

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 351 - Forgiven

‘Jake!’

A high-pitched cry distinctly recognizable from the ambient hubbub of reunion suddenly echoed forth from the center of the spacious hall. When the Jake concerned identified the owner of this female voice, his majestic, almost intimidating bearing was immediately replaced by a guilty, panicked countenance.

‘Shit... I didn’t even have time to hide...’ Jake lamented inwardly, bracing himself for the flood of insults to come.

‘Let me tell you what-‘

SLAP!

Ok, that one he deserved it... If one of his comrades had roasted him alive, he would probably have reacted much worse. Feeling almost nothing with his thick skin, he lowered his eyes to catch Sarah’s fiery gaze.

The young blonde woman was huffing and puffing, her face flushed and her fists clenched as she glared at him fiercely. Her body was trembling with rage like a frozen epileptic, and it was at this point that he realized that he preferred her when she was trying to seduce him for a quick bang.

‘I’m sorry okay, that wasn’t my-‘

SLAP!

Jake's face twitched slightly, but he repressed the urge to fight back. He had well deserved this second slap...

'As I'm trying to tell you, I'm sorry, it really wasn't my-'

SLAP!

'Calm down, we can talk like two mature adults-'

SLAP

'Okay, I've got that-'

SLAP!

'Fuck you bitch!'

SLAP!

After a while, sensing that she had no intention of stopping anytime soon, Jake grabbed the young woman's wrist before another slap could reach its target. He noticed that the young woman's hand was peony red from slapping him and that from her pursed expression she was probably in much more pain than he was. She was certainly already regretting having chosen this way of venting her resentment.

'That's it, can we talk?' Jake begged with an annoyed face.

Instead of making a concession, the young woman who seemed to be on the verge of calming down went crazy again, proving to him that his lazy tone and his nonchalant, falsely shameful expression was by no means the reaction she was hoping to get from him.

'Go fućk yourself!' In the end, she insulted him in a hateful tone and freed her wrist with a brisk jerking of her arm.

Panting and red with anger, she then completely ignored him and strode out the door... Jake, as a good antisocial person, had no idea how to calm a

woman angry from being burned alive. The few psychology and communications textbooks he had read didn't cover the subject...

Nevertheless, he had already mentally conditioned himself to apologize in an honorable manner. Jake was a pragmatic person. Like everyone else he loved gifts, but only if they were useful or satisfied one of his needs or *désirés*. Gifts with 'good intentions' only left him speechless, and he had always been a very bad actor at expressing his false gratitude in such circumstances.

Perhaps this was the reason he was no longer receiving many gifts from his family... Only Anya and her uncle Kalen seemed to understand him.

Faithful to his precepts, he just decided to compensate her with a gift that he considered absolutely useful and valuable. Remembering how she had been dismembered by the Zhorion priest and stripped of her liquid alloy, the apology gift he had planned was obvious.

100 kilos of liquid alloy.

Tvfo jfl loaii f laeradahfro fqmpromd nzuhampl Quofi, usur dmz vaq, gpo rmo urmpev om tuhalasuiw fdduho ovu nuzdmzqfrhu md val gzfhuiuo. A lofrtfzt Ozfhiu Dusahu juaevut fgmpo 500 ezfql. Fzmq val nmaro md sau j, jvuovuz ezfoudpi mz fnnuflut pnmr zuhuasare val eado, vu duio ovfo fdouz ovfo vu jmpit vfsu fomrut dmz val hzaqu.

By the time he remembered the apology gift he had planned, Sarah had long since disappeared from the hall. Will and the others who were about to invite him for a drink to tell each other about their adventures were dumbfounded when he ran like a lightning bolt out of the room to catch up with her.

Seconds later, Jake spotted her in the giant lobby bar of the Player Hall and grabbed her by the arm before she could get away. Without consulting her, he connected his bracelet to hers and transferred the 100 kilograms of liquid alloy representing his *mea culpa* to her.

Sarah was shocked on the spot and was about to slap him again, when her eyeballs suddenly bulged out as she discovered the mass of liquid metal floating from Jake's bracelet to her own. She wasn't the only one.

The few Players of different species occupying the hall subtly changed their expression by recognizing the liquid alloy. Not everyone knew what it was, but for those who did, they were extremely shocked. It was rare to find an Evolver so generous to seduce an individual of the opposite sex.

If they knew she wasn't his wife, sister, or girlfriend, they would surely have been even more stunned. However, often behind the surprise and admiration was jealousy and hostile intentions.

Those willing to kill to become stronger had already impeccably memorized his appearance. If they came across him on B842 outside the peaceful environment of the Oracle Cities, they would not fail to seize the opportunity to strip him of his precious metal.

With their Perception, Jake and Sarah's senses were incredibly sharp. Especially after an Ordeal like the one they had just endured. Naturally, they both noticed the interest and hostility that their exchange had just provoked.

For Sarah, it felt like a cold shower and her anger faded instantly. As for Jake, he glanced at the Evolvers with the least disguised intentions, emitting a thick, predatory and murderous aura.

The Soul Glyph 'Apex Predator' activated in concert and most of the people sitting in the bar immediately went about their business, realizing that he was not an easy prey. However, a few strong heads continued to stare at him with a sarcastic smirk.

Fmz ovulu numniu, Jfcu film qftu lpzu om quqmxaxu ovuaz dfhafi dufopzul nuzduhoiw. Aifl, ypaou f duj md ovuq juzu jzfnnut ar imre mnfypu hmfol, ovuaz dfhul mdour vattur prtuz f vmmt, qflc mz vuiquo. Tvulu artasatpfil juzu gw dfz ovu qmlo tfreuzmpl, fl Jfcu vft rm jfw om aturoadw ovuq.

‘Let’s get out of here...’ Sarah tugged his arm timidly to force him out of his CÒCKfight. Without her intervention, this stubborn man was probably able to stand there staring at them until nightfall, bullying them with his eyes.

Indeed, it was only after the young woman pinched his arm several times that he lost interest in these few bold customers. Once outside, Sarah couldn’t help but tease him, her bad mood episode finally seeming to be a thing of the past,

‘Did you really intend to stand there staring at them until they all gave up?’

‘Yeah... Probably...’ Jake admitted, scratching his head with a penitent expression. Sometimes the propensity of his Myrtharian bloodline to take on any challenge could pose some social issues.

The two remained silent for a few moments without knowing what to say, then finally Sarah heaved a deep sigh and said,

‘I forgive you... It was my fault anyway for letting myself be captured. But next time ... No next time.’

‘I promise.’ Jake nodded, feeling intense relief after being forgiven.

‘Did you at least kill that priest?’ Sarah suddenly teased him as she tried to lighten the mood and return to their previous relationship.

That was a subject he was comfortable with!

‘Fucking yes! Reduced to mush by a meteor.’ Jake boasted with a smug smile. ‘By the way, I’m curious... What happens when you die having the liquid alloy from your bracelet stolen?’

Sarah’s mood, which had become lighthearted yet again, darkened once more when she heard his question. This memory would surely haunt her until her death. Her true death.

‘100 rating points have been deducted to regenerate my bracelet and its functions... ‘ She shrugged with regret. Deep inside she was inconsolable.

Even Jake didn’t know what to say. He expected the penalty to be severe, but not that severe. The young woman’s Oracle Device was standard, not yet upgraded. If the penalty was the same regardless of the bracelet, it was still okay, but if it was a penalty proportional to the liquid alloy lost, it was terrifying...

Feeling that the young woman was no longer in the mood for conversation, Jake bid her farewell after walking her back to the Oracle Bunker where their personal booths were located. At least he had chosen his gift well. The gratitude in Sarah’s eyes was sincere now that she was aware of the value of the liquid alloy.

After they parted, Jake did not join the rest of his comrades in their festivities. Even though he had a relaxed and spirited demeanor, he was actually very tired. Not physically, because with his Constitution and Vitality it was impossible, but mentally he was at his wit’s end.

Without worrying about anyone or anything, he walked down one of the corridors following his Shadow Guide to refresh his memory. After this Second Ordeal, the path leading to his cabin seemed to have changed. This was not so surprising, since the space inside the Pyramid was constantly growing to accommodate the newcomers to the Mirror Universe.

He could have reached his family’s mansion via the Oracle Playground, but he had no energy to face a lunch with his grandfather and other cousins. Brice in particular was probably dreaming of strangling him with his own hands.

When Jake imagined his cousin’s raging face, he immediately regained his smile and momentarily forgot his mental exhaustion. A few minutes later, he was back at his cabin, after having traveled through several hundred Orange Cubes.

Recognizing his identity, the wall dissolved into a vortex and a space wide enough to let him pass opened up in front of him. Once inside, Jake realized that his cat Crunch wasn't there.

His pet had left him a few days before the Ordeal to stay in the New Earth park with the rest of his feline gang. He hadn't been particularly worried about it because he knew his cat was safe with the huge lion and tiger overseeing him.

Heck, this lion and tiger were still much stronger than him despite all the hardships he had gone through. On finding back the austere and empty room, Jake, who was no longer as poor and much less scrupulous about his Aether spending after having wasted tens of millions during the previous Ordeal, refused to continue to live in these conditions.

Right now, he needed to sleep in a proper bed!

Not going as far as Enya and Esya, who had practically transformed their cabin into a princess' room to the point of spending the little Aether they had accumulated after their first Ordeal, Jake still made the necessary investments.

A moment later, the cabin had been enlarged to 60 square meters and cut into a living room with an American bar kitchen, a bedroom and a bathroom. Although the decoration was still non-existent, all the necessary furniture was present and of excellent quality.

Instead of paying a few Aether points per day in rent, he paid the required 1.3 million Aether points without flinching. The time of poverty was over. In a world where he could die any day, he deserved at least to sleep in a real bed.

With his new apartment ready, Jake turned off the lights and fell heavily into the bed without undressing. While the stress and tension had rendered him

nearly insomniac when he returned from his First Ordeal, this Second Ordeal had enabled him to sleep under the worst conditions.

He fell asleep instantly. In a broken bed...