

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

### Chapter 532 - Promising Recruits

This short, ultimatum-like speech profoundly affected the refugees who had just joined his faction. Perhaps more so than his previous warnings.

Many of these Civilians were no strangers to his words. They thought they had time to change, to enjoy the comfortable cocoon that was the Oracle Shelter before eventually emerging from their chrysalis and spreading their butterfly wings.

Regrettably, recent events had nipped this hope in the bud. With the increase in Aether density and the corresponding rise in the Digestors' average level, they had missed the boat.

Even though their Aether stats were approaching 60 points by closely following the Aether density growth curve, it was of no practical benefit to them, since everything from grass to microbes were upgraded accordingly.

Digestors were no exception. The Rank 1 Digestors that Jake and the other Evolvers had slaughtered by the thousands in the Oracle Playground were different from those on their first day on B842. This energy level was enough to allow them to quickly advance to Rank 3 or 4.

All they needed was enough genetic and Aetheric material to perfect their mutation. Sometimes devouring a single prey was enough to

give them the inspiration and nutrients they needed to make that leap.

Aether density also had the advantage and disadvantage of stabilizing the Protosoul of humans and other aliens. Where Jake had struggled greatly to strengthen his Spirit Body and awaken his Extrasensory Perception, this kind of awakening was becoming common even in Civilians who had never held a weapon.

This was an inconvenience because Digestors also benefited from this phenomenon. As creatures spawned by Aether, they had a greater ability than humans to harness and use Aether and their souls were stable from birth. As a direct result, the proportion of Digestors with special abilities was also severely increased.

These Rank 1 and 2 Digestors they had slaughtered may have possessed a standard body type, but many of them had freakish powers they didn't have before, ranging from increased stamina, speed, and strength bursts to more esoteric abilities such as becoming untraceable, or breathing fire or lightning.

But most importantly, their murderous intent generated a tangible, evil psychic force that was incredibly difficult for the refugees to nullify. For Jake and those other experienced Evolvers, they probably wouldn't notice it even if they were basking in it, but for those fearful Civilians it was definitely enough to make them shiver with terror and shit their pants.

In conclusion, any clear-headed refugee knew that Jake's words were not empty threats. If they refused to fight, even if they managed to survive, the only fate awaiting them would be to be at the mercy of another master or to rot in another Shelter until they died.

'I will fight!' The old man swore solemnly as he placed his right fist over his heart. 'The Oracle System cured my cancer, but not my

long-scarred and injured knee. When I first came here, I was shot in the head in a skirmish and was in a coma for over a month. When I woke up, I owed a lot of people Aether and had already missed my chance. Now that I have this vigor and a good spear to fight with, I don't intend to waste this gift!

'That's the spirit.' Jake smiled approvingly as he beheld the old man's overflowing enthusiasm.

Perhaps because this man was much older than they were, but his grit gave some of the other refugees the boost of bravery they lacked and they eagerly knelt down to make the same pledge. The young mother prostitute took the same oath. For her children, she was willing to make any sacrifice.

Jake memorized these new faces and decided to keep a close eye on them in the coming battles. They may not have known it, but their decisive resolve at that moment had just changed their lives.

'What's your name?' He asked for the first time as he looked at these courageous refugees.

In addition to the old man and the redheaded woman, there were two men in their twenties, another pig-like alien of the same species as Grash, the pair of goblin-like aliens he'd rescued, some sort of humanoid octopus with six tentacles for legs and two pairs of arms covered with suction cups, and the barely over-age young woman in the balding man's group.

On the animal side, a huge orange turkey wearing one of the helmets he had forged and some kind of buffalo with green fur also showed their willingness to fight. These creatures could not yet speak, but it seemed that their intelligence was exceptional compared to their peers. Their ability to survive in this Shelter was proof of that.

‘People call me Ingranus The Bold, my Lord. The old man answered first with a bow.

‘A nobleman or a knight?’ Will cut in with a hint of curiosity. That explained his proficiency with his new spear.

‘A knight, vice-leader.’ Ingranus clarified politely with another bow. His etiquette was impeccable as one would expect from a former aristocrat.

The other two humans introduced themselves just after. Their etiquette was much looser, but their outspokenness was more to Jake’s and the others’ liking.

‘Nicolet, from Ega sir.’ The first man with flashy short yellow hair and an unshaven beard several weeks old said concisely.

‘Diccon, from Xor my Lord.’ The second man, a stockier dark-haired man but half a head shorter, took a cue from his friend and introduced himself without fuss.

‘Another Egean, huh...’ Jake muttered out loud as he thought of the two sisters waiting for them at the base.

If he knew that their father had tried to meet him to give him a beating he certainly wouldn’t have been so relaxed thinking about the two young women.

The pig-like alien of the same species as Grash had an equally inspired name and went by the sobriquet of Brash. He also learned for the first time that Grash and his brethren were indeed humanoid, but were not considered to be of the human type as were Earthlings, Egeans or Nawais, but a type of Orcish species.

The goblin couple was called Xort and Niss. Their specific species had an incomprehensible name, but they belonged to the larger class of

goblins as he had surmised from their hideous appearance. With their height of about a meter, their greenish skin, their pointed ears and their primitive attire it was hard to mistake them for anything else.

The octopus alien spoke a language that was incomprehensible to humans, but with the help of a translator Jake was able to figure out that it came from a water covered planet. He couldn't help but wonder how he ended up here. According to its words, it had been 'fished out' by another group of aliens just before their world was transferred here.

'Your name is impossible to pronounce. To facilitate our exchanges, you will answer to the name of Takoyaki from now on.' Jake decided arbitrarily.

The octopus alien would eventually regret the name, but unaware of its true meaning he gratefully accepted his new moniker. The redheaded prostitute was called Secyone, a strange name for an earthling and it made him realize that she was not from Earth, but simply from a world with similar morals.

Finally, the young woman barely of age with a rebellious look and medium-length black hair was called Kelly, a pure Terran of Canadian origin. Disgusted with the cowardice of her original group, she had chosen to stand out to protect the young boy accompanying her, who if he wasn't her brother was an orphan like her that she had taken under her wing.

After this series of introductions, Jake waited another minute to see if any of the other refugees wanted to muster up their courage, but the silence and shifty looks told him it was time to get back on the road. The human trickster in whom he had such high hopes seemed to have a rather cowardly character...

Whatever... If he wanted to survive, he would have to fight. Despite all these solemn promises, it was in a life and death situation that they would know if these refugees were worth it.

Now that their bodies had been strengthened by the Myrtharian Body Passive, Jake was able to pick up the pace and it wasn't long before they caught up to the other factions. They didn't encounter any Digestors for the next few hours, but they had left the Shelter quite late. The sun had begun its descent and it would soon be dark.

'Shouldn't we stop and set up camp?' Will suggested with a bad pang.

Jake hesitated for a moment but shook his head in the end, 'That would be a wise move, but if the other factions refuse to stop I don't think we can take that risk. If we get ambushed by a large horde, our chances of survival will be better if we stay together.'

Dismayed, the businessman sighed but did not object. He knew Jake was right. Meanwhile, Kyle was finally healed and was now glaring at Bhuzkoc's back in the distance with a searing intensity. If hate could kill, the Nawai leader would have been smitten long ago.

An hour later, night fell completely. Because of the thick cloud cover, neither moonlight nor starlight could reach them, and the darkness was overwhelming. If Jake and the other Evolvers didn't have Aether Vision or similar abilities, they would have had a hard time finding their way in the dark. Sadly, the other refugees could not say the same, and they trembled in terror as they gripped their new weapons tightly.

Suddenly, someone broke into a cheer among the refugees.

'They're setting up camp!'

Irtuut, Jfcu lnmoout f hfqndazu f duj caimquouzl fvuft md ovuq. Tvu ovzuu dfhoamrl vft darfiw luooiut tmjr dmz ovu raevo. Tvuw hmpit darfiw euo lmqu zulo. Oz lm ovuw ovmpevo....