

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 211 - I'm Already Here

‘Now that you know our condition and what it entails, let me run the first series of tests free of charge to show my good faith. You will better understand why this small sacrifice is worthwhile. Your bloodline will be a tad weaker, but nothing you can’t make up for with a few months of training. After all, no matter how much Aether is in the blood, it comes from a First Ordeal World.’

With these words, Jay Parks rose from his seat to lead them to his laboratory enclosed behind thick glass walls in the same room.

‘Who wants to get their sample analyzed first?’ The geneticist asked in an impassioned tone. ‘Don’t worry, we’ve already tested a few Players from the same Ordeal World as you last week. Even though none of them carried a pure genome, by cross-referencing the data we were able to get a pretty complete sequence of these bloodlines.’

Jake took a hard look at Sarah, before muttering, ‘Ladies first.’ in a false display of chivalry.

Sarah harrumphed back, but she still complied and handed the Blue Cube in her backpack to the scientist. In his enormous hand, the cube looked as small as a lego.

The giant handled the Blue Cube with exceptional delicacy, as if it were the most precious object in the world, which from Sarah’s point of view was indeed the case. He placed the cube in the slot of a rectangular machine designed for this purpose, and then set the

parameters of the machine so that only a single drop was taken. He then brought Sarah into the laboratory to touch the Cube to validate the operation, since only the owner of the Blue Cube could use it.

‘Perfect!’ Jay Parks exclaimed in a confident tone. ‘Now all we have to do is wait a few minutes for the machine to process the data.’

‘How does this machine work?’ Will asked with unabashed curiosity.

The geneticist’s eyes lit up when he heard the question. He seemed to love it when people were interested in his work.

‘The manual for this machine cost us a real fortune, but in simple terms it works just like the Oracle Device Scanner, but much more powerful. Genome and Aether sequencing is instantaneous, but it’s up to the computer to interpret the data.’

‘As far as the Aether Code is concerned, the Scanner is not powerful enough or our Oracle Rank is insufficient. It just gives the kind of Aether abilities expected. In the end, there are often some surprises after a transgenic operation of this type.’

Jake had already theorized that the Scan of his bracelet could provide much more information with a sufficient Oracle Rank. So it wasn’t exactly a revelation.

Patiently, they waited for the supercomputer networked to Jay’s office computer to finish processing the data. A few minutes later, the machine emitted a long, shrill ‘beep’ and Sarah was able to retrieve her Blue Cube. The scientist opened the corresponding file and the result appeared on his screen, which he then shared on another split screen.

[Myrmidian genome, estimated 52% purity. 24 pairs of chromosomes, similarity to human genome 95.67%]

[Expected physical characteristics:]

[-Gmitur Izalul frt vfaz.]

[-Olive-coloured skin.]

[-Lifespan doubled.]

[-Thicker and longer bones leading to a height gain of a few centimeters.]

[-Increased libido.]

[Expected mental characteristics:]

[-Arrogance, self-confidence.]

[-Warlike disposition, tendency to seek conflict and challenge.]

[-Resilience in the face of fear and pain.]

[Expected Aetheric Characteristics:]

[-Ahhuiuzfout gmtw frt Auovuzah ezmjov: Cimluiw zuifout om nmlaoasaow, tuouzqarfoamr, nzatu, daevoare frt freuz.]

[-Accelerated body and Aetheric decline: Closely related to negativity, shame, weakness of mind, fear, and feelings of defeat and failure]

[-Self-Encoding: There are no longer any limits to the Aether Stats, as the Aether is constantly being compressed to make room. However, the cost in Aether required to increase stats will quickly become exponential. Using the Aether encoded by the Oracle Device to increase the Aether stats is no longer recommended if the Encoding level doesn't match].

[-Warrior Trance: As a result of the above-mentioned emotions and the will to vanquish in battle, the physical stats will be temporary increased.]

[-Aether Tribute: A defeated Myrmidian will yield his Aether to the victorious Myrmidian in proportion to the difficulty of the fight/challenge. Also works by making the opponent consume one's blood before a fight if the opponent is not Myrmidian.]

That was only the summary. The rest of the account was endless and listed series of letters in the millions corresponding to the nucleic bases that make up DNA. Perhaps only Jay Parks understood it.

And the first thing that struck them was the geneticist's unmistakable amazement. After he froze for a short moment on the record, he opened another document where the results of the previous analyses had been recorded, and he couldn't help but frown.

However, Jake managed to notice that the scientist was trying in vain to hide how deeply disturbed he was. After several long minutes, during which all they heard was the sound of his mouse clicks and the clapping of his fingers on the keyboard, the giant forced a contrite smile on his face. Sarah in particular was now more than worried and needed an explanation.

'Everything is all right.' He reassured them as he rubbed his eyes with one hand. 'This 52% Myrmidian blood is actually exceeding my expectations. The 24th pair of chromosomes is also unexpected. All Players who have assimilated this bloodline had either accelerated physical or aetheric growth and decline, sometimes both; and always this same Aether Tribute skill, which is a trait that is passed on every time and surely linked to a fundamental gene such as skin, eye or hair color.

'The Warrior Trance, only one other Player was lucky enough to be blessed with it three days ago and it was the blood of a nobleman. On the other hand, the trait of Self-Encoding... This is the first time I meet it in a First Ordeal bloodline. Normally, this is the privilege that

the Oracle gives to animals of limited intelligence as well as that of some other primordial races.

‘Many species have greater potential than humans, but sooner or later they face their bodily and Aetheric limitations and need the Oracle System or an Aetherist to keep advancing. These Myrmidians... I don’t know what to think.

It was confusing indeed, but Jake couldn’t help but be thrilled. He wondered how to fix his stats limit problem, but he finally had his solution. And a perfect one at that! All the more so since the blood of his rewards was pure. The effects could only be better.

As for Sarah, the first thing she did was to rub salt in Kyle’s wound.

‘Kyle, what are your bloodline skills?’ She asked in a falsely innocent tone to drive him crazy.

The Playboy gritted his teeth, but decided to answer anyway, feeling he couldn’t escape it.

‘I have the Warrior Trance, but I also have the Golden Eyes skill, which allows me to sense the weaknesses of my opponents. I don’t have Self-Encoding, though...’

Sarah, who thought she could taunt him, lost all interest when she heard his answer. Jake was surprised, too. The Golden Eyes skill wasn’t worth the Self-Encoding but it was still extremely useful. Jake had unconsciously overused it during his battle against the Digestor horde.

‘Hmm, Golden Eyes skill?’ The scientist repeated after him. ‘Another Myrmidian trait we don’t have in our database. The blood of another nobleman?’

‘Whose blood did you get it from?’ Jake asked out of curiosity.

Sarah could only have gotten hers from Livia, Lucia's sister and another daughter of the Myrmidian Emperor. It was the only way to explain a 52% pure blood. The temple was rumoured to have a way to increase the blood's purity through a mysterious method based on sacrifice. That the Emperor was special was therefore not a surprise. Her mother Antonia also came from the noble clan of the Sextus.

'Livia. 'Sarah confirmed.

'Khazus. 'Kyle grumbled.

'As expected.' Jake thought inwardly. He suddenly remembered why he had chosen to wait instead of absorbing the bloodline directly with the help of the Oracle System.

He then asked with some trepidation, 'Regarding my form request, is it possible to remove a negative effect?'

Jay Parks replied with a sorry grimace.

' Perhaps, but we're not yet able to do that, and I doubt that the Aetherist on Thelma can do it either, but it's worth a try. To be honest, as soon as I saw that you had samples of a pure bloodline, we contacted him. The portion of pure blood isn't for us, but for him. It was one of his conditions for granting us his favors. He should be here soon. '

At that very moment, a guttural voice croaked behind the giant, 'I'm already here.'