

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 289 - Second Encounter with the Abyss Boss

With Jake no longer having to worry about the deadly attacks of this horny woman, he was finally able to devote himself completely to his goal: To achieve all of the abyss hunting feats at the Gold level. It was by following this pattern that he had earned the Apex Ocean Predator title and he hoped to obtain a new Glyph by doing the same in the ocean depths.

The truth was that Jake was not indifferent to Sarah's charm, but he was even more terrified of failing because he couldn't set his priorities straight. At the speed at which the situation was evolving on B842 and the Ordeal itself, a few hours of fooling around could have unpredictable consequences. Especially if another Player was conspiring in the shadows with his/her Shadow Guide to exploit the slightest flaw.

It was against the backdrop of this constant anxiety that Jake was able to keep a cool head. Maybe going for a quickie wasn't really an issue and it wouldn't have been of any consequence, but the mere possibility that it might happen was enough to drive him out of this madness.

There was no doubt that many humans had, on the contrary, chosen not to worry about tomorrow, even if it meant falling into the worst kind of depravity like Yerode and Lamine, but he had the deep conviction that all these people would pay dearly for this negligence in a not so distant future. And then they would come to him begging for his protection.

But Jake was not a Samaritan and never had been. Protecting his loved ones and tolerating the presence of strangers was already taking a lot of social effort from him.

If it were up to him, he would have gone for a month-long nap at the volcano until the Phantom Sanctuary landing. It didn't matter if he ended up being the only one alive and 3 meters tall after that. At that time he would have been strong enough.

It was more than likely that other Players had acted exactly like that. Choosing to go into seclusion to isolate themselves and increase their abilities without worrying about anything. Therefore, if he wanted to stay competitive, he had to make the most of his time.

And deep down, he was sure that Sarah felt the same way. The only reason she was not able to was the nature of her Myrmidian bloodline and the fact that her *sèxuàt* and social life had originally been very active. Combined with the stress and sleep deprivation of the last two days, she was having trouble adjusting to the change.

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Anyway, training and hunting was the way to go. After resting for a few minutes, Jake dived one last time before nightfall. After getting the Soul Glyph 'Extreme Diver', his snorkeling abilities at full power had increased from more or less 15 minutes to more than an hour.

With the help of his Aether skills, holding on for 2 hours was not difficult either. If his survival depended on it, he could even induce a near lethargic state to his body in order to survive by relying only on the oxygen that the pores of his skin could passively absorb from the water. The greatest benefit of this new Glyph was that he could no longer drown. Except when a certain blonde woman became kinky.

Nevertheless, Jake was far from being invincible and a very high intensity fight was still a risk for him if it lasted too long and a deadly threat if he was wounded thousands of meters below the surface.

This morning, after fleeing from Sarah, he had accomplished the Platinum feat of reaching the 5,000 meter deep zone. The new Soul Glyph had a lot to do with it and he had been rewarded with 5,000,000 Aether points.

It had gone unnoticed, but his position in the Player Ranking had suddenly climbed to the 19th place with almost 10 million points. Many participants had already memorized his name when he had killed a Nosk and this new twist had established a lasting impression on them.

So it was with a certain self-confidence that he dived again at the end of the afternoon. Like the previous times, he rushed towards the 1000-2000 meter depth zone and began to chase away anything that deigned to approach him at less than 10 meters.

His points climbed quickly, but he still had a few more feats to complete. Blind in the darkness, he slashed all the Aether masses that his Spirit Body could detect. Some of these creatures offered no resistance when he sliced them with his machete, while others were so hard-shelled that he had to slash them several times to finish them off.

There were also those elusive prehistoric monsters that required superior strength to be defeated. In these cases, telekinesis, heat, and muscle enhancement with Aether to accelerate a devastating stroke worked miracles.

Until now, no sea monster had been able to withstand such a blow. Not all of them died from it, but it was enough to deter these abyssal creatures from attacking it again.

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In contrast to the first encounter, where the monster had circled around him a few times before hitting him with its tail or a tentacle, the tremendous Aether mass perceived by his Spirit Body directly rammed into him like a missile.

His mind only perceived a fascinating and luminous mass of Aether, but it was concealing an otherworldly monster with a size and ferocity beyond compare. Upon impact, an underwater shock wave blasted Jake away and he spun around within the ocean currents without being able to stabilize.

Half of his air had been expelled from his lungs on impact and he felt an almost irrepressible nausea at this depth. The urge to hyperventilate to catch his breath was overwhelming and he had to use all his wits to suppress this sensation.

'The Shadow Guide didn't work!' Jake ranted inwardly.

Whenever the threat was real, the Oracle System seemed to fail him. The only good news was that he hadn't fractured anything apart from the radius and ulna of his forearm. It was a clean fracture and an average human might have cried like a baby, but after his previous injuries it was nothing.

Regardless, he was still incapacitated. Switching to telekinesis mode to propel himself, he hurried to the seabed without delay. And it was the best decision he ever made.

BOOOM!

Another underwater shockwave exploded at his former position and if he had stayed there, he would certainly have died. After seeing the resilience of its prey, the monster had recalibrated its striking power.

Like an underwater comet, Jake tried to dive into the ocean floor, but instead of finding the sand that would allow him to disappear and move at full speed, his head hit a hard surface.

‘Fuck! Why now!’ He cursed without bothering about the huge bump forming on his forehead.

As in his first trial, he had landed in an area where the NaeQuat deposit was above ground. There was no sand or soil where he was. Only rock and a giant and indestructible Green Soul Stone.

After swimming so much, he had a pretty good knowledge of these waters and immediately started looking for a practicable ground. He hadn’t dared to risk it during the first trial, but these deposits never took up too much space. Had he not been swept away by the sea currents generated by the monster, he would never have made such a mistake.

Jake started groping around, winding like a drunken torpedo that had lost its target, and several times a second he would send a mental impulse with his Spirit Body to scan the ground nearby.

After a few seconds, he found a space without any rocks or deposits, but it was too late. The Boss of the Abyss had caught up with him and a huge clawed leg several times his size crushed him against the sand with the violence of a fly swatter. He was the fly.

Even with his telekinesis acting as a cushion, his new Aether stats and his new body, he was smashed to pieces. The only thing that saved him was that at the very last instant he had placed the tip of his machete in the monster’s striking path.

Driven by its own momentum, the monster’s clawed paw impaled itself into its machete up to the hilt and the pain caused the creature to pull back before Jake was fully crushed.

Seriously injured, he vanished into the sand and returned to the beach as fast as he could, but he was no longer able to walk. Knowing the procedure while there was still some sunlight, he buried himself in the sand in a pool of blood and passed out.

When he woke up a few hours later in the middle of the night, his injuries were stabilized and he was able to walk again. But moments later, as he approached the hill where his base was hidden, a smell of smoke and blood came over him and remembering his bad feeling from two days ago, he hurried back to the clearing.

The trees were in flames, dinosaur and other monster corpses as far as the eye could see, and blood all over the place.

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