

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 2: The First Ordeal

### Chapter 37 - Aslael (Part 1)

The group was a motley crew. Five men, six women, one child. One of the men, a rather athletic playboy, was about his height and wore a colt in his hand. The rest of the group seemed to crowd around him, seeking his protection.

And apparently he seemed to be gloating over all this attention.

‘They haven’t met a Digestor lvl2 like me, it seems. From the look on his face, I’d be surprised if this playboy could keep his cool against such a monster.’ Jake judged, turning his gaze to the other individuals...

The child was rather small, about 5-6 years old, and was holding the hand of a woman in her late 40s, who was, he guessed, his mother. ‘Poor thing...’

One of the men, wearing a two thousand dollar suit, a 6mm shaved haircut and designer framed glasses, looked relaxed, as if it was none of his business.

As for the other three, they were visibly tense, balding, with dark circles, and were clearly in the category that had chosen to hide without any preparation in the previous months. In other words, weak-minded people who let themselves be guided and paralyzed by their fear.

Finally the five young women were all in their twenties, and the oldest was probably no older than him. All pretty, all carefully made up and pleasantly dressed. Probably the procession accompanying and admiring the playboy from some college.

Luckily, the playboy and his admirers had managed to stay together when they were brought here. A feat in itself, considering that people who had disappeared a few dozen meters away from his home had not appeared at his side when he arrived in this world. Perhaps they were in the same room or they had gathered together afterwards. After all, he did not know how long these people had been here.

Believing that the group was no danger to him, Jake placed his belongings near a rock and leaned against it, before turning his attention to the blue light beam. He was not stupid though. His hand never left his gun handle.

Closing his eyes, he watched the sensations in his body. Nothing abnormal. Apart from the cuts, he felt better than ever. Even the pain of his potentially cracked ribs had subsided.

The cat was doing well, too, and its fur seemed glossier than usual. According to his Status he was recovering faster than his Vitality should allow.

Reassured, he pulled the pin out of one of the vials of silvery blood from the creature he had collected and consumed more of it again, this time in larger quantities, but without letting go completely in case the toxicity appeared at higher doses, or if the incubation time was longer.

The young women in the other group stared at him in a dazed look when they saw him drink this strange silver liquor. The older woman grabbed her child's hand and stepped back a few steps as she recognized the substance.

Surprised at their reaction, Jake was able to confirm that their group may have had some unexpected circumstances before arriving here. Remembering the sounds of gunfire earlier, he made the association with the playboy's Colt. 'Digestor lvl1 at most.' He estimated.

According to his theory, the creature they faced was probably younger and weaker than the one he shot on the way, or their group was initially larger, and some had been sacrificed to allow the others to survive. Or the playboy was a much better

shooter that he thought. But the terrified expression and pale complexion of the members of this group rather corroborated the second hypothesis.

Considering that, in the end, information was life, he suddenly got up to walk with a measured pace towards the other group.

Seeing him approaching, women and men alike squeezed behind the playboy, or rather his Colt. Only the businessman with glasses kept his relaxed appearance.

Just as Jake was about to break the ice, the blue light beam intensified and the sound of thunder resounded. Stopping his movements, he and the other group turned their attention to the light and suddenly a human-like individual came out of the blue light.

Human-like, because he was clearly humanoid, but different from a human too. First, he was quite tall. Almost 2.40m high.

His hair was silvery like the blood of the creature he had killed. From his silvery eyes, a white-blue incandescent light pulsed. His golden skin was iridescent with an array of white light representing a pattern similar to the integrated circuit of a computer.

His ears were pointed like those of fictional elves, and he was wearing a costume made of silver as well, reminiscent of the nobility of who knows what kind of idiot king.

He wore a puffy epaulette stitch, half-long trousers, moccasins and a pair of mismatched tights. A clownish individual, but one who in this place and these circumstances did not inspire the *désiré* to laugh.

Exulting from his smashing entrance, the silver jester greeted them with a perfect curtsy.

‘Greetings, my friends. My name is Aslael, but around here the players call me the Instructor.’ He introduced himself in a twangy voice that Jake found horribly unpleasant. The Joker smile was even more so, and made your bowels wag.

This character looked like he had just been released from a psychiatric asylum. The other group was obviously thinking the same thing, since the playboy was clutching his Colt so tightly that his knuckles were bleached. Instead of hiding from him, the rest of the group had slightly corrected their position to hide from the so-called Instructor.

Laughing at their reaction, the so-called Aslaël burst into a crystalline laugh, which gave them the chills. At last, after almost a minute, he stopped laughing and sighed.

‘Every time, it is the same old story...’ He exclaimed with a sorry look on his face. ‘I don’t understand how all these newcomers don’t appreciate the extreme nobility of my appearance ... Anyway, I guess I’ll just explain the rules to them and go home.’

When Jake heard the word ‘rules,’ he focused his attention back on the silver man’s words. The word ‘players’ had also caught his interest.

The other group had obviously not noticed anything, still obsessed with their distrust of the newcomer, except for the businessman with glasses who was staring at the silver man with an extremely serious expression on his face.

‘Mmmm, at least two here who seem to have their heads on their shoulders. Oh! Rank 1 Authority?! With a Recruit here, it’ll be easier.’ commented Aslael appreciatively, nodding happily to Jake and the man with the glasses.

‘Since I have at least one person’s attention and since we are not expecting anyone else, I’ll get started.’

At that moment, even the few idiots who weren’t listening came out of their torpor.

‘First of all, welcome. Welcome aboard Planet B842!’ he said mischievously.

If everyone didn’t think much of it, Jake tilted at the word ‘aboard.’ It was rather unwelcome, since it sounded like an invitation to a cruise rather than welcoming refugees whose planet had been stolen.

‘Indeed, my words may be a little harsh. My bad!’ The Instructor raved, raising a thumb in his direction, which sent a shiver down Jake’s spine like never before.

This silvery man could read his mind, an ability he had considered two minutes earlier to be mere fiction. He was prepared for it with the Oracle, but it was still a surprise when it happened before him. As for the members of the other group, they looked puzzled, not understanding what the latter meant.

‘To be perfectly frank, these planets are also called planet ships, that’s what people in the Mirror Universe call them.’ The Instructor said, this time in the serious tone of a teacher.

‘Those of sufficient rank already know this, but this place where we are, absorbs many worlds simultaneously, from all kinds of universes. In doing so, this place is growing anarchically, giving birth to many planets like B842. Your Earth doesn’t exist anymore.’

Seeing the dead fish expression of his audience, Aslael sighed heavily.

‘That’s why I hate welcoming newcomers...’

Patient, and clearly not at his first speech, he tried a new approach.

‘You are now in the Mirror Universe, a gigantic space filled with Aether and planets like this one. Your home universe is one tiny little world among many. They form the Dark Universe, where the Aether is sparse and the life forms primitive.’

‘What we call a World with a capital W, I insist, is the sum of the Dark and Mirror Universe. Think of it as an egg. The yolk in the center is the Dark Universe, the white is the Mirror Universe. The closer you get to the shell, the more Aether there is.

‘What? Why not the other way around? Who cares? There are other eggs in the basket and we’re not all friends. The Digestors you may have had to deal with are from an egg laid by another hen. I’ll stop the metaphor there.’

He seemed proud of his joke, but only a dead silence greeted him.

‘Oh dear Oracle, I keep forgetting how painful it is to teach creatures with triple-digit IQs...’ Aslael lamented to the sky. He was sobbing now.’