

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 293 - Soul Arrow

Jake thought briefly of an eclipse, but the sunlight was not obstructed by a moon or a black sphere would have been enclosed by the star's rays. The sun really seemed to be more distant.

Out of habit, he tried in vain to deduce by what astrophysical phenomenon such an incongruity could occur, but he quickly gave up. It did not matter. It was no longer a simulation as in the first or second trial, but the sky was definitely fake. Otherwise, these Zhorion survivors would not have needed to build these Sanctuary Bubbles on a desolate asteroid.

The only conclusion to be drawn was that just like the blizzard of about three weeks ago, the Sanctuary Bubble had decided to put them through another test. And this new challenge was a daunting one.

Until then, they had been relatively safe on the island during the day because most of the island's creatures were either weakened or dormant after being under the nighttime influence of the Flintium and Orxanium ores. Travelling at night had always been extremely risky and if Jake could not travel underground he would never have been so reckless.

From now on, and if night became permanent, the island would become dangerous by day and night. The creatures would no longer suffer any after-effects after their nocturnal berserk state and the effects of the various Soul Stones on the local flora and fauna would become permanent. The changes this would bring about were difficult to predict, but it did not bode well for the remaining participants.

Even worse! Those aliens and creatures that Jake thought were the Zhorion descendants would no longer need to burrow underground. In recent days, this race had begun to hunt down the remaining Players and deployed many creatures under their control.

Each consecutive night the number of participants had been reduced from 100 to 200, and he could not imagine the consequences this would have now that these aliens could continue to hunt in the middle of the day.

Last but not least was the lack of light. With their Perception stats, darkness was no longer really a problem, but it was still a fact that this detail did not work to their advantage. Humans without a particular bloodline would be at an even greater disadvantage compared to those whose night vision was part of their species or bloodline kit.

Anyway, the worst news for him was that his original plan to delay until the diplodocus weakened was now obsolete. Whatever his approach to enter this tunnel was, he would have to take on this dinosaur at full power.

‘What do we do now, Jake?’ Lu Yan asked, clutching the hilt of her sword with trepidation.

It wasn’t him that she distrusted, but the jungle itself. The frantic roaring and grunting that had stopped a few hours earlier was slowly coming back to life.

As darkness had returned, the eyes of these sleeping creatures had begun to glow a ruby or sapphire glow again, and it was only then that she realized that no matter how quiet the jungle might appear during the day, it was never empty. Hundreds of blue and red irises were forming an ominous firmament in the foliage of the trees around them and it wouldn’t be long before their violent impulses kicked in.

Also aware of the danger, Jake frowned, but he didn’t have any good solutions to offer either. Their base was originally safe, but with the

hypothetical Zhorions chasing the participants, it was no longer a reliable hiding place. There was no doubt that these aliens knew the island inside out.

He just hoped that Tim's luck and sense of danger would allow him and Lily to make it through. Because unfortunately, his previous decision was still valid. His intention to explore the secret underground passage had not wavered.

'Let me see how strong is this fućkínġ creature in his berserk state!'

A month earlier he certainly wouldn't have dared to face this diplodocus head-on, but with his recent progress and his wounds completely healed, he was ready to give it a new try. If that wasn't enough, he would go back to the volcano to take a nap.

Seeing that Jake had made his choice and not daring to contradict him, Lu Yan breathed an umpteenth disappointed sigh and they set off again. Jake grabbed her by the shoulder and they slipped into the ground. A few minutes later, they were back at the foot of the volcano.

'How are you going to do it?' Lu Yan inquired again in order to calm down. No matter how she interpreted the situation, this diplodocus was a tough fellow to deal with.

Scornfully grunting, Jake simply drew his machete and strode fiercely towards the behemoth. Recognizing the CŎCkroach of this morning, the diplodocus savagely stomped the ground as a warning. A cloud of dust was raised in response, the earth shook and the rock in contact with this massive leg cracked immediately. The red crystal in the middle of its forehead kept the monster lucid.

Jake was momentarily speechless. How heavy this dinosaur had to be to break the rock floor with a simple stomping motion. To accomplish the same

feat, he would have needed to use much of his strength and he was pretty sure that the earth would not have shaken like that.

Like the first time, Jake tested the creature's mental defenses, but the aura of reddish Aether coloring the monster's soul immediately dissipated the psychic energy contained in his attack. Only this time he decided not to give up so easily.

Pifhare gmov vftrl fefarlo ovu nmqqui md val ljmzt jvuzu ovu Gzuur Smpi Somru jfl arluzout, Jfcu guefr om hvfrrui ovu Impi uruzew hmrofarut jaovar. Hu ovur hmQnzullut val Snazao Bmtw fzmprt vaQ iacu f lnzare frt dmzQut fr aqqfouzafi fzzmj jvuzu vu hmrhurozfout fii val zfeu om sfrypav. Adouz val daevo fefarlo ovu Nmlc, oval jfl ovu ouhvraypu vu vft nuzduhout om tudurt vaqluid frt zuofiafou ad lphv f laopfoamr juzu om mhhpz fefar.

When he released his control, his Spirit Body unfolded like a cannonball and the tip of the 'arrow' pierced the bestial aura of the diplodocus like a meteorite smiting the ocean and went straight for the head. This mental attack that was carried by Jake's consciousness formed a momentary gap, as if a vacuum had just formed in the monster's Spirit Body and he infiltrated this breach without hesitation.

Within milliseconds, Jake activated his telekinesis and blew up all the large arteries and veins that irrigated the monster's brain. The skull of this dinosaur was undoubtedly sturdy, but the brain inside was as soft and spongy as any other soft tissue. Faced with the full power of his telekinesis, the organ was reduced to a pulp in an instant.

The long neck of the diplodocus began to rock dangerously, then the gigantic body of the monster wobbled from left to right before collapsing heavily to the ground. Lu Yan was already tearing her hair out with both hands when the dinosaur had started to stagger, but when she saw the blood flowing out of all its orifices, she almost had a heart attack.

'God damn it, why did we have to wait so long if you could kill it in less than a second?!'

Of course, she didn't say that, but her accusing and indignant stare said it all. To tell the truth, even Jake could hardly believe it. He had recently conceptualized these new techniques through his experiences, but he had never tried them against worthy opponents. But when he saw the results, he realized how overpowered his Spirit Body was when it was given the right weapon.

From the beginning, he had used his mind as a rudimentary means of controlling the Aether around him. It was like facing a knight in armor and sword bare-handed. Completely futile. It worked as long as he had overwhelming physical superiority, but if the enemy had any talent at all, even a child could have beaten him.

One might have thought that with his present intelligence he could have figured it out sooner, and in fact he did. He had a lot of such ideas in his bag. The only reason he didn't use them was because he didn't think they would work so well.

More importantly, a month earlier his Aether Control was much worse than it was now. What he had just accomplished today was due to the progress of his mental stats, both physically and Aetherically, but more specifically, to all the hours he had spent trying to train his Aether Core.

The very last key element was the Green Soul Stone. By imbuing his Spirit Body with this special energy, his mental attack had acquired a neutralizing property on the murderous and chaotic aura resulting from the influence of the Red Soul Stone.

Waov oval fhmqnialvquro, Jfcu zufiaxut ovfo vu rm imreuz vft frwovare om dufz dzmq nfzoahanfrol jaov rm qurofi tudurlul om lnufc md. Smqu qfw vfsu vft gimmtiarul mz npzhvflut udduhoasu Auovuz Scauil ar oval fzuf, gpo dmz fii movuzl ao jfl f eifzare juferull!

Despite his excitement, he was not blinded. Such an advantage was only possible because the majority of the Players were not yet aware of the danger of these psychic attacks.

After being captured or killed by these Zhorions, all these participants would become extremely alert on this matter for the next Ordeals. As for those who had been eliminated in the first trial, chances were that they would remain ignorant about the subject for an extended period of time.