

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 194 - Recovery

Biting into his arm to stop himself from screaming again, Jake was huffing and puffing like a woman about to give birth during her contractions. About 10 seconds later, he forced himself to attend to his gaping wound.

If the knee started to heal again before he had put every bone, ligament and tendon back in the right place, he would have literally broken his leg for nothing. He wasn't sure he wanted to go through this experience for a third time.

His Aether Vitality stat was close to 250 points thanks to the influence of the Myrmidian blood during the night of battle. The immediate consequence was that clotting occurred in less than 10 seconds for a small lesion.

It would take longer for a wound of this size, but he could still see the blood thickening and clumping to the surface of the wound before his very eyes. There was no time to waste!

He cleaned the wound as quickly as he could by dabbing it with a suitable wipe, then cut open the skin with a scalpel and spread the two pieces of skin with two retractors to get a better view.

His increased dexterity shone through in these moments, as he was able to handle instruments stably and deftly using only two fingers. He could theoretically hold five different instruments at a time if he used both hands synchronously.

Once the wound was cleaned, Jake proceeded to explore the nature of his injuries. Without X-rays and normal visual acuity, it would have been almost impossible unless he was an experienced orthopedic surgeon, but with his high Perception and Intelligence, he was able to diagnose his knee much more easily than he had ever hoped.

By comparing the damaged part of his knee with the healthy parts, he had plenty of points of reference to compare himself to, and he set to work without further ado.

His Patellar tendon had been completely exploded by the bullet from Lamine's sniper along with his patella. The quadriceps tendon had held firm, but was only attached to the rest of his knee by a single filament. The only reason this remaining tendon had held was by virtue of his high Constitution. Because of it, that one piece of tendon was as strong as a piece of iron wire.

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Our modern feeding methods had rendered the animal parts from the muscle more valuable, while offal and connective tissue had been discarded. This created deficiencies in collagen and other derived proteins that compromised the health of the bone and cartilage system while speeding up aging.

These areas also had limited healing potential and slow metabolism once the growth was complete. Thanks to his current Vitality and Constitution, vascularization and metabolism were no longer an issue.

The real problem was providing the right nutrients for optimal healing. Aether could boost endurance and metabolism, especially energy, by boosting the body's output, but it could not yet create matter from scratch. Higher Encoding may have made this possible, but Jake didn't have any at the moment.

Fortunately, he had thought of everything. Before abandoning Will and the felines, he had remembered to take a few kilos of meat from the Rank 7 Digestor, but also a few pieces of bone that he intended to crumble before mixing them with the Digestor's blood.

If the healing was not done properly or was incomplete after all these efforts, he would just travel to New Earth in search of a specialized surgeon. With 3D organ printing, his knee could be replaced by making one from his cells. On Earth it would cost a small fortune, but on B842 it might be different.

Even more skillfully than an orthopedic surgeon with three decades of service, Jake reconnected the damaged tendons and tissues by clenching his teeth because of the pain bringing tears to his eyes.

Once out of the critical phase and with his fingers covered in his own blood, Jake uncorked one of the bottles full of lvl 7 Digestor blood, then forced himself to drink down half of the bottle in one go to boost his regeneration.

The Rank 7 blood was of a completely different caliber and Jake felt his body overflowing with vitality and energy like never before.

The patella that he had no way to maintain in the right position and the ligaments hanging by a thread began to thicken rapidly, while his blood stream was quickening and branching like in a speeded-up movie. New vessels were being made every few seconds, while the hole that had blown out his patella was closing before his eyes.

‘What the hell...’ Jake couldn’t stop murmuring in shock.

His Aether Vitality stat had temporarily exceeded 3000 points! His wounds were healing at 300 times their normal speed! And to say the least, the healing was going well.

After a long half hour, during which Jake remained in the same position waiting, drinking a few sips of Digestor blood every now and then, he realized that the pain had disappeared. That was almost a full week’s worth of convalescence for a normal human, but no patella would have looked this good after 7 days.

His original plan to drink powdered Digestor bone didn’t seem like such a good idea after all. ‘Maybe there are enough minerals in the blood?’ He theorized in an uncertain tone.

He then remembered that he could use his scanner to ascertain this and his hypothesis was soon verified. In addition to listing the various vitamins, minerals, and other enzymes and nutrients in the blood, whose ratios were so well balanced that it was frightening; he also confirmed that the Digestors’ Aetheric Code gave them the ability to consciously regenerate and change the shape of certain parts of their bodies.

Jake did not have a Digestor’s body and therefore did not have all of their abilities, but it still allowed his body to heal properly under the unconscious influence of Jake’s mind. He had a clear mental picture of what he expected from a normal knee, and the healing was done accordingly.

Just for that alone, the value of the blood of a Rank 7 Digestor was priceless and he hoped that Will would not be ripped off. His intuition was telling him that obtaining lvl 7 Digestor blood was not that simple and that they had been incredibly lucky last night.

This lion was clearly not a normal lion and must have roamed around on B842 for years before evolving to this point. In fact, his demonstration of power had left an even stronger impression on him than that of the dentrite alien.

Now that his knee was out of trouble, Jake decided it was finally time to remove the retractors to close the wound. He sutured the skin of his knee with a few deft movements and he was in such a good mood that he didn't even feel the needles pierce his flesh.

Exhausted by this barbaric surgery without anesthesia, Jake finally dozed off against the wall. It was only when Sarah tapped his shoulder an indeterminate amount of time later that he realized he had fallen asleep.

'How long was I asleep?' Jake asked, rubbing his eyes. Looking down at his knee, he saw that the blood spilled on the floor and his knees had been cleaned up.

'What a shitty survival instinct!' Jake cursed in his head. 'If they were my enemies, I would have died in my sleep...'

Seeing his gloomy face, Sarah easily guessed what was going through his head and couldn't help but giggle. The two princesses wanted to laugh too, but they just smiled politely instead.

The three young women's wounds had been properly sutured and dressed and just like Jake they had taken some Digestor Blood. If not for their tired faces and the tears in their clothes, it would have been hard to tell that they had narrowly escaped death.

'Only a few hours. It's almost noon.' Sarah finally said.

'Hmmm...'

After such a long nap, his knees were no longer hurting him and he felt it was time to test their solidity. In order not to put too much strain on his new knees, he got up with the help of the wall and his crutches before carefully putting one foot on the floor.

No pain.

He then put his second foot down and took a first step forward, then a second. No pain either! Jake then kicked and kneeled a few times before stomping on the ground with more power.

After testing his legs in every possible way, he had to face the facts. He was completely healed.