

Oracle 582

Chapter 582 - Hunting Snowworms

With his first victory over the towering, but painfully slow and over-specialized Digestor, Jake continued to battle the monsters that he and Xi had naturally nicknamed the Snowworms.

After watching him fight alone a few times, Crunch also began to participate. This was not a good environment for Melkree, who was still very weak, and she stayed on the sidelines, snuggled up in the cat's warm fur or near Jake to enjoy a free UV session.

When the black cat took the initiative to fight, Jake was taken aback but he didn't refuse and took the opportunity to assess his abilities. He was used to seeing Mufasa and Shere Khan compete, but the other cats had always given him the feel of being a force to be reckoned with, albeit several leagues below their two leaders.

This was his chance to find out clearly what his cat was capable of.

The Oracle Status of his cat was as follows:

[Weight: 2600kg]

[Aether Stats: 400, Charisma: 1000, Charm: 1000]

[Body Stats: S: 400, A: 300, C: 400, V: 100, I: 32, P: 600]

[Spirit Body Level 8]

[Skills: Feline Bewitching lvl 2, Hardening lvl 1]

[Body Enhancements: Rubber Flesh, Living Fur]

This obviously did not include the Myrtharian Body Passive which provided a 240% bonus to his Body Stats. Given his size, his cat had decent Body Agility and had found a good compromise between power and speed.

Jake had already inspected his cat's status not so long ago, but he had been especially sickened by his Feline Bewitching Aether Spell capable of seducing felines of the opposite sex against their will. Like the other felines in the pack, Crunch had no Bloodline, but he was making up for it with specific physical adaptations that he must have obtained in his previous Ordeals.

The Hardening skill was new, but it was one of the most affordable Aether Spells in the Oracle Store. He must have bought it before they left or maybe even in the Oracle Shelter where Bhuzkoc was holed up before everything went to hell.

It was a real eye-opener for Jake because it told him that Crunch wasn't as stupid and shallow as he looked. Hardening was a useful and versatile skill that could be used for both attacking and defending and was not likely to become obsolete as time passed. Jake himself had better acquire this skill as soon as possible, as well as the rest of his group.

Facing his first Snowworm, Crunch first tried to coax it with his innate Charisma and Charm. An overpowered, overlapping echoing funnel meow swept across the space in front of him, shaking the thick blanket of snow and even causing an avalanche to break out.

The armored worm slowed down drastically for a brief moment, even spinning in circles several times as if disoriented. Jets of snow split the ice, several dunes collapsing while a dorsal fin or whale tail here and there pierced the surface before diving back down immediately after. It was as if the Digestor was in intense pain or inner dilemma and was trying with all his might to resist it.

Unfortunately, as soon as the meowing stopped, the titanic beast stopped thrashing around chaotically and resumed darting towards the culprit. Crunch, who had gotten jumpy, gulped and took two steps backwards until he felt his master's gentle hand on his head.

"I'm here. Just show me what you've got." Jake encouraged him with a reassuring smile.

Crunch wagged his tail happily and planted his long tail in the ground as his body swelled like a globe fish again after a deep breath. Now that Jake knew his skills and stats, he knew what to expect.

Once his fur hardened and bristled, Crunch became the striking head of a flail, his tail the flexible and extensible rope, while the part rooted in the ground became the handle. With his Body Control, an attribute resulting from his Agility, Perception and Intelligence, he could then control his tail at will to generate the greatest amount of centrifugal energy.

As soon as Crunch's tail began to spin around its anchor point, an ominous wind swirled around it, almost triggering its own mini blizzard. Seeing the scourge's "head" spinning dangerously above him at increasingly insane speeds, Jake nervously stepped back in turn, leaving Crunch alone in his bubble to face the Snowworm.

Like Jake against his first worm, the cat had also overestimated his opponent. When the snowy bulge came in front of him, Crunch was spinning so fast and had gained so much kinetic energy that the tip of his tail was slowly beginning to unscrew. His extendable tail had grown several meters longer due to the centrifugal force and looked as if it might snap off at any moment. In fact, Crunch was already feeling a bit dizzy...

Because of this, he had nearly forgotten about the Snowworm that was about to devour him and when the jaw full of sharp teeth opened wide to swallow him whole, what was bound to happen happened.

BANG!

A sphere weighing 2.5 tons and covered with long bristly hair as hard as diamond smashed sideways the wide open mouth of the monster with the inertia of a speeding boeing. Hundreds of broken fangs flew along with quite a few black hairs, but most shocking was the shattered chitin exoskeleton that flew in all directions.

The Snowworm's brain, which was already not that big, was violently shaken in its cranial box and imploded at once, when hundreds of long sharp black hairs pierced it at the same time. It was the result of Living Fur. Crunch was able to control, extend and even pull out his hair to attack or perform all sorts of feats upon impact.

Because of its sheer weight, the monster didn't soar through the sky, and the lower half of its body remained buried under the snow. However, by the time its disfigured and bloody mouth collapsed onto the icy dune where Crunch was standing, the Digestor was as good as dead.

"Nice Job, Crunch and I mean it. Jake gave him an appreciative thumbs up as he admired the result. He clearly didn't want to be the guy on the receiving end of that hit.

Instead of prancing proudly around after receiving a praise from his master for his overwhelming victory, Crunch released his breath suddenly and his tail about to leave the ground lost its anchor and he deflated in the air, propelled in all directions like a leaky balloon. For a creature of almost 3 tons with no wings, it was almost as spectacular as the previous attack.

If there was another one that was incapable of strutting about, it was the Orange Turkey. He had made the mistake of staying nestled in the cat's fur and even though he had gotten out in time, he was now paying the price for his laziness, vomiting his last meal on the sidelines.

The only one who was doing well was Melkree, but she was feeling cold again.

Once Crunch was back on his feet and brimming with confidence, the group set off again and Jake and his cat set about slaughtering the Snowworms with increasing efficiency. To this duo, these huge armored worms were nothing more than prey yielding plenty of Aether and experience.

In two hours, Jake and Crunch killed almost a hundred of them and for the first time Jake began to reap the benefits of this winning streak.

These Snowworms, though slow and limited, had one redeeming quality and that was their size. With equal Aether stats, their massive bodies contained significantly more Aether than other smaller Digestors. On top of that, their stats were heavily biased towards Strength and Constitution and the impact on their stats was inevitably felt.

During those two hours, Jake's Aether Strength and Constitution went from 1000 or so to over 1200. It may not seem like much, but each point was harder to earn than the last and these Digestors were only Rank 5. Compared to the hundreds of goblin and orc Digestors on the previous floor that had only given him a few points, the choice was quickly made.

Melkree and the Orange Turkey watched them fight with an envious look on their faces, but what could they do? Was it their fault that they were too weak to participate? For Melkree especially, it was terribly frustrating, but she was basically a tree and it would never have occurred to her that one day she might feel jealous for not having to risk her life.

All she could do was focus on healing her Tree body to mature it back to its previous form. Even though her new sapling was intact, she had lost her entire body and a good chunk of her spirit to Urul. It was only because she could be reborn into a seed that she was still alive.

Jake in her situation would be dead or his damaged soul would be lingering somewhere in the Dungeon, unable to restore the lost memories. Even if somehow he had kept his Soul intact, without any unscathed cells from his original body, he would have been left with only possession to find a new body for himself.

Jake and Crunch fought for another hour after that and the Snowworms grew stronger and stronger, their Aether levels slowly approaching those of a Rank 6 Digestor. Rank 6 Digestors had Aether stats around 1000, which was the standard for a Fourth-Ordeal Evolver.

At this point, even Crunch began to struggle to defeat his opponents, and Jake surprised himself by having to use Air Blades with a power level nearing that of the one used to defeat his first Snowworm.

Still, Jake was thrilled. It meant they were on the right track.