

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 375 - The Third Ordeal Begins!

For the third time, Jake experienced this kind of utter silence and darkness. He didn't need to breathe, couldn't feel his body or anything else. Without Xi to keep him company and the Oracle System interface to entertain him, who knew how long it would take him to go insane.

After some time he estimated in hours, the familiar notification of the Oracle System popped up in his mind.

[Participant: Jake Wilderth, Silver Myrtharian.]

[Successful Ordeals: 2.]

[Awaiting matchmaking for Third Ordeal. Species allowed: Humans.]

[...]

[Matchmaking complete, Third Ordeal determined.]

[Type: Horror/ Space Travel]

Aether density: *20 or 200 pts.]

[Number of participants: 6,694,729.]

[Background:]

[Tvu Gfifhoah Cmrlmzoapq vfl zuhuroiw talhmsuzut fr ukmnifruo jaov atufi hmrtaoamrl om ulofgialv f ruj hmimrw. Rasf, ovu qmovuz nifruo md ovu Tvazt Bzmovuzvmmt al tware, fit ovu Tvazt Bzmovuzvmmt vfl smiprouuzut om araoafou ovu hmimraxfoamr md oval ruj nifruo]

[The star dreadnaught Titan Pearl is a warship recently converted into a luxury cruise ship to transport Riva's eligible population to its new home. This trip will last 126 years, and in order to save food and preserve the crew and passengers, the latter are normally plunged into hypersleep and awakened a few months before reaching their destination.]

[Except that this time, it does not go as planned, and the crew and passengers are awakened prematurely halfway through their journey. A beacon calling for help nearby might be the cause.]

[In this cruise ship you have the identity of a Sergeant Major with a heavy past in search of a new start and are in this cruise ship as a passenger. Not even the general of the Titan Pearl knows your true identity. Nevertheless, beware. You're not the only passenger hiding your identity, and revealing it is not without risk.]

[Main Mission: Discover the truth behind the premature awakening of the Titan Pearl's crew and passengers as well as the mystery behind the call for help.]

[Penalty for failure: None.]

[Benefits and Specifics during Mission Time:]

[- A new temporary identity to match your Sergeant Major's Oracle Rank.]

[-Your morphology has been altered to have a moderate affinity for the Fluid.]

[May fate work in your favor.]

Al mr nzusampl mhhflamrl, rm lmmruz vft Jfcu daralvut zuftare oval arozmtphoamr ovfr vu duio val hmrlhamplrull guare ljuno fjfw gw fr prlomnngiu dmzhu.

When he regained the sensations of his body a moment later, he immediately felt that he was lying on his back. Usually he didn't like this sleeping position, but this time he felt remarkably good. He didn't even have the strength or courage to open his eyes.

His body was extremely numb and comfortable, and deep inside he had only one désiré. It was to close his eyes and go back to sleep forever. But fate had decided otherwise.

Little by little his numb body warmed up and his consciousness regained its lucidity. When his Spirit Body regained its full strength, he scanned his body out of habit and detected a syringe stuck in his arm. A substance had been injected to energize his heart.

The syringe was connected to an articulated robotic arm and after injecting him with the substance, the robotic arm folded up and stored itself in a dedicated wall location.

Jake was extremely curious and quickly scanned the room he was in with his mental strength, but all he could deduce was that he was alone, in a room with little or no furniture except for his strange bed. He couldn't make sense of the different shapes that his consciousness was detecting.

As soon as he felt able to, he opened his eyes. A narrow, dimly lit room greeted him. A reddish diode flashed constantly above him and as soon as he recovered his hearing, he became aware of the shrill siren hammering in his ears.

Along the walls, which could just as easily be made of plastic or metal, tubes and cables ran through them. Several air vents seemed to renew the air, while cameras observed his every move.

What disturbed him was that he was now trapped in his bed. He seemed to be wrapped in a kind of glass container and a cold, opaque gas was circulating around him. If his body did not produce a tremendous amount of heat to defend itself, his body would probably have looked like a piece of frozen meat.

Fortunately, the gas seemed to gradually warm up.

A duj qarpoul ifouz, ar npzu femrw, Jfcu darfiw dmprrt ovu lozureov om qmsu. Hu zfalut f ozuqgiare fzq frt nprhvut ovu eifll jfii, jvahv lvfoouzut ar fr arlofro.

He took the opportunity to sit up and he was finally able to turn around to look at the bed he was in and he understood that it was a kind of hyper-sleep chamber. By looking more carefully, he discovered a screen on the side of the container with his personal information and he understood that the container would have opened by itself if he had waited just a little longer.

It took him another ten minutes to stand up. His body felt terribly heavy and he knew that it wasn't just the side effects of hypersleep. The main reason was this huge Aether Density.

Because of it, the gravity on board was also 20 times higher than normal. His Aether stats were around 300 points. With an Aether density of 200 points, Jake had completely lost the advantage his Aether stats gave him.

Put in perspective, his Aether stats were only 50% higher than a native.

He could feel the consequences on all levels. His cognitive faculties had drastically diminished, he felt awfully weak and he no longer felt this feeling of lightness at all. He truly felt like shit.

And that was with his Silver Myrtharian Body and Spirit Body. His Body Stats had far surpassed that of a human athlete, and if he felt this bad he couldn't imagine what his comrades were going through.

Gurgle...

At that moment, his stomach began to rumble loudly, but he ignored the sensation. He was dying to grab a few rations from his Space Storage, but with the cameras present he was afraid that this act would have unexpected consequences.

"Xi?"

[I'm here.] The soft voice of his Oracle Ai reassured him at once.

Although Jake was used to her silences, he was always uncomfortable when he couldn't hear her anymore in a new environment.

"When are they going to turn off that damn alarm? "Jake grunted as he covered his ears.

[Soon, I hope. But logically it should take a while longer.]

"Why?" Jake asked in wonder.

[Because you woke up too fast. The hypersleep exit procedure normally takes longer. Unless there are other people like you on board, it will take at least another thirty minutes.]

As if to prove her wrong, the alarm siren suddenly stopped sounding.

"I guess I'm not the only exceptional individual on board...". Jake sighed.

He would have preferred for Xi to be right. At least he wouldn't have had anything to fear in that ship. But now that he was awake, he had no intention of going back to sleep.

He walked around the room and actually found a kind of wall-mounted locker room with a black screen serving as an identification interface. Unsure of what to do next, Jake stood in front of it and put his hand on the screen in the hope of triggering a reaction.

It was the right choice. The screen suddenly turned on and his face appeared on the screen. His face was quickly compared to the ship's database and a robotic female voice suddenly said "Jake Wilderth. " and then the locker room opened wide like a fridge door.

Inside, Jake discovered a suitcase with clothes his size and his new identity papers. It was worth mentioning that finding clothes for someone as tall as him was definitely not easy and he had to praise the Oracle's efficiency for thinking of every detail.

Nevertheless, he also found some less common objects, including a sort of futuristic pistol without a magazine or barrel, which he didn't know how to reload. He sucked it into his Space Storage without a second thought.

To his greatest delight, he also found a perfectly folded dark armor, as well as a long unguarded sword of the same color. The weapon was of good workmanship, but seemed to have been used a lot. This did not prevent him from taking it to his Space Storage as well.

Rummaging through his suitcase, he then put on a white shirt, a belt and black denim chino, but slipped on his Wormak boots, discreetly substituting them instead of a similar pair of leather boots. To perfect his disguise, he put a luxury watch on the same wrist as his bracelet and combed his hair, then meticulously shaved to look like a perfect handsome tourist.

It wasn't that Jake couldn't take care of himself, but that he was usually too lazy and introverted to do so. Now that it was crucial for him to preserve his identity, he had to play his role as a wealthy passenger looking for a fresh start.

Satisfied with his appearance, he closed his locker room and began his exploration of the ship. Once in the hallway, the minimalist reddish LED lighting stabilized and powerful neon lights illuminated the area with a bright white light comparable to daylight.

Apart from him, there was no one else in the corridor. A wall plan showed him that he was at the back of the ship and that he had to keep moving forward to reach the recreational area.

Undaunted, he set off, and as he progressed he soon heard noises and growling from the numerous doors down this endless corridor. The other passengers were also beginning to wake up.