

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 382 - Fluid Ghost

Slap!

The idiot who kept squeezing the trigger of his unloaded blaster spat out half his teeth after just a single slap and his feet took off from the ground upon impact. If Jake hadn't held him firmly in place by grabbing his collar with his other hand, he probably would have ricocheted off the ceiling quite a few times.

The only reason this mad guy was still alive was because he was wearing a helmet. But after such a blow, the metal had caved in, forcing the struck cheek to keep an unnatural shape.

In any case, after a slap like that, the crazed pirate was barely conscious and his grip holding the weapon became loose, letting the blaster slide down to the ground with a metallic noise that jolted him awake.

"Aaarrgh, you miserable vermin! You have no idea of the crime you have just committed! If you want to be spared, you'd better let me go right now! Give me the three women and I can even reward you!" The pirate started braying with all his heart like a calf at the slaughterhouse, but a damn còcky calf considering his predicament.

Unluckily for him, because the deformity of the helmet had also compressed his jaw, he had some problems to articulate and his voice was distant and unclear as if he was talking to them through a tube.

Jake wasn't the type to take pléàsuré in abusing anyone, but the pirate's mouth was just too vile. Luckily, he didn't need to get his hands dirty a second time. Sarah and the two sisters had arrived in the meantime and had heard everything.

" Rascal! "Esysa shouted with a flushed face after struggling for several seconds to find the worst insult in her repertoire.

Jake and the others barely refrained from guffawing at her cuteness. As for Sarah and Enya, they directly pounced on him and viciously kicked him in his private parts. The three cousins had to intervene to prevent them from going too far.

Still, after this beating the insolent pirate had lost his arrogance and he alternately looked at the two women with a deeply traumatized expression. Two devils! After only two Ordeals, these two refined and educated women had turned into ruthless savages.

Meanwhile, Sarah was still sulking like a child, refusing to speak to him... Faced with the contradictions of her character, Jake couldn't help but feel helpless.

Now that the crazy pirate had calmed down, the next steps were much simpler. Jake scanned him with his senses, then his bracelet and immediately found several discrepancies.

His Fluid Organ and the meridians connected to it were indeed atrophied, confirming Enya's hypothesis. But above all he could see that it was still shrinking. The neurons were also inflamed, in a way typically found in victims of head trauma or mental degeneration.

However, there was something even more shocking to discover. This pirate was already a living dead. Almost all of his vital organs were failing or irreparably damaged. In particular, his right kidney and left lung had completely disappeared, filled instead with a disgusting scar substance.

Intrigued, he zoomed in on the organs in question, including the one in charge of collecting the Fluid to receive an even more detailed report, and he finally got a clue.

[Fluid Squire Core lvl 1: Initially lvl6, the Fluid accumulated by this native was gradually devoured by parasitic presences, both physical and metaphysical. These parasites are no longer present, but considering the severity of the symptoms, the supernatural presence has left its host only a few minutes ago.]

When Jake read the end of the report, his expression changed drastically. His immediate response was to scan the entire pirate shuttle, but like the previous time the report quickly lost accuracy beyond a few meters.

[Tvu fqgauro Fipat diphopfoamrl arouzduzu omm lozmreiw jaov ovu dprhoamrl md ovu Ozfhiu Dusahu. Waovmpo dartare guoouz lmipoamrl, I fq fdzfat I jaii gu pluiull tpzare oval Oztufi.] Xa fnmimeaxut ar fr uqgfzzflut omru. Lacu usuzwmru uilu, lvu tat rmo iacu om duui pluiull.

"There's no need to worry yet. I found it." Jake declared while directing his glance towards an inconspicuous holographic panel at the front of the cockpit.

His comrades gazed in the same direction, but they saw nothing but a perfectly normal cockpit. To be frank, Jake did not discern anything either, but by injecting his Spirit Body into his own Fluid Core, he had detected something.

It was indistinct, more a gut instinct than a real observation, but he was absolutely sure of himself. With the Fluid largely predominating over Aether in this world, the Aether Vision provided by their Oracle Device was useless, but it just meant he had to play by new rules.

Myrtharian Eyes!

Golden and silvery starlight began to swirl deep inside his pupils, giving the illusion that they were housing two galaxies. The world miraculously changed under Jake's gaze, unveiling all its secrets.

This Fluid... was truly a fluid. When he activated his Bloodline Skill, he felt as if he had been immersed in an energy-rich liquid full of unfathomable mysteries.

Contrary to Aether, which existed in parallel, as it was neither truly energy nor matter, this Fluid was clearly palpable. This energy could be felt and for those aware of it, it was also viscous enough to be considered as matter.

And hidden in the middle of this Fluid Sea lurked a disgusting creature evoking fear and disgust. It was not very big, the size of a three-year-old child, but it looked like a strange jellyfish whose mushroom would have been crowned with a jagged sucking organ.

There was a ghostly blackish glow floating in the middle of its translucent body, and as Jake peered at it, he felt he was being peered back. These spectral bodies clearly lacked stability, shifting from intangible to material form multiple times per second. With this ability, this monster probably had no difficulty crossing walls.

Io hmpit gu hmrlatuzut fl f Fipat Gvmlo. Waovmpo f tmpgo, vu vft dmppt f dazlo hpinzao.

But once discovered, this ghost was no longer so threatening. Jake bent his knees and raised his feet. The next instant, he was slashing his blazing machete at the monster.

A Banshee's shriek almost shattered their eardrums as the creature was slit vertically in half. It had definitely felt that blow.

For a short second, Jake thought he had dealt with it, but once the blade was removed, the two halves of the ghost came together again as if nothing had happened. Without hesitation, Jake struck again, an aura of overwhelming heat exploding out of him.

BOOOM!

The holographic panel whose base was out of steel was cut in two and started to catch fire. The hologram was extinguished and the metal underneath started to glow and melt. All this in the blink of an eye.

His companions were dumbfounded when they suddenly saw their leader go about destroying everything as he struck an imaginary enemy, but none of them were fools.

With a gut feeling, Kyle activated his Golden Eyes and his eyes lit up like two car headlights in the middle of the night.

"I see them!"

He found a second Fluid Ghost a few meters away from him and moving eerily close to Daniel who had no idea what was going on.

"Beware!" Kyle shouted to warn him.

Daniel didn't feel anything special, but he took the warning seriously. Instinctively he dived back and rolled to the ground to distance himself. He pointed his assault rifle in front of him with great alertness, but apart from his friends looking at him worriedly, there was still nothing there.

BOOOM!

"Haha, I've finally whacked that filthy thing!" Jake chuckled a little further on, putting away his machete.

On his way back to them, he saw Kyle needlessly grinding his sword against a second Fluid Ghost and the rest of his comrades standing there watching him as if he was a psychiatric patient who had forgotten to take his pill.

"This monster does not fear material attacks in its intangible form and can reconnect his body without difficulty with the Fluid in which he is bathing. "If you don't have energy-type Aether Skills, you can also annihilate it with a spiritual attack."

Kyle displayed an enlightened expression and his Spirit Body expanded brutally, forming a low-magnitude mental shock wave. His spirit was the weakest in the group, but against a barely sentient Fluid Ghost of this level it was enough. Moreover, the creature was less than a meter away and took the full brunt of the impact.

The Fluid Ghost exploded immediately with a shrill wail of agony. A sort of blackish ectoplasmic liquid that everyone could see this time splashed onto the ground under the blown-up specter. The rest of the group then realized that Jake and Kyle were not crazy and that invisible monsters had been in the same room with them all along.

Kyle quickly picked up his loot and Jake did the same. After collecting everything there was to pick up, he turned to the others and explained,

"To perceive these monsters, deploy your mental strength by first passing it through your Fluid Core. I thought the absence of Aether was a handicap, but it seems that this Ordeal is fair. You can even take advantage of this change."

"Hmmm... So that's where my feeling of being spied on unknowingly came from. I had been feeling uncomfortable since we arrived in that shuttle. "Kevin said, smelling the air as if he understood something. "Good, I can smell these things."

He didn't have Jake' and Kyle's Myrtharian or Golden Eyes, but he had his own trump cards. Werebear's sense of smell was not to be underestimated.

After eliminating these two threats, the group once again examined the captured pirates, this time taking care to consider the Fluid plane. In the end, four more pirates were determined to have been recently infected.

The Fluid Ghosts culprits were usually not far away and they purged the rest of the shuttle in a matter of minutes. With Jake, Kyle and Kevin pinpointing them, these monsters were just too weak and even Tim and Lily's mental attacks could overcome them.

About ten minutes later, the group joined Will and the kids at the shuttle entrance and they set off again without wasting any time to the command room.