

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 254 - Tim's Misadventures (part 3)

Feet in the water and aware that he was about to commit a foolish deed, Tim crawled back to shore in sheer fright. If he had really dived after his Shadow Guide, only God knew if he would have survived more than a minute in the water.

Even before meeting Jake, he most likely would have been devoured by a predator ten times his size. In the simulations of his first and second trial, there were certainly sharks, crocodiles and other dinosaurs, but their size was rather humble. With his luck and current stats, it was not impossible for him to survive a confrontation if he knew where to strike. He might have died many times, but the challenge was not impossible, or he would never have reached the shore so easily.

But this shark... Even with his Aether Luck stat maxed, it was absolutely impossible to outrun such a predator. The sea monster would probably swallow him in one bite, just like this poor walrus weighing several tons.

BOOOM!

Jolted by the explosion behind him, the boy suddenly turned around, but all he saw was a pillar of flames and smoke about a kilometer away. His blood froze in his veins and his heart was on the verge of a heart attack.

The alien on his heels had almost caught up with him! A kilometer could take fifteen to thirty minutes for a normal human in a jungle as inhospitable as this one, but for Evolvers like them it would only take one or two minutes at most.

‘ Holy crap! Get the fućk off my back! ‘Tim cursed again, clawing his head with his hands so hard that his hair was ripped out of his head. He was on the edge right now.

All hope had abandoned him and his terror was such that he couldn’t even think straight. To enter the water or to leave ?

Instead, he did something even more stupid.

‘JAAAKE!... Jaaake!... aaake!... aaake!... ake! ‘

The child’s call for help echoed throughout the area, alerting all nearby predators and accurately revealing his position to his pursuer, who until then had no way of determining whether his prey was close or far away. Realizing that the human was right in front of him, the Krish chuckled gleefully.

One would be wrong to underestimate the power of the boy’s cry. With his Strength and Constitution, combined with adrenaline and his high-pitched voice that hadn’t yet broken, Tim had a good pair of lungs that rivaled even the loudest monsters. At this point, the alien was now the least of his worries.

After the echo of his cry became inaudible, silence fell again and the kid began to realize the stupidity of his action. As his brain suddenly cooled down, his emotional outburst gave way to a state of mental emptiness, which in turn was quickly replaced by a sense of horror.

‘What have I done...‘ Tim stammered, his chin, lips and eyebrows trembling successively between fear, anger towards himself and the shock of having actually committed such a folly.

Forcing himself to breathe in and out deeply, the boy began counting the seconds in his head, praying with all his heart that his shout had not been for naught. Regrettably, the ocean remained silent. To be honest... The ocean seemed even quieter than before, as if the whole island was scoffing at his efforts.

On the contrary! It was the trees behind him that began to capsize noisily, as if a behemoth of considerable mass was approaching his position in a charge that nothing seemed to be able to stop.

The creepers and brambles that the alien chasing him had so much trouble getting around, despite the use of his weapon or powers, were nothing more than straw twigs in front of this creature, and at this rate it would reach the beach in less than thirty seconds.

Even if Jake had heard it, it was impossible for him to swim back to the shore in such a short time. Biting his lip to the point of blood, Tim took one last glance at the motionless surface of the ocean, then with a sigh he sprinted along the beach towards Sarah.

The only good thing about this short break was that he was able to catch his breath, but he had lost all his lead and had challenged all the predators in the area. His only hope now was that his luck had not completely run out and that the alien chasing him would be intercepted by the behemoth. If that happened, even if he was eliminated, he would at least have the meagre satisfaction of having achieved revenge.

As Tim ran as if there would be no tomorrow on the white sandy beach, he heard a huge 'CRACK!' coming from the former spot where he had yelled Jake's name. As he turned his head fleetingly, he saw two palm trees, about 20 meters high, bursting into splinters.

Tvu Qmrlouz zulnmrlagiu jfl fr urmzQmpl hzufopzu jvmlu Qmznvmimew jfl himlu om ovfo md f gpil tmnut jaov louzmatl hzmllut jaov f ozahuzfomnl. Ir fttaoamr om guare lm vpeu ovfo fr àtplo T-Ruk jmpit mriw zufhv aol cruul, ovu tarmlfpz jfl hmsuzut jaov lhfiul frt ezuur lnacul lm imre frt ovahc ovfo ao hmpit nzmfgiw lpzsasu f Qallaiu lozacu.

The poor trees in its path hadn't had a chance at all! Despite the fact that his meager knowledge suggested that this monster was probably herbivorous, the overwhelming ferocity of this colossus annihilated any thought in him to

make friends with the creature. Clearly, the lord of the place had been challenged by his cry, and if he made the mistake of retracing his steps, he was certain to be pulverized with one blow of its horn.

Tim expected such a heavy creature to be clumsy and stupid, but he nearly pissed himself when he saw the bull triceratops skillfully braking on the sand while drifting sideways like a top alpine skier. The dinosaur then swiftly spun around sniffing the air and as if the boy was wearing a distinctive bug, the monster's furious gaze suddenly locked onto him.

Not thinking that he could still sweat, Tim began to drip again and realized that he hadn't yet reached the lowest depths of despair. There was one more step to go and he had just reached it.

Knowing that staying on the white sand made him an apparent target, he changed direction without a second thought and leapt back into the jungle. He hoped that the lush vegetation and the many fragrances of flowers, soil and other animal pheromones would provide him with the camouflage he needed.

Seconds later, another BOOOM sounded and the earth shook beneath his feet. Soon after, a shock wave lifted a mountain of earth and leaves, turning the ground over at the entrance to the jungle. The triceratops was now on his heels too!

Desperate, he continued to flee by changing direction several times, but just when he thought he would never be able to escape, he suddenly came across a group of humans.

There were four humans in this group and none of the faces were familiar to him. Nevertheless, these four individuals all shared one thing in common. They were young, none of them over thirty years old. The two young women among them seemed not to have reached their twenties yet.

The two young brunette women, whose beauty was difficult to appreciate given their dirty state, wore an unattractive rudimentary leather armor that had clearly been made during the Ordeal from the skin of several mammals.

The two men were slightly older, but did not seem to lust over their two female partners. One was small, chubby and hairy, with dark skin, while the other was bald and hairless with a shredded physique. Both wore only the basic loincloth provided at the beginning of the first trial, but neither of them seemed to care.

Not knowing if their intentions were friendly, Tim bypassed them without breaking his sprint and simply shouted, 'Flee!' . . . If these humans refused to follow his advice he felt he had nothing to do with it.

As if they couldn't understand him, the four humans watched him with curiosity, staring at him disappearing into the distance without showing the slightest sign of movement. But as soon as the child disappeared, the bald man suddenly cracked a smile,

'Since when have there been kids on this island?'

The nearest young woman responded by slapping the back of his head.

'There have always been children in the Ordeals. They too have the right to survive.'

'And you had to slap me in the face to say that?!' The bald man retorted with an angry flushed face as he massaged the back of his sore skull with his free hand. The other hand was firmly clutching a kind of claymore.

'Easy, easy, easy! How about we focus on the threat ahead?' The fatty laughed while pointing a finger at the enormous triceratops rushing towards them.

'Good point...' His three companions responded to the unison.

And a titanic new battle ensued, giving Tim the respite he so badly needed.

