

## Oracle 841

### [Chapter 841 They're Just Gigolos With Wings](#)

The next morning at dawn, Jake and the elite Myrtharian Nerds stood a few kilometers away from Cradel, the Schwazen capital, waiting for the signal from Vexa and Radur to take action. Only those qualified for the mission were allowed to participate.

As a result, there were only 16 of them. Jake, Hade, Lucia, Xaverie, Asfrid, Gerulf, Rogen, Kenway, Haynt, Hephais, Svava, Shere Khan, Mufasa, Tim, Azeus and Maeve.

Maeve was the unexpected last minute addition to the group. Her show of strength had been endorsed by Hade and Asfrid, and Jake had to admit that her field of expertise was adequate for this undercover mission.

Other Myrtharian Nerds such as Drastan, Aisling, Enya, Crunch, Daniel and Kevin would be tasked with adding to the chaos and causing mayhem by slaughtering the Schwazens in the capital alongside Radur.

The stakes were so high that Jake had hesitated to bring along brutes like Gerulf, Rogen, Shere Khan and Mufasa with them, but he finally felt that it could also work to their advantage if the plan didn't go as planned.

Because he had at least one certainty about them... They would not die easily.

Suddenly, from their hiding place, Jake and the others were blinded by dozens of dazzling flashes. As their retinas adjusted, they saw several atomic mushrooms several kilometers high rising to the clouds.

A blast of fire razed the capital within seconds, until a huge shield of holy light stopped the expansion of the blast. Three furious streaks of golden light shot out of the city and went after the culprit: Vexa.

**BANG! BANG! BANG!**

Jake counted the three distant detonations and received confirmation that Vexa and his men had indeed succeeded in luring 3 Virtues out of Cradel.

'Radur's turn now.' He muttered darkly.

This was the trickiest part of the plan. If it went well, the two Virtues defending the two temples would also be lured out of the capital, but if it didn't, his and the other Myrtharian Nerds' mission would become dozens of times more difficult and risky.

Radur was even more belligerent and confrontational than Vexa. After the holy light shield enveloping the city was erected, the greenish alien hovered over the energy dome and sneered,

"For corrupt Angels out to destroy the world, you're pretty damn spineless."

He waited a moment, but only silence answered him. He did garner a few thousand hateful looks from the Schwazen citizens, but no Principalities, Powers or Virtues responded to his provocation.

"You asked for it..."

At near teleportation speed the scorpion stinger of his tail stabbed itself all the way to its base in the light shield. There was no sound, but the dome of light turned black instantly, then shattered into pieces like a broken window.

Everything in the path of the dart, even that which had not been directly hit, was replaced by a gaping hole several miles deep. The inside of the drilled tunnel also turned black, and the blackness spread over a half kilometer radius, causing several parts of the city to collapse.

The Schwazens who did not fly away in time, whether angels or archangels, disintegrated in a few seconds under the effect of the poison. Several Principalities were also affected by the poison particles that spread through the air and their aura began to fluctuate as they all used their powers to narrowly escape instant death.

"So this is what the True Will of a Mirror Vanguard leader looks like..." Tim mumbled in a clearly jealous tone. "Really unfair."

His words reflected everyone's opinion. A single sting had been enough to destroy a supposedly invulnerable energy shield, while dozens of thousands of overpowered Schwazens had lost their lives.

If the Myrtharian Nerds had faced this Player even three months earlier, their entire faction would have been decimated. Only Jake, Gerulf, Rogen, Hade and a few other unkillable anomalies might have survived that first clash.

Even today, very few of them would dare to say that they could take such a blow head-on. Their True Will was in its infancy and the Killing Moves they had developed were rarely intended for self-defense, but more as a trump card that could offer victory in the most desperate situations.

Meanwhile, the poison continued to spread, causing other neighborhoods to collapse and thousands of helpless Schwazens to die. Only when several hundred Principalities and several Powers combined their powers was the spread of the poison finally halted.

But still no Virtues were found.

Radur frowned. The caution of these angels was causing him serious grief. How were they supposed to lure them if they refused to respond to his provocations.

Annoyed, he waved his hand and launched the assault. The thousands of Mirror Vanguard Players under his command teleported behind him and unleashed their ultimate techniques. A deluge of magics and abilities as disparate as they were destructive fell on the already damaged city and the entire capital with the exception of the two temples and a few palaces was razed to the ground.

Only a few Principalities survived the assault, but they were seriously injured. However, thanks to this all out attack, Radur finally got the desired effect.

At that moment, thousands of Schwazens burst out of the two temples with a deafening drone. The second leader of Mirror Vanguard was at first delighted, until his face broke down when he saw that they were thousands of Powers and Principalities.

'Sorry Vexa, I really did my best,' he apologized shamefully in his head.

A Principality could easily outperform the Jake from two months ago relying only on its embryonic True Will of Destruction. Their Spirit Body level was around 80 and their Body stats on par with a Silver Myrtharian. Including their Soul Classes and other amplification factors it was not an exaggeration to say that they were literally invincible except for a few rare players like the Nullifyer or Vexa.

A Schwazen Power was even more terrifying. Their Spirit Body level was around 90, but their Body stats were close to those of Jake, Gerulf and co. Their True Will of Destruction was also mature and fully functional. One of their attacks could even mortally wound Players like Vexa and Radur.

Right now, 2400 Principalities and 600 Powers were flying with heavy killing intent towards Radur and his men. The two Virtues may not have been there, but it was all the same.

"Scatter!" Radur shouted to his men as he threw a spherical artifact at the Schwazens' army.

The object exploded with a blinding flash and Powers and Principalities were momentarily stuck in the air, their wings flapping in slow motion. The flow of time had been locally altered.

Yet all of a sudden, from the Digestor temple, a black laser pierced the altered area and time immediately resumed its normal course. The Powers and Principalities, having noticed nothing, continued to charge towards Mirror Vanguard as if nothing had happened.

In the blink of an eye, the role of harasser and harassed was reversed, and Radur and his men fled in panic, fleeing eastward. However, an observant bystander might have noticed that their chaotic and terrified retreat was mere theater. Radur was constantly giving new orders and his men adjusted their flight accordingly.

Squinting, Jake and his group laughed as Lord Phenix cawed and sobbed each time a Schwazen attack vaporized some feathers. Crunch was bouncing around dodging all the attacks, seemingly in dire straits.

Then his tail suddenly stuck in the snow and retracted like a spring. A loud bang rang out as the bushy tail unfolded, and the next moment the shredded corpse of a Principality appeared in the black cat's mouth. Not only Jake, even Radur and the other Mirror Vanguard Players were shocked.

"Hmm, should I give up my place as the Alpha?" Mufasa grinned in amusement. The progress of this stupid cat was astounding.

Enya also retaliated with a scarlet fireball of her own design boosted by her True Will and almost as fast as a laser beam, but no luck a Power stopped the attack by casually setting up a light force field. After Crunch's masterstroke, the Schwazens were now vigilant.

Soon Radur and the thousands of Powers and Principalities chasing him disappeared into the distance and silence returned to the capital. Cradel was in ruins, but the two temples loomed unscathed over them from their full height.

"Fuck! How are we supposed to sneak in if all the buildings have been destroyed?" Lucia cursed madly. That Radur was just a big jerk!

Jake's face was also twitching and he was tempted to abort the mission. However, he soon changed his mind and his resolve became all the more unshakeable. He hadn't done all this for nothing.

"Who wants to fight a Virtue with me?" He asked grimly.

He expected them to hesitate, but with an excited laugh Lucia exclaimed,

"They're just gigolos with wings. I'll show them what the word Victory means."

"Can you eat a virtue?" Gerulf grunted, no one sure if he was serious or joking.

### [Chapter 842 Bye](#)

With the exception of Xaverie, no one refused the fight. Jake didn't need that many people, so he declared,

"I can take one of these Virtues alone. The second Virtue will be the responsibility of Lucia, Asfrid, Gerulf and Rogen. Hade, Mufasa, and Shere Khan are in charge of releasing Virtue Caphriel. The others will provide a diversion by engaging the other Schwazen guards."

The other Myrtharian Nerds, with the exception of Hade and Asfrid, were stunned when they saw his confidence. They hadn't faced a Virtue, but they had heard from Tim and the others how their encounter with a mere Power had played out.

"Trust me. Even I have no idea how powerful I am if I get serious." Jake said boldly.

He released a sliver of the Aether contained in his Grade 4 Aether Core and Lucia and the others turned pale as they sensed an Aether density over 60 times that of the rest of the planet.

"This..." Lucia frowned.

"That's just my Aether Core.

The Myrmidian princess said nothing, but she was dying to know how he had increased his power so much in such a short time. Of course, Hade and Asfrid had no intention of spilling the beans.

"What about Ruby and the other Digestor Trojans?" Tim raised his hand.

"If Caphriel is released in time, they won't have time to go anywhere." Svara retorted calmly. "Their correct reaction should be to rush the ritual to receive their Corrupted Angel Bloodine sooner. According to the information obtained by Hephais and Mirror Vanguard, they need at least one Virtue and 10 Powers to preside over the ritual. So there's a non-trivial possibility that Temple Digestor's Virtue will choose to ignore us and send what's left of his army instead."

"Why aren't Shere Khan and I in charge of fighting these two Virtues?" Mufasa rumbled in a bad mood.

"I am the strongest."

"No you're not." Lucia scoffed as she gave the huge lion a swift, mischievous kick.

Even Shere Khan rolled his eyes with a fed-up face.

Ignoring the narcissistic lion, Hade turned to Jake and asked in a low tone,

"You're going to use this... technique?"

Asfrid also became serious upon hearing the Fluid Grandmaster mention this moment.

"No, I've learned my lesson. But this experience has given me new ideas. I just need one move. If the Virtue survives this, we might as well abort the mission and bail out right now. Give me a minute."

"Lend me a Grade 6 Aether Core." Hade requested as he understood his plan.

"Sure."

The eyes of Lucia, Xaverie and the other Myrtharian Nerds became wide as the tiny Aether sphere appeared in Jake's hand. The surrounding Aether was instantly siphoned off, but before they could worry about it Hade stowed it away in his Space Storage.

Jake then flew solo at dozens of times the speed of sound and proceeded to position several dozen Grade 5 and 6 Aether Cores while setting them up for what was to come. It was a risky move, as these Aether Cores could easily be stolen in his absence.

When he returned, Jake marched wordlessly toward the Temple of Aurae to the dumbfounded expressions of his subordinates. Cradel had been completely razed to the ground, so his lone figure was as striking as if he had come with a huge army.

'Miniaturization disabled.'

His handsome body swelled abruptly, regaining the alien and terrifying appearance of an almost 8 meter tall giant. The Double Bloodline Ignition enabled by his armor kicked in right after and a plasma crater dozens of meters deep instantly evaporated beneath him.

The black clouds above them began to spiral ominously and the roar of thunder shattered the silence, as huge purple bolts of lightning lashed relentlessly at Jake below. This display of passive might alone shocked not only Gerulf and the other Kintharians, but also Azeus, the lightning user. Since when was he capable of such a feat?

As Jake stood at the zenith of his glory, a pillar of black light as wide as a skyscraper and shrouded in a halo of dark gold light burst out of the ground and engulfed his figure, the dark beam drilling a hole in the clouds that came to a stop just short of the Mana Storm over a hundred kilometers above.

"Jake!" Lucia yelled, intending to dash to his help, but Hade and Asfrid held her back.

"Don't worry, he knows what he's doing."

Indeed, a few seconds later the pillar faded away and Jake's silhouette reappeared a few meters ahead, while his Oracle Shield's aura flickered erratically. At the same time, in front of the temple of Aurae a Schwazen very different from the others walked slowly outside.

This angel was barely taller than the Power they had met six weeks ago. Its ideally proportioned face radiated serenity and benevolence, but it was only a mask. It also had 8 wings, but besides their deep golden color, the tips were as dark as obsidian, absorbing all light. The golden-black chitin covering its body formed an impenetrable plate armor of an almost bulky thickness. A helmet also protected its head, exposing only its eyes burning like two yellow black suns. A huge falchion rested in his right hand, and a huge bulwark in his left.

"Leave. You are not welcome here." Virtue hissed in a raspy, icy voice.

As the sound of its voice carried to Jake, he felt his Oracle Shield corroding and he sneered inwardly. Even as it spoke, this monstrosity was trying to kill him with its True Will of Destruction.

The angel having clearly shown his insincerity by attacking first Jake retaliated in kind with the full extent of his power. With a thought he activated all the Aether Sun Cores in position.

His 112 Grade 4 Aether Sun Cores and 16 Grade 5 Aether Sun Cores emitted a superheated laser beam simultaneously that struck his single Grade 6 Aether Sun Core at the speed of light. The Grade 6 Aether Core activated in turn and all that radioactive heat and light was channeled, compressed and re-emitted right back at the Schwazen Virtue.

BOOOOOOM!

No matter how strong this angel was, his reaction time could not exceed the speed of light. That was the limit of the natives. Without any Oracle Device to predict the behavior of their enemies there were moves they could not respond to.

Still, its mind was powerful, the equivalent of a Spirit Body level 100. At this level, even without being an Eltarian the mind was closely connected to the Aether Dream and possessed some degree of foresight.

But so what? Even if this Virtue sensed danger looming, why would it fear a measly Player? At best, it was just an ant that was slightly fatter than the others.

With indifference, the Schwazen raised its shield and ducked behind it.

Fatal mistake.

A laser of several hundred million degrees hit the bulwark hard and it melted instantly, a fiery hole instantly replacing the alien's chest and a good third of its Spirit Body. The heat was so scorching that it spread to the rest of his body, overheating its cells to the point of no return.

Sensing his imminent death, the Virtue flapped its wings decisively to propel itself above Jake to retaliate, but could it outrun a laser? As soon as Jake glanced up at him, the laser locked onto its position again and its already partially regenerated body was nuked again.

Even so, Virtue showed no signs of panic, understanding that this attack would cease as soon as Jake was killed or lost consciousness. The alien discarded its shield and grabbed its falchion with both hands despite the fact that its torso and head were already disintegrated.

A pillar of black and gold light enveloped what remained of its body and blade, momentarily halting the concentrated laser that threatened the angel's existence. Jake's Oracle Shield sizzled, then overloaded before the enemy sword even hit him.

Despite this, Jake remained completely stoic. He raised his right hand in front of him and grabbed the void. At the same time, a Grade 6 Aether Core appeared in his left hand and a stream of Aether with a density of several million was instantly converted into Grade 1 Strength Aether, the only Grade of Aether Encoding he could insta-cast presently.

A torrent of Red Aether poured into his right hand, as did nearly all of the Aether in his body, whether it was from his Aether stats or his Aether Core.

An unbending will set his soul ablaze and Jake growled in a low voice,

"Bye."

Jake's fist exploded, but the Virtue's fate was far worse. His existence was erased. Where the Schwazen angel stood, space distorted, then cracked open into a thin spatial rift that closed a few milliseconds later.

What was left of the pillar of black light was sucked into the spatial rift before it closed, leaving no trace of the arrogant Virtue's time on this planet. A deathly silence settled over the ruined capital of Cradel.

A Player who was not from a super faction had just killed a Schwazen Virtue.

### [Chapter 843 Duck Smash](#)

Not only the other Myrtharian Nerds, but Jake was left flabbergasted when he realized that he had two-shot a Virtue. The angelic creature that could have killed him with a casual swipe couldn't do anything, crushed, ground down and swallowed up by a Spatial Rift before it could offer any resistance.

'Is my killing move truly so overpowered?' Jake thought speechlessly.

He had expected an uphill battle, but instead he found himself struck by a sense of emptiness inside, but also of trepidation. He had underestimated the power of his True Will. His Soul Strength and Spirit Body level were nothing special compared to this almost 1000 year-old Virtue, but it had only taken one mistake for the angel to meet his demise.

Did this mean that any Player who could actively deploy their True Will could screw him to death if he wasn't on guard? The thought horrified him. Because unlike the Schwazens, these Players had an Oracle Device and some of them even had an Oracle Rank higher than his.

This reaffirmed his resolve to capture Ruby or another Digestor Trojan. To their sullen faces, the other Myrtharian Nerds had also come to the same conclusion.

A demonic aura suddenly erupted from within the second temple, an overwhelming spiritual pressure spreading like a ripple throughout Cradel and beyond. All of the Myrtharian Nerds, Jake included, were struck by an intense headache as if they had just been run over by a truck.

This was despite the fact that they were all wearing protective airtight suits made of pure Adamantium, a magic metal known for its incredible spiritual insulating properties. Jake, who wasn't wearing his helmet to make it easier to use his True Will, even got down on one knee, blood pouring from every orifice.

If this was the Jake from the beginning of the Ordeal, his brain would have exploded and his Soul would have been severely damaged, making him a vegetable. His lvl 50 Spirit Body was insignificant compared to this new foe, but the tremendous boost from his Grade 4 Aether Core made up for it.

The Myrtharian became as still and steady as a waveless sea, his mind focused entirely on how to defeat this second Virtue. The Aether Sun Cores formation activated again and he cautiously waited for his enemy to appear. When the angel finally emerged from its temple and he was about to open fire, four familiar figures flashed before him.

From left to right, a woman in armor with long golden hair, a giant with dark skin and a long silver mane, a second giant almost identical from behind except for his pale skin and finally a woman in armor with long blue seaweed hair. Lucia, Gerulf, Rogen and Asfrid.

"Let us deal with this Schwazen." Lucia glared at him accusingly. "You've already shown off enough for one day."

"Gerulf doesn't like to be outdone by his student. I'm still your first mentor and a gladiator champion." The Kintharian grunted matter-of-factly as he donned his own helmet. Just now, he and Rogen had been protected by Asfrid.

"No need for that rock-eating dork." Rogen scowled with contempt. "I, Rogen, is more than enough to freeze this angel to death."

The aura of wisdom and dignity enveloping Gerulf instantly crumbled upon hearing the Throsgenian's insult, and the two giants immediately got into a wrestling match. Ignoring the two idiots, Asfrid said to Jake without turning around,

"You're not the only one who's made progress. The Myrtharian Nerds don't want to be a burden on you anymore. Our individual power isn't always enough, but together we can lift mountains. You just worry about saving Ruby, we'll take care of the rest."

Jake frowned, but as he looked over to where the other Myrtharian Nerds were he was shocked to find that they had all shifted positions. Hephais and Daniel were even absent. He hadn't even realized they were gone.

Hade, Mufasa, and Shere Khan had already slipped away into the Temple of Aurae and the loud blasts of explosions soon began to resound inside. A dome of golden light shrouded the structure, trapping the three Players inside.

"Offensive Formation One." Asfrid ordered telepathically.

Azeus, the probationary god of thunder, transformed into a streak of multicolored lightning that violently battered the black storm clouds swirling above them. His presence became untraceable and the storm surge was greatly magnified.

Haynt leapt high into the air and blinding dots of light magically illuminated the opaque clouds, forming a constellation of stars in the shape of a giant sword. The Astral joined his two outstretched fingers and began to move his arm as if he were wielding a blade.

A mirage of a very corporeal sword shot out of the star constellation and rained down like a meteor on the lone figure of the Virtue at near teleportation speed. A huge multicolored lightning bolt burst out of the clouds like a huge snake of light shortly after and hit the blade halfway to the ground, encasing it in a halo of condensed electricity.

The Virtue in charge of protecting the Digestor temple was obviously aware of everything that had happened earlier, but it showed no signs of rage or anxiety. It showed the same detached and benevolent face as his comrade who was murdered before its eyes.



However, that didn't mean it was a fool. Although it could not abandon the temple under its protection, it did not mean that it intended to stand still like a retard. A split second before impact, it sidestepped out of the giant sword's reach.

There was no sound of collision or explosion, only the peal of thunder as the giant sword plunged into the depths of Quanoth, boring a hole so deep and dark that anyone who fell in would never be found.

BANG!

The Virtue suddenly somersaulted for no apparent reason, its body moving so fast that thousands of afterimages formed in its wake. A few seconds later, a deafening shot, comparable to Azeus' thunder clap, echoed in the distance and the angel reappeared with a large hole in place of his left shoulder.

"True... Will?" Virtue murmured quietly as it lifted its falchion with a two-handed grip.

The creature raised its guard just in time to casually block Lucia's Myrmidian gladius sword. On impact, the alien's relaxed muscles bulged, its throbbing veins tripling in size to withstand a force that gave it the false illusion of being squashed by a huge mountain.

"Slash of Victory." Lucia uttered eerily in a soft whisper.

Virtue experienced the concept of defeat corrupting its unwavering resolve as the weight of the enemy sword increased exponentially. The heavy blade of its falchion sprayed sparks with a shrill sound and only by coating its whole weapon with its True Will of Destruction and angelic energy did it manage to repel the attack.

A shockwave comparable to a nuclear bomb resounded, forcing Lucia to scramble back to escape the destructive cloud. The air and the ground blackened as if someone had dumped an ocean of ink onto it, and everything that was touched broke apart before disintegrating.

Everyone scurried backwards to avoid the destruction, but Jake was no longer with them. Taking advantage of the window provided by the previous assault, he had teleported to the second temple.

"I'm not letting a mole sneak in under my nose." The angel snorted as he bolted toward the temple under its protection in pursuit of Jake.

But barely after taking three steps, its entire body became trapped in a block of eternal ice. This supernatural ice was so cold that it clashed with the angel's True Will of Destruction, freezing the affected areas and momentarily stopping their disintegration.

"Sitting Ice Duck." Rogen proudly announced the name of his first killing move to follow Lucia's example.

A perfectly spherical magma rock about a meter in diameter instantly pulverized the block of ice, shooting through the skies at a speed far exceeding Jake's maximum flight speed at his peak.

BOOOOM!

The shockwave, combined with a splash of lava, obliterated everything in its path, including the remnants of the destruction aura still spreading.

"Duck Smash." Gerulf sneered as he patted his Throsgenian rival on the shoulder with a tinge of disdain in his eyes.

Rogen immediately flew into a rage, but a cold sidelong glance from Asfrid forced him to swallow back his desire for revenge.

#### [Chapter 844 I'm Just Laughing At You](#)

"The Virtue is not dead." She declared darkly.

Proving her right, the angel's body recovered soon after with great pain. It was far from instantaneous and anyone with good perception could feel the tenacious and contradictory energies of Gerulf, Rogen or even Daniel responsible for its bullet wound in the shoulder colliding and ruining its recovery.

Having finally a respite, Virtue finally took the time to observe its prey with a hint of respect and dispassion. Whether it was Daniel, the sniper hidden in the forest, the Astral looming high in the sky, the traitor of Lost Divinities or the three fighters having ambushed it on the ground, it had seldom been in such a dire predicament.

Unlike its congener and the other Schwazens of androgynous appearance, this one was clearly a male, or at least he was built like one and had the same aesthetic features. His hair was short for an angel, and he had a short trimmed beard. His eight wings were of a darker gold than those of his colleague and the two yellow black suns shining in his eyes were even more dark and compelling.

His Body Stats were far superior to Jake's or Gerulf's, but they were biased towards physical strength rather than intelligence as was the case for most species. Combined with his millennial Soul Strength and Spirit Body, it was nearly impossible to one-shot him unless one used an overpowered and instantaneous slaying technique like the one used by Jake.

The key to defeating this kind of enemy was to never give them a chance to resist. Once they mobilized their powerful True Will and other angelic faculties, killing them became nearly impossible unless the power gap tilted overwhelmingly in their opponents' favor.

"We knew Mirror Vanguard was plotting to wipe us out, but we didn't think they would be able to find such good helpers." Virtue commented solemnly in a raspy voice. "However, your action is all for naught. Even if I die, it is already too late. Our goal is already accomplished. The ritual has already begun and nothing can stop it.

"Besides... Mirror Vanguard and you Players underestimate the malice of your allies far too much."

Splash!

A black blade shot out of his chest, impaling his heart from behind. The blade spun in the wound, vibrating at a very high frequency, ravaging his insides and releasing a darkness that surpassed even his destructive aura. The Dark Element.

This was no mere wound, his Spirit Body and Soul had also been fatally damaged. Numerous debuffs related to the Dark Element afflicted all of his body, ranging from Fear, Weakness, Poisoning or Paralysis. In gaming terms, it was what some games called True Damage, an attack that ignores all defense and causes absolute damage amplified by the surprise effect.

"And you trust your senses too much." Hephais whispered mockingly in his ear, his body dissolving like a specter into the shadows formed by the blackened earth.

Taking over immediately after Hephais' escape, several Shadow Wolves sprang from the angel's shadow that the assassin had vacated, savagely chomping down on the alien's legs and carotid artery to devour its soul. The Virtue swatted them away with a hard slap but several pieces of his Spirit Body remained missing, aggravating his wounds.

The angel staggered back, wobbling dangerously as he puked a stream of rotten blood. The status quo between his True Will and the three enemy True Wills wreaking havoc on his body was broken as these two new, more pervasive and pernicious energies affected his vitality and ability to focus.

Despite this, the Virtue was a tough guy with no ego. His wounds only fueled his hatred of the living and his determination to kill them was further bolstered. Ignoring his wounds, he held up his falchion again with a frosty expression and said,

"Congratulations, you almost killed me. In fact, with a better knowledge of my abilities your victory would have been assured. So let me teach you a lesson for the future. Never let a high ranking angel, whoever he may be, realize that he can't win. Because an angel, never fights alone and the entity he represents is always at his side."

The angel slowly closed his eyes, his hands clasped in a gesture of prayer and a sacred aura radiated from his being, crossing time and space. His lips parted and began to chant in an unknown language, the excruciating sound evoking the choir of thousands of martyrs howling in agony.

A traumatic melding of requiem and rhapsody, the disturbingly beautiful and eerie song echoed across heaven and earth, starting low, then rising until it became totally inaudible.

The air began to fluctuate, warping slightly behind the angel, and suddenly a beam of black and golden light burst forth, gently embracing the praying Virtue with eyes closed in a motherly glow. A warm, yet demonic and murderous presence smothered all hope of resistance, engulfing the entire Schwazen territory with an overwhelming power.

At that moment, the angel's raspy voice boomed again in understandable Oraclean,

"Holy Nyrxes, keeper of souls and sower of death and chaos, I beg you to hear my prayer. Cleanse my soul so I may conquer your foes. I plead this of you in your eternal presence, o infinite light. Grant me your presence so I may ache no longer. Strengthen me with your divine grace."

A brief silence, as drawn out and oppressive as ever, suppressed all sound in the Serinese Theocracy, the very rustling of the leaves ceasing for a fleeting moment, and then a distant, alien, yet soulful voice echoed from everywhere and nowhere at once,

"Granted."

The Virtue's aura then soared, his levels far, far exceeding those of the angel at his peak, and his wounds instantly healed. The energies of Gerulf, Rogen, Daniel and Hephais ravaging his body were quashed and a bright halo of oppressive and corrosive power flowed forth from the Schwazen, distorting the space around him.

The invincible and evil presence summoned by the angel's prayer faded as it had come, making them doubt its existence, but the power bestowed by this entity lingered. Yet the Myrtharian Nerds soon noticed that the halo had already begun to fade as the angel's Spirit Body was rapidly consumed.

Borrowing the power of an entity that far surpassed his own power was not without drawbacks. And seeing this, Asfrid could not help but chuckle.

"Is it a nervous laugh at your own impending death?" The angel asked with a slight confused frown.

"No. I'm just laughing at you. At the futility of your action." The Eltarian confided with pity. Turning to Lucia and the others she smiled at them and said, "It seems I'm the only one who didn't attack earlier. Let me show you my own killing move then."

Asfrid fearlessly teleported to the alien a few feet away from the creature, the minds of all the Myrtharian Nerds and Eltarians in a position to help merging with her own. Because of her small size, she only reached halfway up the angel's shin. She nonchalantly pointed her palm upward and hummed, "Force Push."

The name was as simple as it was iconic, and so was its effect. Before he knew what was happening to him, the Virtue, boosted by Nyrxes' powers, found himself shot forcefully into the cosmos, his angelic body blasted at over 20km/sec into the thick layer of black cloud.

The sheer magnitude and frequency of the lightning at these altitudes was so overwhelming that Jake, Asfrid and Hade had to combine their Oracle Shields to have any chance of getting through the clouds. How could a humble Virtue survive this without protection?

Perhaps because Aurae could sense the repulsive energy exuding from this angel, but the lightning from the black clouds dozens of kilometers around converged furiously on the Schwazen like a school of hungry piranhas, merging into a huge destructive bolt of lightning with a voltage of several trillion volts.

Nyrxes' weakening aura spiking his abilities held out for half a second, then before he could even think of using his own True Will of Destruction his body and soul shattered into countless particles.

Cradel's second Virtue had perished.

#### [Chapter 845 Temple Demolisher](#)

As soon as Jake stepped inside the Corrupted Temple, an austere dimness overwhelmed his senses. The sound itself seemed to have dulled, and he could barely hear his own breathing. He focused his psychic power into his Myrtharian Eyes and the light returned.

The interior of this temple reminded him of those old Gothic churches and cathedrals, except that the notion of sobriety was altogether absent. There were rows of pews for the faithful, a dais and an organ at the back, but instead of being built of basic materials like wood, everything was made of gold, platinum and precious stones.

Colorful stained glass windows depicting angels performing all sorts of divine actions served as towering wall decorations, but instead of saving people or performing miracles, these folks were their food. In one, a 12-winged angel solved a people's drought by bleeding out the entire population to irrigate their land. On another, a father praying to heal his deformed child saw his wife, himself and all the humans in

his village become as deformed as his own son. On a third, the problem of famine was solved by slaughtering half a village to feed the other half.

All the pure wishes that were originally formulated ended up being distorted, corrupted. Each time, the angel who had answered their prayers took its due by devouring something. Most often the one who made the wish.

"Ugh, that's...fucking sick." Jake's face scrunched up in disgust at the depraved and unnatural theatrics. "But where are Ruby and the other Digestor Trojans?"

He attempted an Oracle Scan, but was taken aback when the emitted spirit signal ricocheted against the marble floor. There was some material or spell under the temple that could interfere with his bracelet.

"As expected from a Corrupted Species worshipping Digestors. But as a result, I know where to look."

Jake was not yet the ultimate warrior and had quite a few shortcomings, but his destructive ability was not one of those. Having to stop the ritual anyway, he summoned a Grade 6 Aether Core again and activated all of his boosting skills and kicked the ground beneath his feet with all his might.

Double Bloodline Ignition, Myrtharian Warrior Trance, Gold Stone Skin, Gravity Domain, Telekinesis, Strength Aether, Aether Conversion...

Gravity was multiplied by 110 thanks to the Gravity Domain of his armor and Jake launched himself into the air, his feet sinking deep into the ceiling and creating deep cracks in the temple's vault. He bent his legs and tightened his muscles, then hurled himself in the opposite direction back toward the ground. A jet of plasma blasted out from behind his elbow, which combined with his telekinesis accelerated his arm to inhuman heights. His fist stretched out like a spring and smashed into the ground.

The floor of the temple caved in instantly, a downward shockwave pulverizing everything underneath the temple for several hundred meters. After that first punch, Jake didn't stop there. He leapt up and did it all over again.

Hundreds of times per second.

**BANG, BANG, BANG!**

At first he was a bit rough, but soon he got the hang of it and started to use the ceiling with his Earth Manipulation as a trampoline to assist his movements. The might of his offensive stepped up another notch and a massive earthquake quickly rippled through Cradel, generating deep rifts that rent the earth in two as far as his eyesight could see.

After having leveled the temple to a depth of 6 or 7km, Jake's eyes flickered with anticipation as he finally detected several presences below him with his mental sense. He raised his fist one last time and...

**CLANG!**

His fist, which currently resembled a disproportionately large boxing glove covered in black diamonds, collided with an incredibly solid light surface. It was the rare ore from the asteroid that he had consumed in its entirety the day before.

On impact a counter force entered his body with such violence that it dislocated his shoulder. With an aggrieved frown he put his joint back in place and tried to scan the energy dome beneath him.

His Aether Sun Cores were outside the temple, which was still standing after the earthquake he had caused, but that didn't matter. Activating them remotely, he aimed the laser resulting from their convergence at the dome of light just below him.

There were kilometers of earth and rock between them, but it took less than 5 seconds for the light beam to vaporize everything in its path and strike the dome. A ripple was born on the dome's surface, which then turned into a multitude of wavelets.

Jake was optimistic at first, but soon the light from the dome grew brighter and he realized that he had been wrong about this shield. This structure was feeding on radiation and heat with an efficiency close to 100%.

He thought he had failed at first, but after a few seconds the light from the dome became so blinding that he was forced to avert his gaze. The temperature skyrocketed and he understood that unless this dome was some sort of Aether Artifact Air Conditioner of Bronze quality or higher, whatever was inside would soon cook alive like a lobster in a pot of boiling water.

That was a terrible example. It would be more like throwing a lobster directly into the core of the sun. A transition from solid state to plasma in a flash.

Alas, expectations and reality often diverge greatly. Instead of heating up indefinitely, the golden light dome abruptly darkened, turning black.

The pure white laser that had been crashing into the energy shield turned black as if liquid ink had been injected into it, and the beam of light began to decay as the destructive dark energy traveled up the laser's path to its source.

"Fuck me..." Jake curse as he threw a huge boulder of black diamond several feet in diameter that sliced the laser in half and refracted the black and white beam in different directions before vaporizing.

At the same time, he switched off his Aether Sun Cores and the destructive energy corrupting his laser was deprived of its target, having to make do with the air. Very quickly the black light of the dome regained its warm golden hue as if nothing had happened, but in the meantime several angels had managed to break out and then strike at him.

Three black lasers coming from three different directions converged on him simultaneously, aiming at his heart and brain, and Jake, unable to protect himself effectively against such energy, responded in the only appropriate way, namely by teleporting directly behind one of his enemies with a grabbing motion.

As he reappeared, the angel in front of him immediately deformed under the pressure of his grip, then when his True Will's flame flared in his pupils the Schwazen imploded, before being vacuumed into a Spatial Rift. He didn't even get a chance to count how many wings this angel had.

At the same time, the two black lasers of the two remaining attackers targeted him again, but Jake ducked behind the Spatial Rift's shade to fend off the danger. The two destructive lasers capable of shredding even air, light and Aether vanished inside without a trace.

Upon seeing this, Jake felt enlightened and realized that his True Will of Gripping could also be used to defend himself. However, after this second use of the day, he felt his mental fatigue catch up with him, a sense of emptiness and apathy pervading him unknowingly.

He was familiar with these symptoms after training his True Will hard for the past six weeks and forced himself to ignore them. Concealed by his Spatial Rift, he teleported behind another Schwazen before it closed and pulled his ultimate grip again. A second Spatial Rift tore through the air, sucking the remains of another imploded angel into it.

He tried to fool the last attacker in the same way, but the opponent realized that letting Jake grab the void in front of him was a lethal mistake, and fearlessly threw itself into the fray, slamming its falchion wrapped in black and gold light into its opponent's half-closed fist suspended in midair.

Jake had no choice but to dodge, but this time had time to observe and count the wings of his enemy clearly. A Power.

Compared to the Virtue he had killed, this angel was ridiculously fast, his swordplay so advanced that every movement was like a dance of blades slicing through the air and space around him. His body was enveloped in runes and multiple halos of light emitting distinct auras and Jake understood that this one had taken advantage of his two companions' sacrifice to receive some divine buffs.

But even with such agility and technique it didn't matter. Jake's physical advantage was overwhelming. The only danger was the True Will of Destruction coating the angel's blade, but he had found a parry.

They exchanged several thousand blows over the course of a few seconds where Jake mostly dodged, then all of a sudden he pretended to reveal a gap in his guard. The Power thrust at his heart and instead of dodging like the last few times he deflected the blade with a heavy palm strike.

The angel's outstretched arm was flung to the side and the Schwazen lost its balance, finding itself swept away by the inertia of the counter. Jake took a step forward, teleporting a meter to grab the Power's head with his free hand. He squeezed without activating his True Will and the angel's head imploded. He then froze the corpse and its soul without giving it a chance to regenerate and with a telekinetic burst of pressure crushed the whole thing into fine ice dust before setting it on fire again with a gigantic flash of lightning.

The dome guardians had been taken out.

### [Chapter 846 Mission Accomplished](#)

Left with a clear field of fire, Jake again ordered his Aether Sun Cores to shoot at the light dome, except this time the laser did not fire continuously. Light pulse by light pulse, blaster shot by blaster shot, he bombarded the energy shield at an insane rate of several million rounds per second.

Soon the dome was draped in a destructive black veil again, but since the laser was not steady, its inherent contamination property was not exploited. Without True Will, even the most destructive power was constrained by the most fundamental laws of physics, the most inviolable of which was the conservation of energy.

The True Will of Destruction was a limited resource and after the death of these three Powers, the tenacity of this protective shield took a hit. The black veil continued for several minutes to break down

and absorb the light particles hitting its walls, but soon the interior of the dome overheated again. And this time, there was no one to stop the people inside from slow cooking.

And indeed, the dome was manually shut down by someone a few moments later and two charred Schwazens on the verge of death revealed themselves to him writhing on the floor. He nuked them with a laser blast each.

It was not the two Powers that caught his attention, but the spooky altar erected in the center of the once-dome of light.

A strange silver figure about six meters tall, vaguely humanoid and without facial features hovered twenty centimeters above the ground with its arms outstretched like some biblical figure on its crucifix. Thousands of wings of energy with the same warm dawn radiance spread out behind its back like a fan, forming a perfect circle.

The aura of this thing was not oppressive and repulsive as Jake had envisioned, but rather like the soothing embrace of a loving mother. His mental fatigue at the sight of it seemed to subside, and a subconscious urge to approach it made him take a step forward.

[Jake, what are you doing?] Xi snapped him out of his daze with a sharp rebuke.

A cold sweat brought the Myrtharian to his feet and a chill of dread swept through his body.

'That was close... I almost lost control of my senses.' He realized, his face gloomy.

His lucidity recovered he finally noticed that this silver avatar was not alone. Seven humanoid aliens of different species were crowded around the majestic entity, hugging it possessively like a pack of starving hyenas clinging to a dying zebra.

Looking more closely, Jake realized that this was not just an impression. These seven individuals were indeed devouring this unknown silver angel. One of them had long silky white hair, and although she was in her Digestor Myrgenian form - a giant of just over four meters, covered in silver chitin armor with skin streaked with veins of bluish light - he identified her at once.

Ruby Hale. And in this case, the other six aliens must have been the other six Digestor Trojans gathered at Cradel and scheduled to receive the angelic bloodline through a ritual.

Right at that moment, Ruby had like the other six her fangs deeply planted in the flesh of the silver entity's forearm, swallowing greedily. The scene might have seemed erotic at first, reminiscent of the festive practices of some of the upper class vampires, but that misconception faded away as soon as Jake realized that the faceless angel was not just having its blood sucked out, but was actually being devoured alive.

It was just that its regeneration speed was so terrific that its flesh was instantly rebuilt between each bite. Although this thing had no face, Jake got goosebumps as he perceived its altruistic and benevolent aura.

This overwhelming presence was very much like the one summoned by the Virtue he had killed earlier.



He could almost imagine it smiling. But that smile was pure evil. With each additional bite, the genetic and Aetheric material of this entity would accumulate in the stomachs of these seven Players and with it a Corruption unlike anything they had encountered before.

Jake didn't know how the ritual had summoned this thing, but he was sure of one thing. He couldn't let them finish devouring this entity. He didn't care about the fate of the other players, but he hadn't given up on saving Ruby yet. His Ordeal Rating and his hopes for revenge depended on it.

The most confusing part was that this silver avatar and the seven hungry Digestor Trojans were completely unaware of his existence. It was as if they were possessed and the only thing that spurred them on was the compulsive instinct, the powerful desire to evolve that drove them to relentlessly devour this evil angel.

The lack of resistance was unexpected, but he wasn't going to complain about it.

"Forgive me for interrupting you in the middle of a feast, but this might hurt." Jake mentally apologized in advance as he grimly raised his hand up to his face.

All that was left of his True Will focused in his fingers and after activating all his boosts he clenched his fist and gripped the air eight times. An overwhelming mental fatigue immediately overtook him, blurring his vision.

The silver entity imploded on the spot, immediately followed by six more implosions and a tearing sound. Its body rebuilt itself instantly, but the Spatial Rift that appeared at its location warped the space around it and the angel was siphoned inside without offering any form of resistance.

Six of the seven Digestor Trojans were reduced to the state of molecular pulp and were in turn sucked into the Rift, but Ruby suffered a different fate. A sort of flaccid pouch with a short tube at one end and a long, serpentine pipe 20 or 30 feet long at the other appeared in Jake's hand.

Ruby's digestive system... His Grabbing Move was not only used to kill but could also fulfill its most basic function: catching things.

A few feet away from him, the white-haired woman had regained her senses, an excruciating pain radiating throughout her body as she became cruelly aware of the disappearance of her internal organs.

Her eyes were bloodshot and her face puffed up with pain and bewilderment and for a fleeting moment Jake sympathized. But only for a moment.

Without mercy or hesitation he pulverized Ruby's stomach with a stomp of his foot, hoping that what she had ingested had not yet been digested. Stomach acid splashed in all directions, but instead of corroding all the surfaces, the floor and walls froze for several dozen meters.

This reassured Jake greatly. Cold was not as effective as heat in destroying matter. Its main function was to freeze things as they are, not to break them down.

This meant that by definition Ruby's digestion was much less efficient than his. However, this kind of logic applied to normal cold. Cooling an object meant stealing its heat energy and taking this logic to the extreme once all the heat of an object was stolen, the next step would be to steal the matter itself.

Eventually, Ruby's cold digestion would lead to the same result, but the outcome was simply longer.

After tearing open her stomach and intestines, Jake coldly inspected what was inside, ignoring the foul smell of gastric juices. He soon found pieces of silvery, spongy, glistening flesh scattered throughout her digestive tract, whose erratic behavior reminded him of liquid alloy.

When Jake's gaze fell on them, they began to wriggle autonomously as if they had a will of their own, trying to crawl back to Ruby by any means available.

"Not under my watch." Jake snorted coldly.

With a thought he wrapped them in a telekinetic force field and shoved them right into the Space Rift that was about to close. The predigested pieces of silver flesh disappeared into the silent rift and Jake finally breathed a sigh of relief when he received a notification from the Oracle System.

[Side Mission 6: Assist Mirror Vanguard in their war against the Serinese Theocracy.]

[Sub-Mission 2: Rescue Ruby Hale: Excellent Rating]

That was it. Still, he noted that the rating was not perfect, which could only mean one thing: Some of the silver flesh consumed had been digested.

He didn't worry too much about it. If her condition was impossible to reverse, the final rating would have been mediocre, bad or downright deemed a failure.

The Spatial Rift began to close and Jake walked toward Ruby, keeping his guard up. Only after it had completely closed did he dare to relax for good.

Rather than sedate Ruby's Digestor half with his own Spirit Body and Calming Soul Spells at the risk of corrupting himself, he did as Vexa suggested and forced the young woman to drink a sedative substance intended for that purpose. Ruby, who had barely finished regenerating her digestive system, immediately fell into a deep coma.

This potion was a substance produced by a veteran Mirror Vanguard player with 8 Ordeals under his belt, and at this level even a promising half-digestor like Ruby could do nothing.

With his mission accomplished, Jake placed the sleeping girl onto his shoulder and prepared to turn around when the Spatial Rift that had closed suddenly reopened by a millimeter. The process lasted only one billionth of a second and he did not notice anything.

A blinding, superheated jet of silver substance shot out of the rift and splashed onto the back of Jake's neck, penetrating the pores of his skin. He felt an itch and scratched absentmindedly, then returned to the surface.

### [Chapter 847 They're Not Built For Teamwork](#)

At the same time that this silver substance was seeping through the pores of Jake's skin, the Virtues and various Powers and Principalities relentlessly pursuing and battling Vexa and Radur's squadrons suddenly retreated.

Vexa was so surprised when the three Virtues gave up the chase that he halted in his tracks, wavering on whether to attack again to hold them off. They were still a long way from the ambush point they had chosen to eliminate these three powerhouses.

When he was about to target one of them in the hope of taunting them again, he received a notification from his Oracle Device. He was startled when he found that it was a message from Jake.

"Caphriel has been freed and Ruby is in our hands, sedated with the potion you gave me."

"What about the other Digestor Trojans?" Vexa inquired.

"Dead."

The cube man's face twitched as he learned what had happened to them, but he didn't press the issue. It was unfortunate they couldn't be saved, but he couldn't ask Jake to risk his life for them.

Jake had indeed considered saving them, but at this point his True Will was nearly exhausted and he was being racked by a splitting headache. The problem with overusing his mental strength was that it resulted in not only psychological fatigue but a severe lack of motivation and deep apathy.

Jake had killed the other six Digestor Trojans instead of saving them simply because he didn't give a damn about their fate at the moment. Vexa had anticipated this contingency, so he refrained from blaming him. This outcome was good enough.

"See you later at the base."

\*\*\*\*\*

Radur faced a similar situation, with thousands of Powers, Principalities and Archangels chasing them like a swarm of buzzing gnats suddenly veering 180 degrees in the opposite direction.

Unlike Vexa's plan, Radur had never intended to ambush them anywhere, contenting himself with gradually reducing their numbers with guerrilla tactics and long-range bombing. Myrtharian nerds like Lord Phenix and Crunch were smeared with Schwazen blood, as were the bladed weapons of the Mirror Vanguard Players.

Radur shook his scorpion tail vigorously to clean off the angelic blood covering his stinger, and read Jake's message.

"Ugh?" The alien's slit pupils constricted in astonishment. "They pulled off the mission despite the fact that I failed to lure the two Virtues guarding the temples? I'm impressed... It would seem that Vexa is a better judge of character and talent than I am."

The warrior turned to his men and barked,

" We're going back home."

\*\*\*\*\*

Half an hour later, another council was held in Mirror Vanguard's secret base, this time with an additional guest. Caphriel.

Caphriel was a Schwazen Virtue very different from the other evil, degenerate angels teeming within the Serinese Theocracy. She was able to alter her size and right now she looked like a gorgeous young woman with a flawless angelic face, and an hourglass body curvy and thin where it should. She wore a

long red dress falling to her ankles and not particularly skin-tight, but her voluptuous forms made the outfit even more suggestive.

Like the other Virtues, her skin was a pale grey and her wings, hair, irises and nails were pure gold. While the other Corrupted Virtues were of a cold and depressing dark gold, the gold of her wings and hair were much brighter and heart-warming.

"First of all, I want to thank you for saving me." Caphriel bowed low before them, her doll-like face filled with gratitude and sincerity. Her voice was incredibly sweet and cute for such an ancient and respected angel.

Vexa and Radur noticed that her gratitude was not directed at them, as her pretty eyes twinkled with adulation as she focused on Hade, who was the epitome of indifference.

'How fucking dense are you?' Jake and the others cursed inwardly seeing him totally oblivious to the angel's sweet-eyed behavior.

"Ahem, it was the least we could do. We were only doing our duty." Vexa cleared his throat awkwardly before regaining his seriousness and getting to the heart of the matter. "Can you control the other Virtues? It's good that you're on our side, but these five Virtues together can do considerable damage if we let them run free."

Cough...

"What?" The cube man became annoyed as he saw Jake and his group interrupt him with self-conscious expressions.

"There are only three Virtues left." Asfrid explained. "Jake killed one, we killed the other."

She had gotten the second kill, but she didn't dare take credit for her teammates who participated in the fight.

Vexa, Prysm and Radur's jaws dropped when they heard the news.

"Are you kidding me?" The cube man asked grudgingly.

"I'm afraid not." Lucia smirked with a smug face.

Vexa and the other Mirror Vanguard officers were still in shock, but it was good news for them. Being professionals, they quickly regained their composure.

"Only three Virtues left, then. Three instead of five doesn't fundamentally change the picture." Radur grunted.

"But at least we know now that the Myrtharian Nerds are capable of killing those Virtues." Prysm eyed them strangely as she spoke these words. Wasn't their progress a little too fast?

"If we could use all of our Artifacts we could easily kill them too." The scorpion-tailed alien pointed calmly, thinking that Jake and his team had resorted to an Artifact.

Vexa frowned, not as convinced as his friend Radur, but he didn't contradict him. He wasn't totally wrong.

For one thing, his Cube Magic was regarded simultaneously as a Bloodline, a magic and a technology. His body could behave like a cube, but he could also produce, assimilate or use those belonging to other members of his species.

Some of the cubes in his possession were considered prohibited weapons in this Ordeal, as was the Grade 10 Aether Core that Jake had recently acquired. This could be extremely unfair to some Players like him who had the ability and means to easily produce such weapons even from scratch.

'Fortunately, this is the last Ordeal that is so restrictive. From the Fifth on, we will at last be free to deploy our full power with all the implications that entails...' Vexa thought grimly in his head.

After that, it was decided that they would give Caphriel a chance to convert the Schwazens whose Corruption had not yet reached the point of no return. Aerae could replace the Digestor entity as their new god, and Jake knew that the Ancient Designer was currently here, so he was very confident with this plan.

The Virtue refused to donate her Bloodline to Ruby for the time being, arguing that she needed all her power to purify and convert the corrupted angels. Besides, she needed Aerae's approval to allow such a sacred ritual. Turning someone into an angel was not a trivial act and required some preparation.

Jake was in no hurry and agreed to wait. In the meantime, Ruby was forced to remain in an artificial coma by consuming the potions prepared by Mirror Vanguard.

With the three Virtues and their armies of Powers and Principalities still posing a great threat, it was decided that the Mirror Vanguard elites and Myrtharian Nerds would accompany Caphriel on her cleansing quest.

Over the next few days, Caphriel toured the villages and cities to convert ordinary Schwazens. Citizens who had committed too many crimes or had been corrupted to the point of no return were mercilessly put to death by Mirror Vanguard, while Jake and his comrades were content to deal with archangels and Principalities who might pose a real threat.

These frequent but moderately difficult fights allowed them to gain experience with their True Will and their first Killing Moves were gradually refined, getting closer and closer to perfection.

By now, Jake's Grabbing Move had reached a certain level of proficiency and Mirror Vanguard's higher ups like Vexa and Radur were stunned by the terrific progression of his True Will. Who would have imagined a few months earlier that a simple grabbing motion could produce such damage while being so versatile.

"I can't wait to see the look on Ael's face when he gets a taste of this technique." Vexa laughed to himself as he watched a Schwazen Power implode, then get siphoned into a Spatial Rift without being able to react.

He also had a very positive opinion of Asfrid, Lucia, Gerulf, Rogen, Svara and Hephais. Their True Wills were amazingly synergistic, and Vexa himself wasn't confident he could survive an ambush from those six if he didn't have the Oracle Rank advantage.

"As for these guys... they're not built for teamwork." Vexa pursed his lips in disapproval as he glared at Mufasa, Shere Khan, Crunch and Lord Phenix.

## [Chapter 848 One Drop Would Have Been Enough](#)

Mufasa was a highly underestimated machine of large-scale destruction. The omnidirectional blast of wind that he whipped up with every movement was like the shockwaves of a several-kiloton nuclear bomb, with himself as the epicenter.

No one, absolutely no one, could fight alongside him, not even his allies.

Shere Khan was a different story. The only one whose fighting style came close was Azeus.

When he fought, the giant tiger would generate a very powerful voltage that converted all the energy in his cells into electrical or kinetic energy. Like Azeus, he could transmute his body into lightning, but unlike the probationary god his body was much more tenacious and he could revert to solid form after reaching much greater speeds.

Shere Khan's fighting form of choice was therefore a half-solid, half-lightning state that gave him, at the cost of a slower movement speed than pure electricity, an offensive and defensive prowess that very few Players in this Ordeal could emulate.

When Mufasa and Shere Khan fought in close proximity to each other, they would inevitably compete, rampaging and ravaging their battlefields beyond redemption. Several Mirror Vanguard Players had almost died several times fighting too close to them.

Then there was Crunch, the rubber cat who thought he was a giant flail. Once its tail was firmly planted in the ground, the black cat's body would become a spinner covered in spines and once launched its rotations would become unstoppable crushing anyone unfortunate enough to stand in their way.

With the centrifugal force continually increasing, the cat's elastic tail would also grow longer and longer, increasing the range of its deadly spins as the fight went on. If Crunch's spinning attack was miraculously stopped, the rebound would hurl his thorny body in a random direction increasing the chaos and damage done in unpredictable ways.

Then there was his faithful sidekick, Lord Phenix. Since the orange turkey had realized his dream, he liked to remind everyone that he was no longer a lowly bird, but a spectacular fire phoenix.

In addition to continually launching kamikaze attacks by blowing himself up to rise from the ashes, each of his wingbeats triggered deluges of flame as hot as the sun's surface on the battlefield, incinerating everything for kilometers.

If a blast of Mufasa's wind inadvertently collided with his flames, a flame tornado with a tenfold diameter would cover the battlefield, multiplying the extent of the damage by an unknown factor.

Their propensity for carnage and the advent of their True Will had only made them more unpredictable.

After these four brutes had wiped out several entire cities in an attempt to help, Vexa had formally forbidden them to participate in any combat without his permission. Unfortunately, he had overestimated the respect these animals paid him and every time they fought he would be forced to clean up their mess.

"Sigh... I don't know how Jake keeps these beasts under control." Vexa lamented wryly. Radur seemed to like them...

"At least they are our allies." Prysm consoled him with a peck on the cheek. "We'll need them for the final battle."

Far from relaxing, Vexa darkened when his companion reminded him of the impending final confrontation. In recent days, the planet had finally been completely blanketed by the black clouds and Mana Storm. Leaving the planet was now impossible with the allowed artifacts.

The only alternative they had was to gather enough Codexes of Auras to gain full control over the planet's settings and reduce the density of Mana to weaken the black clouds and the Mana Storm. Easier said than done.

A Codex alone had limited effectiveness and range and could easily be countered by another Codex. If Jake used his Codex right now to reduce the Mana density to zero, it would actually take several years or a decade for the Mana accumulated over the centuries to dissipate. The only way to speed up this process was to merge the Codexes together to increase their performance.

According to their intel, a total of 26 Codexes of Auras had been found on Quanoth since the beginning of the Ordeal. Because Vhoskaud had arrived first, three of them were in its possession. Mirror Vanguard had 2 more, Lost Divinities had another 2, Demiurges had 4 but they were fighting in space, and Anti-Life had 3. With Jake's, that made fifteen.

So there were 11 Codexes currently owned by Players of unknown factions. The Ordeal was coming to an end and if these Players had managed to hide and survive until now then they were definitely not weak.

"In the end, we'll still have to kill each other to get all those Codexes..." Vexa grumbled sullenly, which made Prysm tremble. "If there are less than ten thousand of us at the end of the battle royal, getting final control of the Codexes won't matter. And if the Codexes end up in the hands of the other super factions and there are more than 10,000 of us, they'll use them to get a free pass for their members by letting the other factions die.

"And if we're still over 10,000 after that... we'll have no choice but to kill each other. Mirror Vanguard has over 10,000 players scattered across Quanoth. I'd hate to have to fight Jake and the others. I hope they'll forgive me..."

"You worry too much." Jake's voice suddenly boomed behind him. "It's just an Ordeal. We have our assignments and we do what we need to do to get through them. If we have to fight and you kill me in the end I won't blame you. But let's do it fair and square without backstabbing. Besides, you're too optimistic. I doubt you'll have more than 100 Players left after all this."

Jake didn't mince words. Between the robotic army Vhoskaud had been tirelessly manufacturing for hundreds of years, the billions of mythological creatures from the Wilderness migrating to Celestial City, and the other super factions and solo Players, there were too many variables they couldn't control.

For a while now, his Shadow Guide had hardly responded, telling him that all the remaining Players had Oracle Ranks equal to or greater than his. They were probably using all sorts of special abilities like Oracle Cloaking and Promotion to confuse their enemies' predictions.

What Jake didn't know was that since Ruby's release the other super factions, Mirror Vanguard included, couldn't predict anything about him and the Myrtharian Nerds either. Even if he knew, he would have simply chalked it up to Ruby and her Digestor aura jamming the Oracle System.

"You're probably right." Vexa forced himself to smile. He was indeed getting worked up over nothing. It was still too early to be thinking about hypothetical events that were unlikely to happen.

Over the next week, all the cities of the Serinese Theocracy were visited by Caphriel and spreading her gospel she converted all who could be converted while the rest were slaughtered without remorse by Mirror Vanguard and Myrtharian Nerds.

After ten long days of reconquest and preaching, Caphriel, her escort and millions of reconverted angels finally returned to the capital, Cradel. Vexa, Jake and the others expected a tough fight, but they were taken aback when they discovered a desolate city.

The three Virtues and their elite troops had deserted the country, fleeing to who knows where.

"I didn't think these angels were so wimpy..." Radur snorted with a disappointed look.

"At least we kept our end of the bargain." Jake commented in relief, not giving a damn about what would become of these renegade Schwazens.

Caphriel was finally going to give him the Blood Essence she had promised him and that was all that mattered. The fate of the Corrupted Virtues and Powers was a concern for Mirror Vanguard and the other Players.

His only regret was that as long as they were alive he couldn't get a perfect rating on his Side Mission. Nevertheless, he was confident that he would meet them again before the end of this Ordeal.

A few hours later, Jake found himself in a private room in the temple of Aurae with Hade and Caphriel, who was hooked on his arm like a leech. Judging by the Fluid Grandmaster's embarrassed expression, their relationship had made some progress over the past few days...

Feeling the cheeky gaze of his leader, the centenarian Player coughed and glowered at him. Caphriel, who hadn't noticed, released her crush and pricked her fingertip with one of her golden feathers. A drop of blood that looked like molten gold beaded on its surface and Jake carefully collected it in a vial specially processed with his telekinesis.

The female Virtue did not stop there, however, and two more drops of Blood Essence beaded off her finger and the glowing halo radiating from her dimmed significantly after this deed.

"One drop would have been enough." Jake chided her gently.

"What does it matter? I'm going to die soon." The young woman smiled sadly as she cast a rueful sideways glance at Hade.

### [Chapter 849 Parting](#)

She knew about the 10,000 places and didn't think she could secure one. Besides, she didn't want to abandon the millions of angels she had just converted. That would be the epitome of hypocrisy. It was the lot of all angels in the service of Aurae.



Jake turned to Hade, who shrugged and said,

"I've already tried everything to convince her. Bigotry is the worst."

"I prefer to call it a sense of honor and duty." Caphriel grinned without resenting him for his tactlessness.

If anything, she knew the Fluid Grandmaster was totally right. She was putting Aerae's commandments ahead of her own feelings.

Seeing that she had made up her mind, Jake didn't dwell on it and bid her farewell. Before leaving, he turned around one last time and said to the resigned Virtue,

"I've already met Aerae. No god or entity is worth sacrificing your life for. If he is as noble and good as you seem to think he is, he should want you to live. Aerae orchestrated this world ending. The only reason we're killing each other is to survive an apocalypse he intentionally created. I don't pretend to know his deepest motives, but I do know that this whole charade has the sole purpose of sorting the wheat from the chaff, separating the strong from the weak. If you fight and get one of those 10,000 spots, in my opinion you are fulfilling the will of Aerae, nothing more and nothing less."

Jake and Hade then left together, leaving the Virtue lost in thought. He then visited Vexa and Prysm and told them of his intention to leave with what was left of the Myrtharian Nerds. At this stage of the Ordeal they were only a few dozen.

Vexa was not thrilled with their departure, but he knew it was bound to happen. The final battle was near and no one could know if they would end up as enemies. To avoid any early betrayal, it was best to part ways now.

The cube man knew that they had Ruby, a Digestor Trojan, in their hands, so they were no longer included in the predictions of his Oracle Paths. Letting them go without keeping an eye on them was dangerous, but by allowing them to do so Vexa was proving that he and Mirror Vanguard were trustworthy. He hadn't given up on recruiting them yet.

"Goodbye my friend." The Mirror Vanguard leader gave him a bear hug. "I hope we'll meet at the Divine Academy among the winners to celebrate our success together over a drink."

"Don't look at me like this is the last time we'll see each other." Jake rolled his eyes. "Try not to die too quickly."

Radur and Prysm shook hands with him and the other Myrtharian Nerds, and the two factions parted ways. Over the next day, Jake ferried the Myrtharian Nerds with his telekinesis, flying aimlessly in search of a hiding place to use as a temporary base.

He entered Shatug Empire territory in the afternoon and found that the cruelty of war had reached new heights. Ravaged futuristic cities, replaced by smoking ruins and blackened metal debris covered the land. Corpses of all races and species, animal, human and alien, littered the plains, forests and bombed-out battlefields.

The corpses of Drur citizens and warriors were scarce but recognizable by their gigantic build, dark purple skin and futuristic armor suits. The corpses of their enemies were a thousand times more

numerous, but the most shocking thing was that the dead Drurs were just ordinary aliens with no special status.

Even the warriors in combat suits were the equivalent of guards or policemen, given the overweight and lack of equipment of some of them. He was tempted to stop here to take advantage of these ruined cities to hide temporarily with his men, but a glance to the south dissuaded him.

The black clouds that had previously been looming menacingly over them from the sky had formed a black curtain, like a cascade of stormy black smoke pouring over the land. He could see a deluge of blue and purple lightning streaking across the earth and air, continuously striking anything that had the misfortune to find itself below.

Even after several minutes, he didn't hear any thunder rumbling and that enabled him to deduce that this curtain of clouds was still far away. But with his keen eyesight he could discern that the black veil was approaching them rapidly at the speed of a racing car running on turbo.

"We can't stay here!" Lord Phenix squawked as he anxiously flapped his wings.

Gerulf, who was sitting cross-legged on his head, whacked him hard on the head and growled,

"Shut up birdie or I'll eat you."

In addition to Lord Phenix, there were still three giant birds of prey alive that had joined Mufasa's pack. They were currently serving as transportation for the other Myrtharian Nerds unable to fly. Jake's telekinesis was only used to maintain formation and boost their flight speed.

Disregarding the turkey and Gerulf who were hurling creative insults at each other, Lucia frowned and said to Jake,

"At this rate, that cloud curtain will be here in a few hours. Celestial City is only a few hours away if we maintain this speed. If these clouds do not accelerate, they too will reach Celestial City in seven to ten days."

The other Myrtharian Nerds became serious upon hearing her forecast.

"At least no matter what happens this Ordeal is almost over..." Enya sighed wearily, "I need a vacation."

The truth was that she missed her sister and was worried about her psychological state. The other Players seemed to agree with her except for one person: Maeve.

Kyle's sister gave off an energy and presence that was weaker but similar to Hecate's in the past. The only other auras among the Myrtharian Nerds that came close was that of Aisling and her mother Xaverie.

"I especially hope Will is okay." Jake conceded. He should be awake by now. If he wasn't, then he was probably already dead.

"My dragon that was assigned to escort Craig picked up the other New Earth Players." Hade confirmed. "I asked him to stop by and visit the dragon village before he returned. If they were surprised by that black curtain, it's possible he convinced them to leave."

"Can't you contact him via his Oracle Device?" Tim blurted out as he gave him a judgmental look with his innocent eyes.

"Cough, cough, Immyr can't stand the Oracle System notifications and has disabled them so as not to be disturbed..." Hade explained with a sheepish expression.

"Well... I'm not worried about that dragon." Asfrid said out loud what everyone else was thinking under their breath.

Jake then ignored the black curtain and the blasted landscape below him and turned northwest in the presumed direction of Celestial City. A few tens of thousands of kilometers later, he stopped short in the air and decided to land.

In front of him were damaged but still inhabited cities. They could hear and perceive the exchange of gunfire and artillery shells from their position and they understood that from this point onwards they would have to shed blood.

"Let's stop here. The clouds are still far away, so there's no need to force a confrontation." Jake decided arbitrarily, ignoring the disappointed looks of the belligerent Players like Mufasa, Shere Khan, and Crunch.

Gerulf and Rogen also began to sulk at the news that they would not be fighting anytime soon.

Jake then rendered their group invisible by manipulating the light, then with a wave of his hand formed a vortex in the ground, the metal paved roads beneath them rippling like the surface of a pond into which a pebble had been thrown. The Myrtharian Nerds dove in, but there was no collision.

The rock and the earth gave way to them and in a matter of seconds they had travelled several dozen kilometers. When he felt they were low enough to go undetected by an Oracle Scan, Jake used his Earth Manipulation and Telekinesis to carve out a large cube the size of a small city and then dumped his companions on the ground.

"We'll stay here for the next few days. Whoever I nominate can go up to the surface as a scout to get more information about Lost Divinities and the current situation around Celestial City."

No one objected and unsurprisingly Hephais, Hade, Svara, Aisling and a few other stealthy Myrtharian Nerds like Maeve and Asfrid were assigned to investigate the surface. Because they were unsure if Ruby's protection extended to the Players away from her, it was decided that they would not spread out on this mission. That way, even if they were ambushed, with Hade and Asfrid they would at least be able to fall back.

Jake couldn't come with them because he had to constantly use his Earth Control to keep the base he had just created from collapsing under its own weight. After all, they were extremely deep below the surface.

Once the scouts had left and the other Players returned to their own activities, he finally laid down Ruby, who was still unconscious on his shoulder, and decided that this was the right time to wake her up.

[Chapter 850 Angel Of Aurae](#)

Asleep, the young woman's soft face was a wonder of nature, her pale, albeit faintly grayish complexion glistening like diamond dust in the dimness of the man-made cavern. Her curves were hidden by her natural chitin armor and she was still just over four meters tall, but Jake could already make out the two silver protrusions growing behind her back.

"Only two wings..." He murmured with slight relief.

That meant she hadn't had time to digest much Blood Essence from that mysterious Digestor. A Digestor could digest anything and assimilate its essence, whether it was its DNA or its Aether Code.

The great strength of these beings was not that they could digest everything, but that they could decide what to do with it. The genetic and Aetheric material extracted from their victims formed a subconscious database that they could instinctively recombine to achieve various evolutions. Only when their mind was set would the mutation finally take place.

Low Rank Digestors were too stupid in the brain to make these choices consciously, and the result was usually random, depending on what they had consumed most often or what was predominant in their environment. Digestors with intelligence were different, able to intentionally choose the combination of bloodlines that best suited them.

Ruby, as a Digestor Trojan, did not have the advanced and omnipotent digestion abilities of the Digestors, but on a subconscious level she could already choose what to keep from the bloodlines she consumed. By devouring this strange Digestor, she had not become an angelic monster, retaining her original human appearance except for a few subtleties.

In addition to her budding wings, he also noticed a dim white gleam in her pupils when he opened her eyelids. The joints of her knees, ankles, elbows, phalanges, neck and shoulders were covered with a strange grayish padding with the hard, rubbery texture of a tire.

Her body also seemed to be more robust than before while being more slender than the Throsgenian influence of her bloodline would suggest. Her body temperature had also risen, her cells constantly emitting a warm radiance as the ground beneath her slowly froze.

Even without his intervention, Jake could already tell that when Ruby woke up she would be much stronger. However, compared to his meteoric progress he was not at all worried.

'Now we just have to hope that Caphriel's blood will make a difference.'

Taking advantage of her unconsciousness, Jake opened up her mouth and poured in a drop of Blood Essence from the Virtue of Aerae. Nothing happened, but Jake was in no hurry. Monitoring her changes, he waited patiently cross-legged for the digestion to take place.

He couldn't access her status when she was in this Digestor guise, but he could always scan her manually with his Oracle Scan. With his Myrtharian Eyes he could also easily see what was going on inside her organs and track her Aether flow.

With his eyes riveted on her stomach, he watched the digestion process with great fascination, comparing it to his own. The walls of her stomach gave off an extreme cold, accompanied by a viscous stomach acid that was a bit special because it was able to maintain its liquid state at a temperature close to absolute zero. Caphriel's blood drop was immediately frozen.

Minutes passed and soon the Blood Essence was sucked dry of all its thermal heat. Five minutes later, it began to disintegrate, emitting a bright energy that was absorbed by Ruby's small intestine. The digestion was complete.

The nutrients and Aether particles entered her cells and then vanished without a trace. Even when he tried to scan her cells more thoroughly, he got a blurry and confusing result.

[The Digestor Bloodline protects itself from intrusion. Even if we understand theoretically how it works, we can't observe it. At least not with an Oracle Scan this weak]. Xi explained placidly, sensing his discontent.

"It would be handy if I could digest more Blood Essence in the same way." Jake confessed enviously.

He was confident that he could digest Blood Essence even faster, but he would only get a temporary power boost. Even if he could find a way to digest it perfectly, he would have no control over the changes it would trigger in his current bloodline. The result might not be to his liking.

'Better wait for the Ordeal to be over and check it all out with Cekt.' He repeated to himself for solace with little conviction.

About an hour later, a second pair of wings began to sprout on Ruby's back. Unlike the first pair, which was a dark metallic gray, the second pair was slightly golden. The grayish pallor of her skin had also turned a little pink, regaining a healthy glow.

The chitin covering her body turned golden little by little, while taking the shape of an exquisite and tight armor much more refined. Her long silky hair, which had always been white, ironically took on the same color as Jake's, with golden streaks dotting her silver hair. If it weren't for the fact that his skin was much more tanned, you'd think they were brother and sister.

"Looks like Caphriel's Blood Essence worked." Jake's face twitched as he saw how much they looked alike.

[You can risk waking her up, but if you suspect anything use the Spirit Shell.] Xi reminded him carefully.

"Don't worry, I wasn't going to forget." Jake smiled.

He was supposed to make her drink the potion provided by Vexa every three hours, but this time he waited for the effect to wear off instead of dosing her again. He still had a few drops of the sedative potion left and considering its formidable potency he decided to store it carefully for later use.

Who knows? It might get them out of a dire predicament in the future.

Soon Ruby's eyelids began to twitch and Jake became alert, wiring his mind to the Spirit Shell to prepare to subdue her at the first sign of any threat. A few seconds later, the young woman opened her eyes and met his gaze.

They stared at each other for a long while without either moving, then Ruby said,

"Thank you. I haven't felt this calm in a long time."

Jake nodded but did not let his guard down. Although there was no hatred or killing intent in her eyes, her current appearance was still that of a Digestor.

"I am in control." The corner of her lip curved upward at the sight of his wariness.

"Forgive me for doubting you, but it wouldn't be the first time a smart Digestor tried to fool a Player." Jake retorted flatly without letting himself be swayed. "Maybe the Digestor inside you used those two new angelic bloodlines to become more calculating, learning to masquerade as a harmless sheep."

The innocent smile dropped at once and she glared at him. Jake detected a trace of killing intent, but compared to before it was definitely weaker. But at least this time he could determine that the Digestor was still there. It was much stronger than before, but its killing intent had certainly weakened.

Now, it was not too much to hope for. Although Caphriel was a deeply benevolent angel willing to do good, she was not incorruptible either. Before she gave him her Blood Essence, she had warned him that an angel was influenced by the entity from which it derived its divine powers.

If Aerae didn't recognize her, the higher Digestor that provided her second angelic bloodline would undoubtedly have the upper hand. That was why Jake immediately gave the following instruction,

"You're still my slave, so let me check your Oracle Status while repressing your Digestor part."

Ruby flinched, but after a short reflection she complied with a reproachful pout. Jake carefully read her Oracle Status and found new Bloodline Abilities at the bottom.

[Servant of Aerae lvl1: You serve the will of Aerae and therefore cannot betray its interests. In exchange, you can access a fraction of its power and even summon it directly by making an appropriate offering.]

[System Alteration lvl1 : Aerae's gift allows you to easily alter the parameters of the world around you, from the algorithm of a machine to the physical laws of the universe, provided you are able to fully understand them.]

[System Deciphering lvl1 : Aerae's gift grants you an innate ease to understand and decipher the laws and parameters of the universe around you. Everything that can be encompassed by a system is now accessible to your understanding.]

[Electromagnetic Control lvl1]

[Lightning Control lvl 1]

Jake drew a sharp breath as he finished reading. Being an Angel of Aerae didn't provide many abilities, but except for the first one which was more of a drawback, the next two were almost like a cheat code.

As for the last two skills, he guessed it had to do with the fact that Aerae was most likely an android. He hadn't reacted at the time, but Ruby's Metal Manipulation had also been significantly enhanced.

He then looked for skills related to her Digestor Bloodline, but as usual they were omitted from the list. Whatever powers this Digestor entity conferred, he had no way of discovering them until Ruby used them in front of him.

In the meantime, with Aerae's support, Jake concluded that he could now trust her again. That is, until her Digestor self became strong enough to completely corrupt her angelic nature...