

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 268 – Siblings

‘You see? I told you to trust the Oracle. A little more and we were going to freeze to death.’ A weary baritone voice pierced the silence of the clearing.

‘Idiot!’ A second female voice, so graceful that it sounded like the one in the TV commercials, retorted curtly.

Except that Jake and the others couldn’t understand a word of their exchange, which sounded both relieved and worried.

Chinese? The trio thought the same thing. And why those two voices sounded so familiar, Jake wondered with a troubled wrinkle in the center of his forehead. Meanwhile, the man and woman inside their home base were still arguing, totally unaware of their presence... or maybe not.

‘Why so foolish?’ The man who seemed immature objected in frustration. ‘Thanks to me, we have a roof over our heads, and the Shadow Guide guided me to this place when I wished to find a safe shelter.’

SLAP!

‘Idiot! A safe shelter for you! My Shadow Guide advises me to get out of here right now!’ The woman exploded into a sudden, irrepressible fury.

‘You... You hit me?!’ The man’s voice was in a state of shock, as if his vision of reality had just shattered.

‘And why not! You deserved it. The owners of the house are already here!’

She was not wrong. Even though he didn't understand Chinese, Jake didn't need to be a genius to pick up on the changes in tone and emotion. Just a few feet below them, Jake could practically picture their movements from the contact of their feet on the ground.

He had refrained from deploying his Spirit Body, but it seemed that the Chinese-speaking woman had been vigilant from the start. Not knowing how to hide his own Aetheric signature, he had known right away that his ambush had failed.

Nonetheless, he still chose to remain motionless and mute to take control of the building's traps. The woman had perceived a foreign Spirit Body enveloping them and it took her only a moment to realize that the entire house was under enemy control.

At first, Jake was more curious than hostile, but when his Spirit Body and then his bracelet scanned both individuals, a resounding 'Hmmpf' escaped from his mouth, making the floor of the stone house vibrate.

The woman had scanned him as well, and when she had read the popping up report in front of her eyes, her face had turned pale with terror.

'Shit! It's Jake!' She yelled as she jumped up in the air with a backflip.

'Jake?' The man, still confused from the slap he had just received, repeated the name foolishly without really catching the young woman's hysterical reaction.

BOOM!

The stone floor exploded without warning, the tile floor of the building abruptly collapsing under their feet. Not at all prepared for this, the Chinese man, already disoriented, lost his balance and fell into the pit created. For a fraction of a second, the exploded floor seemed to come alive and began to swirl around his engulfed body to form a solid floor.

After this unpredictable attack, only the man's head was still sticking out of the ground, his movements having been completely sealed. At the same time, another figure had risen from the ground at the same time, its golden and silver irises harboring intense viciousness. Recognizing these eyes, the young woman, who had landed on the roof like a spider by sticking her fingers into the interstices between the bricks, felt a hint of hatred, mixed with an overwhelming despair.

'It would seem that your lesson from the First Ordeal was not enough for you...' Jake snorted with an icy glare. 'Now you even want to steal the base that I built with my own hands?'

'There's a misunderstanding...We just wanted a shelter to spend the night, I swear!' The beautiful Chinese woman tried to justify herself as best she could while sweating profusely.

Huz fnnufzfrhu vft hvfreet laeradahfroiw larhu ovu dazlo Oztufi. Sarhu ovuw vft fii guur fiouzut arom Tvzmlaurafr ar ovu nzusampl Oztufi, rmrud md ovuq vft talnifwut ovuaz ozpu immcl gfhc ovur. Tvuw fii vft jvaou vfaz, ovahc gmrul frt laeradahfroiw vaevuz qplhpifopzu ovfr ovu fsuzfeu vpqfr. Tvuaaz arouiiaeurhu vft guur qfzcutiw zutphut frt ovuaz nzaqaoasu arloarhol ezufiow qferadaut.

The Lu Yan in front of him also lacked the long, smooth black hair he expected from a traditional Chinese woman. Like Sarah her irises were golden, her skin rather tanned and her hair of a black gold, betraying that she too had absorbed the Myrmidian bloodline. However, the spark of spirituality in her eyes was very close to his own and Jake could recognize the Eltarian bloodline as well.

'Jake?' The head protruding from the ground said again with unfeigned excitement. His black gold hair and golden eyes attested that he too had assimilated the Myrmidian bloodline. 'You see, I told you we were safe!'

‘SHUT UP!’ Jake and Lu Yan yelled at the same time without breaking eye contact with each other.

At that moment, recognizing Jake’s voice inside, Sarah and Tim stormed inside by kicking down the door. Gladius and axe up, the two individuals were ready for battle.

Seeing the state of the door, Jake facepalmed. ’’Fuck, they each have a key...’’ The real Question was rather how Lu Feng and Lu Yan had entered without breaking the lock. But remembering that the young woman had unlocked her Seventh Stat even before the first Ordeal, it wasn’t really shocking.

Faced with two new enemies armed to the teeth, Lu Yan’s anxiety had soared yet again, if that was possible. Having fought alongside Sarah in the coliseum, although their appearance was very different back then, she was still able to identify this fierce female warrior at first glance.

Knowing that if Jake wanted her dead, she would have no chance of getting out of that house alive, she threw her wooden spike on the floor and immediately got down on her knees to implore him. As cold and selfish as she was, she knew her priorities.

‘Please, let me go and I promise not to cross your path for the duration of the Ordeal.’

‘Sister, what are you doing?! Jake let me go!’ Lu Yifeng cried out, struggling with all his strength in vain. His face was red and congested under the effort, but he was unable to dislodge himself from the ground.

It was not that the ground was too hard, with their strength it was not impossible to slowly break the rock if they devoted themselves to it completely. But it was without counting out Jake’s Earth control. Every time the young man managed to move up an inch, the ground would soften like Quicksand, bringing him back to his starting position.

‘You I can let you escape. ‘Jake nodded as he looked at the buried man, but it’s impossible for me to trust your sister again.’ If you don’t get it, she’s a manipulative psychopath.’

‘What’s he talking about sister?’

‘He’s saying that you’re a complete moron!’ Lu Yan spat indignantly, giving up the idea of begging him. She would rather die with her chin up.

Turning to Jake again, not forgetting to pick up her crude spear, she proudly declared,

‘If I had to do it all over again, I would do it the same way. My life is more valuable than those of strangers except for my brother’s. I’ve played these kinds of games long enough to know that no one can be trusted. Everybody betrays you at some point, so you might as well take the initiative.’

In response, Jake sneered at the young woman’s defiant look.

‘Sure, you can betray whoever you want if that’s what you think. But you have to be able to pay the price. For a few Aether points, you killed innocent people and conspired against other Players.’

‘Innocent of what?! Players can resurrect, so I clearly have no remorse on my conscience. It’s nothing more than a game! A deadly game, but a game. As for these NPCs, why should I care?’

Jake choked her with his telekinesis before she started spouting more nonsense. She tried with all her might to repel Jake’s invisible grip with her own powers, but her Spirit Body and stats weren’t strong enough.

‘Jake! Let go of her! I promise we’ll leave you alone. This is a misunderstanding!’ Lu Yifeng screamed in panic with red eyes about to burst into tears. He had started struggling again like a madman, but for naught.

Sarah and Tim were also shocked to see this side of Jake, but knowing his abilities, they wisely chose not to intervene.

Ignoring Lu Yifeng's buzzing, Jake coldly dropped every word between his teeth, 'They-are-not-NPCs. You are just a murderer.'

After that, the telekinetic pressure around her throat disappeared and the young woman dropped to the floor, coughing repeatedly with a cyanotic face. She seemed to be in a state of shock. Before she could say another word, with a wave of his hand, and under the stunned gaze of Sarah and Tim, Jake grabbed the siblings with his Spirit Body and expelled them outside before closing the door with a big BANG.