

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 187 - Sharing the Booty

Only Kyle, who seemed too busy communicating with his Oracle AI and keeping track of his points, stayed away. Despite his apparent calmness, he was exhausted and a wince sometimes seized his face when a wrong movement awakened the pain in his wounds.

Jake patted his shoulder without saying a word to show him his moral support, then after telepathically checking his cat's thoughts, he used his control of Earth to slide to the Lion's side and begin his bargaining.

The Tiger, alerted by the movement of the ground, straightened its head, its muzzle dripping with silvery blood. Then realizing it was only one of the humans they had just rescued, it refocused on savoring it.

Jake, who didn't have any universal translators, chose to connect his Aether to the Lion's to convey his intentions. The feline in question stood up abruptly with a slight growl as he sensed the intrusion of a foreign spirit, but when he realized it was only a means of communication he calmed down.

This allowed Jake to confirm that the Lion, strong as he was, had only recently awakened his Seventh Stat. His Aether remained confined within his body, but the quantities were frighteningly high. The Tiger's Aether control seemed better in comparison, with a more restrained flow.

The feline's body appeared like a sun in his mind when Jake used his Extrasensory Perception. Based on color intensity, the Aether Strength, Agility and Constitution of the Lion had exceeded 2000 points. It was such an absurd amount of Aether that Jake just couldn't understand how this was possible.

To have stats like that, this lion had probably been on B842 for months, if not years. Only the Oracle knew how many Ordeals he had participated in. Considering that the feline's body was considerably larger than that of a trained human, the difference in effective strength was even more terrifying. Even if Jake achieved the same Aether stats as the Lion, he was absolutely certain that he wouldn't stand a chance of winning in a head-on confrontation.

It was the same on Earth after all. Before they received their bracelets and discovered the existence of the Mirror Universe, every living being on Earth had an Aether density of 10 points. No sane human would have dared to face a lion with his bare hands even though their Aether stats were equivalent.

Swallowing his saliva in search of the right words, Jake opted for honesty. He explained the effect of Digestor blood on stamina and regeneration by transmitting some clear mental images, and then asked if he could fill his gourds.

The Lion looked at the huge carcass of the Digestor and concluded that a few liters more or less wouldn't make any difference. The feline could be considered more intelligent than a normal human, but his knowledge was that of a kindergarten child.

He had never been to school, had never handled any tools except for the bracelet on his paw, and was still having trouble communicating with his own Oracle AI. To have a human being able to communicate

with them and at ease with all these weird technologies was definitely a good thing.

Having been given his consent, Jake happily filled his gourds and bottles while whistling, remembering that he would surely need it very soon to heal his knees. Seeing that the Lion was conciliatory, Jake signaled to the rest of his group to join him to do the same.

Tvu Taeuz arouzpnout val duflo fefar jvur vu lfj ovu dmpz vppfrl bmar ovuq, gpo jvur vu talhmsuzut ovfo ovuw juzu mriw arouzulout ar f iaooiu gimmt, vu imlo arouzulo aqputafouiw.

Enya and Esya, who had lost their gourds when they were attacked by their former guards, had to bring themselves to contemplate the three Earthlings filling up with Digestor blood in silence.

Jake, the one who had saved them, had countless empty bottles and gourds, as if he had foreseen this situation from the start. The handsome man and the blonde woman at his side were equally well prepared.

Once all their bottles and gourds were full, the trio stared in frustration at the silvery blood that was still pouring from the victim's severed neck. Letting all that blood spill out would be a total waste.

Meditating for a few minutes in search of a solution, he finally came up with some ideas. For one thing, night gave way to dawn. Jake could feel that even though there was no visible sun, his body was radiating a pleasant warmth and he could feel a new source of Aether building up inside him.

This Aether came from infrared radiation, visible and ultraviolet light. The invisible radiation from the sun, filtered mostly by the

black clouds, was nourishing his body and making it stronger despite the fact that his biology was still that of an earthling.

‘Have I become a Kryptonian?’ Jake blurted out with an expression of disbelief.

Now that the battle was over, Jake had time to focus on his new sensations and abilities and was able to confirm that the Aether provided by the radiation was a controllable energy source that the Kintharians seemed able to catalyze to emit heat. There were undoubtedly more complex Aether manipulations to be done, but it was essential to keep in mind that he was still a novice in this field.

He didn’t need to be an expert to verify his plan. He could very well have used the uprooted trees to make a watertight barrel, but given the time it would have taken, he wasn’t sure it was worth the effort.

His current plan was simpler. Lift a mass of earth by telekinesis and then heat it to its melting point so that it turns into lava. After that, all he would have to do was mentally shape it to his liking and let it cool down.

Ir nzfhoahu, iadoare ovu qfl md ufzov nzmsut laqniu, gpo vufoare ao om quioare nmaro nzmsut om gu f zufi hvmzu. Tvu tfw jfl bplo guearrare frt ovu ouqnuzfopzul juzu qait. Rftafoamr frt ovuzqfi feafoamr juzu iaqaout, qfcare ao aqnmllagiu om nzmsatu urmpev vufo ar f lvmzo nuzamt md oaqu.

To achieve his goals, Jake had to learn to concentrate the radiation by using the sphere that defined the range of his Extrasensory Perception like a magnifying glass, then compress the matter to increase the number of collisions between atoms to force the temperature to rise.

When daylight rose completely, Jake, who was dripping with sweat, finally managed to make a black barrel with a vitrified appearance, but by that time the monster's silvery blood had long since stopped flowing.

Not demoralized, Jake asked for the remaining meat. The felines had been feasting for quite some time, and it wouldn't be long before the Digester's corpse attracted other creatures, and perhaps another even more ferocious horde.

The Lion and the Tiger tried to tow the remains of the Rank 7 back to the Oracle Shelter, but to no avail. The monster was just too heavy. A single liter of silvery blood weighed more than a ten kilos, which greatly limited the quantities that could be transported, full gourds or not.

Its bones also had a density ten times higher than that of heavy metals, and with the size of the corpse, this made the remains untransportable even for the Lion. Normally, this prey could have lasted them a few days, but this time the pack had to give it up.

So Jake happily stuffed his barrel with meat, not forgetting to retrieve a few other prime pieces, such as a portion of skin covered with translucent scales and the ends of the metamorphic legs frozen eternally in a scythe shape.

The felines, sitting on their rear, watched with interest as the human got busy, then understanding that they too could bring back some of the booty, the Lion and the Tiger set about separating the carcass into transportable pieces.

The Lion was not familiar with the concept of currency, but he was no stranger to it either after having partaken in several Ordeals.

Credits were used to purchase rewards, and the Aether contained in the bracelet had a similar role.

After interrupting Jake to ask a few questions in the form of grunts and growls, he finally realized that every single part of the Digestor was indeed precious and so ordered the rest of his pack to help them.

With the Lion's consent and help, Jake cut the dead Digestor into pieces and harnessed each feline with a quantity of skin, chitin, and scales that they could carry by using the rope in his bag. Crunch wasn't spared either, even though he was the one carrying the lightest load.

Leaving a good half of the remains behind for the scavengers, both humans and felines set off for the Oracle City with their loot. And when they finally caught a glimpse of the precipice a few minutes later, the sky showed a sign of clearing up for the first time.

The red lightning subsided, the black clouds thinned, and a ray of sunshine finally broke through the darkness. They were finally safe.