

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 455 - Jackpot

Jake left the other Masons under Pavao to rebuild the other important structures in the Village. After completing the Castle, the only structures he personally rebuilt for most of the morning were those of his Faction members.

Except this time, he made sure that these structures were included in the inner wall of his own residence. Except for Ostrexora and Pavao's squad, whom he still didn't fully trust, all his allies now shared the same fortress.

When the construction was completed, Jake exchanged a few small talk with his friends, but still couldn't relax. He listened to Will's expansion plans based on the monopoly of resources. With the assistance of Avy's Village, he was confident he could accumulate a lot of Fluid in no time.

Of course, there was one caveat: Survive until all resource-producing Villagers and NPCs had been eliminated or turned into Monsters. Jake agreed in principle, but he no longer believed in this solution.

Instead, he suggested something else that suited him better under the current circumstances.

'Do either of you have a Jackpot Card?' He asked out of the blue. He was glad he had retrieved it and not just left it in the hands of the lucky Villager who had drawn it. 'I have one in my possession. If you are willing to entrust all of your Fluid to me, I intend to use it now.'

Will flinched as he heard him propose such a simple and pragmatic plan to implement. The businessman had obviously considered this option, but he hoped to reserve it for a time when his fortune would be more substantial. On the other hand, he had not yet succeeded in obtaining one of these Cards despite his best efforts. Skaur had one, though...

Still, if they pooled their Fluid, they could indeed get a colossal fortune in the snap of a finger.

‘That’s a good plan, Jake... But why didn’t you mention that you had such a great card before?’ Will whined with a tinge of resentment.

‘Like you, I wasn’t planning on using it so soon.’ Jake replied bitterly. ‘I’m losing my marbles, Will. I need that Fluid now or I’m going to go ballistic any minute. I swear you don’t want to be around me when that happens.’

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The two sisters seemed composed, but they were fidgety and had abandoned their mannerisms. Tim had always been restless, but now he spent most of his time sharpening his axe. Drastan had already nearly gone crazy, as had Kewanee and Svara, who were already close to their limits. Avy... was already known for her wild temperament long before visiting this station.

Only Carmin seemed to be acting like herself, but Jake had already told him to watch out for her. Hephais was the exception, but given his history as an assassin, it was best to consider him a ticking time bomb as well.

‘Okay, I’m in... Should we tell Pavao and his men about this?’ Will suggested without much enthusiasm.

‘No.’ Jake refused adamantly. ‘I believe them when they claim to be on our side, but that just means they fear the Monsters more than us. If they find out how much Fluid we have, the Corruption will stimulate their greed in unpredictable ways.’

‘Why trust me in that case?’ Avy asked, moved by his faith in her.

‘I don’t.’ Jake trampled on her goodwill toward him. ‘But I have nothing to fear from you. No offense, but your character is easy to peg.’

‘Hmmm!’ The petite Fluid Knight drew her sword, ready for battle.

‘I have two Jackpot Cards and three Lottery Cards.’ Tim interrupted them, ruining the young woman’s fighting stance. Obviously, he had waited all this time to bring more punch to his revelation. His smug face said it all.

The child’s legendary luck had struck again. Drastan and Hephais were shocked, but for the others it was a normal occurrence. Still, they didn’t forget to rub his fragile ego the right way.

‘Well done, Tim.’ Jake and Will patted him one after the other. Even Enya and Elya gave him a hug to congratulate him.

‘All right, that’s three Jackpot Cards. We can start.’ Jake put an end to the teenager’s crowning moment, which seemed to be far too self-indulgent as his head was smothered by the two sisters’ breasts.

He seemed to be recovering well from Lily’s absence. Although to be honest, it was a bit early for the twelve year old girl to accomplish the same feat. It was important not to let the teenager get a big head, though, because they still needed him.

Jake then collected the Jackpot Cards and Fluid from his allies, for a total of 3 Jackpot Cards, 3 Lottery Cards and 1.437 billion units, and gave the entire amount back to Tim. Although he trusted the boy, he forced him to sign a Contract in front of everyone to avoid any misunderstanding.

After using the 3 Lottery Cards, the total came to 1.757 billion. Jake alone had contributed more than a quarter of this sum. This was due in part to the Fluid Cards he retrieved from the two Inquisitors he had defeated last night.

The second largest contributor, contrary to what one might have guessed, was not Will, but Hephais, followed closely by the two sisters. The Assassin had accepted many contracts and had never devalued his rates. As for the two sisters, their Noble Role ensured them continuous income without putting in any effort.

‘Go ahead Tim, you can start.’ Jake gently encouraged him.

This was the moment of truth. No matter how hard he tried not to stress the child, his jitteriness and that of the others in the group showed through. Depending on Tim’s luck, this sum could be multiplied by 2 to 5 times per Jackpot Card. With such a large payout, the margin was simply exorbitant.

Much to everyone’s pleasant surprise, Tim shared the interface of his Fluid Card with them through his bracelet. It was not to gain their trust, but more to share with them a special moment. Winning money was always fun.

[1st Jackpot Card used..... Your initial fortune of 1.757B becomes... 5.642B.]

[2nd Jackpot Card used..... Your fortune of 5.642B becomes... 18.958B.]

[3rd Jackpait Card used..... Your original fortune of 18,958B becomes... 90,413B.]

Dead silence.

Everyone stared at the interface result completely speechless. What kind of fucking divine luck was that? Dumbfounded, Will pinched Drastan next to him and widened his eyes as he heard him squeal in pain. As for Enya and Esya, they hugged the child again, determined to hold on so tightly that his luck would rub off on them.

As Jake was about to pick up those 90B of Fluid Units, something strange happened. Everything went black.

The Village, the Forest, the sky, the sun, everything vanished, replaced by a sickening bellowing sound. As the group's eyesight acclimated to the new lighting, they found that they were all in a large, empty hangar.

The metal floor and walls, the pipes snaking along the ceiling like gigantic earthworms... They were back in the station. At the back of the hangar, they could even make out an elevator like the one that had brought them here.

‘What the hell...‘

Then the light came back. The Village, the Forest, the sky, the sun, everything returned to normal. The cold, austere space station looked like a bad memory. Yet everyone noticed that the Runes lining the ground were a bit dimmer than before.

‘It was weird.‘ Drastan grunted as he hugged his club a little too tightly. Since he had broken his war hammer, it had become his replacement weapon.

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Holding his chin, Jake remembered the distance and counting his steps, he walked to where he thought he had seen the elevator. Unfortunately, it was just too good to be true. There he found nothing special except the ruins of an old house.

‘This was supposed to be the place.’ Hephais vouched as he pointed to the ashes of an old fireplace.

‘Old Ghost, was that your plan to get out of here?’ Jake questioned the deceased Fluid Wielder.

‘No... This is a surprise for me too.’ He hastened to admit while popping his head out of Jake’s body. ‘The plan I have... is much more dangerous and pragmatic. But it will work for sure.’

‘At least now we know we weren’t transported somewhere else.’ Carmin commented indifferently. Despite her apparent calmness, a tumult of emotions was brewing behind her beautiful eyes.

With their Fluid prize secured, Jake then redistributed the Fluid according to each person’s needs and the amount of Fluid provided at the start. He was going to need a lot of Fluid, but he wasn’t the only one. His allies also needed to become stronger to withstand the Corruption and the coming battle.

Even so, it was pointless to give them too much. Tim’s Jackpot Cards had surpassed his expectations and because of that, even he wasn’t sure he could spend that much Fluid in such a short time, even if he wanted to.

Now that they had more Fluid than they could spend, Jake could finally train without restriction. After giving some instructions, he secluded himself in a Castle room and grabbed his Fluid Card.

It was time to become a true Fluid Wielder.

