

OATHBREAKER

Written By

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FADE IN:

INT. PALACE - DUNGEON - DAY

Dimly lit torches hang from the walls. A rat scurries across the floor, plucking scraps of food.

A dozen cells, 11 empty, 1 occupied.

MARRUS, late 30s, scruffy in appearance with a hint of valor, wearing torn rags, sits back against the wall of his cell.

The rat follows a breadcrumb trail toward Marrus' cell.

Marrus watches the rat, determined/focused.

The rat enters the cell.

Marrus pounces on it like a cat. It squeals, and bolts out of the cell. Marrus reaches out after it -

- the rat enters a hole in the wall.

Frustrated, Marrus slams his hand against the bars.

NIGHT

Moonlight shines through the barred windows.

Marrus, sitting back against the wall, rubs his stomach.

He focuses on the hole in the wall, and narrows his eyes.

DAY

The rat scurries across the floor, plucking scraps of food.

Marrus intently surveys it.

The rat follows a breadcrumb trail into the cell.

Marrus pounces on it -

- the rat escapes, and hurries into the hole in the wall.

NIGHT

Marrus tirelessly stares at the hole in the wall.

His stomach growls. He holds a hand to his gut.

DAY

The rat enters the cell. Marrus scrambles toward it, reaches out - just about grabs it -

- the rat flees the cell.

Marrus growls.

The rat enters the hole in the wall.

NIGHT

Marrus, lying on the floor, drooling, fights unconsciousness.

Torches flicker in the breeze. The rat squeaks (O.S.).

Marrus falls unconscious.

DAY

The rat sniffs breadcrumbs inside the cell.

Marrus, lying on the floor, watches it.

The rat stands on its hind legs, and squeaks.

Marrus, hand shaking, reaches for it.

The rat remains.

Marrus' hand falls to the floor a few inches from the rat.

The rat inches toward his hand.

Marrus' eyes roll back in his skull. He falls asleep.

NIGHT

A roast dinner occupies a plate on a tray by the cell door, a goblet of wine rests beside it.

Marrus' eyes flutter open, and locate the tray.

He crawls toward the tray.

DAY

Marrus pulls himself up on the bars, and stands upright. His legs wobble as he fights gravity.

He uses the bars for support as he approaches the door.

His leg buckles, and he drops to a knee. Defiant, he rises - and stands upright.

He grips the door's bars, and tests their strength. Strong.

DORMAK (O.S.)
(nearby)
Finally.

Marrus seeks the source.

MARRUS
Who's there?

DORMAK (O.S.)
I'd rather we kept that a mystery.
Mysteries are fun. It keeps people
guessing. Hence the term.

Marrus sneers at the voice.

DORMAK (O.S.)
Oh, you're one of those.
(beat)
Fine, we'll do it your way.

DORMAK, mid 40s, demonic with scaly-crocodile like skin, and horns protruding through his temples, taps Marrus' shoulder.

Marrus turns, swings a weak backhand and falls to the floor.

Amused, Dormak looks down at him.

DORMAK
That was pathetic. Look at you now.
On the floor, again. I'm beginning
to think you enjoy looking up. Like
an obedient dog. Know any tricks?

MARRUS
Demon...

DORMAK
Never heard of that one.

Marrus stares a "hole" through him.

DORMAK
Oh, you mean me? That's offensive.
(beat)
But it's also true. Introductions?

Dormak takes a bow.

DORMAK

Dormak. *Demon King. Dealer. Healer. Destroyer. Harvester of Souls*, male and female, I don't discriminate... it's all about equality!

(beat)

And, if I do say so myself... quite the extraordinary gourmet chef. How was the food? Did it fill that gap?

Marrus just stares at him.

Dormak chuckles, points at Marrus.

DORMAK

And you're *Marrus*. I know all about you. Oh yes, I do. I've been eager to meet you for a very long time... and now the day's finally here, and I feel all giddy inside!

Dormak excitedly rubs his hands together.

DORMAK

(taunting)

I know what you did.

Dormak squats in front of Marrus.

DORMAK

And I loved it!

MARRUS

Get away from me!

Marrus swipes at Dormak's face - Dormak leans back, avoiding the attempt, and laughs.

DORMAK

Is that really the way to treat the man, who saved you from starving to death? No, I think not! No, no, no. You thank me.

(beat)

But it's OK. I get it. I'm a demon, you don't trust me. It's fine.

Dormak pats Marrus on the head.

Marrus swats Dormak's hand away, and grabs for him.

Dormak disappears in a waft of smoke -

- and reappears outside the cell, juggling a fresh apple.

DORMAK

That said, my being a demon has its benefits. Food, for starters. I can give you all you can eat.

Dormak snaps his fingers.

A bushel of apples appears on the floor beside Marrus.

DORMAK

Or perhaps you enjoy the oh-so very sweet, delectable taste of pastry?

Dormak flicks his palm into a horizontal position - an apple lattice appears in his hand.

Marrus focuses on the lattice.

Dormak takes a whiff of the lattice.

DORMAK

Ooh... it's still warm.

(beat)

Or, or... or! Something fresh?

Dormak blows a raspberry.

A live chicken appears in Marrus' cell.

Marrus scurries back into the bars.

DORMAK

Oops, that's too fresh.

Dormak clicks his tongue.

The chicken poofs, feathers fly - fried chicken legs appear on a plate where the chicken stood.

DORMAK

Perfect-o.

(beat)

Perhaps something to drink?

Dormak wolf-whistles.

A jug of wine appears next to the chicken legs.

DORMAK

As I said, being a demon comes with its benefits. And those benefits... can benefit you too.

Marrus looks to Dormak.

DORMAK
Interested?

MARRUS
What would I have to do?

DORMAK
There are no strings attached. I'm
a nice demon, believe it or not.

MARRUS
There's always a catch.

Dormak rolls his eyes.

DORMAK
Well, of course there's a catch...
but there's no strings attached to
that catch. It's a one time deal.
One and done!

MARRUS
And what is that catch?

DORMAK
Simple... I need you to finish what
you started.

Marrus narrows his eyes "what?".

DORMAK
(sighs)
You're really going to make me say
it out loud? Ugh... fine.
(beat)
You killed *him*, now kill her.

Marrus weighs his thoughts.

Dormak inspects the fresh apple.

MARRUS
If I do this, I'm free?

DORMAK
As a dragon.

Marrus struggles to his feet.

Dormak grins.

Marrus uses the bars as support, and glares at Dormak.

MARRUS
And if I refuse?

DORMAK
Then I leave, and you stay here...
where you'll starve, alone, and die
a horrible, painful death.

Marrus considers his options.

DORMAK
The choice is clear, Marrus. Heck,
you've already done the tough part.
That's why you're here. Killing her
will be easy.

MARRUS
What do you get from her death?

DORMAK
Nothing at all. Well, something...
but if you're interested in knowing
what that *something* is, you'll have
to seek me out when you're done and
I'll tell you all about it, over a
nice goblet of fresh wine.

Dormak expresses "well?".

Marrus fights inner turmoil.

Dormak "polishes" the apple with his sleeve.

MARRUS
You have a deal.

Dormak acknowledges this with a sly smirk.

DORMAK
Excellent.

Dormak snaps his fingers.

The cell door swings open, and clangs off the bars.

Dormak claps his hands together.

DORMAK
You're going to need some stuff...

Marrus stumbles out of the cell.

Dormak waves his hand in front of Marrus.

Smoke engulfs Marrus - and disperses - Marrus, now in armor, with a sword sheathed at his side, inspects himself.

Dormak excitedly claps.

Marrus looks Dormak in the eyes.

DORMAK

Now, be a dear... and fulfill your
end of the deal.

(beat)

Go and kill the Queen.

Dormak giggles, snaps his fingers - and disappears in a cloud of purple smoke - the smoke disperses.

Marrus glances at his cell, then focuses on the dungeon door.

He confronts the dungeon door - weighs deep thoughts -

- and grips the handle.

CUT TO BLACK.