

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 311 – Greed

When the Giant Thrall collapsed dead flat on the ground raising a gust of dust and debris, the foot that was blocking the lava fountain was inevitably moved. A geyser of molten rock, like an overflowing manhole cover, began pouring lava once more into the altar square filled with corpses that once hosted the Zhorion crowd.

Jake hadn't really been able to question the identity of the Zhorion controlling the Thrall when he heard footsteps and yelling coming toward him. When he turned his head behind him with a raised eyebrow, he recognized the few surviving prisoners who had managed to escape his lava rain.

With their half-anxious, half-excited expressions, Jake had no trouble understanding their intentions. The Nosk seemed to want to challenge him to a one-on-one combat. In this respect, it was no different from the one he had faced during the blizzard. The lizard-horse alien seemed to be interested in the Thralls' charred bodies and a stream of saliva flowed non-stop from his half-open jaw.

On the other hand, the three humans who had taken command of the prisoners and their few acolytes watched him with unabashed greed. Some of their minions seemed hesitant and their hands trembled slightly as they clutched the Zhorion weapons they had stolen close to them.

Jake expected Kevin and Kate to come back once the battle was over, but they had apparently run away with no concern. Just the opposite of these free prisoners who were now trying to fish in troubled waters.

‘Thank you for your help.’ One of the three leaders blurted out in English with a falsely grateful smile. He was a middle-aged man with pale skin and a full red beard, he had a strong Scottish accent.

Jake peered into the individual’s eyes, but remained silent. He wanted to see how shamelessly this man could behave. Indeed, when the former prisoner took note of his mutism, he felt humiliated inside, but he tried not to show it on his face.

‘I’ll be frank. By being imprisoned here, we have all lost a lot. Beneath the altar is their stock of Flintium and the famous liquid metal used to make our bracelets, which they extracted in previous sacrifices. If it’s not too much to ask, we want a share of the booty.’

On the surface, the request seemed polite, but this man’s perfidious look betrayed his true intentions. Jake couldn’t understand why these humans weren’t afraid of him. He had seen what they were capable of and although they were not so bad, they were not a threat to him.

Did they really think that Nosk and the other alien would help them?

In fact, that’s exactly what they thought. They didn’t know what method Jake had used to trigger such a lava shower, but for them it could only be a long-term plan planned well in advance. It was inconceivable to them that a Player just like them could exterminate an entire Zhorion tribe without shedding a single drop of sweat.

For these three leaders, their capture was only the consequence of a terrible string of bad luck. The proof was that they had no trouble getting free when the opportunity presented itself. If they were the ones who had been sacrificed instead of Sarah, they would undoubtedly have tried something, with or without Jake’s intervention.

Moreover, after those few days in captivity they had a good understanding of the character of the other two aliens. The Nosk spoke little, but lived only for

honor. It did not fear the sacrifice, because each time the priest would give the sacrificed the chance to fight. They all failed because their bodies could not endure the pure energy of the altar, but it was different.

A Nosk, even a weakened one, could easily endure such a berserk form for a long minute. Even if they were then defeated and sacrificed by the Zhorion priest, it was not a dishonorable death.

The other alien did not have the same concerns and was primarily motivated by food. The placid character of a herbivore combined with the appetite of a carnivore. An odd combination, but one that proved deadly if one clashed with its *désirs*.

In this precise context, it turned out that this alien, whom the prisoners knew as Wurching, enjoyed the smell and taste of the Thralls. It was this rampant gluttony that had provoked the tribe's anger and led to its capture.

This alien had a brain the size of an apple despite its great height. Thanks to the Aether of Intelligence, the intellect of this species rivaled that of a human child.

These humans did not know what this alien was doing in an Ordeal reserved for the humanoid species, but they were confident that they could exploit its stupidity. All they had to do was convince it that Jake refused to share the Thralls' corpses.

Cmrsarhut md ovuaz vmloaiu arouroamrl, Jfcu rmrhvfifroiw lhzpoaraxut ovu uknzullamrl md ovu movuz ojm vpqfr iuftuzl fimre jaov ovu fzqut nzalmruzl guvart ovuq jaovmpo dartare frw tallmfrhu ar ovuaz fooaoptul. Tval ezmpn md lpzsasmzl luuqut om lvfzu ovu lfqu feurtf.

In total, there were 11 of them, counting the Nosk and Wurching, which was less than the total number of survivors. Not counting Kevin and Kate, those who did not want to participate in what was to follow had already fled.

Seeing their confidence, Jake suddenly let out a small chuckle of disdain. When he looked down on these humans, he made no secret of his contempt for them. Finally, he nodded his head towards the Nosk and said calmly, 'I accept the duel. Just let me finish with them.'

The Nosk, who hadn't uttered a word until now, bowed slightly, placing one hand against his chest as a sign of acceptance.

Then Jake let out another derisive sneer and turned towards the lizard. With Crunch and his gang of felines, he was already used to animals. Communicating his intentions telepathically with the help of images and sensation was already possible before this Ordeal. With his recent progress, it was now ridiculously simple.

His Spirit Body connected with the Wurching's Spirit Body and after some telepathic fluctuations, the lizard let out a joyful roar before rushing towards the skyscraper-sized corpse of the Thrall, licking its lips with delight.

Seeing their two trump cards leave them with a few words of the human in front of them, the faces of the three humans instantly crumpled. Flee! It was the only idea they could think of right now.

These Players were collaborating together by force of circumstance, but none of them knew each other before their capture. One of the lackeys in the rear ran away frantically without any concern for the fate of his comrades, and that was the signal that started the rout. Seconds later, all the humans, including the three leaders, were scurrying like madmen in the opposite direction of the temple.

Unfortunately for them, Jake was not a forgiving man. Wordlessly, his two hands grasped the void in front of him and a sphere of lava several meters in diameter was immediately torn from the rapidly forming pool of lava around the fountain.

Tvur, jaovmpo jfzrare, Jfcu ommc mdd jaov val jufnmr md qflf tulozphoamr. Lacu f Qallaiu, ovu Mwzovfzafz frt val nzmbuhoaiu Iniao ovu faz, euruzfoare f lpnuzlmrah lvmhc jfsu frt msuzommc ovu dpeaoasul ar fr arlofro.

Once within range, Jake fragmented the lava sphere into smaller projectiles corresponding to the number of targets and fired. As if nine trebuchets had just been triggered at the same time, nine shooting stars passed through the city as fast as a flash and struck their intended targets.

All six minions died instantly. Not because of the heat of the lava, but because of the tremendous momentum of these projectiles. The molten rock remained as heavy as any boulder and at that speed it was even more lethal than a shot of heavy artillery.

The other three survived the impact thanks to their Shadow Guide, but this provoked their pursuer. To increase their luck, the three humans had wanted to separate in different directions, but instead had stayed close together.

This was one of the paradoxes of the Shadow Guide. Normally, dispersing would have allowed at least two of them to survive, but because of the Shadow Guide, the one who was doomed knew that it would cause his loss. Consequently, his logical decision was not to separate from his companions.

By recalibrating the predictions, the three fugitives found themselves stuck together, unable to take any initiative.

As a result, Jake caught them without too much difficulty with an amused face and with a snap of his fingers, the ground under their feet liquefied and wrapped them up tightly like a big coat. When the rock resolidified, the three of them were neck deep in the rock.

‘Please, this is a misunderstanding!’ The Scotsman begged, sweating profusely, his face red and congested by the rock blocking his breathing.

The pleas of the other two leaders resounded immediately afterwards, but Jake ignored their complaints. If they had been on B842 or in the Fifth Ordeal, he might have hesitated, but knowing that they would revive soon after, he felt no remorse or hesitation.

Three mental arrows followed by a telekinetic strike struck the bodies of the three former prisoners and their brains exploded instantly. He didn't know what their abilities and Aether Skills were, but it made no difference. They were like lambs facing a wolf.

A qmquro ifouz, Jfcu jfl gfhc fo ovu fiofz frt vu luooiut val tpui fefarlo ovu Nmlc jaov f duj lozmcu md val eafro ljmzt. Tvu fiaur jfl lozmre, gpo prdmzoprfoiww omm jufcurut. Tvulu sahomzaul hmrlmiatfout val dazlo nifhu ar ovu zfrcarel gw gzareare val lhmzu msuz 215M nmarol.

'Thank you.' The Nosk murmured with gratitude in a long rattle as its head rolled on the ground.

Finally in peace, Jake let Wurching feast on its own corner and went in search of the booty that had driven all those prisoners out of their minds.