

Oracle 576

Chapter 576 - Evolver Hunter

Jake abruptly pulled his claws from the chest of the grey Orc he had just impaled. A trickle of silvery blood dripped from the gaping wound and the humanoid monster suspended in mid-air collapsed to the ground, its eyes lifeless.

The Goblin and Orc Digestors who had just ambushed him were retreating after their defeat, but he had no intention of letting them escape. Just as he was about to give chase, his body stumbled to a halt and a worry-filled frown appeared on his face.

'The Vitality Link ? Who did this?'

Eyes closed and scrunching his eyebrows intensely, Jake weighed the pros and cons but accepted the transfer of injuries all the same. As long as the head wasn't fatally wounded he was fairly confident in his regenerative abilities. The real concern was the Death Mark, which was likely to activate if anything happened.

Like Svava, he suddenly became aware of the hidden attribute of this Faction Skill. The Vitality Link was not pulled out of a hat. When this person had used the skill, Jake had been informed of its location, or at least the direction it was in.

[Few Myrtharian Nerds are rich enough to afford activating the Vitality Link.] Xi reminded him before returning to her mute state.

'Right!' Jake's face lit up.

By process of elimination, it could only be Kyle, Will, Svava or one of the felines.

"I hope you're all fine." He muttered worriedly.

The next moment, the wound transfer took place and a searing pain electrified his entire body. His titanium-hard bones cracked all over, his tendons and muscles tore, while numerous bruises and lesions wracked his body.

Because of his superior Constitution and Vitality, his injuries were not as severe as Svava's and his bones did not completely break, merely cracked.

Taking the brunt of his new injuries, Jake abandoned his Digestor Hunt and promptly teleported to the top of a tree after erasing his footprints. He then turned around, moving from tree to tree at increasing speed without ever leaving the reassuring protection of the canopy.

Moments later, Jake recognized a rocky promontory forming a small cliff about twenty meters high and half as wide.

'It's here.'

Jake wasn't here by chance. He had been here before while fighting these goblins and had already spotted the cliff as a potential resting place.

In this Dungeon Digester, Jake could not deliberately use his Earth Control to move underground. Until proven otherwise, the walls, ceiling and floor included were part of the Dungeon Digester and he had seen what awaited those who tried to dig their way out.

He had already analyzed the floor with his senses and his bracelet and had come to the unnerving conclusion that this dirt and rock was alive. He doubted that his Accelerated Healing Skill would work with this artificial organic soil.

Only a few rocks, and a thin layer of soil in some places, escaped this standard, and this small cliff was one of them.

According to Xi, other Digestors had probably brought in these inert materials from outside to brighten up the place. Perhaps the Dungeon Digester had requested it, but the assimilation of materials could also have occurred during the creation of the Dungeon itself.

In those few moments when Jake was retracing his steps, he had used his Aether Core to generate as much heat and radiation as possible and his swelling had already subsided. The healing of his fractures and muscle tears was also well underway.

Upon authorizing the wound transfer, Jake had feared the worst and rushed to find an ideal hiding place to maximize his regeneration, but what he feared had not happened. No additional injuries had been incurred and when he reached the base of the cliff, the Vitality Link died down.

'Phew, false alarm.' Jake exhaled tiredly.

This level of injury required no help. His recovery would be complete within minutes.

Refusing to admit that he had turned back for nothing, Jake checked the remaining space in his Space Storage and Faction Vault and decided to fill them with the cliff section ahead.

Slowly at first, he punched the cliff, then gradually picked up speed until his arms became so fast that the resulting blast sounded like a machine gun. When he accelerated again, there was only one continuous note whose shockwave manifested itself as a raging wind.

"Are you really trying to grind that cliff into powder?" Xi's hologram quipped near his ear with an amused look. "A few sword strokes would have been enough for this."

"Maybe. But it's clearly not as much fun." Jake grinned with a feral expression.

Less than a minute later, the cliff had vanished and a small mountain of fine dust stood in its place. There was more than enough for his intended use, and without skipping a beat he loaded his Space Storage and the Faction Vault's common space to the brim.

He could already imagine the other members' complaints when they discovered that the Faction Vault was bursting at the seams with dust.

"At least now I won't have to worry about looking for a place to bury myself in case of serious injuries." Jake said as he rinsed his hands with some water to get rid of the dirt.

In fact, he had planned on a few cubic meters of dirt in his Space Storage before coming to rescue Kyle's sister, but he had used the Vitality Link a bunch of times over the past few days to rescue the refugees in his group.

No matter how careful he was, it would have been impossible for him to keep all those inexperienced members in perfect fighting condition otherwise. Their Aether and Body Stats had improved, but not enough to allow them to quickly recover from multiple fractures and lethal injuries in a matter of moments.

With those dozens of tons of crushed rocks, Jake was now considerably more serene and immediately started back in the direction he had just left. He could still smell the grey goblins and orcs that had ambushed him.

Most of the refugees, if they were still alive, had probably stopped in a comfortable area for their level. Searching for them to rescue them was a waste of time, since help was supposed to arrive at any moment.

At least that was Xi's conclusion, but Jake agreed with her. As a leader, he had to do his best to help them when he could, but he shouldn't just stop living for them or their roles would reverse. In the end, he was the leader, he had the right to use them as much as they used him.

After multiple skirmishes with the Digestors in this forest, Jake had already figured out that this was a great place to train, not just for him. In fact, the monsters he had encountered were still too weak and that was why he had continued to venture deeper down into the woods.

The cavern on this floor might seem huge to a normal human, but to Jake who could run or fly at supersonic speed, this place was barely bigger than a garden. If he wanted to, he could reach the infrastructure in the distance in two to three minutes.

The only reason he was still far away was because he had erred on the side of caution and spent time understanding his surroundings and the enemies he was dealing with. Now it was time to step up a gear.

Jake didn't fear any Digestor in this forest, not even the Taoties. To him, these large, scale-covered beasts were as clumsy and slow as sloths. As long as he avoided them, he had nothing to fear. Not to mention that with his senses, he could hear them coming from a distance.

Jake was not invincible, however. There were still people he feared in this forest, but they were not Digestors.

As he was about to catch up to the contingent of orcs and goblins he had been chasing, a cold chill ran down his spine and he stopped dead in his tracks. With his telekinesis, he froze the air around him to prevent the sound of his abrupt braking from spreading, then made himself invisible with his light control before dashing in another direction.

"Hmm?"

A few hundred meters away, a huge Black Orc sniffed the air with a comical expression on his face, then sneered scornfully,

"Another cockroach."

Motionless and invisible, Jake released his breath only when he was certain that Urul Tak was not after him. He waited a few more minutes, then summoned up the courage to track him down.

As the saying goes, the safest place is often the most dangerous place. Besides, he was curious to know what this powerful orc was really after.

A moment later, a breeze blew and Jake reappeared where Urul Tak had been standing. Unsurprisingly, the orc and goblin Digestors he had been chasing had been wiped out. The Aether had also been picked up, which spoke volumes about the greed of this Sixth-Ordeal Evolver.

Jake had no idea what kind of carnage this black orc had left in his wake, but he got a little idea as he kept following him. After a few minutes of stalking from a safe distance, he came across not only the bodies of Digestors, but also those of other Evolvers.

Their faces, when their heads were still on their shoulders, were bloodless and their eyes glazed over, a stream of drool dripping from their lips.. Common to all, their Oracle Devices were nowhere in sight.