

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 462 - Why?

Seren's wake-up call a few minutes later in the Forest was brutal.

'Aaaarrggh!'

Two severed arms and legs were separated from their trunks as they squirted out impressive gushes of blood. Separated from the greater part of her Oracle Device's liquid alloy, all the functions of her Oracle System were shut down, except for her Oracle AI and the one regarding her Status.

Communicating with her faction was now impossible. Gritting her teeth and gasping as if she were about to give birth, the Vampire lay prostrate on the floor with an expression of agony.

'For fućk's sake, who the fućk are you?!' The Vampire Noble shrieked with her face flushed and congested with pain and rage.

Jake ignored the young woman's cursing of his ancestors and took the opportunity to cheerfully absorb the liquid alloy in her bracelet. He wasn't exactly short of it, but it was always good to have a little more. To his utmost delight, Seren had killed more than one Player in the past and the severed limbs contained quite a few pounds of alloy.

Because his Space Storage was unusable in this Monster Game, he was still only carrying 12 tons instead of the 27 he had. The downside was that his bracelet was less efficient and yielded less Aether, but in

exchange he was definitely faster and lighter. One could not always have it all in life.

Sensing that Seren had no intention of shutting up anytime soon, Jake waited patiently for Carmin to rejoin him. When she saw the bloodshed, the woman gawked in shock, but quickly regained her composure.

As for Seren, she was so gobsmacked when she recognized the familiar face that she finally shut up for the first time, giving Jake a welcome respite. Alas, the silence was short-lived.

‘Bitch! How dare you betray us!’ The hardcore Vampire began to abuse her with insults. ‘You would collaborate with this despicable cattle to plot against your own kind? Shame on you! Shame on your clan!’

Carmin showed remarkable composure as she in turn was called names, but slight tremors betrayed that she was not that unmoved by the slurs. A reddish glow pulsed behind her pupils and like Wyatt earlier, she punched the throat of the impudent woman.

Deprived of her arms and legs, the arrogant victim choked, her busty chest writhing on the floor before finally catching her breath as she began to wheeze.

‘Cough, cough! Ahh...’ Seren shot them a look brimming with hatred and madness. ‘Kill me, we’ll meet on the other side. Carmin... I hope your clan is there to protect you after your treachery.’

This time it was Jake who lost his patience. Levitating what was left of her body in front of him with his telekinesis, Jake focused all his mental power and killing intent on the defenseless Vampire. The Apex Predator Golden Glyph emerged in the depths of his galactic eyes.

When Seren met his gaze, her body suddenly stiffened, a stark terror disfiguring her cruel face. Although she had already lost a lot of blood, she was now so pale that she was not much different from the corpse she had butchered fifteen minutes earlier.

‘I’m going to level with you so listen up, I won’t repeat myself.’ Jake somberly pronounced word by word. ‘You like to torture your prey before you put them to death, dont you? I don’t share your hobby, but believe me, I can do a lot worse. If you don’t tell me what I want to know, the rest of your Ordeal will be a living hell. I will keep you alive as long as I live and break you to force a Contract Slave on you. After that, I will continue to inflict the worst abuse on you until you can’t even remember your own name...’

After making these abject threats, Jake paused briefly. He took the opportunity to transfer thousands of mental images of torture and other abuses that he had read in a history book as a child.

It was just bluff, but his acting and killent intent were genuine. With the insidious impact of Corruption on him, it was not entirely inconceivable for him to carry out his threats.

Under the influence of Apex Predator and the Corruption impairing her sanity, it didn’t take much to break her down. In fact, even Carmin stared at him with a horrified expression.

‘I... I’ll talk.’ She stuttered, sweating profusely. Despite her Vampire vitality, the severe blood loss and pain was starting to take its toll.

‘Good!’ Jake grinned, ‘Now let’s establish the Slave Contract.’

‘Wh-What?’ Hearing that he still intended to have her sign a Contract, Seren lost what little of her noble aura she still had left.

‘Relax. I’ll add the usual clause about releasing you after the Ordeal is over.’ Jake said with a straight face. ‘You didn’t expect us to take your word for it, did you?’

Seren winced, but in the end she breathed a frustrated sigh when she recognized her body’s condition. What could she do without arms and legs? Especially since even now, she still didn’t know how she ended up here. She only remembered an intense headache, then... it was a total blackout. When she woke up, she was in this state, tormented by excruciating pain.

‘Fine. I’ll sign it.’ She muttered in a tiny voice.

Having accepted her fate, Seren proved to be extremely docile after that. She and Jake set up the Slave Contract and she told them everything she knew about the Inquisitors’ visit.

As they already suspected, these Inquisitors had not come for tea. The first duo of Kagorim and Imaev, representing Grandmaster Isbeus, had come to formalize an agreement to attack the Village of Sigmar at nightfall.

The second pair of Inquisitors, to their surprise, had come for the same thing, but this time on behalf of an individual named Nylreg. Tonight, the Village of Sigmar and Avy would be wiped off the map.

‘Now kill me. I hope you manage to kill that bastard Wyatt.’ Seren closed her eyes, waiting for him to end her agony.

Jake had originally intended to kill her, but now that the Slave Contract had been successfully established he thought otherwise.

‘Carmin, is Wyatt the type to read the minds of his subordinates?’ He asked.

Both Carmin and Seren exchanged a troubled look.

‘Wyat... I don’t think he’s capable of that.’ Carmin said hesitantly.

‘Peeh! He can’t. Even if he could, he wouldn’t.’ Seren spat with disdain. ‘He may look confident, charismatic, and supremely intelligent, but most of all he has the longest, thickest broomstick up his àss I’ve ever seen! He may be the grandson of a Vampire Progenitor, but he’s still a vîrgîñ wet behind the ears.’

Embarrassed by the dying Vampire’s vulgarity, Carmin blushed ever so slightly before clarifying,

‘Wyatt is known for his uprightness and candor... But mostly for his fighting strength. Though he should theoretically excel in all of the Vampire Arts, he is known for his inability to perform even the most basic hypnosis spells, just like his father. It could be a family thing...’

Jake was skeptical and full of questions, but that was good news for them. With a deadpan face, he reconnected Seren’s limbs to her çhèst, returning just enough liquid alloy for her bracelet to function as normal.

The Vampire cursed him inwardly for his cheapness, but she refrained from complaining aloud. She was alive. That was already more than she’d hoped for.

Jake was somewhat reluctant to let the hateful Seren survive, but she was far more useful to them alive. The longer it took Wyatt to find out that their plan had leaked, the better for them.

He was willing to wait until Seren could walk again, but as soon as her limbs were reconnected, reddish filaments sprang from each end of the severed limbs like mini tentacles. Blood Energy gathered around the injured limbs and the damaged nerves, bones and muscles recovered at a prodigious speed.

It took the assistance of Jake and Carmin's Vitality Aether to speed things up, but within minutes Seren was back on her feet. When he saw a sick, carnivorous sneer on her face, he immediately threw a nasty uppercut that brought her to her knees.

Jake gave her then a set of mercilessly strict instructions to prevent her from exploiting a fault in his words to disobey. Only then did he let her go. Corruption had totally taken over her common sense.

Once Seren was out of sight, Jake finally turned to Carmin and suddenly slammed her against a tree with his telekinesis. The shockwave sent all the nearby birds flying, while the leaves of the shaken tree rained down on them. The Vampire did not resist, merely staring at him blankly.

'I have a question.' He snarled coldly. 'Why are you the only Vampire still sane? Don't answer right away. Hear my theory first. Everyone who has a Bloodline with some monster or bestiality in them is vulnerable to Corruption and they all got the Monster Role by default, which accentuated and accelerated that process. However, oddly enough, this is not your case. Your original Role was Henchman.'

'Why?'

Henchmen could identify Monsters at a glance, but the latter were oblivious to their identities being disclosed. If Jake had figured out anything in this game, it was that Unique Roles weren't handed out by accident.

There had to be something that set her apart from her brethren, and he refused to believe that she had no inkling of it. His instincts were telling him that her sister's death had something to do with this.