

The Oracle Paths

Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

Chapter 511 - Didactic Mode

After that, Jake turned his attention back to his Purgatory and tested the other features available to him, including the spaceship mode and the Offensive and Defensive modes that allowed him to produce different types of combat units or attacks within the Purgatory Dream.

The spaceship feature was by far the most eye-catching. It could also be considered an illusion of the Purgatory Dream, but it fulfilled all its duties.

Based on a blueprint of a 7th generation Consortium warship, this ship had the same durability and performance as the latter. Even energy attacks, such as plasma cannons and other futuristic oddities, were functional over short distances, disintegrating only seconds after leaving the Purgatory's confines.

The only heavy weapons of limited value were the solid ammunition guns that depended on shells, torpedoes and other types of metal bullets. Unless fired at close range, this kind of illusion would not last long enough to develop significant tactical potential.

However, it was not the Purgatory's offensive and defensive potential that interested Jake, but its ability to move. This ship could reach superluminal speeds of up to five times the speed of light. This may seem insignificant on the scale of the Mirror Universe or even B842, but for Jake it opened up many options.

For example, Will's Floating Island, which had been blown several tens of kilometers away during the incident with the Space Digestors, was now not all that far away. In the same way, if one day the Cubes became non-operational or if an event required an evacuation or a forced relocation, he would be able to react.

Most interestingly, the ship was actually larger than his own Floating Island and therefore encompassed it. So not only could he move freely in the cosmos, but he could also take his island with him.

Jake then visited the interior of his ship, enjoying the luxurious and brand new furniture as well as the various recreation rooms that had been made available to the non-existent staff. It should not be forgotten that this ship model was originally intended for the Inquisition, Fluid Masters and other prominent members of the Consortium. Ordinary citizens of the Six Brotherhoods had probably never seen one, let alone set foot inside one.

Once the tour of the ship was concluded, Jake then proceeded to visit the various training modules. After a little fiddling with his Artifact's interface, Jake found hundreds of specific tutorials and training courses.

Of course, he found the many Monster Game Roles from his previous Ordeal, including the various professions and other jobs that Jake had not been lucky or unlucky enough to get.

Jake soon realized that most of these trainings and simulations were useless, but he also quickly noticed that each time there was a small reward.

The original creator of the artifact was Sigmar and therefore the Purgatory was designed as a multi-functional toy to entertain and educate his son. With nothing to prove, Sigmar had not sought to

influence his son's destiny, perhaps wrongly so, letting him try out any role he wanted, letting him learn and have fun as he wished.

Going through all the training modules and other simulations available, Jake was able to almost reconstruct Sigmar's creative process and benevolent state of mind when he designed the Artifact.

The basic roles, such as Baker, Grocer, Farmer, etc., were authentic, but totally worthless from the point of view of a Player like him. The rewards, on the other hand, were the real deal.

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All the tutorials suggested, if completed flawlessly, would grant the corresponding Soul Glyph to the one who completed them.

Depending on the difficulty, these Soul Glyphs could be upgraded and there were even special Soul Glyphs when certain objectives were reached.

Nylreg may have tampered with the Artifact and imposed his rules during the Monster Game, but he was only using what was already there. If he could have gotten all of these Glyphs for himself, it was a given that he would have tried. The only reason he had refrained was because he had signed an agreement with the Oracle Guardians after the Aetherist Nyttisus had modified the Purgatory for the purposes of the Third Ordeal.

If Nylreg had pretended to steal the Soul Glyphs for himself, he would have been executed on the spot. In an ambivalent posture, he had chosen to take it easy until his Digestor part got the better of him and made him screw up everything.

If he wanted to, Jake could also recreate a Village with an environment similar to that of his previous Ordeal, as well as recreate

the NPCs of his choice who would then fill the Roles of his choice and operate independently as in a real, live village.

Of course, this was of no interest to him. In addition to the Roles created by Sigmar, Nytibus, who had made the modifications and added the Soul Glyphs, had also taken the opportunity to add many tutorials of his own choosing. These had obscure names and it was not always clear what they were about, sometimes only with a question mark as a qualifier.

For the moment, these were greyed out and Jake realized that to access them he would probably have to complete all the modules created by Sigmar first. Out of curiosity, he activated the first module, Farmer.

Instantly, the environment around him changed and he found himself in a family-sized farm amidst pigs, chickens and ducks. He found the vegetable garden of the previous Ordeal, but also the crops and orchards arranged exactly the same way. In a storeroom, he found a whole bunch of equipment and tools for tending the animals and plowing the fields.

For a few minutes he wandered around the estate, visiting the small stone house, then the barn and the various pens. He wondered thoughtfully what was expected of him. No robotic voice had come to inform him of any objective and the Purgatory interface for this module was desperately silent.

The only information displayed in the interface was the number of Soul Glyphs remaining for this workshop. He had shamefully hoped that the Artifact could produce these Glyphs at will, but the Oracle had obviously set limits. If that had been the case, the Purgatory would not have been just a Bronze Artifact.

For the Farmer's Role, there were still 100 left, more than he had hoped for and yet less than expected. The number of participants was so high during the previous Ordeal that if everyone had survived, many people would probably have gone home empty-handed using their Reward Cards too late.

Besides, except for the unambitious weaklings, no one would stick around as a Farmer or Baker until the end of the Monster Game. Players would naturally seek to acquire better Roles and upgrade them as much as possible to maximize their rewards.

In other words, the Farmer Soul Glyphs might have been ignored until the very end, but not the more interesting Glyphs like those for the Assassin or Lord Role. He would have to check all this as soon as possible.

If he wasn't mistaken, there should be far fewer Soul Glyphs left for those Roles. Not everyone had chosen to save their Platinum Reward Card for later. Those who had barely survived the First Round had certainly decided to use their card immediately to guarantee at least one reward.

Somewhat thrown off by the omnipresent silence, Jake continued to wander around until he found an old man dozing in an antique rocking chair. The man had tanned, wrinkled skin from years of hard work in the hot sun and looked like a typical 1950s peasant.

The most noticeable feature of his appearance was the straw hat pulled down over his face and the wheat ear protruding from between his lips. Had he not been sitting in his chair, he would have been indistinguishable from the scarecrow standing a few feet away.

Failing to see who else he could talk to, Jake cautiously walked over to the old man and said,

‘Hello sir, I’m sorry to bother you, but what am I supposed to do?’

No reaction.

Appearing to be fast asleep, Jake did not hold it against the farmer and repeated his question a second time. Once again, the farmer turned a deaf ear and continued to snooze.

Gzmjare frmwut jaov ovu lopnat luooare, Jfcu euroiw nfoout ovu mit qfr mr ovu lvmpituz gudmzu lvfcare vaq samiuroiw fdouz ovu nuflfro vft aermzut vaq dmz ovu dadov oaqu ar f zmj.

It was only after Jake had amply tested the limits of this ‘rocking chair’ that the peasant actually deigned to wake up, blinking with a haggard look in his eyes.

‘Who are you? What the heck are you doing in my house?’

Jake held back his urge to strangle him as he saw his perfectly genuine reaction. Obviously, Sigmar or Nytibus had been having a lot of fun configuring these NPCs. Even talking to them was annoying.

‘I just moved here and since I’ve always dreamed of farming and growing my own vegetables I’d like to take this chance to learn the ropes of being a Farmer.’ Jake replied in a falsely sincere tone, flashing his best smile.

‘Hmmf.’ The farmer snorted disdainfully at his cheesy tone. ‘Tell the truth instead. You want that Soul Glyph, right?’

At that moment, a glowing symbol of pale yellow manifested itself above the old man’s head like a mirage before disappearing just before Jake could grab it.

His reflexes had not lagged at all. As soon as the Glyph had appeared he had mobilized all of his Aether of Strength and contracted all of his muscles, including his telekinesis and Bloodline Ignition to steal it,

but he fell short. This peasant was not as simple as he appeared at first.

‘Nice try. I like your energy kid!’ The farmer grunted mockingly as he abruptly stood up with a bright-eyed look.

He then dusted off his filthy, stained pants with his equally filthy hands before starting to walk towards his vegetable garden. Jake stupidly watched the peasant walk away unsure of what to do, until he heard him bellowing in the distance,

‘What are you waiting for? Do you want to be a Farmer or not?’