

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 272 - The Incredible Nosk

Kevin, who was growling in a defensive posture a few seconds earlier, was now wearing a very funny expression, while Sarah, the only other female fighter in the mix, was as shocked as Jake.

Like him, she had encountered a Nosk before, and she remembered very well the feeling of helplessness one can feel when faced with such creatures. The exchange of pointers between a Nosk and a multicolored Alien Bubble was fresh in their memory and was enough to make them despair back then.

As flabbergasted as Jake was by this absurd turn of events, he hadn't let his guard down. Once the surprise passed, he mercilessly bombed the Nosk stuck in the ground with the needles under his control.

Their thickness of less than a millimeter and the speed at which he blasted them at the alien made them virtually indistinguishable and a shrill whistle of air pierced their eardrums when he took action. A current of air momentarily thwarted the icy wind coming from the outside, testifying to their extreme speed and synchronicity.

CLANG !CLANG !CLANG !

Yet Jake's face became more and more solemnized as the relentless bombing continued. The Nosk hadn't moved, only its head protruding from the welded ground, but its helmet and the dendrites covering its skull were dealing with these attacks in the same way as a tank crashed by a bicycle. Not content to do no damage, the needles broke one by one leaving their maker frustrated and helpless.

'My precious!' Jake lamented inwardly as he saw all of his work shattered in seconds. If he had known that all these preparations would be useless, he wouldn't have wasted all this time.

'I can't let it go on like this!

Just as he was about to execute his next contingency plan, a vibration under his feet followed by a CRACK momentarily stopped him in his tracks. The Nosk had finally decided to react.

The muscles of the buried alien suddenly contracted, causing thick worm-like veins to appear on the surface of his skin. Simultaneously, the Nosk drew a deep breath, its lung capacity and diaphragm proving to be in a different dimension compared to those of humans. Its chest swelled to the point of doubling in size, as did its muscles in a brief instant and the solidified rock around it instantly cracked under the pressure.

The alien then shook its body two or three times with sharp movements, reminiscent of spasms, splitting and cracking the ground even more. Next, the alien exhaled suddenly, and the difference in volume suddenly created a space that allowed the alien to free itself. With a few more shakes, the enemy was completely freed from its rock prison.

Wvaiu jaorullare oval tuqmrlozfoamr md nvwlahfi nmjuz, Kusar, jvm jfl ukozuquiw hmrdaturo ar ovu lozureov md val gufloiw dmzq, imlo qphv md val tplouz. Cmqnzfut om Jfcu frt val movuz hmplarl, oval guloafi dmzq jfl val pioaqfou daevoare dmzq frt ovu mriw fgaiaw vu vft zuiat mr om euo oval dfz ar ovu Oztufi jfl val nvwlaypu. Bpo ar ovu dfhu md oval hzufopzu, vu jfl rm imreuz lm hmrdaturo md jarrare.

As for Sarah, she knew from the beginning that it would be a desperate battle so her mental state had not been affected more than that. On the contrary, it gave her the conviction she lacked to face this new challenge. Her Myrmidian instincts had been triggered!

As the Nosk silently gazed at them arrogantly, its expression impossible to distinguish under its helmet, Sarah's gladius struck without warning from behind, making a decisive attempt to decapitate the monster.

SPLASH!

Electric blue blood began to flow abundantly on the shattered ground. The alien had uttered no sound, and its head was still on its shoulders, but the way it turned its neck towards the young woman was a clear indication that it was not expecting this.

One of its precious dendrites had been severed. Each of them was supposed to be stronger than steel and this was even more true after increasing its Aether stats. Intrigued, the motionless Nosk stared at the young woman from head to toe before lingering on the weapon in her hand.

Sarah sensed a presence scanning her and she had the unspeakable feeling that she had been rapped by the eyes of the enemy, as if her own soul had been exposed. She understood right away that the alien was interested in her weapon and understood what had just happened.

But while she was still mulling over how to approach her next attack, the alien emitted a shrill, jerky sound as its chest repeatedly lifted and deflated.

'He's laughing,' Jake realized as he squinted warily.

As if to confirm his conclusion, the Nosk averted its gaze from the young woman and shook its hand strangely with a gentle, smooth gesture.

Sviarc!

A black jade-like blade grew magically from a device attached above its gauntlet. In a fraction of a second, the blade lengthened to about a meter long, then with another bizarre wrist gesture, the blade fell off into its hand.

The alien then grabbed a short, thick stick from its belt about a foot long and inserted the blade inside with a click. Only then did Jake realize that it was the hilt of a sword.

Taunting them with extreme nonchalance, the Nosk made a few slow swings with its sword before performing a slash of great violence that swiftly broke through the sound barrier. The floor of the house, already in poor condition, was embellished with a new trench after this blow.

Satisfied, the alien began the attack, leaving an afterimage behind. It was not related to its extreme speed, but a true hologram. By some unknown means, the warrior was generating holographic clones behind him to add to the confusion.

Kevin blocked, intending to ward off a real strike, but the clone was a fake. Jake knew at first glance from his Myrtharian pupil skill that it was a fake too and jumped straight to the Nosk in order to intercept the deadly blow intended for Sarah.

Aware of the threat posed by this formidable opponent, Jake gathered all his Aether of Strength, Agility and Constitution in his main arm to amplify his strike and even assisted the movement with the full power of his telekinesis. At the same time, his Spirit Body pulsed and the ground beneath the alien's feet rose abruptly to form a podium covered with spikes almost a meter high.

Sensing the danger posed by Jake, the alien interrupted halfway down its downward sword stroke that could have cut the young woman in half if it had hit its target and retaliated with a lateral slash that hit Jake's machete resulting in a deafening BANG.

Jake who had pounced on the Nosk lost all momentum and remained momentarily suspended in the air while the ground beneath the alien exploded on impact as its feet sank several inches into the ground and several rock spears pierced his skin, boots and legs.

The Nosk staggered slightly under the blow with a startled expression under its helmet, the blade of its sword and the breastplate covering its torso split in two. Sarah, who had not relaxed her attention, struck with all her might from behind the crook of its knees and ... missed her target, cutting another dendrite instead.

The alien was injured, though, and even Kevin knew this was an opportunity not to be missed. Only God knew if this creature had hidden regenerative abilities. In the split second that followed, Kevin, who didn't want to look like a useless coward, rammed into the Nosk who had lost his weapon and began to scratch him savagely with claws and hammer punches.

However, before he could even place more than three blows a backhand hook of phenomenal power that broke half of his teeth and rattled his brain sent him flying in the air from where he had come from. The Werebear crashed miserably in the shape of a star against another stone wall, breaking a few more bones. The whole action had lasted less than a second.

Nevertheless, this brief respite had allowed Jake and Sarah to corner the Nosk a little more. The rock had tightened around the alien's ankles during this fleeting lapse, and this time, when Jake passed behind the monster with a forward roll, the monster was unable to turn around in time.

Sarah's sword was blocked again by sacrificing another dendrite, but her intervention provided the opportunity Jake needed to launch an unstoppable attack. An incandescent sword blow, even more powerful than the previous one, sliced through the alien's knee tendons and the dendrites that tried to stop it.

CLANG!

'Ouch!'

Jake quickly muffled a cry of pain as he felt the thumb holding the handle of his machete dislocate on impact. The Nosk's bones had held firm. If even

after hitting with all his might with a Grey Aether-reinforced machete, the alien was still standing, he had to face the facts. This opponent was just impossible to kill by decapitation or dismemberment.

At the very moment of this realization, the Nosk's aura, which had been passive throughout the battle, intensified drastically and for the first time the humanoid creature uttered a crazed battle cry. The pain and the fact of having been beaten up by miserable humans had finally angered him.

The dendrites, which had only had a defensive role from the start, merged together to form thick strings, and a radiant white light began to shine from the appendages. Two lashes of whip sounded and soon after Jake and Sarah had joined Kevin into the stone wall.