

Oracle 590

Chapter 590 - The Oracle Guardians Are Here

Tens of thousands of kilometers off, a huge Black Cube supposedly invisible was orbiting right above a gigantic spiral rocky peak whose top was buried in this thick layer of stormy clouds. The colossal technological jewel was not exactly stationary, but it kept coming back to the same point, as if the flying object was patrolling in a well-defined circular trajectory.

Inside, a glorious Oracle City, flagship and embodiment of the Oracle's supremacy, had lost all its former grandeur and majesty. Once a place of pleasure and speculation for Evolvers lucky enough to access the Oracle Playground, this expensive sanctuary was now a mess.

All the mansions, hotels, stores, and other essential buildings had been wiped out. The only exception was the Transportation Tower in the center, and the huge colored cubes positioned equidistantly around it.

Amidst the ruins, these cubes glowed faintly with a faint ruby, sapphire, emerald, or amber radiance, reminding any remaining survivors that this was once a prosperous city.

The most confusing part was that there was not just one ruined city inside this cube. In fact, like a certain Dungeon, there were many floors. Instead of the fake sunny sky once visible in the Oracle City, a flat, smooth ceiling forged from Oranium served as the base for another similar city.

In total, the immense Black Cube had several dozen Oracle Cities that were intrinsically similar, but also fundamentally different. At this moment, these differences could not be seen since everything had been destroyed, but by excavating the rubble it was still possible to detect some clues.

These different crumbling Oracle Cities served the same purpose: to welcome Evolvers to feast, rest, invest, but most of all to spend their freshly earned Aether. Few Evolvers were lucid enough to invest in these places, but those who did were given a springboard for expansion on B842 and a steady source of income.

The biggest distinction between these Oracle Cities lay in one thing: they were not intended for the same clientele. All of them were accessible from the Oracle Playground, but not all aliens had the same habits and customs, and their morphologies and sizes varied greatly from one species to another.

The smallest of these Oracle Cities seemed to have been built for Lilliputians or at least species of comparable size, while the highest layer had an excessively high ceiling, very clearly dedicated to a population that wouldn't pass through conventional doors.

However, these ruined cities, vestige of the Oracle's supreme authority, were not devoid of life...

If one listened carefully, it was possible to hear a teeth-chattering hubbub, a dissonant mixture of shrill cackling and blood-curdling squealing. If you opened your eyes, though, you could see hell...

Grey batrachian skinned monsters as far as the eye could see. Some of them were covered with a silver chitin exoskeleton harder than steel, while others had more conventional appearances, but had their place in the most creative nightmares.

The reason why the light given off by the intact Cubes was so weak was because tens of thousands of these monsters were currently swarming on the surface of these, greedily absorbing the minute traces of Aether that leaked off them.

While this Black Cube and its Oracle Cities seemed destined to wither away until the last Cube in these ruins was completely extinguished, their Aether Core vampirized from their last ounce of Aether, something happened.

The Yellow Cube atop one of the Transportation Towers emitted a blinding flash of light comparable to a supernova. The thousands of Digestors crawling on top of it shook nervously, their shrill cackling resuming in earnest.

The attention of the sluggish monsters nearby was also drawn and they all began to flock to the light simultaneously with an insatiable fire in their silver eyes, like suicidal moths flying towards a flame.

The brightness intensified again and a huge blast of energy blew away all the Digestors and rubble in a five hundred meter radius. Oddly, the Transportation Tower remained intact, but one more person stood on the platform atop it.

Nearly five meter high, its torso had six arms, one of them holding an energy shield covering two-thirds of its body, while another arm carefully held the pommel of a blade still in its sheath. The other four arms were crossed, displaying his profound disinterest in this mission.

The silvery-metallic suit of unknown material was as usual, with bluish lines of light drawing together thousands of incomprehensible runes. The helmet vaguely resembled those of the ancient Greek phalanxes, but the space leaving the face visible had been replaced by a kind of opaque black liquid.

No doubt, it was an Oracle Guardian. And a rather strong one at that! The weakest in their hierarchy had only four. Even Garos, the Oracle Guardian Captain serving the Overseer Oros was no exception.

The Oracle Guardian looked around the devastated Oracle City and growled loudly. His snort alone, shook the Tower and the sound wave spread to the other side of the city until it hit the Black Cube's walls, forming ripples on its surface.

All Digestors on the scene, regardless of rank, promptly imploded after being hit by the sound blast. Those who were a little more reactive or able to fly tried to escape, but only those on the edge of the Black Cube or near an Orange Cube managed to escape in time.

After purging the Black Cube of its unwanted squatters, the Oracle Guardian scanned the Black Cube for survivors before remembering that he had just eliminated any chance of there being any after his dispassionate snort.

"Oh... I overdid it. My bad... I hope Oros won't see this or I'll be demoted again." The alien frowned guiltily, but this was clearly not the first time this kind of mistake had happened.

"Still... I need to do the job I'm paid for."

The Oracle Guardian took a step forward and the next moment the ruined city beneath his feet had disappeared, replaced by the sidereal void and the distant landscape of a huge planet. Even from here,

he could see the hundreds of thousands of flying or free-falling Digestors that were trying to leave the ship, er, the Black Cube after his arrival.

Uncrossing his two lower pairs of arms, the alien clasped his hands behind his back in apparent nonchalance and reversed the force field allowing him to levitate. His body quickly began to plummet, and as soon as he entered the dense atmosphere of the mesosphere, his body was so fast that it ignited due to the friction with these molecules.

The top of the spiral rocky promontory soon appeared in his line of sight and it was obvious that the surviving Digestors were fleeing in that direction. Despite the urgency of his mission, the Oracle Guardian was in no particular hurry and did not attempt to artificially accelerate his fall. He saw the experience as a simple ride, calmly enjoying the scenery around him.

Nevertheless, even taking his time he soon hit the ground. The deafening crash formed a monstrous shockwave around the epicenter, and a crater hundreds of meters wide and dozens of meters deep replaced the conical mountain standing as the entrance to the Dungeon.

Refugees, creatures and other Evolvers exploring the Dungeon Digestor underneath were the direct victims, as a cataclysmic earthquake interrupted whatever they were doing at the time. Even the Digestors were no exception. The closer a floor was to the surface, the worse it was.

"Obviously a newborn." The alien chuckled jadedly as he stomped on the floor. "Otherwise, it wouldn't be so stupid as to erect such an unnatural mountain over its kingdom. As if it couldn't live without a hat... At least I guess my mission makes sense now. Destroying newborn Dungeon Digestors and snatching their nexuses has always been my guilty pleasure."

As the lone Oracle Guardian was about to make his way into the Dungeon Digestor, several huge Digestors got in the way. Glancing at them expertly, he remained unfazed until he caught sight of the creature at the very back.

At that moment, he uncurled his fingers from behind his back and drew his long sword. His opposite arm raised its shield, while the remaining four hands assumed different postures, each holding a different Aether Artifact.

"Seven Rank 11s and one Rank 12 Digestor. The alien listed solemnly. "Well, I underestimated your evolving speed, but that doesn't change my mission. On the contrary, it makes my presence even more indispensable. Well, I suppose you'll make a good warm-up."

As he prepared to engage in a fight of epic proportions, the Oracle Guardian looked up as he heard a whistling noise and smiled.

"I guess I won't be fighting alone this time." The warrior joked as he saw a shooting star crash a few feet away from him.

Next to its crater, this one wasn't worth mentioning. An arachnid creature with six pairs of legs and a shiny black abdomen crawled out of its little "hole" and stood at attention.

"Oracle Guardian Kokoon at your service."

The other Oracle Guardian could see that this was just a rookie from its deference, but even though his eyes smiled benevolently, his brain was cogitating at full speed.

'Why did Oros send another Oracle Guardian for a simple newborn Dungeon? Does he really think that my presence alone is not enough?'

Or maybe this addition wasn't planned in the first place....