

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 296 - Second Rescue Attempt

The sad consequence of being drenched with Flintium-rich blood was that they had won the battle, but they were no longer able to rescue their companions. In Jake's opinion, the Ordeal of Lu Yan might even be over...

Having a strong Vitality had a downside. By the time the young woman woke up, which could take at least several hours, her bones would have already begun their healing process long ago. Given that her bones had been practically ground down to powder, the resulting anarchic scarring threatened to permanently incapacitate Lu Yan.

If she didn't commit suicide immediately upon waking up after looking at herself in the mirror, her only hope for healing would be to re-break each of her bones to reposition them, which meant starting the recovery stage from scratch.

Lu Yan had her Aether of Vitality capped at 100 points, while her body was not much different from that of a human athlete of similar morphology. Because of the world's Aether density set at 40 points, her effective Vitality was only 2.5 times higher than normal.

When she injured her Chest a few days earlier, she was able to accelerate her recovery by concentrating her Aether of Vitality in the injured areas to locally amplify her regenerative powers. Alas, her current condition was very different, since this time her entire body was in a critical state.

Jake could still save her, if he put his heart into it, but the situation did not allow him to take such a risk. If a Zhorion, Nosk or one of those humanoid monsters appeared right now, he would be in dire straits.

The Green Soul Stone may have limited his mental fatigue, but his body was a total wreck. He was so scrawny and dehydrated that he too could faint at any moment. It was not without reason that he had simply used his telekinesis to fend off Lu Yan's attacks.

Somewhat frustrated, he glanced down one last time in the direction his Shadow Guide was pointing at, then with a last weary sigh he decisively turned back after picking up the pile of amorphous flesh corresponding to Lu Yan.

A few minutes later, he was back at the entrance of the secret underground passage and a starless night welcomed his return to the open air. While he was still wondering how to recover as soon as possible, Xi's voice echoed in his mind.

[‘Your cousin Noemie is dead.’] She said in a solemn tone.

Jake had instructed her to keep an eye on the Player Ranking and inform him of any changes. Spontaneously, he checked the Player Ranking, then tried to locate the girl with his Shadow Guide in vain. Like his uncle Elijah, she had disappeared to the point that even her dead body had become impossible to detect.

During these few hours of fierce fighting, the number of participants still in contention had dropped drastically again. There were now just over 1,000 participants. At the rate at which the Players were being eliminated, they might only be 100 in two or three days.

The evening had only just begun, but the permanent darkness made such notions meaningless. Without his bracelet, he would have been unable to estimate the time. In any case, he needed to regain his strength first.

Fiware arom ovu bpreiu, vu lhfrut f nfohv md sueufoamr ar lufzhv md nzuw, frt fl lmmr fl f nmmz zfgat Sqaimtmr urouzut val iaru md laevo, vu npisuzaxut val lcpii jaov f lomru nzmnuuiut gw val ouiucarulal.

In order not to fall back into his Berserk state and hasten his demise, he kept his distance crouched on the high branch of a tree and waited patiently for the creature to bleed to death. The Flintium contained in the red blood cells made it difficult to manipulate it through telekinesis, but at least there was no longer any residual bestial aura. With a little insistence, he managed to disperse the blood enough to approach safely.

Jake took great care to extract the remaining traces of blood and then made a tank with his powers and filled it with water at the nearest stream. He then dipped his machete in it to diffuse the energy of the Green Soul Stone embedded in the pommel. The soul energy diffused into the liquid and when he felt it was enough he threw the carcass in to rinse it out.

It was only after all these precautions that he began to munch on the raw monster without even bothering to light a fire. Now that all the creatures were under the Soul Stones' influence all over the island, lighting a campfire had become too dangerous. Without fear or emotion, all the beasts in the surrounding area would have swarmed in straight away.

As big as the prehistoric feline could be, Jake's appetite was even bigger. By focusing his Aether of Vitality and Constitution in his digestive system, he consumed dozens of kilograms of meat and bones until he felt horribly bloated. He then drank about ten liters of water from the tank and only then did he feel that his recovery was back on track.

He then dug a hiding place for Lu Yan, which he dumped inside with the rest of the carcass as well as the tank of purified water. He then plugged the hole and flew directly to the top of the volcano. This was all he could do for the young woman, considering that he did not even care for her. If she was not discovered, she stood a chance of making it through.

Of course, Jake hadn't given up on saving Sarah, Kevin and Kate. His Myrtharian bloodline prevented him from giving up such a challenge so easily. However, he now knew that it was probably impossible. What still motivated him was the mystery behind their capture and what these Zhorions could get out of it.

A moment later, he had found his makeshift cave back in the volcanic chamber and he dug even deeper this time to come closer to the lava. After that, he buried himself again in crushed volcanic rock but without losing consciousness this time.

It took him almost 24 hours to restore his optimal musculature, the time it took for his body to metabolize all the food he had eaten and for the nutrients in the soil around him to be absorbed as well. His physical stats had increased by another 5 points on average and this could be considered as a fair bonus.

During his 24 hour nap, he had had plenty of time to analyze the situation more thoroughly and the death struggle had not been so pointless. Some of these monsters were, in their Berserk form, opponents that presented a real threat to him. Without Flintium, he could never have defeated such an army and he would have retreated long before.

Mmzumsuz, ovu prlvfcufgiu zfeu om caii ovfo oval efsu vaq vft f emmt lwruzew jaov ovu MwzQatafr nfzo md val gimmtiaru. Tvu tazuhohmrluypurhu jfl ovfo val loferfro Auovuz lofol vft nzmezullut qfzcutiw.

[AETHER STATUS:]

[Strength(S): 231.6 points] (202|231.6)

[Agility(A): 230.3 points](199.6|230.3)

[Constitution(C): 224.6 points] (186|224.6)

[Vitality(V): 227.4 points] (188|227.4)

[Intelligence(I): 233.2 points] (216.3|233.2)

[Perception(P): 224.6 points] (214.2|224.6)

[Extrasensory Perception(EP): 223.9 points] (212.4|223.9)

Jake was not so confident in his chances of success, but with his recent progress he had to give it a try. He didn't feel invincible, but at least he had the conviction that he would be able to run away safely in case something unexpected happened.

With a shake, he got rid of the ashes covering him and returned for the third time in a row to the entrance of the secret underground passage. He expected to find a new dinosaur standing guard there, but there was no one around although the diplodocus's carcass had vanished.

This aroused his suspicion, but it wasn't enough to dissuade him. Without hesitation, Jake dashed towards the entrance, and then blended into the darkness of the labyrinth.

He was prepared to meet new monster patrols, but the corridors were deserted too. His victims' blood from the previous day had dried up, while the stench of rotting corpses had begun to reek.

Holding his nose, Jake continued to move forward until he found the site of the previous day's deadly battle where he and Lu Yan had risked their lives. Knowing that this was the only path he had not been able to fully explore, he continued in that direction and unsurprisingly a few minutes later he discovered a staircase going down even lower.

This spiral staircase had been carved out of the rock and seemed to have no end, but he knew in his heart that it was the only way to find Sarah and his two cousins. The Shadow Guide should have been able to direct them to this staircase as soon as he wished to find his comrades, but again the Oracle had proved unreliable.

He didn't have any conclusions to draw yet, but he had the feeling that the Soul Stones had something to do with it. As soon as there was a high density of these minerals in the area, the Oracle's predictions seemed to fall short.

It took him longer to descend the spiral staircase than it did to cross the network of galleries that had led him here, but when Jake arrived downstairs, the grandiose spectacle in front of him made the trip worthwhile.

A gigantic underground city! But this one was not in ruins. Yet, far from teeming with Zhorions and monsters as he had mentally braced himself for, there wasn't a soul living for kilometers around.

The city was as deserted and silent as a ghost town.