

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 419 - Building A Bunker Again

‘What the hell?! ‘Jake and Tayyar shouted in rage at the same time before exchanging a look filled with injustice.

‘Why are they voting against us? ‘The Hunter wondered aloud. ‘Even if we were both Monsters, there’s no way they would have identified us so early. Besides, I’m pretty sure Peter Brady isn’t one.

Jake raised a suspicious eyebrow at the guy in front of him.

‘What makes you say that? ‘

‘Peter’s just a druggie idiot. ‘ Tayyar explained analytically. ‘He put on a brave face when he came out of the Pit, but I’m sure his body suffered some after-effects. If I were him, I would have spent the night licking my wounds and resting. ‘

‘Then there’s only one possible explanation. ‘ Jake concluded sullenly. ‘Three attacks last night, three votes. It’s safe to say there are three Monsters among the Villagers. With Peter’s behavior yesterday and our absence from the vote, it’s not absurd that they voted against us, even if it is silly. I’m curious to know who took the initiative to convince the others. ‘

Remembering the name ‘Chinen Taisho‘ among the Enforcers, he already had his little idea. The two ‘criminals‘ hadn’t even considered their next tactic for tackling the later part of the day when another announcement from the robotic voice reverberated above them.

[Villager Gordon Mason was elected Mayor of the Village with 51% of the vote. He will retain this additional role until he resigns or a new election is called by the majority. (possible once every 5 Cycles).]

Upon hearing the name Gordon Mason, Jake was immediately reminded of the mealy-mouthed and forgettable Titan Pearl officer currently occupying the Role of Bailiff. Bailiff was already an important Role although he didn't know the details and the Role of Mayor would further add to his authority.

Tval rfoasu jfl emmt. Puzvfnl jaov val lofopl fl f luramz mddahuz vu vft uflaiw efarut ovu lpnnmzo md ovu movuz rfoasul prtuz val hmqqfirt. Ir ovumzw vu jfl ovu vaevulo zfricare mddahuz nzuluro ukhuno dmz Dfzwi, ovu Cvaud Mutahfi Oddahuz, firt ovuw fii mjut vaq mgutaurhu.

Now, Jake still didn't know what the point of being the Village Mayor was, but a unique role like this was sure to have a few interesting perks.

'I'm leaving.' Tayyar declared abruptly as he picked up his bag full of boar meat.

They were in the same predicament, but neither of them trusted each other. Rather than being perpetually in fear of being backstabbed, perhaps it was better to go it alone. That was why Jake didn't try to stop him.

'All right. Take care.'

Before leaving, Tayyar knelt down to pray briefly in a certain direction before giving him a final head nod in parting.

From his strong accent, the time of day and his prayer posture, Jake identified him as a Muslim. Still, he couldn't help but wonder how the Qibla (prayer direction) was determined in the Mirror Universe. For all he knew, Mecca and its great mosque might not exist anymore.

On top of that, at this very moment they were not in the same universe either. If he crossed the Hunter again, he would definitely ask him the question.

Once more alone, Jake did not linger either. His bag was packed with herbs, fruit and boar meat, but he had no intention of returning to the Village. Jake realized that very few villagers had the ability to enter the Forest without his permission.

The Hunters were among them, as was the Herbalist, whom he had recently learned about from Tayyar. If Kewanee had known that such a Role existed, she would surely not have signed the Contract with him with such decisiveness.

Or ovu movuz vfirt, ovuzu jfl mru ovare ovfo mriw ovu Fmzulo
Wfztur hmpit tm om val crmjuteu frt ovfo jfl om lofw ar ovu dmzulo
fo raevo. Ir movuz jmztl, vu hmpit hvmmmlu rmo om em vmqu fl imre
fl vu lofwut ar ovu jmmtl.

These 3 Enforcers were in for a nasty surprise if they thought they were getting a bargain by targeting him. Remembering that Hephais, the lone survivor from last night had gotten a reputation point for his feat, Jake was somewhat excited to replicate that performance.

[‘That’s no reason not to do something. If you have time to daydream, you’d better set up a defense base]. Xi admonished him lightheartedly.

‘Yeah... Right. ‘

Jake pulled out his map to look for an interesting spot and found an ideal hill, slightly elevated. The forest was quite large, much larger than the space station was supposed to be. The Fluid Grandmaster's powers behind it all commanded respect.

He quickly covered the distance, using his telekinesis to muffle the sound of his footsteps and limit his weight. He didn't want to disturb the monsters and creatures in his path. These would become a natural defense in case his aggressors managed to chase him here.

When he got to the top of the hill, Jake discovered a small clearing at the top, which reminded him vividly of the stone house in his second Ordeal. At that time, Sarah wasn't the bitchiest of bitches yet, as Lu Yan held that position with flying colors.

Already an expert in the field, Jake rebuilt a fortress of stones and heated earth in no time. He carved and hewed the trunks of nearby trees to make a multitude of spears and projectiles and with his high intelligence and creativity took the opportunity to recreate all sorts of mechanical traps.

When the stone fortress, which was nothing more than a bunker with access to the roof, was finished, Jake stopped satisfied and dripping with sweat. If time permitted, he would add a secret escape route by digging underground.

His work done, Jake sat cross-legged atop his bunker and waited. About an hour later, he heard twigs snapping and one of his traps was activated soon after.

'I can't believe it...they really came. '

Maybe the Enforcers have special authorization or a way to locate you. Xi suggested without much faith.

‘It seems unlikely, but we’ll see.’ Jake retorted nonchalantly, drawing his machete.

He activated his Myrtharian Sight and detected an Aetheric signature at the base of the hill in front of him. The individual was bleeding, clearly skewered by one of his traps.

Indeed, when Jake arrived at the bottom looking relaxed with his machete resting against his shoulder, he discovered a Chinen Taisho nailed to a tree by a 3m long, 15cm diameter wooden stake. The tattooed Player was in constant pain as he tried unsuccessfully to free himself.

‘JAKE!’ Chinen howled in rage and agony like a wounded dog when he spotted him.

‘It’s me.’ Jake nodded good-naturedly.

‘Get me down and wash your neck for me.’ The tattooed man inveighed between bloody coughing fits.

‘Oh. And why should I?’ Jake paused to glare at the Enforcer with scorn. ‘You really think I don’t see through your little game?’

Chinen instantly abandoned his theatrics, and a cold, numb look at the trunk sticking in his chest replaced his tortured rictus. He seemed to notice Jake for the first time.

‘You’re not an easy prey.’ He said.

‘No kidding. Are you with the tattooed giant and the other dork named Wilde? You seem to share the same hot blood.’ Jake abruptly changed the subject.

‘You mean Boris?’ Chinen probed with genuine surprise in his eyes.

‘A bald guy my size, biceps as big as my thighs and so many tattoos you can barely make out his skin color?’

‘Yeah, that’s him. Are you one of us?’ The impaled man chuckled.

‘Sorry, I don’t know him. Just seen him once or twice from a distance.’

‘Jake apologized with a straight face.’

It wasn’t a lie. He had only run into these two Players on two occasions: to greet the pirate captain Emiwan on the Titan Pearl and in the meeting room with Avy when Boris had brought the remains of a Hunter he had exterminated with his own fists.

The tattooed Player almost spat blood again upon hearing this. This guy was truly infuriating.

‘Okay, I’ll stop messing with you.’ Jake yanked the huge stake out his chest without batting an eyelash.

As Chinen flopped limply to the ground to wriggle like a fish out of water, he proclaimed,

‘I give you two choices. Either you give me 50% of your Fluid and I’ll let you go as you came. If you are a good boy, I will even give you some bandages and medicine. Second choice, I torture you until you die or sign a Slave Contract with me.’

Not long ago, Jake would never have considered the second option, but his moral compass had recently grown more flexible. If that was the price of victory, he could sure go to hell.

He wouldn’t do that to just any Player, but to one who had issued death threats and tried to kill him for no reason? He would sleep soundly no matter what happened.

‘I choose...’ Chinen muttered, the end of his sentence not audible.

‘I can’t hear anything. Louder. ‘ Jake reached up with his hand funneled against his ear to taunt him.

‘I choose...‘ The tattooed Player was deathly pale, barely clinging to consciousness.

‘Yes?’ Jake moved closer.

‘I choose... TO KILL YOU!’ Chinen’s befuddled, extinguished gaze suddenly cleared, replaced by unflinching loathing.

The huge hole in his chest closed in a split second and his bloodless skin turned a healthy shade. The tattoos of a Minotaur and another creature on his chest and arms seemed to come to life, and his muscles momentarily filled out. Still crouching, Chinen threw a punch of prodigious force considering his posture.

Simultaneously, Jake heard a noise above him and let himself be swallowed by the ground, only to reappear a few feet back. Gazing at his former position, he discovered a Nawai woman wincing as she looked teary-eyed at her broken axe.

‘Finally out of hiding.’ Jake observed casually. ‘It’s about time. I was tired of waiting.’