

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 472 - 10 Sentences

With that, Peter lashed out at Tim without warning, delivering a killer punch straight to the teen's heart. The kid tumbled backwards at the last second to avoid the blow just before his heart was struck.

The ground instantly opened up beneath the druggie and the nearby runes converged on him, forming multiple chains in a semi-solid state that restrained him mercilessly. Peter pretended to resist and the cobblestone floor slid further apart, an unprecedented gravitational force pulling him down into the abyss.

The others immediately realized that it was not going to be that easy to accompany him in his suicide. Compared to the previous times, the chasm was not very wide and the pull was so powerful and focused that they would have difficulty following him in his fall.

They had to enlarge the gulf further. With tacit understanding, the group reacted accordingly. Jake deployed his telekinesis on Peter to lift him up into the air, while the rest of them who could fly took off after him to push him up. Carmin produced a chain of crystallized blood to attach herself to the addict, while Tim and Kyle clung to Jake like koalas so as not to be left behind.

Mihangyl stamped his foot once more and multiple vines sprang up all around the square, between the stone slabs, the grandstand steps, and even the rooftop of the houses beyond. These thick vines

swooped down on Peter, then strapped him tightly to stabilize his position.

Jake and the others did not let up yet. The gravitational force dragging the addict down was rapidly gaining strength and the ground still refused to open up further.

Mihangyl kept producing more vines, creepers and other woody plants to tie Peter down even tighter, and the others also intensified their efforts to save him.

It was all fake, but after a minute in this stalemate, the Pit apparently decided that it was no longer enough. In response to their efforts, the chasm swiftly expanded, engulfing an entire city block in a radius of 100 meters.

The Wood Archmage's plants lost their support and the drag they had been providing disappeared immediately. Jake and the others' strength was no longer enough, the balance was broken and Peter slowly began to fall.

[Contestant Jake Wilderth, Kyle Gibson, Tim Paradis, Enya Velseyel, Esya Velseyel, Ralnor Beinan, Mihangyl Sarcaryn and Carmin Liche broke the rules by helping Peter Brady escape his punishment at 23:28am during the Night Day phase. They will be punished along with Peter by being sent to the Pit. The sentence will be carried out immediately. If they survive their trial, they will reappear in the central square of the same Village in front of the fountain].

The gravitational force that had been applied only to Peter was forcefully exerted on the others. Their veins and arteries were mercilessly compressed, their joints cracked and their eyeballs were so squeezed that they felt like they would burst at any moment.

Even with his Bloodline's power-up, Jake felt the pinch and could only imagine what the others were going through. Tim and Kyle in particular looked like they were about to pass out.

'Now!' Jake shouted breathlessly. He noticed two names were missing from the list, but he didn't have time to wonder about them.

Receiving the message, a thick pedestal of multiple intertwined vines sprang up from the ground in the distance and Mihangyl leapt elegantly onto it. The trunk shot up at lightning speed toward Peter and the others and he let himself be carried to them.

Once there, Jake caught it with his telekinesis and Mihangyl took full advantage of the opportunity to tie them all tightly together with his vines. No matter what befell them during their dive, they would not be separated until they hit the bottom of the Pit.

Jake and the others stopped resisting the pull of gravity and began to plummet at breakneck speed. Just the fall alone might kill half of them. Ever since Jake had smashed his skull against Minerva's barrier, he had been dreading this kind of scenario and treated this descent into hell with extreme caution.

The Pit's familiar darkness enveloped them, robbing them of their senses, and two shadows sneaked in after them just before the chasm closed. They were, of course, Hephais in his Shadow form and Ostrexora in her Ghost state.

Seizing the chance to get through, they had used their allies' efforts to escape the AI's attention. Jake may not have been able to physically see them in the darkness, but his Aether Vision was fully functional. Annoyed, he glared at them, but the lack of feedback prevented him from knowing if his warning had gotten through.

Luckily, karma waited for no one. The Purgatory AI's robotic voice rang out again a few seconds later, announcing to the delight of Jake and his comrades that the 'two detected intruders' would be subjected to the same punishment as the other eight.

Ostrexora should have expected this, but she had still tried to pull a fast one on them. As for Hephais, his powers were perfect for harnessing the surrounding darkness and his gambit was easier to stomach.

Ultimately, they had all successfully entered the Pit. The first step of their plan could be considered complete.

The freefall continued for several minutes, until a spark of blueberry blue began to expand beneath their feet. They had made it to their destination.

SPLASH!

Even with extensive telekinetic braking, Jake failed to reverse their inertia in time. They slammed into the surface of the murky pool at about 100 kilometers per hour, but thankfully it was enough to survive the fall.

However, the trouble started as soon as their bodies came into contact with the liquid. A sense of euphoria and plenitude unlike anything they had ever felt before gripped their bodies, causing them to momentarily forget the harsh treatment that the gravitational pull had inflicted on them.

Jfcu zuqfarut ar f lofzdaiv nmlopzu dmz fgmpo our luhmrtl, iuooare vaqluid larc jaovmpo ovu liaevoulo varo md zulnmrlu. Tvu tfzc frt peiw ovmpevol ovfo ovu Cmzzpnoamr jfl limjiw loazzare pn ar vaq juzu ouqnmzfzaiw lpnnzullut fimre jaov val lozull frt zulmisu.

Spghmrlhampliw himlare val uwul, ovu pzeu om liuun ezftpfiiw
ommc msuz ovu iflo md val jaiinmjuz.

[Jake, pull yourself together!] Xi jolted his mind awake as she gently nudged his consciousness with her own.

Opening his eyes slowly, Jake hastily looked around and saw his unconscious companions in the same state as himself. His vision was clouded by a strange mixture of smoke and bubbles and it was only after a few seconds that he realized it was coming from him.

Without even consulting his Oracle Status, he quickly sized up the danger.

'Something is sucking the water and oxygen out of my body.' He fidgeted nervously, worried not for himself, but for his friends.

This pool, though not very wide, was extremely deep and the liquid rather slimy and cold. 'Cold' to Jake meant freezing to the others. Enough to cause hypothermia within minutes and induce a coma.

Assuming the worst, Jake forced himself to ignore the debilitating euphoria inviting him to sink and began to swim toward the nearest person. Not seeing much, he used his Aether Vision to recognize his friends, but something in the pool seemed to interfere with it. Beyond a few feet he couldn't see much.

After finding Tim and Kyle, he surfaced with their unconscious bodies. Thanks to their partial Myrtharian Bodies, they recovered quickly and regained consciousness within a minute.

Knowing they were safe, Jake dove back into the tank to look for the others, but was relieved to see them resurface one by one without his help. Yet, after a while he noticed that one person was still missing.

'Where's Peter?' Kyle pointed out.

Olozukmzf, jvm iacu Hunvfal, vft ulhfnut ovu nmimi jaov vuz
ulmouzah fgaiaoaual, tzadout prtuzezmpert gudmzu hmqare pn f duj
luhmrtl ifouz jaovmpo vatere frw md vuz taleplo.

‘Still alive... He’s laughing like an idiot at the bottom of the tank,
even swallowing the water inside to drown faster... I should have
killed him from the start.’

Facepalming, Jake felt a headache coming on. The others rolled their
eyes or cringed, but no one had any solutions to offer.

‘Cough, do we really have to save him? He seems... happy?’ Esya
asked embarrassedly.

Jake hesitated for a long moment before sighing tiredly,

‘I’ll get him.’

Diving like a torpedo, his Glyphs A Fish in Water and Extreme Diver
kicked in, allowing him to reach a decent speed despite the liquid’s
viscosity. Using his telekinesis to thrust him forward, he reached the
addict in seconds.

Still peppy, the junkie looked more frisky than ever, but his body
temperature had already reached negative values. It was a miracle he
was still conscious.

‘End of playtime!’ Jake roared telepathically in his head, jolting him
out of his blissful trance.

Far from being grateful, Peter tried to swim deeper to escape, but he
had already reached the bottom of the pool. Grabbing him by the
neck like a disobedient kitten, Jake dragged him back up to the
surface against his will before tossing him to the ground like a dirty
rag.

‘ All there again.’ He said, kicking the sobbing victim he had just ‘rescued’.

He was at least expecting a reaction from his comrades, but their focus was already elsewhere. Because there were ten of them, their sentence had been adjusted. The pool they had just left was simply the first punishment intended for Peter.

Indeed, a few seconds later, the basin began to boil, the blueberry liquid turning a tomato red. A fiery, sulphurous pestilence wafted out, making them retch all at once.

Strange alien snakes as big as boas fell into the ‘pot’ one after the other, stirring up the mixture even more. If Peter had stayed inside, heaven only knew what fate would have awaited him there.

And now they had to face nine more punishments.