

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 450 - Showdown with Inquisitors (part 1)

‘How did you find me?’ Jake probed in puzzlement. ‘I thought you had to report back to your base if you failed.’

The two Inquisitors were almost indistinguishable. They wore the same loose-fitting, hooded, inky black robes, and their faces were obscured by a veil of darkness. Yet Jake was able to tell them apart by their slight difference in height and posture, which were subtly different.

Croyorn seemed to be unduly heavy and his movements were unnatural despite his remarkable stealth. Oxium, on the other hand, looked more normal, but to someone like Jake who was used to supporting his own mass, the second Inquisitor did not seem to be anchored to the ground, as if he was too light to let gravity influence him.

In response to his question, Croyorn tilted his head to the side in an unnatural way and remained in that posture, while Oxium answered with an angry rasp, close to a rustle.

‘And we did report. Our Master was not happy with our failure... The Village not being ours yet, she already knew that somehow you had survived. She gave us a second chance, tonight, and we will do our duty no matter what it takes.’

Jake and Will frowned. Drastan raised his war hammer and flexed his muscles as a show of strength. Regrettably, the sweat on their faces and clammy hands gave away their nervousness.

Truthfully, none of the three were in a hurry to fight these two Inquisitors. If the fight did take place, it would be the most treacherous since the Ordeal began. They would be putting their lives on the line this time.

‘Do we really have to fight tonight?’ Jake tentatively made one last plea, though with little conviction. His hand was already on the hilt of his machete.

‘Of course not.’ Oxium whispered like a gentle breeze. ‘If you agree to die now, fighting is pointless.’

Jake was mildly unsettled, but didn’t show it. Instead, he snarled back,

‘You’d rather kill me than gain a new ally?! Why not turn me into a Monster instead?’

‘Would you accept?’ This time it was Croyorn’s grinding, metallic voice that retorted.

Jake hesitated for a second, then sighed somewhat disillusioned, ‘I guess you know me well.’

‘Vincent, fire at will.’ Jake shouted telepathically.

In the span of a tenth of a second, a huge projectile pierced the air, bursting out of the darkness at breakneck speed. Croyorn, who was the target, barely had time to tilt his torso slightly before he was struck violently. The impact generated a deafening shock wave and the stone floor of the newly rebuilt hall cracked.

Simultaneously, Drastan pumped up his muscles, and leapt forward with superhuman speed to bring down his huge warhammer with all his might. Croyorn, who had already taken an unknown projectile, was already in a bad position, and his head connected with the warrior's hammer with a loud GONG.

Jake expected to see the Inquisitor's head explode, or at least be thrown off by the violence of the impact, but what a shock it was when he saw Drastan instead drop his broken hammer to press his swollen left arm. An ugly protuberance protruded from under his wrist, indicating that a major bone had splintered on impact.

Croyorn had not moved an inch.

As for the giant projectile, it was a huge spear or rather translucent arrow fired by Vincent. It was giving off a mist of cold air and was already melting. Nonchalantly and as if he couldn't feel the pain, Croyorn grabbed the ice spear with one of his gloved hands and with a twist, it shattered into pieces.

Simultaneously, Jake had bombarded Oxium with multiple air bullets to prevent him from rescuing his comrade, but he soon noticed that the Inquisitor was standing idly by, letting the projectiles wash over his robe with indifference. However, he did not stop shooting to ensure that Vincent and Drastan's ambush would be carried out successfully.

Sadly, they failed. After firing hundreds of rounds of compressed air, Oxium's hooded robe was riddled with holes. It gradually frayed, then fell apart, revealing a full-body armor underneath and an arsenal of tubes hanging from his belt. The plates of the armor were dotted with fine cracks, but they had held firm.

Underneath the Inquisitor's hood, there was still a metal helmet with a visor that prevented him from peering into its face. Obviously, they enjoyed cultivating a sense of mystery.

Jake stopped producing air bullets and changed tactics. Vincent, who was camped outside in the shadows, also left his hiding place and appeared behind the two Inquisitors to ambush them with an assault rifle in hand.

By unspoken agreement, the two cousins went into action at the same time. Vincent opened fire on Croyorn, while Jake depressurized the air around the two Inquisitors to make them choke. Drastan stepped back and snapped the broken bones back into place. A greenish halo enveloped his forearm, a sign that the Aether of Vitality was at work.

Once again, their attacks proved ineffective. The bullets ricocheted off Croyorn with a deluge of sparks, while the lack of oxygen left the two Inquisitors completely unaffected, almost as if they couldn't even tell the difference.

Beside him, Drastan inspected his healed arm, opening and closing his fingers in search of any sign of discomfort. The three Players exchanged alarmed looks and decided to stop conserving their strength. If these two Inquisitors escaped, who knew what kind of hell they would face next.

Drastan suddenly let out a war cry and a thunderous heartbeat shook the walls of the hall. The black warrior suddenly doubled in size, almost reaching five meters in height. His arms lengthened until they almost touched the ground, his shoulders widened disproportionately, as did his head, which swelled horribly. His ears became pointed, his nose sunken, his jaw moved forward, while the yellowish fangs of his mandible lengthened until they protruded from his lips. His skin

thickened to a texture between leather and bark, and his muscles developed in a disharmonious way.

Miraculously, his oversized plate armor managed to accommodate his growth spurt. Somehow, the creator of this armor had foreseen this scenario.

Yeah, no doubt, it was a Troll.

Vincent drew his trusty rapier and a strange blue halo enveloped his body, condensing at the tip of his blade. Drops of water began to condense one by one along his blade, then the process accelerated drastically and all the humidity of the surrounding air converged towards him, enveloping him in a watery veil.

Nmo jfroare om gu iudo guvart, Jfcu fhoasfout Bimmtiaru Ieraoamr frt ljaohvut om Lfsf Mmtu. Tvu giflo md vufo frt iaevo jfl hmrofarut gw val ouiucarulal, ovmp evu zmhc gurufov val duuo loaii iaypudaut ar f vufzogufu.

As for Will... He had already retreated to the far end of the hall with his two bodyguards. It wasn't a matter of courage, but of practicality. Without his summons, he was too vulnerable and he highly doubted that his Charisma would work on these two fellows.

For safety, Jake manipulated one of the walls to keep him safe. He hadn't created any secret passages, but he had set up the hall in individually manipulatable blocks so he could easily intervene. To be fair, he didn't expect to use it so soon.

Compared to their relaxed demeanor before, the two Inquisitors for once appeared to take the situation seriously. Both activated one of the tubes on their belts to form a dark energy blade, respectively.

These blades contained a high-frequency vibrating metal portion, as well as a layer of Fluid with terribly destructive properties. They were an improved version of Daryl's sword.

'DIE!'

Drastan planted his huge fists into the ground and pulled out a huge boulder. Building up momentum as he shook the hall with each step, he lifted the boulder over his head and leapt into the air. As he fell, he smashed it down on Croyorn's skull.

The targeted Inquisitor swung his blade upward with dazzling agility and deflected the huge boulder in an inexplicable manner. Shifting his feet, he spun around and planted his weapon successively in the giant foot of the Troll, then his two knees before severing his hamstrings and lifting his blade towards his crotch.

The black Player growled in pain, but unlike what one might have pictured, he managed to muster a sadistic smile. His wounds closed almost instantly after a few large drops of leafy green blood flowed from them.

Just as he should have collapsed from the agony of having a blade thrust into his crotch, Drastan vigorously clenched his legs and crushed the arm of the Inquisitor holding the sword. Croyorn tried to pull his arm free, but it was too late. The Troll's huge fists began to pummel him with enough power to flatten a car like a pancake.

Mufrjvaiu, luuare ovfo Dzflofr jfl qfrfeare, Varhuro hvfzeit omjfztl Okapq ar f diflv, iufsare f ozfai md jfouz nfzoahiul guvart vaq, ovur gfhcloggut vaq jaovmpo vulafoamr. Or aqnfho, f daru buo md nzullpzaxut jfouz lvmo mpo md ovu oan md ovu giftu jaov urmpev arourlaow om liahu ovzmpv louui.

A shrill chime erupted along with numerous splashes, and the Inquisitor's chest armor was pierced clean through. Seeing, this first success, he withdrew his blade and stabbed again at a monstrous rate.

Oxium should have been able to dodge with his Precognition, but that was without taking into account Jake. After witnessing their strange invulnerability to air, his countermeasure had simply been to retaliate with overwhelming power.

When Vincent had attacked him from behind, the Inquisitor's attention was already occupied by multiple Soul Arrows and a gravitational pressure on his head weighing several dozen tons. If he let even one Soul Attack through, Jake would take control of his body with his telekinesis and crush his heart with a snap of his fingers.