

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 183 - Fighting the Horde (part 2)

The Kyle in question was both admirable and pitifully funny. Tears and snot were streaming from his eyes and nose as he shook his sword back and forth like a madman to fend off the Digestors who wanted him dead. His body was already covered with multiple wounds and the monsters had already tasted him a few times, as evidenced by the pieces of thighs, calves and trapezoids he was missing. He was in a pitiful state.

'Damn, if you're not sure you're going to survive and you're terrified, then what the hell are you doing in the middle of a horde of Digestors?' Jake thought silently with a momentary urge to laugh.

Figuring that Sarah couldn't fare any better, he dived underground to check on her, leaving Kyle to fend for himself. If his twirls kept the same vigor, he could hold on for a while longer. In any case, he was already hitting harder and faster than before, proof that the Aether of his victims weren't wasted.

Sarah wasn't much stronger than Kyle despite their difference in character. However, she had hunted a herd of Digestors with Jake earlier, and that was enough Aether for her to maximize her Strength and significantly improve her Agility.

Considering the fact that she had to his surprise a much better sword technique than the Playboy and a Myrmidian sword of excellent quality, it was not surprising that she did better than him.

With each Digestor killed, her victorious blood-red metal blade would become stronger and sharper as it stole a fraction of the Aether from its victim and the atmosphere around it by obeying Aether laws too complex for him.

To be honest, Jake was a little envious. If Sarah knew what he was thinking when he was the one walking around with a liter of pure Myrmidian Blood, she probably would have hit him despite her physical inferiority.

In fact, Jake could perfectly forge a similar Myrmidian weapon by following the protocol he had observed with his own eyes in the underground crypt of the Myrmid Temple.

Hmjusuz, Szfzv jfl rmo prvfzqut uaovuz, usur ovmpev lvu lpdduzut iull luzampl arbpzaul. Buhfplu md ovu qmznvmimeahfi tadduzurhul guojuur qfiul frt duqfiul, vuz gmtw Sozureov lofo lozpeeit om ukhuut 15-20 nmarol, jvuzu Jfcu frt Kwiu vft uflaiw zuffhvut 30 mz qmzu. Art ao jfl gw vfsare f qplhpifz, hzmlldao nvwlaypu, rmo ovu ovar frt dzfai nvwlaypu ovfo qfrw jmqur lnmzout frt lmevo.

The direct consequence was that even with her Aether Strength maxed out, her actual strength was at least 30% less than Jake and Kyle's. This limited not only her speed, but also the explosiveness of her blows.

The humanoid Digestors of Rank 4 of whom Jake could stop the brutal charges with difficulty were simply too big, powerful and heavy for her to neutralize them head-on.

Her fighting style was calibrated accordingly, favoring mobility and technique. But in a place where the density of Digestors was so high, that it was impossible to set foot anywhere without stepping on one of them, it was almost impossible to really show her talent.

In the end, she slaughtered as many Rank 2 and 3 as she could, but each Digestor of Rank 4 was like a needle in her foot that she couldn't get rid of, shoving and destabilizing her regularly, which gave openings to the other Digestors.

Jake decided to give them a hand by targeting the larger Digestors and erecting rock obstacles in their path, sometimes even imprisoning them directly in the ground, which suddenly became soft and viscous like quicksand. His Extrasensory Perception had already exceeded 60 points.

When Sarah and Kyle discovered the magic act with their mouths wide open in surprise, they gathered their courage and finally began to fight with hope and confidence. Especially Kyle, whose tears of terror had been replaced by tears of joy.

Jake threw him a flask of fresh Digestor blood to limit the worsening of his injuries. As for his own knees, they were no longer hurting, but the prognosis was bad. With his Perception it was simple enough for him to judge the state of his body.

It wasn't just the bone that had been destroyed. If only that, he could heal completely in a day or two with fresh Digestor Blood and his own Vitality. The problem was the ligaments and menisci that had been shredded.

The human genes did not guarantee a complete regeneration of these parts of the body, and most of all not correctly. In order for the ligaments and muscles to regenerate properly, it was essential to reattach them in the right places to guide the healing process.

Al dmz ovu gmru aoluid, ad vu jfl rmo hfzudpi, ovu cruu hmpit laqniw hfihadw ar ovu jzmre nmlaoamr, iufSare vaq jaov f zaeat frt rmo Suzw qmgaiu cruu bmaro. Tvarcare md ovu ojm hpinzaol, Jfcu duio f qpztuzmpl zfeu arSftu vaq, frt ovu Auovuz ar ovu foqmlnvuzu f

vprtzut quouz l fjfw dimhcut tazuhoiw om vaq om duut val Auovuz lofol. Tvu Mwzqatafr gimmt jfl bplo ovfo emtiw.

Frustrated and worried about the future of his legs, he turned his attention to the Digestors in front of him to take his mind off it.

'If I have enough Aether, I can pay for anything and I seem to remember that there is a huge Green Cube in the Oracle Shelter for this kind of care. It'll probably cost a fortune, but at least there's hope.'

At worst, he could just smash his own knees again if the healing was abnormal. It was the kind of thing a normal human would never dare to do, but the idea came to Jake spontaneously without the slightest apprehension.

For an incalculable length of time, the group fought, continuing to exterminate Digestors after Digestors in total darkness. New monsters replaced the vanquished, until stronger Digestors, alerted by the carnage and the smell of blood, came in their turn. At this point, Jake's stats had soared to new heights and his Extrasensory Perception finally reached 100 points as well. His initial goal was well and truly achieved.

As the horde became more and more sparse, Jake noticed the many Humanoid Digestors of Rank 4 approaching in the distance, as well as the swarm of flying insects in various shapes that could only be other Digestors of similar or higher Rank.

Floating in the air several kilometers away from them, Jake could make out a strange butterfly-like bug with silvery, razor-sharp legs. The creature was silent, but the Digestor horde attacking them was behaving more intelligently as the different types began to complement each other in formations.

The Fire-Spitters who hadn't had a chance to shine since the battle began were finally able to show their innate talent for bombing and the battle took another turn where Sarah and Kyle had to retreat in a hurry.

Now that the Digestors had cleverly regrouped, the two pink-haired sisters could no longer hunt either and found themselves exposed to the butterfly's ruthless judgment.

Jake had been surprised to find that they hadn't run away, but it had warmed his heart. At least it proved that princesses or not, they weren't ungrateful.

Syparoare fl vu lhzpoaraxut ovu Bpoouzdiw Daeulomz, Jfcu ovmpevo gfhc om ovu Sipe hmrozmiare movuz Daeulomzl. Sarhu ovu Sipe jfl mriw f ifzsf fhmztare om ovu lhfr, ao jfl imeahfi om allpqu ovfo ao hmpit usmisu arom lmquovare uilu. Gasur ovu hfiq frt arouiiaeuro rfopzu md ovu Bpoouzdiw, ao jfl rmo fglpzt om ovarc ovfo ao jfl f laqaifz lzzuepifz md f qphv vaevuz zfrc.

Realizing that this Digestor was at least Rank 6 and capable of controlling the horde, Jake suddenly had a bad feeling. The Silver Butterfly suddenly flapped its wings and a gust of wind hit the battlefield where they were.

Prepared, Jake simply dove underground to avoid the attack, but Sarah, Kyle, and the two sisters caught the wind in full force. The paralyzing powder inside had the effect of a lightning petrification spell. Just by touching their skins, Kyle, Sarah and the two princesses lost all feeling in their bodies and collapsed to the ground like wooden logs.

Not daring to come to the surface, Jake felt it was time to leave. Like an underground torpedo, Jake shot from comrade to comrade as fast

as he could, liquefying the ground beneath each of them and catching them on the way under.

In less than a second, although they were all tens of meters apart, Jake had recovered them all. Unfortunately, the simple fact of touching them with his arms was enough to make him lose the sensation of his own hands, then his forearms a few seconds later.

In the end, he used his control of the earth to carry them underground, actively rubbing their bodies with dust and gravel to rid them of the paralyzing powder. A bit like a washing machine with sand instead of water. Not really recommended, but it was a good stripper.

Disappearing underground on his way to the Oracle City, Jake thought he was off the hook, but the horde kept tracking him, as if they could see him with their own eyes. The Butterfly was hovering exactly above him a few hundred meters above the ground, he could feel it.

Then eventually, the Butterfly uttered an abominable, out of tune whale call, strongly reminiscent of the dead Slug. Simultaneously, the horde of Digestors galloping and scurrying above him scattered as if a stink bomb had just been thrown at them.

Jake then felt a visceral sense of danger and accelerated sharply, using for a brief moment all the power of the blood and his new stats. A split second later, he was blown out of the ground in an explosion of earth and rock, the place he had fled from being reduced to a vast crater, the ground having been completely turned over.

At this place stood the Rank 7 Pterosaur Digestor and on his shoulder the Silver Butterfly silently staring at him.

‘Fuck!’ That was the only word that came to his mouth. A word he’d been saying regrettably far too often in the past few days.