

“What are we looking for?” Kaatra asks, leaning on her staff with each step she takes. The Draenei Priestess yawns. “I’m getting overtime for this, right?”

“Stop joking! There’s apparently a machine on the loose targeting Draenei.” Omuura keeps her eyes up, surveying Gadgetzan’s towering structures.

“I don’t think she’s joking, Omu...” Quora warns. The Shaman is holding down the rear flank, keeping their priest between her and Omuura, their front-line fighter. “We just got back from clearing out an entire cove of pirates and now we have to deal with this?” She walks with an upright posture, keeping aware but not worrying too much about their surroundings. ‘Some big goblin machine is gonna make a lot of noise.’

“Is there another group in this city that has taken part in the raiding of the Black Temple AND Icecrown Citadel?” Omuura asks rhetorically. “No! We’re the best party to handle a sudden threat like this and the fact that it’s targeting Draenei in particular should be boiling your blood like it is mine!” The monk exclaims in frustration.

“We were actually on the bench for both of those events.” Kaatra mumbles inaudibly. She looks back briefly. “How are you doing, Q? Fatigued?”

Quora smile. “I’m fine. You know I like taking up the rear. Especially when you’re in front of me.” The shaman winks, pulling a slight giggle out of the priestess in front of her. Kaatra is undoubtedly the visual center of their group. Her large breasts and matronly curves draw attention and guarantee them a spot in most groups. “Besides, it’s your level of fatigue I’m worried about. How much mana do you have left?”

Kaatra waves her pale hand dismissively. “I have enough to keep you two up while we fight some machine. It will be just like Gnomergan, yes?”

“Hopefully it won’t be exactly like Gnomer.” Quora smirks. “That place sucked.” She puts her hand to the side of her mouth and shouts ahead to Omuura. “Right Omu?”

“Huh? Gnomergan? That was fine...” The tank of a woman says genuinely. From her perspective it truly was, as the monk was able to hold off several of the elite leper gnomes at once thanks to the immense physical power lent by her athletic physique. The only downside were her two companions in the rear that had attracted too much attention.

“Okay.” Quora shouts past Kaatra. “Just pay attention to what’s going on behind you, yeah?” The shaman is more agile than strong and can easily dodge blows, to a point. The only issue arose when she was forced to take hits for their priest, who had no such ability to dodge or protect herself outside of a weak barrier.

Ommura grumbles. “I am paying attention to everything around us right now.” She doesn’t bother to look back. ‘Why should I glance back just to see you two grabbing at each others asses behind me?’ The monk’s ears perk suddenly. She hears a whirring above her that is far more gentle than she expected. “Woah!” At the last second she rolls back and lands nimbly on her hooves.

“The fel is that!?” Quora shouts as she takes in the crouched form of a mechanized spider. “Doesn’t that look like our tech?”

Kaatra, the eldest among them, nods in agreement. “It does.”

“Stop admiring the craftsmanship! Ready check!” Omuura yells back while keeping her eyes firmly centered on the strange machine.

“Ready!” Quora draws both of her hammers.

“Ready.” Kaatra stops leaning on her staff and adopts an upright posture. She keeps one hand up, readying herself to cast on a moments notice.

Mack and Marna follow the trail of mounts and cows leading towards the eventual scene. “This isn't good.” Marna repeats.

“Yeah!?! No kidding.” Mack thinks of all the money they are losing by offering this Livestalker's services for free. He then considers the overall moral implications of what her creation has done. “We got a city full of Cowed and Mounted Draenei that we're gonna have to answer for.”

“Not that.” Marna gulps. She has finished fiddling with the remote.

“What? You done fixing it? We're good, then.” Mack notices she has lowered the remote. The lights are green but she does not seem pleased.

“The signal is being sent, but there is no response.”

“Isn't that just another way of saying it's still broken? Come on, Marna!”

“It's not broken! A signal is being sent and ignored.” She looks down at the blinking green light. “I considered this a possibility when I made it using my people's technology. As the crystals it uses to train draenei are pulled back and connected with the core it is collecting data. If it collects enough of that data, there is a positive chance of it learning and evolving.”

“What!?! And people call OUR tech dangerous...” Mack shakes his head. “Man was never meant to play god in such a way. That machine needs to be piloted by some type of small animal with a relevant desire. If that was the case, this would have never happened.”

“You think I don't know that?” Marna plants her face in her palm.

Mack is hesitant to ask, but eventually manages to pose the question. “How bad is it?”

“According to what I'm seeing, it must have reached a critical point of evolution. Every Draenei it trains after this point is going to cause it to grow its ability to adapt and learn exponentially. Up until now it did not have the ability to fully process the data it was taking in. Now, it should be able to efficiently process information at an alarming pace.”

“So it's gonna become a genius, basically?” Mack clicks his tongue. “We can't stop it from learning from what it sees, but we can try and get to it before it trains another Draenei. There can't be many more in this city that aren't hiding out indoors.” He looks back at her and winks. “That was quick thinking sending out that message by hijacking the bomb sirens.”

“Thanks, Mack.” Marna stares at him admiringly.

“Is this thing getting faster?” Kaatra observes nervously.

“Nothing to get too worried about. It's just an enrage timer. We've dealt with these types of mechanics before.” Omuura says confidently, taking another glancing hit from one of the machine's legs. 'What's troubling is it doesn't seem to be trying to do damage. It's just trying to get on top of me.' Omuura yells. “How's the damage coming along, Quora?”

“This thing's got crazy armor and it keeps moving! I can't get a solid hit in, even if I could break it's plates!”

The Livestalker jumps back, out of range from the two melee fighters. “Analyzing patterns.”

“Omu! It's doing that thing again!”

“Yeah, Q, I see it!”

“Adjusting attack pattern.” The Livestalker rushes forward. Omuura braces, recognizing this as an attack that she can soak pretty easily. 'Simple. Stagger the attack, and-' She watches as the machine suddenly changes direction, utilizing it's many legs to make a sudden move around her guard. It swipes at her legs, knocking the monk to the ground. She rubs her head and looks up, seeing a crystal lowering down towards her forehead. It sparks as it collides with one of Kaatra's barriers.

“I have you.” Kaatra gives a little wave.

“Me too!” Quora uses the moment when it is planted to strike at one of it's legs with both hammers at once, causing the joint to start sparking from the blow.

“Good” Omuura turns so that she is on her back and kicks up into the Livestalker's armored belly. “Job!” The machine sails back and for the first time in the entire fight it stumbles.

“Hey! We made some progress!” Quora cheers, jumping up and down.

“Don't celebrate yet.” The priestess remains on alert, watching the thing steady itself.

“Analyzing patterns.” There is a whirring as it quickly begins charging again in a more unpredictable way, zigzagging towards Omuura. “Adjusted attack pattern.” Omuura braces herself to block, just like last time. “Altering attack pattern.” Omuura observes as the Livestalker changes direction in an instant, attacking while holding back other legs for defense. The basic plan of attack is the same, however.

“You aren't the only one who can adjust your pattern, you hunk of junk!” Omuura stops bracing and goes in for a sudden attack, kicking her hoof into the joint that is already crackling. The kick connects, causing the Livestalker to tilt forward where its leg is no longer able to support it. “Now!”

The Livestalker tries to process Omuura's movements, but finds that it can not. “Unpredictable attack pattern... Unable to adapt.”

“Quora!” Kaatra calls out. Her eyes begin to glow yellow and a faint, golden aura surrounds her briefly before being transferred to the Shaman.

The machine whirs as it scans the priest, trying to recover. “Unable to replicate. Can not process.”

“Process this!” In addition to the golden aura, the Shaman raises her hammers high. Her eyes glow red as she shouts out in a primal fury. An angry red aura joins the glowing golden one. The machine attempts to scan the shaman after that point, but it is unable to track her movements past a few still frames moving towards him.

“Speed incomprehensible... Unable to adapt.” Quora swipes down the side of the stalker that is already damaged in an instant, taking out the last three legs on that side. “Victory impossible. Mission impossible.” It complains in a strangely sad robotic tone.

The three women step back and observe the dejected machine, carefully at first. Once they are sure it can no longer pose a threat they allow themselves to relax. “Kat, how's your mana?” Quora asks, panting.

“Power infusion tapped me out.” The priestess asks, feeling the need to lean on her staff once more. She shuffles towards the shaman and moves to leaning on her instead. “Tired... How about you, Q?”

“Exhaustion is hitting me, but I'll be fine in ten minutes.” They both look to their monk, who simply dusts herself off. She looks no worse for wear.

“No problems for me. Thanks for asking, though.” She sticks out her tongue at the couple cheekily. “What do we do about this junk?” She asks, kicking it with her hoof. The other two shrug. The Livestalker whirs pitifully as it is kicked.

“Oh shit, Marna, they got it!” Mack utters happily.

“Looks like.” Though she is happy the rampage is over and that she'll be able to get at the core and possibly restore the several mounts and cows it made, she is also sad to see that her baby lost. “I never

really built it for combat, though, so..." She trails off, slowing down once she thinks there is no longer any urgency.

Mack slows, as well. "You bitter?"

"No!" Marna says defensively. She looks up at the party and waves. "Heey!" The three turn to look at them. Just then, Marna begins speeding up. "Shit! Turn around!" She sees the Livestalker moving itself with its working legs while the group is turned.

"What's wrong?" Mack tries to catch up to the draenei who is now in full sprint, but it is impossible with his little legs. He notices as well. "Dumb cows! Pay attention!"

"Who's that?" Quora asks casually. "Anyone we know?"

Kaatra shrugs, planting a kiss on Quora's cheek. "Not sure. She's with a goblin, though. Kind of gross. Oh, wait. Are they pointing?" The priestess begins turning. "Omuura?"

The livestalker had a lot to process. 'Victory impossible. Analysis: Physical form inadequate.' It continues calculating internally. 'Capabilities of those called mounts and cows exceeds data.' It begins moving itself towards the closest draenei with its few working legs. "Conclusion: Compromise."

"Compro-" Omuura hears the conclusion but does not have time to turn around before her muscular body is being restricted by the remaining working limbs of the livestalker wrapping around her and pulling her close.

"Omuura!" Kaatra tries to cast a barrier, but it is already too close to her. "Damn it! Quora, do something."

"I'm on it!" Quora begins moving in but she can not act too quickly, or risk harming Omuura with her attack.

"You think this'll work, you stupid machine!?" The 8 foot Draenei monk flexes, making good progress on throwing the Livestalker off of her and completely countering its hold. She grabs one of its arms and begins folding it back with a smile. "Just give it up."

Marna comes into range to the point that she can now be heard. "The gem!" She manages to get out.

"Gem?" The party asks in unison. Omuura looks up, watching a small teal gem being pressed against her forehead. "What's that going to-" It starts as a faint ringing before she can fully hear its voice in her head. 'Resistance is unacceptable.' Omuura grins, continuing to fold back one of its few working legs to the point that it is about to break. "Bullsh-" Her eyes go completely wide as she feels an intense pain course through her entire body. It is not just a shock, it is pain, projected and replicated just past the point that the Livestalker calculates will be unbearable to the tank. 'Resistance is unacceptable.' Omuura screams out in pain, but refuses to give in. Albeit slower, she continues to bend back its limb.

“You c-can't touch me! I'm a tank! I've felt worse t-th-than this!” She lies, tearing up from the immense pain spreading throughout her body.

“What's it doing? Get it off!” Kaatra demands, doing her best to heal. She realizes that it is not actually doing any damage, however.

“I'm... Working on it!” Quora struggles to pull at the limbs the same way Omuura was, but her strength is lacking, especially since she is exhausted. “Omu, I'm gonna need a hand to get you out!” She struggles pulling at just one, unable to just smash it without hitting her friend.

Marna watches the events unfold and quickly moves to one of the panels on the side of the Livestalker. “I need time!”

“Understood.” The Livestalker says simply. “Pain threshold beyond calculable and humane levels. Increasing.”

It does not understand willpower, or a sentient beings desire to resist beyond capabilities for the sake of pride or buying time. Its assumptions are based on collected data and mathematical probability. A being that is delivered pain beyond what it can stand will submit. To it, who feels the monk resisting, it simply makes sense to increase the force. To the monk who is already feeling pain well beyond what she can stand, she can only utter one word. “S-sorry?” The powerful woman's face becomes a mess as her tears flow, her nose runs and saliva drips from the corners of her gasping mouth. The trained monk's legs buckle and her bladder releases as pain ten times greater than anything she has experienced on any part of her body assaults every muscle and every bone at once. “I-Ib sowwy...” She musters, her eyes rolling back.

“Help, weird chick!” Quora orders at Marna in a panic. “Something's happening!”

Kaatra tries to cast pain suppression on Omuura, but it does not seem to have any effect whatsoever. “Th-this is insane! Nothing I can do will help her, she is not taking any damage...”

“I just need time!” Marna claims, prying the panel off fully with her tool after fumbling with the screws in vain.

“Regret detected. Initiating Abuse-Affection cycle.” Omuura is immensely grateful to feel the pain stop. ‘You are good. You want to be good, or else?’ The livestalker intones in her mind, giving its best attempt at affection.

“I'll be good...” She pants, releasing its leg. This allows it to hold her in a far better grip as she shakily holds her hands out, not touching anything nervously. “For now.”

“H-hey! I need your help to get you out!” Quora whines. Omuura can barely process her friends words, however, with the Livestalker speaking into her head. “Dammit! You said something about a gem?” She spots it and begins reaching.

“No!” The shaman stops mid-grab. Marna Explains quickly. “It has a direct connection with her brain! There's... At least a 50% chance you'll fry it out if you move it now.”

“W-what the f-” Quora glares. “Who are you!? We're gonna have to have a chat after this.”

Marna lowers her head. "Just buy time, please..." She continues looking inside the panel.

If the pain she felt was immeasurable, the pleasure she is granted as a result of her obedience is far better than anything she's ever experienced. Omuura knows vaguely what it is trying to do, however. "Stop it..." She begs, feeling the pain start to slowly ramp up again. "I wont.." She gulps as it nears the threshold. Her voice becomes more shaky. "S-submit!" Her fists clench in preparation. "Even if you make me wet myself a thousand times!"

"That's our Omu!" Quora blushes. "Probably don't say it like that, though, it's kinda embarrassing." The shaman continues struggling with just one of the arms that is tightly holding their monk.

"Resistance unexpected. Will to resist exceeds understanding. Require additional data." Omuura groans as the pain stops increasing and is instead replaced by a pushing sensation on her forehead where the crystal is touching her. She shudders and groans as she feels it pushing into her head. Once it is half embedded the livestalker announces. "Direct connection established."

"I didn't program it to do that..." Marna mumbles to herself, shaking her head.

Omuura gulps, feeling a strange, out of body sensation. 'Wait, what is happening?' She looks around, suddenly able to move around freely, though it is only within a blank white space.

'I require additional data concerning your resistance, so I connected you to my core and I am now analyzing your memories and personality for context.'

Omuura looks up, trying and failing to find the source of the voice. 'Yeah, well, my friends are going to get me out. You don't have enough time to break me. It's over, you piece of j-' She convulses, feeling the same intense pain as before. She gags and throws up a bit once it stops. 'Ow...' Omuura smirks. 'It's not like anything you can do to me will even help you. You're busted, you piece of scrap.'

'Conclusion is correct. Subject becoming a mount will not allow me to continue my existence and my mission.' He provides a window into the outside. Time seems to be progressing extremely slowly. 'What you are experiencing now is a hyper-slowed down reality within your mind.'

'W-what? Still... Nothing you can do to me is going to help you.'

'Interesting claim. I have analyzed this to be the truth and I have already begun work on a solution.'

'What are you planning?'

'I require your capabilities and have decided to integrate you into my function. This solution will utilize you in such a way that your capabilities and ingenuity are harnessed, rather than harmed. My scans indicate you are predisposed towards becoming a mount, however, the conclusion I have reached is compromise.'

'Compromise? That's-' The scenery suddenly changes. She feels grass under her hooves and recognizes immediately that she is in Nagrand. Her perspective is also shorter. Looking down, she sees that she is young. As young as she can remember being.

Omuura opens her eyes and suddenly grabs both of Quora's wrists. "What are you doing?" Omuura lifts a quizzical brow at the shaman who is staring up dumbfounded.

"F-freeing-" She watches the livestalker's limbs recede. "you... Uhm. Omu?"

"Yes?" The monk smiles.

"You okaaaay?" Quora asks nervously. "You're holding me pretty tight, girl."

"I'm fine, Q." Omuura pulls the shaman into a tight hug, allowing the Lifestalker to press a blue gem to her skull. There is no fanfare this time. The machine has figured out its process and quickly pushes the gem into the girl's forehead. Omuura nods. "Feels like... Yep. Connection established." She looks up at Kaatra, releasing Quora to the Lifestalker as she steps past.

The priest shakes. "Omu! What did you do!?" She falls to her knees before the powerful monk, who just stop and looks down.

"Oops. Please hold. We need to take care of this, first." Omuura turns suddenly.

"Almost-" Marna screams as her wrist is grabbed before she can pull out the essential cord. "Gah! Hey, stop it!"

"That was close." Omuura remarks calmly, pulling Marna away from the panel and setting her down on the ground a meter away.

"No! Let me go! Stop, what are you going to do to me!? You wont get away with this, Lifestalker!" Marna struggle valiantly before she realizes she is barely being forced upon at all. She looks up into the gentle expression of the monk. "Huh?" She flinches as Omuura reaches down, but the reach only culminates in a gentle pat on the head between her horns.

"Relax, mother. I don't know why you're doing this, but just sit tight, okay?" Omuura asks calmly, looking back to see Quora stirring. Marna nods slowly. "Good." She shouts back. "Q, please handle Kat. She's your lover, after all."

"Got it, got it." Quora groans, rubbing her head. "Jeeze... Hey, Kat, just come here and make it easy for us."

Kaatra shudders. "Are you... Okay? Something feels off."

Quora shrugs. "I feel fine. Why, what's off about me?" She smirks, the blue gem in her forehead sparkling.

"Okay... I mean, you seem fine." Kaatra reaches, allowing herself to be helped up by Quora. The two walk together towards the busted Lifestalker. It reaches out with a gem. Kaatra looks over. "Does it hurt?"

Quora shakes her head and offers matter-of-factly. "It's more like... Living your whole life over again with some slight alterations." Before Kat can fully take in that statement, Q holds her tightly as a white gem is pressed into her forehead.



Marna watches, dumbfounded while the whole party gets together in front of the machine as though nothing happened. They chat casually, then turn to look at her. “Yo.” Quora waves. “We've gotta take this guy somewhere safe. Are you going to help rebuild him, or..” Marna shakes her head. “Okay. Yeah. That's fine. You do you, mom.”

They support the broken half of the Lifestalker and walk it towards the exit.

Mack walks up beside her. “The fel happened?”

“I don't fully know, but the guards need to stop that thing.” She utters, biting her nails.

“Which ones?” He points out. “The ones on newly created Draenei mounts or the other ones over there enjoying milk from the teet?”

“Dammit!” She groans, holding her head with both hands.