

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 428 - Team Fight

Hiss!

A wrinkled, clawed paw poked out of one of the holes. The skin was a sickly gray with a network of dark veins, while the claws were ink-black, long and curved enough to slit their throats effortlessly.

The rest of the creature soon followed. The size of a calf, a simian morphology with thin tentacles and suckers instead of what should have been its hair. When the monster yawned, long thin teeth reminiscent of Venom's jaws in the Marvel Universe were humbly put on display.

Although somewhat different in some aspects, it was indeed a Hunter parasite like those of the horde that had chased them earlier. Still, it was enough to make Carmin despair. At their best, these monsters were small fry for the vampire aristocracy, but in her current state one of them was already overkill.

And sadly, it was not alone.

As soon as the first Hunter, more daring than the others, began to cackle, dozens, hundreds of similar monsters poured out of the depths of the tunnels. They soon realized that the first creature had only its fearlessness to show for it after meeting its brethren.

Those of calf-like proportions were in the minority by far. On average, these monsters were as big as adult gorillas and the most massive

ones stood on their broad hind legs, making them giants of over 4 meters in height.

These particular giants were different from the others. Their chests, skulls and other vulnerable body parts were clad in a kind of natural armor reminiscent of crustacean shells, and their long, agile tails ended with a natural club at the tip, itself fitted with a stinger.

They were a perfect predator and despite distinct differences their resemblance to the Digestors he knew was uncanny.

Shrrri !!!!

A long, shrill howl was suddenly released by one of these giants, but Jake noticed that its mouth remained closed. It was only when he activated his Myrtharian Sight that he spotted an ugly creature halfway between a dry baby and a spider clinging to the top of its head. Blending into the background like a chameleon, he had almost missed it.

Its lone silver, bulging, watery eye was riveted on the duo, twinkling eerily with each of its heartbeats. As soon as the abomination let out its loud shriek, the Hunters swooped down on them as one.

Jake immediately recognized by elimination one of the Controllers that the pirate captain had theorized about, but never met in person.

As Carmin braced herself for impact, gripping the hilt of her weapon so tightly that her knuckles ached, Jake ignored the impending threat to focus on the Controller.

Activating Bloodline Ignition, he consciously pushed his cardiovascular system to its peak in a heartbeat, raising his blood pressure to a level that would have made a normal human heart explode. His body temperature rose in turn and a torrent of red,

yellow and orange Aether washed over his legs to increase his explosiveness tenfold.

Jfcu ovur lypfoout fl imj fl nmlagiū om efovuz fl qphv uruzew fl vu hmpit frt nplvut mr val iuel jaov fii val qaevo om zuiūflu ao. Lacu f lpnuz lnzare, frt jaov ovu vuin md val ouiucarulal, vu talfnnufzut dzmq val nmlaoamr iufsare guvart fr fdouzaqfeu.

A wink later, a shockwave pierced the eardrums of all the monsters in his wake, as he reappeared at the other end of the cave, his machete buried up to its guard in the skull of the most gigantic Hunter.

Between the top of the bloody skull and the hilt of his machete, a deformed arachnoid creature was skewered, wailing in pain. Its untouched eye was sobbing profusely, filled with terror and utter incomprehension. Even as its light went out and its consciousness faded, the intelligent creature kept its traumatized expression.

It was by far the most sophisticated emotion he had observed in these parasites since the beginning, and it set them apart from the Digestors. The Digestors had proven that they could be intelligent, but they had always behaved with utter selflessness, as if their existence were of no value.

If such Digestors also existed, then what made them so different from the other Mirror Universe aliens that getting along was no longer an option?

In any case, as soon as the Controller died, the other parasites lost their commander and returned to their chaotic behavior. The giant Hunter he had just killed collapsed heavily, releasing long strands of dark energy that he was unfortunately forced to ignore.

Jake had already tried to absorb this mixture of Aether and Fluid, but the yield was extremely poor. However, it was still meat and he

would never have overlooked it if that was the only reason. The actual reason was Corruption. Xi wasn't sure if the resulting Aether was safe.

SMASH!

A long mane of brown hair shot past his eyes like a cannonball and slammed into the wall a few meters away. A fractured obsidian helmet rolled to the ground, revealing Carmin's once perfect face. Her small trumpet nose had been crushed, her sensuous lips were swollen and bloody, while one of her black eyes was completely closed.

Because of Jake's blitzkrieg, the vampire had been left alone to take the full brunt of the enemy's charge.

Hfid loprrut, ovu wmpre jmqfr liat om ovu eZmprt, rmo usur vfsare oaqu om zuefar vuz lurlul gudmzu ovu Hprouzl rufzgw nmprhut mr vuz. A duj md ovuq film opzrut ovuaz foouroamr om Jfcu, gpo fl f zuqartuz, val qfhvuou jfl loaii lophc ar ovu hmznlu md ovuaz qmlo sfiafro duiimj. Aiovmpev ovulu qmrlouzl juzu qmzmrah fl vuui, ovuw tat nZuduZ uflw nZuw.

' For God's sake, help me!' Carmin's distressed cry brought him back to reality.

The young woman had surpassed his expectations, four Hunters lying dead and bloodless at her feet in mere seconds, but a giant Hunter had managed to pin her down with all its weight. Dozens of lesser creatures were biting at her limbs like rabid dogs and if it weren't for the pieces of armor Jake had made for her, she would have been torn to pieces by now.

Jake bolted to her assistance, slicing everything in his path, but his superhuman movements drew the attention of the rest of the monsters, who gathered into a mountain of flesh to block his path.

Sensing her demise, Carmin gave up the futile idea of conserving her energy. The giant hunter's huge clawed hand was crushing her ribcage, and the supporting armor was already beginning to break apart. Its destruction would spell her end.

Resolute, she bit her tongue and blood spurted out, forming an ephemeral fountain that blinded the monster for a short time. Instead of falling back, the blood flared up, releasing an intense reddish light, and as she took a deep breath, it was sucked back into her mouth.

After this ritual, her extinguished eyes regained an intense ruby glow, piercing the darkness of the cave like two car headlights at night on the highway. An aura of bloody red light burst forth from the depths of her being, and Carmine's drenched hair began to float in the air as if it were being battered by a powerful hurricane.

'Scram!'

With a violent twist of her torso, she sent the small Hunters hanging on her flying and broke free of the giant Hunter's grasp, knocking him off balance. The skull of the monster slumped over her and she mercilessly seized the opportunity to retaliate with a powerful palm strike.

The creature of more than one ton and four meters in height shot back up to more than ten meters high, the back of its head in contact with her back after a 180° tilt. After that, it was nothing but carnage and massacre.

Tzfrldmzqut arom frmovuz nuzlmr, Cfzqar diuj ovzmpev ovu uruqw zfrcl fo lpnuzlmrah lnuut, mriw f gimmtw diflv md iaevorare fiimjare

vaq om dmiimj vuz qmsuqurol usuzw rmj frt ovur. Dfzc gimmt dzmq vuz dmul hmfiulhut arom fii lmzol md jufnmrl frt nzmbuhoaiul, f qfhfgzu dazujmzc talnifw urlvzmptare ovu Pao.

Jake had to admit that without Bloodline Ignition, as long as he carried his liquid alloy she would be faster than he was. Her strength was also prodigious. Barely below Kevin's Werebear form.

Not to be outdone, Jake also pulverized everything in his path, using the advantage of his weight and strength to dominate all the giant Hunters in single combat. If Jake struck down from the sky, his weight alone was enough to crush any enemy.

A few hours later, the monsters stopped spawning from the tunnels and the cavern grew quiet again. The rocky floor was long gone, buried by a pile of monsters several meters high. At the end, a new parameter had come to complicate the fight.

Jake and Carmin had thought these monsters were coming for them, but they soon realized that they were just appetizers for the Hunters. What these creatures really craved was the itchy pumpkin soup and the emerald lava lining the cave.

It wasn't until they got their first taste of it and a Hunter gorilla mutated right in front of them after landing in the lava that they remembered that these aliens could literally absorb heat and energy.

Fortunately, they had reacted in time and Jake had chopped its head off before it could complete its evolution.

The battle over, Carmin was about to finish off the last Hunter when Jake stopped her.

'Wait. Don't kill him just yet. '

'Why?'

‘To buy time. ‘Jake replied as if it was obvious.

If his theory was correct, once this monster was killed, they would be sent back to the Village Square. The previous convicts who had survived had always returned after a few hours, which was their situation.

It should be noted that none of the natives sentenced to the Pit had returned. Peter Brady and the late Chinen Taisho were the only exceptions, and they were both Players.

Carmin put her weapon away and let him deal with the creature. With his Earth Control, neutralizing this wounded Hunter was a breeze. A second later, it was completely encased in a rock tomb, with just enough ventilation to breathe.