

The Oracle Paths

Volume 2: The First Ordeal

Chapter 60 – BANG

If one were to notice a major difference from the Earth humans in this third group it would have been that their skin shone as if it were covered with golden glitter. This gave a certain aura of grandiloquence to even the poorest caste.

As for the aristocrats, they seemed to be directly inspired by a Greek or Scandinavian pantheon. Even according to strict aesthetic criteria, no member of this people could be described as ugly. Their hair was unusually coloured, seeming to follow no particular evolutionary logic.

Two young women at the centre of the formation, wearing long poppy red satin dresses, proudly wore long pale pink hair that Jake had so far only seen in manga or movies.

Other nobles seeking their attention had equally zany hair colors and cuts, ranging from pale green to dark purple. Each of them displayed undisguised arrogance, as if they considered their race superior to all others.

Despite their apparent contempt, the security perimeter put in place was clearly defensive in nature, with no intention of encroaching on the territory of other human or humanoid factions, nor offending anyone.

Apart from these three human groups with distinct physical characteristics, there were a large number of humanoid factions, some of which were far more numerous.

Troll creatures six meters high, giants covered in suckers with tentacles for hair, scaled minotaurs, a people resembling what the T-Rex might have become if they had evolved into a humanoid form.

There were also those humanoid creatures that looked like humans, but on closer inspection they turned out to be of a completely different origin.

One of these extraterrestrial species communicated with some sort of disharmonious rattling from some unknown appendage, while their bodies looked like knights in full armor, except that these were plates of chitin which could not be removed.

There were also all these humanoid species evolved from animals, many of which existed on Earth. Jake's theory was that on habitable exoplanets and provided their DNA was carbon-based, there was only a finite number of possible variations. A cat identical to Crunch didn't necessarily exist on another planet, but a group of species with feline-like characteristics? Without a doubt.

As for all those theoretical life forms that needed completely different environments to survive, obviously they had probably been shipped to a completely different area.

Concluding that the best strategy consisted in ignoring all these wonderful folks, Jake patiently made his way with a neutral expression to an unoccupied piece of land.

Of course, their numbers weren't enough to form a security perimeter and to limit the risks, he chose to set up camp among the groups of humans too few to compete with the first three factions.

There were many sub-groups like their own. A couple here, a bunch of friends there. A father and his two kids, a whole family, a few old people, but also some lonely vagrants with their faces untidy and full of despair.

All together, they formed a fourth faction, large enough not to be crushed by the previous groups. But just barely.

Sadly, none of these people could boast of having four beautiful, vulnerable young women in their midst. If Jake was formidable to anyone who had suffered at his hands, he was just an athletic, 1.8 meters tall young man to all those bullies around. As for the Playboy and Will, they were not worth mentioning.

Wvfo jfl gmprt om vfnur vfnurut. Oru md ovu eafroah, qplhpifz, qpttw-lcarrut gfgzfafrl jficut omjftl ovuq jaov f hmrypuzare lozatu, fhmqnfraut gw ojm md val duiimj qfoul. Waov ovuaz iuhvuzmpl lqaiul frt ovuaz dauzw immcl ovuaz arouroamrl juzu mgSampl. lo lquiut iacu ozmpgiu.

The one in the middle, a tall male with braided fluorescent hair and beard reminiscent of certain Vikings pointed at Sarah, thundering authoritatively in an unknown language whose sounds resembled grunts.

‘Whasch Gravsh Rooom Ytdas grish!’

‘Excuse me?’ Jake frowned in a bad mood.

‘WHASCH GRAVSH ROOOOM!’ The giant cro-magnon commanded again, screaming louder than ever and sputtering like an automatic water jet.

‘No.’ Jake replied simply, but in a tone that allowed no contest.

For once in her life, Sarah was glad that the feminist hadn't progressed to the point where no man would stand up for her. On the other hand, she also realized that the alien facing them only recognized her existence as Jake's possession. Here, only the law of the jungle prevailed.

The group of medieval soldiers from another world, on the other hand, seemed to be under the yoke of the two long-haired, pink-haired noblewomen who stared at everyone as if they were owed money. Maybe joining them would be safer.

Eventually, the decerebrate pile of muscle lost patience and resorted to the only way to settle a conflict and get his way that his rudimentary brain knew.

'Raahjim, Brashta!' The alien growled as he reached out his right arm to his comrade, palm open.

The latter ran quickly to their camp before returning a few seconds later with a huge archaic club at least four feet long, still stained with the clotted blood of his victims. Slavishly and deferentially, the underling placed the prehistoric weapon in his boss's hand, before withdrawing with his spine bent, looking down at the ground.

'WAAGHRASHT!!!' The alien barbarian uttered a loud war cry as he raised his club to the sky, sparking a standing ovation punctuated by guttural screams from his tribe.

When the grunting and screaming ended, he pointed his club at Jake with a smirk on his face and a satisfied smile, before resting his weapon on his shoulder. Everything in his facial expression, from his exorbitant eyes to his fierce grin of a beast showing his fangs, challenged Jake to a duel he believed he was sure to win. After all, the wretched human before him only reached his pecs.

'Fuck you!' Jake replied annoyed, barely holding back a yawn.

'Jrasht? WAAGHRASHT!!!'

'Oh, looks like you're not so stupid you don't recognize an insult.'
Jake muttered with a raised eyebrow.

Of the factions enjoying the show, not one of them intended to intervene to resolve the conflict. While some felt compassion for the poor human who was about to be blown to bits by a 30 kilogram club, most were eager to witness the public execution.

Jake stared at the faces of the passive audience around him, intending to feast their eyes with obvious irritation. He had only recently made it to the Red Cube and was already being messed with. Was it really marked 'victim' on his forehead?

Clearly, since his arrival on this planet and after absorbing the Aether and a piece of Digestor's soul, he could feel that fear had little hold on him. On the contrary, he had to curb his murderous desires. These impulses were weak, but he could feel that with less intelligence he could have behaved in a very different way.

Nevertheless, if there was one thing he was convinced of, it was that by showing weakness here, he might get away with it, but the rest of his group would be finished. Not that he attached any importance to them, but if it was in his power to prevent a catastrophe, he had no reason not to try.

'Just looking at you, your species is the kind that has the brain of an oyster in a gorilla's body. Time to show you what magic looks like.'
He thought strongly.

Under the overexcited gaze of the criminals of the second group and the mud-skinned barbarians of the first group, Jake calmly advanced

to his opponent. Then slowly, with the same jaded expression, he raised his gun and...

BANG!

Everyone heard the sound of a ripe melon shattering as if it had crashed from the fifteenth floor. After all his mockery and provocation, the alien's skull turned out to be extremely fragile, much more fragile than he imagined.

In the astonished silence of the crowd, the muscle mass remained standing for a short time before suddenly collapsing backwards in a big 'boom'. The fight was over before it began.

With the same nonchalance, Jake blew on his pistol like a cowboy before approaching the body, picking up the stream of Aether that had appeared, and leaving with the same measured step.