

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

### Chapter 299 – The Three Tribes

It was not because he was insensitive or selfish that he behaved this way, but because he sincerely believed that rescuing them was impossible. In fact, he even wondered if he would be able to get to the surface without a hitch.

As if to confirm his premonition, when he wished to safely return to the surface, his Shadow Guide didn't simply turn back as he had hoped. On the contrary, it lay even lower against the roof of the kennel, taking full advantage of the width of the statue next to him to hide even more perfectly.

Basically, if Jake wanted to survive, he had to stay here. Of course, it was on the assumption that his bracelet was working properly. It was far from being the first time that the Oracle System had failed him...

Whatever! The quest he had accepted was still active, so even if he was stuck in this underground city for a while, he might as well take advantage of it to complete his mission. As long as he avoided attracting the attention of these monsters, he didn't have much to fear.

As Jake tried to cope with the stress of being stuck here, the Zhorion priest in the middle of the crowd suddenly raised his hands in the air to ask for silence. The crowd had long since fallen silent, but the drumbeat from the temple ceased shortly after his gesture. Then the alien spoke.

'Dear Chosen People, the hour of our Ascension is at hand! The long-awaited glory for our tribe is imminent, and once again we, the Zhorions of Chaos, will crush our brethren from the Tribes of Harmony and Dream. At the last descent of the Phantom Sanctuary, our city obtained 38 places. 38 brave

Zhorions who managed to fly away of their own wings and were able to leave this island which shackles us! By sacrificing these parasites of another world to the Ancient Designer, we will obtain the force needed to finally surpass our enemies !'

At the end of this vehement opening, the silent crowd loudly roared in concert, their combined voices shaking the stone buildings with the intensity of a tsunami. Their red eyes glowed intensely, responding to the deep, hypnotic voice of their guru.

Even Jake, who was more than a hundred meters from the crowd, felt a patriotic emotion bursting from the depths of his soul. Had he been closer, perhaps he would have volunteered to become a sacrifice. This priest was elegant, his voice appealing and pleasant, while every word he said seemed to resonate in his heart. If he wasn't sure he was straight, he might have doubted his heterosexuality.

'What the hell is that ?' Jake cursed under his breath as he wiped the sweat from his forehead. 'How can this alien be so enthralling ?'

[ A high charm or charisma Stat, combined with a powerful Spirit Body and a mental type Aether Skill. It could also come from a Soul Skill or the effect of a Glyph]. Xi explained without the slightest surprise. She seemed to have anticipated that such a situation would occur at some point.

'What can I do to defend myself? If I don't do anything, I'm stuck here. I can't get any closer and if he sees me, I'm afraid to surrender on my own if he asks me nicely...'

It is indeed problematic. You don't know any Aether Soul Skill, but now that you're expecting it, you just need to focus on your Spirit Body to perceive and maintain control of your Aether. If you can prevent these fluctuations from reaching your consciousness or your brain, you should be fine.]

'Easier said than done...'

Jake snorted inwardly.

[ You are stronger than you think, so focus! ] Xi encouraged him with a restless tone as she saw his pessimistic attitude. [Remember the Myrtharian mentality. Never give up!]

Right! Even if he failed, he should not admit defeat or his Aether stats would drop accordingly! Using violence, Jake forced himself into meditation like when he was trying to create his Aether Core and quickly managed to ignore the hypnotic influence of the priest Zhorion to focus on the infinite and versatile variations of the Aether particles floating all around him.

As soon as he silenced his mind and used the full power of his Extrasensory Perception to analyze these Aetheric fluctuations, another perspective opened up to him. By using his physical senses, a sound or image could evoke emotions or thoughts in him, while by focusing on the nature of things, only vibrations or electromagnetic waves remained.

Tvulu lmptrl frt hmimzl lptturiw guhfqu qphv iull foozfhoasu mrhu prtuz ovu nzalq md val arouiuh. Art gw ovu laqniu fho md qutafoamr, vu gzmcu fjfw dzmq ovu ardipurhu mr val uqmoamrl ovfo oval talhmpzlu vft fzmplut.

While scrutinizing the Aether in his own Spirit Body, Jake noticed how high frequency Aether waves were hitting his Spirit Body multiple times per second. When they impacted his Spirit Body, his own Aether would vibrate and resonate against his will and ripples would then spread to the center of his Spirit Body where his soul and the heart of his consciousness was located. By retracting his Spirit Body into his brain, the effect was even more pronounced to the point of altering his own neurochemistry.

‘No, it’s not going to work...’ Jake fought back as he watched his Spirit Body gradually become corrupted by these foreign Aether waves.

There had to be a way to counteract this attack. He had been able to directly take the Nosk’s mental blast because his Spirit Body was resilient enough. But here the method used was completely different. This Aether Skill was not

trying to harm or damage him, but trying to sway him without his knowledge.

By analyzing the enemy's Aether waves colliding with the edge of his Spirit Body for the umpteenth time, an idea came to him.

'Why don't I do the same?'

Slightly redeploying his Spirit Body to take control of the Aether around him, Jake used his own Aether Control to repeatedly push out the Aether around him. As if his body was in the center of a shock wave, the surrounding Aether was expelled at high speed away from him and quickly collided with the enemy's underhanded attack.

The collision site was too far away for him to perceive what was happening, but he immediately felt the effect of the enemy's Aether Skill weakening. As soon as he partially escaped this sinister influence, his control over his own Aether grew stronger, and his retaliation became more adept and increased in frequency to rival that of the enemy's mental attack.

Ultimately, Jake was unable to attain the same frequency as the enemy Aether, proving that this Zhorion had higher mental stats and a superior Spirit Body than his own. No matter what he did, he was unable to completely rid himself of the deleterious influence on his mind, but it was enough to keep him lucid.

Jake was aware that he was far from emulating the enemy's technique. He still didn't know how it worked and by what wonder this attack was made possible. The Aether Skill of this Zhorion did not throw the Aether as he did. Something was travelling through the Aether separating them at a very high frequency and it was this something that was affecting him without him being able to do anything about it. His counterattack had only broken the flow of the surrounding Aether to prevent this mysterious force from spreading.

Jake felt like he had struggled for hours to regain control of his body and thoughts, but in truth it hadn't been more than five minutes. When an Evolver with his Intelligence and Spirit Body was giving his best, the time went about five to ten times slower. If he had been on Earth with an Aether density of 10, that number would have been increased between 25 and 50 times.

When Jake turned his attention back to the priest, he noticed that the alien had already finished his speech. He had missed everything. Aside from knowing that these Zhorions belonged to the Chaos tribe and that they were in conflict with two other tribes, he was still as ignorant as ever.

Anyway, based on the green eyes and the Green Soul Stone of the Zhorion monster he had met during his second trial, the existence of different types of Zhorions and tribes made sense. And if these differences reflected the function of each of these Soul Stones, the names of these tribes were an even more obvious clue.

These red-eyed Chaos Zhorions were belligerent and barbaric in their behavior and primitive in their morals. The Flintium altar suited them well and it was no wonder that the crowd was kneeling in front of the crystal as if they were worshipping it.

Speaking of worship, who was this Ancient Designer? A God? Or maybe another Zhorion from an ancient time? It could even be another alien if he referred to the heroes behind the myths of his first Ordeal.

Jake was still immersed in his reflections when the priest in the middle of the crowd started to ascend the altar. As soon as he set foot on the huge crystal, a reddish light network lit up the platform where the crystal stood and a luminous structure as complex as an integrated circuit unfolded.

An invisible but tangible energy began to gush out of the altar, engulfing the priest inside. Soon an abject bestial aura began to radiate from the Zhorion bathed in this energy and his body began to change.

In a few seconds, his height increased by 50 centimeters, his black hair grew up to his ankles and the veins on his muscles began to snake under his skin like big earthworms. From his shoulder blades, two grey, membranous wings spread out, while his long claws and pointed canines gave him a new demonic appearance impossible to associate with the old one.

But the most shocking detail was not this physical mutation. During this transformation, a familiar object had openly materialized on one of his wrists.

A bracelet.

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