

The Oracle Paths

Volume 1: The Oracle

Chapter 3 - The Oracle System (part 1)

Once at home, Jake threw himself on the black leather sofa. This day at work had been short, but he was already exhausted with all the unforeseen developments. He found within himself the strength to stand up again to brew a cup of coffee. Lyophilized coffee, if that interests anyone. He was not rich, but not so poor he couldn't afford a good coffee machine. He was just lazy. Stir a teaspoon of freeze-dried coffee in hot water and it was done. Sorry, for the purists.

After having swallowed a few mouthfuls and closed his eyes for a bit, he finally focused his sight on his right wrist. Upon close observation, the black liquid metal was still slowly revolving around his arm. The rotation speed had come to a crawl, but he could still feel the bracelet flowing over him if that made sense to you. Each spinning was reducing the space between the metallic surface and his skin, making him feel more and more uncomfortable.

Anxious, Jake tried to take it off by force, but the liquid bracelet violently constricted instead. This alien thing was bluntly rejecting his attempts to escape its tactile attentions. In fact, the revolving speed sharply increased in answer. Realizing that he would not succeed to get rid of the shifty thing, he took a break for a while by turning on the TV.

He switched the information channel on, hoping to get a bit of fresh news after this morning's turmoil. It was barely past 9.00 am. And indeed the breaking news didn't disappoint.

The Earth United Government's President had already called for a press conference as a matter of urgency. The new Earth's leader was actually a sixty-year-old

Russian, bald like an egg. He was sweating and panting like a 300 kilogram obese running a summer marathon with a parka. The poor guy had visibly some hard time to handle the pressure.

It was more an empty title right now than a real position of power, as this hot potato of leading a planet changed country hands every year. It was one of the decisions voted when the Earth Government was founded to share responsibilities and stabilize the world after the previous war.

Life didn't change much after this for normal Earth citizens. The government seemed impressively united, and negotiations had gone well. The next turn would be China again, then the USA. Other rich countries could have a try to the leading role, but surprisingly no one offered their candidacy. Hopefully, the President's speech would give him some parts of the answer.

‘Good morning or evening dear fellow citizens.

‘At this moment, you should all be wearing a bracelet like the one on my right wrist,’ he said with a strong Russian accent, showing his forearm to the camera.

‘Don't panic, it is perfectly normal. In fact, it is a good thing. Every living creature on this planet has now such a bracelet. It can't be removed until death, so don't lose your time in vain. In a few minutes, this device will completely synchronize with your mind and body, becoming a part of yourself forever.

‘The government has been owning a few of these things for twenty-two years. I can assure you they are not a danger; they can only benefit you.

‘Now keep your calm until the integration process ends. The panic and the casualties resulting from the earlier event are regrettable, but these devices are our future.

‘Good luck Earth citizens.’

The president then dropped the micro like a damned rock star, before running away from the mad wolves of reporters that clearly needed more answers to feed

their interview. No explanations about the alien spaceship were given. Not even a word.

Jake was frustrated too. The government undoubtedly knew something. They were not as panicky as them, and these alien technologies were not foreign to them. You could be sure there would be some protest marches in the days coming with all the shits that comes with it. Well, at least no work for today.

Deciding that it would be a waste of his time to stress about things he couldn't control, he stared at his right wrist again, waiting for the end of this supposed integration.

It felt like forever, the time slowly going by second per second. At last, a strange noise rang in his head, procuring him a strange sensation of *pléàsuré*. It was like an armless-person discovering the arm he lost was in fact always there. Nothing could compare to such a joy, except maybe... No need to compare further.

The bracelet had totally integrated his forearm. He subconsciously knew that he could control it at will, making it vanish under his skin if such was his *désiré*. He also felt an immense presence connected to him, almost infinite. Hesitant, his curiosity finally won over his fear.

Jake reached out to the mysterious existence. All of a sudden, blue light burst out of the device, flashing him again. A miraculous screen mode overlapped with his normal sight. An automated woman voice resounded in his ears. The sound came from nowhere but his head. Truly disturbing.

[Hmlo Jfcu Waituzov, Cmrezfopifoamrl mr mnuzfoare ovu Ozfhiu.]

[As it is your first time encountering such technology, an explanation of the Oracle functions will be given to you.]

'Wait, wait, wait. Why am I wearing this thing in the first place?' Jake asked, cutting her off.

[Earthlings has fulfilled the conditions to be eligible for an Oracle. So you shall wear one.]

‘...‘

[...]

‘So that’s it? That’s your explanation?’ He said laughing with a dry voice. Even an alien AI could treat him like a joke.

[Authority level insufficient.]

‘Oh, what is my authority level then?’

[Zero.]

‘Shit. I’m out.’

This AI was clearly fucking with him, playing him for a fool passing by. His anxiety was already gone. He wanted answers now.

‘So what can you tell me.’ He asked politely.

[The functions of the Oracle available at your authority level.]

‘Very well. I’m listening.’

[The Oracle system’s functions currently available to you are Status and Guidance. Details such as AI’s voice, appearance, humor sense or information display can also be configured at any time. Take heed that the actual settings have been automatically chosen from the host’s memories data.]

‘Hmm, no surprise your voice was so sweet to hear. Did you say appearance? You can also appear?’ He said with an enlightened face.

[Authority level insufficient.]

‘Fuck!’ He swore again. ‘Continue please.’

[Status function will show all physical and mind data. your information as follows:(Attributes calculated according to a fully grown adult male.)]

Ao oval qmquro, f imo md crmjuteu hmrhuzrare vaq fnnufzut ar val qart. Hu hmpit hmrlpio ovuq jaov f laqniu ovmpevo.

[Specie: Homo sapiens (Primitive humanoid species)]

[Age:25]

[Height: 180cm]

[Weight: 87kg]

[Health: Healthy (You will soon be pre-diabetic. Stop this sugar.)]

[Your basic attributes are as follows. Note that all attributes are related to each other. Although the current settings show your status as a standard Earth RPG game, it should be noted that in human anatomy high strength, for example, can't coexist with a low constitution. A high level of strength needs fitting bones and muscle density to be sustainable.]

[Strength: 10 points (Normal male: 10 points). Strength is a compound value of different types of strength. Isometric, plyometric, eccentric and concentric strength values from every muscle are involved in the final calculation. (Two humans with the same strength value can have different muscular strength and very different builds. A world-level bodybuilder could have the same score as a world-level sprinter. The former would crush the latter in charge lifting, whereas he would have a hard time to keep up with the sprinter's speed and explosiveness.)]

[Agility: 8 points (Normal male: 10 points). Agility is a compound value of reaction speed, reflexes, coordination, balance, body control, and suppleness values. (Two humans with the same agility value can have very different builds).]

[Constitution: 9 points (Normal male: 10 points). Constitution is a compound value of stamina, toughness, body density, blood amount and your immune system.

Toughness can refer both to the hardness of your body or the one of your cells as well. It usually correlates with a higher body density and thus a higher mass as well.]

[Vaofiaow: 9 nmarol (Nmzqfi qfiu: 10 nmarol). Tvu rfopzfi nurtfro md hmrloapoamr. Vaofiaow al f hmqnmprrt sfipu md huii saofiaow, wmpz quofgmialq, frt huii-zunfaz uddahaurhw. Io hfr gu fdduhout gw wmpz tauo. Nmou ovfo saofiaow al tadduzuro dzmq iadulnfr. Fmz ukfqniu, qahu vfsu f lozmre saofiaow, jaov f suzw vaev quofgmialq, gpo ovuw tau dflo. A nuzduho DNA zunfaz fgaiaw hmpit arhzufu wmpz iadulnfr iaqao, gpo mr Efzov, lphv fr fgaiaw al prvufzt md.]

[Intelligence: 13 points (Normal male: 10 points). Intelligence is a compound value of reaction speed, memory, ability to focus, mental strength, processing speed, visualization, creativity, and many other cognitive abilities. Note down that psychological issues wouldn't necessarily be solved by a higher intelligence and could instead be exacerbated.]

[Perception: 10 points (Normal male: 10 points). Perception is a compound value of each body sense as follows: Sight, hearing, sense of smell, taste, and touch. Others senses may exist but are underdeveloped among Earth humans.]