

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

### Chapter 150 - Reunion

Since Jake supposedly had the highest Oracle Rank among his companions, finding them was actually quite simple. All he had to do was wish to join them as soon as possible and a suitable Path would be generated in response. The Path was calculated without any problem and his Shadow Guide dashed off in the right direction to show him the way.

Jake soon realized that his group had fled eastward in the direction of the nearest Oracle city. It was the same direction that Cho Min-Ho, Amy and many others had chosen a day earlier (B842 time zone).

Already resentful to start with, with his current intelligence he was not likely to forget Yerode and Lamine either. In addition to looking for his friends, he also checked the direction in which the two criminals had fled.

The fact that a Path had appeared was a rather good omen. It meant that their ranks had not surpassed his. Unfortunately, their speed and the fact that they had no dead weight with them ensured that he could not catch them unless he decided to abandon his group.

In just a few steps, Jake accelerated, quickly surpassing the speed of a race car. Even after losing the bonuses of his Throsgenian body, his physique had retained much of the benefits of all that physical training. Combined with his maxed-out Aether stats, this allowed him to accomplish such a feat.

Calmly, his breath barely quickening, Jake slalomed between the fleeing people, ignoring the aliens, humans and animals being captured by the flying Digestors. From time to time, if one of these monsters targeted him, he would perform a perfectly timed stunt to dodge and then slay the creature.

On two occasions, he saved humans on his way who hadn't yet participated in their first Ordeal, but after beheading the two Digestors that were attacking them, he immediately got back on his way, not caring about their thanks.

Jake had decent moral qualities, but he was ultimately relatively selfish. Beyond his loved ones, his heart did not have enough room for all mankind. If he could help, he would, but not if it jeopardized his own interests.

Minutes later Jake recognized the imposing silhouette of the giant lion that Crunch had joined before the Ordeal. The lion in question was even more massive than he remembered, a full-grown elephant arriving only at the withers.

All sorts of felines were clustered around it and none of these Flying Digestors dared to approach this carnivorous pack. Most of these lionesses, tigers, lynx and other leopards had grown well during their Ordeal and their vertically slit pupils sparkled with cleverness.

The lion that led them stood proudly with its head raised to the sky with dignity. Every once in a while, if a Digestor came too close to its Pride, it would emit a devastating roar, powerful enough to be heard for kilometers around; its immediate effect causing the creature to retreat.

Jake inspected the group of felines in search of his own cat, but found no felines that resembled him, even considering the possible

large gain in size. Calculating a new Path in search of Crunch, he discovered that Crunch was in the same direction as the rest of his own group.

It was rather surprising that the cat took such an initiative on his own. No matter how his Ordeal had gone, the animal had obviously benefited.

Going around the pack of felines, Jake continued to run towards his friends. Finally after a few more minutes of chasing, he spotted them after climbing a sand dune.

A few kilometers away from him, he recognized without any difficulty with his Perception the hair of Sarah, as well as the black mass corresponding to his own cat. The difference was that the black mass corresponding to his cat was rather the size of a Tibetan mastiff.

From the top of his dune Jake could see that they were being harassed by a dozen or so flying Digestors. Their wingspan was smaller than the ones he had slaughtered near the Red Cube, and his group seemed capable of handling them, as evidenced by the corpses of Digestors lying behind them.

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Enya, the Princess in question, was easily recognizable, even from a distance, with her long pink hair and red satin dress. The young woman and the other nobles seemed nervous, leaving their armoured guards to deal with the threat from the air.

With the help of their halberds, the warriors in charge of their protection were skewering the creatures one by one, gradually reducing their numbers and the threat they posed. None of the guards dared to pick up the Aether from the defeated monsters. From time to time, a nobleman would approach the remains when he had the chance, trying to monopolize the reward for himself alone.

In any case, the quarrels of an alien faction did not concern him unless it had a direct impact on him or his loved ones. Contracting his thighs, he disappeared from the top of the dune, leaving behind him a slight shock wave.

He reappeared at the bottom of the dune a few dozen meters further down, lifting a sand geyser. He then sprinted back towards his group, splitting the sand in half like an underwater torpedo. In just a few tens of seconds, after having eliminated and avoided a few more Digestors, he finally joined them.

Recognizing the sand comet heading towards them, Will and Kyle sighed with relief, while Sarah and another prepubescent teenager immediately turned their attention back to the Digestors circling above them.

Stopping in front of them, Jake slashed the few remaining Digestors, but these monsters had good survival instincts. After slicing up a few of their fellows, the remaining flying aliens flew away after cawing one last time.

The armored knights of the faction beside them paused for a brief instant, watching the newcomer with suspicion. Enya gasped as she recognized him. Even though several months had passed during her Ordeal, she didn't forget those she had made a deal with. Her secret weapon, which she hadn't used until now, was precisely the gun Jake had sold her.

If Jake knew what the young woman was thinking, he probably would have argued that with his new stats, a bazooka was probably necessary to be considered a secret weapon. He now regarded his old guns as children's toys. By throwing pebbles, he could probably hurt just as much.

A good rifle sniper could probably do the trick by aiming at soft tissue like the eye, but he doubted that a bullet could pierce his skull, even if it was aimed right at his forehead. It might stun him or crack his skull, but kill him in one blow? It certainly couldn't.

He still had an assault rifle that he had never used before, but now he knew that it wouldn't be enough against a high-ranking Digestor or Evolver. After nodding to the pink-haired Princess to show he hadn't forgotten her, Jake inspected his own group.

Will, Kyle and Sarah hadn't changed much. They were all leaner and more muscular, but only he and Kyle had gained significant muscle mass, Will having operated as a scribe for much of his Ordeal. Sarah had the physique of a top-level crossfit woman, but that was what it took to have a chance of surviving in the Mirror Universe.

As for his cat Crunch, if he didn't have the same silly face characteristic of Himalayan persian cats, he probably wouldn't have recognized him.

In addition to being as big as a mastiff, his fur was thicker and bushier than ever. The long black hairs shone like razor blades and looked as rough and stiff as the spines of a hedgehog. The time for petting was over.

Alas, when the faithful cat recognized his master, he proceeded to rub himself against his legs as usual. The rubbing of the hair against his calf and thigh ripped the fabric of his trousers in an

instant, while the rubbing against his skin caused some sparks to sparkle and an unpleasant screeching sound to be heard.

Struck dumb, Jake realized that there was nothing normal about his own body anymore either. He stooped down slightly to pet his cat and was surprised to discover that by applying a little more pressure, the hair remained flexible and soft to the touch. However, this was probably only true for him.

As for the teenager accompanying them, Jake had never seen him before. However, after looking at his face a little more closely, he realized that it was actually Tim.

In one Ordeal, the five-year-old boy had more than doubled his age.