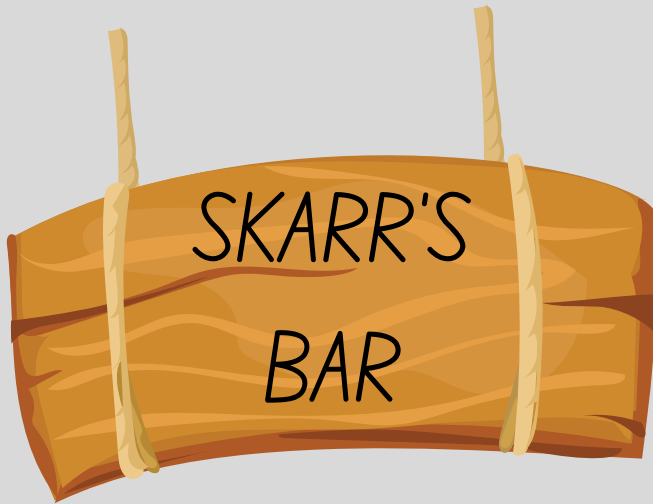




Sanasha laughs a truly infernal cackle. "I might can make use of him, dear. I wonder, would he make a nice rug, or coat rack? Hmhmhm."

Skarr hoists Ozy up to a seated position. "I've given you chances, old man. You could have left. Taken your second chance at life and ventured out into the world. But you came to me, sought me out to do harm. Is this how you want to end things? Shipped off to Hell to serve a devil until your dues are paid?"

Ozymandias groans, resting his head on the back wall. "It could have been different. You and I. We are more similar than you admit. Ugh." He rubs his temple. "Do whatever you will. I've said my piece."

"I'm giving you a chance. Convince me that you won't be trouble, and we can let bygones be bygones. But if you so much as look at anyone I care about the wrong way, there aren't enough gods in existence to save you." Skarr lifts Ozy to his feet. "You tell me what we're doing."

Sanasha hums, her forked tongue flicking over her near perfect lips. "I don't mind making examples, Love. Helps keep the rest in line."

"For years, I've wanted what you have," Ozy says with a sigh. "That gods-forsaken power you hold. I wanted it long before you knew who Moktar was."

"If I could give it to you, I would. I never asked for it, never wanted it. But if anyone has to carry this curse, if anyone has to shoulder the burden, I'd rather it be me." Skarr puts a hand on Ozy's shoulder. "You have no idea what it has cost. You don't want this."

Ozy shrugs away from Skarr. "You don't know what I want. You have no idea what I could handle. I came back as a Blessed just to try my hand at that gift once more. If this is where my story ends, then so be it."

Sanasha hisses. "I knew you smelled off. Blessed are just a little too lively for my taste. Too much Positive energy. If it's all the same, Love, best to deal with this one another way. His Positive stench would scare off too many of Myra's servants."

Ozy spits at Sanasha's feet. "Positive just means alive, you hellspawn sulfur stain. Just because I am more closely tied to the Positive Realm doesn't mean I am that different from you."

"Enough," Skarr booms, his voice rattling the walls. "I don't care if you are tied to Sin City, the Positive Realm, or the moon. Walk your own path, Ozymandias. Don't make me fight you."



Ozy grunts but doesn't fight back. "And where am I to go? After years of this, what am I to do?"

"Open a bar, perhaps? Hmhmhm." Sanasha giggles at her own joke.

Skarr shrugs. "Not the worst idea. You can settle down. Give up that old life, like I did. Open a flower shop, a bakery, a bookstore, something. Summerton has room enough for both of us. They welcomed me, so I see no reason they couldn't welcome you."

A coarse chuckle escapes Ozy's throat. "And that's it then? Spend my days tending to some quaint little shop until I die? Seems so..."

"Drab?" Skarr asks with a touch of disdain.

"Boringly mortal?" Sanasha asks with a bemused smirk.

"Relaxing. I was going to say relaxing." Ozy chuckles once more. "It'll be hard to put this behind us. I haven't exactly lived the best life leading up to now."

Skarr nods. "Neither have I, yet I've gotten a second chance. It's never too late to turn over a new stone."

Ozy sighs, shuffling his feet. "Well. I guess this is where we go our separate ways then, eh? After so long wanting to kill you, I never fathomed you'd be the one to talk me down."

"Trust me. I've had help walking back from that edge myself." Skarr scratches his beard, squinting. "Still need a talking to from time to time."

"What does it for you? Your friendly little Scion pulling on your moral compass?" Ozy laughs.

Skarr scowls but then calms. "No. Sometimes it takes the right person being in the right place at the right time."

The door to the office opens as Quin bebops inside. She stops short as she sees Ozymandias up and about. "Ma ears're burnin', so I fig'ed I'd see how things're goin' up here."

Ozy shoots Skarr a glance, who just shrugs in response.