

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

### Chapter 524 - Ogre

Jake, however, had little time to relate. In contrast to his stalwart and dominant bearing, deep inside he was agonizing.

He may have summoned the Aether Sun Core for less than a second, but it was enough to severely char the back half of his body. The back of his head was already bald and blistered, though his hair was already growing back.

Besides... Riveting his gaze on the golden throne embedded in the wall and the person slumped on it, he squinted his eyes in wonderment. That bastard was still alive!

There was no need to check. If Bhuzkoc had died, all the Slave Contracts in his possession would have automatically been transferred to him. This meant that his ambush had failed.

Feeling a powerful killing aura surging forth from the throne and the emergence of several ominous Aetheric signatures, Jake acted decisively. Without asking Kyle's permission, he grabbed the Playboy by the scruff of the neck and threw him over his shoulder like a sack of flour before bolting off in a single bound. Maeve, who was frozen in shock, was left behind without the slightest reservation.

When Jake disappeared with Kyle over his shoulder and the other two Evolvers at his heels, the young woman showed immense relief before recomposing the subservient and fearful mask that Bhuzkoc used to enjoy. The other female slaves hurried to do the same. Everyone had their own battle to fight.

A few seconds later, a dark figure stepped out of the throne with a red glow in his eyes. Anyone who met that gaze immediately felt an almost compulsive need to bow down, their body shuddering in terror.

Bhuzkoc was alive and kicking!

Well, he wasn't in such good shape. Jake's overpowering punch had not failed him, and the four-inch deep imprint of his fist was still disfiguring his face, depriving him of his nose and mouth. Even his vision was slightly impaired because of his swollen flesh and broken facial bones.

However, he was very much alive and no longer in mortal danger. When he looked around at the people present to find the culprit, goosebumps ran through the hair of the female slaves present, including Maeve. At that moment, all of them bowed low, none of them having the impudence to meet his gaze.

Staring at the floor in front of her, while trying to suppress her fear, Maeve saw the tyrant's humanoid shadow on the floor suddenly distort, almost doubling in size and widening noticeably at the belly and shoulder level, while a hoarse, sinister breath filled the room. An almost unbearable smell of carrion soon filled the room.

Tvur lvu vufzt vuz qflouz qmsare fgmpo, ufhv md val lounl lvfcare ovu dimmz frt hzfhcare ovu qfzgiu md ovu vfii. Sv u loaddurut prjiiareiw fl lvu duio vaq fnnzmfhvare, ovur zuifkut jaov lmqu lvfqu fl lvu vufzt vaq jfic fjfw.

Conversely, the female slave who had become the lucky recipient of his attention soon let out a horrified high-pitched scream, as a vermilion liquid spilled onto the floor, seeping into the cracks of every floor tile.

‘AARRGH!’

Maeve and the others held their breath, not daring to move for fear of suffering the same fate. The sobs and cries of their comrade lasted only a few seconds before silence returned. After that, all they could hear were the sounds of chewing and crunching bones, the smell of blood and fresh guts adding to the already overwhelming smell of carrion.

Another slave could not help but vomit in disgust as she realized the situation and her impulse sealed her fate. A few seconds later, she too let out a shriek of terror and joined her colleague in the Nawai chief’s stomach.

At that very moment, Maeve began to seriously wonder if she had made the right choice by staying here or if she should have run away when she had the chance. Then she remembered that as long as the Slave Contract existed, she would have no control over her existence anyway.

When she felt Bhuzkoc’s ragged, stinking breath coming at her, she closed her eyes to shut out reality, but then several shrill cackles erupted behind her. The rapidly approaching Aetheric Signatures promptly collided with the creatures at the origin of these noises.

A few explosions of lights, flashes of gunfire and clashes of blades sounded behind her and the cackling stopped as one of the Aetheric signatures that had just fought them was eradicated. Bhuzkoc, who was about to devour her, suddenly changed his mind and retracted his clawed hand only a few inches from her throat.

The next second, several Evolvers broke inside the throne room with grave expressions on their faces. None of them commented on the gruesome scene nor the monstrous appearance of their leader, but they frowned. One of them, a Nawai almost as tall as Bhuzkoc with

long fluorescent turquoise hair and a short beard scowled disapprovingly,

‘While your brothers were dying, what were you doing?’

‘Hmmpph! I don’t have to answer to you, Vamak.’ Bhuzkoc harrumphed with disdain, almost making both Maeve’s and the last slave’s eardrums explode with a single snort.

Of course, for these Third or Fourth-Ordeal Players, it wasn’t enough to intimidate them. The one called Vamak, glanced at Maeve with relief, but he quickly hid his heart’s fluctuations.

‘Rank 2 to 5 Digestors have begun to spawn in the Oracle Playground.’ He reported accurately, choosing to postpone their argument. ‘This Oracle City is connected to 36 other Shelters through Orange Cubes, including ours. As expected, no Oracle Guardian or High Rankers have intervened.’

‘What about the Yellow Cube? Is it compromised?’ Bhuzkoc asked coldly, finally showing his leadership abilities.

‘Not yet, but it will be soon.’ Vamak replied with concern. ‘Digestors are attracted to Aether-rich sources and the Oracle Cubes are all powered by at least one Aether Core. The Yellow Cube is well protected, but the Orange Cubes have been taken over and will soon fall.’

‘Let’s follow the plan in this case. Let’s sell the mansion and our other estates, store everything we can carry in our Faction Storage and tell the guys to get to the Yellow Cube for immediate evacuation. We’ll meet you on Thelma for the rest of our operations.’

‘Agreed.’ Vamak and the other Evolvers nodded.

‘But before that, I need you to do something for me, brother...’  
Bhuzkoc added with a mocking smile filled with sadism.

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A few minutes earlier.

‘Jake, no! Please save Maeve!’ Kyle struggled, subconsciously neglecting his injuries. His jerky movements immediately made him wince in pain.

The ‘savior’ in question turned a deaf ear to his subordinate’s lamentations. Instead, he rebuked him harshly,

‘If we want to save her, we’ll have to save ourselves first. Look around you!’

It was only then that Kyle became aware of the terrified screams, the familiar shrill cackling, and the numerous explosions and gunshots ringing out.

‘What the hell is happening here?’

‘You finally notice?’ Jake rolled his eyes in exasperation.

‘All the more reason to go back and save Maeve!’ Kyle began to struggle again with a fanatical expression on his face.

Seriously annoyed, Jake grabbed the ‘bag of flour’ by the hair and threw it to the ground before mercilessly stomping on his broken knee, wiggling his foot to properly stimulate his nerves. A gritty sound resounded distinctly, giving a nearby Evolver goosebumps.

‘And what are you going to do with all your broken bones and flayed skin?’ Jake yelled in anger. ‘You haven’t screwed up enough for today?! You think I’ll still be here to wipe your àss everytime? Now

shut up and think about your mistakes. If we can save your sister, we will.’

Like a spoiled child who had just been told no for the first time, Kyle opened and closed his mouth repeatedly but no words came out of his mouth. In the end, his severe injuries and shame overcame his will as he passed out. With an unconscious sack of flour, the return journey proved to be much quicker.

Jake briefly caught a glimpse out of the corner of his eye of Grash’s fighting figure as he felled one flying Digestor after another, and he congratulated himself on not having any obligations here. The next thing he knew, he and Kyle were back at the tavern where Will, Svara and the felines were waiting.

None of them cracked a joke when they saw the playboy’s condition. For one thing, he was unconscious, and for another, they had already been briefed by Jake on the way.

‘What do we do now?’ Mufasa growled as he scratched his claws against the wooden walls of the long abandoned Melkree’s Bar.

His claws were dripping with silver blood, as were the other felines’. Obviously, they had already dealt with a few Digestors while waiting for him here.

‘Whether we want to save Maeve or escape from here, the plan is the same, to get to the Yellow Cube in the center of town.’ Svara explained chillingly. ‘If Bhuzkoc isn’t a fool, he’ll have the same plan as us and we should bump into him there again.’

Jake tried to locate Maeve with his bracelet, but as he feared the Shadow Guide showed no reaction. The Oracle System had gone blind in its own home.

‘Then, let’s do that.’