

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 384 - Fluid Wielder

After the meticulous and efficient slaughter of the pirates by the three young women, the soldier panicked and immediately picked up his heavy machine gun to attempt one last bluff. He knew full well that with a knife, his chances of survival were practically nil if these newcomers turned out to be enemies.

Once silence was restored to the room, Jake and the others entered in turn to admire the extent of the carnage while pinching their noses. Jake, in particular, glanced at Sarah in exasperation, after she had jostled him a few seconds earlier.

She now had her back straight, her chin up, and a lofty posture full of nobility and ludicrous arrogance like a proud kid who scored a 20/20 on a test. Maybe she was hoping for congratulations or at least some kind of admiring reaction from him, but he had absolutely no intention of giving her satisfaction.

Instead, Jake ignored her as she did, reflecting her attitude back to her like a mirror. He then turned to the surviving soldier with curiosity.

Faced with Jake's intense gaze, the veteran's heart almost missed a beat. While he was already considered tall with his 2.02m, the giant in front of him was two heads taller. His muscles were perfectly proportioned and his gaze had something deeply intimidating, as if he was staring at a predator.

"Who, who the fućk are you?"

Those were the first words the surviving soldier stammered after seeing this group of strangers exterminate the space pirate squad without any effort. Although his heavy machine gun was completely depleted, he was pointing it at them while sweating profusely.

It was a bluff, but until he knew their true intentions, it was unfortunately his only recourse. Pirates were notorious for killing and conspiring against each other, even on the scale of a single crew. As unlikely as it was that these newcomers were pirates, it was still a very plausible scenario.

Seeing the soldier with a face full of scars pointing his gun at them, Jake simply clenched his empty fist and the barrel of the heavy machine gun instantly twisted into a corkscrew tail.

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"No need to be afraid, we are on the same side." Jake soothed him with a friendly smile.

As proof, he found the ID papers in his Space Storage and floated them up to the soldier's face. Always with his hands in the air, the soldier read the printed information with doubts and relaxed visibly as he recognized the Consortium's stamp.

Such an official paper was difficult to falsify and it meant that Jake and his group were truly passengers. Once reassured, the soldier abandoned his fears and abruptly changed his attitude.

"Please, can you save them?" He hurried to bring them to his two unconscious colleagues. The first had been shot in the throat while the second had been shot in the femoral artery and lost a lot of blood.

Jake inspected the two soldiers at a glance and shook his head with a sorry expression.

"The one who took the bullet in the throat is already dead, but his spirit is still there. "He explained in a neutral tone. "The second one is still alive, but he has lost a lot of blood."

The surviving soldier displayed a sad face when he heard the first sentence, but he suddenly got goosebumps as he understood the implications.

"Spi-Spirit?"

Jake remained silent for a few moments, staring at a corner of the room and nodded.

Perhaps because the Aether Density was high or because of the Fluid's properties, but the electrical and quantum fluctuations in the brains of the deceased had not dissipated. However, they were deteriorating rapidly as the persistent fluctuations became more and more fragmented.

Because they had not awakened their Extrasensory Perception and their Spirit Body and Soul were not stabilized, they were unable to do anything at this time and their minds were unable to prevent their degradation.

Nevertheless, if the integrity of their personalities and memories were deteriorating, their spiritual fluctuations would quickly gain in intensity as they absorbed the ambient Fluid. Within a few hours, if their memories were complete enough, their minds would stabilize and they too would become a kind of Fluid Ghost.

Regrettably, this Fluid did not seem as pure and neutral as Aether. Clearly, the unstable spirits of the deceased seemed to be corrupted by this new energy and they had already lost their instinctive human form.

Eventually, Jake would not be at all surprised if these Fluid Ghosts became as evil and bizarre as those they had faced earlier. It was an alarming discovery.

If all the deceased in this Universe turned into Fluid Ghosts when they died, it was a pure miracle that their societies had not been annihilated by killing each other. He had seen what these monsters could do to perfectly healthy humans.

The only conclusion to be drawn for the moment was that there must be hidden forces acting in the shadows to stem this threat.

Instead of responding to the shocked soldier, Jake simply sent a rain of spiritual arrows into the unstable minds of the deceased to dispel the future Fluid Ghosts. The soldier was unable to feel the Fluid or Aether, but he immediately felt his mood improve after his intervention.

Jake then knelt next to the second unconscious soldier and gave him a few sips of Rank 6 Digestor blood, then pressed his hand against the soldier's thigh and concentrated all the energy of his Aether Core into his hand by activating his Aether Conversion Skill.

His hand then began to glow with a bewitching emerald light that only his comrades could see and the victim's artery began to regenerate at a glance. With his other hand and with the help of his telekinesis, he performed emergency surgery and sutures to reconnect the femoral artery, muscles and skin cauterized by the blaster shot.

Of course, the miracle came mainly from Digestor's blood. Jake alone could never have produced such a result on his own.

A few minutes later, the soldier was stabilized and he was finally able to move on.

"Let's go. We've wasted too much time already." Jake said coolly, and his companions who hadn't said a word hastened after him.

The soldier was grateful, but was unsure how to deal with such a scary group. Still, he knew how to recognize an opportunity when it presented itself, and gritting his teeth he picked up his dead colleague's blaster and ran after them.

"Sir, are you a Fluid Wielder?" The veteran immediately fawned over with enthusiasm.

"A what? Jake growled indifferently as if he was dealing with a fly that was a little too clingy.

"A Fluid Wielder. "The soldier repeated without taking offense. "One of those exceptional beings able to connect to the Fluid of the Universe and thanks to this obtain incomparable powers."

"Well... I guess I can be considered one of those people. "Jake replied in an evasive tone.

Whether it was the abilities he had shown or those of Sarah and the two sisters, they had already proven that they were superhuman in many ways. On the other hand, contradicting the soldier would be a waste of time and could even backfire. It was much more reasonable to agree with him.

As the group rushed to the command room, the scarred soldier asked them all sorts of questions about the Fluid Wielders and they soon realized that this guy was just a hardcore fan of these mythological individuals whom he seemed to admire with a reverence bordering on the moronic fanaticism.

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Most of the people in this Universe had atrophied Fluid Core or no Fluid Core at all, which greatly compromised their chance of successfully connecting to the Fluid. Fluid was, in their view, an energy formed from the primordial energy of the Universe, but also the thoughts and emotions of every living being.

In essence, it resembled Aether, except that the Fluid was much less pure and its effects much more palpable and perceptible. The more sensitive a Fluid Wielder was to the Fluid, the easier it was to connect to and use it, but also to be influenced by it.

Fluid Wielders had to undergo extensive training before being allowed to connect directly to the Fluid, but even without reaching this level, passive absorption of the Fluid could extend life expectancy, sharpen the senses, nourish the body and mind, and make one tireless.

Unlike Aether, which was only usable by spiritually evolved life forms, the Fluid benefited everyone and its energy and effects were detectable by conventional technologies.

Many technologies and weapons were powered by the Fluid, and even in everyday life normal people came in contact with this energy on a regular basis.

The Consortium Inquisitors were part of a special order of Fluid Wielders and were supposedly comprised of the most formidable warriors of the Six Brotherhoods. Even a Fluid User would flee rather than confront them.

During this informative exchange, Jake and his group exterminated two more pirate squads and saved five more soldiers who gladly joined their ranks.

At last, a few minutes later, after taking a final elevator ride, the group of fighters finally reached their destination and an apocalyptic sight unfolded before them.