

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 319 – Unrest

Somewhere on the island, far from Jake in another cave whose vault was covered with bluish crystals reminiscent of glowing sapphires. The major difference compared to the cave where Jake lay was that the walls were not made of rocks, but ice. The temperature there was many degrees colder than zero.

‘Craig, how are you doing with that hologram?’ A bald man in shorts with a claymore dangling from his hand asked curtly.

‘Shh! Shut up Ryo, you’re distracting me.’ Craig, a small, chubby, black man answered just as curtly.

The two friends who could not stand the darkness of the catacombs were about to squabble again when a footstep sounded from the long corridor behind them. As if the footstep sound was rooted in their subconscious, the two men stiffened up and radically changed their attitudes, smiling at each other as if they really were the best buddies in the world.

There was no light in this tiny room with metal walls and ceiling except for the blue hologram filled with symbols floating above them. Yet the snow-white haired young woman walking towards them could still be admired as if it were daylight. In fact, the young woman’s entire body emitted pure radiance that seemed to be able to overcome even the most stubborn darkness.

Still, what was most captivating was these two hypnotic eyes. The right eye was a deep marine blue, while the left eye displayed a rare amethyst color.

‘How’s it going?’ Ruby asked anxiously.

The question was innocuous and the tone polite, but the chubby man immediately started sweating profusely. The woman was angelic, humorous and unfailingly kind, but they had witnessed her clemency towards her enemies on many occasions.

Never, oh never, would he ever want to antagonize her.

‘This Aether Spell is super hard to crack...’ Craig tried to justify himself while awkwardly gulping down to moisturize his dry throat.

‘How long?’

She had just raised an eyebrow, but for the two men a tiger’s roar on the prowl wouldn’t have been so frightening.

‘A few minutes maximum...’

‘It’s too long, I have a bad hunch. You are our future Aetherist, so don’t disappoint me.’

‘I would never allow myself... Right away.’ Craig complied immediately when she gave him a warning look.

As his chubby comrade got back to work twice as fast as before thanks to his adrenaline rush, Ryo, who had his hands free, couldn’t help but ask how it was going above.

‘The situation is under control. The last pocket of resistance of the Dream tribe has been wiped out by me and Alef.’ Ruby told him honestly with a deadpan face.

‘Oh...’

BOOM! BANG! TATATATA!

‘Hmmm, so what’s all this noise we’ve been hearing?’

Instead of answering, Ruby glanced up in the direction of the shooting sounds and he had to repeat his question again for her to remember him.

‘Nothing special. Bawopi and his group showed up earlier to rescue their three imprisoned comrades.’

‘Bawopi... Bawopi... The Nosk?!’ Ryo exclaimed in amazement.

‘In person. Nosks don’t like the cold. The Dream Zhorions took the opportunity to capture several of them. Bawopi did not appreciate the sacrifices. Bad luck for us, he came when Alef, Xiaoming and I were in the process of eliminating the prisoners. You know our policy. If they’re not human, we kill on sight. He saw this so he’s mad... He has already killed Mary and Rob.’

‘What?!’ Ryo and Craig shouted at the same time. Craig had nearly lost his focus.

‘Let me join the fight. I’m useless here!’ The bald man begged with both hands joined together.

‘Okay. Craig keeps going.’ Ruby agreed after a brief moment of hesitation.

‘Hurrah!’

Ryo dashed towards the exit with his claymore in tow and a few short instants later, a rain of insults mixing English and Japanese began to echo from time to time across the battlefield above.

Meanwhile, under Ruby’s intimidating gaze, Craig had not dared to dawdle. Approximately ten minutes later, a perfect Soul Spell identical to the hologram was reproduced.

Ruby suddenly felt drowsy as visual and auditory hallucinations started flashing around her, but by biting her tongue she somehow managed to

disregard them. After confronting these Zhorions, all of them knew their mind tricks.

When Craig cast the Soul Spell, the circular table in the center opened in half and a pool of liquid alloy was revealed.

BOOOM!

‘Quickly!’ Ruby hurriedly dived into the pool headfirst. ‘Come on, let’s absorb it all and then we can help the others. We’ll share equally later.’

‘Right...’ The chubby man jumped down after her with a reluctant face. He hated metal baths several hundred meters deep underground. Not that he had ever taken one...

Waov ovu ojm md ovuq, ovu nmml iusui tuhzuflut zfnatiw, gpo jvau loaii qmzu ovfr ovzuu-ypfzouzl md ovu nmml iusui zuqfarut, fr msuzjvuiqare nlwhvah nzullpzu md prcmjr mzaear nzullut ovuq om ovu ezmprt fefarlo ovu dimmz md ovu quofi nmml.

Neither Ruby nor Craig could lift their heads. All they heard was a bitter snarl, followed by a ‘Lucky Bastards!’ and the psychic pressure preventing them from moving disappeared along with the pool of liquid alloy swamping them.

Craig didn’t care much about what had just happened as long as he was alive, but when he saw the translucent fangs and the psychotic glare of the beautiful young woman next to him, he felt faint with fright.

‘Craig?’

‘Yes! Anything you want. Just don’t eat me, please! I taste bad and I’m not easily digestible!’ The chubby man suddenly lost himself in a long pleading litany, full of nonsense.

He was scared shitless. When Ruby was like that, her behavior was unpredictable, even for her allies. Recently, it had gotten worse and worse even though nothing bad had happened to them.

Ruby's eyes widened slightly when she saw his overreaction, but she simply put a finger over his mouth to force him to shut up.

'Let's go help the others. I need to let off some steam.'

'Sure...' Craig nodded with apparent relief.

A moment later, when the duo resurfaced, a certain Bawopi who knew nothing about any of this suddenly had a nasty premonition. When he saw the old man named Alef and the Chinese man named Xiaoming retreat for no reason, his foreboding was confirmed.

Tvu fizuftw fglpztiw hmit hfsu lptturiw lfj aol ouQnuzfopzu tzmn frmovuz rmohv. Tvur, vu talhmsuzut ovu lrmj-jvaou vfazut jmQfr jvm vft gpohvuzut val numniu ufziauz frt vu dmzemo fii fgmpo val gft vprhv.

Seconds later, humans and Nosks were once again entangled in a fight to the death that was meant to last until a clear winner was determined. Six Humans against nine Nosks. As for the few Dream Zhorions who had survived in hiding, no one cared about them.

Similarly, another similar scene took place in the center of the island where the Harmony Tribe temple was located. However, the atmosphere there was quite different. Protected by the snow-covered mountain range of the Dream tribe and the volcano and artificial creatures of the Chaos tribe, the green plain where the Harmony tribe was located was calm and peaceful.

A gigantic temple had been built on this plain and a whole city had been hidden inside. The wide and flat platform on the roof of this gigantic

monument was strangely reminiscent of a heliport, but on a drastically different scale.

The entire cave where Jake was now was probably able to fit on this platform with still enough room to add one more aircraft carrier. The overall standard of this temple's architecture and the materials it was made of seemed highly advanced technologically, light years away from the primitive settlements of the other two tribes.

At each corner of the temple, high towers topped with a gigantic emerald crystal loomed over the plain with the tireless vigilance that only artificial intelligence could provide. Under normal circumstances, it was virtually impossible to discover the plain by chance and make it back alive.

At this very moment, inside the temple, hundreds of Players, many of the current top 100, were calmly biding their time, sitting around long stone tables and staring at each other menacingly.

Unlike prisoners from other cities, they were neither bound, chained nor handcuffed. They were free. None of them seemed to suffer any wounds, but the fresh blood spilled on the ground suggested otherwise.

Every once in a while, a Zhorion male wearing a suit with emerald green eyes would drop by to bring them refreshments or snacks, whenever they felt like it. Each time, he would exchange some small talk that made the participants laugh, although most of them chose to ignore or avoid him.

Azmprt f liaevoiw luhiptut ofgiu, f iufr qfr ar val ufziw ovazoaul jvm vft mrhu jmr eifllul jvalnuzut lmquovare om f lqfii, prplpfi tarmlfpz zuluqgiare f dufovuzut gfgw tzfemr.

In front of him, a pink-haired young woman in an amazon outfit was sipping a strange purple mixture while making a face. Whatever the ingredients in this drink were, the result was disgusting.

Although they had lost weight, gotten a tan and toughened their expressions, their features had changed little. An imposing alien was napping next to them, but they didn't care. Jake would have no trouble recognizing them if he saw them. For these two humans were none other than Will and Enya.