

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 328 - Bawopi's Revenge

‘Ryo! ‘Craig, the young man, sobbed as he hugged his comrade’s head in his arms as if he could still be saved by sticking it back in the right place.

Instead of getting the sympathy of his comrades fighting the Nosks, he received instead a vigorous kick in the àss from his superior.

‘ Move your àss and get back to fighting. ‘Alef scolded as he tried to ignore the pain at the tip of his foot.

After sharing all the liquid alloy, each of them weighed several tons. Since Craig was one of the strongest physically and didn’t need a lot of mobility to use his techniques, he wore more alloys than the others. Hitting him felt like hitting a stone pillar rooted deep in the ground. Painful and vain. If Craig wasn’t so fat, Alef would probably have broken a toe.

Craig and Ruby carried 5 tons of alloy each, while the others shared the remaining 10 tons. As a result, they all weighed over 2.5 tons and their mobility was severely impacted. Not as much as Jake, but not all of them had a bloodline that multiplied the value of their Body stats by 4.

Alef and Raj especially were still human and depended on specific Aether Skills and Encodings to perform at such a level. The quality of their bodies was not much different from normal humans. Most of all, Alef was quite old and even with the boost of Aether Constitution and Vitality, his body could barely support such loads.

Xiaoming was different. As cliché as it may be, he was a martial arts expert in charge of teaching the basics to special forces and the discovery of Aether

had increased his capabilities tenfold. Younger and less senior than Alef, he assisted him in supervising this team. Like Ruby, he had accepted the Throsgenian bloodline at the end of their first joint Ordeal, where Alef had refused.

As a result, Xiaoming was not as smart as he should be and too aggressive for his own good, but his fighting skills were real. His position in the rankings was not as high as one might expect, but it was not his role to steal the spotlight from the new recruits.

In fact, at that very moment, the martial arts instructor was not fighting as hard as his mates were hoping. Two Nosks were whipping him with their thousands of dendrites and trying to chop him to pieces with their long blades, but nothing worked.

Xiaoming seemed to be in trouble, narrowly dodging every time, but anyone with a trained eye could see three obvious anomalies: He wasn't sweating, his breathing was still and his eyes were blank, as if he was lost in thoughts that had nothing to do with the fight at hand.

'Xiaoming! 'Alef, who was fighting 3 Nosks, including Bawopi himself, repeated the same action as he had done with Craig a few seconds earlier.

The kick in the buttocks this time was much faster and powerful.

BAM!

'Ouch! What's the matter with you old man?! Can't you see I'm risking my life?!' Xiaoming rubbed his buttocks with one hand to repress a sad grimace, while simultaneously parrying the blows of the two Nosks with the spear he was holding in his opposite hand.

Hearing him complaining, a vein palpitated on Alef's forehead, but when he saw Bawopi rushing towards him at the speed of a missile, he drove this irritating assistant out of his thoughts.

‘Ryo is dead. You can say goodbye to your promotion this time.’ He simply informed him before refocusing on his own struggle.

Xiaoming’s eyes widened briefly, betraying a slight surprise, but he soon regained his usual phlegm. However, when he looked at the two Nosks with whom he was crossing swords, the two aliens felt a dull dread overwhelming them. This human suddenly seemed much more dangerous than before.

As for Ruby, she had briefly abandoned them at the beginning of the clash to find their last companion Raj who was stranded elsewhere on the platform. Alef was the fastest, but he had to stay to coordinate the group. Getting there and back hadn’t been so easy because of the staggering number of Zhorion warriors.

Strangely enough, half of these Nosks were in no hurry to fight them. If that was the case, Ruby could never have gone after Raj so easily and Craig would have been killed for sure. Just then, Ryo had taken a fatal strike in his place.

At least their so-called pride was not totally usurped. They seemed to abhor group fighting. Those who were attacking them in groups did not have enough notoriety to afford themselves the luxury of ignoring Bawopi’s orders.

When Ruby and Raj joined the rest of their companion, the first thing they saw were the dead bodies of Ryo and the two Nosks. The young woman’s face darkened abruptly, and the temperature unexpectedly dropped below zero.

The fighting Nosks made a slight wince, but they were not made of the same wood as the one Jake had faced during the storm. With the exception of the two Nosks who had already died, their armor was intact with a smooth, round metallic texture that no locally handcrafted armor on this island could

match. On the other hand, their build was much more developed. Their dendrites were longer and emitted an intense light.

This time Bawopi had planned everything carefully before seeking revenge.

‘The white-haired bitch is back.’ Bawopi eerily declared in Nosk language to his comrades, as he spoke directly into his helmet. The language was guttural, between a growl and the cry of a dolphin with strep throat.

Listening to their leader’s short statement, the Nosks nodded subtly and uttered a sullen war cry with their right fist firmly resting on their hearts.

‘ For honor!’

After repeating this strange oath, the brightness within their dendrites intensified exponentially. Their armor and limbs were mysteriously saturated with a surge of energy, thin white flashes crackling around them from time to time, faintly giving off the roar of thunder.

Faced with this miraculous turnaround, Ruby’s group retreated, but deep down inside they were already foreseeing the worst. Their bad premonition was well-founded.

One of the Nosk who had been fighting Craig disappeared from his position, leaving behind an afterimage. Before anyone could react, Raj who had just arrived was bashed up into the sky. Despite his 2.5 tons, his fractured body rose a hundred meters before slowly falling down.

Next, all the Nosks coiled up their dendrites to form a long cylindrical cannon and pointed the tip of their artificial cannon at the wretched Raj stuck in the air.

WOOOOM!

Thirteen white laser beams containing breathtaking energy instantly converged on their target, producing a blinding flash of light on impact. By

the time Ruby and the others finally realized what had happened, Raj had been disintegrated on a sub-atomic scale.

Ruby was short of breath, and hyperventilating in a disturbing way as if she were in the throes of a violent existential crisis. She had tried to save him by forming a wall of ice, but it had evaporated without offering the slightest resistance. Raj was just too far away.

Faced with such a reversal, Alef, their leader, knew at once that they had no chance of defeating Bawopi and his troops. The Nosks were already incredible opponents in normal times. If they were ready to sacrifice the energy accumulated in their dendrites, it was hopeless...

‘Ruby and Craig, run. The old man announced with a resolute expression. ‘Reach each an Orxanium door and enter directly. Xiaoming and I will hold them off in the meantime.’

‘But...’

‘This is an order!’

Ruby and Craig clenched their fists in frustration, but they obeyed. Fighting them here wasn’t impossible, but it wasn’t the purpose of their mission. Maximizing their rewards was their only priority.

After Ruby and Craig left, the old man barked dryly at his partner.

‘Xiaoming, rejoice. You’re finally going to be able to prove that you deserve your paycheck.’

‘...’

Back on the other side of the platform, Jake had finally reached the door he had chosen. The symbols engraved in the three interstices were identical to the Soul Spell he had learned under the volcano.

In theory and with enough time, he didn't even need to use his Red Soul Stones. Reproducing the Soul Spell was enough. In fact, with his Soul Glyph 'Harbinger of Chaos', he could use the Soul Skill 'Bloodline Ignition' at any time. He was pretty sure it would have the same effect.

The door was deserted and the place calm, but alas it was the calm before the storm. When Jake raised a hand to insert a first stone, he felt the gaze of all the Zhorions within a hundred meters converge on him. It was as if these aliens had been pretending not to see him all along.

Susuzfi Pifwuzl film lpzzmprtut vaq ar fr arlofro, gimhcare fii val ulhfnu zmpoul. Tvu qflfhzu vu vft hfplut ufziauz tat rmo luuq om vfsu aqnzullut ovuq qmzu ovfr ovfo.

Two Wengols almost four meters tall and whose close scent was perfectly matched with their appearance of human octopus had finally decided to attack him. Their breath smelled like rotten fish, but their long claws and fangs already betrayed what their favourite diet was. Fruits and vegetables were clearly not their cup of tea...

'Can I help you gentlemen?' Jake asked kindly with an extremely relaxed posture now that he knew there was no real trouble getting in. He could have a little fun with them.

The two Wengols exchanged a confused look. They were obviously not ready to see this human initiating the conversation. The Zhorions all around did not change their expression. For them it was normal that the human was trying to negotiate. They were rather surprised by his composure.

Was he really that confident or was this just a facade?