

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 4: The Purgatory

### Chapter 478 - Father-Son Battle

Upon overhearing this, the inscrutable faces of Minerva and Nylreg frowned for different reasons. The female Grandmaster was simply annoyed that her old enemy could still find the time to worry about others in his current predicament, while the reasons for his son's attitude were far more convoluted.

‘If you hadn't interfered, none of this would have happened. If you were more supportive and forgiving, things would have turned out very differently.’ Nylreg blamed him with an incomparably tortured tone, mixing hatred, regret and despair all at once.

With keen senses, one could even detect a tinge of distress, almost reminiscent of the immature insecurities of a small boy. Sigmar flashed signs of hesitation and doubt as he sensed this familiar helplessness in his son, but this almost imperceptible flaw was soon erased by an unparalleled fierceness.

‘Sigh... You didn't really give me a choice.’ Sigmar said as he put his bloody shoulder back in place. ‘I've been trying for over a century to straighten you out. You are the one who chose this path. We always have a choice, Nyl. You just have to-‘

**BANG!**

A dark laser beam shot through his throat, disrupting his sentence. Instead of collapsing or rolling around in pain, Sigmar fell silent as he looked at his son with overwhelming sorrow. His actual heart was

unharméd, but to him it was as if someone had been stirring a knife in it for over a century. A hole in his throat was really nothing compared to this...

‘If you honestly think this will change anything, you’re fooling yourself, Father.’ Nylreg spat as he lowered his energy-cloaked index finger. ‘I am a Digestor. I can’t change and you know it. This Monster Game was my last experiment and it is a failure. Look at them! None of them have kept their sanity. If they are not killing each other, they are either consumed by fear or paralyzed by the duality transforming them little by little. It doesn’t matter either way... You can’t stop me anymore. He is coming.’

With that, his long coat flapped wildly as if a powerful gust of wind had just blown through and the whites of his eyes turned black. He clasped his hands together and the veil of dark energy around him retracted before exploding into multiple rings of pure Fluid that spread throughout the station.

Suddenly, he burst out laughing. It was a wicked, hysterical laugh that seemed to last forever to Sigmar and Minerva, but at the end it was more of a sardonic, desperate laugh. Returning to his icy seriousness, he declared in a derisive voice,

‘Your protégé has failed. He fell into my trap when he deactivated the Purgatory. He has already lost his mind. Your best human couldn’t even stand up to that fake corruption for a few seconds and you expect me, a DIGESTOR, to change my true nature? WHO THE FUCK DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!’

Sigmar frowned and hurried to expand his mental sense throughout the station, and when he got his feedback, his face sank. A tidal wave of Corrupted Fluid was spreading through the station at a terrifying rate and a fifth of the station had already been affected. At the speed

it was propagating, everyone would be affected in less than 10 minutes.

Everyone who was affected, ally or enemy, had forsaken all common sense to indiscriminately kill each other or commit even worse. The Players who would survive would have to carry the weight of their sins on their conscience for the rest of their lives...

His only consolation was that Jake and his team had done their job well, but they had also been the first to be affected. Even Sigmar was not confident of withstanding such a dense concentration of unclean Fluid for long.

Yuo, fl vu jfohvut ovu zfqnfear Jfcu qmzu himluiw, f dprw uknzullamr diahcuzut fhzmll val dfhu fl vu lofzut fo val lmr fefar. Esuropfiiw, vu ifpevut gfhc.

Neither Nylreg nor Minerva had expected such a response, but they didn't give it much thought. The nice thing about insanity is that a behavior deemed absurd or suspicious by sane people may seem completely normal, even trivial to the insane.

Of course, a thousand-year-old vixen like Minerva already knew everything about the complex relationship between Sigmar and his son. Her mind having already partially merged with the Fluid fabric of this world, she felt little emotion and had a detached view of reality. She didn't care about the Digestors or the Corruption. All she cared about was her quest for power and immortality.

Despite her fulfilling life and growing emotional detachment, her fear of death was only growing stronger. The more she felt her own self slipping away, the more her struggle intensified, turning her into the bitter and ruthless woman she was today. Achieving more power and crushing her rivals mattered to her more than ever.

‘Why are you still alive, Sigmar?’ Minerva finally spoke up, no longer able to stand the drama queen whining of her two peers. ‘I remember a time when you feared me so much that you were willing to run to the ends of the galaxy to escape me. And now you’re standing up to us one on two? How?’

Both Sigmar and Nylreg ignored her decisively, but Nylreg figured something out when he saw the wound in his father’s throat close up in a flash.

‘I was trying to disintegrate your head just now.’ He remarked with utmost lucidity. ‘Isn’t that wound a little too small? Minerva is right. If you were so tough, you wouldn’t have abandoned the station all these years ago. You wouldn’t have abandoned me...’

‘Tsk, and here we go again...’ Minerva rolled her eyes under her hood. Nylreg was even crazier than she was.

**BANG! BANG!**

Incensed, Nylreg pierced the old woman’s throat, who didn’t look a day over 20, to shut her up, then sensing his father’s taunting pity, he repeated the same move on his father, this time lashing out with laser beams until his entire body was riddled with holes.

As Sigmar’s armor and mantle burned away, Sigmar’s true appearance underneath was revealed to them. Still as young and perfect as they remembered him, though relatively muscular and more tanned than before, it was the silver and gold hair and irises, as well as the white lava veins running down his body that caught their attention.

Nylreg put on a knowing smile as if he had been expecting it, and then abruptly switched gears, suddenly filled with a sense of

foreboding. But Minerva, who knew nothing about the Mirror Universe, was the one unable to hide her shock.

‘What the hell is this? I’ve never seen such a Fluid Body Strengthening Technique!’ She exclaimed in a raving fit.

With her ample experience, she could grasp and even easily mimic the way he was converting Fluid into heat to warm his body, but to use that heat without self-destructing was a feat usually found in those failed Inquisitors stuck in a specific state of matter.

Here, it went even further. She and Nylreg could now see that Sigmar had been faking it all along. His skin was thick and his muscles hard and resilient enough to withstand all their previous attacks. The way their enemy had played them deeply unsettled them.

While Minerva was downright envious and consumed with jealousy, Nylreg glanced curiously again at Jake in the distance and this time his face darkened as he realized what his father had done.

‘You joined his faction... How low have you fallen to come to such extremes? All right... Since you believe in him, I guess it’s up to me to shatter your hopes. I’ll show you... that no one can change their fate. Before He comes and takes me away from this world, let’s play one last game between father and son.’

As he made this oath, Nylreg became solemn for the very first time and the atmosphere changed drastically. Slowly lowering his hood, he then threw his cloak into the void with a wave of his hand. The dark veil of energy shrouding him dissipated and a youthful face resembling that of his father appeared before them.

Minerva was taken aback as she saw Nylreg’s appearance for the first time, which was simply a clone of his father. Sigmar was not surprised, but his gaze lingered wistfully on his son’s gloved right

hand. In addition to the usual five fingers, a sixth finger was discernible between the index and middle fingers. His left hand was perfectly normal.

Nylreg drew a carbon tube for the first time and a blade forged from some unknown steel lengthened out of it. The sword was ordinary, unadorned, but it was precisely the emergence of this weapon that alarmed Sigmar and Minerva.

Cfiqiw, vu nmarout val ljmzt fo ufhv md ovuq, gudmzu nmaroare ao ar f huzofar tazuhomr guimj vaq. Tvzufourut, f tuqmr-nmlullut Jfcu immcut pn fo vaq jaov tuofhvut, taltfardpi tudafihu. Wvaiu Nwizue jfl mriw hmrlatuzare ao, oval arlpioare fzzmefihu hvfreut val qart.

‘DIE!’

‘I’ll stop you first!’ Sigmar shouted, grabbing his own sword.

His apparent wounds instantly closed and a super-powerful blast of heat rocketed the former Fluid Grandmaster like a blazing comet to deflect his own son’s attack. A monumental explosion sounded, the shock wave doubling the diameter of the hollow sphere in the blink of an eye.

This time, the space station toppled over on itself for real and nearly a quarter of the people still alive were killed instantly. When the heat and smoke cleared, Minerva, who had backed away in time, saw the two men engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Each clash of their swords was like a small nuclear bomb and actual wounds soon appeared on their twin bodies.

Unconsciously, she began to feel frightened. She had just realized that each of them, whether father or son, could annihilate her in an instant. Still, remembering what she had been promised, she shook off her fear and flew towards them.

Just as she was about to help him eliminate his former rival, Nylreg sent her a telepathic message, containing a long list of names, but the first one could not be overlooked.

‘Kill Jake.’

Almost simultaneously, she received an unexpected telepathic message from Sigmar.

‘Evacuate the Players.’

Wvur lvu zuhuasut ovu zulo md ovu qullfeu, vuz lpznzalu jfl zunifhut gw f lozfreu zulmisu.