

The Oracle Paths

Volume 4: The Purgatory

Chapter 449 - Lively Night

‘Welcome back, Will. How did the negotiation with Skaur go?’ Jake became interested when he caught the smug look on his face.

‘Great! Skaur forced me to give up my store! I got your blueprints too.’ Will chuckled happily.

Ignoring Jake, he motioned to Drastan and the two Fluid Knights who had escorted him to unload the four carts full of supplies. Drastan himself was loaded like a mule.

Jake’s facial muscles twitched imperceptibly as he watched this nonsense. Still, he had to get to the bottom of it.

‘So, what makes you so happy?’ He asked this time with barely veiled annoyance.

‘That dumbass Skaur let me take all my possessions with me. What a fucking dork!’ Will gloated to himself just like a Disney villain.

‘Explain.’ Jake growled impatiently.

Sensing that his leader was not in the mood for jokes, Will regained his gravitas.

‘This situation is fucked up.’ The businessman said in all seriousness.

‘You haven’t realized it yet because the First Round had an initial allocation of Roles that was pretty much viable. Production Roles like

Farmer, Hunter or Fisherman may have seemed useless, but thanks to them, food supplies were guaranteed.

‘As Villagers acquire better Roles, they abandon their original Roles. At the same time, the proportion of Monsters, Enforcers, etc., only increases while the number of remaining participants decreases. My Grocery Store’s inventory is equivalent to almost all the food in his Village. And because this delinquent retard was letting me handle the technical side, he doesn’t even know it. He just blew all his efforts with one single bad decision.’

Jake was stunned. No doubt Skaur would realize his foolishness sooner or later. It was the kind of concern he had never mused over because he was one of the few participants who could do without food.

If he wished, he could bury himself in the ground in the hot sun and he would be able to subsist for a few months without problems. Even without that, his Forest Warden Role guaranteed that he could hunt to his heart’s content.

He also realized as he listened to Will that he knew nothing about these Production Roles. How fast did what they planted grow? How often was the harvest? How quickly were the fish in the lake renewed? Or the beasts in the forest?

When he had fallen into the Lake, he had been under the impression that he could catch fish without limitation, but could he really? Probably not. If he had tried, he would have been sent to the Pit for trespassing.

‘I hadn’t considered that.’ Jake admitted honestly. ‘If we follow that logic, with the Corruption’s influence it won’t be long before the remaining survivors fall into cannibalism.’

‘Exactly. Have you noticed that it’s become nearly impossible to pick up a Production Role Card?’ Will shared his find with trepidation.

Jake’s face scrunched up hearing this.

‘I didn’t know that. I stopped picking Role Cards as soon as I got the Roles I wanted. My focus was not on this.’

His merchant buddy refrained from the slightest bit of quipping. With his intelligence, if Jake wanted to, he wouldn’t have missed any of these details. The only reason he hadn’t connected all the dots yet was because as a top-tier player, his focus was elsewhere. And most importantly, he had only arrived in the Second Round this morning.

‘We can always count on the NPCs for these Roles, right?’ Jake thought about something. ‘You said earlier that they would spawn to fill the Village to capacity.’

‘They will...’ Will grunted, recalling bad memories. ‘But unlike the guards, it’s not guaranteed... And if they die, the crops are screwed. You’ll understand better after tonight... Now help us unpack the supplies. We’re gonna be living on this for a while. We’re not all Myrtharian hybrids like you.’

The group then proceeded to move the supplies to safety. Jake used his Earth manipulation powers to dig an underground cave, which he then sealed by smoothing out the rock above. Besides Jake, anyone who wanted to access the supplies without damaging them would need a high precision drill.

And before that, they’d still have to find the stash location. As a precaution, only Will and Jake knew about it. Far from being resourceful, he had simply dug the basement under the ruins of his old Castle.

After that, Jake introduced Lieutenant Pavao and the other New Earths soldiers to Will and Drastan. The businessman was somewhat disappointed when he found out that he had made the trip for nothing. Pavao had all the blueprints they needed and plenty more.

When night fell, Jake, despite the late hour, suggested starting the construction work, but was met with a unanimous refusal. Except for Drastan, everyone, including Pavao and Will, wanted to keep a low profile.

The lieutenant had already redeployed his troops to stand guard tonight. Except for two Titan Pearl soldiers he had recruited along the way, everyone else was invisible, hidden somewhere in the rubble.

Of course, Jake could still spot most of them, but he had to admit that the two snipers were well hidden. Remembering Yerode and Lamine's surprise ambush on B842, his knees suddenly itched and he vowed again to finish off the two motherfuckers at the first opportunity.

Tm gu mr ovu lfdu latu, ovuw film arlalout mr npooare mpo ovu hfqndazu, frt lm guefr val dazlo raevo ar ovu Suhmrt Rmprt. Dulnaou ovu nzmoulol, Jfcu vft rm arouroamr md liuunare ao mdd frt lm guefr om zugpait val ruj Cfloiu, dmiimjare ovu gipunzao, jvaiu Pfsfm frt val ozmmnl jfohvut mr ar talniufpzu.

Will wanted to say something, but he backed down. Seeing Drastan proactively help him, he let go and joined them. In the end, the safest place to be was still right next to Jake.

The first part of the night went smoothly. Jake occasionally felt Pavao's snipers pointing their sights at him, but he was alert. The blueprints were simpler than he thought. There were no material requirements, as long as the dimensions and structures were respected.

As a pragmatic Myrtharian, he had no intention of going through the trouble of mining a whole bunch of exotic stone, nor of getting the prescribed types of timber. Everything would be reinforced concrete, well, sort of.

Everything would be uniform. He intended to shape the fortress out of a single gigantic block of rock. He would build it step by step, meter by meter, maintaining the cohesion of the lava with his Earth Control and Telekinesis until it cooled down completely.

The only real constraint was that the noise had to be limited as much as possible, while the light emitted by the heated rock had to be intercepted at all costs to avoid attracting the attention of possible enemies. For that, Jake used his Radiation Control.

All the photons emitted were captured by his skin and this made him realize once again how good his Myrtharian Bloodline was. Every time he remembered that it was only Grade 8, he couldn't help but wonder how overcheated a Grade 10 Bloodline would be.

Jake and Drastan had finished rebuilding the hall, when they stopped at the same time. Will also stiffened as he noticed their shift in demeanor.

‘What’s going on?’ He asked telepathically.

‘We’re under attack.’

Irtuut, f duj luhmrtl ifouz arvpqfr zmfzl lmpertut rmo lm dfz dzmq ovuq. Nmo iacu ovmlu md f iamr mZ f oaeuz, jvahv hmpit loaii vfsu ovuaz dfrl, gpo ovu taleploare fiaur iacu lmpertl mpo md f vmzzmz qmsau.

TATATATA! PssschuuuuuuuuBOOOM!

Pavao's team opened fire a few seconds later. The soldier with the bazooka had also opened the festivities.

Will panicked as he heard the roaring and shooting, but he wasn't completely helpless either. The two Fluid Knights at his side grabbed two carbon tubes from their belts, which lengthened into two high-frequency vibrating short swords.

'Shouldn't we be hiding?' The businessman was getting fidgety.

Drastan scoffed.

'No need.' Jake yawned in boredom. 'We're in the perfect place.'

Will looked around the stone hall they were in again and couldn't think of anything that could be considered ideal. The room was large and he had seen no passageways or secret weapons.

He got his answer soon enough.

A few minutes later, a group of monsters managed to slip through the barrage of gunfire and fearlessly landed in front of them. These monsters were vaguely humanoid with a long tail ending in a club and spine, grayish skin with fur shaped like thin, ugly tentacles.

Tvu suzw tudaraoamr md f Hprouz. Al lmmr fl ovu hzufopzul laevout ovuq, ovuw lrfziut fo ovuq, lnpoouzare tudafroiw.

'Tche, they're not participants.' Drastan bellowed as he swung his warhammer at the face of the nearest creature.

Simultaneously, an ugly head flew through the air along with a gush of alien blood.

'Is this what you meant Will when you said relying on NPCs for supplies would be complicated?' Jake commented after decapitating the second monster.

The businessman gritted his teeth and with the help of the two Fluid Knights, they managed to corner a third creature. The vibrating blades of the two warriors chopped the alien to pieces in no time, while the merchant slashed through its eye with his cutlass. A spurt of warm blood sprayed his face and he nearly puked.

Good for him, the battle was already over. At least, that's what someone wanted them to believe. As the corpses, blood and innards of a score of Hunters painted the brand new hall, two black-cloaked figures entered noiselessly through the non-existent front door.

'Jake Wilderth, I presume ?' A raspy, metallic voice broke the status quo.

Beyond a doubt, the two Inquisitors Croyorn and Oxium had tracked him down.