

## Oracle 548

### Chapter 548 - I Can't Let You Die

"For goodness's sake!" Will shrieked resentfully as he lost his balance.

If Shere Khan had not caught him in time with his big paw he would probably have fallen into the rift too.

"Thanks Khan." The businessman breathed a sigh of relief, his hand over his chest to calm his racing heart.

When the ground stopped shaking, the giant tiger gently lowered him to the ground and they were able to admire the extent of the mess. Grash had not done things halfway!

The pig orc in question was still clutching his greatsword in the same posture, the latter still sunk into the ground after his powerful cleaving move. Now, even if these panicked beasts wanted to charge at them, they would be forced to make a detour. Circling them here, even briefly, meant that the other factions would have to suffer the wrath of these creatures instead.

Jake blinked stupidly as he stared at the huge, bottomless trench that parted the land in two. With his high Perception, he obviously knew that this rift was not bottomless. It was just the contrast between the light above and the darkness below that gave that impression.

Nevertheless, the depth of this rift was well into the two hundred meter range. Pure strength couldn't accomplish that, not as cleanly anyway, even if it was a 5th-Ordeal Player's. By deduction... It could only be an Aether Skill!

Thinking back to their brief fight, he congratulated himself for having made a good first impression on this naive alien. Otherwise, he would have been gone by now, but Grash would most likely have been incarcerated as well for trashing an Oracle City.

There was one other person, sweating profusely as he stared in horror at the aftermath of this cataclysmic attack: the scammer! Now that he saw with his own eyes what this orc jerk was capable of, he realized that he had gambled with his life by selling him that cleaning booze.

"I'm sorry! Don't kill me, I won't do it again I swear!" He immediately prostrated himself at Grash's feet, whimpering loudly.

"What the hell are you talking about? Why should I kill you?" The pig orc nonchalantly picked his ear with his big thumb as if he owned the place. The piece of earwax that came out was big enough to fill a small jar of honey.

Holding back from vomiting, the other refugees ignored the duo and went back to fighting.

"Can I do it too?" Jake muttered as he looked at his own hands.

He definitely couldn't imitate Grash's method. It was an Aether Spell, but he had also detected traces of a Soul Glyph activation and another type of energy that he didn't master. On the other hand, perhaps he could use his Earth and Metal Control Skill to achieve a similar result.

"Mufasa, cover me."

"Sure." The huge lion agreed to stand guard in front of him. In the process, he took the opportunity to flaunt his terrifying Wind Roar in front of Grash.

His Mane of Mysis began to rustle as if under the effect of an invisible wind and a huge fan-shaped air blast shot out of his jaw. The supersonic gust blew all the beasts in its path until it ran out of steam a few miles away. At this distance, the gust was just a cool breeze and had no effect on the Digestors and creatures at the back of the herd.

While Mufasa and Grash were playing "who's got the biggest?", Jake got down on one knee and closed his eyes to focus on the boundless Aether he could sense beneath his feet. It was a slightly different Aether than the one in the stale air around him, but he had full control over it. Yet, this Aether felt wrong compared to what he was used to.

'Is it because we are in Digestor territory?'

Shaking off his depressing thoughts, he resumed his efforts. Soon, his mind reached out deeply into the ground and he began to understand how to rearrange the Aether flow and the matter beneath him to cause a collapse.

After tinkering with the Aether underneath him using his mind, Jake was struck by a flash of understanding and he opened his eyes suddenly. A psychic wave radiated forth from his being and seeped deep into the ground around him along with a string of commands that could not be interrupted. Only high-level Evolvers or those specializing in magic or the mind noticed his action.

Almost immediately afterwards, the ground through which the ripple passed liquefied and split in two like an ocean. This rift was less spectacular than Grash's Aether Skill or Mufasa's roar, but its consequences were less "lasting".

And yet, it was precisely this detail that frightened the onlookers nearby. Once they fell into this crack, the force holding this "earth ocean" and giving it its viscosity vanished. With a few swirls and splashes, the huge trench closed up, then returned to its usual solid consistency. As for the hundreds of beasts trapped forever below, no one had time to worry about them.

The Evolvers of the other factions had stopped saving their strength and were also unleashing their most destructive Aether Skills and techniques. Because of this, no one noticed Jake's pale face and sweaty forehead after using this super technique.

'As I thought, it's still too early for me to spam this kind of spells...'

Physical stamina was not the problem. His Vitality and Constitution was so high, especially with this Aether density, that he didn't have to worry about it. He had noticed a certain issue in that department, but it wasn't to the point of troubling him.

No, the real concern was his mind. In his Soul Status, there were no attributes like Spirit Constitution and Vitality. His only clear gauge was his level 17 Spirit Body. The Aether used was easy to control and replenish, but the more he used his Soul and Spirit Body, the harder it became and his recovery would slow down.

He missed the Green Soul Stones from his Second Ordeal.

Spamming minor Aether and Soul Spells was like walking for his body. Although tiring, it was nearly impossible to reach his limits unless he did nothing else for long hours. Big Spells were different. It was like lifting very heavy weights or running a very long sprint. It could be done a few times, but the body always paid the price afterwards.

In this case, because he had used a powerful Soul Skill to command the earth, he had overtaxed his Spirit Body for a short time.

If he had taken his time by deploying his consciousness and Spirit Body directly outside his body, he could have manipulated this earth as if it were one of his own limbs, but then he would have exposed himself directly to the mental counter-strikes and spirit domains of the other Evolvers and creatures nearby.

After digesting a portion of Xion Zolvhur's Soul Stone, Jake could now project a compressed portion of his mental energy at a distance. Imbued beforehand with a series of instructions, he could finally use the full range of his Spirit Body without exposing himself to the slightest consequences.

Of course, a spirit specialist could easily interrupt his mental waves with his own, but he would still have to be fast enough and willing to sacrifice his own Soul Energy.

In the end, this new technique was a success, but it clearly could not be used limitlessly. Based on the subtle discomfort that ran through his Spirit Body, which manifested itself as a small psychosomatic headache once retracted into his brain, it would take him about 24 hours to recover from this Soul Skill.

With the help of his other regenerative skills and soul attributes, this time could be cut in half or even more with the right conditions.

[It was unnecessarily risky, what you just did.] Xi sternly belittled him even though he hadn't asked for any of it.

'Huh? That spell looked pretty neat to me.' Jake was puzzled by her reaction.

Suppressing her discontent, Xi sighed and explained slowly,

[That spell was okay. The Soul Skill was okay too. The medium used was not! You have an Aether Soul Core now. In addition to protecting your Soul and Spirit Body, it amplifies your Intelligence, Perception and Extrasensory Perception when you merge your mind with it. This means that your mind is also more resilient and therefore better able to recover from such techniques. As long as it is not destroyed, you should also be able to recover from most mental injuries. This is your first and only Physical Soul Organ and you should get into the habit of storing your consciousness in it rather than in your brain. Your soul can live without your brain, but even if your body is intact if you damage your soul you will be no better than a vegetable.]

Jake didn't try to argue. He knew she was right. His only excuse was that his third Ordeal had just ended and he had only had time to test his Purgatory before he had to rush out to save Kyle's sister.

Since then, they had done nothing but fight and run, and he had used his free time to enter the Purgatory and commence his first training module. His Aether Soul Core and Spirit Body training had been left behind somewhat.

Merging his mind with this Aether Soul Core was not that easy though. He could do it, but controlling his body at the same time was counterintuitive because it had been his brain's job to do that. It would take some practice.

Meanwhile the slaughter had been ongoing, and the casualties were beginning to be staggering on both the refugee and the creature sides. Neither side was willing to die pointlessly. Although he was focused on the consequences of his technique, Jake had soldiered on and given orders for his faction to retreat in good order, until they too found their backs to the wall. With the strong factions behind them, they could not retreat any further.

Just as he was about to fight to the death, something happened that changed the course of the whole battle. A frosty breath blew on the back of his neck and he looked up to see an old man wearing a long black robe floating a few feet above him.

"Sigh... I can't let you youngsters die.. I need all of you living and kicking for what is coming next."