

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 409 – War Cry

‘Hmmm?’ Jake and Kyle’s eyes widened sharply, their faces alarmed.

‘What’s wrong?’ Will inquired as he saw their reaction.

‘The Hunters aren’t sleeping anymore.’

‘Shit... what do we do now?’ Kevin snarled as he rolled his candy bar wrapper into a ball and threw it on the floor.

Arryn, Siraye and the three soldiers showed anxious expressions, but they all waited like everyone else for his decision.

‘We run.’ Jake replied seriously as he summoned his machete. The others immediately followed suit, grabbing their own weapons.

‘Seems like I may have to stick with being a Werebear for a while.’

‘His cousin sighed.

All this time, Jake had never stopped monitoring his Aether and Fluid levels, making sure he was always in peak condition. Absorbing these two energies had become as natural as breathing, but since reading the diary he knew that the Corruption mentioned by Emiwan was the real deal.

Recovering his energy might no longer be so easy before long. This belief could also be attributed to his newfound instincts as a Fluid Adept.

Just as he made this remark to himself, he felt something change around him, as if the temperature had suddenly dropped a couple of degrees. He shivered involuntarily, before inspecting his surroundings with suspicion.

‘Did you feel it?’ Jake asked as he spontaneously launched a scan with his bracelet. At this point, he wasn’t even counting his Aether anymore.

Alas, the scan came up empty.

‘I did.’ Vincent confirmed with a frown.

‘Me too.’ Enya raised her hand.

‘Our fortune has run out,’ Tim said mysteriously.

‘What do you mean Tim?’ Everyone turned to him with a confused look.

‘I can’t feel the right path anymore. It doesn’t matter to you, but to me it’s like losing my eyes or ears. My sense of danger still works though.’

Jake ruffled the boy’s hair to calm him down, as he sensed his fear. Without his luck, Tim was just another kid or so. With such Aether density, his other stats didn’t grant him any advantage. Even with the Myrtharian Body Passive, he could barely compete with a weak adult soldier.

‘Good job Tim, I’ll take it from here.’ He declared as he walked past him. ‘Enya and Esya behind me. Kevin and Vincent you close the march. Kyle and Daniel with the kids. As for the rest of you do your best not to get in the way.’

With these words, he began to jog at a brisk pace. They had long since taken the ominous path that his foresight had warned him about, but they had made up their minds. Between a sure death and a trap, they had made their choice.

Thunk!

The ceiling slab collapsed a few meters behind them without warning. The rift immediately spewed forth a dozen hyperactive quadrupedal creatures, their former lethargy nothing more than a memory.

Jake glanced behind him, but didn't slow down, letting his cousins do their job. After shrieking and cackling a few times, the monsters managed to get back on their feet and chased them down. In a few strides, the aliens outpaced the gallop of a cheetah and started to close the distance.

'Holy Moly!' Siraye screamed in fright as the monsters caught up with them. She fired her outdated revolver, but the aim was off. The bullet struck a gutter a little further away, producing a few sparks.

In response, the provoked monster spat a jet of venom straight to her face with remarkable accuracy and Kevin was forced to intercept the projectile with his body with an irritated grunt.

At that very moment, Vincent's rapier pierced the culprit's eye, before coming out on the other side of its skull. With a kick to push back the corpse and a backward somersault he went back to his position in the group.

'Don't shoot if you're not sure you'll hit your target.' He coldly advised Siraye who was still in shock before refocusing on the fight.

Lily, who hadn't done much so far, produced a beam of light with her hand towards the monsters but nothing happened. Seeing Tim's 'as it

should be' countenance next to her, she pouted and stuck her tongue out at him.

She continued to repeat the process, but with no conclusive evidence that her spell was working. Yet, she was a child, so no one thought much about it.

On his side, Jake sped up more and more but never got too far from the group, trying to scan each intersection in order to make a quick but irreversible decision. At each intersection, the paths would be packed with monsters except for one. And that path was always the one that triggered his danger instinct.

Of course, it was the path he chose to tread every time. The other option involved facing hundreds, if not thousands, of Hunters one after the other and he wasn't in a hurry to find out which side would yield first.

Above all, he was not alone. Kevin and Vincent could have done with this plan, but not the others.

Soon he noticed a pattern. The monsters behind them were relentlessly pursuing them, but seemed to be keeping their distance. He had the vague certainty that these Hunters could run much faster than that. The previous poisonous spit proved that these creatures were resourceful when provoked.

It was the same with the other paths crawling with monsters. The things there were making no particular effort to chase them while their sense of smell and hearing was developed enough to hear them coming.

It must be said that they were not particularly stealthy with their heavy running thuds and the monsters' shrieks behind them.

After a few minutes of frantic chasing, Jake encountered his first headache. In front of him, it was no longer an intersection but a long, endless hallway.

The problem? His Myrtharian Sight was picking up a swarm of creatures all along the way. When he closed his eyes, the number of energy signatures was so great that he felt as if he were staring at the sun.

Spghmrlhampliw, vu gzfcut, hfplare val hmqnframrl om nfrac. Elwf gpqnut vuz vuft fefarlo val gfhc, gpo jaovvuit vuz hmqnifaro jvur lvu rmoahut fr fiaur fvuft md ovuq.

'Could this be the dreaded trap?' If it was, he would have done better by trusting his instincts and engaging all those monsters.

The alien wasn't aggressive, but it was slowly creeping towards them, dripping a phenomenal amount of slime from its mouth. As it touched the metal floor, a corrosive smoke would be produced, reminding them all that this saliva was not harmless. The floor was holding up, but traces of rust were rapidly appearing.

'Think, think.' Jake repeated to himself as he hurriedly searched for a solution.

He inspected the nearby armored doors in hopes of a way out, but all the doors looked the same... or almost. A few dozen meters ahead among the horde of monsters, he spotted one that was different from the others.

An elevator!

'Follow me! Whoever is trailing behind will be left to his own devices!' Jake shouted as he broke the neck of the monster standing in front of him with his telekinesis.

The monster's neck didn't break instantly, but instead let out a horrible metallic squeak before snapping in half with a soft bang.

'How tough' Jake exclaimed inwardly with a bad feeling.

Either this monster was tougher than the others, or something had changed. His black eyes with no irises, no whites, and no pupils sure were striking compared to the stupid, but vaguely human gaze of the Hunters behind them.

Art artuut, lurlare ovu tufov md ovuaz hmqzftu, ovu vmztu md hzufopzul gudmzu vaq guefr om qmsu. Ekfqarare ovuq qmzu himluiw jaov val Mwzovfzafr Saevo, vu darfiw dmprrt jvfo jfl jzmre.

'Their Dark Fluid levels... They're rising fast!'

The discovery left him completely stunned. Telekinesis would no longer work on them. At least not until he overcame the barrier of their aura.

Quickly inspecting the Hunters his two cousins were facing, he noticed that these monsters were undergoing similar transformations, but their energy levels were much lower than their other black-eyed counterparts.

Why?' Jake wondered inwardly, but this was not the time to get answers. The fiends wouldn't give him the chance.

Determined to fight, he condensed his Grey Sharpening Aether around his blade, also shifting other Aether types inside his body to optimize his movements. He also activated Bloodline Ignition and Myrtharian Trance with the intent to attack with maximum explosiveness.

Focused as ever, he raised his machete and then lashed forward, releasing all his murderous intent. In a few steps, a sonic boom rang

out and the ground buckled underneath him, releasing a few sparks. He was about to slash his blade down at the monster horde, mentally prepared to lose a few of his group members in the process, when a strange thing happened.

When the deadly aura emitted by his Spirit Body hit the creatures, the closest Hunters simultaneously cringed and whimpered as if they had just met their nemesis. Interrupting his strike, he stood still for a short time in the middle of the monsters, trying to understand the phenomenon.

Then he thought of an obvious reason, which he should have tested from the beginning: The Apex Predator Soul Glyph he had obtained during his Second Ordeal. If killing these monsters wasn't so easy for him, he would surely have realized it.

[-Title: Apex Predator (Platinum): Your body emits an overwhelmingly intimidating aura to terrestrial, flying or aquatic creatures, causing them to overestimate you. Also works on Evolvers. Upgradable. (Obtained by reaching the extermination milestones of each type during the Second Ordeal.)]

Al lvftw frt fgrmzqfi fl ovulu qmrlouzl juzu, ovuw juzu loaii diulv frt gimmt guarel. Nmj crmjare jvfo om tm, Jfcu ommc f tuun gzufov frt zuiuf lut f guloafi zmfz dzmq ovu tunovl md val lmpi.

‘AAAH!’

The War Cry was back! Except this time it wasn't as rushed as last time. He still couldn't cast spells or attack without endangering himself with his Spirit Body, but with a Fluid Core it couldn't be easier. By merging his Soul with his Fluid Core, he found it easy to do this.

As if guided by an omniscient mystical force, he fused his Fluid, Aether, Soul Energy, and Glyph Apex Predator together smoothly. With his telekinesis, he then formed an immaterial megaphone which he used to direct the sonic attack.

The deafening scream exploded out of his mouth, releasing a funnel-like sound blast straight ahead. At about 340 meters per second, the shockwave swept everything in its wake. The six closest Hunters bled from all their orifices and died instantly. Those a few dozen meters away collapsed like disjointed puppets, while those even farther back scurried away like a herd of antelope before a lion.

Turning his head to motion the rest of his group that the path was clear, he came upon silent, dumbstruck faces, with their mouths open so wide, that a little more and they would have been scraping the ground.

Embarrassed, he said while scratching his head,

‘Ahem, I like to sing in the shower.’

It was as good an explanation as any.
