

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 274 - Loot and New Ranking

Suffocating on all fours on the frozen lawn in the clearing, the world around Jake was spinning dangerously and he could no longer align coherent thinking. Yet, seeing the tremendous magnitude of the explosion, which had nearly leveled the equivalent of a soccer stadium, he couldn't help but be both bewildered and in awe.

The Nosk could have self-detonated as soon as it had realized that it would not make it out alive, but it had chosen to control the energy leakage instead, leaving it unable to perform adequately, thereby sealing its fate once and for all.

If only the alien had tried to talk from the beginning by explaining that it was seeking shelter during the storm, none of this would have happened.

Nevertheless, Jake knew that this was impossible. This opponent had shown its hostility from the start by attacking them. Lu Yifeng, Lu Yan's brother, had undoubtedly been beheaded without warning by this bloody alien.

Jake had a lot of questions about this Nosk at that very moment, but they would have to wait. Similar to the time he had been seriously injured in the water a week earlier, all his attention was dedicated to repositioning his bones and organs to ensure that the healing process would go smoothly. If a bone healed in the wrong position, he was at risk of being crippled for good and he had no desire to break his bones again to correct a failed healing.

But this time there was a catch. The storm was in full swing and it was almost dark, not that the sun would have made any difference. The clouds

were so thick that the sun's ultraviolet radiation would never have reached the ground.

Without heat and radiation, burying himself underground to heal faster was useless. At that very moment, he could only rely on his Vitality and the diligent control of his Aether.

As painful as it was, Jake was already familiar with the process and within minutes he was able to overcome the critical stage of the initial healing. His bones were in place, but his organs would still require special attention to avoid after-effects.

The entire procedure had been performed lying on the ground in the clearing and the hailstones had never stopped falling. During the few minutes that Jake had dealt with his most serious injuries, his body had been battered by dozens of projectiles, each one harder and heavier than the next, leaving the surface of his body covered with bruises and bumps. His appearance was not too good at the moment.

Despite this, he did not immediately rush to the stone house which needed immediate repairs. Lily, Tim and Daniel were in a worrisome state after the Nosk' mental blast, but they had simply passed out. With their Vitality and Constitution, this level of injury was not as worrisome as it seemed.

It was the same reason why Jake had kept fighting relentlessly when a normal human would have died of his injuries long ago.

With one leap, he scaled down the hill to return to the site of the explosion and searched the devastated area with anxiety and expectation. As soon as he recognized the filaments of white light typical of the Aether left at the death of an individual, he breathed a sigh of relief.

It was the first time that one of his enemies had died in such an explosion, and to tell the truth, he had never before known whether pure Aether could survive such a discharge of heat and energy. It was an unnecessary worry,

though. The Aether mass had not moved from the place where the Nosk had self-detonated and the storm hailstones were passing through it without affecting it.

Then checking his Aether status, he almost let out a joyful roar, which he instantly regretted when a stabbing pain pressed down on his chest. It took him almost a minute to recover, but the smile on his lips spoke for itself.

All of his Aether stats had gained almost 10 more points, elevating his abilities to the next level. With last week's hunt and the nights spent training to study the Green Soul Stone and forge his Aether Core, his Status was nothing like it was at the beginning of the Ordeal.

[Oracle Rank 5, Sergeant [15.43M/ 100M], Aether Storage: 1,957,386pts]

[BODY STATUS:]

[Physics: Myrtharian Body lvl1]

Height: 2.03 meters]

[Weight: 116kg]

[Strength: 48.3 points.]

[Agility: 40.5 points]

Constitution: 64.2 points]

[Vitality: 59.6 points]

[Irouiiaeurhu: 32.4 nmarol]

Perception: 29.6 points]

(NB: Average human stats: 5 points)

[AETHER STATUS:]

[Strength(S): 125.6 points]

[Agility(A): 124.6 points]

[Constitution(C): 135 points]

[Vitality(V): 135 points]

[Intelligence(I): 198.3 points]

[Perception(P): 195.2 points]

[Ekozfurlmzw Puzhunoamr(EP): 202.4 nmarol]

[SOUL STATUS: Myrtharian Soul and Spirit Body(lvl1), 2 Gold Soul Glyphs: A Fish in Water, Apex Ocean Predator.]

[Spirit Body lvl5: Stable, immaterial purpose. Cannot affect the physical world but the psychic and Aetheric abilities are slightly amplified. The spirit is also more resilient and attracts more Aether to sustain it.]

His Aether Status was quite abnormal compared to most participants. His mental and sensory stats were overdeveloped when they were supposed to be the most difficult to improve. His Spirit Body had also broken through level 5 and although the difference was not immediately noticeable, the effects were clear enough to see during that battle.

He was the only one who had been able to remain on his feet in the face of the mental attack of the Nosk and despite the severity of his injuries, he had not lost consciousness. Willpower alone was not enough without a strong Spirit Body to support it all. If he reached his physical and mental limits, no matter how determined he was, he would simply die.

As for his Body Status, it was the one that progressed the slowest. The first test was useless, since it was only a simulation and his muscle mass and physical condition were already close to their optimal shape and volume.

Physical exertion had little effect on his body and he fully depended on his Kintharian genetics to evolve further.

For this, he needed to bury himself regularly in hot volcanic soil mercilessly irradiated by a blazing sun. The environment of the native Kintharian planet was not so easy to reproduce, and he had not directed his efforts towards this aspect.

Nevertheless, Jake had gained another two centimeters and put on another two kilos. He was beginning to seriously consider whether there was a limit to his growth spurt. If it continued like this, he might soon be unable to enter the human-only Oracle Playground Cities.

However, his body stats had risen by 1-2 points and this could be considered decent considering he had made no special effort to improve them. Becoming taller and heavier provided him with an advantage most of the time as well, since his optimal power-to-weight ratio had not yet been achieved.

The higher his Aether stats, the more his body would seek to grow. This was the sad reality to accept.

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The death of the Nosk alone had earned him almost 800,000 points, which was actually not that much. The rest came from the feats he had completed with Sarah and Tim as well as the results of last week's hunt.

Out of legitimate curiosity, Jake opened the Player Rankings information page and he felt both proud and dismayed when he discovered his new ranking.

[54th place: Jake(Species: Myrtharian): 1,565,396 pts (1 kill)]

He had moved up several dozen places in a single fight and for that he could be justifiably pleased with his performance. After all, he had just risked his life.

The reason why he was depressed and pessimistic for the future, was that the Nosk having disappeared from the Player Ranking was not Bawopi, the Nosk occupying the current 3rd place in the ranking, but a nobody.

To be honest, until now Jake didn't know what a Nosk was and apart from memorizing the names of the top 50 candidates, he hadn't really been interested in anybody. In other words, all he could deduce from his new ranking was that before this fight, Nosk had a comparable rank to his own.

As aggressive as this alien may have been, it had apparently been quite low-profile compared to the other members of its species. Because by checking the present ranking, he realized that 7 Nosks were actually occupying the top 50, including 3 in the top 20.

This was a ridiculously high number compared to the hundreds of species participating in this Second Ordeal, which was equaled only by the Krishs and paradoxically humans.

Jake found it hard to believe that so many humans had managed to survive so far, but he was not fooled either. The third trial had just begun. As time passed, the situation would eventually be reversed.

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