

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 287 - New Soul Glyph

Sadly, he couldn't say the same with his Aether stats. This small fry was barely able to pierce his hard leathery skin, while these hunting sessions were too short because of his limited breathing capacity.

It took the whole morning plus part of the afternoon for Jake to manage to eliminate all threats from the dive spot he had decided. The murky water of the area had long been tinged with red, but the currents were dispersing the blood to the four winds, preventing predators too curious to identify where it came from.

In any case, when a sea monster that was too curious approached this area, it was immediately wiped out. On several occasions, Jake felt the presence of a gigantic creature swimming not far from him, the sea currents generated heckling him without being able to do anything about it. But he never saw the culprit monster head-on.

He would be lying if he hadn't thought about the Boss of the Abyss from the other time, but the fact that he hadn't been attacked and the fact that the monster had left as it had come brought an end to his dread. Not seeing it anymore after a while, he had directly executed his 1000 meter freedive.

A few minutes later, Jake touched the ocean floor, and after a few more minutes he was back on the surface. With jubilation, Jake saw the familiar notification popping up in his mind and the least he could say was that it was worth the effort!

[Extreme Diver (Gold): Your skin can tense up like the skin of a drum to withstand considerable pressure and your skin can passively extract a fraction of the surrounding oxygen, drastically improving your underwater endurance. (only works in fluid)]

The next moment, a huge Aether Glyph measuring his size descended from the sky to settle in the air in front of him, then a flash of light enveloped him and he felt the Soul Glyph merge with his mind and the other two glyphs.

'I did it!' Jake screamed inwardly, clenching his fists to contain his excitement.

He had been less and less optimistic about receiving a new Soul Glyph after the abyss exploration feat had given him nothing, but he had been proven wrong to his utmost delight.

The new title did not improve his fighting skills in any way, but it gave him an extra layer of protection to deal with a hostile environment that was still dangerous for him.

Jake felt that completing the Free-diving feat was impossible for most participants without a specific bloodline or strength far exceeding that expected from a second Ordeal. However, this did not mean that there were no means to cheat.

Let's imagine that a Player had built himself a submarine or a bathyscaphe, going down to the bottom of the ocean would have been no challenge. Of course, one would have to wonder where to find a submarine on the island, but he had a vague intuition that this island was full of opportunities for every type of individual.

Maybe it could be by taming another animal or designing a diving suit reinforced with Constitution Aether, etc. There were plenty of possibilities. Jake had just picked the one that was the most challenging.

The sun was already starting to go down and a cold wind had started to blow over the water. The day was far from over, but he decided to go back to the island. He would test this new Glyph the next day.

He dug up his clothes, put his clothes back on and returned to the base. With the exception of Kevin, everyone was already back, but his cousin eventually showed up in time, just before nightfall. His body was covered with blood, but it wasn't his.

'Nothing to report?' Jake asked routinely with little concern for the answer.

'No, except for the white Ziwid who cried his eyes out when he was forced to take a bath. The smell was just too awful...'

'Ugh... Whatever...'

If it was the most notable event of the day, he hadn't missed a thing. Tired, he rinsed himself with normal water and then isolated himself in his room as usual to work on his Aether Core. Sarah, Kevin, Tim and Lily were used to his Quirks and made no comments, but Noémie and Kate harrumphed coldly when they found that he didn't even greet them when he came home.

'Who does he think he is?' Noémie grumbled as she discarded the fur that Sarah had given her to scrub on the floor.

It wasn't for the fun of exploiting them that Sarah had given them that task, but because everyone in that clearing, Lu Yan and Kevin included, had learned to make their own clothes. Relying on Jake to renew their wardrobe was impossible.

Not having enough furs cleaned and scraped for all the beds, Sarah had shown them how to deal with the many furs piling up in the basement. By dint of hunting everything that moved, they had accumulated a large stock of furs, skins and bones.

‘Shut up!’ Kate murmured as she continued to vigorously scrape the inside of the fur with her bone knife. ‘We’re already lucky they accepted us. We’ll soon find out tonight if it was worth it.’

‘You’re right...’

Night fell, the wind blew and temperatures dropped, but the sky remained clear, devoid of clouds. The storm they feared had not occurred. The group dined silently by the fire in anticipation of another attack, but nothing happened either.

They had nightmares for those who dozed off instead, and Jake could finally see how nervous everyone was, as if they were constantly being spied on and scared of something. Although he looked in the same direction as them every time they turned around, all he could find every time was the silence and the cold rock of the building’s walls.

Tazut md fii ovu jfaoare, Jfcu juro gfhc om val zmmQ om nzfhoahu frt ovu raevo juro gw jaovmpo frw rmoahufgiu usuroi mhhpzzare. Wvur vu iudo val zmmQ ovu ruko tfw om zuopzr om ovu gufhv om daralv val vproare hvfiureul, vu hfQu fhzmlf ezmpn md xmQgaul jaov lprcur hvuuel frt nzmozptare uwugfiil.

‘What the hell?!’ Jake cursed as he reflexively drew his machete until he realized they were his comrades.

His shout of surprise did not provoke any reaction, as if they were too tired to hear it and he had to give them all a flick to get them out of their torpor. When they recognized him, their confusion subsided considerably, but they were still very numb.

‘What’s wrong again? Still those nightmares and that feeling of being spied on?’

‘Yes... And it gets worse...’ Kevin grunted as he crunched into a roasted dinosaur leg from the night before. He was the only one who still had energy left, but he was clearly less talkative than they were used to.

Jake heaved a long exasperated sigh, had breakfast with them and left without further conversation. He had no idea what was happening to them. He didn’t doubt their experience, but why was he the only one to whom nothing was happening?

Perhaps he was too strong and the culprit was afraid of him? Yeah... Probably.

‘What do you think Xi?’ He asked his AI to sound out her opinion.

[The bit I remember reminds me of the Zhorions. I seem to remember that mental attacks are one of their specialties. I don’t remember anything more.]

‘Oh, I should have guessed with all those different colored Soul Stones. Thank you Xi. Let me know if anything comes back to you.’

[Nm nzmgiuQ.] Svu nzmQalut gudmzu zuopzrare om vuz laiurhu.

Jake then went back to the beach, and like the day before he undressed before burying his clothes. As he was about to burrow underground to hunt in the ocean depths, a rustling of leaves behind his back alerted him and after a few seconds, a young blonde woman in armor came out of the jungle.

It was Sarah.

Wearing a pseudo leather boxer shorts as a swimsuit and underwear, Jake had no qualms about having Sarah staring at him with shallow breath and a rosy face. Even her dark circles and pallor didn’t detract from her beauty.

One glance was enough to know that she didn’t just have good intentions.