

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 488 - Inquisitor Massacre

Faced with this reversal, Kagarim's resolute gaze, which had not wavered once during the fight, brightened up with a sort of cynical elation. The mocking and haughty glance he threw at his former comrade and now enemy Imaev was exceedingly eloquent.

As for Imaev and Qizor, the Inquisitor Specter, there was a profound pang of shock on their faces. This murder was far too devastating!

'Who are you?' Imaev, a.k.a. Ethlando, cautiously asked with a grim and constipated look on his face.

Stupid question. Before he even finished his sentence, he recalled the details of their number one target. The only reason he hadn't made the connection was because he had never considered the possibility that this one would willingly embrace danger. And with such a swagger to boot!

In response, Jake snarled and charged so swiftly toward Qidor that it almost felt like teleportation. In two steps, he was standing right in front of the Specter and the liquid alloy armor covering his hand receded to reveal a white, smoldering, clawed hand from which radiated an oppressive heat.

Evoking the surface of a sun, its hotter-than-plasma claws were so blinding that when it struck, his punch gave the illusion of a laser strike. The plasma fist tore a huge hole in the mass of black smoke

and the radiant heat from it began to eat away at this spiritual body like the worst kind of acid.

The Specter Inquisitor, who was already struggling to maintain a structured form, began to wail in a high-pitched manner, and the black smoke within began to steam and evaporate at a speed visible to the nàkèd eye. At this rate, Qidor would cease to exist in two or three seconds.

Of course, Imaev would not let another ally die like that, and he let out an enraged roar as he pounced on Jake with a terrific sword thrust. Simultaneously, he pointed his free hand at Jake and Jake experienced for the first time what it felt like to have his movements hindered by an enemy's telekinesis. He now had a better understanding of what his opponents had been going through.

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lpznzalu foofhc frt zuofiafout jaov val mjr ouiucarulal om zulalo ovu  
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tudufu, film ezaout val ouuov frt lozphc gfhc fo Iqfus, arouro mr  
caiiare vaq.

The young Fluid Grandmaster had to abort his attack on Jake and the deadly slash aimed at him abruptly changed direction to intercept the golden warrior's sword.

The pressure stalling Jake was suddenly lifted, but this forceful intervention had provided the precious second Qidor needed to distance himself and counterattack. The Spectre swung his Cleaver with a glint of pure hatred in his eyes and charged like a dark missile at his attacker with the firm intention of returning his injuries a hundredfold.

Alas for him, the outwardly directed telekinetic force that Jake had erected to resist Imaev's found itself unstoppable when the Fluid Grandmaster withdrew his own and a monstrous telekinetic

shockwave resulted, which dug a huge crater 20 meters in diameter into the already devastated cafeteria.

It goes without saying that Qizor was the first and only victim of this incident. Kagarim and Imaev, who were fighting further away, pulled back in time, especially Imaev, who had anticipated this scenario as soon as Kagarim had interfered.

The Specter exploded like a gas canister into which a firecracker had been thrown. The dark ectoplasmic smoke that made up his body dispersed into particles so tiny that it would be virtually impossible for him to recover after that.

His Cleaver, however, did not shatter, proving the excellent quality of this Fluid Artifact, but went to burrow itself somewhere into the ceiling several floors above, the floors below having been inadvertently blown away by the shock wave.

Jake's killing intent did not weaken one bit after annihilating Qizor, quite the opposite. His icy cold bloodlust as a predator grew even more pronounced and he immediately redirected that killing intent to Kagarim and Imaev who had resumed their fight a little further on.

This fight seemed relatively balanced, but it was evident to a trained observer that Kagarim had long been at the end of his rope. On the other hand, Imaev was still relatively fresh, his wounds being only superficial for a Fluid Wielder of his level.

A sharp scowl flashed across Jake's face, then his whole demeanor darkened when he realized that he could not win in a one-on-one fight. However, his fighting spirit surged like a raging inferno as he praised himself for having finally found opponents worthy of him.

All means were good to win and just like a stalking leopard, Jake's body crouched slightly, flexing all his muscles one by one to build up

maximum explosiveness. His Myrtharian bloodline didn't encourage deceit and unfair victories, but that was only for those who cared.

Given that Jake didn't have a strong sense of honor to begin with, in his current state he would most likely be extremely proud of himself if his ambush succeeded. But all of a sudden, when he was already relishing the prospect of adding a 4th Inquisitor to his palmares, an unpleasant sensation made him shudder.

It was as if someone had thrown ice water on him while he was running a fever of 39°C. Not deadly, but definitely an experience one did not want to relive. Looking at his unprotected right hand, he discovered that it had stopped glowing like a sun and the usual lava veins had turned black.

Within seconds, and without feeling the slightest pain, he saw his hand wither as if under the effect of accelerated aging. He positively considered the hypothesis of localized dehydration, but a scan refuted it mercilessly.

'My hand is really aging.' He mentally concluded with a grave expression.

'Xi, I need you.'

[Hmmp! If you ignore me like that again I won't forgive you!] The usually gentle and kind female voice of his Oracle AI was harsh and scathing, and Jake, knowing he was in the wrong, didn't even try to justify himself.

'Yes, yes, I'm sorry. But I don't have time.' He retorted smugly. 'If you have a solution, it's now or never.'

There was no guilt or gratitude in his tone, but Xi was far too aware of his predicament to take offense at his disrespect. Taking in the

magnitude of the situation, she ordered curtly and without the slightest bit of hesitation,

‘Cut your hand off.’

Jake’s face turned horribly ugly but he didn’t try to negotiate. With his other hand, he clenched his fingers together as if to form a blade and wrapped it in Sharpening Aether, then without flinching he sliced his damaged right arm up to the elbow.

[I’m honestly surprised you listened to me. I hope you-]

Jake had closed off his mind again. He could already imagine Xi ranting and raving, but it didn’t concern him anymore. With apathy and a dull anger he stared at his severed hand on the ground and watched it wither and mummify until all that remained was a pile of translucent bone, which also crumbled seconds later.

As he watched this devilry unfold before his eyes, a chill of horror ran down his spine despite the Corruption’s influence having greatly stifled his doubts and fears.

‘I thought this Specter was the weakest, but it would seem that none of these Inquisitors can be underestimated.’ Jake squinted his eyes as he came to this conclusion.

He would not make the same mistake again. This was by far the most bizarre ability he had encountered since the beginning of the Ordeal. Even Keelut’s curses hadn’t made that much of an impression on him.

‘Whatever, nothing like killing to cheer up.’

Ignoring his stump, Jake gave Imaev a murderous look and launched himself at him like Qizor had done to him earlier. Except this time he had learned his lesson from Minerva and in addition to his Silver

Stone Skin, liquid alloy armor and multiple telekinetic barriers, he also focused his Constitution Aether in the directly exposed areas.

Kagorim, who had dropped to one knee and whose golden skin had begun to fracture, looked up and his almost extinguished combat aura suddenly revived. The final blow Imaev intended to deliver hung in the air as a blast of golden energy struck him in the face, while he hastily erected a force field to protect his back.

Frozen on the spot and caught in a pincer movement, Imaev could only accept helplessly the inevitable fate that awaited him. Launched at full speed, Jake was as destructive as a small 30-ton asteroid and absolutely nothing ordinary could survive such an impact.

At least for people of his level. Imaev's barrier broke instantly, then it was his entire body that exploded and burst into flames from within as the claws of Jake's intact arm ripped his spine out with a sharp yank before his entire body slammed into it.

The shattered carcass of the Fluid Grandmaster disappeared into the distance through multiple layers of wall and he didn't rise again. Jake had some doubt as he inspected the bloody spine between his fingers, but with the Corruption driving him to kill over and over again he quickly forgot about this loser.

Instead, he turned to Kagorim, whose body was breaking on its own like a porcelain vase that had been inadvertently smashed. The dying warrior didn't hide his admiration and opened his mouth to thank him, but it was Jake's supersonic fist that he received in retribution.

Bang!

As his body dispersed into golden dust from the blast of that sudden fist, Jake was already on the move again, looking for new prey. A hesitant mumble escaped his lips as his stump gradually regenerated,

‘What a moron... He works for Minerva, I know that. Just because they were fighting with each other doesn’t change anything. As the saying goes, the enemy of my enemy... is my enemy. Yep, that makes sense. Still... I felt like he wanted to tell me something at the end... Oh well, whatever.’

As he sniffed a new target, his incoherent and disingenuous mumbling ended and the excited expression of a hunter at the ready resurfaced across his face. And as he slipped away down another hallway, a lizard man and a ghost woman arrived at the scene of the carnage shortly thereafter with an incredulous expression on their faces.