

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 400 - Rout

When all hell broke loose, different people reacted differently. Some retaliated promptly, opening fire almost instantly whereas others just lost their cool and instinctively tried to retreat if not flee. The problem was that the ship was clearing off! There was nowhere to retreat, let alone flee to.

The Players also showed off their skills, but most especially their true colors. Faced with such a large number of monsters, only a fool would choose to bravely confront them until the very end. Whether there were idiots or not among them was hard to say but they would rather let all the honor and glory go to others.

Well trained and formatted, the troops of the Titan Pearl turned into cannon fodder as they paved a path of retreat for all selfish Players, passengers, and officers. As for Jake... he was shamelessly amongst these self-serving people.

And the reason was obvious: These monsters were fucking strong! When these creatures were flooding down from the collapsed ceiling like an unstoppable tide, Jake didn't immediately try to flee. His first reflex was actually to engage the first alien beast that pounced on him.

Raising his blade high, he sidestepped masterfully at the last second and stroke down with all his might, his biceps and veins bulging out frighteningly. His Wormak machete was augmented by Sharpening Aether and he believed he could cleave the creature in half.

Instead, he just heard a dull sound, followed by a sharp shrill. The greasy skull of the creature was cracked open, but even though the brain was damaged the monster remained alive.

The backlash shook his arm up to the shoulder while the splint of his hands opened, drawing out his blood. Ignoring the pain, Jake blinked once in disbelief and then immediately followed up with a frontal kick. Except this time his leg lit up with a halo of red, orange and yellow, a three-color rainbow that every Player was familiar with.

BAM!

The roughly humanoid creature shot back like a cannonball, forming a parabolic curve before falling back somewhere on the battlefield. But Jake couldn't care less about it.

He shook both of his aching hands in a vain attempt to get the pain out, then raced immediately towards Will a few meters away from him. The businessman was already on his last leg, flat on his back with two beasts on him.

The first one was trying to bite him in the throat, while another one was chewing his thigh like a mad dog. Charisma Aether had obviously failed and if he had any trump cards he had unluckily missed the chance to use them. The assault had been too sudden.

"Scram!"

Jake kicked up the monster's head going for Will's neck at full strength as one would shoot a penalty kick. With excellent Aether Control, it was a killing move. The creature took off in the distance and he immediately chained this first move with a precise upward machete strike to the second beast that was still biting voraciously at Will's thigh.

The monster's head was severed in two except for its lower jaw and Jake panted imperceptibly after this lightning strike. He was going all out this time. Seeing his comrade's condition, he activated the Vitality Link Skill for the first time, but Will refused to transfer his wounds to him.

"I'm fine. Take care of the others." Will gasped as he grabbed the hand offered to help him stand up.

To back up his claim, he exposed the bracelet on his wrist and a magical white light spread outward from it, unleashing a familiar figure. Membranous wings, a lizard body, long claws and teeth as well as a spiked tail. Baby dragon had been summoned on the battlefield!

The summoned beast was no longer that small and like Crunch, with an abundance of Digestor meat to feast on, its growth had been lightning quick. The dragon was already more than two meters tall when standing upright on its hind legs.

Upon discovering its master's wounds, the mythical creature roared with rage, shaking all the Players and soldiers nearby. Only the pack of parasitic creatures remained totally fearless. For them, it just meant more food on the table.

A dozen monsters swooped down on the little dragon just like a pack of hyenas and he was instantly engulfed. Nonetheless, its furious roars continued to resound and from time to time a membranous wing would surface, sweeping away a couple of monsters before they were immediately replaced.

Jake was left dumbfounded in front of the dragon's fierceness, but he soon noticed how the roars were getting scarcer, quickly followed by yelps. All in all, the glorious fight had lasted less than five seconds.

"Call him back or he will die for nothing." He tactfully advised his friend still stricken silly by the absurdity of the scene.

Will woke up from his daze and hurriedly summoned off his fighting pet. Jake promised himself to ask him after the fight how he had pulled this off. Crunch was pretty impressive right now. If he could have his cat with him, or better yet the Lion, he would be much more confident about the future.

"Stay close to me." Jake said as he slew another monster.

Will picked up the assault rifle that he hadn't been able to pull out in time during his first bout with the two monsters and nodded. With no time to waste, Jake erected a spherical telekinetic force field around him, stopping any beasts that would choose to attack them.

Orhu ar f jvaiu, vu jmpit zmfou val Auovuz Cmzu om nuzlmrfiw hvmcu ovu msuziw zuhciull qmlrouzl. Tvu Auovuz lhfzhaow jfl fr allpu, gpo Fipat jfl niurow. Tvzmpsev val Fipat Cmzu vu hmpit qfranpifou oval uruzew jaovmpo vfsare om prdmit val Snazao Bmtw.

Not being a Fluid Master, the range was limited, but not having to worry about mental attacks was new for him. With his Soul hiding cosily in this Fluid organ, he was like a puppeteer controlling Fluid remotely with thousands of wires. It was easy and natural as if he had always been able to do it. On this point, Fluid far surpassed Aether.

With the support of his telekinesis, Jake and Will regrouped with the others in no time. Tim and Lily had been spontaneously protected by Daniel and his two cousins, while the two sisters, like Will, had been inadvertently injured by overconfidence. Kyle had been lucky and was unharmed.

Their first reflex when they had seen these monsters falling down had been to throw at them a fireball. Only after their assailants ignored their spells did they remember that these aliens were immune to heat and energy based attacks.

Despite the ambush, Jake never thought for a second about employing all his lethal techniques against these infernal beasts. It wasn't that the two sisters were stupid though, but regrettably they had no other way to fight. They were too used to fight as Fire Mages and their close combat skills were subpar.

However, unlike Will their fighting instincts were decent. Their magic having failed, they had immediately switched to their guns and fired wildly. Despite this, Esya had been seriously injured and if Jake and Vincent hadn't arrived in time, they would have died.

Jake activated the Vitality Link and unlike Will they accepted with sincere gratitude. The Faction Skill cost 1M Aether points per minute, and Jake had to bear the price alone this time. The other members of the faction also received a request to share vitality with the two sisters.

Kevin, who had the best regeneration in the group under his Werebear form agreed to transfer Esya's injury to him whose bowels were almost spilling out. He grunted as he tried to muffle the pain and soon shapeshifted before things got worse.

A gaping laceration appeared under his cousin's stomach while the torn skin of Esya's belly became smooth again. Jake, who had seen all sorts of incredible things in the last few months, couldn't help but be fascinated. Based on his current Aether understanding, he had no idea how this kind of magic was possible.

[Don't Bother.] Xi sighed with emotion. [Apart from the Oracle itself, I'm not sure anyone really understands this kind of Aether Spell. Not even the best Aetherists. It touches on the fabric of Reality, the Soul, and the laws of Causality. A field too complex for you at the moment.]

Enya refused to transfer her injuries, which were minor, insisting that Will be treated first. With his thigh chewed like minced steak, the businessman was indeed a liability for the group if left like so. Kevin having already done his share of sacrifice, Jake took on this responsibility. Sensing the urgency, Will didn't refuse this time.

Jake gritted his teeth as he felt the muscles in his left thigh magically shred, but he didn't let it show. The Vitality Link cost 1M Aether points per minute and he reluctantly deactivated the technique as soon as the transfer was complete. They were really too poor to afford these premium skills at the moment.

"Let's go."

Protected by his telekinetic force field, the group had already forgotten the deadly battle raging around them. When Jake brought them back to reality, they found out that the battle was already lost.

For the brief moment when soldiers and Players fought or fled valiantly, the shield separating the station's landing shed from the sidereal void had been disabled. The Titan Pearl had taken advantage of this to escape, its metal silhouette barely visible in space from afar.

It should not be forgotten that the ship was several kilometers long. Although they could still distinguish it, it was by no means close.

Fortunately, the station had some sort of mechanism in place to keep the hangar from depressurizing or most of them would have died. Although for Jake it would have been an acceptable sacrifice if it meant getting rid of the monsters. His group could survive in space for a while anyway.

With Jake and his cousins leading the way, their group quickly made their escape to the nearest corridor and faded into darkness, leaving the passengers, Players and soldiers to their fate. Turning their heads one last time before taking a fateful turn, they caught sight of Avy and her personal bodyguards retreating to another corridor, forcefully pushing back the monster horde.

The only remaining fighting soldiers ran out of ammunition one by one and were devoured, dismembered in the goriest possible way. Because Emiwan had informed them in time, all had replaced their plasma rifle with a conventional steel bullet firearm. Otherwise, they would have been annihilated even faster.

Ultimately, an army of several thousand men had been wiped out in less than two minutes.

Dulnaou oval, Jfcu frt ovu movuzl talhmsuzut jaov vmzzmz ovfo ovu hmznlul md ovulu qmlrouzl juzu zatahpimpliw duj ar rpqguz fqmre ovu sahoaql. Lull ovfr ojm vprtut hmznlul ar omofi frt ao jfl jaov Jfcu frt ovu gfgw tzfemr vfsare lifwut ypaou f duj md ovuq.

Thousands of them remained, and this in spite of all the monsters that set off in pursuit of the fugitives.

With the exception of a few who had run away the fastest, the rest of the fugitives could only barely defend their lives. Among the human corpses, Jake even recognized a few faces.

Commonplace faces like one of the passengers who had wanted to leave the ship a little earlier, but also more striking ones such as the two bodyguards guarding the bridge, two tattooed men, three Nawaiis as well as three of the pale-skinned Players that Sarah had joined.

The only consolation was that Sarah was not among the corpses.

In the end, they had all died for naught. Jake and his group ran blindly through the station for a long time to escape from the horde of monsters chasing them, until at last, after many minutes, only their own breath and footsteps could be heard.

At that moment, three Oracle System notifications popped up in front of each Player.

[Side Mission 2: Escape the creatures of Yotai Shien 3 for as long as possible.]

[Side Mission 3: Find a way to leave Yotai Shien 3.]

[Side Mission 4: Discover the truth behind what really happened on Yotai Shien.]