

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 454 - Extra Mission

Later, the group gathered in the Castle's brand new meeting room. Not having furnished the place yet, they made do with the spare table and rock stools that Jake had made on a whim.

Tapping his fingers on the table in a sullen mood, Jake stared long and hard at Avy and the Inquisitor before breaking the silence,

'We took out two Inquisitors a few hours before you got here.' He stated defiantly, getting straight to the heart of the matter. 'I apologize for our hostility earlier, but I still need a good reason for not doing it again.'

Drastan and Hephais nodded beside him, and even Will bobbed his head in support. Enya stifled a sigh, but took it upon herself to make the introductions.

'You already know Avy. She runs the largest Village in the Second Round. Regrettably, it's mostly Titan Pearl' soldiers. The Players have mostly gone their separate ways and formed their own Villages. Because of the circumstances surrounding our presence in this Ordeal, they are more susceptible to Corruption. As a result... Most Players are now either Monsters, Criminals, or dead.'

Jake and the other survivors frowned. This was not good news. Pavao and Hephais had already told him all this, but it was not pleasant to hear it again.

‘What about this Inquisitor?’ Jake glared at the latter, who was surprisingly behaving quite well.

‘I’m getting to that...’ Enya replied wearily.

‘Let me say it.’ Avy interrupted her, showing for the first time a maturity and gravity befitting of her rank. ‘Ifora here, is an Inquisitor working for Sigmar.’

A shiver of horror ran down their spines. Jake didn’t overreact this time, but his face tensed up.

‘Sigmar Aelsinire?! Isn’t he supposed to be our enemy?’ Will exclaimed with incomprehension.

Jfcu lvfzut ovu lfqu luroaquro. Ahhmztare om ovu tafzw urozv ovuw vft talhmsuzut, Saeqfz jfl ovu Fipat Gzfrtqflouz jvm vft guozfwut ovu Cmrlmzoapq frt qmsut om oval lofoamr jaov val qur om hmrtpho uknuzaqurofi gamimeahfi zulufzhv. Tvu nfzflaoul ovfo fgmprtut ar oval nifhu juzu ovu zulpio.

At that moment, the Fluid Ghost he had saved materialized next to him and transmitted telepathically with a shudder of guilt in his voice,

’ Master, because of the events of yesterday I didn’t have time to make my report. About Sigmar...’

Jake listened to the late Fluid Wielder report and his face darkened as the minutes passed. The only good news in all of this was that he received a notification from the System that he had completed his Main Mission with a Perfect Rating.

He was free to return to B842 at any time. If he shared his findings with the other members of his Faction, they would all be able to leave this wretched place.

Kyle and Daniel had already completed their Main Mission from the moment the Titan Pearl docked at Yotai Shien 3, Tim, Kevin and Will simply had to survive until the mystery of the emergency beacons was solved, while Sarah, Esya and Vincent had to find at least one clue. The only person who needed to solve the entire mystery like he did was Enya.

‘Where is Sigmar?’ Jake asked solemnly. This was the most important question.

If the ghost hadn’t been led astray, Sigmar hadn’t been on Yotai Shien 3 for a long time. If his theory was right, this one was like them one of the Titan Pearl’ passengers. As for Isbeus, she was undoubtedly the sworn enemy who wanted him dead for a long time.

‘Think Jake, think...’ He repeated to himself while replaying in memory all the data recorded by his senses and his bracelet since the beginning of this Ordeal.

Then suddenly, his mind froze as he focused on the image of two individuals: his first two encounters on the Titan Pearl.

‘Xi, how did we miss something like this?’ Jake closed his eyes and massaged his temples to soothe his brain. An unspeakable anger was slowly rising in him.

In response, he only heard Xi’s dispirited sigh.

[There’s nothing you could have done. They are at a level where they can influence your behavior and decisions without you realizing it. The Oracle System’s malfunction is probably their fault, too.]

‘So why am I only realizing this now?’

[Several possibilities. The evolution of your Fluid Core and Spirit Body made this possible, the effect is time limited or has been lifted,

or the last possibility is mild hypnosis. In the last case, if you are confronted with the obvious, then the illusion disappears.]

'I see...'

'Sigmar does not inform us of his movements, but he regularly gives us orders. We can also contact him if necessary.' Ilfora put an end to his train of thought as she answered his previous question.

'Fuck, obviously it couldn't be that simple.' Jake ranted inwardly, but his face remained unfazed before the audience.

'I want to meet him.' Jake proclaimed with resolve.

Avy and the Inquisitor exchanged a meaningful look, then Ilfora bowed respectfully and said,

'As you wish. I can arrange the meeting today if you so *désiré*.

'Fine. But I won't meet with him today. Schedule it in three days.' Jake declined straight away.

Ilfora paused briefly, then bowed again. 'It will be done as you wish. Avy, we're leaving.'

Avy clung to her mask of indifference and replied in an even tone,

'You go ahead. I want to stay here and catch up with my friends.'

The inquisitor gave her another baleful look, then left the hall without any escort. Drastan wanted to walk her out to keep an eye on her, but somehow Ilfora stepped through the large door and wall as if they didn't exist. Unlike a Fluid Ghost or Ostrexora's ectoplasmic state, her body seemed to behave more like a hologram.

Either she had never been there in the first place, or like Croyorn and Oxium her body was attuned to a specific element.

Regardless, if Drastan was too clumsy to follow her, this was not so for Hephais, who slipped easily through the gaps in the door with his Shadow form. He came back a few minutes later and confirmed that Ilfora had really left.

‘Phew! It feels good to get some air at last!’ Avy instantly regained her easy-going cheerfulness as soon as the Fluid Master failure left the scene. ‘These Inquisitors give me the creeps. I know I couldn’t have kept the Village without them, but now that they’re here I don’t have much authority either. I’m just a puppet they’re protecting because my identity has more value alive than it does dead.’

The Titan Pearl General then told them about her background as an heiress in the Shanmin Clan. The Shanmin Clan was one of the most influential families of the Third Brotherhood and produced the most powerful Fluid Wielders in Riva. At their peak, they even had a Fluid Grandmaster on the Consortium Council.

Agmpo 140 wufzl fem, ovuw imlo ovuaz mriw Fipat Gzfrtqflouz ar f qwlouzampl usuro. Hu guhfqu f jfrou t hzaqarfi msuzraevo. Io jfl film fo oval oaqu ovfo ovuaz vmqu nifruo Rasf guefr om tuhiaru.

Coincidence or not, fate had a way of doing things. This Fluid Grandmaster from Riva was the same Sigmar Aelsinire who had taken refuge on Yotai Shien 3 over a century earlier.

When the Consortium announced the discovery of a habitable exoplanet not too far from Riva, the Third Brotherhood saw the perfect opportunity for a new beginning. Hence the 22 space expeditions that ensued to colonize Riva 2.

Thanks to her clan, Avy had been propelled to the helm of the Titan Pearl despite her young age and inexperience, but because she was neither the main heir nor her clan’s prodigy, and far too young at the

time, it was not until now that a space expedition to Riva 2 was entrusted to her.

In retrospect, this was probably what saved her life. The tragic fate of Riva and its inhabitants seemed closely tied to that of Sigmar and her clan.

Now Jake and the others were well aware of what had happened to those earlier expeditions. Sabotaged from the inside, they had all been intercepted by Yotai Shien 3, now forming a graveyard of spaceships around the station. Emiwan's pirate ship was just collateral damage. They had never been the target of this conspiracy.

While everyone considered Sigmar to be the mastermind behind the whole scheme, his presence aboard the Titan Pearl indicated that things were more complicated than they first assumed. Perhaps out of filial instinct or mere guilt he had deemed it best to wrap things up once and for all.

'Why, did you want three more days before meeting him?' Esya asked curiously.

'To train and prepare.' Jake answered honestly. 'If you have Fluid to spend, now is the time. Because if you don't use it now, you never will.'

His near death at the hands of Isbeus was still fresh in his mind.

Waov val ruj dmptr zulmisu, Jfcu dmptr ovfo val nzusampl Mfar Mallamr vft guur zunifhut gw ovu Ekozf Mallamr: Dalhmsuz ovu Uioaqfou Tzpvov. Al gudmzu, ovuzu jfl rm oaqu iaqao.

After the Fluid Ghost's report, Jake already knew that this ultimate truth was not going to be pretty. Because Sigmar and Wendy (the chief researcher of the station back then) had conceived a son. If this person was still alive, he would have been 137 years old.

Alas, this was simply not possible. Because someone had made sure that this would never happen. Sigmar, his father, had murdered him with his own hands.