

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 2: The First Ordeal

### Chapter 69 – It was a long night.

A few minutes earlier.

Amy, Sarah, Sophie and Loana were stripped naked and thrown like sacks of potatoes in the middle of a tent under the perverse laughter of their kidnappers, whose features they could not see clearly in the ambient darkness.

Finally getting some respite, bound, naked and gagged in the middle of a basic tent, the four women found themselves abandoned to all sorts of anguish. Even before they had time to foment any kind of plan, a man with the look of a lecherous beast entered the tent, palpated them one by one as if he was weighing melons in the market, before resting his choice on the young blonde with voluptuous curves.

Baffled and panicked, Sarah was torn from her friends without being able to say or do anything. She was dragged through the cold sand on what she thought was about 30 metres before being thrown headfirst into another tent.

The thug was undoubtedly excited and impatient, and she could hear him unbuttoning his belt behind her, then taking off his pants before throwing his full weight on her, eager to satisfy his impulses.

Still tied up and unable to resist, Sarah's brain was in full swing, thinking like never before. Then she remembered that she had an Oracle device dedicated to solving exactly this kind of situation.

Sarah was a selfish and arrogant young woman, manipulating men to achieve her ends, while giving them what they wanted from her. A great man once said, 'Loving someone is all about loving yourself'.

When one fell in love, one fell in love with the ideal person capable of satisfying one's deepest needs. Need for affection, tenderness, sex. Affinities of character, humour and hobbies for sociability. Ideal beauty to generate attraction.

When a man or woman cheated on their husbands or wives it was because their needs had changed and were no longer satisfied. In the same way, when the woman or man you were madly in love with dumped you, the only reaction would be sadness, resentment and sometimes anger or hatred.

Whoever really loved unconditionally, should in fact just be happy for that person and wish him or her the best. Impossible, right? Sarah understood that.

Men loved her for her looks, her bed skills or her laughter, and she loved them for the money, pleasure, usefulness or reputation they would bring her. She had slept with many men to get what she wanted, not always very handsome, but she had never been forced to.

In the 22nd century, sayings like 'A key that opens all locks is good, a lock that can be opened by all keys is trash' had long since fallen into oblivion. Macho or racist judgements still existed, but on the whole morals had evolved in the right direction.

Sarah had never felt dirty or unclean and had never felt any shame for her actions. The end justified the means.

Struggling and squeezing her legs as best she could, she suddenly realized that her impatient wanna-be rapist couldn't get it up. The

offender was apparently a long-time cocaine addict and had been suffering violent withdrawal symptoms since arriving on B842. One of the main consequences was high cortisol levels and impotence.

Realizing that this was her chance, she consulted her Oracle to exploit this loophole. The Path revealed itself to her and she committed herself to it without hesitation.

Hufzare vaq fhoasuiw qflopzgoare om fjfcu val ifxw jmq, lvu hzfjiut hfpoampli omjztl vaq, tmare vuz gulo jaov vuz gmpvt vfrtl frt duuo, ovur lozfaevourare pn mr vuz cruul nzuourtut om buzc vaq mdd jaov gmov vfrtl.

Surprised by her initiative at first, the rapist relaxed, thinking that she had fallen under his spell, or that she was one of those girls with submissive fantasies. For a while, only his groans of pleasure were heard in the tent. Unfortunately, this mistake proved fatal to him.

TATATATATATATA!

A burst of fire in the middle of the camp startled the excited man. Taking advantage of the diversion, she followed her Shadow Guide to the letter. Without mercy, she grabbed his testicles delicately, then squeezed with all her might. A sound of grapes bursting under the pressure resounded inside the tent, followed by a heart-rending cry of pain.

While the man was cowering and paralyzed by the paroxysmal pain, Sarah crawled at full speed to the criminal's belt in total darkness as if she could see in broad daylight. Drawing a long knife from his belt, she came back to the agonizing man, and with a loud scream of rage stabbed the blade into his heart.

After this first stab, she continued to stab him repeatedly, venting all her accumulated fear and anger. After a while, long after the man had drawn his last breath and a filament of Aether had appeared above his body, she calmed down.

Then realizing the horror of the crime she had just committed and the sticky blood covering her, she tucked her knees against her chest in a corner of the tent, convinced that she was a goner once her crime was discovered.

That's how Jake discovered her when he entered the tent. He couldn't distinguish her clearly, but the clouds blocking out the light from the purple moons and stars had begun to dissipate, allowing a few thin rays of moonlight to pass through. At last he could see something, though very little.

Gently tapping her shoulder to see how she was doing, he was rewarded in response with a stab to the heart, which he easily neutralized by grasping her wrist. If he hadn't controlled his strength, he would have broken her forearm.

'It's me, Jake.' He said, as he made her drop the knife.

Huz uwul jaturut liaevoiw fl lvu zuhmeraxut val smahu, Sfzfv rusuz ovmpevo lvu jmpit gu eift mru tfw om vufz ao fefar. Guooare vuz vmnu gfhc, lvu zuefarut ar fr arlofro ovu uknzullamr md f hmrdaturo frt lqpe jmqfr. Jfcu jfl fqfxut fo vmj ypahciw ovu hvfreu ar fooaoptu vft mhhpzzut.

He then removed her gag and undid her restraints. He then let her pick up the murder weapon and absorb the Aether she had earned.

'Okay, follow me now. We're going back to our tent.' He commanded her in the same lackluster tone with which he addressed them

during the day. Without knowing why, she found this indifference reassuring this time.

The return to their camp went smoothly, and the duo found Amy and the other girls unharmed, along with Kyle and Will. The child was still unconscious inside the tent.

Amy then gave Sarah her clothes back and Jake removed the bullet from Will's thigh. Digestor's blood had done its job well and he had to reopen the wound to remove it. After that, he sutured and bandaged the wound before moving on to the Playboy's injury.

Then when things finally settled down, he checked his own gunshot wound to the shoulder and realized that apart from a scar that promised to be quite nasty, healing was on the right track. The increase in his stats had had the desired effect.

As the other exhausted members of his group went back to bed, huddling together inside the tent despite the lack of space, Jake went for a walk again.

Now that visibility was decent again thanks to the starlight and moonlight, Jake retraced his steps to the mercenary camp, hoping to find the child's mother and check on her condition for good.

He found her body easily, lying in the sand a few dozen meters from their own base. After all this time, she still hadn't woken up and seeing how her face was half buried in the sand, it didn't bode well.

Turning the body over, he checked her pulse and breath. Nothing. Touching gently the back of the deceased's skull, he felt his fingers digging into her skull like a broken pottery jar. With a long sigh, he searched her, looking for a memento for the child.

Esuropfiw vu dmprt vuz lqfzonvmru opzrut mdd, jvahv vu tuhatut om gzare gfhc. Id ovuzu jfl mru aouq ovfo hmpit vmit dfqaiw nvmoml, ao jfl oval mru. Ir ovu Mazzmz Urasuzlu, ovuzu vft om gu f jfw om hvfzeu mz zuozauSu ovu tfof arlatu, uSur jaovmpo ovu fnnzmsut hvfzeuz.

Finding nothing else of value, he undertook to bury her with dignity. If the child fell on her corpse when he woke up, it would be a disaster and out of respect for this woman, he could not let her either to rot in the sand or end up as a nocturnal snack for a group of scavenging aliens.

When night gave way to dawn, he finally returned to his camp, mentally prepared to face many more nights like this one. But just as he was getting ready to eat something to recover from his night adventures, the giant Red Cube started flashing wildly, emitting a piercing noise that stirred up all the creatures.

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