

## Oracle 541

### Chapter 541 – Promising Recruits

Ingranus, the old man, had become accustomed to his new fitness and with his spear optimally sharpened by Grey Aether he had started to fully display his skills as a lancer. His past as a knight no longer seemed an empty lie.

Nicolet, the blond Egean, had no distinctive elemental affinity like some of his people, but perhaps he had never been given the chance to awaken this trait. In the Mirror Universe, the elemental particles abounding in Ega's atmosphere were all but absent, so he could only rely on his Aether and Body Stats to fight. Despite this, his origins from a medieval world ensured that he had a decent physical condition and rudimentary fighting skills. Compared to other refugees, he was relatively comfortable with his sword.

Diccon, his fighting buddy, was a short, stocky, hairy guy who had a sharp tongue, but he sure had plenty of courage to spare. On his home world, the planet Xor, he must have been a lumberjack or something like that because he was pretty handy with his axe. By dint of slaughtering monsters he was getting the hang of it and even appeared to be enjoying it.

Takoyaki, the octopus alien, was probably the one who benefited the most from his power-up. Being more adapted to the ocean than to land, his physical condition was poor and despite his humanoid appearance, he was still an invertebrate. He had no skeleton to resist gravity and support his body, so his muscles worked hard to hold his body together by constantly contracting. With the Myrtharian Body passive and his new Aether stats, he had regained a high degree of mobility.

With his tentacle arms, he could manipulate several weapons at once and each of his limbs contained a peripheral brain giving him exceptional coordination. In terms of dexterity and learning potential, this alien was undoubtedly superior to humans.

The old goblin couple, Xort and Niss, on the other hand, were limited by their age and small stature, but it was not for nothing that these creatures had a bad reputation in folklore and modern literature. Favoring the use of daggers and curved blade cutlasses, their attacks were vicious and sordid, striking directly at the private parts. Jake didn't know if the Digestors had genitals, but he couldn't help but feel genuine compassion for their victims.

Kelly and her adopted brother Khal had gotten close to Svava, who seemed intent on taking them under her wing. Under her supervision, she had begun to fight like a tigress. The death of the balding man was still fresh in her memory and each of her moves was filled with rage and resentment. They gave her an inexhaustible energy and valiance.

As for Khal, he may have been only 7-8 years old, but his passive Aether Skill was as breathtaking as you would expect from an Oracle gift. The Digestors, notorious for their devouring appetites and deep-seated hostility to any species other than their own, tended to ignore him and focus on the other refugees nearby, especially Kelly. If one of these monsters did end up attacking him, very often the attack lacked enthusiasm and punch.

However, this Aether Skill was far from invincible. How could such a Skill be given away for free, even to help a helpless child? If there was one thing Jake knew for sure, it was that the Oracle was not a philanthropist. There was a limit to his generosity and he never acted without reason.

In any case, Khal could be called talented. He was one of the refugees who had spontaneously awakened his seventh stat and with each passing second he was becoming more adept at controlling and perceiving Aether. His unique Aether Skill, which had previously been passive, had become more proactive and he was already influencing Rank 1 Digestors to make crucial tactical mistakes. A little more and he might soon be able to control them like puppets.

"Not bad." Jake nodded as he watched the kid. They could make the kid a crowd-control mage or something if that proclivity were to become more apparent in the days to come.

Elsewhere on the battlefield, Secyone, the former redheaded prostitute, had also begun to walk a new path where fear and hesitation had no place. She still feared for her children's lives, but they were now fighting alongside her.

Older than Khal, these two boys had a composure comparable to Tim after his first Ordeal. At school, Jake was willing to bet that they were the rambunctious, daredevil type.

In addition to these refugees, there were also a dozen others who showed promise. The first was this creepy orange turkey with a helmet on his head. Flanked by an army of chickens and other fowl that Jake didn't include in the count of refugees under his protection, this turkey was leading them into war with unwavering ferocity.

Gobbling like a fierce king, Jake and the others regularly had to duck their heads to avoid the flock of birds battling overhead. With their increased strength the turkey and other birds were now powerful enough to fly and they had a field day.

Having repressed months of dread and anguish waiting to be turned into nuggets, their instinct for revenge was overwhelming and with no better option it was the Digestors who became their scapegoat. Apart from Jake, they respected no one and this turkey was so arrogant that he dared to stand up to Mufasa and Shere Khan.

These chickens already had the aura of an established criminal gang and he could only commend their courage, or rather their complete lack of self-preservation. Were they even aware that if the cats weren't so well fed, they would have just eaten them?

Shaking his head, Jake froze in disbelief as he watched them bully a Rank 2 Digestor, swooping down on him like a pack of piranhas. 'Don't you have any dignity?'

In addition to this turkey and his minions, there was also a St. Bernard dog, the green buffalo and a couple of other alien creatures that showed signs of keen intellect. The others were too stupid and had not followed them out of the Shelter.

As for the humans and aliens, most had killed at least one Digestor, but not everyone had the potential to become a top tier Evolver. Jake could tell at a glance which of them would eventually become powerful Players. Of course, that was only if they could make it that far.

Still, there was one true coward among these refugees: the hustler. If Grash hadn't portrayed such a good picture of this guy, Jake would have definitely discarded it and let him die like the trash he was. If he hadn't changed his mind after Barty's sacrifice, his fate would have been sealed.

He was one of three refugees whose weapons still glistened like new. No trace of silver blood had marred their blades. Right now, he was hiding with the other two aliens in the middle of the camp, burying his head in the sand under a pile of luggage so as not to draw attention to himself.

Fortunately for them, Jake and the other refugees were too busy to deal with them, but their cowardice and obnoxious attitude had already made itself known among the group. They were drawing the majority of the refugees' glares at them and even they could sense that they were no longer welcome. If they didn't at least pretend to fight they would sooner or later be ostracized.

The only consolation for the scammer was that he had Grash's favor, or at least the cleaning alcohol in his possession had...

The pig orc had dedicated himself body and soul to protect him against all common sense. The giant alien being stronger than him, Jake could only turn a blind eye to his stupidity. So be it. With his con man profile, maybe they could do something about him by capitalizing on his strengths.

Luck or Charisma Aether might be a good build for this guy. He would have to discuss it with Tim when he returned.

The battle ended without any unpleasant surprises a few minutes later. The confrontation had been bloody and tedious for the refugees, but this time Jake smiled in satisfaction as he flew over the battlefield.

Zero casualties!

Familiar with the procedure after the previous assault, Will gave a series of orders and everyone pitched in to clean up, label, store and redistribute the loot according to everyone's needs. The Aether due to everyone was also absorbed by those who had not had time to take care of it during the battle.

Well-versed in human (and alien) psychology, Will knew how to motivate the troops and made sure that each refugee received a fair share of the loot. After the hard battle, they were exhausted and out of breath, but they were all, without exception, a little richer than before. They all had a proud and contented smile on their faces.

After that, they set off again. Kyle hadn't deserted this time, but knowing he was worried sick Jake had immediately offered to investigate the situation of the three factions. Taking the playboy with him, they had flown the distance to Bhuzkoc and the other leaders in an instant.

The apocalyptic vision of their camp made them draw a sharp breath. Another quarter of the refugees had died during this second assault! Having already lost a third during the first attack, the numerical gap had begun to widen and the refugees had paid a heavy price. If the Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers had not stepped up their game, the casualties would have been far greater.

Fortunately, they spotted the graceful figure of Maeve in the distance. Her face was sallow and filled with despair, but at least she was unharmed.. Reassured, Kyle breathed a sigh of relief and they returned to their own camp.