

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

### Chapter 174 – The Slug (part 2)

As soon as Jake had a moment's respite, he made the monster pay for its mistake with a one stroke attack. While the Digestor's sight was still obscured by its shield-shaped crossed arms, Jake slashed the blades and thorns protruding from the shield to clear a path, then stabbed it in the middle towards what he thought was the creature's head.

His arm lit up with Red, Orange, and Yellow, and as if the time had just speeded up, the arm suddenly stretched out, letting out the sound of a whip crack. Also guiding the Sharpness Grey Aether on the tip of its machete, the blade easily pierced the metal plates forming the monster's arms, and a split second later punctured the creature's eye and brain.

The Digestor stood still for a moment, then collapsed backwards when Jake pulled out his blade. Still in a precarious situation, Jake absorbed the monster's Aether, which he spent once again to increase his Intelligence by an additional 2 points.

The headache diminished another notch and although it wasn't yet perfect, he was out of the critical phase. After eliminating the small fry and the key fighter, Jake was finally starting to find his rhythm and regain his confidence.

Battling humans or Digestors were two very different experiences. Facing humans, you could still train yourself by practicing various

martial arts. The human anatomy was generally well known. Not everyone was a doctor, but it was easy to locate vital organs such as the heart, lungs, liver or genitals.

With the Digestors, aliens and even some animals in general, predicting their anatomy and weak points was much more risky. His Scan lvl 3 did not currently provide this information, providing only sketchy information.

There were no martial arts to effectively defend and counter these creatures. A tactic that worked on one could be completely ineffective on another. These monsters were also impervious to fear or other limiting negative emotions.

A fight against a Digestor was always a fight to the death.

However, he was beginning to realize that he had made more progress than he had imagined. Those Digestors that seemed so terrifying to him before the Ordeal, and that he wasn't sure he could dominate a few seconds earlier, weren't so terrible after all.

The supposedly most dangerous Rank 5 didn't seem to be suitable for dealing with balanced and fast fighters like Jake. As long as he kept his distance from the slug, he didn't have much to fear.

The real danger in the end was the Bugs. A sting would probably be fatal, while their speed remained difficult to follow even after his Agility had reached 200 points.

The initial difficulty was getting to them, but the problem was partially solved now that the four insects had been ordered to attack him at all costs. Less than a second after finishing the humanoid Digestor, the four mosquitoes were already on him.

Focusing the Sharpness Aether on the cutting edge of his blade, Jake intercepted the first insect with his machete. Due to their initial speed, the two severed halves of the mosquitoes continued on their way without slowing down on either side of Jake.

The slug emitted another long, high-pitched wail after this failure and the mosquitoes began to swirl cautiously again shortly afterwards as if they had just received a new instruction. Regardless, Jake was not one to miss opportunities.

By the time the other three flying insects regained altitude, he managed by jumping to catch one of the Digestors in the air. His machete sliced through the air above his head and the lower half of the creature and two wings were immediately separated from the rest of the body.

With the flying Digestors high in the air, he took the opportunity to free his backpack from his shoulders and then removed the assault rifle he had never used before. He would have preferred to refrain from using his bullets, but at the speed at which these Digestors were gaining in strength and resistance, he was not sure that these firearms would be useful for much longer.

If he had been able to find a few rocks, he was confident that he could headshot these mosquitoes with a few good throws. The problem was that he was not sure that this would be enough to kill them and that apart from grass and small shrubs there was nothing else on this plain.

The pebbles could not be strengthened by his Aether at this distance and he was not confident that he could break their metallic chitin exoskeleton by brute force alone.

Taking a deep breath, he pointed the assault rifle at the slug first. He was certain that the mosquitoes would be on him in no time if he

decided to rush the Rank 5, but if he did that he was exposing himself to very real risks. That acid vomit didn't exactly fill him with confidence.

The Oracle Path ensuring his survival was not indicating any particular danger, the Shadow Guide remaining motionless, but that was the result of the Oracle System's inability to include the Digestors in its calculations.

He felt that by using repeated scanning, it should be possible to predict their movement, but since the information obtained was limited, it was obvious that it was not so easy for his bracelet to obtain crucial and up-to-date information about these creatures.

The little information that the lvl 3 scan had revealed simply matched the information contained in the Oracle's database that his rank allowed him to access.

TATATATATA!

The bullets embedded themselves in the sticky skin covering what Jake thought was the head. His accuracy was exceptional, despite the fact that his one-handed shooting posture was ridiculously non-academic. This was due to his very high Agility and Perception as well as the short distance separating him from the monster.

Hearing the slug screaming in pain, Jake thought for a brief moment that his assault rifle would be able to finish it off, but he soon sobered up. The bullets penetrated a few inches into the monster's skin, but no silver blood oozed from the wounds.

Worse, a few seconds later the bullets gradually rose to the surface before falling to the ground, like when someone tries to stick his finger into a fat belly. The skin had definitely been pierced, but the

clotting was almost instantaneous. A few seconds later, the slug was completely healed as if it had not been shot at all.

'Fuck!' Jake cursed.

Focusing his attention on the mosquitoes instead, he sprayed them with bullets with his assault rifle, aiming as best he could, but the insects were so fast that most of the bullets missed. Only the mosquito that had been badly wounded before was shot. Stunned by a bullet in the skull, the insect fell to the ground like a stone and Jake finished it off by crushing its skull with his foot.

If the other Mosquitoes didn't want to come down, he had only two possible plans left: to flee or to physically attack the slug. His instincts told him that attacking the slug would be a bad idea and he didn't intend to gamble his life on a coin toss.

Hu vft gmpevo urmpev oaqu dmz Szfzv om euo fjfw jaov Waii frt Czprhv frwjfw. Bpo lmquvmj, bplo fl vu jfl ovarcare fgmpo iufsare, vu duio val salamr gipzzut.

[ Careful Jake! Looks like you've been poisoned. ] Xi warned him with an alarmed voice.

'But when?'

Jake replayed the last actions and came to the only possible conclusion. The mosquitoes hadn't touched him, neither had the slug. The flying insects had a clearly identified poison from their proboscis or the ends of their legs and wings. It couldn't have been them.

Since it could only be the slug, he logically associated his vision impairment with the gunshot wounds he had inflicted on the creature. As he scrutinized the creature more carefully, he noticed a multitude of open pores on the Digestor's viscous skin.

Gas? That could explain why the other insects were flying so high. Drawing the appropriate decisions, Jake exhaled the air from his lungs, and then, with empty lungs, he sprinted towards the Oracle Shelter. His vision became increasingly blurry as his limbs grew heavier, but his great Constitution and Vitality were not to be underestimated.

This poison did not appear to be of the lethal type like that of some snakes or insects. The objective seemed to be to paralyze the victims and if that was all it could do, he could escape from them without any problem. Uncorking his gourd full of fresh Digestor blood, he gulped down all the contents to the point where he felt like puking.

Because it was Grade 3 blood, his Constitution and Vitality instantly quadrupled and this gave him the energy he needed to fight the effect of the poison.

While the Mosquitoes were reluctant to pursue him by abandoning the Slug, Jake kept speeding up, disappearing soon after into the tall grass in the face of frustrated and helpless Digestors.

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