

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 197 - Dreamless Sleep

After discovering all this, Jake felt he had to get this Oracle Cloaking as soon as possible. He still had three slots left on his wristband thanks to his rank of Sergeant and the bracelet he had absorbed.

Still, with the exception of Yerode and Lamine he had no sworn enemies. Even Yerode and Lamine, if they were formidable adversaries, were not overly serious threats. Now that he knew that he could be ambushed at any time without his bracelet being able to anticipate it, he only had to be careful by behaving accordingly.

In the end, wasting an Ordeal's credits on this Oracle Cloaking was a solution reserved for the weak and devious. Because the confident ones, would prefer to improve their Oracle Rank to get the same benefits and more. And for that, the ideal was to perform better at Ordeals and exterminate hordes of ever more powerful Digestors.

By the way, this Oracle device skill had several versions. A more offensive version sacrificed discretion for the sake of attack.

Although it didn't hide its existence from the other Evolvers, it allowed the Prediction function to include Evolvers with a higher rank than the user in its calculations.

The cost per hour was 1000 points at level zero and allowed you to hunt a predefined target with at most one rank higher. The name of this Oracle device skill was the Oracle Hunter skill.

So Jake had no regrets about his choice. Even though he was caught in a surprise ambush, he still firmly believed that the two manuals he had purchased were the best possible choice in the long run.

He had an inquisitive profile and loved to read and learn. For that reason alone, he had the disposition to follow this more passive path. Even if he had spent his points differently, he would probably have opted for another Aether Skill or a specific Aether Encoding.

By scrolling through this category, Jake had indeed discovered Encodings that could enhance such abstract properties as Luck, Charm or Charisma. He had also found the Aether Encoding that Lamine had used to enhance the firepower of his sniper.

With his rational temperament, he had no idea how an Aether Encoding could increase Luck, but the mere fact that it was possible opened up a field of infinite possibilities.

Jake spent the rest of the day with his eyes closed in contact with the Blue Cube, reading and memorizing the Oracle Store database. Of course, it was a long-term project that he didn't expect to complete in a day.

When the sun finally set and the dark clouds darkened the sky again, his stomach began to rumble and he opened his eyes.

As he scanned the hall, he noticed that Cho Min-Ho's bodyguard had left the building a long time ago. There were more aliens than when he arrived, but no other humans. The aliens present were humanoid and belonged to two different groups.

Tvu dazlo ezmpn immcut iacu lak-quouz vaev eafrol hzmllut jaov nfhvwtuzql, ovuaz imre oplcl nzmoptare dzmq ovuaz imjuz bfjl, jvau ovu movuz, lqfiuz fiaurl immcut iacu lmqu cart md cmfifl hzmllut jaov guoioiul.

The result was as pleasing to the eye as it was disturbing. With the way they communicated and dressed, they could have played the distant cousins of the Ewoks in Star Wars.

Neither group seemed hostile, and the creatures that did not find their way to a Blue Cube simply followed him with their gaze, sniffing the air as he passed by with curiosity.

Jake hastened to the exit, their intrusive stares making him uncomfortable. Jake felt no embarrassment about publicly scolding his cat in front of a crowd of humans and aliens, but as soon as he was aware of the attention he was receiving, he would immediately feel the need to isolate himself.

Jake, whose appetite was wheezing, hurried to his quarters once outside the Ring. There was no one inside the Oracle Shelter except the hundreds of thousands of refugees crammed on the other side of the force field.

He wouldn't bet his hand on it, but he had the faint impression that their numbers had increased again. A little more and the Black Cube would be filled to capacity.

Although he now had over 17,500 Aether points, his frugal nature had not changed and he still preferred to stroll along and through the hundreds of corridors and Orange Cubes leading to his cabin. It only took him a few minutes to reach it now that he was traveling alone.

When he found the small, empty, metallic room he had used as a refuge, he felt calm for the first time since his arrival on the B842. He hadn't been able to relax the day before to the point of going out to hunt for Digestors a few hours later, but after almost dying like that, he was happy to be back in his booth, as austere as it may be.

Pulling a good piece of Digestor meat out of his bag, along with the pink potatoes and cyan salt he had left over from his picking in the woods prior to the Ordeal, he set out to cook himself a good meal.

He could not make a fire in this room, but the Kintharian blood was still active for a few hours. By taking out his wok, he managed to thermally stir the atoms composing it by concentrating slightly.

A few minutes later, the characteristic 'pssshhhhhh' of frying meat and potatoes broke the silence in the cabin. He had used the fat from the meat to fry the potatoes and the heady smell alone promised that it would be fantastic.

Jake's mouth was already watering and he was barely holding back from grabbing the hot meat from the frying pan and biting into it.

When the dish was finally ready, Jake voraciously devoured the contents of the wok with his fingers, the silvery juice dripping from his chin. He looked like a barbarian who had lived all his life far from civilization, but at that time he didn't care what anyone thought of him. He was starving, and he had no cutlery except a machete and a military knife. He had some cutlery in his bag in fact, but his mind had forgotten all about it.

The meat of a Rank 7 Digestor was as miraculous and nutritious as one could expect. His slight fatigue had completely disappeared and he felt completely sated. If he had been able to eat this meat during his Ordeal, he wondered how much his body would have changed.

Would he have peaked at his current body stats, like top athletes unable to surpass their limits, or would he have continued to evolve until he became inhuman? Because according to his bracelet, Rank 7 blood and meat contained various unidentified enzymes, growth

factors and growth hormones that his digestive system was not completely able to digest.

This gave him an incredible amount of energy, but the biological changes it would cause in the long run were a mystery. Perhaps in the future he would do better to limit his consumption of High Level Digestor meat and blood to emergency situations or when he was gravely injured until he had more perspective.

The same was true for the Myrmidian and Kintharian pure blood. Some molecules did survive digestion, but knowing that Lucia was a beautiful woman and Gerulf was relatively human, the risk was considerably less. Anyway, he intended to assimilate those bloodlines.

Despite the fact that he still felt full of vigor, and had many urgent things to do such as reading the two manuals, creating an Aether Core or joining Will to help him find a buyer, Jake decided to just sleep.

He couldn't remember the last time he had simply laid down with his eyes closed and done nothing. During the Ordeal, he had occasionally fallen asleep from exhaustion or remained passed out for hours in the infirmary after a severe concussion, but he had never rested when he wanted to.

Most nights were devoted to meditation or reviewing the movements and techniques learned during the day, sometimes with short naps permitted by his high Constitution and Vitality.

It was therefore his first real opportunity to sleep without any noise, danger or fear of being disturbed. He did not have a bed, but that did not matter. Before lying down he didn't forget to store the excess of Aether in his body within the respective crystals so as not to lose control during his sleep.

AS soon as he laid down on the floor in the fetal position his consciousness was washed away by the embrace of Morpheus in a few seconds and he sank into a dreamless sleep.
