

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 175 - New Mission

Jake certainly hadn't said his last word. However, he did know when he was at a disadvantage. Maybe an opportunity would have come along eventually or a few lucky shots would have allowed him to reach the other Flying Digestors, but he could not guarantee it.

Just for that alone, he did not regret refusing to absorb Lucia's Myrmidian bloodline. Simply running away with his tail between his legs would probably have caused him to lose 20% of his stats considering the strength of the Myrmidian pure blood.

To avoid the inconvenience, he would have been forced to fight until victory or death ensued. This severely limited his options, and for a rational person like him it was a risk he refused to take.

After sprinting for several minutes without stopping, he finally slowed down to catch his breath. With his Aether Strength and Agility at 200 points and a stamina quadrupled thanks to the Digestor's blood, he had briefly reached 700 kilometers per hour.

It was an exhilarating feat, where Jake could clearly feel the air resistance at that speed. The sound barrier wasn't that far away.

The problem was that his actual Constitution was only 130 points with the bonus of 30 Yellow Crystals. Digestor's blood quadrupled his Constitution and Vitality, but it should not be forgotten that these stats were compound stats made up of other variables.

As much as his stamina had increased substantially, his body toughness hadn't changed much. This meant that after running at twice the speed that his bones, muscles and tendons were able to support, they were not in such great shape.

His high Vitality ensured good tissue regeneration, but it would take several hours, even with Digestor's blood, to heal such injuries. Again, this was a risk he could not take.

The only good news was that the paralytic poison had been properly removed from his system. With a liver and a metabolism that was 40 times more efficient than normal, he could metabolize this type of dangerous molecule very quickly.

Of course, that was only if his liver and kidneys were intact and to the extent that these foreign molecules could be metabolized by him. If this was not the case, the toxins would be expelled by vomiting, sweating, urinating as well as breathing.

Dpzare ovulu duj qarpoul md ulhfnu Jfcu vft guur ljufoare vufsaiw frt rmo mriw guhfplu md val vaev zprrare lnuut vufoare pn val gmtw om ouqnuzfopzul ovfo jmpit gu iuovfi om f rmzqfi vppfr.

His body was covered with an abnormally acidic, foul-smelling sweat, and he felt as if he had just passed through a night with a fever of 40°C, although this had never happened to him before.

Finally, he had one last trouble to which he saw no obvious solution right now. The problem of his overloaded Aether Stats and his persistent headache. It wasn't as intense as a little earlier, but it was still extremely painful. It was preventing him from thinking as usual and it was getting harder and harder to control the Aether excess.

Since he couldn't be sure that he hadn't been chased, Jake continued to trot at a more reasonable speed (400 km/h) towards the rest of

his group, tracking them with the help of his Shadow Guide. When he was certain that the Digestors had given up chasing him, he took a short break and used the opportunity to pull out the 100 empty crystals in his possession.

Originally, there were 30 Red, Orange and Yellow crystals respectively with the remaining ten crystals dedicated to intelligence. This configuration was no longer possible if he wanted to keep his Aether.

To immediately relieve his headache Jake guided 50 points of Aether of Strength and Agility into the empty crystals. With his mental fatigue, the procedure took him a few minutes, after which his Aether Strength and Agility dropped to 150 points.

It was still high, but his headache was almost gone, as if the clamp around his skull had just been removed. Now that Jake could think normally again, he set off once more, this time reflecting seriously on his next plan.

Jake didn't have the arrogance to say that he would never lose focus. All he needed was a brief moment of sleep or some strong emotion for him to lose the surplus of Aether that his body contained.

He could certainly continue to increase his Aether of Intelligence to increase his mental strength and cognitive abilities, but in the medium term it was the same as a snake biting its own tail.

Using the metaphor of the bottle, if the mind acted as a pressure stopper forcing the excess Aether into the bottle, strengthening the mind with the Aether of Intelligence was like saying that the liquid in the bottle was used to get more liquid in and to keep it in the bottle.

It was true that it was the role of the liquid (the Aether) to strengthen the bottle (the body) and the cap (the mind), but at the source, it

was all just Aether. There was bound to be a point of no return where the Spirit itself would no longer be able to contain the Aether composing it and at the origin of its power. After all, his Soul was not yet considered stable according to the Oracle's definition.

In the short term the best plan was to get hold of more unused crystals to store his Aether overflow in order to get his Aether stats back to normal. Finding an Aetherist would be ideal, but they didn't grow on trees.

As if the Oracle System had heard his laments, the Coaching feature of his bracelet that hadn't manifested itself since the last Ordeal popped out a new mission suddenly.

[Mission: Save Enya and Esya Velseyel.]

[Potential Reward: Their gratitude/friendship, Aether Crystals.]

[Note: Time is running out! They must be rescued within the next hour or their chances of survival will become unpredictable.]

Jake grunted inside as he discovered the mission. For sure, the Coach played his role well this time by proposing a mission that represented a real opportunity for him. The rub was that there were certainly other, simpler ways to get the crystals. Starting with the tens of thousands of refugees who probably had no use for their already consumed crystals.

By now Jake had figured out that the Oracle System wasn't that impartial. His goals remained unclear to him and Xi. On the surface, this mission seemed to serve his interests, but it was also likely that the Oracle wanted these two young women to survive longer. As if their time hadn't come yet.

The only familiar name was Enya, and the only person he knew by that name was the young woman with pink hair. Esya must have been the other woman who looked very much like her.

It also made Jake realize that the Oracle could give his name and surname without his permission to other people under the pretext of a vulgar mission. Even if it was to save them, who's to say it would always be with such good intentions?

With his running speed, he finally managed to catch up with Sarah who had halted to await his return. Carrying Will and Crunch wasn't difficult, but it wasn't so easy for a woman of her size either. Especially with a bad grip.

When they saw him arrive, the group was startled, but their worry was soon replaced by relief. They didn't feel serene after leaving him behind all alone.

'You're not hurt?' Sarah inspected him from head to toe as she circled his body.

'I'm okay, but I have an emergency right now.' Jake explained concisely. 'Take Will and Crunch back to the Oracle City, I have another Coach mission to complete now or it will be too late.'

He promised to explain the rest in detail on his return, but fortunately they were all very understanding and did not insist.

There was no sun visible with these black clouds loaded with red lightning, but it was getting late. The luminosity had begun to fade.

With his Perception, as long as there was some light Jake could see just fine, but for Will it was far too risky. Crunch was the only one who might be more in his element at this hour, but what he needed the most to succeed in his mission was speed. Crunch would only slow him down.

As for Sarah, she was free to go out hunting again or join him after escorting them back. They were pretty close to the Shelter, so it would only take her a few more minutes to make the round trip if she wanted to.

The group then bid each other farewell and Jake vanished into the tall grasses in a gust of wind.