

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 251 - The Player Rankings

In a completely different section of the island, the two pink-haired sisters were also fighting for their lives, but their situation was not as critical as Tim's.

When they encountered a predator or participant they could not defeat, they had adopted a radical solution of setting fire to the jungle. A few well-placed fireballs were enough to set off a nearly unstoppable forest fire and this had allowed them to flee several times.

It was also the way they had solved the riddle of their second ordeal. By letting a large portion of the jungle burn, they had discovered that they were able to survive this mysterious affliction.

When the charred plants and the burnt earth had cooled down, several red, green and blue lights had started oozing out of the ground and they had been able to easily identify the different properties of the minerals responsible.

Like Jake at the time of his first success, the Sanctuary Bubble had not immediately recognized their success, and indeed the following night they had died without being able to resist.

They had then understood that just burning the jungle was not enough, and they had taken the time to scan and experiment with each type of ore.

Both sisters now knew as Tim did that green light was synonymous with security and peace on this island, but unlike Tim, they also knew very clearly that they were at risk when approaching areas rich in Flintium (red) or Orxanium (blue).

Armed with this information and with their improved control of fireball, it had not been so difficult to pass the second trial. However, just like the young boy, their arrival on the real island had turned out to be a real hell.

‘Cough, cough, En-Enya, I, I can’t do it anymore...’ Esya stammered and coughed non-stop because of the smoke from their latest fire.

‘If you can still complain, shut up and run!’ Her older sister replied curtly, whipping out the sweat dripping from her forehead with a flick of her hand.

The two sisters were practically nàkèd and covered with dust and soot, while their pink hair, usually shiny and silky, was now tangled, sticky and dirty, giving them a look that would not be out of place among a group of beggars.

It was a miracle that they had managed to find each other so soon after their arrival on the real island. It was as if the Sanctuary Bubble itself did not want to separate them.

As they fled together without having a precise destination, they hoped that their companions would not be so far away either. Unfortunately, according to Jake’s rankings, Kyle and Sarah still hadn’t reached the island and Will and Tim were nowhere to be found! After all this time, they had yet to come to terms with the fact that their two companions had failed...

But as they shared this thought, Jake’s name suddenly appeared in the rankings, followed moments later by that of Sarah. Only Kyle’s name remained missing.

With renewed hope, they started running again, hoping to meet them soon. Jake and Sarah were the hand-to-hand fighters in the group, and they were confident that they could make it through as a team with these two.

Shortly after they had set the dense vegetation behind her on fire to block the way to their enemies, high-pitched guttural sounds echoed across the flames.

These voices seemed indignant and angry, but they were powerless to overcome this natural obstacle.

Soon they withdrew, and the silence returned, broken only by the crackling of the wood that had been bursting under the flames' influence.

Back on Jake, he still hadn't moved from his hiding place, safe from any outside threat. Unlike the clearings that Tim had discovered, the clearing he was in was nothing special, but it was virtually inaccessible by any means other than by air.

With the Green Soul Stone, he could stay there as long as he wanted, so he took the opportunity to analyze the new features available in more detail on the spot.

First of all the Player Rankings. When he accessed the interface with a thought, he was shocked to discover that he was actually quite high ranked. All the points he had earned from his exploits in the first event had indeed been counted in his total score and he currently peaked at 468,300 points, of which 418,300 points were exclusively from his prowess in the first event. The genocides he had perpetrated had a more than decisive impact on his score.

With the Aether he already had at the beginning of the Ordeal, he had almost 850,000 Aether points in his bracelet, which could be considered a real fortune at his current level, although it was still not enough to buy anything interesting in the Oracle Store.

Nusuzovuiull, gw ukfQarare ovu Pifwuz Rfrcarel Qmzu Quoahpimpliw, vu rmoahut lusuzfi tuofail. Hal mpolofrtare hpzzuro lhmzu, jvahv aqqutafouiww gzmpevo vaQ om ovu 121lo nifhu, jfl dfz dzmQ guare ovu vaevulo lhmzu.

To be fair, he didn't know how many bonus points a participant could get by finishing a trial among the first, and therefore he didn't know whether these scores were considered normal or not.

Regardless, the top 20 had staggeringly high scores, far exceeding those of the other participants. The top 5, in particular, had scores so high that it was questionable:

[Player Rankings:]

[1st place: Hakkrasha (Species: Jakam): 7,637,287 pts (3 kills)]

[2nd place: Krish (Species: Krish): 6,387,296 pts (172 kills)]

[3rd place: Bawopi (Species: Nosk): 6,385,279 pts (211 kills)]

[4th place: Krish (Species: Krish): 5,432,486 pts (157 kills)]

[5th place: Krish (Species: Krish): 5,231,862 pts (155 kills)]

With the exception of the first in the ranking, the other four participants shared a common characteristic. They were all Player Killers and their names were displayed in red.

'What the heck is wrong with these guys who all have the same name as their species?' 'Jake was taken aback for a brief moment as he found out the details of the second, fourth and fifth place.

Together they had decimated over 500 participants, which was more than one-fifteenth of the Players who had made it to the third trial. Their scores were so high that it was disconcerting, and not surprisingly he discovered that there was a good reason for this.

In addition to strongly encouraging them to kill each other to reduce the number of candidates competing for the fourth round, the Sanctuary Bubble had given an incentive that was almost impossible to resist. When a Player knocked down another contestant, he would get all his points right away.

Jake didn't know if the loser kept the Aether earned outside of the Ordeal, but he didn't intend to confirm it personally. In any case, once one was dead, it meant one had not been up to the challenge.

Worried for his companions, he started looking for their names without much expectation, and this time he was truly appalled when he discovered that all his friends were already on the island except for Kyle.

Sarah was ranked 626th with 186,600 pts, while Will had a very surprising score of 246,100 points, giving him a place in the ranking relatively close to Jake.

Tim and the two sisters were currently ranked rather low, all three of them below the top 5000, but the mere fact that they were still persevering on the island was commendable in itself. Jake had just realized that he didn't know them that well. The fact that they had passed the first trial already proved that they were much more resilient mentally than he thought they were capable of. Only Kyle seemed to fit the image of the insecure Playboy he had of him.

However, there were two names that made him shudder when he saw them. The first was 'Lu Yan' at 148th place with 8 kills. Even if he wanted to, Jake would be unable to forget that name. This bitch had shown her true nature during their first Ordeal, and he knew she was a viper among vipers. If he met her again on this island, he would avoid her like the plague or would show his fangs without the slightest hesitation.

This name may have been relatively common in China, but he knew for sure that it was her when he found her brother's name not far away in the ranking. This greatly reduced the likelihood that it was a different woman.

The second name that left him hesitating was much higher in the ranking and was currently at the 7th place :

[7ov nifhu: Rpgw Hfiu (Snuhaul: HpQfr): 3,845,569 nol (98 caiil)]

The image of this young woman smiling in a wheelchair despite her crippling disability and ugliness came back to him, and he was unable to associate her with this Ruby Hale in 7th place capable of slaughtering 98 participants in cold blood.

The idea was so bizarre that he automatically put it out of his mind. If these two Ruby Hales were really the same people then he was a very poor judge of character.

Yet, Jake was not a total fool either. He too had changed enormously. If the Ruby Hale of that time met him today, there was a good chance that she wouldn't recognize him either.