

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 2: The First Ordeal

### Chapter 91 – Beginning of a new alliance

Lu Yifeng appealed to his sister on this matter. Who better to answer than the one who had experienced its benefits first hand.

The young woman in question shrugged her shoulders while rubbing her chin as she contemplated her explanation with some degree of frustration.

‘It’s not that simple to explain. You have to live it to make the difference. ‘Lu Yan attempted a timid, hesitant response. ‘ Basically, the answer’s in the name. But I wasn’t lying when I said it was of little use to me now. »

‘What do you mean? ‘ Jake asked, inviting her to elaborate further.

‘Well, what is not perceivable by our senses or our technology?’ She addressed him with another question, whose answer was quite evident.

There were only two things he knew that technology could not detect. What had to do with the soul or the spiritual realm. That was why it was called the paranormal. If it was normal, it wouldn’t be so hard to verify.

The other thing their technology couldn’t detect was the Aether. We could detect gravity waves, the Higgs boson or Quarks, but Aether was out of their reach. Other things might have been undetectable that he didn’t know of.

‘ This is exactly like that. And that’s why it’s useless to me right now. ‘ The reserved young woman confirmed her deductions after reading his expression changes.

‘ Because the Oracle device already allows us to see the Aether? ‘ Kyle made his first and last intelligent remark of the entire conversation at that very moment.

‘That’s right!’ Lu Yan validated his theory, the Playboy feeling like a schoolboy who just got a good mark.

‘You can’t really see the Aether, but you can feel it. ‘ The older brother added his own personal touch.

‘Yeah, that’s the most important thing. I can feel the Aether flow very faintly as it passes through me, and the one in the air that comes into contact with my body and that I breathe. Unfortunately, I can’t do anything with it. »

Jake meditated on this fact for a brief moment, untying his crossed legs, then straightening up to get the blood moving.

‘I can think of only one reason for this. ‘He suddenly theorized out loud, to make his point. ‘Aether only amplifies the capacities of our bodies, just like the properties of matter or energy. A simple multiplier. Our muscles are stronger, an object will be sturdier, and so on and so forth. I suppose the reason why the effect is so limited is because our bodies are missing a crucial element.

‘A soul. »

The two siblings looked at each other for a brief moment before turning their attention to Jake. They had made the right choice for their alliance. Now they had to hope it wouldn’t backfire.

‘My sister and I feel the same way. But Lu Yan has an interesting theory. You may have noticed that among the sub-attributes of intelligence is ‘control’? »

‘ Yes, indeed... ‘ Jake had repeatedly wondered what the differences were between the control provided by agility and that of intelligence. It was obvious by now.

‘Well, so the whole idea is that it’s about mind control, brain control. First of all, it increases willpower, emotional or attention control. Kind of like an advanced meditation practitioner. But on a higher level, we think it’s about accessing and controlling this Aether flowing through us. Without perception, there’s no control. The seventh stat opens the door to control not only our mind, but our environment.

‘If we can influence and use this Aether as fuel with our minds, then we will have a stable soul, even if our bodies wither away. That’s the key I think to evolving beyond our limitations. »

This was opening up brand new perspectives. The discovery of the violet Aether’s role as well as the existence of thousands of prodigies eclipsing it intellectually had altered his plans dramatically. Of the 21 Aether points he had left, he immediately spent 16 to increase his Aether Intelligence by one point.

He suddenly felt the clarity of his mind improving, as if the fog was gradually dissipating. He was not yet as clear as he had been before his transformation into a Throsgenian, but it was already much better.

When he suddenly became clever again, he realized that one quickly got used to being stupid. Maybe that explained why so many people

thought they were always right, or why so few thought they were dumb. Yet it was well known that we were all someone's fool.

Gaining control over one's emotions and focus made a very real difference in a context where spikes in Throsgenian hormones made him moody.

'It's our turn to ask one last question. 'Lu Yifeng abruptly changed the subject, calling the debate closed. ' You're from another Red Cube right? So I'm guessing you know some of these slaves. Is there anyone we should be wary of? »

Jake pointed his gaze at Yerode and Lamine who were eating silently crouched against another column. They too had chosen to keep a low profile.

'The tall one with darker skin and a sharp body is Yerode, the leader of a mercenary group and a criminal. The man standing next to him, who had lost his long beard at the barber's earlier, is Lamine, a skilled marksman. He can see in the dark and never misses his target. It's not good to be a woman with them around. »

As he said this, Jake glanced insistently and meaningfully at the shy young woman, who from the beginning had not spoken much, often leaving her brother to answer in her stead. He hoped for her that her talent in Trial Worlds wasn't limited to virtual reality.

Hearing Jake's warning, Lu Yifeng's eyelids suddenly contracted, before relaxing again. The Chinese man cast a vicious glance at the African guy, as if to warn him that if he came near his sister he would pay the price. Naturally, Yerode couldn't care less, continuing to gulp down its foul porridge with little spirit.

'My turn to ask one last question and it will be the same one. Do we have to pay attention to anyone in particular ? »

Lu Yifeng pointed straight at the taciturn Middle Eastern man. The same man who had received, like Jake, a teasing wink from the wife of Servius Cassius. After having his head and body shaved, it had become almost impossible to determine the ethnicity of the participants.

‘He was in the same camp as us. He’s Lebanese, former firefighter. His wife and daughter were devoured before his eyes by Digestors, hence his expression of ‘I have a grudge against the whole world’. I think he’s a good guy, but in his current state I think it’s better not to provoke him. We’ve seen him in action, and he’s surprisingly powerful for an ordinary fireman...

‘Apart from him, that fat guy over there with the freckles is Hugo. Kind of goofy, not mean. The skinny young lady at the next table is Miya. She doesn’t talk, but nobody in her original group dared to bother her. »

The woman in question could not be considered pretty, or even charming. Being only skin and bones and with her short hair, she could have been mistaken for a man with an androgynous morphology.

After that, the siblings said goodbye to them, returning to their spot. There was no point in rushing their collaboration. As long as they didn’t harm each other and shared their information, it was good enough.

Jake and Kyle who were done eating waited patiently for the dinner to finish so they could get back to their room. The gladiators bearing the mark of Servius Cassius were taking a wicked pleasure in feasting as slowly as possible, laughing and commenting incessantly on how delicious their meal was.

At last, when they realized that their playact had left the new recruits completely indifferent, they quickly finished eating before returning to their quarters, leaving the recruits to their own devices.

Priscus appeared out of nowhere, clapping his hands to guide them to the dormitories. It went exactly as he had described to them earlier in the day.

Tvu rahulo zmmql jaov jartmjl vft guur mhhpnaut gw ovu dazlo fzzaSfil, gpo vu qalhvausmpliw zuqartut ovuq ovfo ao jfl pn om ovuq om fezuu mr jvm jmpit liuun jvuzu. Orhu ovu suouzfr eiftafomz jfl emru, ovu omru ypahciw zmlu, lmmr opzrare arom vufout talnpoul.

Minutes later, the first fights broke out. The more aggressive and confident ones tried to impose themselves, throwing out the belongings of the previous occupants of the rooms they had chosen. The Throsgenians' short fuse temperament came to the fore at the worst possible moment, the situation escalating in a snap into a full-scale brawl.

As for Jake, he just threw himself on the first straw mattress at the entrance of the corridor, falling asleep immediately. He would have plenty of time to fight in the days to come.