

Oracle 552

Chapter 552 - Oros's Wrath

"Jax!" The little alien cussed dismissively. "I should have known better! Who else but you could have come up with such a nefarious arrangement."

"Ghehehe! I'm surprised you still recognize me. You weren't so arrogant the last time we met." The smoke face took a dig at it with a relaxed look. "I remember a certain Giwok shaking with jealousy when I was named Overseer of B839."

Oros sneered at this unsubtle quip. This loathsome character hadn't changed a bit over the years. Maintaining his frosty demeanor, he retorted,

"And I remember that the Jax of that time would never have felt the need to possess the subordinate of one of his rivals to achieve a petty victory. Let me guess. It's not going well on B839? You're in over your head, right? Looks like you betrayed the Oracle too."

If he hadn't figured out what he was up against with all these clues, he might as well kill himself right then and there. The Oracle didn't need such an Overseer.

B839 had been born 8 years earlier. In the past, it used to take centuries or even millennia for such a planet to be assembled, but in recent millennia their frequency of creation had increased dramatically. Half of the planets and systems in the Mirror Universe were born in the last million years.

The Mirror Universe now had 670,956 active systems, each comprising up to 25,974 huge planets agglomerating several Seed Worlds together. This represented a staggering 17,427,387,011 planets.

The ZZ831 system was the youngest system and currently had only 1841 planets including B842 which was only 4 years old. Many Evolvers like Jake thought and were told when they first arrived that the planet was already over 20 years old, but those who had been there from the very beginning knew that the planet was actually much younger than that.

This mistake was forgivable, for it was indeed 22 years earlier that the first contact on Earth with the Digestors and the Mirror Universe had taken place. The Earth Government had faithfully kept the secret and except for authorized personnel, the rest of the population had been kept in the dark.

On paper, the calculation made sense, but that was without taking into account the difference in the flow of time between their home world and the Mirror Universe.

Just as time flowed at a different rate in an Ordeal and on B842, time flowed differently in a Seed World than in the Mirror Universe.

Based on the General Law of Relativity, time passed more slowly for objects moving at a higher speed. When approaching the speed of light this phenomenon became particularly obvious.

The Seed Worlds were static worlds, or at least very slow compared to the Mirror Universe. When the assimilation of these worlds to form planets occurred, these worlds were slowly and progressively accelerated to synchronize their time flow with that of the Mirror Universe.

When Aether was added to the equation, these laws became even more complicated.

This synchronization process could take several years and all the other nations and governments invited to B842 at an early stage were informed of this phenomenon and sworn to secrecy.

For the military families left on Earth after the False World War of 2084, 22 years had passed, but those soldiers who had joined B842 had only been there a few years. That was also why many of the famous politicians seemed to have aged very little in the last twenty years.

If Jake had talked more with his cousin Anya, he would have learned about all this. Will had long ago discovered the truth from visiting Thelma and New Earth, but hadn't seen fit to tell him. In any case, knowing his leader's temperament, he would probably have yawned with indifference upon hearing the news.

Back to the matter at hand, it was not for nothing that the Mirror Universe was assembling these planets more and more quickly. The endless war against the Digestors was in full swing and... they were unfortunately losing it.

Many major planets and systems had fallen to the enemy in just a few centuries. And the reason... was unfortunately too complicated to explain in a few words.

But if Oros were to describe it simply, it would say that the real cause of their repeated failures stemmed from greed. As long as a life form was capable of thinking, they were bound to develop emotions, desires and ambition. This was an unalterable truth.

Faced with certain defeat and the influence of Corruption, it was a given for these weaker-minded Evolvers to bend their backs and forsake their dearest principles. But for an Oracle Overseer? That was a disgrace beyond measure and deserved the maximum penalty and worse.

What Oros was thinking must have been written all over his face because the swirling smoke face in front of him suddenly frowned.

"Oros... I know you despise me, but you weren't in my shoes." Jax mouthed laboriously. "I've been entrusted with B839 and I have to do whatever is necessary to preserve it. I don't care about the Mirror Universe at all. I just need more time."

"Hmmpf, that's what they all say before they betray the Oracle permanently!" The tiny alien exclaimed as he roughly clawed at the air in front of him.

The ghostly smoke face distorted before being compressed into a small black ball. Even in this state, Jax still muttered apologetically,

"I'm not a traitor, Oros. Help me out this time. The traitors are..."

The Giwok listened to the series of names with a serious expression, then clenched his fist hard, blowing up Jax's spiritual clone. The next moment, Garos' crushed corpse swelled up like popcorn and the Oracle Guardian Captain opened his eyes again with a haggard look.

"Fine, I'll help you out this time, Jax." Oros muttered gravely.

"What are you ranting about? Where am I? What happened?" Garos asked as he rubbed his eyes with a terrible headache, as if he had just been crushed...

He was dangerously close to the truth.

He freaked the hell out when he saw his tiny superior fluttering above him and he gulped loudly when he saw it raise its hand above his head. Gritting his teeth, he repressed his movements without managing to hide his deep sense of injustice.

'What have I done this time...'

However, it was not the punishment he feared he got. Instead, the alien's small palm patted his head happily and said,

"We have work to do, Garos. I need you to do something for me."

Garos, wasn't sure what had just happened, but he could tell when his superior was serious. For once its ire wasn't directed at him, he was delightfully pleased.

" Anything for you, master!"

His brain then telepathically received a huge packet of information, summarizing for him what had just happened and what his Oracle Overseer expected of him. Sweating profusely from the news that he had come so close to death, Garos clasped his fists and swore fiercely,

"It's as good as done."

Pausing for a brief second, he gathered his courage and asked timidly,

"And you master, what are you going to do this time? We can't let this pass or they'll brand us as weak and try again..."

A sinister glint flashed fleetingly in the Oracle Guardian's pupils and as he left the room moments later a deadly bloodlust burst forth from his entire being.

What Oros had said still echoed in his mind,

"Because I am naturally lazy and usually merciful, these traitors and rivals think they can conspire and wreak havoc on my turf at will. I guess I have no choice but to prove them wrong... Digestors, traitors or greedy rivals, it's all the same to me. It's been a long time since I made an appearance and these fools are starting to forget my name. It's time to remind them... with blood. Wiping out a few of their worlds should do the trick... Remember well Garos. No mercy. You can be possessed once, but not twice. Next time... There will be no next time, okay?"

"There won't be a next time. Friends or not, these traitors, I'll kill them all." The Oracle Guardian Captain repeated these words darkly with a resolute murderous aura. This incident would forever stain his Evolver career and the time had come to redeem himself.

A few hours later, the ship's interior had been completely repainted with a macabre and bloody fresco that contrasted sharply with its pristine white walls. Alien flesh, guts, weapons and broken bones lay everywhere, the air still sizzling from the build-up of the many different energies that had saturated the place.

A short time later, the garrison of Oracle Guardians stationed aboard the ring-shaped spaceship sprang into action, propelling themselves one after another out into space towards various locations on the surface of B842. A keen observer would have noticed, perhaps, that more than half of them were missing.

As for Oros, it was long gone, but wherever it was, the ensuing carnage promised to deprive the many conspirators coveting its position of sleep.

While Oros and Garos were busy radically restructuring their workforce, Jake and the others, who knew nothing of this whole intrigue, were still wracking their brains about how to escape this mountain. After exploring all their options, even Will, who didn't like violence, could only suggest,

"How about we explore this dungeon?"