

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 442 - New Rules (part 2)

On the way home, the businessman explained that he and Skaur had met in the previous Round. The overweight scum wasn't a Monster, but he was no angel either. In order to survive, Will had been forced to team up with this bastard.

That was fine in Round One, because despite his flaws, Skaur was somewhat protective. Without his comrades, from whom he had been separated, the gangster was not so čóčky, willingly choosing diplomacy over violence.

Because he was strong enough and Will did the talking, they had earned the trust of the other Villagers as they saved them on multiple occasions. Of course, their Round was not nearly as dangerous as Jake's.

The three original Monsters were natives that their Players had no trouble defeating. There were no Inquisitors or outstanding Players. As soon as the remaining Monster got his points, he left and their Round was over.

In the end, his Village was one of the first to enter the Second Round. Like Jake, they had discovered the differences between the two Rounds at their own expense. For some, the more flexible and realistic setting was a welcome improvement, but for those like Will who depended on the rules to survive, it had been a disaster.

The main difference between the first and second Rounds, Will explained, was that it was much easier to attack. For starters, the Lord had full power in his Village. He could mobilize the Guards and attack anyone in his territory for no reason.

What counterbalanced this almost absolute authority of the Lord in his territory was the new voting system. Unlike before, where the effect of a vote lasted only a single day, the sentence was now instant and irrevocable.

First, the Villager voted guilty would be sent immediately to the Pit. If he returned alive, he would be deemed a Criminal. As long as the Lord did not revoke this status, it was permanent. In the Lord's absence, the Mayor, then the Captain in order, held this authority, including the ability to mobilize the Guards.

These Guards were not to be underestimated. They were not numerous, but their power rivaled that of the top tier players. This was to prevent anarchy from flourishing too easily and to assert the authority of the current Lord.

The other crucial aspect that had changed was that neighboring Villages were not under the same jurisdiction. One Village's Criminal could have the status of Villager in another and all that was required was to obtain citizenship. It was the role of the Mayor and the Bailiff to handle these new migrants.

If the Villagers of one Village were not free to act as they wished, it was different when it concerned another Village. Thus, a Villager from Village A could attack a Villager from Village B without fear of retaliation.

The Lords were also able to form alliances with each other, which extended the ban on attacks to their common territories. However, very few had used this feature until now.

When Skaur discovered the new advantages of his Lord status, he suddenly changed his attitude, revealing his true nature. The tax he had put in place was simply obnoxious, while the guards took charge of controlling every entrance and exit of the Village.

The Guard was a special entity. It was equal to 30% of the Lord's protective capacity, or 30 Guards in Jake's case, and these Guards could respawn from the barracks every other day.

Once born, they behaved like any other Villager and their Guard Role could even be upgraded, as with the officer who answered his questions when he arrived.

Tvuaz hmeraoasu frt aqnZmsalfoamrfi fnoaptul juzu iaqaout, gpo ovuw mguwut mztuzl ukhuutareiw juui. Fmz f omn tme iacu Scfpz, ovulu gzfarjflvut ozmmnl qftu nuzduho qaramrl.

As with the Guards, if the Village's population did not reach the protective capacity of its Lord, other NPCs could spawn or immigrate to fill other positions such as Farmers or Fishermen. The Lord's reputation partly determined what kind of NPCs would appear.

Having more or less figured out the basics, Jake mulled over various strategies before remembering something.

'Hey Will, can you play an instrument?' He blurted out casually.

'Hmm? Why are you asking me that. I played drums and a little guitar when I was younger.'

'I have a Musician Role Card.' Jake clarified as he shared the card's contents. 'I thought it would fit you like a glove so I set it aside for you.'

As he read the perks on the Card at hand, Will tripped and had to hold onto his sleeve to keep himself from falling over.

‘Come on, of course I’m interested! Ever since I lost my Charizard, this Ordeal has become a living hell...’

Jake almost choked on his own spit upon hearing this. After the space dimension of their bracelet was sealed, the businessman had indeed lost contact with his baby dragon.

‘Cough, cough, did you really name your dragon Charizard?’

‘Why not? It’s half as big already and it spits fire. Plus, Tim and Lily picked the name.’

‘But his scales are green... Whatever...’

After giving him the Musician Card, Jake then chatted with Tim and the two sisters. The three were not in the same Village as Will originally and had only joined him a day earlier.

‘Sorry about Lily.’ Jake patted the teen’s shoulder in a vain attempt to cheer him up.

Tim’s expression darkened when Jake mentioned his girlfriend.

‘It’s my fault.’ He lamented wistfully. ‘My luck betrayed me for the first time. We didn’t teleport to the same Village.’

‘Oh...’

Jake had expected the two lovebirds to have been teleported together and a serious accident to have occurred, but the truth was much more ordinary. Tim felt bad about it, but it was actually much more realistic that his luck would disappoint him from time to time. After all, with the Aether density of this world, his 100 Aether Luck points were severely devalued.

If Tim wasn’t directly responsible for Lily’s death, there was nothing to mope about. However, when he considered the girl’s age and the

fact that she may have been separated from her father for the first time, he felt that this failure may have caused her mental health to suffer.

After the Ordeal, in addition to saving Kyle's sister, he would have to make sure that Lily did not retain any after-effects of her untimely death.

As for the two sisters, they had done well, for one, they hadn't been separated and for two, their initial role was that of Nobles and it couldn't have been better. In addition to occupying a manor together, they had the privilege of directly starting each Round with 100M worth of Fluid. It was then up to them to spend or grow this fortune wisely.

With their decent strength and perfect cooperation, they had no trouble standing out in the last Round. Had it not been for 2 Inquisitors and Avy Shanmin in the same Round as them, the Lord Role would have ended up in their hands.

In addition to their status as Nobles, they had also acquired the Enforcer Role since then by successfully eliminating a Criminal.

'You're saying Avy got the Lord Role from your Village? That's a pretty good thing.' Jake commented without being too surprised.

Gordon Mason, as an insignificant senior officer, had managed to make the majority of the natives eat out of his hand. For the Titan Pearl General, this was the *bàrè* minimum to expect.

As for Arryn, she had been separated from Siraye, who according to his bracelet had already been eliminated. At least that was one less person to protect, Jake consoled himself.

The young woman had simply been saved by the bell because one of the Inquisitors in her Village had on his own initiative eliminated all

the Monsters in the Round. Too weak to shine, she had barely achieved anything since their separation.

The return trip took longer than the outward journey, as they had to take the winding paths around the Forest, but half an hour later they safely made it to their destination.

A Guard he had never seen before easily recognized him and blew a horn to report his arrival. The Villagers nearby were attracted by the commotion and quickly gathered around to take a look.

‘Jake!’

Kujfruu jfsut fl lvu zuhmeraxut val taloarhoasu daepzu. Jfcu jficut msuz om vuz frt qftu ovu arozmtphoamrl.

‘Aside from these two men, these five are part of my Faction.’

Unexpectedly, the Witch showed signs of jealousy when she heard that they were members of his Faction. Not to mention, a woman could recognize a rival when she met one. Even though Enya and Esya hid their curves under a thick coat, their beauty was undeniable.

‘What, you want to join us?’ Jake chuckled.

‘Why not.’ She countered frankly. ‘I already signed a Servant Contract. It won’t make much difference.’

Jake opened his mouth, but Will beat him to it with his most glorious merchant smile.

‘Welcome to our company.’ The businessman shook her hand energetically without giving her the slightest chance to shake it off.

‘Welcome to the Myrtharian Nerds.’

Upon hearing the full name of their Faction, Kewanee immediately regretted it. Her face sank, but it was too late to change her mind.

With Will's persuasive words, she let herself be led through the procedure like a toddler learning to walk.

By the time she realized the extent of her actions, it was too late. The Myrtharian Nerds had gained a new member.