

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 380 - Board!

At the bow of the ship, in a room full of blank screens, a young woman wearing a heavy plate armor was sitting cross-legged on a leather armchair too big for her. Her hands clung so tightly to the metal handles of her seat that they had been completely distorted like a snake with a twisted neck.

Although she was no taller than five feet and looked more like a teenager than an adult, her cruel smile inspired fear and respect in everyone present. Her hazel eyes, delicate features and long black hair were not enough to counterbalance this impression.

Several high-ranking soldiers shivered with apprehension next to her, but they didn't dare interrupt her pondering. Luckily for them, the young woman was not interested in them, her gaze fixed on an armored window opening directly onto the sidereal void.

Suddenly, a breathless soldier burst into the room covered in blood before collapsing unconscious in front of the young woman and her officers.

"Can someone tell me what's going on?" Avy Shanmin stopped staring into space and ignoring the unconscious soldier at her feet, she questioned her subordinates directly.

Now that they had the green light to speak, they didn't waste a second.

"Communications have been down since we entered the perimeter of the electromagnetic storm." A bearded officer of advanced age declared solemnly.

He was the only officer who was completely calm and his many wrinkles did not hide the vicissitudes he had endured during his long career.

Pow!

"I know that!" The young woman shouted out after slapping him without restraint. "Did you think I wouldn't notice with all the monitors off?!"

The old bearded man did not change his expression and wiped the blood from his lip with a handkerchief. After cracking his jaw a couple of times, he continued his report apathetically, not forgetting to call her to order.

"Commander Shanmin, you know how and why you got this position. Don't forget that or you'll suffer the consequences." Seeing that the impetuous young woman was just clenching her teeth in rage, he let out a contemptuous smile.

"Getting back to the present situation, the storm is unnatural. At least one Fluid Grandmaster is involved."

"Impossible!" One of the officers protested vehemently. "These old fossils can be counted on the fingers of one hand and are all eminent Galactic Consortium figureheads. Apart from ensuring the security of the headquarters, they have no other duties and are not allowed to leave the territory of the First Brotherhood."

The old man snubbed the officer who had just spoken as if it was a braindead idiot and simply retorted, "You're wrong."

"Renegade Inquisitors? Or an enemy of the Consortium?" Avy asked with a solemn expression. If a Fluid Grandmaster was involved, their situation was far more dire than she imagined.

"It's impossible to answer with certainty at this point."

"And this anomaly detected in the ship? How long before we reach Yotai Shien 3?" The young woman questioned them successively with a worsening foul mood.

"We still haven't regained control of the Titan Pearl." Another officer quickly replied with a bow. "Whoever or whatever sabotaged us did an excellent job. It's a good thing that the passengers accepted our excuse, but if they knew that we never chose to go to the Yotai Shien 3 space station, I wonder what their reaction would be..."

SLAP!

A spurt of blood and a few teeth flew through the air. The officer who had just spoken had been slapped so hard that he had almost gone senile.

"I despise innuendo. Speak clearly!" Avy Shanmin sneered loudly.

BOOOM!

Another officer was about to take over when the ground abruptly slipped from under their feet. The command room capsized at almost 90 degrees for a short time, sending most of the officers flying off the floor, before stabilizing again in its normal position.

"Board!"

In another corner of the ship, in a place filled with jacuzzis, hammam and sauna, a young man in swimming trunks, with a shaved head and covered with tattoos representing various animals was rhythmically trampling a shapeless mass with an unlit cigar in his mouth.

With identity papers scattered on the ground and covered in blood, this shapeless mass was one of the passengers.

"Wilde, we don't have time for this nonsense." Another man, even more tattooed, if possible, patted him on the shoulder to bring him back to reality. Seeing the state of the middle-aged lady trampled on, he got a chill.

Wearing an old-fashioned monokini, the passenger's forehead had been smashed between her eyes with a kind of chisel and her brain was directly exposed. The sensory organ in the form of a mussel to control and circulate the Fluid was missing.

In addition to this cosmetic detail, the deceased passenger's eyes were sunken and most of her hair was missing, as if she had lost many tufts in a very short time. Combined with a corpse pallor, this "woman" deserved her place in a horror movie.

"Tsk! I didn't do that." The so-called Wilde justified himself by giving one last angry kick. "This passenger was already like that when it attacked me. When you arrived it collapsed like a disarticulated puppet."

"All right, I believe you..." The other tattooed man then turned to his seemingly equally eccentric comrades who were also in bathing suits, and clapped his hands while shouting, "Playtime's over! I want everyone geared and ready for battle in 120 seconds. Hehe, it looks like we won't really be able to enjoy this cruise like we were dreaming of..."

The group of men in bathing shorts burst out laughing, then an explosion rang out and sent them all rolling on the floor.

"Board!"

"Come little one. Don't be afraid." A squatting girl smiled radiantly as she stared at a wall where there was absolutely nothing in front. Her voice was soft and soothing as if she was trying to attract a frightened puppy, but to the witnesses nearby, she sounded just like a crazy person.

"Lily stops doing that, it's just fucking creepy." A beautiful woman wearing a long evening gown and high heels scolded the girl in exasperation.

"Mmmmf. Because of you, he ran away... I hate you!" The girl suddenly started screaming in rage, her face momentarily red with anger.

"Shut the fuck up if you don't want another round of spanking."

The girl calmed down immediately and became good as gold again.

One could have thought of a commonplace exchange between mother and daughter, but they were both covered in blood and looked nothing alike.

The little girl had messy red hair and was dressed coquettishly in overalls and sneakers, while the adult woman was dark-haired and exquisitely dressed and made up. The only thing they had in common was their scarlet irises and abnormally pale skin.

Minutes after they left, another group of Players entered the room they had just left and a macabre sight greeted them. Dozens of completely desiccated corpses had formed an orderly pile in a corner of the room.

The most shocking thing about this scene was that there was no trace of blood.

All over the ship, similar scenes were occurring where Players and passengers were facing strange situations that were beyond their control. The communication breakdown was a boon for some Players, while some passengers also had their own schedules.

Sometimes the passengers were victims of abuse by other participants, while sometimes it was the passengers who proved to be dangerous. Finally, in other cases, the Players were a threat to other Players.

But the boarding of the Titan Pearl by an unknown enemy changed all that. The Consortium Inquisitors, who until then had not moved from the dining hall, rose abruptly from their seats and all eight of them turned their gaze in the same direction.

For the lucky passengers who had the wonderful idea of staying in the dining hall, this scene gave them goose bumps. What they didn't know was that because of the Inquisitors' presence, the dining hall was now the safest room on the ship.

"Can you feel it? "One of the faceless creatures croaked with a voice so hoarse that no human would have been able to imitate it.

"We feel it. It's indistinct, but Sigmar has been here. "Another Inquisitor grunted and uttered a wheezing whistle.

"We should meet him."

The eight hooded creatures immediately agreed, and the next second they silently disappeared like ghosts. If it wasn't for their meal trays still half full, you'd think they'd never been there.

Al dmz Jfcu frt val ezmpn, ovuw juzu fizuftw mr fiuzo frt ovu uknimlamr guvart ovuq efsu ovuq ovu fitzurfiaru lvmo ovuw ruutut.

"Board!"

BANG!

The one who had just shouted "board" flew back like a missile from where he had come from after Kevin punched him in the face. The other invaders about to land were deeply shocked and hesitated briefly.

Unlucky for them, Jake's group was full of freaks and when they discovered they were dealing with other humans, their fear was completely non-existent.

"Board! "Jake shouted back before grabbing the head of one of the invaders and shoving his knee up his nose. The face of his victim caved in and a horrible cracking sound sent shivers down everyone's spine. He then charged into the invaders' ship and disappeared inside.

With the initiative of their faction leader, it was enough for Sarah and the others to charge after him, uttering war cries.

Kyle, who had a heavy heart, swung his sword at the first enemy that came near, while Sarah and the two sisters rushed after Jake and his cousins to keep up with them. Soon, cries of misery and new explosions resounded inside the enemy ship.

The only one left behind was Will, who knelt down next to the first victim and slapped him shamelessly to wake him up. Once he was more or less conscious, the businessman looked into the invader's eyes and asked in a hypnotic voice.

"Hello there. Would you be so kind as to tell me what brings you here. Of course, please... Take all the time you need..."