

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 364 - Space Digestors

Actually, they were not alone at all!

According to the scan report, in addition to the abundance of stellar debris and dust floating in space around his island, many life forms in hibernation were also detected.

As soon as Jake and his group had arrived, these creatures had come out of their stasis and started drifting towards them like a swarm of bees towards a field of flowers. The most shocking thing about this was that their numbers were on the rise.

And what kind of unfathomable extraterrestrial creature could adapt and multiply in the sidereal void of the Mirror Universe without any semblance of effort? Unfortunately, to Jake's knowledge, there was only one.

Digestors.

[Void Digestors : A type of Space Digestor spawning directly out into the vacuum of space after amassing enough Aether. In the absence of neighboring life forms to draw inspiration from and base their genome on, these Digestors adopt a varied and disorderly guise, most often inspired by their environment. Because of the lack of prey to devour, these Digestors tend to kill each other to enrich their genome and satisfy their appetite, but the lack of genetic and Aetheric variety compromises their evolution and they, therefore, end up settling for hibernation merely absorbing the surrounding Aether. Although Digestors are creatures born of Aether and can survive by simply breathing it in, they have a digestive system and nonetheless experience an insatiable hunger. Any life form from the Mirror Universe passing by becomes their meal.]

As he read the report, Jake's face was grim. It was now apparent that the Floating Island forcefields were not only intended to stop radiation and some rocks. The Digestors were the main threat.

If these Void Digestors were attracted by the presence of life forms as insignificant as them, he dared not imagine what Thelma's sky really looked like. Their islands were tiny at the moment and apart from Jake and his gang there was no one else here. And yet, all these Digestors were converging towards them at an increasing speed.

In the void, it was not difficult to move at high speed. Without air, there was no resistance to slow them down and even Jake could easily break through the sound barrier with a single telekinetic impulse. Of course in space there would be no noise.

The Digestors would be on them in a few minutes for the closest ones, while the Digestors taking longer to wake up would need a few hours. And that was just an optimistic estimate...

Jfcu vulaofout gzaudiw fgmpo vmj om nzmhuut, gpo vu hvmlu om ardmzq val hmzqftul, usur ovmpev jaov ovuaz dmzhu dauitl ovuw juzu lpnmlut om gu lfdv. Tvu zfreu md zuqmou

hmqqprahfoamr ovzmpcv val gzfhuio jfl our oaql ovfo md val lhfr frt dmz ovu dazlo oaqu, vu npo oval fgaiaw om plu.

"Digestors approaching. "He said drily before drawing his blade.

Will and the two sisters who were busy figuring out how to furnish their Floating Islands with their meager budget got a fright when they received Jake's message. They immediately congratulated themselves for setting up a force field. Though, even with this safety belt, they were not that confident.

"Need help?" Sarah asked fearlessly. They all heard the shing of a sword being unsheathed from her side of the handset.

Looking down at the islands below him, Jake noticed that one of them had turned off the shield supposed to repel physical obstacles and this made him smile.

As long as there was artificial gravity, the atmosphere was not likely to disperse too quickly in the cosmos. Breathable air was produced continuously anyway. It was possible for Sarah to fight for a long time with her current Aether stats and the boost that the Myrtharian Body faction skill gave them.

"No need. "Jake replied after a few seconds of hesitation. "Unless you want me to come and fight alongside you?"

To reach her, he just had to jump off the edge and fly to her. They were only separated by a few seconds of flight.

"Hmmp, I'll tell you if I need help! "Sarah harrumphed out of pride. Her honor was at stake here.

She hadn't enjoyed his teasing and took his last proposal as a provocation. For a Myrmidian, it was a challenge. And indeed, her next statement turned out to be,

"Whoever kills the most monsters can ask the loser for a favor. Do you accept the bet or are you too scared?"

Jake snorted with disdain. But Sarah's face lit up when she heard him grunt. She knew he had fallen for it.

'If I win, you're mine, and if I lose, I'll find a way to get that favor to push me into your arms.'

Luckily, Jake couldn't yet read minds from such a distance or he would have gotten goosebumps. Still, an uncomfortable feeling gripped him, his sharp instinct hinting he had made a mistake somehow.

Yet, what almost choked Sarah to death was that her bet proposal also awakened the competitive spirit of the others. Kyle, in the midst of his depression, was looking for a reason to prove his worth, and the thinly veiled flirtation between Sarah and Jake tickled his jealousy. On the other hand, he was also a Myrmidian. Facing challenges was in his nature.

"I'm in too. "The Playboy shouted with determination.

"Cough, you can't... this is my island. "Will calmed his ardor with a small sentence.

Kyle's resolute aura immediately deflated like a punctured balloon. He looked like a cuckolded old man catching his young wife having sex with her secret lover. Tim also

seemed to regret not being able to participate in the event. Will suddenly hesitated seeing their reactions. Eventually, he changed his mind,

"If it becomes too dangerous, I will immediately reactivate the force field. So don't go too far away." The businessman warned Tim and Kyle, who swore they would listen to his instructions.

Enya and Esya being the only ones not to participate felt left out, and eventually they too deactivated their force field to join in the fighting.

Fmz f gzaud qmquro, ovu ezmpn guvtsut iacu mit dzaurtl, lvmjare zufi hfqzftuzau.

Then they regretted it. Bitterly.

Less than two minutes later, Jake saw a rain of small asteroids and dust slowly growing in his field of vision. It seemed to come from all directions.

Although there were no obstacles interfering with his vision, the lack of clarity and the small size of the approaching objects prevented him from quickly identifying these targets. But as these "rocks" became wider and wider, his heart grew anxious and he started clutching the handle of his weapon even tighter.

His Wormak's Claw machete, which had never been used before, would finally taste Digestor's blood. As for his armor, it would be an opportunity to see what it was made of.

[Ten seconds before impact] Xi suddenly informed him after taking into account the speed of the dust cloud.

Jake repeated his AI's words to his friends but it was not needed. Their Oracle AIs had also completed their own calculations. Everyone got into position and braced themselves for the impending impact.

BOOM!

Jake's Floating Island shook, then he swayed violently and almost lost his balance. However, he still raised his weapon just in time to strike it down on a boulder heading straight for him. The rock did not come from above his head, but from the front.

His aura surged, his Aether Core quickened its spin and a steady stream of Strength and Constitution Aether converged towards his arms to withstand the future impact.

Hal giftu hfqu tmjr fo iaevorare lnuut frt ovu fzoadahafi foqmlnvuzu md val alifrt jfl jflvut fjfw jaov f lvzaii rmalu, fhmqnfraut gw f eplo md jart frt f liaevo lvmhc jfsu. Tvu zmhc, jvahv vft ofzeuout vaq, jfl hpo ar ojm frt aol ojm uypfi nfol hmroarput ovuaz hmpzlu ovzmphev ovu hmlqml, hzmlare nfzfiui msuz val alifrt jaovmpo usuz lphhuutare ar ifrtare.

Amazed at the sharpness of his weapon, or rather at the fragility of this rock, Jake heard a heart-rending shriek of pure rage and agony as it moved away behind him, before falling silent forever as it entered the void of space. This was no rock, but a Digestor.

He had no time to relax, however, as many of these asteroids continued to collide successfully with his island, shaking its territory as if an earthquake had just struck it, coming straight from the apocalypse.

All of these rocks successfully colliding with his island were, with a few exceptions, Digestors.

"Shhhhhhhrrriiiiiiii!"

Blood-curdling wails accompanied by inhuman cackles began to resound around him, and in addition to insatiable savagery and hunger, one could also clearly sense an unspeakable jubilation.

Although his Floating Island was still shaking a lot, Jake was slowly but surely adapting like an old sailor used to the swell of the ocean after years of sailing. After a few seconds, he finally found the freedom to look at these monsters more carefully.

Mostly spherical, the surface of their body was indeed rocky and grayish, allowing them to blend perfectly in the middle of all these asteroids. But after they landed, these surfaces began to crack like an egg about to hatch, and monsters with very different shapes emerged from them with hungry cries.

Except that these shells were not just discarded. They were part of their bodies, and Jake instantly understood that the Digestors' known ability to transform their limbs into different weapons had evolved to fulfill this function.

Depending on the rank of the Void Digestors, this ability was more or less advanced. The weaker Digestors spread their arms apart and their shells simply split in two, giving the impression that these monsters were holding two shields, or rather two mushrooms. Not being able to change the shape of their extremities quickly, they were for the moment harmless.

Hmjusuz, ao jfl f tadduzuro lomzw dmz ovu movuzl. A Daeulomz uqaooare f nmjuzdpi
Auovuzah laerfopzu qfrfeut om ukozahfou aoluid uflaiw dzmq f dasu-quouz tafquouz zmhc fl ao
zmfzut jaov dusuzalv dzurxw frt dpzw.

In a matter of seconds, this "shell" retracted and formed a thick chitinous armor over the body of an insectoid creature with twelve polished steel-tipped legs. A massive, slightly translucent torso stood at the top of a heavy abdomen, but apart from a large mouth filled with long, sharp teeth, there was no head. Instead, long limbs that formed strange metal blades protruded from it and pointed in his direction.

Jake found this appearance familiar and realized that his Oracle Constructors had a very similar morphology, both reminiscent of a spider. Except that one was a robot dedicated to conception and creation while the other was an organic monster living only to kill.