

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 218 – Relooking

They didn't walk very far. Prajuk led them to the nearest reinforced door, verified his identity with his bracelet, then motioned for them to follow him. There were cameras covering every corner of the floor anyway. A fraudster would have no chance of getting in without hacking into the AI supervising the Center's security.

A room as large as a basketball court appeared before their eyes, with several corridors leading to different sections indicated by electronic boards, such as 'Military clothing', 'Auxiliary equipment', 'Weapons', 'Miscellaneous'.

Since Jake was there to get a new wardrobe tailored to his new abilities, the barman took them directly to the clothing section. All sorts of outfits could be found there, from conventional soldier's outfits spotted in green, khaki and brown for forest camouflage, to the black outfits for the the special forces.

Some garments were normal, but of course there was a sub-section dedicated to Evolvers. These outfits were more expensive and required contribution points.

The Government provided the necessary equipment to ensure that each mission took place in the best possible conditions, but this equipment had to be returned at the end. Only contribution points were the only way to obtain them permanently.

‘Physical strength?’ Prajuk inquired placidly as he opened the showcase giving access to the boots and shoes for Evolvers.

Being a High Ranker, he could easily estimate the Aether levels of a beginner like Jake, but it was much harder to determine the body quality of an Evolver with a Bloodline. Without a clear answer from Jake, he couldn’t offer suitable gear.

Jake pondered over the question for a few seconds before answering, ‘I need clothes that can withstand high friction and temperatures.’

Hu vaqluid jfl prfgiu om frljuz oval ypuloamr hmzzuhoiw, larhu val gmtw vft rmo hmqniuout aol qpfoamr arom Mwzovfzafr. Puzvfnl ar f hmqqfo laopfoamr val gmtw jmpit zufhv vaev ouqnuzfopzul mz vu jmpit gu dmzhut om ozfsui ar qmiour ufzov.

This was for the future, but depending on how fast he progressed that day could come quickly. A suit capable of enduring this kind of strain would also provide excellent protection.

Prajuk again watched the receptionist’s face before nodding his head. He then grabbed a pair of thick dark leather military boots, but the sole seemed to be made of some kind of metal.

‘Try these on.’ The bartender barked as he threw one of the boots at him.

Jake grabbed it casually with his right hand, then frowned. His first impression was that the size of the boot was way too big for him. He still forced himself to try on the shoe and it perfectly adjusted to his foot like magic. There were no laces to fasten or tie.

‘So?’

Jake threw a few kicks in the air in front of him to test the boot’s performance, then confirmed in a satisfied tone, ‘Perfect.’

Prajuk glanced at Elisabeth again, then sighed and closed his eyes.

‘This is a shoe sewn using the leather of a Wormak that General Rob brought back from his Seventh Ordeal. ‘The receptionist, who had spoken very little until now, began to explain the origins of this pair of boots, surprising them all. ‘Under normal circumstances, unless you are a High Ranker working for the Earth Government, they are priced at 80,000,000M Aether points. ‘

The announced price shocked everyone, Jake included. He hurriedly pulled the boot off and asked to try a cheaper pair. Prajuk seemed enchanted by this initiative. He seemed to care about these boots very much.

‘It’s not necessary. ‘Elisabeth gestured to the two boots that floated magically in front of his feet. ‘ Consider these boots as a small gift representing our appreciation to a disciple of Cekt Mogusar. I hope you will never forget your home planet if you survive to become an Aetherist. ‘

Jake finally realized why it had been so easy for him to try this military equipment. This receptionist represented the Earth Government and clearly had a very important position within it.

An Aetherist’s disciple was too scarce a resource to take any chances. The government’s attitude had changed significantly since their arrival on B842. After the defection of a number of their High-ranked Evolvers and Players, and later dignitaries from strong countries such as China, the United States, England and France, the Earth Government had learned to make concessions.

It would only take one Evolver surpassing all of them for the New Earth Government to lose its legitimacy. Today’s politicians were rarely Players. They were mostly Evolvers who had become

excruciatingly strong by siphoning off all the resources of their subordinates, but their combat expertise was non-existent.

Some politicians were shameless enough to directly buy the absolute knowledge of many martial arts and Aether Spells from the Oracle Store to make up for their lack of practice, but that was mainly what triggered the defections and mutinies. Most of these greedy politicians had been murdered by outraged subordinates or had lost their place in government.

Some of them, however, had managed to abuse their position of power long enough to gain enough momentum to create their own factions.

Therefore, although recruiting promising new recruits was one of their main goals, the Earth Government did not wish to make more enemies than it already had. If subordination was impossible, collaboration remained the best recourse.

Of course, the New Earth Government was still a nest of vipers where no one could be trusted. But on these broad outlines, there was nothing to fear, unless one of those important politicians or Evolvers had a personal grudge against him.

An Aetherist disciple was worth befriending and it also showed the respect and esteem they had for his master Cekt Mogusar. Lastly, by warning the Wendok that Jake had samples of pure blood from two High-grade bloodlines, they had obtained the promise of several favors from the capricious little alien. These few acts of generosity were well worth it.

Realizing that New Earth was offering him and his friends their new equipment, Jake didn't hesitate. In addition to Wormak leather boots, he obtained a black suit covered with protective plates of the same color that was extremely light and comfy, as well as a helmet with a

visor that was opaque from the outside, which could filter the air and allow contact with the vacuum of space.

This Special Forces outfit was not as expensive as the boots, but was still designed to withstand high friction and temperatures. Wormak leather was also used in its design. As for the helmet and protective plates, they were made from the creature's keratin.

By consulting his Oraclean dictionary, Jake discovered that the Wormak was a kind of turtle hibernating in the molten core of small telluric planets. From time to time, these creatures would come to the surface as a result of volcanic activity to lay their eggs. The Player in question had been incredibly lucky to come across a fresh molt from one of them.

He was also provided with a new machete. About 71 cm long, the blade was black as night and he figured out that it was also forged from a Wormak claw. The handle of about 30 cm had a porous texture ensuring a good grip, giving the weapon a total length of about one meter.

He would have to break his old machete to retrieve and transfer the Grey Aether inside, but this new weapon was undoubtedly superior. No firearm or grenade for Evolver was sold to him, though.

The technology behind it was more complex and each of these weapons was a technological gem, requiring specific resources. In any case, proactive Evolvers and Players generally evolved much faster than any firearm.

A special Enhancing Aether like that of Lamine could overcome this problem, but most Evolvers preferred to rely on a bladed weapon that could accompany them for a long time.

The other important point was that the Oracle System did not allow the use of technologically advanced weapons in some Ordeals

because they could trigger violent reprisals from the local deities or top powers of the Ordeal World. It was like shouting ‘I’m from another world and I’m looking for trouble.’

Those who chose to take the risk seldom survived.

The rest of the group were also provided with outfits suited to their abilities, but nothing as exceptional as the gifts given to Jake. By the time their fitting assignment was over, Jake’s group had been completely revamped and gave a completely different vibe. Even Tim had now a somewhat intimidating aura.
