

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

### Chapter 253 – Tim's Misadventures (part 2)

Not so far from Jake's position, Tim was going nuts. The goddamn alien on his tail hadn't given up the chase after all this time and because of that, he had been unable to focus on any side objective. Worse! He was completely exhausted and hungry. He had sweated all his body's sweat, his tongue was painfully dry and his lips were cracked.

If he didn't find a solution quickly, he had already made up his mind that he wouldn't last through the night. His pursuer had made it impossible for him to camp in one of the safe clearings on the island and he didn't know about the Green Soul Stone, not that it would have made the slightest difference, since he didn't know where to find one.

For the young boy these expanses of green grass radiating at night was simply the equivalent of a rest area that the Sanctuary Bubble had provided for them. At no time had he bothered to find out where these lights were coming from and what their real significance was.

What he did know, however, was that after several days without finding any refuge, the benefits he had derived from this light had begun to wane and the previous night had been life-threatening for him. He had felt his consciousness clouding and he had only a very vague memory of last night. If he couldn't find a way out, he was absolutely certain that he would die without even realizing it, for some reason or another.

Tim had already exhausted his luck a long time ago and was now suffering from a string of bad luck. On several occasions, he had stumbled over roots, or had been shat on by a tropical bird sleeping on a branch above him.

These misadventures were limited in their effect, but they weighed on his mind, already close to its breaking point. His body was riddled with scrapes and bruises caused by his falls and unfortunate contacts against brambles, and without his high Constitution and Vitality, he probably would have had to be hospitalized.

Still, Tim hadn't faltered yet. He still had one last hope: To regroup with his comrades. Alone, he didn't stand a chance against this crazy alien, but with Jake or Sarah it was different.

Except that when the aliens had come after him, Jake and Sarah hadn't yet reached the island. To survive, he had been left with no other choice but to put his choice on Will. Although the two sisters were cute and sweet, he didn't believe for a second that they could handle the threat behind him.

Will wasn't the best fighter, far from it, but he had a good head on his shoulders. He was definitely the smartest of the group after Jake, if not the cleverest based on his experience, and the mere fact that he had arrived on the island before Jake proved that he was much more resourceful than they had originally assumed.

Unfortunately, once again, as if fate was against him, meeting Will had turned out to be a real headache. It was the first strategy he had adopted at the beginning of the third trial, long before these Krish aliens decided to target him as their prey.

His Shadow Guide, who was supposed to show him the way to Will, would constantly change direction, sometimes making him run east for a hundred kilometers, before suddenly changing course in the opposite direction.

Because of his inconsistencies, Tim had been close to being devoured by a dinosaur several times and with the psychopath behind him, he had to give up the idea when the Shadow Guide had told him that Will was no longer in front, but behind him in the same direction as his pursuer...

In his current state of fatigue and distress, Tim was incapable of complex reasoning and out of panic he had even begun to search for the two pink-haired sisters, albeit without any hope. He had been running in their direction for several hours already, to no avail. Even after all this time, he had only explored a fraction of the island. Who knew how many hundreds or thousands of kilometers away they were!

The only thing he knew was that the two sisters were together. So they were much luckier than he was at the moment. Quite a feat for someone whose every ability was based on luck!

Bpo bplo jvur ovu cat ovmepevo ovfo fii jfl msuz dmz vaq, vu vfnnurut om eifru fo ovu Pifwuz Rfrcarel frt val uwul daiut jaov tuiaevo. Hal vufzo lptturiw zfhut jaov ukhaouquro frt fiqmlo ar talguiaud, vu aqqutafouiwalvut dmz val gzfhuio om hfihpifou vmj om dart Jfcu mz Szfzv fl ypahciw fl nmlagi.

Confirming that the results of the Player Rankings were real, the Shadow Guide revealed two different trajectories, which miraculously were both heading in roughly the same direction. Even better! Not in the same direction as the alien on his heels!

Tim estimated that he was about ten minutes ahead of the Krish behind him, but that was on the condition that his pursuer would maintain the same stupid tactic of frontally destroying all the natural obstacles that the boy had taken great care to leave untouched after his passage.

At first, some sort of super-powerful weapon or Aether Skills would gladly atomize these bramble and creeper walls, but lately the alien seemed to have given up on this method. If not for that, Tim would have been caught long ago.

If the Krish in question had been able to read the boy's thoughts, he would have immediately retorted in rage 'The heck! Do you have any fućking idea how much each shot costs me?!'

Of course, even if Tim knew, it wouldn't have made any difference. On the contrary, it would have cheered him up! Right now, he was in great need of it.

As a precaution, the young boy tested his bracelet with different wishes to determine who was closest between Jake, Sarah and the two sisters and almost broke down in tears when it was the Shadow Guide pointing at Jake who showed up.

With renewed faith, Tim ran with all his might, carried by a wind of optimism. He didn't know if he would have to run for an hour or several days, but what he did know was that the Oracle Path guaranteeing his survival was wavering. If joining Jake was the ideal choice, the two Shadow Guides would have overlapped each other, but it wasn't the case.

The variation between the two Shadow Guides was subtle and in the end Tim was just a child. Perhaps out of fatigue or simply because deep down he wanted the reassuring protection of an adult, he deliberately chose to continue his run to Jake and soon the Oracle Path adapted his calculation to produce a new and unique Shadow Guide.

As he got closer to his savior, the boy could hear the heavy footsteps of the alien on his heels getting closer and closer. Every once in a while, the roar of a sleeping beast that Tim had been careful to avoid would be heard, followed by a heart-rending cry of agony. Each time this happened, he couldn't help but get goosebumps and pick up the pace once again.

Nusuzovuiull, fl vu emo himluz frt himluz om val ofzeuo, vu guefr om vfsu tmpgol. Io opzrut mpo ovfo vu vft fizuftw uknimzut oval nfzo md ovu alifrt ar ovu nflo. Io jfl ifzeuiw guhfplu md oval ovfo vu vft guur fgiu om ulhfnu dzmq ovulu uknuzaurhut fiaurl dmz lm imre. Hal arhzutagiu iphc mriw nfzoafiiw uknifarut val nuzdmzqfrhu.

In that part of the jungle where he was, he remembered having escaped from a pack of raptors after crushing one of their eggs, just as his exhausted luck was receding. This was not important in the present circumstances, though.

What was of concern was that if he kept going in that direction for a few more minutes, he would be leaving the jungle for the white sandy beach.

In a different context, this might have been good news, but in his case it meant losing the protection of the natural obstacles that had allowed him to survive so far.

'Jake is on the beach?' Tim speculated, unconsciously choosing to believe in the hypothesis that suited him best. If Jake was really on the beach, he was saved!

A moment later, the boy saw the flora transitioning from lush tropical vegetation to a few scattered palm trees. The wet and muddy soil was also mixed and then replaced by white sand. He had finally reached the beach.

But on the beach there was not a single soul around, and certainly not Jake. Yet the Shadow Guide did not intend to give up. As if that were the most logical way to proceed, the holographic Tim jumped into the water without hesitating and started to swim towards the open ocean ...

'Fu-Fuck!' Tim swore reluctantly. Like all children his age, he was like a sponge absorbing the good or bad habits of his companions. Jake and Kyle had a really foul mouth, while Will was the only one who seemed to care about manners.

'De-should I get in the water?' Tim almost broke down when he saw his Shadow Guide dive headfirst.

As if to give himself courage, he squinted his eyes to better scrutinize the murky and turbulent water, but that was the moment that a giant shark a few

hundred meters away chose to jump into the air, a half-dead walrus between his teeth.

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