

The Oracle Paths

Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

Chapter 537 - Ahem... Let's Go

An awkward silence ensued where Jake found out he wasn't as charismatic as he'd thought. In his mind, he visualized the refugees letting out a loud war cry before charging forward relentlessly like in Lord of the Rings' final battle, but no one moved an inch after he gave his order.

'What the hell dude?! We don't want to test the waters just to die for nothing.'

A vein bulged across his forehead as he bore witness to this mutiny. He didn't need to be a genius to guess what was going through all of their minds. He hadn't forgotten that these refugees were still hopelessly scared just a few hours ago. It was too much to expect them to reform in such a short time.

Abandoning courtesy, Jake raged, 'If you don't attack now, I'll end your life!'

For good measure, he drew his sword and charged like a cannonball at the Rank 9 Digestor who was still standing. As he plummeted, a huge jet of white flames was ejected from his feet to propel him forth, while a telekinetic barrier enveloped him to increase his aerodynamics and further accelerate his fall.

With this two-lever propulsion, Jake momentarily reached a speed close to that of Shere Khan, but this was only possible because he was

hurtling straight down like a missile. When he was about to collide with the Rank 9 Digestor, he slashed down.

Just before impact, the blade of his brand new sword became white hot, generating a blinding flash of light. At that very moment, the Rank 9 Digestor, which had not moved one iota since the very beginning, jolted. With an inhuman twist of its torso, the monster contorted itself just enough to avoid being split in half.

‘Tsk...‘

Jake’s blade sank into the monster’s flesh like butter, slicing down from the left collarbone to the armpit on the same side. With a thud, a monstrous arm crashed to the ground, spilling a stream of silver blood and some other dark, opaque blue substance.

Shhhrrrrriiii!

Jake winced in pain as he took in the monster’s howl at close range. His vision temporarily blackened at the edges as a metallic taste filled his mouth and throat.

At the same time, the white-hot blade of his new sword evaporated instantly, the material not having survived the impact and temperature stress. Filled with regret, Jake reluctantly discarded the hilt of his useless sword before refocusing on the creature.

The truth was, he himself had trouble believing his attack was effective. He hadn’t seen how Grash had attacked this monster, but seeing his utter failure he had already resigned himself to the fact that his attack might not have any effect. Cutting off a limb of this Digestor was already more than he had hoped for in his wildest dreams.

But a mere few seconds later, he understood why the orc had told them it was futile to try to kill this thing. Like Kelly and Grash before him, his face turned livid and he felt his legs go limp with weakness.

'What's happening to me?!' A horrible feeling of despair and helplessness suddenly swept over him. He felt so weak right now that he was about to black out. If he hadn't tempered his will during the previous Ordeals he probably would have fainted with hardly any resistance.

Through his Myrtharian Eyes, he could see how a myriad of points of light were leaving his body to merge with the Digestor's Aether signature in front of him.

'Is it stealing my Aether?' Jake felt a shiver of horror as he felt his strength ebb away.

Just when he thought he couldn't resist any longer, the feeling of tiredness suddenly stopped worsening. With his Myrtharian Sight, he noticed that indeed those points of light had stopped leaking from his body. Whatever the enemy's intentions were, the goal had been achieved.

Immediately teleporting away from the monster, Jake used his new Aether Skill for the first time in sad circumstances. Huffing and puffing, he watched, sweaty and pale-faced, as the monster's severed arm seemed to evaporate into a bluish mist, which merged seconds later with the main body.

With its body intact again, it was as if Jake's epic strike had never happened. After that, the Rank 9 Digestor lay still as a statue, waiting patiently to be struck again.

The other refugees gulped when they saw this, but at least they knew now that this thing did not want them dead. The only trouble was

that due to Jake and Grash's sallow complexion, they were reluctant to approach this creature. However, under the gloomy gaze of their leader they stopped hesitating.

'Fine, it's just a strike...' the old man growled as he stepped forward with his spear.

Taking a deep breath, he hurled his spear with all his might like a javelin. After seeing how Jake had suffered in hand-to-hand combat, he had elected instead for a ranged attack. It was fairly ingenious, but alas, he did not escape his retribution either.

A blink after the spear disappeared into the monster's chest, Ingranus turned pale and fell to his knees coughing up a pool of blood. It was only after he had rested for a good minute, gasping for breath, that he managed to stand up, his clothes drenched in sweat.

The old man's recklessness confirmed to the other refugees that they too were in no danger, and each in turn began to attack the creature. Jake didn't like it, but unfortunately he had no better option. If it wasn't for the fact that this Digestor refused to attack them, most of them would have been dead long ago.

Oru gw mru, ovu zudpeuul ukuhpout ovuaz zptaqurofzw foofhcl.
Smqu ozaut om plu f zusmisuz md jvahv ovuw vft nzuhampaliw cuno
ovu gpuiiul, movuzl hvfzeit dufziulliw jaov ovuaz ljmztl, fkul frt
lnufzl ar vftrt iacu Jfcu frt Gzflv ufziauz, jvau Ssfzf luro vuz dmpz
Svftmj Wmisul om gaou ovu uruqw ar ovu vmnu ovfo ovuw jmpit
lpdduz ovu hmznmzfi npralvquro ar vuz louft.

Will, who hated fighting, also swung his sword with a disgusted look on his face while his dragon belched a dense stream of blue flames at the Digestor to no avail.

None of this changed the outcome. Bullets, weapons, fire and even Svara's Shadow Wolves vanished without a trace in the monster's body. Each time, whether the attack was in close combat or at a distance, physical or mystical, the attackers suffered a violent backlash.

Their faces turned pale, a taste of blood filled their mouths, while an irrepressible dizziness threatened to make them faint. The most disturbing thing was that everyone experienced the same symptoms regardless of their stats.

While everyone sacrificed an attack to the enemy, Jake meticulously examined his body and his Spirit Body, not forgetting to check his Oracle Status, and after a while he came to a terrible conclusion.

' My Bloodline, my Aether, Body and Soul Stats all weakened slightly...'

It was no big deal if it was only his Aether or Body Stats. As annoying as it was, he could always make up for the loss with time and perseverance. The weakening of his Bloodline was much more concerning, but fortunately the difference was barely noticeable. With enough heat and radiation, he would recover in a day or two.

Yet not everyone had a Bloodline whose strong point was regeneration and could easily be stimulated by various energy sources. For many, this minimal weakening of their Bloodline might require several months of rest to restore their original strength.

'This shouldn't be allowed to happen again...' Jake thought with a brooding mood.

He wasn't the only one worried. After enduring that backlash, anyone eager to relive that feeling of being drained surely had a screw loose.

Al ovu iflo zudpeuu daralvut val foofhc, Jfcu frt ovu movuzl guhfqu saeaifro fefar, nzunfzare dmz ovu jmzlo, gpo ovur, fl nzmqalut gw Gzflv, ovu Rfrc 9 Daeulomz imlo arouzulo ar ovuq. Waov f tuun zpqqiu, aol gmtw iaypudaut, tzmnnare om ovu ezmprr ar f vpeu npttiu, fl ovu mnfyvu iaypat ovfo qftu ao pn luunut arom ovu ezmprr proai ao talfnnufzut hmqniuouiw.

Jake scanned the ground with his mental sense, and then his bracelet before declaring,

‘It’s gone.’

Once the monster was gone, the accumulated tension dissipated all at once, and many of the refugees collapsed like puppets whose strings had been cut. The others cheered in celebration of their survival.

‘Phew...’ Will wiped off the sweat on his face as he let his baby dragon carry him around.

‘You’d have to stop depending on your big lizard.’ Svara didn’t mince her words as she saw the businessman’s laziness.

In response, the ‘big lizard’ snorted as he spewed a cloud of black smoke from his nostrils.

As for Jake, he remembered that he still had one last piece of business to take care of and he took off with a sonic boom to look for a certain ‘deserter’. The screams of agony and gunfire seemed to have diminished in frequency and intensity on the side of the three factions, a sign that their battle was also nearing its end.

Flying silently, he wasted one more scan to locate Kyle and heaved a relieved sigh when he found him standing at the edge of the three factions’ camp, hidden behind a bush. It was hard to believe, but he hadn’t completely lost his mind yet.

Landing stealthily behind him, Jake caught sight of him spying on the enemy camp with a complicated expression on his face. Following his gaze, he saw that he was staring at a certain young woman who bore a slight resemblance to him. Most likely aware of his arrival, Kyle suddenly began to speak with a guilty tone,

‘Um... You know, I just came here to see if she was okay. I didn’t intend to charge around like a moron unless of course... well you know...’

Walking to his friend’s side, Jake stared at Maeve, then at Bhuzkoc with a thoughtful expression. ‘She’s stronger than I thought. She didn’t suffer any injury.’

‘It’s my sister for you!’ Kyle exclaimed proudly before relapsing into melancholy. ‘Bhuzkoc protected her. As much as I hate that lowlife, he seems to care about my sister. As long as he does, she will be safe.’

Just after saying these words, Jake and Kyle saw the barbarian dragging the young woman into his tent, and guttural mōàns and groans soon came out. The playboy immediately turned red with anger.

‘Ahem... Let’s go..’ Jake said, scratching his chin to mask his embarrassment.