

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 477 - We're Doomed

Because several things happened concomitantly when the Purgatory was disabled.

First, Jake experienced a mixture of elation and disbelief when he was notified by the Oracle System that he was now the proud new owner of the Purgatory.

[Fluid Artifact (estimated to be a Bronze Oracle Artifact): The Purgatory: An alien piece of technology wrought from a Fluid Crystal shaped by the amalgamation of multiple Grandmaster Fluid Cores. Its creator Sigmar Aelsinire designed this technological jewel to entertain, train, protect and meet the social needs of his son. After Nylreg agreed to the Oracle's terms for hosting Ordeals, the Purgatory underwent further modifications by the Grade 4 Aetherist Nyttisus.]

[Purgatory Capabilities:]

[Fluid Production and Storage: The Fluid Crystal can generate its own Fluid out of nothing at a rate of 1 billion units per day. While this Fluid can theoretically be reclaimed for other uses, it only fulfills the minimum energy requirement to run the Purgatory.]

[Purgatory Dream: Contains its own spatial dimension wherein tangible illusions can be generated to create all sorts of environments, objects, beings, and rules at the whim of its owner. A database is available to facilitate the creation process. Can also be used to

superimpose these illusions on the real world within a 10km radius. The range/territory can be extended by sacrificing more Fluid.]

[Didactic/Training Mode: Numerous training and teaching modules are provided by the Artifact database, some of them allowing the acquisition of specific skills or Glyphs if the required conditions are met. The owner can also enrich this database with his personal experiences.]

[Defensive/Offensive Mode: Combat units and war buildings can in theory be generated, but the Purgatory was not originally designed for this purpose. To increase the number of options available, you will need to provide it with the necessary blueprints and knowledge.]

[Space Ship Mode: The Purgatory can also be used as a mobile fortress and contains in its database the blueprint of a 7th generation Consortium Interstellar Battleship, usually restricted to the Inquisition.]

'Holy shit!' Jake felt the adrenaline rush to his brain when he read this. He had to summon his best acting skills to cover up the overwhelming joy he was experiencing.

This was by far the most cheated reward he had ever received. With the Corruption at work, the jubilation he felt quickly turned to greed, then paranoia about his comrades. For a few seconds, he seriously considered killing all the witnesses.

Remembering that half of them were his friends, Jake shuddered, appalled by his own thoughts. At that very moment, he became aware of the stark, dark room he was in and his complexion underwent a second drastic change.

This time, he didn't even have to exert the slightest bit of self-control to put on a somber face. The room they were in was an old research

laboratory, and the desiccated alien corpses with numbers on them still lay on the stretchers they had been dissected on.

Ao ovu dfz urt md ovu zmmq, f lqmmov, lplnahampl jfii lommt gudmzu Jfcu, dfaro jalnl md tfzcuz-ovfr-gifhc uruzew jfdoare mpo md arsalagiu nmzul. Io jfl gw arvfiare f liasuz md oval lopdd ovfo ovu lahc frt aqnpzu pzeu om qpztuz val hmqzftul vft ruloiut ar val vufzo.

Stopping his breath, he closed all the pores of his skin and formed a protective screen with his telekinesis, but he soon realized with utter horror that nothing in the world could possibly stop this gas. From experience he could tell that it was Fluid and his bracelet confirmed this diagnosis, but his instinct was screaming at him to flee.

Yet, just as the thought crossed his mind, the wall in front of the party suddenly rippled as if a pebble had just been thrown into a pond. Chronologically speaking, it had been less than a second since he had acquired the Purgatory and the cause of this phenomenon was obvious.

The ripple spread, then recurred faster and faster, until the wall mysteriously disintegrated. When this happened, two enormous abominations slouched in the back of the room were exposed to them.

About ten meters tall, roughly humanoid, obese, with tiny atrophied arms, they were the Converters that Emiwan, the Pirate Captain, had mentioned. They were the parasites discharging the polluted Fluid, responsible for the Corruption, but fate did not give them the luxury to study them.

For they exploded. As soon as he got the Purgatory, the wall dissipated, and they blew apart. A flood of Corruption unlike the wisp he'd just whiffed a second earlier swept out with the speed of a flaming cloud. Jake, who was closest, was instantly engulfed.

Faced with the impending disaster, the face bloodless and pale with horror, Jake did the only thing he could. Pivoting on himself, he lifted his hands in front of him and shouted,

‘Run!’

At the same time, the metal slabs of the entire lab crumpled and tore away from the floor to form a thick steel wall. Multiple telekinetic barriers overlapped with it, imperceptibly slowing down the Corruption. Carmin, Kyle and the two sisters tried to save him, but the wall stopped them dead in their tracks.

At that moment, several things happened simultaneously. First of all, there was a huge explosion somewhere on Yotai Shien 3. The shockwave almost turned the space station upside down, and everyone without exception lost their balance.

Second, Carmin and the others trying to save him were suddenly caught off guard by the Inuit Players’ surprise ambush. Ralnor impulsively stabbed himself in the heart before anyone could react, and Kyle did the same, only to be stopped by Carmin, who knocked him out with a punch. Mihangyl roared with rage and transformed into a towering Treant in a split second and charged forward in the direction of the enemies. Hephais merged into the shadows at once and went to his help.

As for Ostrexora... Whether by bad luck or greed, she was even closer to the two Converters when they detonated. The second explosion from afar had thrown her off balance even more and sent her flying straight into the epicenter of the Corruption.

Feeling his consciousness wither, consumed by ugly and intolerable thoughts and emotions, Jake briefly activated the Purgatory in his hands and for an infinitesimal instant the Purgatory Dream reappeared.

Perhaps because it was the first time he had used it and his characteristics were different from Nylreg, but the environment that replaced the space station was a searing telluric world. In the atmosphere-free sky, 3 gigantic blinding suns of pure white occupied the whole space.

Abruptly being able to visualize the Purgatory territory in 3D and all its details in his head, Jake spontaneously diverted the Corruption to another equally turbulent area.

' Sorry Sigmar. Have fun with that, I don't really have a choice,' He reasoned without an ounce of guilt.

In the short time Jake had performed this tiny action, his countenance had already undergone a complete change. His translucent fangs protruded forth from his mouth and his dagger-like claws were scraping the walls in a nightmarish fashion. Guttural growls escaped from its mouth and the whites of its eyes were bloodshot, a demonic gleam glistening behind its pupils.

On the verge of breaking down, Jake bit his tongue so hard it bled and controlled the Purgatory to grow a giant volcano under his comrades' feet. Mihangyl and Hephais, who was in the middle of a fight, were swept up with the rest of the group and their opponents, rising into the air about two kilometers in less than four seconds.

After that, Jake deactivated the Purgatory and his last shred of lucidity evaporated. Trapped in a torrent of corrupted energy, he curled up on the ground gasping loudly and suddenly began to howl like a cornered feral beast.

His screams were so poignant and terrifying that not even the parasites swarming the station dared to approach him. The faces of the companions he had just rescued twitched as they heard his screams, but they gritted their teeth and kept running.

Tvuaz Ozfhiu Dusahul juzu jmzcare nzmnuziw fefar frt ovuw juzu rmj vuftare omjftl Waii frt ovu movuzl om nifr ovuaz ulhfnu. Tvzuu md ovu dmpz Irpao Pifwuzl ofcur jaov ovuq vft fizuftw guur caiiut gw ovu ezmpn, jvaiu Kuuipo frt Tmmouef juzu qallare. Tvu ifoouz tuhatut om diuu jvur vu zufiaxut vu jfl ovu mriw zuqfarare mru fiasu.

In the confusion, no one in the group noticed when Jake's roaring stopped. However, when he sat up and opened his eyes again, what little humanity and compassion he once had was gone. Instead, two swirls of galactic light pierced the void, projecting their predatory hatred onto the world.

Elsewhere on the station, an apocalyptic scene reigned supreme. A sphere of emptiness a kilometer in radius now occupied the space once reserved for the staff's living quarters. The corridors, rooms and dormitories ravaged by the explosion could still be seen, although the walls, ceilings and metal floors had been mostly vaporized by the heat.

The heat and radiation within this sphere was unimaginable, the chaos and entropy having completely overtaken everything else. Yet, floating in the air, three hooded individuals were silently peering into the void below them with grave expressions on their faces.

Each of them was covered in blood, one more than the other two, but none of them cared about their injuries at that moment. Because the ultimate battle between Sigmar, Minerva and Nylreg was in full swing when the Purgatory containing their attacks until then had been deactivated. The last clash at that moment was the cause of this disaster.

The space station was now severely damaged and an alarm siren was blaring throughout the station, a faint red light flashing in every

corridor to remind them that Yotai Shien 3 was under attack and that its crew had to be evacuated urgently. All over the station, panicked survivors were trying to figure out what was going on, with the Players even wondering if the time had come to get repatriated to B842.

The shockwave generated by the clash between 3 Fluid Grandmasters was not to be taken lightly and its aftermath had reached the main generator. At the very bottom of this void sphere, the outer protective layer of the main generator had been damaged.

It was a daring combination of a huge fusion reactor and multiple Fluid Cores and was currently the main power source for the Purgatory Dream when Nylreg was still in possession of it.

Because the parasites he had created were fond of heat, radiation and energy, Nylreg had forbidden them access to the generator area, isolating and concealing it with his powers. But their previous clash had shattered these protective measures.

‘We’re doomed.’ Sigmar murmured fatalistically as he closed his eyes.