

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 453 – It Can Happen to Any of Us

The rest of the night passed without a hitch. After reaching an agreement with Hephais, Jake resumed building the castle, this time with the other survivors' assistance.

It turned out that Hephais was not one of the Monsters. To prove this, they would have to wait for Peter's return, but a simpler solution presented itself in the form of Ostrexora. She used her Clairvoyant Role to identify his Roles in front of everyone and confirmed that he was not one of them.

The ghastly female Player had also joined the battle as promised to defend the Village, single-handedly eliminating more than half the Players and natives sent to fight alongside Hephais. She was covered in blood and gore, and a devilishly inhuman grin crept across her ghoulish face.

While Hephais was no Monster, he was no angel either. In addition to his original Farmer Role, the special Role he had acquired shortly after the first Round began was Assassin.

[Villager: Assassin lvl 3(Rare)(Upgradeable): Can accept 3 contracts each night to eliminate another Villager. In addition to being allowed to go out at night to complete his missions, the assassin is rewarded or penalized according to the success of the eliminations. Ability : Stealth lvl 3. Requirements: Accept a contract and successfully eliminate the target.]

The Egean Assassin did not try to absolve himself of the previous murders. He simply said that a job was just a job. In his line of work, he didn't care who the target was as long as he got paid. The only reason he was willing to switch sides was that he ultimately preferred the 'good guys' when he had the freedom to choose his employer.

In the previous Round, it would have been complicated for him to put a sign outside his door like Jake with a notice 'Assassin accepting assassination missions.' That was why, when Daryl had attacked him on the first night, he had taken the opportunity to negotiate a deal with the dead doctor. After all, killing was all he knew.

The current Round presented him with better options, but more importantly he didn't have much of a choice. Avros and four of the Inquisitors (now down to two) had formed a Monster Village by gathering around this woman known as Grand Master Isbeus. No one knew where she came from.

The targeted attack on Jake's Village earlier in the day was no accident. Avros and their previous First Round qualifiers had all been teleported to the same Village. That's why they knew from the start where Jake and the other survivors of their First Round would respawn. The only unknown was when.

In the end, Jake and the others had taken longer than expected, but it had also given them the breathing room they needed to flourish.

Unfortunately, the appearance of Isbeus had dashed their hopes. Their trio of Avros, Hephais, and Luc were crushed in a matter of seconds unable to do anything. Avros and Luc being Monsters themselves, had willingly embraced the new cause, but for the Assassin these were the most perilous days of his existence.

Unlike the other two Players who had forsaken their own souls, Hephais had been waiting for Jake's appearance to change sides.

Thus, Jake and the Egean Assassin signed a Contract stating that all of Hephais' next targets would be decided by Jake. The only clause was that Hephais retained the right to refuse or even break the contract if Jake lost his mind or turned into a Monster.

At dawn, Jake and the others didn't even try to be discreet anymore and pushed themselves hard to finish the Castle. With his powers, the monument he was building was nothing like the original blueprint.

If the Castle of the blueprint was a ravishing naked and defenseless maiden, the new fortress was a 3m tall bodybuilder knight in heavy armor. A bit like a wooden hut of one cubic meter wrapped in 20 meter thick stone walls.

Seen from the outside, the new Castle looked like a smooth and homogeneous cube of rock fifty meters on each side. If not for the few spiky towers protruding from the top, the moat encircling it, the large gate and the drawbridge, it would have been impossible to guess that it was supposed to be a castle.

This kind of wonder was only possible with Jake's magic and the assistance of Drastan and the other Players whose strength far exceeded that of the natives.

'One good thing done.' Jake sighed with relief as he contemplated his handiwork. A glance at his Fluid Card confirmed that his Lord (Baron) Role was no longer grayed out.

Exhausted, he wiped the perspiration off his forehead. He was far from the only one drenched in sweat. Those like Will who didn't shine with physical strength and stamina were literally on their knees, close to passing out.

‘I have two other potential allies in a nearby Village.’ Hephais revealed as he stood next to him. ‘Mihangyl Sarcaryn, a Wood Archmage and Ralnor Beinan, a Fire Knight.’

Jake remembered the leaf green haired idiot present at the meeting on the Titan Pearl. Ralnor was the calm, composed knight who attended him. He didn’t dither too much about why the assassin hadn’t joined them. No doubt he had his reasons.

‘They control this Village?’ He inquired.

‘They do. But not for long...’ Hephais did not hide his gloom. ‘The attack that your Village suffered yesterday is what the other Villages are going through every day. At first, they recruited those who agreed to surrender, turning them into Monsters, but for the past two days they have been eradicating everyone without exception. Whoever this Isbeus is, she wants to end it all.’

‘How many Villages are there in total? Is this the only Monster Village we need to be wary of?’ Jake continued to question him.

‘I can answer that.’ A female voice sounded behind him.

‘Enya!’ Tim exclaimed before throwing himself into her arms. The poor teenager starved for affection without Lily to keep his hormones in check.

Will gave Esya a quick hug and nodded to Kewanee and Svara behind them. Jake focused instead on the breathtaking hottie bringing up the rear.

‘Carmin, why did you come back?’ He exclaimed in disbelief. When she had left, he was convinced she was off to find the rest of her Faction.

Seeing her blank stare and lack of reaction, he realized that something was wrong. Sadly, he wasn't familiar enough with her to take the initiative. Just a few days earlier, she was trying to bleed him dry.

In addition to Carmin, there were also two other unexpected people in this group. The first was Avy Shanmin, recognizable by her youthful appearance, small size and flat chest despite her almost 40 years of age. The second, hooded in black and its face obscured by a veil of darkness, left no doubt as to its identity: another Inquisitor.

Recognizing an Inquisitor, all the survivors' hair stood on end and they drew their weapons as one.

Jake even struck preemptively, smashing her with a giant telekinetic palm descending from the sky. Drastan shifted into Troll form and swung one of the unused tree trunks at her like a javelin, while Hephais distorted the Inquisitor's shadow into dark stakes and speared her through and through from behind.

'Stop! Stop it! She's with us!' Avy yelled as she steeled herself in front of the wounded Inquisitor to keep them from sending a barrage of deadly attacks at it.

'Step aside.' Drastan roared in fury as he brandished another tree trunk like a club and prepared to slam it down with all his might.

Meanwhile, Hephais didn't flinch and continued to branch out and twist the shadow of the immobilized Inquisitor to butcher him without mercy. Jake didn't let up on his force field either. When Avy entered the range of influence of his attack, she too was flattened like a pancake against the ground and began to spit blood.

'Jake, please...' Enya squeezed his hand with a pleading tone.

Glancing at her, he finally noticed the worry and heavy dark circles on her face. Her noble air was absent and her beautiful eyes held a hint of supplication. Taking a deep breath to calm himself, he returned his attention to the Inquisitor on the ground and saw that it had not once tried to resist.

‘All right. Stop attacking.’ Jake ordered wearily. This urge to kill was a bit too strong. Perhaps he had been too optimistic. In a day or two, it would be hard for him to contain his homicidal impulses.

Hephais released his control and the Inquisitor’s shadow became lifeless again. It turned out to be a bit more complicated for the Troll.

ROOOOARRR!

Drastan kept smashing down the tree trunk like a madman. With drool on his lips and eyes clouded with madness, he appeared determined to persevere until the Inquisitor was reduced to mush.

‘ Luckily, he just lost his mind. Without his wits, he’s just another monster.’ Jake gròànéd.

Borrowing from Croyorn’s method, Jake depressurized the air around the Troll’s head and when it began to suffocate, he leapt behind its neck and punched the back of its skull with his full strength. His arm pumped with Red Aether and a telekinetic push further increased its power.

It was enough.

Drastan’s huge head was thrown forward and his eyes rolled back for a brief second. The huge troll collapsed on his stomach, shaking the ground, but got up almost immediately. However, the anger within him was gone.

‘Sorry.’ Drastan scratched his head sheepishly as he regained his human size.

‘It’s okay.’ Jake and the others forgave him with no hard feelings. What had just happened to him could happen to any of them from now on.

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