

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 460 - Capture Mission

Jake was dying to yell at them to get their attention, but his common sense prevented him from doing so. His acumen was warning him that this reunion would not go as planned. If nothing else, they looked healthy...

Staying low at the edge of the village, Jake followed Kevin's gaze and saw him heading for a warehouse the Grocers had set up to store their goods. Will had also rebuilt a similar structure in their new Village.

He didn't see anything wrong with it at the time, but he got a nasty hunch when he saw Kevin licking his lips. Sarah and two other vampires with the same red eyes as Carmin were also walking in the same direction.

As Kevin entered the warehouse, he felt Carmin clutch his arm.

'Don't...' She whispered pleadingly.

Jake puzzled over the gleam of pain behind her pupils, but he didn't let empathy cloud his judgment. Jerking his clutched arm, he broke free of her grip.

'Now I'm here, I need to know.' He apologized grimly.

Feeling his resolve, Carmin sighed ruefully but made no further attempt to change his mind. After all, it was because of her that he was here.

Waov ezmjare hmitrull, Jfcu jfohvut Kusar lian arom ovu gpaitare, ovur vufzt ovu tulnuzfou hzaul arlatu. A duj luhmrtl ifouz f lvfzn lhzufq md femrw zfre mpo, frt ovur ovuzu jfl laiurhu fefar ukhuno dmz f duj lmgf.

A moment later, Jake saw his cousin come out covered in fresh blood munching on something. When he squinted, he identified the thing as a human forearm...

When he realized this, his face paled in horror, but darkened right after. After observing the Zhorions' man-eating practices, he didn't expect to witness such a scene again so soon.

Quelling his disgust, his mind cleared of all its parasitic emotions and he turned his attention back to Sarah and the other vampires on their way to the same building. When the blonde woman went in, his face was as smooth as a waveless sea.

Yet, for those who knew him, this often heralded the calm before the storm. Far from being perfect, Jake had a recurring flaw long before he fell victim to the Corruption. He could hold a grudge and was very principled. Nonsensical cannibalism was not something he could tolerate.

Unsurprisingly, the terrified screams inside rose louder, interspersed with the uproarious laughter of the vampires in the room. A moment later, the screaming stopped and Sarah and the vampires accompanying her emerged with a satisfied grin, fresh blood still dripping from their lips.

'Fuck. I'm going to kill them!' Jake gritted his teeth in fury. The composure he had managed to keep in check all this time was about to shatter.

If his grandfather Antony had been present, he who was against punitive violence would probably have beaten his grandson Kevin to death himself. As for Sarah... She too needed someone to knock some sense into her head.

Upon seeing him flare up so quickly, Carmin began to panic. Clutching his arm again to restrain him from attacking, she whispered nervously,

‘Not now, please. We didn’t come for them! I want to kill Wyatt too, but not now. Why do you think I want to kill him? I may be a vampire, but he’s done something terrible to me too!’

Jake was about to ignore her plea in search of an opportunity to attack, when he felt a warm liquid running down his arm. Looking down, he saw tears of blood streaming profusely from the young woman’s heartbroken face.

His anger left him at once. The sight of her crying was like a cold shower and he regained his composure. Taking deep breaths to normalize his mood, he replayed all the memories he had of Carmin’s original Faction, and he suddenly had a good idea of what had happened.

‘The little girl?’ He blurted out, almost certain.

The kid who had run into him had left an impression on him for the simple reason that her name was also Lily. Decidedly, this Ordeal was not bringing luck to the bearers of this name...

Carmin’s uncontrolled shaking of rage gave him the confirmation he had been fearing. After weeping, the vampire regained some of her composure and nodded sadly.

‘My little sister.’ She confessed before telling him what she knew, ‘I knew she was eliminated early in the Second Round, but not how.’

When I found Wyatt and the others, the situation was already like that. Don't get me wrong, our vampire race is a slave to its Bloodline. We really need human blood, or at least something close to it, to subsist.

'Legend has it that it came from a sacrifice made by one of our ancestors. In exchange for the power to protect our fellow man, we were condemned to drink their blood for eternity. Instead of showing up in the sunlight, respected and admired, we were forced to live in darkness, feared and abhorred by those we were supposed to protect. Over time, most Vampires have forgotten the noble origin of their powers, but the original clans like mine still remember. We strive to consume only the blood we need to survive and multiply our sources so as not to endanger the lives of our prey. Unfortunately, not all new vampires share this view and it is beginning to spread to some of the older clans.

'Power Curses are some of the most powerful curses in existence and are also passed on to offspring. Many powerful Bloodlines also work like this, because it strengthens the Spirit-Aether connection.'

Jake compared her statements to the data from his own Myrtharian Bloodline, and had to admit that there was some truth to what she said. It was because his negative emotions were weakening him as much as his positive ones that he was able to progress so quickly.

On the other hand, because his bloodline predisposed him to be overconfident, arrogant, and reckless, he was much more likely to make prejudicial mistakes. If one were to take the reasoning even further, he was gradually losing his former personality. Some would say that compared to the loser he once was, it was for the best, but was it really?

Wvfo vu tat crmj dmz lpzu jfl ovfo ovu mit vaq jfl arozmsuzout frt ukozuquiw talozplodpi gw rfopzu. Aiovmpev vu jfl rmo msuziw dufzdpi, vu jfl rmo nzmfohasu. Nm qfoouz vmj nmjuzdpi vu jfl, ovu mit vaq jmpit rusuz vfsu ofcur ovu zalc md npooare vaqluid ar ovu lnmoiaevo fl vu jfl tmare rmj.

The old Jake would have gone unnoticed without provoking anything or anyone. For the sake of survival and competitiveness he would have done his best, but never by compromising his safety. His past motto would have been something along the lines of ‘Even if everyone else dies, I’ll survive.’ Even if the Corruption eventually drove him insane, it would have been his paranoid fear and distrust that would have gotten him killed.

His recent actions completely invalidated that perspective. Instead, the current Jake, while still rational, was daredevil, proactive, and much easier to provoke. Inwardly, he still thought his life mattered most, but in reality his pride and emotions had gotten the better of him on more than one occasion.

When his Bloodline had been upgraded, the impact of his negative emotions had diminished, but not its impact on his personality. In that sense, perhaps he too was a slave to his Bloodline.

‘We can’t kill Wyatt now, but we need to capture someone who was in the Castle. We need to learn what these Inquisitors are up to.’ Jake refocused the conversation after clarifying his thoughts.

Drying up her tears, Carmin rubbed her eyes one last time before putting on a fierce expression.

‘Leave it to me. I’ve got a perfect candidate for this.’ She smirked evilly.

‘Just remember, we’ll have to kill the interviewee...’ Jake added as he saw her getting excited. He had no intention of letting this person escape only to reveal to the enemy that their grand scheme had leaked before its due time.

‘Even better.’ The vampire chuckled.

‘Cough, so... who’s our target?’ Jake asked, while clearing his throat.

Carmin immediately pointed to a pretty, overly made up brunette wearing a Victorian gothic dress mixing black and purple. The vampire wasn’t very tall, about 150cm, but she made up for it with her large breasts and an angelic smile. Too bad, that the white napkin around her neck was stained with blood... She had just finished her meal.

‘Seren!’ Carmin said with hatred. ‘Don’t worry about it. She was a pro-vampire oligarch long before the Corruption arrived. To her, other humanoid species are just food or toys she throws away after breaking them. The only reason I tolerated her was because of Wyatt’s leniency. Now that he’s flipped out and we have to kill him too, there’s no need to hold myself back...’

Jake caught a hint of sadness in her very last words, but she was clearly more stable than before. She seemed to have made peace with her choice and its consequences.

Guilt-free, she told him everything he needed to know about his target, including a bunch of unimportant secrets. Against all odds, despite her youthful appearance this Seren was already 200 years old. To be accurate, most of the vampires of her faction were relatively old if compared to the lifespan of Earthlings.

‘Okay... Wait for my signal here.’ Jake said in a low voice.

This capture mission, he was better suited to carry out alone. With his billions of Fluid, he was no longer worried about running out of Aether, since the Fluid-Aether conversion was 1:1.

The time had come to fully utilize his Oracle Skills.