

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

### Chapter 198 - Learning the Dictionary

A couple of hours later, Jake was awakened by the tickle of a tuft of hair as rough as iron wire. The tuft of hair was rubbing tirelessly against him, purring like a car engine, and soon Jake had no choice but to sneeze his way up when the long hair grazed his nose.

‘Achooooo!’

Looking around in a semi-vigilant state, Jake recognized his cat Crunch, who had snuck back in during his sleep. Instead of returning to his own cabin, the cat had first licked the wok, which Jake hadn’t bothered to wash, and then huddled up next to him.

In search of a comfortable position, or simply pestering his master, he had finally woken him up for good. Seeing his cat’s innocent expression, but actively licking his lips, he understood exactly what had happened.

‘Damn Crunch! Don’t tell me you woke me up to cook?’ Jake grumbled between two yawns as he began to stretch.

Hearing the word ‘cook,’ a spark of excitement in his slit pupils betrayed the feline’s true intentions. Moving his long tail like a happy dog, Crunch waddled to Jake’s backpack to bring him to his feet.

‘I don’t care anymore...’ Jake gave in to the cat’s insistence and hopeful gaze.

He was getting a little peckish again anyway. Jake rinsed the woke with water from the shower before cooking a new slice of meat for himself and his cat. In his case, it would be the last time for a long while, since he didn't know about the potential side effects, if there were any.

A few minutes later, two pieces of perfectly grilled silver meat had been cooked by Jake and he put the piece of meat in his cat's bowl, which was no longer at all suitable for his current mastiff size.

It was also at this very moment that the Kintharian and Myrmidian blood ceased to have any effect at all.

Unsurprisingly, Crunch knocked the bowl over in less than a second and then ran away like a thief into his booth with the piece of meat in his mouth. Jake breathed a long exasperated sigh, but at least he had some peace now. For the moment at least.

Now that he was wide awake, he checked what time it was. He had slept incredibly well, and the lack of a window was preventing him from having any kind of time marker. Nevertheless, he expected it to be at least morning.

When he discovered the time indicated by his bracelet, his eyes suddenly twitched open, and he began to chuckle sardonically.

11:57pm. He didn't know if the days were calculated the same way on B842, but it was clear that he had only slept two or three hours at most.

It wasn't even midnight yet and Jake was feeling rested as if he was coming out of a week-long coma. His Constitution and Vitality probably prevented him from sleeping like a normal human being anymore.

It was like trying to sleep for 8 hours straight again immediately after finishing a 9-hour long night. Unless one was extremely tired or depressed, it was almost impossible.

Since he had too much energy to go back to sleep on a full stomach, Jake felt he might as well start reading the manual again right away. He also hadn't forgotten the English-Oraclean dictionary that his cousin Anya had transferred to him via a USB drive, and he decided to read the dictionary first.

He couldn't always rely on Xi to translate and this language was the basis of all communication in the Mirror Universe. The sooner he mastered this language, the sooner he would be autonomous.

It was also an excellent test for his memory. He reabsorbed the Aether from the Blue Crystals to boost his Aether Intelligence back up to 150 points before starting his reading. The difference between 100 and 150 was not merely 50%.

The memory improved by 50%, but also his ability to focus, understand, infer and his information processing speed. The difference in effective intelligence was considerable and this drastically amplified his learning abilities.

Not thinking that he would ever be motivated to memorize an entire dictionary from the first letter, Jake opened the mental hologram corresponding to the knowledge in question. Multiple lines of English words starting with the letter A appeared, followed by their definition and the corresponding Oraclean symbol(s). Phonetics in both languages were also indicated.

With his current Perception and Intelligence, he could assimilate a lot of information at a glance and read characters as small as 0.05mm at a distance of one meter without difficulty. He therefore configured the display of the hologram screen until he was satisfied.

He then looked at the first English word of the alphabet 'a'. In addition to having 33 different meanings in English, such as the musical note or the Angstrom unit of measurement, the corresponding Oraclean symbols were ridiculously complex.

If he still had his original intelligence, he probably would have spent a full hour memorizing the symbols corresponding to the first entry in the dictionary before giving up for the rest of the day. On top of that, he probably would have forgotten half of it.

Instead, he just flashed the text with a glance and immediately had a deep sense of familiarity with what he had just read, as if he had reviewed the information many times. Even these mysterious symbols were child's play with his memory and present dexterity.

He then moved on to the second word 'aardvark', becoming sadly aware of his own inculture. He didn't even know the meaning of the second English word in the dictionary... It was apparently an African mammal with sparse hair, long ears and an elongated snout... Never heard of it! In his defense, the animal was in danger of extinction in the 22nd century.

The learning process continued over and over again and at a rate much faster than he imagined Jake finished reading the A-words. It had only taken him about 30 minutes.

By simultaneously learning the meaning of the symbols and their phonetics, he had quickly mastered the alphabet and his mastery of Oraclean grammar was progressing steadily. When he finished the dictionary, all he would need to do was practice to become truly bilingual.

Jake spent the rest of the night flipping through the holographic dictionary, consolidating both his knowledge of the Oraclean and his own world. There were a lot of English words he didn't know the

meaning and existence of, and he felt like he was doing a crash course in general knowledge.

Usually he would have quickly become demotivated, but when he became aware of the ease with which he retained and understood all this information, he could not help but find the whole endeavor addictive. He had a real sense of filling in all his verbal and cultural gaps one by one and it was an absolutely exhilarating experience.

It wasn't until Crunch rubbed against his leg to signal his return that Jake came out of his trance state. Checking the time, he noticed that it was past noon. As for the dictionary, he was done with the English words, but the Oraclean part contained a lot of words with no English equivalent, since it had to include many concepts unique to the Mirror Universe.

There were the names of mathematical and physical constants that the Earthlings had not yet discovered, as well as descriptions of many mysterious creatures and objects. This half of the dictionary would probably take months or even years before he could read it all.

This was not necessary at the moment, and he could always use it as a reference if he came across an unknown alien creature. So he deactivated the hologram and stretched out again, scratching his cat's head mechanically.

Neither Will nor the rest of his group had tried to contact him, which meant they didn't have any need for him at the moment. Like him, they must have been busy pursuing their own goals.

Jfcu jfl uknuhoare Arwf om zuopzr ar ovu ruko duj tfwl, gpo larhu vu vft lmqu dzuu oaqu, vu vft om npo ao om emmt plu gudmzu nfzoahanfoare ar val luhmrt Oztufi. Adouz iflo raevo, ovu Auovuz

turlaow frt ezfsaow vft arhzuflut fefar gw mru rmohv, guare rmj  
ojahu fl vaev fl rmzqfi.

This fortuitous discovery immediately rekindled the sense of urgency and stress that had driven him to work so hard over the past few months. He really had no time to waste.

Jake slowly chewed off a few remaining shreds of jerky before getting back to work. Crunch had wandered out of the cabin as soon as he realized that Jake had no intention of cooking again. Only the Oracle knew who he'd gone to annoy.

At last alone again, Jake opened the manual on Aether manipulation where he had left off and leisurely began his reading of chapter 2 on how to create an Aether Core. He knew that the creation of an Aether Core was not recommended if one had less than 100 points of Extrasensory Perception and he had largely achieved the required value during his battle against the horde.

As a result, he could now approach this chapter with serenity.