

The Oracle Paths

Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

Chapter 512 - How Dare You!

A few dozen minutes later, Jake deactivated the Purgatory with a splitting headach and an expression of intense frustration on his face. He couldn't count the number of times he'd dreamed of strangling the old man.

It was indeed Farming 101. In that boring half hour, Jake didn't learn much. Quite the opposite. Instead, he was exploited like a lowly servant and forced to do all sorts of menial tasks like milking a cow or cleaning manure.

After this traumatic experience, he was already less optimistic about his ability to obtain these Soul Glyphs. He almost regretted Nylreg's Monster Game. At least in that game, accumulating Roles and collecting Reward Cards was still relatively accessible.

Despite the feeling of being taken for a fool and free labor, the peasant had still fulfilled his duty. Every thankless task he had been given had been explained at length to eliminate any possible confusion. It was concise and clear, and with Jake's elephantine memory, these instructions would be etched in his mind forever.

On the other hand, the farmer never stopped talking once he started and his words were a treasure trove of information. He didn't just limit himself to the task at hand, but also took the opportunity to discuss all sorts of topics. His knowledge was light years ahead of that of a peasant lost in the countryside.

On several occasions, Jake heard him mention strange names and number sequences, and it took him a few minutes to realize that he was referring to actual locations in the Mirror Universe. The terminology he was using to speak was also Oraclean, and if he hadn't memorized an entire dictionary on the subject he probably would have been completely clueless.

After that painful half hour, Jake had unapologetically called it a day, but he couldn't exactly say that his time was completely wasted either. His instincts were telling him that an equivalent manual in the Oracle Store would not be as affordable as one might think at first thought.

The felines, who meanwhile had continued to nap, groom themselves or frolic around, perked up when they saw him reappear.

'Is it time?' Crunch asked excitedly, wagging his tail like a dog.

'It should be.' Jake muttered half-heartedly.

He then contacted Will again to find out the latest on his investigation, and the businessman solemnly announced that he had managed to get some news through the Civilian and Player Hall. As for the additional information, he had obtained it from Svara herself.

Ruquqguzare ovfo val dmzquz ouqnmzfwz lifsu jfl artuut f Nfjfa, Jfcu daepzut ao jfl artuut ovu zaevo ovare om tm, usur ovmpv vu vft rm arouroamr md arsmisare frwmru ar oval zuluhpu qallamr.

'Svara asked to come.' Will mentioned with slight hesitation.

Jake frowned as he considered this option, but in the end he simply shrugged.

'She's free to do what she wants. If she wants to come with us, that's up to her, but it'll probably be dangerous.'

Will laughed bitterly in response.

‘It is precisely because she knows how dangerous this Nawai warlord is that she asked to come. I got the impression she wouldn’t mind a little score-settling, if you know what I mean...‘

Jake remembered that Svava was an independent woman looking for recognition and fulfillment. She was the equivalent of a feminist born in the Middle Ages. The Nawai were so primitive, both biologically and psychologically, that each gender and their behavior was distinctly defined.

There would never be any room for communication or progress as long as the Nawai women would accept submission and the males would let their testosterone and green bean IQs dictate their behavior. On top of that, their morphological differences worked so much against the women that without the Oracle it would have taken a miracle to break this macho and tyrannical spiral.

Jake couldn’t imagine what she had gone through to develop this strength of character, but after living in such a society and getting the chance to extricate herself from it, it was impossible for Svava not to feel a deep resentment.

‘There’s something else too...‘ Will resumed in an even more hesitant and embarrassed manner if that were even possible.

‘What is it?’ Jake asked without really understanding the businessman’s shy and uptight attitude. He didn’t know him to be so fearful and cautious under normal circumstances.

‘Mmmm, nothing... Let’s deal with the Kyle problem first. We better, well you better hurry. I’ll try to buy you some time...‘

Hearing his comrade’s nonsensical spiel, Jake was overcome by a strange shiver of unease. It wasn’t fear, but a sudden trepidation at

the approach of something that was likely to cause him a lot of trouble.

‘All right, let’s go.’ He capitulated with nary a second thought. His keen instincts had saved him more than once, and he trusted them more than he trusted the Oracle System, even if he was bordering on paranoia at times. ‘Let’s meet on Thelma in five minutes.’

Without further ado, he contacted Kyle, who didn’t bother asking why they weren’t just meeting on his island to talk. All that mattered to him was that they were finally going to save his sister.

Jake then informed the felines of their rendezvous point and they put their big paws on the Yellow Cube one by one to meet him there. When only he was left, he took one last look at his uninhabited island and out of the corner of his eye he suddenly spotted a speck of reddish light approaching at high speed from the cosmos.

The only thought he had before he disappeared was that this bright light was coming from Will’s island.

’ Enya or Esya ? Well, whatever...’

He didn’t bother any further and focused instead on the huge platform covered with Yellow Cubes he was standing on. Whether it was pure luck or a twist of fate, Jake reappeared at the exact same Yellow Cube from his last visit and recognized the same old alien named Roth who had answered his questions the last time. Upon recognizing him, Roth greeted him with a friendly wave.

The alien was his usual self with his grayish skin, floppy ears and a long mustache. He still wore his rusty armor covered with gashes and a long, frayed black cloak hung loosely down his back. One notable change, however, was that the Warrior was no longer twice his size.

Tval jfl rmo guhfplu ovu fiaur vft lvzprc, gpo guhfplu Jfcu vft ezmjr ypaou f gao ofiiuz larhu ovur. Tvu suouzfr qftu lpzu om gzare oval om val foouroamr,

‘Hey kid, if you keep growing like that you’re going to outsize me!’ Roth laughed out loud. ‘I can’t wait for that day to come! You can take my place and I can retire, haha.’

Jake strained to laugh as well, but deep down he was definitely not amused.

‘Hopefully, I won’t get that big too soon. Preferably, never.’ He replied in a tentatively detached tone, but he was almost wincing.

Fortunately, Roth wasn’t too well versed in human expressions and his reaction felt perfectly normal to him. Bored to tears, he naturally followed up with another question.

‘What brings you here? Shopping?’

‘If only... This is a rescue mission. A friend of mine’s sister has signed a Slave Contract with a primitive, libidinous alien and I have to find a way to rescue her.’

Roth grimaced as he heard this.

‘Tsk, nasty business. Rarely does this kind of story end well.’ The old alien growled grimly. ‘You’d better give up.’

‘Why’s that?’ Jake was somewhat taken aback by the veteran’s pessimistic attitude.

‘Because if he’s not the ultimate moron, his current master has already put her through hell. You may save her, but be prepared to get a wreck back. I won’t hide from you that Psychotherapeutic Soul Skills don’t grow on trees and they have more than unreliable effects.’

‘And if he’s not too stupid, he’ll stay holed up in an Oracle Shelter or his Floating Island and I wish you good luck in forcing him out. If he’s as horrible as you claim, he’ll be too attached to his comfort to risk everything on a whim. You better pray that the rise in his intelligence wasn’t enough to instill some sense into him and that he’ll respond to your provocations.’

Jake was about to retort that he would find a solution somehow, but he finally caught sight of the familiar figure of his comrades waving at him.

‘My friends are here, I have to go. See you around.’

‘See you around.’ Roth waved at him as he returned to his post. ‘Tell me how your rescue went next time. Maybe I’ll get something out of it.’

His last words seemed full of optimism, but his expression said absolutely the opposite. Having already spent too much time with the disillusioned alien, Jake walked away without looking back and met up with Kyle and Will walking toward him.

A few seconds later, Svava appeared and told them their next destination before disappearing into a Yellow Cube again. Jake and the others followed in her wake and they vanished from Thelma as if they had never been here.

On Jake’s Floating Island, seconds after he disappeared into the Yellow Cube, a reddish flame comet collided with his island’s force field before ricocheting pitifully.

After two more collisions, the comet gradually stopped glowing and a flame-red-haired man in his forties appeared on top of the island on the other side of the force field.

Tval qfr jmzu f Fazu Azhvqfeu ukypalaou zmgu md ovu lfqu hmimz fl val vfaz. Tvu oukopzu jfl zuqaralhuro md suisuo, gpo jfl uqguiialvut jaov rpquzmpl emit-hmimzut loaohvut nfoouzrl ovfo zuhfiiut ovu difqul ursuimnare vaq. Ahopfiiw, oval mpodao jfl qmzu md fr msuzhmfo ovfr f zmgu frt ovu qattiu-feut qfr jmzu prtuzrufov f nfaz md lmdo gifhc iufovuz nfrol frt f ovar fzqmz md ovu lfqu hmimz frt arifat jaov zpgaul.

In addition to this flamboyant outfit, his fingers were adorned with gold rings set with huge gems, as were his neck and ears with heavy pendants and earrings. The resulting look could be called eccentric, but anyone who made that mistake would not live long.

All of a sudden, the red-haired middle-aged man took a deep breath despite the lack of air in the sidereal void, swallowing back his own flames, then bellowed out red with anger, 'Jake! Show yourself before I gut you! How dare you defile my daughter?!'