

Act II - Zach

The shades charged into the fray, and Gemheart and his people reacted immediately. The spirits had been mostly dealt with, at least those near him, leaving only a few dozen coming over the sides of the bridge. Zach focused on them and let Gemheart and his people focus on the shades.

He used Mistral to send blades of air that cut into the spirits and sent them tumbling back over the bridge. Naha protected him from those that came close. As the last spirit was dealt with he turned around to see the others battle the shades and spirits that attacked with them.

Gemheart had six diamond looking gems orbiting him firing blasts at the strongest shade who deflected them with his sword. The other shades clashed with the Kishua and the others, but the shades outnumbered them without Zach and Naha. Seeing no other choice Zach and Naha joined the fight. Zach tried to go for the shades that had two concentric circles, since they seemed to be the weakest.

What surprised him was that he couldn't see their names above their heads, suggesting that they weren't really monsters. But he tried to use his **The Ring of Deepscan** on the closest one to him.

Name	Veiral Hemal
Class	N/A
Level	N/A
Main Path	N/A
Realm	N/A

Zach frowned at that, but he had no time to think about it. The molten shade turned to him and jumped forward, its sword swinging for his neck. Zach raised Mistral and blocked, then used his **Wind's Favorite** to send a blast of wind at him making him stagger back. Zach dismissed Mistral as Naha jumped in, swiping at the shade with her weapons. He couldn't use Mistral here as all of them were too close to each other, he had little room for big swings.

Zach pulled out his dagger and summoned his **Ethereal Sword**. Then, he activated his **Phantom Avatar**. Immediately he felt his stats increase, a faint mist raising through the seams in his armor. He knew that his body had changed, that his skin had gotten paler and his eyes turned all white, but his armor hid all of that.

He saw Naha take a big swing, her dagger striking with great power. The shade blocked with its sword, but she was stronger. Her dagger pushed the sword away and she stabbed it in the shoulder. Zach heard the shade scream in a reverberating voice and he jumped forward, moving with precision around Naha and lashing out with his rapier. He stabbed it in the throat and then swung around with his other hand, his **|Perfect Tempest Dance|** guiding his movements as his dagger stabbed into the side of the shade's head. He felt the Essence flow into him, and then the shade fell to the ground lifeless.

He glanced at Naha, who moved a step back to stand next to him as a spirit attacked her. She evaded its claws and stabbed her dagger into the armpit, then cut at it with her short sword.

He looked around, seeing Kishua dancing around the two shades with two concentric circles, cutting them up. The two green skinned shades were casting ranged abilities, some kind of bolts of green energy that the caster ravor was blocking while also sending back attacks at the same time. The others were engaged in combat with the spirits and the sphinx.

Zach focused on staying back and killing any spirit that managed to come over the bridge's side. Then he saw the eight circled shade, the one that looked like a lizard-man, jump into the air, and fly directly at Gemheart. The four diamonds surrounding him moved and a prismatic shield appeared around him as the shade swung its large sword. The blade impacted the shield and released some kind of an attack that shook the air and sent a blast of power spreading everywhere.

Zach braced but he was still thrown back, tumbling across the ground. He saw Kishua get blasted off the bridge and scream as he fell into the dark. Zach rolled and smashed into the short stone railing, cracking it and half tumbling over. He struggled to catch himself, but then something sharp bit through armor on his leg and stabbed into him, halting his tumble. He turned

and saw Naha, still in the middle of shifting into her ravzor form. She had changed one arm into a massive claw and stabbed it into the ground, while her normal ravzor hand had caught him.

Zach pulled himself back up, and nodded at her.

He glanced around seeing Gemheart with his cannons cut into pieces fighting the shade. He had something that looked like diamond bracers over his arms and was using his great size to push the enemy shade back.

Zach got back to his feet, and saw that the shades had taken advantage and were pushing the others back. Gemheart had his hands filled with the lizard-shade and couldn't help them, and the sphinx one seemed very powerful.

Something caught Zach's eye and on instinct both he and Naha jumped back. Zach used his **Wind's favorite** to send wind into the fabric beneath his arms and push himself back faster. A hammer smashed into the ground cracking the bridge and Zach saw the yeti. His eyes almost red, with three circles surrounding it. Zach hadn't been much impressed with the previous shade, and had started to think that Gemheart underestimated Zach. He wondered how much more powerful this shade could be.

He readied his weapons as the yeti lowered his center of balance and prepared to fight, but Naha jumped him. An army of spectral spirits appeared around her and charged the yeti, and she ducked and hid behind them, preparing to take advantage.

The yeti ignored her **{Phantom Army}** and instead smashed his two hammers together. A sound unlike anything Zach had ever heard stabbed into his head, making his ears ring. He fell to one knee and saw Naha doing the same. She recovered before Zach did, probably using her regeneration perk. She attacked, her dagger cut the air in front of her from her kneeling position. Her **|Spatial Cut|** opened a gash on the yeti's face as he moved out of the way and sawed his throat.

He turned to her and snarled, then charged her. Zach shook his head, and then pulled out a potion. He was feeling dizzy, his sense of balance completely disrupted. And he didn't know how long the effect was going to last. He downed the potion and felt the damage to his ears heal. He stood up,

still somewhat shaky and saw Naha barely holding her own against the yeti, as he pushed her toward the edge of the bridge.

He saw what was going to happen, she didn't have many powers to handle straight up fights, and even with her greater strength she couldn't damage the yeti fast enough. She had opened up wounds on the parts of its body that weren't covered in armor. And while they were bleeding, or at least he hoped that they were, since they were releasing some kind of green mist, Zach could see that it wasn't enough.

Zach moved his Qi, preparing his technique as he charged across the stone bridge. He activated **Old Heritage** and his stats increased. Then he used his **[Ethereal Leap]** then his **[Ethereal Chains]**. He wrapped the yeti up, letting Naha stab it in the shoulder as it twisted and protected its heart. Zach pulled himself to the yeti and activated his **{Lightning Strike}**. Before his strike landed the yeti did something and Zach's chains burst apart, he kicked Naha wrenching the dagger out of his shoulder and then swung with his hammer sending Zach's rapier of course. His other hammer flew toward Zach's head, and he was forced to use his **|Spatial Evade|**, his body flickered midair and the hammer passed through him as Zach evaded to the side. The moment his feet hit the ground his skill was done and the yeti shouted and an amplified yell hit Zach in the face making his eardrums burst again.

Disoriented, he had no chance to evade the strike that followed.

Both of the yeti's hammers smashed into Zach's chest. He felt his ribs crack as he was picked up off the ground and sent flying back. Naha appeared behind the yeti and stabbed him in the neck with both weapons, killing him, but her eyes were locked onto Zach.

They were open wide in a fearful expression. She yelled something, but Zach's eardrums were ruptured and he heard nothing, as he flew over the edge and started to fall down. He tumbled in the air, his sense of equilibrium completely disrupted. He couldn't tell which way was up or down. He pulled out a healing potion, one of the high grade ones that Gemheart gave him and downed it. He felt it work, the pain disappeared, but he still couldn't hear anything, and he was still completely disoriented.

He grimaced and pulled out another potion. He downed the **Soul Restoration Potion**, and a few seconds later his soul healed and his ears started to work again. The only thing that he heard was the passage of wind. He saw that he was falling and twisting in the air wildly.

He put his hands out, and summoned wind with his **Wind's Favorite** perk. He stabilized himself and then tried to push the wind up into the wing-suit area beneath his arms. He slowed, but he was falling too fast and was too heavy to push himself up. The wing-suit wasn't designed for flight, his power over the wind wasn't enough for that yet. At most he could somewhat glide. He grimaced as he realized that the most he could do was to make sure that he doesn't splatter all over the ground.

He looked around, the glowing walls with symbols were all around him, but there were no other bridges, only the darkness below. He focused on trying to use the wind to slow down his fall, but he was still falling pretty fast, certainly enough to kill himself if he hit the ground. He tried to think about what he could do, but there was nothing. The good news was that there seemed to be a long way until he reached the bottom, he would probably have enough time to slow down.

After what seemed like hours of falling, he reached the area where the glowing walls stopped, the rest was only filled with darkness, but he could see fairly well with his **Night Eyes**. There were still symbols and formations on the walls, only they didn't glow. Zach wondered what that meant, but he didn't have the time to dwell on that as he saw the bottom.

He had slowed down a lot, but he knew that it was still not enough. He pushed himself toward one of the walls with the wind, unequipped his armor to lower his weight, and then summoned Mistral. He stabbed the great sword into the wall, and was immediately and violently jerked in two directions. The sound of rending stone filled his ears as Mistral cut through the stone, slowing Zach down. He struggled to keep his hold on his sword, his hands barely holding on.

Finally, he reached the ground. He smashed into it with enough force that he broke both his legs, even with the wind cushion that he tried to make at the bottom.

He stayed on the ground for a few moments, looking up at the tiny point of light on top. He grunted and then sat up, then dismissed Mistral. He gritted his teeth as he looked at his legs and then pushed the broken bone of one leg back inside and tried to fix it in place as best as he could. The other leg hadn't broken the skin, but he still had to push the bone into place. He stifled a scream as he did so, and then pulled out a potion and downed it all, then he pulled another and poured it over his leg. He heard cracks as his bones fixed themselves and he sighed in relief as the pain disappeared.

If he hadn't had his **Phantom Avatar** on, he wasn't sure that he would've survived that. He shut down his perk before he got completely drained and then looked around. He saw a dark shape in the distance on the other side of the room and he stood and walked over.

It was a patch of blood and gore, and Zach realized that it was Kishue who had smashed into the ground once he fell. He hadn't had any way to slow himself down. He looked around, seeing two of his swords but not the other two. Zach realized that the man probably lost these ones in the fall, since they were a bit away from the body. His other two were missing, but judging by the fact that he was close to the wall, Kishua probably tried the same thing that Zach had, and his swords got stuck in the wall while he continued on.

Zach took the swords and put them in his storage. Both were legendary weapons, but he didn't take the time to look at them, he didn't think that he had the time. He looked around and found the man's storage ring and took it as well. Then he looked around the room and found his dagger that he had lost in the fall.

Zach then studied his surroundings. There were six doorways, each dark and probably leading somewhere where he didn't want to be. Zach didn't know what this place was, Gemheart believed that it was a dungeon. And that was still possible, a wild dungeon would show any prompt that you were in it. But one could usually recognize it by the way it looked, as far as Zach was aware. The issue was that this place was in the Ethereal Realm.

He didn't know what to do. The obvious was that he had to get back up, the issue was that he was pretty sure that he had been falling for a long time. He could be a dozen kilometers below the bridge where the other were.

He didn't know what they would do, his portal would last for the day, so they could get back out even without him. Unless they stayed for longer. He didn't know if they would be able to find their people, but he hoped that they would.

Zach heard a noise from across the room, and immediately moved. He dashed for one of the doorways and entered, hiding behind it. He looked across the room from cover, and saw spirits enter the room, their names and levels visible above their heads.

Lower Prison Warden Spirit (LVL 290-Early Immortal)

Zach swallowed and tried to make himself as small as possible. He knew his limits, and fighting three monsters like that was beyond him. The three spirits looked similar to the ones on top, only larger and with an additional set of arms.

They walked over to Kishua's body and looked around. They seemed to talk among themselves and then picked up the remains and dragged them off into one of the doorways.

Zach waited for a long while after they were gone before he relaxed. He looked around at the dark walls, his eyes showing him that the corridor behind him extended for a while.

He didn't want to stay here in case that more of those spirits arrived, so he moved, heading down the corridor. He put Kishua's ring on his finger and looked through it, hoping to see something that would help him out.

He knew that he couldn't survive down here without being stronger, but while Kishua had some Essence Crystals, he didn't have enough for Zach to level even once.

He saw two more **Soul Restoration Potions** and he moved them to his own storage, there were a few more potions that he looked over and then drank. One let him see better in the dark, and while his **[Night Eyes]** were good, there wasn't much light here for him to see better. Immediately after he drank it everything turned grayish and he could see a lot better.

He downed the stat increasing potions as well, boosting his stats as much as possible. He knew that if he ran into something like those spirits again, he was going to need them.

Finally, he reached the end of the corridor and saw that he now had to choose which way to go. The corridor split to the left and right. Zach picked at random and headed right.

He walked for a few more minutes before he saw something in the distance. As he approached, he realized that what he saw were bars on the walls. He reached them, and slowly peered in one of them.

Inside was a being, looking like the molten shades up above. His eyes stared aimlessly ahead and the formations on the walls of the cell were glowing faintly.

Zach saw nine concentric rings.

Every cell was occupied by shades, and each had either no less than seven concentric rings. And all of them were in the same position, sitting on the ground with their eyes staring ahead. Zach figured that the formations in the cells had to be keeping them in that state somehow.

The fact that all of them were shades made him think that this was a prison for them. Which made him question the presence of shades up above. Had they been the guards? Or were they prisoners that had been released to help defend the prison?

He had no idea, but one thing was certain, this place was strange and it operated on the rules that Zach knew nothing about.

He walked through the long corridor, and reached the end. He saw stairs curving and leading down. He grimaced, he needed to go up, not further down. He turned around and took a step when he saw a shape far in the distance. One of those spirits had just entered the corridor and it froze as it saw him. Then it spoke in a tongue that Zach didn't understand and rushed forward.

Zach's eyes widened and he turned and ran down the stairs, hoping that there was something there where he could lose it. But judging from its speed he doubted that he could get away. It had already closed the distance between them by half as Zach entered the stairs. He ran down, jumping and using the wind to push himself around.

He could hear it behind him, smashing into the wall as it entered the circular staircase. Zach reached the bottom and entered a medium sized room with low walls. There were four doorways leading away from the room, and a large hole in the middle of the room. Zach could hear the spirit behind him, closing in. He didn't think that he could outrun it. So he stepped to the side of the doorway he came in and summoned mistral. He activated **Phantom Avatar** and **Old Heritage** as he channeled his skill. The spirit entered a few seconds later and Zach swung.

|Flurry Strikes| hit the spirit and sent it flying into the wall, cracking it. But Zach saw that his attacks barely pierced the skin. He realized that there was nothing that he could do against monster like this.

But he didn't want to give up, he couldn't leave Naha alone. He attacked again before the spirit could recover, using his **Dazzling Strike**. He connected with its arm, not even making a cut. But he heard a screech that seemed to come out of its body, since it had no mouth. He stepped back as it attacked with its four arms widely, in its blindness. Zach pulled out and threw one of spirit bombs in its face. It twitched as its head started sizzling. Zach pulled back and focused on his sword and then stabbed forward using his **Double Ethereal Strike** and aiming for the most vulnerable area he could see. He stabbed it in the eye.

Mistral pushed through and the monster stiffened and jerked. Then the Ethereal attack followed, hitting the same spot. The monster jerked again and one of its arms hit him in the chest, the claws opening him up and cutting through his ribs as he was sent flying back. Zach hit the edge of the hole in the middle of the room with his back, felt a bone crack again and then he tumbled down, falling into the hole.

The pain nearly made him black out, but he knew that he couldn't afford that. He looked down and saw only darkness, not even his eyes with the potion could see through that. He pushed the wind up slowing himself down and then he hit the ground, hard.

He focused on his pain in order to keep himself awake, and pulled out a potion that he downed immediately. Then he downed one of the **Soul Restoration Potions**.

He felt himself heal slowly and he focused on his breathing. He looked up at the hole opening, waiting for the spirit to show up. When it didn't he pushed himself up and groaned. He didn't know if he had managed to kill the spirit. He didn't know if it had something like a brain or if it was more susceptible to Ethereal damage or what, but it wasn't coming after him at least.

He had notifications, but he his head was hurting too much for him to pull up his screens and check if he had gained Essence for the spirit or not. The pain kept intensifying, and Zach frowned, not knowing what was wrong.

Then, he heard movement, chains hitting the ground. He looked around but saw only darkness.

“Oh,” a voice in the dark said. “What is this now? Am I dreaming again? Didn't I break the dream?”

Zach swallowed hard and then the walls light up slowly, pulsing with power and filling everything with light. A sharp pain hit his head again and he grimaced and let out a hiss of pain. His vision going dark for a moment.

He managed to shake it off long enough to look at the speaker.

It was sitting in the corner, chains wrapped around its wrists and ankles. It was a yeti, and its head was turned in his direction squinting at him.

“Ah, the dream is for you then,” the yeti said.

Zach pulled out his [The Ring of Deepscan](#) and looked at him.

Name	Ra'azel Equinar
Class	N/A
Level	N/A
Main Path	N/A
Realm	N/A

“You need to face yourself, little visitor,” the yeti said as the pain and the light around him intensified. “To face your demons and understand the truth. It is the only way to break the dream.”

Zach could barely see, let alone ask questions. He opened his mouth to speak, but the only thing that left his mouth was an agonizing scream.

The yeti leaned forward, opening his eyes wide open. “Break the dream soon little... whatever you are, I would enjoy speaking with someone again... It had been too long.”

The last thing that Zach saw were two eyes staring down at him, glowing with eerie blue light, and eighteen concentric circles filling them.