

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 482 - Lost Divinities

While all hell was breaking loose on the station, some desperately seeking to escape by any means necessary, while others engaged in unbridled slaughter and debauchery, there was one place on Yotai Shien 3 where an ominous, heavy atmosphere prevailed.

As the epicenter of the tidal wave of Corrupted Fluid, the living beings in its vicinity had been affected by the Corruption in its purest form. As the Fluid spread, its concentration would diminish to the point where it would have very little effect on its subsequent victims. Furthermore, the Converters who created this filthy energy were no longer of this world.

Yet, two strange Fluid Ghosts with gruesome and misshapen appearances were gradually reconstituting themselves where the two parasites had exploded and these two Ghost Converters were gradually resuming to absorb the ambient Fluid to stabilize their ectoplasmic existence.

Although this action could not be considered breathing, after each 'inhalation', an 'exhalation' would follow in which a tainted and slightly altered Fluid would be released in minute quantities. If enough time was given to these two ghosts and they continued to strengthen in this way, perhaps they would eventually return to the same level of performance as when they were alive.

However, these inconspicuous exhalations were repeated over and over again and the room where these two ghosts were drifting

aimlessly remained shrouded in a dark and oppressive fog that no Player or native would have dared to tread.

This room should have been deserted a long time ago, the eventual victims trapped inside it having long since fallen into madness and gone hunting frantically in search of prey, but at that moment a dull and greyish dome of light was flickering faintly about a hundred meters away from the two Ghost Converters.

The dim light emitted by this dome also seemed muddy and impure and it was difficult to make out what was inside. Even so, the outlines of two medium-sized figures, one male, one indeterminate, could be vaguely discerned.

Inside, Keelut, the Inuit Player specialized in curses, turned to his comrade wrapped in thick furs without hiding his profound displeasure. Because of the scarred woman's indifference, their enemies had escaped and they were left stranded here.

Having fully embraced the identity of villains, they didn't truly fear the Corruption. No matter what nefarious evil they committed under its influence, it wouldn't stop them from sleeping soundly. Perhaps that was why they were so good at resisting it, although their excellent stats and unique abilities certainly had a hand in it.

The only thing they did fear was making crucial tactical mistakes that would lead to their downfall. And their current plight, no matter which way Keelut looked at it, was definitely the result of such an oversight.

'Why didn't you help me, Tootega?' He asked hatefully, suppressing a pained rictus.

Ulpfiw gâzè-hvulout, val iudo fzq jfl rmj jaovuzut iacu f tzw ojae frt ovulu lwqnomql juzu ezftpfiiw lnzuftare om val lvmpituz, ovzufourare om opzr vaq azzusmhfgiw arom f qpqqw.

In response, the scarred woman next to him simply ignored him, continuing to stare at a point on the other side of the dome with a genuinely puzzled expression. When Keelut pretended to retract his protective dome, she scorned dismissively,

‘I haven’t asked you anything.’

Then, she languidly strolled out of the dome as if the Corrupted Fluid raging on the other side didn’t exist. When she shook the bone scepter in her hands, the dark fog moved out of her way as if it had just received an imperative order.

Seeing this, Keelut bit his tongue until it bled to keep himself from attacking her, but in the end he managed to rein it in. Deactivating his dome to conserve his energy, he nervously trotted after her to keep up. The scepter’s range was limited to only a few meters.

‘I don’t understand why Nylreg entrusted this scepter to you alone.’ The jealous Inuit warrior groused blatantly. ‘It’s just a human femur fitted with a baby’s skull in a snake’s mouth. I don’t think that’s very hard for a guy like him to pull off...’

Tootega didn’t respond and went back to ignoring him. A malignant glint flickered in Keelut’s dark eyes, but he took it in stride once more.

Contrary to what outsiders might think, the group of Inuit Players he was part of were not as close-knit as they appeared. Having met during their first Ordeal, they had formed a faction together called ‘Lost Divinities’ and their leader was precisely this woman called Tootega.

The only one who truly knew her was their vice-leader, but he was already a 6th-Ordeal Player. After meeting her, he had changed

drastically and his power had soared. Becoming a lone Player, he had quickly left them behind in the dust.

While this reckless Player had become ridiculously powerful in a matter of months, he continued to be reverently respectful to Tootega. It made one wonder what was so special about her, but other than waving her scepter from time to time during the Ordeal, she hadn't done much.

Wvur lvu vfiout fgzpnioiw, imlo ar vuz tfzc ovmpevol, vu rufziw gpqnut arom vuz gudmzu lomnare fo ovu iflo arlofro.

‘What is it now?!’ Irritated, Keelut followed her gaze and his heart sank when he came face to face with a pair of twin stars shining eerily through the opaque fog.

Those two eyes were like two deep galaxies where a mixture of gold and silver sparkled and they harbored such a thirst to kill that nothing seemed likely to quench it.

At first he thought he was dealing with a monster, but he immediately realized that it was much worse than that when his already mangled voodoo doll began to wail ominously.

‘Oh shit...’

Instinctively, Keelut clutched his àssegai in his free hand and placed the voodoo doll between his teeth, ready to bite with all his strength at the slightest sign of hostility. As he contemplated his withered arm refusing to move one iota, he regretted accepting this mission. If he had refused to curse this person, perhaps he would have stood a chance of reaching a deal...

But this was not guilt, and certainly not a mea culpa. He had committed all sorts of atrocities in his short life and if he wasn't a

rapist like Yerode and Lamine, human life didn't mean much to him either.

No, his only regret was that he had chosen the wrong target. He knew now that his curses were not infallible and as such, he would not act so recklessly in the next Ordeals.

In comparison, Tootega was remarkably composed. Her icy face was steely and even when she and Keelut received their new orders from Nylreg and a new Side Mission, she showed no emotion.

Patiently, she waited for Jake to emerge from the fog. When he finally did, a feral gleam twinkled behind her milky gray eyes. It looked like she was blind, but it was plain she could see perfectly.

Tval Jfcu jfl gmov laqaifz frt tadduzuro dzmq ovu mru f duj qarpoul ufziauz. Fmz mru ovare, vu hmpit rm imreuz gu qalofcur dmz f vpqfr.

Standing over 3 meters tall, his hypertrophied musculature, his long translucent fangs and claws, his incandescent white-hot body, his long silver hair flapping without any wind and the suffocating spiritual pressure exuding from him were simply nightmarish. The armor offered by New-Earth that had held up until now was starting to show signs of breaking.

In his galactic-like irises, several golden Glyphs had agglomerated to form a strange symbol and the murderous and predatory aura that this look harbored was absolutely unreal.

Around him, three rivers of liquid alloy slowly swirled, coalescing several times per second into different weapons and armor pieces. The process went on rapidly, increasing in frequency and intensity, and both Tootega and Keelu noticed straight away that the precision, quality and complexity of these fleeting creations were improving distinctly with each new attempt.

Neither Keelut nor Tootega dared to interrupt, but while the woman holding the scepter was smiling in fascination, the curse-caster had already given up the idea of fighting. Abandoning his partner, he gritted his teeth hesitantly, then sprinted furiously in the opposite direction.

Never mind if there was Corruption and never mind if Tootega died because of him. At that moment, his terror had got the better of him and he didn't even realize when his common sense left him, replaced by an unhealthy impulsiveness that was not natural to him. Had he not been cruel and vicious in character, he might have noticed the other changes that accompanied this transition.

‘What a dumbass...‘ Tootega insulted him in a low voice as she watched her comrade descend into lunacy.

Her scepter was effective, Nylreg had not lied to them, but she was well aware that this Fluid Artifact was not foolproof. In the midst of such a high density of Corrupted Fluid, the Artifact could at best halt its spread. It could also alleviate the symptoms, but only for the wearer of the scepter. Of course, she hadn't told her companions about it.

Perhaps most ironically, once controlled by the Corruption, Keelut's usual negative musings and murderous impulses took over. Suddenly changing his mind, he stopped running away and lumbered with slobber on his lips not towards Jake, but towards the scarred woman.

Expecting such a twist, Tootega let his àssegai impale her without resisting, but no blood gushed from the wound. Instead, her body shattered into a pile of snow, and with a breeze blowing out of nowhere, her body reconstituted itself across the room, ready to escape through the air vent.

Dalhmrhuzout gw vuz talfnnufzfrhu, Kuuipo frezaiw lufzhvut dmz f ruj ofzeuo jaov val uwul frt dfofiw duui mr Jfcu jvm vft aermzut ovuq proai rmj. Ruhfiare f nflo quqmzw, dufz gzaudiw ezannut vaq, gpo val msuzjvuiqare azu omme msuz frt tzmsu vaq om gaou vfzt fo ovu smmtmm tmii guojuur val ouuov.

The straw doll snapped in half instantly, but the result was not what he expected. Jake, who had been ignoring them, plagued by his own demons, began to move.

Each of his eyes swiveled in a different direction in a nightmarish way under the influence of his extreme Body Control and chillingly locked onto his two targets.

A deadly hunt was about to begin.