

The Oracle Paths

Volume 2: The First Ordeal

Chapter 61 – Intimidation and Probing

Even after Jake joined his group again, the silence of the humanoid factions around him lingered. The display of violence was an eye-opener for all these groups for very different reasons.

The group of humans led by a gang of thugs, delinquents, and potential lawbreakers was obviously not unduly shocked. If Jake's execution by gunshot showed that he was a ruthless person, whom it would be unwise to underestimate, who among these criminals had never seen a gun?

Both factions of extraterrestrial humans were experiencing this situation much more conservatively. The first group was a primitive people technologically similar to the prehistoric homo-sapiens, or even more primitive hominids.

Jake's killing was pure magic for them, a feat that even their greatest shamans and sorcerers could not claim to have accomplished. The sound of the gunshot itself was completely foreign to them and reminded them of the sound of lightning striking a stone. The most fragile ones were still dazed by the thunderous sound.

By firing a shot, this tiny human had just proved to them how insignificant they were among the various factions and how size was no direct guarantee of superiority.

Just a few minutes earlier their debauchery was largely due to the fact that the most massives of their tribe felt completely

invulnerable in the midst of all these frail humans. Even the Omegas of the tribe had grown wings, a never-before-seen confidence replacing their usual submissiveness.

Now the poor, decerebrate primates had abandoned their casual, unrestrained orgy and gathered close together, forming a formation similar to an army of penguins sticking together to withstand a blizzard.

The poor abused young women finally had a break, but to everyone's surprise they did not seem particularly traumatized or distressed by their harsh treatment. It was as if everything they had endured was perfectly normal and part of their daily lives.

To top it all off, their eyes were bright and their facial expressions were much richer and more subtle than those of their male counterparts, who were just mindless bullies. The intelligence of the females was superior among this species, but their role was reduced to mere outlets, objects of reproduction.

Things were different with the medieval faction, always closely protected by its circle of armoured infantrymen. Until then, if the soldiers had been vigilant, they were now wearing gloomy faces.

While unlike the first group, most of them were smart enough to understand that the death of the giant had been caused by the bizarrely shaped metal object held by his opponent, they had no idea of the sorcery behind such a feat.

And yet it wasn't enough to break their spirit. They came from a world where magic existed and only the nobles could master its secrets. The various and varied hair and eyebrow colours generally betrayed their elemental affinities and were mainly hereditary.

Their princesses could certainly produce spells of similar power, but the visual effects accompanying these spells were usually spectacular and explicit. A ball of fire, a cone of ice, a lightning bolt; nothing that could not be understood at first sight. Spells capable of killing with a simple noise? It was definitely the first time they'd ever heard of them.

As for the other humanoid species, some of them seemed to have too little intelligence to understand what had really happened. Only the sound of the gunshot had struck them.

However, Jake wasn't so naive as to convince himself that none of the aliens wanted to harm him. He felt a pervasive hostility, the source of which he couldn't locate. Even if he couldn't find a culprit, there were certainly more advanced species than the Earthlings among them.

The lack of clearly identifiable futuristic weapons was no indication of primitiveness. Bioengineering, nanorobotics, explosives, emitters capable of disrupting neurons or inducing hypnosis, drugs. There were a thousand and one ways for an extremely advanced civilization to hide its game.

In the end, each faction chose to remain neutral. No matter how advanced or confident in their strength a people might be, the largest groups near the Red Cube did not exceed a few hundred heads.

Esur ovu fraqfil plpfiiw hmrlatuzut lmiiofzw frt ouzzaomzafi iacu oaeuzl qazfhpimpliw qfrfeut om guvfu nzmnuziw frt zuezmpnut fqmre ovuaz duiimj hzufopzul. Tvu Ozfhiu tusahul mr ovuaz nfjl vft huzofariw rmo guur ovuzu dmz rmovare.

It was worth noting that most Earth carnivores capable of defeating low-level Digestors in single combat had evolved extremely rapidly

after their arrival on B842. Some had undoubtedly been transported to this planet weeks or months earlier.

In particular, there was a lion larger than a mammoth that was napping in the middle of his pack of lionesses who looked like simple kittens next to him.

What a surprise when Jake found out that Crunch had sneaked up to the king of the felines and was now tickling his nose with his paw.

‘Is this fucking cat brain dead?!’ Jake cursed in his mind, sweating bullets.

Luckily, the evolution of this lion had not spared his intellect and instead of shredding the intruder with a bite like a standard lion would have done, the big feline resumed his nap after having identified the intruder by opening an indifferent eye.

‘Phew, that cat’s got a lucky star.’ He sighed wearily.

Concluding that this cat had its own path to follow, he let Crunch play with the devil. When it got tired of it, it would come back. He was aware, however, that the Ordeals inside the Red Cube would vary greatly from species to species. Perhaps the fact that his cat had joined other felines was not so innocuous.

After this brief twist, the various factions returned to their tranquility, while Jake and his group got to know the few wanderers or mini groups that introduced themselves to them.

If Jake was always so unsociable, Amy, Sarah, Sophie, Loana and even the Playboy were more than happy to meet normal people. At least more normal than the thug who had just shot an even bigger thug a few minutes earlier.

Tvu hmpniu jvm arozmtphut ovuqluisul om ovuq juzu, om ovuaz ezufu lpznzalu, ovu mjruzl md ovu dfzq ovuw vft salaout ojm tfwl ufziauz. Tvu qfar zuflmr ovuw vft ofcur ovu araoafoasu om ofic om ovuq jfl ovfo ovuw vft zuhmeraxut ovuaz himovul frt nmlullamrl mr Waii frt Aqw.

Since they were only a few hundred metres from their farm when they were teleported to B842, they had found themselves in the middle of nowhere, unable to find their way back. They had obviously tried to use their bracelets to find their way, but due to a meeting with Digestors they had been forced to flee to the Red Cube.

Terry the farmer was a six-foot tall bon vivant with a head on his shoulders. With the changes on Earth in recent weeks, he had never moved apart from his wife, and never without his trusty shotgun. He had long since run out of bullets, but that had allowed them to survive until then.

His wife Maria, a tall brunette in her thirties with sun-tanned skin, never went out without a knife or pitchfork either. She wasn't particularly pretty, but she had a well-groomed body and sparkling eyes.

They made a handsome couple.

Other individuals then introduced themselves one after the other, some friendly and enthusiastic, while others only gave their names out of courtesy or to exchange information.

They learned through these exchanges that very few of them had had the chance to witness a blue light reaching up to the sky and serving as a beacon for them. Some had seen it, but had not found the courage or desire to go there, despite the fact that their Oracles confirmed that there was no danger there.

Indeed, depending on the area of appearance, if the place where the beacon of light was located was safe, the path leading to it was full of pitfalls.

The direct consequence was that the majority of them had no idea where they were, what the Aether's role was, or even why so many species from different worlds were waiting in front of the Red Cube.

Amy, with a good heart, set out to explain everything they had learned so far, from their encounter with Aslael to their own discoveries.

They were all delighted to hear about Oracle cities, but they were not so delighted when they found out that the nearest one was more than a hundred miles away. On top of that, they didn't even have the necessary Aether to pay the head tax.

Others, on the contrary, were determined to stay at the foot of the Red Cube to forge themselves a future through the Ordeals.

After all the chatter, night had finally fallen and Jake ordered the tent to be pitched. He would let the child and the mother sleep in it. As for him, he didn't intend to sleep under the stars. He just didn't intend to sleep at all.

Between the primitive aliens of the first group who were going to hate him, the second group full of criminals who had been staring at their bags full of food since their arrival, and all those other humanoid species and carnivores all around him, falling asleep would be like handing over his life to fate.

He still had 36 more Aether points and more than enough Digestor blood and meat to last the coming night.