

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 393 - Genius

Once the meeting was over, everyone went about their business and the Players dispersed to their cabins or factions. Jake did not try to make friends with these participants. He gladly left that pleasured to Will and the others.

He was not alone in being individualistic. The Player nicknamed "Boss" had simply left without saying goodbye to anyone. However, before he left, he had also revealed that his group had been attacked by a demented passenger before the hijackers had even initiated their boarding.

The gorgeous young woman and the little girl accompanying the handsome man immediately corroborated these statements. Doing forensic work wasn't the style of the tattooed Player, nor was it the style of his subordinates. On the other hand, the young woman was much more meticulous.

Although these passengers had been executed without mercy, their bodies had been properly examined. Besides having been clinically dead for some time, their Fluid Core and meridians had been severely atrophied, if not missing.

The unimaginable conclusion was that the Titan Pearl had been harbouring Fluid Ghosts, or much worse, long before their hypersleep awakening. It was simply terrifying, the mystery just getting thicker and thicker.

No matter how positive someone was, it was impossible not to suspect a conspiracy. Whether it was the accidental hypersleep awakening near Yotai Shien 3 Space Station, the sabotage of the ship requiring a stop at the station to perform repairs, and all the other inexplicable events on board, it was far too many coincidences altogether.

Because of all this news, the mood aboard the Titan Pearl had dulled considerably and apart from a few eternal optimists, no one felt like joking around. The Titan Pearl would reach the space station in one or two days and they had to make use of this time to prepare for the danger waiting for them there.

Kyle, hurriedly bid them farewell and went to the ship's gym with Kevin and Vincent. Sarah and the two sisters chose to stay together while the two children stayed with Daniel. As for Will, he stayed with the ship's senior officers to gather as much information as possible.

Al plpfi, ovu lpg-ezmpnl juzu mdour ovu lfqu, fl jfl ovuaz jfw md nzmhuutare jvur dfhut jaov f ruj laopfoamr. Jfcu frt Waii vfztiw usuz lifhcurut mdd frt mnuzfout fimru, fiovmpev Waii jfl rmo fsuzlu om lmhafi arouzfoamr. Bmov hvaitzur ommc ovu Oztufi iaevoiw, urtpzare usuro1 nllasuiw zfovuz ovfr nzmfhoasuiw.

Kyle had finally pulled himself together and decided to maximize his chances by practicing seriously with his cousins, which was great news. Lastly, all three women were giving him

headaches and he couldn't figure out exactly how they were wasting their time. He just hoped they knew what they were doing.

Moments later, Jake was back in front of his cabin. On the way, he had come across few passengers, and except for the ones who had joined the refectory at the time of his awakening, it was very likely that these people had met the same unfortunate fate as those mentioned by the tattooed guy and the gorgeous woman during the meeting.

Currently, the soldiers and volunteer Players were actively checking each of the hypersleep capsules in order to count each of the ship's passengers. From time to time, a shot would ring out.

Their victims were either zombified passengers who had been dead for a long time or passengers in too critical a condition to be rescued. They could also be Fluid Ghosts, but not all soldiers could deal with this type of threat. This task fell to the Fluid Wielders of the Titan Pearl.

Hearing rattling and scraping from behind a closed door on his way back, Jake had opened the door and discovered a broken hypersleep capsule, as well as a young woman smelling rotten with a hole between her eyes the size of an apricot pit.

Too bad... The woman was young and must have been quite pretty when she was alive, but now even the flies wouldn't dare go near her.

He had then personally confirmed that these passengers could not be saved. These bodies were clinically dead, but their Spirit Body and Soul was still there, albeit in a degraded form. It was as if the Fluid Ghosts had been compelled to form without leaving their original bodies.

Apart from grunting and repeating a few simple actions, these zombie passengers only obeyed a few instinctive impulses. Some wanted to devour and kill, while the zombie he had met had literally tried to strip him down while trying to kiss him... Or bite his face, he couldn't tell.

With her breath smelling like the carrion of a rotten fish that had been dead for a century, Jake's immediate reflex had been to duck and retaliate with a full-powered telekinetic projection to avoid the slightest physical contact.

Tvu gmtw guare dzfai frt rmo zufiiw vmitare val gimj, f nptiu md gimmt frt mzfefrl vft arlofroiw zunfarout ovu zmmq frt vu iudo jaovmpo opZrare gfhc, tuhatare om iufsu ovu jmzc om ovu nzmdullamrfil dmz ovu ruko oaql.

When he finally closed the door of his cabin, the désiré to throw himself into the king-size bed crossed his mind, but he held back. Instead, he said calmly to the void,

"You can come out."

An intangible entity then oozed out of his body and reformed itself in front of him to form a middle-aged man with a look less lost than at the time of his death. Recognizing his savior, he performed a deep bow to show his respect.

"Master."

"Hmm? Why, you call me that. "Jake was surprised at the change in honorific.

"Because you saved me and I'm used to serving. "The ghost explained emotionally. "I called my previous master the same way."

"Do you have any memories of this master?"

"Unfortunately not. Maybe it will come back over time."

"Let's hope so. "Jake nodded without much conviction. "Instead, tell me what you know about the Fluid and how I can improve."

"As you wish. "The deceased accepted obediently without showing the slightest hint of surprise. He had already understood that his new master was not a human of this world. "Every individual in this Universe, from human to bacterium, has a Fluid Core. This is also true for single-celled organisms, and since complex beings are also made up of cells, this means that in addition to a central Fluid Core, each cell has its own Fluid Core. This organ bridges the gap with the Fluid in the atmosphere, which is an energy that no one really understands, but which is of great benefit to us.

"What we do know is that this energy is all around us and interconnects us all together. The Fluid is seen as alive by some and as an amalgam of disordered emotions from every living being that is part of this Fluid Web for others. Under normal circumstances and for most people, the Fluid Core is said to be atrophied or closed, regardless of its initial size. The Fluid has difficulty entering the Core and even more difficulty leaving it to reach the meridians. With few exceptions, these people are doomed never to become Fluid Wielders.

"Those who are sufficiently talented and receptive to the Fluid will generally have a larger and therefore more open Fluid Core, but this is not always true. The Fluid passively manages to circulate in their bodies, which gradually creates a virtuous circle that strengthens their bodies and Fluid Core and thus their sensitivity to Fluid. When the Fluid Core reaches the size of a grain of rice, it is referred to as Fluid Acolyte or Acolyte Fluid Core and the Fluid Wielder becomes able to perceive the Fluid surrounding him. This is the minimum prerequisite for becoming a Fluid Wielder.

"For a person without talent, a closed Fluid Core will take decades to promote its wearer to the rank of Fluid Acolyte. At this point, it's already too late to start training. The training of a Fluid Wielder is a slow process of accumulation and unless there is a miracle or exceptional talent there are no shortcuts, at least not within the reach of the average individual. This is why most Fluid Wielders have been diagnosed with an Acolyte Fluid Core before the age of 10, which corresponds to about 1 in 100 people.

"Once the Fluid Acolyte level is reached, formal training can begin. Just meditate by clearing your mind and focus on the area between the two eyes and the sensations it provides. The more this sensation is refined, the stronger our connection to the Fluid. It is then enough to maintain this connection as long as possible and repeatedly. Then, year after year the Fluid Core and the practitioner's body will be strengthened, until a kind of third eye is developed to perceive the external Fluid.

"For individuals like you with a closed innate Squire Fluid Core, if not detected in time, they will remain normal people. With the help of a Fluid Grandmaster or several Masters working together it can be forcibly opened after a few sessions. Alas, these masters are not really known for their altruism. Except for their family or an exceptional disciple, they will never do this.

"As for the Fluid Wielders' powers, most are understood instinctively and are practically innate. They awaken on their own as the awareness and understanding of the Fluid increases. Except for a few Consortium geniuses who will be personally trained by Grandmasters to become Inquisitors, most Fluid Wielders are self-taught.

" Still, we find in everyone a marked regeneration increase, a longer lifespan, a powerful spirit and increased reflexes. Prescience and foresight are also common among Fluid Wielders and come from the very nature of the Fluid Web. Since everything is connected

to it, the accepted theory is that reaching out to the Fluid allows one to achieve a sense of omniscience and omnipresence.

"Even if this is not verifiable, it is indeed true that high-level Fluid Wielders often act enigmatically as if they were anticipating thousands of moves in advance. Sometimes a Fluid Wielder doesn't even know why he's acting this way, but a few years later he realizes that this previous action saved him from a disaster."

After this long introduction, Jake asked a few more questions and immediately began experimenting. With the Fluid Ghost's assistance and his own extensive experience as a novice Aetherist, he got the hang of it in no time at all.

His Fluid Core qualified him as a Fluid Squire. This was a relatively low level that most talented Consortium disciples didn't reach until they were in their teens. Because his Fluid Core had never been opened, his meridians were atrophied, but that was not a problem for him. For this issue, he had his high Body Constitution and Vitality.

A Fluid Wielder of this level could vaguely feel the Fluid around and inside him without even trying to calm himself down particularly. Yet, they still couldn't use this energy to fight proactively. In terms of fighting ability, if it wasn't for their reflexes, they wouldn't be much more effective than a trained soldier with a proper firearm.

The dead Fluid Wielder had given him plenty of advice, but despite his politeness, it was clear that he didn't really believe that Jake could accomplish anything notorious in such a short period. Especially with a closed core. Talent had its limits.

That's why when Jake simply closed his eyes and all the Fluid within ten meters was instantly siphoned into his Fluid Core, the Fluid Ghost practically dissipated out of sheer fright.

The neglected Fluid Core first cracked like popcorn, then began to expand to the naked eye and every cell swelled accordingly to accommodate the new energy. Simultaneously, his Aether Core continued to absorb Aether and after about an hour, a second crackling sound resounded in his skull, followed by a powerful mental blast.

He had just become a Fluid Knight.