

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 470 - I'll Wait a Bit Longer

‘Holy cow! They’re going at it like crazy!’ Will sweated profusely as he saw the blaze of fireworks in the distance.

‘Lucky for us that’s not where we’re going.’ Ralnor snickered as he gripped the hilt of his sword tightly for reassurance.

The others remained silent, but each of them had paled noticeably. Tim’s axe swings in particular had grown more vigorous, as if he were trying to distract himself at all costs.

Jake furrowed his brow, but refrained from assuaging their concerns with sweet talk. No matter how favorable the situation sounded, he was pretty sure their enemies wouldn’t let them get away so easily. If Sigmar was defeated, they would have Nylreg on their tail immediately after stealing the Purgatory Fluid Artifact. If it wasn’t Nylreg who dealt with them, he would at least send his subordinate men, monsters and Players after them.

Put another way, they would have to fight no matter what.

If Jake had been given a choice, he would have taken a few more weeks to consolidate his Roles, explore and train more, but he could tell his temper was nearing its limit. Everyone was on edge, some already on the verge of losing their minds.

Kyle regularly stabbed the tip of his sword into his leg, wincing in pain by choice for the sole sake of staying sane. In a way, this was already a sign of madness.

Peter was going through withdrawal and his feverish depression was threatening to degenerate into something much more terrifying. As for the two sisters, they were meditating aside from the group to steady themselves, but it was clear that it wasn't all that effective.

Carmin was staring hungrily at his carotid artery, resisting somehow, but certainly not for much longer, while Ostrexora... He preferred not to know what was going through her mind at the moment...

Ir ovu urt, ovu hfiquilo juzu loaii Hunvfal, ovu Eefufr Allfllar frt Mavfrewi, gpo ovuaz hmqnmlpzu vft film hvfreut ar ovu iflo duj qarpoul.

Jake himself could feel the renewed self-control bestowed by his Bloodline's evolution fading fast. In just a few minutes, he had gone from stoic and vaguely irritable to wanting to kill anything, including his comrades. It was like a mosquito bite in the middle of his back: impossible to scratch.

The Corruption was intensifying. And this change had been brought about by the explosion born of the clash between these two powerhouses. Based on his estimates, they had maybe an hour or two ahead of them, and not a day or two as they had originally hoped, before flipping out one after the other.

‘Leaving in two minutes.’ He growled with a worsening sense of foreboding. ‘Will, Drastan, Svava and Kewanee I'm counting on you.’

The two women promised not to disappoint him, while Will refrained from any optimism. He had a nasty feeling that he was losing the control he had recently gained over his creatures and the bloodthirsty

Troll Slayer next to him was doing nothing to improve that. He missed his Charizard!

To ease his mind, Jake checked his equipment and his Oracle Status one last time and the rest of the party did the same. For a minute there was complete silence, the only noise being the handling of the weapons and other equipment they would be taking with them.

Checking his Aether Storage, Jake's grim expression softened somewhat.

[Aether Storage: 11,154,659,752 pts]

To achieve such a fortune, he had taken the risk of converting more than half of his Fluid into Aether for the upcoming operation. It might prevent him from shining at the Monster Game, but as it stood it didn't really matter anymore. If he didn't have to save the rest to short-circuit Nylreg's Fluid Artifact in case their plan A failed, he'd probably have converted everything by now.

[AD Oracle Cloaking lvl1 and AD Promotion lvl1 on!]

Hal Auovuz zuluzsul tzmnnut gw 120M ar f lniao luhmrt, gpo ovfo jfl ovu nzahu vu vft om nfw dmz guare gmov loufiovw frt prozfhufgiu. Tm lpzsasu ovu raevo, vu jfl jaiiare om lnurt gaiiamrl ad ruhullfzw.

Those with Oracle Cloaking or Promotion like Hephais and Mihangyl did the same. Wilde and the other Criminals serving Boris had already left, ready to execute their own part of the plan.

While Jake and his team searched for the Fluid Artifact that brought this dimension to life, the Pagans would take care of looting and demolishing as many enemy Villages as possible. This was to turn them into Vagabonds, thus stripping their enemies of the perks granted by their Roles.

‘Time’s up. It’s time to go. If anyone wants to say anything or edit their will, it’s now or never.’ Jake joked, a rare bit of humor that sadly made no one smile.

‘Jake... Bl-blood...’ a faint voice stammered from behind him.

Seeing Carmin’s exposed canines and possessed look, he made an immediate decision. Grabbing his backpack, he pulled out a vial filled with a vermilion liquid. To avoid any bad surprises, he had prepared enough blood to transfuse himself completely at least twice.

‘Drink.’

Smelling the so longed for blood fragrance, the young woman’s ravenous instincts kicked in and she chugged it down in an instant. Her rosy face quickly regained its lucidity, but her thirst had definitely not been quenched. Still, that would have to do for now.

‘Let’s go.’ Jake said to the rest of the group as normal before setting off. Blaming her would do them no good.

The two sisters gave her a mildly jealous look, but they jogged straight after him without picking up on the incident. Kyle and Tim, on the other hand, took their distance from the young woman. They had only just realized that they were standing next to not one but two time bombs.

The second, of course, was Ostrexora. As Jake started to move, she floated eerily above him, her semi-translucent body passing through the obstacles as if they didn’t exist.

‘You’re more dangerous than before. I can feel it.’ She said curiously as his Spirit Body touched hers.

Of course, Jake had no intention of telling her about his Bloodline upgrade. Steadfast, he focused on the replica in his hand to find his way.

The black crystal carved with a Village, Forest, Lake and Mountain identical to the one in their First Round began to pulse as Jake tuned his mind to it. The runes on the cobblestone floor they were walking on were forcibly sucked into the artifact, only to be spit out as a glowing arrow of the same color pointing in a certain direction.

‘Northeast.’

The group adjusted their course and accelerated sharply. The slowest of the group was Tim, but to save everyone some time, Jake took it upon himself to mobilize his telekinesis to transport all those unable to fly, namely Peter, Kyle and the teenager.

Enya and Esya shot streams of red flame from their hands like Ironman to propel themselves, while Ralnor did the same with his legs. Mihangyl conjured a giant bird of intertwined vines, while Hephais shifted into his Shadow Form, becoming virtually undetectable at night.

Perhaps it was Tim’s luck, but no survivors noticed their presence. The Village of Avy, where the apocalyptic battle between three Fluid Grandmasters was taking place, was far to the south, the opposite of their destination.

As they got further away, the sounds of clashes and explosions became more distant, but the vibrations shaking the ground became more frequent, proving that this clash of titans was far from over.

When they were about to reach their destination, Jake braked suddenly, his senses on high alert. A faint pain constricted his heart, but it subsided almost instantly. Lowering his gaze, he scanned the

ruined village below them, unable to determine what had made his hair stand on end with fright.

‘Where are we?’ He asked telepathically to the addict.

Catching his warning glare, Peter, whose legs and arms had just about grown back, suppressed his irresistible urge to ask for a tranquilizer and cleared his throat awkwardly.

‘This is the Inuit Village. The one because of which I finished in this state...’ The addict informed him with slight embarrassment.

It was also the Village where he had been cursed.

Jake didn’t scold him for not warning him. That was his mistake. He had listened carefully to Will’s report, but in order to cut to the chase, he had ignored the Villages in their path.

After one last wary glance in the direction of a certain moth-eaten wooden shack, he turned away and set off again.

A few dozen seconds after their departure, a bare-chested Eskimo with hair shaved on the side and long on top emerged from the said cabin. Soon, six other Inuit emerged in turn, including the young woman with a scar on her face who had greeted the two Inquisitors a few days earlier.

‘You were right, Tootega. This is where the real battle will be fought. If we had really gone to fight alongside Nylreg or Minerva, we’d probably be dead.’ Keelut stated with a glint of ferocity in his eye.

‘I’m never wrong. That Nylreg is too wet behind the ears to handle me.’ The fur-clad woman boasted with a jaded demeanor. In her cruel

and ageless eyes, a glimmer of wisdom that was hard to put into words seemed to reign supreme.

‘To be honest, I’m more curious as to why my target is still alive..’ Keelut muttered moodily as he stared at the voodoo doll crushed by his grip. ‘This is the first time, that someone has survived one of my curses head on.’

The urge nagged at him to go after Jake and do it again, but Tootega stopped him.

‘Not now. Let’s follow them first. When we know where they’re going, we will eventually deal with them.’

A caustic retort almost slipped out of his mouth, but a traumatic memory about the female Inuit surfaced in his mind.

‘Fine...’ Keelut swallowed his saliva reluctantly. ‘I’ll wait a little longer.’