The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 201 - Aether Core Creation

The method of creating an Aether Core wasn't that complicated if the mind was powerful enough, but there were certain precautions to take if one wanted to create an Aether Core inside one's body.

The Aether Core was originally just a mass of Aether belonging to no one. If its creator wasn't careful, he or she could spend days or even weeks at a time accumulating Aether, only to find that at the first move, the Aether Core had stayed behind in the very same spot.

Though, most often by disintegrating all the flesh and organs that had been in contact with it... So the first thing to do before creating an Aether Core was to make sure that it was firmly anchored to the body of its creator and not spatially locked in the space where the Core was generated.

Luckily this problem had a simple solution, which was to anchor the Aethor Core to his own Soul. This was one of the reasons why it took at least 100 Aether points of Intelligence and Extrasensory Perception to do so. This was the minimum threshold where a Soul was considered stable enough.

It also confirmed to Jake for good that he could now survive the death of his body in an Aetheric form. He didn't know how long he could survive in this state, but the manual considered that his consciousness was no longer just the product of a neural network, but something more metaphysical.

In order to anchor the new Aethor Core to his Soul, it was enough to mentally envelop it in order to isolate it from the rest of the world. The spirit of the creator had to be in complete control of the space where the Aether Core was placed.

This seemed easy since the Spirit body of an Evolver who had awakened his Seventh Stat extended over his entire body. Except that space, energy and matter were also part of his body. It was not possible to anchor the Aether Core to a specific part of the body, since it would be destroyed when the Aether density of the core became too high.

In order for this to work, the Aether Core simply had to prefer to anchor itself to the spirit rather than the void where it was located, and all that was needed for this to work was a strong spirit, attractive enough for the Aether Core to make this choice naturally.

This was based on one of the fundamental principles of the Aether, which was that the Aether was drawn to the Aether and the powerful Souls. Once a Soul became stable, there was no longer any risk of the Aether Core binding itself to the wrong place.

Of course, Jake couldn't create the Aether Core in his Soul either, in which case a fraction of it would be destroyed when the Aether Core outgrew what his mind could endure. The key word was 'enveloping'.

If the enveloping was successful, the Aether Core would naturally follow its host, just as a black hole would not try to escape from the Universe that contained it. In the long run, this Aether Core would even bear the Aetheric signature of its host. It was as if his own Spirit Body became a separate universe.

At that moment, a bold idea came to Jake's mind, but he put it aside immediately. He had imagined for a brief moment that the Mirror Universe was the Spirit Body of someone or something. This could

explain the Oracle's miraculous and almost omniscient abilities. But in the end, he thought it was unlikely.

'The Oracle Systen is an incredibly advanced algorithm using technology that is simply beyond me,' he concluded in his head.

It was undoubtedly an interesting theory, but he felt that at his current level it was a waste of his precious time. Perhaps one day, if he survived until then, he would become powerful enough to get entitled to those secrets.

Incidentally, condensing as much Aether as possible to create an Aether Core was actually an Aether Rune. It was the simplest Aether Rune, the one that every Evolver, Player, and Aetherist learned first, and it was simply called the ' Point '.

Many factions would judge an Aetherist's talent by asking them to execute that Rune. The larger the mass of concentrated Aether and the smaller the sphere containing that Aether, the better an Aetherist's potential was.

An Evolver with high Extrasensory Intelligence and Perception would generally perform better than an Evolver with lower stats, but this was not always true. Once the Soul became stable, the Spirit Body existed just like the Physical Body and there could be clear differences between individuals.

The Soul and Spirit Body was Aetheric in nature and was constantly washed by the surrounding Aether, feeding on whatever they experienced.

When consciousness and memories were stored in the brain, information was stored in the neurons in the form of electrical and chemical signals through synapses, axons and dentrites. But in the

Soul and Spirit Body, these memories and consciousness were stored in the form of Aether Runes.

This meant that every second, Jake's Soul was producing millions of microscopic Aether Runes at every thought. When he used his Soul and not his brain to think and act, it could have unpredictable effects.

In other words, all these harmless memories and thoughts possessed a certain power when expressed through Jake's Spirit. This was an obscure aspect of Aetherism that the textbook was only touching on, but it was at the root of what differentiated a weak soul from a strong one. It was also what made it possible to distinguish one Soul from another by giving them a unique aura and signature.

One should therefore be wary at equivalent Aether stats of those who were older. The richness of their experience, memories and wisdom generally gave them souls that were much more stable and vast than those of younger Evolvers like Jake. It was even possible that they may have developed other mystical abilities over time. Of course, being smarter meant that memories and experience accumulated more quickly and lastingly.

Focusing his attention on the creation of his Aether Core, he began to actively compress the Aether around him. Xi's hologram watched him pensively without saying anything and it made him uncomfortable, but he forced himself to shut out the young woman's heavy gaze from his mind.

Considering that the average Aether density on B842 was about 20, the atmosphere over a ten meter radius would normally contain several hundred Aether points at the very least. When he was compressing this large amount of Aether, he became aware of two phenomena.

The first was that, even after he had compressed this originally 20-meter diameter Aether sphere into a compact sphere of just under ten centimeters, the Aether density of the atmosphere within that ten-meter radius had not changed. In other words, the Aether he had stolen from the atmosphere had immediately been replaced.

It wasn't just the nearby Aether filling the void, rather it was as if the Aether had never disappeared in the first place. The Aether density around him remained constantly the same, no matter how many times he repeated the process.

The second phenomenon was that compressing a large amount of Aether was not at all restful. The smaller the sphere, the higher the concentration and willpower required.

When the Aether mass became as small as a ping-pong ball he began to feel a slight pressure on his temples. When it became as small as a coin, the veins in his forehead and temples swelled under the strain.

When the Aether sphere was compressed to less than a centimeter in diameter, he had such a headache that he had to face the facts. That was his limit.

He had chosen a space in the middle of his lower abdomen made up mostly of unimportant soft tissue and connective tissue to house his Aether Core, but if he couldn't do better he would end up with a hole as large as a bullet in his belly.

For the moment the Aether density of the sphere was bearable for his body, but this would no longer be the case if he continued to accumulate Aether. Nevertheless, it was through practice that one became better, and Jake had every intention of becoming the best Aetherist in the Mirror Universe.

With his eyes closed, he continued to persevere, bringing more and more Aether to his Aether Core as it was being created. The more Aether in that sphere, the harder it became to stop it from exploding, but on the other hand the Aether in the center of the sphere was getting closer and closer to the target density.

[Jake, the rotation.] Xi reminded him succinctly when she saw that he had such a headache that he didn't even have the mental strength to think anymore.

Xi's words brought Jake out of his trance and he suddenly lost his focus. The Aether Sphere, deprived of the mental pressure Jake was exerting, suddenly inflated and then blew up. All of the accumulated Aether was scattered to the four winds, bringing Jake back to square one.