

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

### Chapter 508 - Fake And Real Spells

All he had to do now was learn how to miniaturize it and store it somewhere in his body like his Aether Core and Aether Soul Core. While Space Storage or a spiritual dimension were valid solutions, after being deprived of them for most of his previous Ordeal he had lost his faith in these technologies and Spatial Skills.

There were items and resources he could do without, but a major card like the Purgatory should always be close at hand. Therefore, assimilating it into his own body was the ideal solution.

Now that the Bronze Artifact had his mental imprint, Jake immediately saw that miniaturizing or enlarging the object would be no problem. However, he also quickly realized that the Purgatory was already reduced to the minimum size of the Aether Soul Cores that make it up.

Compressing it further would be difficult, but the artifact was still far too big. The size of a small bowling ball, Jake had no way to store such an object inside him unless he drilled a hole in his chest to house it. Swallowing it wasn't an option either.

First, there was the problem of how to swallow such an object whole without damaging his esophagus, but more importantly his digestive system was so advanced that there was a genuine possibility that the Purgatory would not survive it. Absorbing the energy and materials of such an Artifact would undoubtedly be beneficial to his body, but the benefit/risk ratio was not worth the risk.

'How am I going to do this...' Jake winced inwardly as he considered several unpleasant solutions that would not leave his Aether Storage unscathed.

'Xi, do you have an idea?'

'Besides carrying it around with you at all times, unfortunately not.] Xi destroyed his hopes with a sorry tone. [The only realistic solution is to create a space or spiritual dimension with the disadvantages that entails, or to acquire the Aether Skill Compression or Miniaturization. Both will be expensive and require maintenance over time.

'Compression exerts external pressure on the target to reduce its size by force, which for fragile or complex objects could cause rupture or even implosion. Spherical materials, gases, liquids and soft or elastic bodies are ideal for this spell. The Purgatory being forged from lvl6 Aether Soul Core is virtually indestructible to the average person, but it remains rigid and will not withstand further compression unless upgraded further, since these are already by definition organs formed from crystallized Aether and Soul Energy.

'As for Miniaturization, it is the exact opposite of the Gigantism Skill used by Boris with the help of his tattoos. The object actually becomes smaller and there are two different types. The first one is similar to Compression, but the pressure exerted on the atoms of the object or the individual is homogeneous. The object or individual will weigh the same despite their reduced size and even if the material capacities will not be affected, the cost in Aether and the mechanical constraints undergone will be proportional to the Miniaturization cast. Even if overall the pressure exerted will remain the same as for Compression, it will be better distributed and is not limited by the object's shape. The second type of Miniaturization is more like magic. The object is really miniaturized, but its capacities are diminished. Basically, the object truly becomes smaller. To do this, the matter

composing the object is converted back into energy, then into Aether and this Aether will be preserved by being stored in the Aether Runes sustaining the Miniaturization spell. This is by far the most practical solution at your current level.'

Jake was tempted, he didn't deny it. His boundless growth spurt had become a complex recently and he feared in a day not that far from now he would no longer be able to pass through a doorway. The two Miniaturization spells would allow him to solve this problem.

Compression could be replicated with his Telekinesis, but it was proportional to his Body Strength, Mental Strength and Focus. This Aether Spell overrode these basic limitations and would require nothing but Aether if he decided to purchase the skill. Because of its restrictions, this spell was the cheapest of the three, but also the least appropriate for his situation.

The other two Miniaturization Aether Spells were must-haves that he should definitely acquire in the near future. The first one would allow him to reduce his size while keeping his strength within the limit of his physical tolerance while the second one would allow him to sneak in everywhere without any counterpart.

These two Aether Spells would cost him much more, but it was a price he was willing to pay. Momentarily deactivating the Purgatory, his island reappeared before his eyes, including the feline gang watching him with a confused expression.

'Where have you been?' Crunch meowed, clawing at the air with a silly look. 'You disappeared for a while. All that was left was that object in your hands floating above the ground.'

'Oh?' Jake was slightly taken aback.

Tvu Ppzefomzw vft guur laooare ovuzu ar val vfrtl, gpo ovu zufi Azoadfho vft rmo qmsut ovu jvmiu oaqu. Soaii, ovu qurofi iarc vu vft ulofgialvut jaov ao jfl zufi.

'How weird...'

Jake then quickly explained to the felines what his objective was and they were eager to accompany him inside the next time. He then made his way to the lvl2 Blue Cube on his Floating Island, which with its ten meters of side and its dazzling sapphire luminescence was impossible to miss.

Familiar with the Oracle Store's various categories of items, Jake quickly found the three Aether Skills he wanted, but their price tag quickly turned him off.

[Compression lvl1: Allows you to compress matter to reduce its size by up to 25% of its original size. Cost: 2B Aether points.]

[Fake Miniaturization lvl1 : Allows you to compress matter up to 50% of its original size by exerting an even force on each particle of the object. The pressure is no longer directly felt, although damage may occur, and is therefore compatible with use on living beings. Cost : 5B Aether points.]

[True Miniaturization lvl1: The target of this spell becomes truly miniaturized to 10% of its original size. The original excess mass and energy is temporarily converted to Aether, resulting in a significant decrease in combat ability. Cost: 50B Aether points]

Jake's face was ugly after he finished reading. The bitter feeling in his throat could not be more real and a flurry of insults to the Oracle threatened to spill from his lips.

'Fuck!'

Xi, who had already given up her holographic form, immediately consoled him as best she could,

[It was predictable. The Ordeal Store's prices are discounted considerably. Those in the Oracle Store, unfortunately, were too. When you finish your first four Ordeals that act as a tutorial, the prices will return to their original value. There are so many things that affect the prices in the Oracle Store that it's hard to explain in a few words. The prices displayed in front of you may well be higher or lower for another Evolver.]

Jake furrowed his brow slightly as he heard this. It reminded him of the dubious business practices of large companies using trackers to retrieve information about their customers and slightly modulate their prices and the items offered accordingly. The Oracle obviously didn't need trackers to know everything about them.

He remembered receiving a similar explanation from Agent Keru when he had purchased his Floating Island regarding the cost of using a Yellow Cube based on distance. The price of long-distance teleportation was constantly rising, but was still relatively affordable for pro-active Evolvers like himself. However, as soon as the chosen destination exceeded the distance that the Cubes' Aether Cores could handle, the cost would immediately become exorbitant.

Even the food magically generated by the Oracle Store was, according to Xi, cheap by the Oracle Store's standards. A 20-point pizza might seem outrageous to a Civilian who never leaves his Oracle Shelter, but for a food magically created out of pure Aether it was actually a bargain.

After several Ordeals and many battles, Jake still had not been able to determine the exact conversion rate between Aether, Energy and Matter. The energy to matter conversion was governed by the famous

formula  $e=mc^2$ , but the conversion of Aether to Energy was much more abstract.

When the Aether density was 60, did that mean that there were 60 Aether points per cubic meter? Not really. In practice there were 3 times less, which was consistent with the Aether Stat Encodings working on creatures of 3 cubic meters or less. Beyond that, increasing an Aether Stat by one point was actually much more expensive.

Besides, what could 60 points really accomplish if they spent it on an Aether Spell? It was hard to say. If he absorbed all the Aether into a sphere with a radius of 30m to cast a Fireball spell, that would theoretically be over 2.2M Aether points.

Yet the Fireball resulting from all that Aether would not exceed the power of a small grenade. To increase its power, most of the energy was usually drawn from the caster's cells and Soul, which were more available sources of energy, but also more difficult to restore.

Offensive techniques that produced a lot of heat or light might seem impressive at first, but they actually consumed the least amount of Aether. Techniques involving the creation of stable matter, such as those used by the Oracle to create food, were infinitely more expensive and challenging even for experienced Aetherists.

In addition, many visually stunning Aether Spells were often the result of temporary magic. For instance, the elemental flames of Enya and Esya were not real flames, but simply had the appearance and properties of real flames.

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Tvuaz hmrluypurhul jmpit iasu mr, ovmpev.. Art ovfo jfl jvfo  
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