

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 239 - Soul Glyph

[Certain actions performed during the first round met the conditions for unlocking the Feats category in advance. Each of these Feats grant generous rewards and are free to be carried out throughout the participants' stay in the Sanctuary Bubble. Some of these exploits also have several Milestones corresponding to Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond].

[Feats accomplished during the first trial:]

[-Fish Hunter (Gold): 1000 fish exterminated.=| Next Milestone: 9763/10,000]

[-Shark Hunter (Gold): 1000 sharks exterminated =| Next milestone: 2438/10,000]

[-Cetacean hunters (Gold): 1000 cetaceans exterminated =| Next milestone: 1327/10 000]

[-Jellyfish hunter (Gold): 1000 jellyfish exterminated =| Next milestone: 1477/ 10 000]

[- Squid hunter (Silver): 100 squids exterminated =| Next milestone: 211/1000]

[...]

Jake thought the artificial voice would stop speaking quickly, but that was just the beginning. After a while, even he began to find the report boring. The voice was so monotonous and caustic that he was close to

falling asleep on the spot. Between two yawns, the list of his exploits continued to unfold, seemingly without end.

Each accomplished feat was rewarded according to the Milestone reached a significant amount of points. The Bronze Milestone awarded 100 points, while the Silver and Gold Milestones awarded 1,000 and 10,000 points respectively. He didn't know how many points he had, but his Oracle device would update his score after each new achievement.

Jfcu jfl zfovuz dzplozfout gw oval dazlo usuro, guhfplu tulnaou fii ovu luf qmrlouzl vu vft uiaqarfout, om ovu nmaro md guhmqare hmqniuouiw artadduzuro om ovulu nzutfomzl ovfo juzu plpfiiw f raevoqfzu dmz rmzqfi numniu, rmo mru md ovulu qmrlouzl vft tzmnnut f lareiu Auovuz daifquro.

Above all, his bracelet had been practically useless during this first event. The Oracle System seemed incapable of predicting anything inside this Sanctuary Bubble, as if it was out of bounds.

This explained the many difficulties he had struggled with in the beginning, but even switching to a prediction model based on his own senses, the truth was that at his level the Shadow Guide wasn't much better than his own reflexes.

Since the water was murky only a few meters away, his only visibility was from his Extrasensory Perception and with his current Intelligence he was more than capable of anticipating and predicting what these monsters were capable of if they entered his mental domain.

Beyond that, he was blind and so was the Oracle, unless he used his scanner extensively, whose range was limited to 50 meters. Without selecting targets, the cost in Aether of a multidirectional scan went up

to 50 points. It was a cost he could afford to spend, but it was out of the question.

So Jake had given free rein to his *désiré* for revenge by retaliating against all the creatures that had tortured or devoured him without getting the slightest particle of Aether. Fortunately, his Aether Intelligence, Perception and Extrasensory Perception as well as his Spirit Body had all made great progress. These stats being the most difficult to improve, he was overall quite happy.

As he wondered how he was going to gain Aether in his Ordeal, his eyes widened in shock when he discovered that the amount of Aether in his Aether Storage was increasing at an insane rate. The amount of Aether he was earning corresponded exactly to the number of points he had been awarded for his feats.

Meanwhile, the announcement of his exploits seemed to be almost complete. A few individual feats were referenced, but since he hadn't reached the corresponding Milestones, he couldn't verify what they corresponded to.

This feature was supposed to be unlocked later, or the objective of one of these exploits had to be reached for the feature to become available. In any case, all these points were a pleasant surprise for him who thought he was among the last to reach the island.

Yet, when he heard the continuation of the speech of the artificial voice, Jake almost got an eargasm.

'The heck?!'

[Special Achievements:]

[- Title: A Fish in Water (Gold): When you move in water, your hydrodynamics are increased by 100% and you can't get dehydrated.

It is obtained by surviving more than 7 days at sea without assistance or equipment, all without setting foot on land or a ship.]

At the time the Title was announced, the Aether around him suddenly condensed under the effect of an unknown mystical force and shaped into an intricate pattern resembling a kind of glyph. Unfortunately the pattern seemed too simple to match an Aetheric Rune, but that did not mean that there was none.

The Aetheric Runes contained in a Bloodline or the Aetheric Code were so tiny that they were undetectable and impossible to observe without alien technology far beyond that of Earth.

After a few seconds, the Glyph had taken shape, emitting a soft golden light. It then floated towards him, as if attracted to something, and when it touched his Soul, there was a flash of light and it was gone.

When Jake was able to open his eyes again, he didn't feel any particular difference, but the title A Fish in Water was now part of his passive skills. His Soul, which until then had been unattributed, now contained the words '1 Gold Soul Glyph', although the rest had not changed.

[It's amazing that you got a Soul Glyph so easily] Xi congratulated him warmly. [This will be extremely useful for your fourth Ordeal.]

'Oh ?'

He was curious, but this was no time to ask questions. Satisfied with the generosity of the Sanctuary Bubble, Jake was about to count his points when the artificial voice resounded again:

[-Taoiu: Anuk Ohufr Pzutfomz (Gmit): Ympz gmtw uqaol fr ukozuquiw aroaqatfoare fpzf om movuz luf hzufopzul, hfplare ovuq om msuzuloaqfou wmp. Ailm jmzcl fefarlo Esmisuzl jaov ovu

Bimmtiaru md f luf hzufopzu. Il mgofarut gw ukouzqarfoare fii Ohufr
Anuk Pzutfomzl ar fr fzuf om ovu nmaro jvuzu ovu duj lpzsasmzl
zuhmeraxu ovuaz arduzamzaow frt diuu pnmr wmpz laevo.]

[This title is a prerequisite for the Title: Apex Predator (Platinum)]

‘Ugh...‘

It was much more than Jake could endure. When the new Soul Glyph merged with his Soul he burst out laughing.

‘ Well done to all of you, you fried fish shit! Serves you right for trying to eat me! ‘He spat on the giant shark behind him to emphasize his point.

Even after having exterminated the sharks from leagues around to extinction, he was still not appeased. If Jake hadn’t begun to get thirsty, and prey started to become scarce, he probably would have continued indefinitely.

Because, yes, Jake had discovered another secret as he chased all those sea monsters to the point where they didn’t know where to flee and hide. This ocean was not infinite.

When Jake had chased yet another plesiosaurus so far from shore, he had hit an invisible force field that felt like an electroshock. No matter how hard he had tried to break or circumvent this restriction, the force field proved to be impassable.

The sad reality was that the ocean disappearing on the horizon, the sun and the sky were probably illusions. Recalling that the Second Ordeal was also of the ‘Simulation’ type, it had taken him a while to figure out why it was a simulation.

The world seemed too real and if it wasn’t for the revivals in the past that brought him back to the initial moment and the fact that he

wasn't getting any Aether by eliminating monsters, he probably wouldn't have suspected anything.

Nusuzovuiull, fdouz oval talhmsuzw vu vft zufiaxut ovfo rm qfoouz jvfo vu duio arlatu oval Sfrhopfzw Bpggiu, ao jfl rmo val zufi gmtw, gpo mriw val hmrlhamplrull ovfo jfl zmfqare oval jmzit. Tval uknifarut jvw mriw val nlwhvah lofol vft nzmezullut ar lnaou md fii val nvwlahfi uddmzol.

After that, Jake waited silently in the hope of getting a third Title, but the artificial voice remained silent. About a minute later, he heard some noise coming from the jungle and the monotone voice resounded again, the notification also appearing in his mind.

The second stage will begin shortly, in 5,4,3,2,1,0.]

[Objective of the second trial: Spend a night on the island. (Taking refuge in the ocean does not count and will result in immediate elimination.)]

Jake frowned when he heard the warning, but he was not upset. After spending a whole week immersed in seawater without dying once, it was obvious that it would be far too simple if the trial left him that option. Not to mention a single night, he could certainly survive the entire Ordeal in the ocean if no new predators popped up.

‘Fine...’ He sighed.

To be honest, after the carnage he had just perpetrated, he didn't really care about the threats the Island had in store for him. What was the worst that could happen to him? Dying? The sooner he finished this second trial, the sooner he could move on to the next one. He had fallen behind and now he had to make up for the wasted time.

On this reflection, the palm trees at the edge of the jungle began to sway again and the rustle of trees reached his ears. The ground shook slightly and a flock of small birds soared out of the jungle.

Thump! Thump!... Thump!

Not daring to believe what his imagination suggested, he peered into the lush jungle with expectations, his eyes sparkling like a child's in front of his Christmas presents. As expected, a deafening roar between that of an elephant, a tiger and a whale resounded and a creepy creature straight out of his memories emerged from the jungle, uprooting a palm tree in its path.

Io jfl f T-Ruk. A dpćcīrġ Twzfrmlfpzpl Ruk!