

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

### Chapter 510 - Business Plan

‘Why don’t you say anything more?’ Mufasa suddenly interrupted her, tilting his head inquiringly. ‘After our answer, you became strangely concerned.’

Jake had to praise the giant lion’s observational skills.

‘It’s all right. I’ve just become aware of some dangers.’ He brushed off their worries absentmindedly with a pretence of a smile without forgetting to shoot a heavy glance at his cat Crunch.

The black ball of fur got goose bumps when he felt his master’s sanctimonious gaze, but his response was simply to sit on his hindquarters, raise one of his hind legs and reach down to lick his crotch without a care in the world. Jake’s face twitched but he held back from kicking him again.

‘From now on you must use your Aether points to develop your Bloodline and Aether Skills.’ Jake continued in a more serious manner as he turned to the other felines. His cat had already chosen his path and was already beyond redemption. ‘By the way, what do you usually do with your Ordeal Credits? I’d be surprised if the Oracle System didn’t offer you some kind of reward.’

Shere Khan, Mufasa, and the other felines curled their chops in response and cracked an ugly, fang-filled grin.

‘The rewards were perfect. What do you think of my mane?’ Mufasa proudly raised his head in the air to expose his thick black and gold mane that encircled his head and neck like a piece of thick armor.

Jake had never paid attention to these cosmetic details, thinking they were the normal consequences of their evolution, but that was apparently not the case. Dominant African lions usually had a darker, fuller mane than other lions, and if they lost their position as alpha, it tended to thin out.

From this standpoint, it was totally normal for Mufasa to be proud of his mane, but it was also not surprising given his power and position as leader of the Aristocats. So what was so special about that mane for him to be willing to spend his Ordeal Credits on it?

Thankfully, Mufasa didn’t let him ramble on for long. Gladly sharing his Oracle Status, Jake got his first glimpse of the feline’s stats. On paper, his Aether Stats were nothing to write home about, being exactly the same as the ambient Aether density, namely 62. On the other hand, his Body Stats were terrifying and each of his physical attributes were further augmented by the cumulative bonuses and effects of his previous ‘cosmetic’ choices.

[BODY STATUS:]

[ Snuhaul: Adzahfr Lamr ]

[ Height: 7.28 meters ]

[ Weight: 6856kg ]

[ Strength: 5686 points ]

[ Agility: 4857 points ]

[ Constitution: 8563.4 points]

[ Vitality: 7652 points]

[ Intelligence: 67 points]

[ Perception: 2897 points]

[ Passive Aether Skills:]

[Nuqufr Scar: Nufz arspiruzfgaiaow om gipro frt nauzhare foofhcl (Bmtw Cmrloapoamr md lcar\*100)]

[Mane of Myysis: Gives the wearer a natural affinity with the Wind Aether. Because of its sacred origin, it also amplifies receptivity to Aether: (Aether stats= 40 times local Aether density.)]

[Nergal's Claws and Fangs: Nothing can resist them. They are imbued with the properties Corrosion, Disintegration, Bleeding and Life Drain. These abilities are enhanced by feeding on the blood and fears of their prey. These properties can also be infused into the Aether.]

[King's Roar: Each of your growls, snarls, and roars has an intimidating, coercive, and domineering effect on those who hear it that is proportional to the mental strength, loudness, and emotional charge involved, including intent and True Will. If used at full strength, this passive attribute can serve as the foundation for devastating mental and offensive techniques.]

The lion had only a few passive skills in his arsenal, but each had incredible attributes. The first two in particular rendered Mufasa extremely dangerous in the initial stages of a new Ordeal.

Interestingly, he had also awakened his True Will stat, which was blatantly labeled 'Lion Pride'.

In the wild, dominant lions could fight to the death for hours on end even after being castrated or having their spines snapped in half. The

unwavering fighting instinct that characterized these animals was probably enough to cause this very special stat to awaken.

If Jake faced the lion here and now, he might have a chance with his intelligence by skillfully handling and combining his various techniques to enhance his attacks and exploit the feline's weaknesses. But that was only true because the Aether density on B842 was a measly 62.

If Jake had encountered the lion during his last Ordeal, he would have been completely helpless. His Aether stats would have been close to 2500 and the disadvantage would have been impossible to offset. Even if he could miraculously devise a plan to win fair and square, Mufasa would only need a spontaneous attack to ruin his efforts. Escape would have been the only way out.

Shere Khan had an Oracle Status with similar perks to Mufasa, except that he specialized more in speed and ambush. He was also more intelligent and could generate powerful electric currents with his fur.

The other felines in the group had their own unique abilities based on their own morphological characteristics, which were commonplace at first glance. There were obvious limitations to this progression model, but Jake also saw it as an interesting alternative in his quest for power. A new path that could complement his Bloodline's approaching limits.

Hfsare zuhuasut ovu frljuzl vu jfl immcare dmz, Jfcu gzmpevo ovu hurozfi omnah gfhc om ovu ofgiu.

'How much Aether are you able to give me?' He asked seriously, addressing both the lion and the tiger.

The two majestic felines exchanged glances, then Shere Khan nodded,

‘Thanks to Will, our daily hunts have generated a profit of several hundred million Aether points per day and sometimes even several billion when the hunt is good.

Jake gasped as he heard these staggering numbers. He hadn’t kept up with the rate of Digestor blood and corpses on B842, but he doubted that their market value had increased that much in such a short time. It was impossible to achieve this feat by exterminating low-level Digestors.

‘What kind of Digestors do you hunt every day?’ He asked, suddenly intrigued.

‘The kind of prey that gives us the chills.’ The giant lion exclaimed valiantly, licking his lips without going into further detail.

‘Crunch?’ Jake inquired directly to his cat.

‘Mufasa and Shere Khan only hunt Rank 7 and 8 Digestors.’ The Himalayan Persian shrugged as he continued to groom himself. ‘Will buys us each liter of Rank 7 Digestor blood for 10,000 Aether points and Rank 8 for 100,000 points. The corpses are our food, but the ones left over are also sold for 10 to 1,000 times those amounts.’

Jake did a quick mental calculation and was dumbfounded as he realized the absurd amount of Aether this could represent. Rank 7 and 8 Digestors were rarely small. The Pterosaur-like Digestor was absolutely titanic, weighing in at a minimum of several dozen tons. A creature like this must have packed several tons of blood.

Tvu gimmt md f Rfrc 7 md oval laxu jmpit ovuzudmzu wauit fo iuflo 10M Auovuz nmarol, jvaiu f Rfrc 8 jmpit duohv fo iuflo our oaquil ovfo. Att om ovfo ovu sfipu md ovu hmznlul md ovu Haev Rfrc Daeulomzl, jvmlu hifjl, vmzrl, ouuov frt mzevrl juzu sfipfgiu qfouzafil

ar vaev tuqfrt, frt wmp hfr aqfearu ovu vpeu lpql md qmruw ovu duiarul ufzrut usuzw tfw.

On top of that, knowing Will's business acumen, it was a safe bet that he was buying back these Digestors' remains and blood at a slightly below-market price. In other words, Will was making money!

No wonder he was so generous before their third Ordeal, generously donating the Aether each needed before they started their Ordeal. Jake promised himself that he would have a serious talk with him about where exactly all that Aether was going.

However, Jake was not fooled, nor was he jealous. He was also aware that such large amounts of Aether were not so easily earned. The Rank 7 Pterosaur Digestor had been a terrifying opponent that had left a deep impression on him. So much so, that even with his current strength he was irrationally apprehensive about fighting it again.

At the time, he was far too weak to apprehend and gauge the strength of such an adversary and he had to resign himself to watching the fight between the felines and this Digestor as a helpless spectator.

The trees had been uprooted over several dozen meters by the Lion's roar and the Digestor's shrill cry had caused equally devastating damage to the clash's surroundings. Only now did he know that the Lion had instinctively mobilized his innate control of the wind with his Mane of Mysis and the repressive power of his King's Roar to generate such a gust.

He, who at the time had only a haphazard understanding of Aether, had thought their Aether stats much greater than they really were at the time, but he knew now that this fight had been much riskier than he had thought. Any mistake and Mufasa and Shere Khan would have been pulverized.

As for a Rank 8 Digestor, Jake may never have encountered one before. The Silver Butterfly accompanying the Pterosaur Digestor might have been a Rank 6 specializing in intelligence.

‘For now I’ll be fine, but I’d like to go with you on your next hunt after we deal with Kyle’s problem.’ Jake ultimately resisted extorting their Aether from them.

There was no lack of *désiré* and he would certainly negotiate a deal with them, but it was more interesting for him to make them lasting allies rather than naive tenants acting at will.

‘Do you need our help?’ Shere Khan asked amiably.

Jake considered the offer for a second before shaking his head.

‘That should be fine, but if you’re bored you can tag along.’

All the felines’ eyes without exception sparkled in anticipation as they heard they were most welcome. They hunted Digestors for food, but it was primarily because they were bored stiff.

They would never turn down some action served up on a platter.

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