knee and bit into my wrist of my one remaining arm.

[You have taken 3 damage!]

As blood spilled from the wound, I was about to give it to him in an attempt to heal him somehow, but before I could put it to his lips a weak hand stopped me.

Looking incredulously into Mika's faded eyes, I saw tenderness and warmth in them, and I immediately understood that this was his wish. I could only reluctantly lower my arm and let the boy in my embrace fade, a single tear spilling unknowingly from my empty eye sockets, the first tear I've ever shed since coming to this world.

But just before Mika left this world, his hand moved to tap his chest, above where his unassimilated core was. Confused, I watched as he mouthed the words; 'take it'. I understood what he wanted, and that he wasn't going to entirely leave me. But before I could nod in affirmation towards his request, his eyes glassed over and his arm fell limply to the side.

Mika was dead...