

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 212 – Cekt Mogusar

Jay Parks trembled slightly as he recognized the hoarse, sizzling voice, but he forced himself to display the composure and warm, obsequious expression expected of such a distinguished guest. With his body language subdued, he turned to the figure behind him, feigning surprise and elation.

‘Master Aetherist Cekt Mogusar! ‘He exaggeratedly announced to inform his guests of the status of the newcomer. ‘It is a plèàsurè to meet you again. I didn’t think you would come so soon. I have a vague recollection that you ignored my last 116 attempts to reach you... ‘

‘ Really? My Oracle AI filters all my calls and must have put you in the spam category.’ Cekt Mogusar sneered picking his nose as if he couldn’t care less about this big fella in white blouse.

No one was sure from where or when the Aetherist had entered to stand behind Jay Parks, but when the latter stepped aside to introduce them, a small alien no taller than a child’s doll floated in front of them, hovering in the air about one meter above the ground.

Cekt Mogusar was indeed a creature vaguely reminiscent of a gremlin. A sort of cross between a small koala bear, an imp and a lizard. It had large, bulging yellow eyes with slit pupils, long, wide, pointed ears on either side of the skull reminiscent of a small elephant, and greenish, wrinkled, scaly skin covered with fine fur. A long braided goatee and

a shabby linen toga half hiding his clawed feet completed the portrait.

Jake's group was completely petrified, but for different reasons. Naturally, Jay Parks and Cekt Mogusar had communicated in Oraclean. Only Jake, Will, Sarah and Tim had understood their exchange.

Seeing their amazement, the little alien began to snicker. His laugh was as unpleasant and painful to hear as that of a hyena. The Aetherist levitated up to them and then dropped himself into one of the free leather pouffes that measured several times his size.

‘ So? Which one has the sample I'm looking for? ‘The creature stared at each of them in quick succession until it came to rest on Jake.

‘Mmm, the Spirit Body's pretty rugged and your body's been washed by a lot of Aether explosions... Have you tried making an Aether Core? But you failed, of course... No doubt, you're the one who has what I'm looking for. Name your price and I'll see what I can do. ‘

Jake eyes lit up when he heard the gremlin talk. In a single glance, the alien had completely analyzed his mental and physical state.

‘He said... ‘ The geneticist that everyone had forgotten began to translate with the best of intentions, but he stopped short when Jake began to respond to the alien in perfect Oraclean.

‘ Master Yod—, I mean, Master Cekt Mogusar, I do indeed have a liter of pure blood for two different bloodlines. I want to merge them into my genome without any side effects and by deciding the physical and mental consequences on my appearance and personality. If it is also possible to eliminate the negative effects, that would be even better.‘

Jake knew exactly what he wanted, and the Aetherist's unexpected arrival had just saved him a trip to Thelma with no guarantee of

success. So it was without the slightest embellishment that he spilled his guts.

Only the Oracle knew if the alien had listened to him. The alien was having fun bouncing around in the pouffe with his telekinesis and had actually turned his back to him... A few seconds after Jake had finished talking, the creature did a little twisted backflip to sit back crosslegged in front of him.

‘Hmm, a lot of demands, but I like it. I can’t promise anything, but it should be doable.’ Cekt Mogusar croaked as he smoothed his beard pensively with one of his free hands. ‘Anything else? I need at least two portions. I haven’t analyzed these bloodlines, but given their gross price in the Oracle Store it’s worth more than that. I’m not scamming Low-Rankers and I have a reputation to uphold, so think again...’

It was the first time Jake came across an alien who thought the price wasn’t high enough. To his surprise, the Aetherist seemed rather prankster and mischievous, but his professional honesty was commendable.

‘I’ll gladly give up two portions if you’ll take me on as an apprentice.’ Jake blurted out serenely. That was his intention all along anyway.

‘What?!’ Jay Parks shouted in disbelief.

‘He was so distraught, he had to distract himself by getting a beer from the fridge under his desk. The giant decapped the bottle by lightly pinching the cap with his thumb and forefinger. The lid deformed and was torn off, taking a few shards of glass with it. The giant then began to chug it down wildly.’

The Earth Government had tried countless times to convince the alien to accept a few apprentices, but the alien had accepted very few

disciples in recent years. Jay was one of them, but Cekt Mogusar couldn't stand him anymore. In the alien's words, humans did not make good Aetherists.

Sarah and Will were equally shocked, but when they remembered the manuals he had bought, they came to realize that this was probably his plan all along. The little alien remained silent for a while, before finally snarling in a sizzling tone, ' Deal. '

'Pffffffttt!'

A jet of beer suddenly struck the Aetherist at the velocity of pressurized water from a fire hose, soaking and throwing the little alien out of its pouffe. Like a drenched teddy, whose toga looked like a freshly used mop, Cekt Mogusar slowly straightened up before slowly turning his head towards the geneticist.

Gulp.

Everyone heard the giant's swallowing sound, and each witness, Jake included, gave him a sympathetic look. 'This guy is dead.'

The gremlin pointed his open hand at the scientist and unable to do anything, his beer bottle jumped out of his hands and floated to the alien. Cekt Mogusar then opened his mouth wide, revealing sharp shark-like teeth, and emptied the beer bottle completely down his throat by telekinesis.

'Run. 'The alien uttered with an icy tone.

Multiple expressions crossed the geneticist's face, ranging from courage, anger, fear, shame and indignation before finally letting go and adopting a grieving smile. He knew his place.

'I don't dar-

BANG!

The respected researcher and supervisor of New Earth's Genetic Research Center, Jay Parks, disappeared into the wall, forming a deep wall crater whose hole was as dark as the abyss. A smell of beer and stomach acid hovered in the air long after he was gone.

'He, he's dead?!' Tim cried out in a panicked tone.

'Of course he's not, you idiot!' Cekt Mogusar croaked dryly to soothe the boy. 'Violence is forbidden in Oracle Cities.'

'Cause that's not violence?' Jake lampooned mentally. If he was the one who was hit by that beer jet, he'd most likely be dead, or at the very least in critical condition.

'Do you know why I agreed to take you on as an apprentice immediately?' The alien questioned him as he struggled to climb back onto his pouffe. Once on it, his tiny body radiated a heat wave that instantly dried his toga and beard.

Jake had no idea and remained silent.

'Because you used your first Ordeal credits to buy these two textbooks. That's enough to give you a chance.'

Jake had no idea how the alien could know that. None of his group had met him before today.

'Your Oracle AI just told me.' Cekt Mogusar chuckled mysteriously until he started coughing.

'Xi?' Jake did a mental check.

[I informed him as soon as you made your demand using the scan feature on your bracelet to contact his A.I. Turns out I've met this Aetherist before, back when I still had my body. My memories are

confused, but as soon as I heard his name, I recognized him. There aren't many Wendok Aetherists still alive, so I remember him well.]

It was a hell of a coincidence, but Jake didn't think it was so absurd. After all, when you reached the top of the Mirror Universe, chances were you knew almost every influential person of a similar level, and the Oracle Rank was then enough to access all kinds of information. Knowing the influential Aetherists was therefore quite normal.

'Why don't we get started?' 'The little alien suggested rolling up his sleeves. 'Before the afternoon is out, you can say goodbye to your humanity. '