

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 485 – Siphoning Off The Reactor

Earlier on the reactor floor.

Jake had no trouble getting down there. The humongous Hunter he had just frozen to death had made his way up to his floor, leaving a ridiculously large hole in his wake. While the chamber containing the radioactive fusion material was still holding together, its temperature had already reached a critical level.

Not to mention ending up charred, peeking at the reactor walls, even from a distance, was a sure way to end up severely irradiated. Without a special constitution, the victims would at first suffer superficial burns reminiscent of a sunburn. But deep down, the DNA of their cells would already have been irreversibly damaged. Their organs would eventually rot and then liquefy as their vital functions deteriorated.

For those lucky enough to have been exposed for only a short time, it would be a slow and excruciating agony, while for those who had been up close or looked directly at the reactor, blindness would be coupled with much more severe burns, and death would occur within hours if not minutes.

Thankfully, Jake did not have a normal constitution. Whereas this radiation was like a poison for the other players, it was a valuable tonic for his body.

And he wasn't the only one with a taste for this intoxicating energy source. Although the radioactive material inside the reactor remained inaccessible, its growing instability had gradually superheated the walls and Jake could see huge monstrosities swarming on its surface.

Next to these creatures, the Hunter that Jake had killed a moment earlier was like a runt and could even be described as cute. To cover as much of the surface as possible, these monsters had abandoned their humanoid form and most of them were now sporting ludicrous shapes.

The ones that took the lead over their fellow creatures, jealously defended their territory, not hesitating to tear apart the parasites nearby, often driving them to flee. The Hunter Jake had killed was clearly one of these losers.

He had thought them fearless until then, and rather than refute this hypothesis he calmly looked for eventual Controllers cautiously hiding beneath them. If his theory was correct, at least one of them was in touch with the reactor, protected by a mountain of minions.

A few seconds later, Jake found his target. His chilling, reptilian gaze locked on the abject creature and the monster let out a weak, shrill squeak at him in a vain attempt to intimidate him.

'Found one.'

These two words were identical to the ones Tootega had uttered earlier, but what they referred to was quite different.

This Controller had a wingspan of over five meters and no longer looked like a dehydrated baby cyclops on the body of a grayish spider. Its 10 legs were robust and covered with a mysterious metallic sheen, while its upper half, although still monstrous and humanoid, was now

fully matured. However, its appearance was still nauseating and its long black and forked tongue didn't really help.

This parasite may have commanded all these monsters, but it was as timid and fragile as the others. Its only forte was its ability to command its brethren and its substantial mental power. Assets that were meaningless against Jake.

And yet, Jake felt no urgency nor inclination to exterminate them like the vermin they were. In comparison, the lure of the reactor was far more tempting, stimulating his greed to unprecedented levels.

The taunting brilliance of a sun erupted forth from his pupils, a bizarre hybrid Glyph revolving within, and his body vanished leaving an afterimage before reappearing silently next to the Controller, right at the one spot of wall not occupied.

It was important to keep in mind that this was not so a second earlier. Where his two boots were now rooted to the ground, the skull of a Hunter had shattered like a coconut thrown down from a skyscraper.

The reactor vessel creaked alarmingly, caving in several inches, but the structure held firm. This was the least expected of the walls of such a reactor, or the monsters would have long since forced their way inside. After all, it was a Fluid Artifact capable of powering the Purgatory.

The downside was that a pestilential and corrosive liquid coated the surface of the reactor. These Hunters had already demonstrated their ability to soften and devour metal to carve out a path, but the protective coating on the reactor was up to the task.

'A shame I can't steal it...' Jake mourned with regret.

Oru qaevo vfsu uknuhout Jfcu om dfii arom f lftaloah frt niuflpzfgiu dzurxw, emzeare vaqluid mr ovu vuiniullrull md ovulu vprtzutl md lopnatiw qpofoare nfzflaoul loaii rmo zufiaxare ovfo ovulu qftu ovuq qmzu aruno frt hipqlw, gpo ao jfl rmo om gu.

Compared to the Digestors, these mutations were just disgraceful failures, none of these monsters having succeeded so far in evolving in a favorable direction. Whether it was the Hunters or this Controller, their biomass had grown, but they had not acquired any new abilities nor corrected their weaknesses.

What made the Digestors so unique was neither their shapeshifting limbs that could take the form of any weapon, nor their adaptability to any environment and situation, but rather their ability to absorb the genome and Aether Code of their victims to perfect their own existence.

These parasites lacked this invaluable ability. Or perhaps they could, but none of them had exploited it to any significant degree.

‘Move or die.’ Jake’s growled at the petrified Controller as he saw it suck in air to shriek.

A murderous pressure encompassed its immature mind tightly and the arachnoid creature stiffened pitifully. As if it had just choked on a peanut, the parasite shut its mouth abruptly and scrambled away, leaving a wall of monsters trailing behind it.

Paying no further heed, a wickedly greedy grin disfigured Jake’s face as he activated Bloodline Ignition to strike the reactor vessel. As he lifted his right leg, then stomped on the ground with all his might, tremendous energy built up in his muscles before he unleashed his power.

All of his faculties merged into his foot at that moment. Sharpening and Strength Aether supported by Aether Conversion for strength and

penetration, telekinesis and flames for speed, Silver Stone Skin and liquid alloy for toughness.

BOOOM!

The tremendous impact that followed shattered the wall beneath his feet. A blinding light burst forth, and the Hunters nearby automatically lost interest in the overheated wall as they detected this new source of light. One of them, in particular, cackled defiantly before bringing a huge blade-like hand down on him.

‘Fuck off!’ Jake roared with unparalleled insanity, veins of unadulterated wrath pulsing on his forehead at the creature’s impudence.

No one was to touch his stuff! No one!

While Bloodline Ignition was already activated, it flared a second time out of sheer will and perhaps also because of the heat and radiation coming from the reactor. His Silver Stone Skin and bones cracked in a disturbing way, letting appear a mist of blood around Jake which evaporated instantly, his body being unable to bear such a treatment.

As for the impudent Hunter, the palm that intercepted his blade-like hand generated such a shock wave that the huge creature weighing more than a hundred tons exploded on the spot. What was in that palm strike, not even Jake could be sure as he had reacted entirely by instinct.

After this display of power, the other Hunters cautiously retreated, as the nearby Controllers may have ordered them to leave him alone. As long as he was left alone, Jake couldn’t care less about their schemes. They could even go crawling around the universe, slaughtering at will for all he cared.

Without giving them a second glance, Jake jumped into the breach he had created and with a wave of his hand, the molten wall of the reactor reformed above him, eliminating any chance for those stupid parasites to follow him in. A telekinetic sphere swelled around him, adding a second layer of protection to the restored enclosure.

Once confined alone inside, Jake then faced firsthand the result of a thermonuclear fusion reaction that had spiraled out of control. Hydrogen in the form of deuterium and tritium, which until then had been pumped into the reactor in minute doses to keep the reaction going, had been dumped into the reactor, setting off a chain reaction.

The powerful magnetic field, holding and compressing the levitating mini-sun at the center and spaced apart from any structure, was rapidly weakening as the discharged neutrons bombarded the inner walls and damaged the Fluid Artifact's key functions one by one.

The electromagnetic force compressing this mini sun was no joke. When it disappeared or the enclosure ruptured, the mini-sun would 'crash' and then explode violently. Jake didn't know the actual mass of this thing, but at that point, it was best not to be within 10km of the epicenter of the explosion to find out.

Still, as his skin blistered hideously, Jake grinned with glee. Even a Myrtharian of his level couldn't survive long in a reactor like that. Good thing it wasn't his goal!

Rfalare val vfirt ar dzmro md vaq, Jfcu qpqgiut,

'Feed well and grow up.'

No sound came out of his mouth because of the vacuum environment, but a second mini sun of only a few centimeters in diameter suddenly materialized, although just as blinding as the first one that had already gone unstable. The radiation emitted was not as dangerous,

but the light and surface heat released was on par with the reactor sun.

This mini sun was the second Aether Core that Jake had created to light and heat his Floating Island and even he couldn't get within ten meters of it without getting burned. Among his 'last minute preparations' before the 3rd Ordeal, finding a way to take this second Aether Core with him without damaging his equipment had been the priority.