

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 355 - Taking His Mind Off Things

When Jake left the Oracle Bunker about ten minutes later, he couldn't have been in a gloomier mood. Every time he thought back on what had just happened, the urge to destroy something to relieve his anger itched him.

Back to the altercation between Jake and the two mercenaries, he had indeed taken the upper hand on them from the start. By precisely controlling the pressure he exerted on them, he had gradually managed to force them to their knees without ever hurting them.

But all of a sudden, when Jake thought he could finally humiliate them, those two bastards did something that pissed him off, but which unfortunately left him helpless in the face of such a situation.

"Linth, Xana, come here. "Yerode and Lamine had yelled at the same time, taunting Jake with their eyes.

In disbelief and disgust, Jake had witnessed the absolute obedience of the two women to this suicidal order, their Slave Contract forbidding them to resist. In order not to reduce them to mush under the enormous pressure, he had been forced to cancel his magic before the two slaves entered his field of influence.

It had taken all of his self-control and the constant, panicked reminders of Xi to keep him calm. After that, he had immediately left the scene to prevent things from getting any further out of hand.

"Xi, if an Oracle Path to kill them appears, inform me immediately. "Jake whispered darkly as he walked through the city.

[ All right... ] Xi made a solemn promise. If Jake hated people, she hated them too. Her anger was more diluted, but it echoed his.

This was a new benefit of their strengthened mental bond. The wishes Jake made to generate Oracle Paths, Xi could also mobilize her mind to keep them active.

Before, no matter how many wishes Jake had, it was impossible to constantly feel them with the same degree of importance. For example, from a strictly rational point of view, his life was more important and usually took precedence, but if he was suddenly overwhelmed by irrational hatred, this might momentarily not be true.

In the case of Yerode and Lamine, for example, he had wished to kill them many times, but the Shadow Guide never reacted, so he usually ended up forgetting them in the back of his mind. Even if the Shadow Guide suddenly changed its behavior because a realistic Oracle Path had just presented itself, Jake would probably have been unable to make the connection.

Or oval nmaro, Xa jfl prttmpgoutiw lpnuzamz om vaq. Al fr Ozfhiu AI, vuz qart jfl nuzduhoiw hfnfgiu md nuzdmzqare firt hfihpifoare qpiaoianu oflcl fo ovu lfqu oaqu. Ulare ovuaz qurofi iarc, lvu hmpit om lmqu ukouro euruzfou vuz mjr jalvul ovzmpev Jfcu.

Of course, an Oracle AI was not supposed to have such freedom of action. She could not connect directly to the Oracle System to make wishes that were personal to her, but isolating the different wishes and ambitions from Jake's mind and dealing with their level of importance was something she could now do without any problem with his consent after the changes made by Xion Zolvhur's will fragment.

Despite the benefits of such changes, Jake was not happy about it. He knew more than anyone that he was no exception. Hakkrasha and Ekaion at least had undoubtedly received the same bonus reward. Counting all the Ordeals that took place every day, this represented countless Players. Cumulated over the years and centuries it was just unquantifiable.

Besides, it was only the second Ordeal. Maybe one day when his intellectual faculties had reached an extraordinary level he would be able to divide his attention and desires to keep a multitude of Oracle Paths active at all times. What Xi's consciousness was doing was only a temporary crutch.

Most importantly, Jake would never forget that the Oracle System was unreliable. After his misadventure, if he wanted to kill Ruby for revenge and an Oracle Path was calculated, would he attempt it by blindly throwing himself headlong into it?

Heck, if he really did commit such nonsense, he probably wouldn't even know how he died until the last moment. Many might trust blindly the Oracle, but certainly not him.

"Jake you're here, perfect!"

Hearing someone shout his name, Jake turned around and recognized Will's svelte appearance. A small winged lizard resembling a feathered baby dragon waddled ridiculously behind him like a turkey.

Standing close to Will, the lizard had bumped its forehead against the businessman's calf when he had stopped at the sight of Jake. As a result, it had bounced back and was now lying on the ground on its back, its four legs and wings wiggling in the air in a vain attempt to get back on its feet.

His master had to make him roll over on its side so that the pet could finally manage to stand up again. Jake congratulated himself for the first time that his cat Crunch was perfectly self-sufficient. At least, he didn't have to wipe his ass everyday. It was not so sure about this baby dragon...

Waovmpo nfware dpzovuz foouroamr om ovu iaxfzt, Jfcu rmoahut aqquafouiw ovfo bplo iacu vaq Waii jfl jufzare ovu fzqmq ovuw vft mgofarut dzmq ovu Nuj Efzov zulufzhv hurouz firt ovfo vft prdmzoprfoiwi rusuz guur plut.

However, upon closer inspection, he noticed that just like him, the businessman was wearing no weapons, no backpack, or anything at all. Knowing what he was thinking, Will confirmed his suspicions without any ulterior motives,

"I bought the Oracle Space Storage skill. This thing is dope! It's a must have for a merchant like me."

Jake nodded mechanically before realizing the young man seemed to be looking for him.

"Are you going somewhere? " He asked curiously.

His plans to relax had been sabotaged by his encounter with the two mercenaries, so he now needed to take his mind off things. Accompanying the businessman was just another way to do it.

"Currently I'm back from New Earth and Thelma." Will explained wearily. "I have visited a bunch of Oracle Cities since this morning, but the prices are just insane! With a few million Aether points I thought I could buy something decent, but I dreamed too big. "

Who would have thought that he would be so determined and hard-working only one day after their last Ordeal? His ambitions to create a commercial empire on B842 were not based on wind.

Nevertheless, ambition and perseverance were not enough to accomplish one's dreams. Although he supported the businessman fully, he could not see how a single Evolver could establish himself in the midst of all those top Evolvers and Players, not to mention the factions, countries, and even planets that supported them. Plus the fact that Will had nothing to sell.

"That's precisely why I need you, Sarah and the others." Will admitted after hearing his doubts. "If you need to sell or buy anything, you come to me and I'll take care of everything."

"It still doesn't tell me why you need me now. I don't have anything to sell right now either." Jake shrugged with a puzzled expression.

Will laughed mysteriously in response.

"Remember New Earth's Floating Island?"

"You want to buy one to start your own business? It's not stupid." Jake acknowledged in an approving tone.

"I wish! I could and I will, but I would never be able to defend it. At least, not yet. You're the one who's going to buy a Floating Island in your name and start your own faction. Sarah and the others already know and agree. Our Floating Islands will orbit around yours. We will all be neighbors."

Jake was silent for a few seconds after that. He liked Will's enthusiasm and confidence, but he didn't like the way he imposed his wishes on him. Apparently he had already convinced the rest of their comrades during their festivities the night before.

Rubbing his temple in exasperation, Jake closed his eyes as he pondered what attitude to adopt so as not to disappoint the businessman.

"Listen Will, I love your enthusiasm and I do intend to buy a Floating Island, but I just wanted to have my own personal space, and not just a metal booth. If a "mall" is built on it right away, I don't see the appeal of it..."

Will's excitement was mercilessly dampened by Jake's lack of enthusiasm, but he soon regained his composure. He had prepared for this kind of reluctance from the start. The fact that the rest of the group had immediately agreed had just rendered him deceptively optimistic.

"Let's not talk about that kind of thing right now." The businessman changed the subject all of a sudden. He knew when to lose the battle to better win the war. "Let's go buy our Floating Islands first. Sarah and the others are already there. Talking with my Oracle Ai

and some government soldiers I learned a lot. It doesn't matter if you are lonely or not, you have to join a faction or create one yourself. This is important for the next Ordeals."

'Is that true, Xi?' Jake asked in his mind with serious doubts.

[ I'm afraid so. ] His Oracle AI sighed. [ The faction as such is vital to the Civilians who cannot protect themselves. The Oracle Shelters are too crowded and unsanitary for a decent life. Joining a faction for all these poor Civilians is indeed their best solution. In your case it is less important, but the term faction implies many things. It can refer to a nation, a corporation or a faction per se, but also to a guild of Players.

[If you run each Ordeal with the same teammates, you'll want to increase your faction level and choose faction skills that benefit its members the most. If you join an influential faction, you will have no say in the choice of its faction skills and you will not even be allowed to activate them without the leader's permission. In the Mirror Universe, some factions have only two or three people for these reasons.]

'What kind of Faction Skills are worth having me start my own guild?' Jake asked confusedly again. Based on his own impression of the Oracle Store, everything was buyable. It didn't matter what the potential of a Faction Skill was, it couldn't match the potential of a powerful Evolver.

[First of all, they're free. It's their activation that is not free outside of the Ordeals. The number of skills and their rank depends on the Faction Leader's Oracle Rank and Floating Island development level].

"Jake?" Will's impatient voice brought him back to their present conversation. He was aware that he was communicating with his Oracle AI, but he needed a quick answer.

As a respectable businessman, he liked to act fast and never missed a good deal. If Jake refused, he would immediately change his plans, turning to Enya to try convincing Hakkrasha instead. But if he had a choice, he would rather join the faction of a human he knew and appreciated than an alien with unpredictable behavior.

Faced with Will's exhortations and Xi's convincing explanations, Jake finally accepted. He had been wondering how to spend his Aether intelligently, and now he had a solution.

"I agree. What are we waiting for?" Jake clapped his hands and walked hastily towards the nearest tower housing the Yellow Cube. At his tone, one might have thought that Will was the hesitating guy.

Realizing that this stubborn person had finally changed his mind, a delighted smile appeared on Will's face as he quickly trotted after him, not forgetting to pick up his lizard under his arm like an old cardboard box.