

The Oracle Paths

Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

Chapter 193 - Experiments

When Jake placed his hand under Enya's, the tennis ball sized fireball that had stopped growing suddenly began to expand again at an alarming rate. In less than a second it had doubled in size. A few seconds later it was the size of a watermelon and the radiant heat of the flames had reddened their faces.

Jake being the only one with sufficient Extrasensory Perception could feel how the surrounding Aether was rapidly converging above Enya's palm, as if she was holding a mini black hole.

The farther away the Aether was from him, the harder it was to control it, but eventually all the Aether within ten meters bent to his will. Beyond that, he was blind anyway.

He could very well have controlled the Aether by sitting cross-legged at a distance, but his control would not have been as precise. Besides, he didn't want to frighten Enya by making her realize that he could control her body and Aether flow easily. He reserved this kind of bad surprises for bastards like Yerode and Lamine.

'It's all right, you can undo the spell.' Jake indicated as he withdrew his hand.

Without his help, the surrounding Aether stopped streaming towards the fireball, and the fireball quickly deflated like a pierced balloon back to its standard tennis ball size. Enya then relaxed her

focus and the flame dissipated. Since transmuted Aether was the only fuel available, there was no danger of losing control.

Enya's face was flushed and covered with beads of perspiration, but that wasn't enough to hide her excitement. Her sister Esya was displaying a similar joy.

'How did you do that?' Enya asked with a hurried tone.

'Simple Aether manipulation. You should be able to do the same as soon as your Intelligence and Extrasensory Perception are sufficient.

' Jake replied succinctly.

The two sisters were so excited that they had completely forgotten their wounds that were still waiting to be bandaged. Nevertheless, Jake wanted to do one last experiment before taking care of his knees.

'I have one last test to do.' Jake said, cutting short their daydreams.

'Recreate the same fireball if you can still do it, please.'

Jake didn't know if those Aether Spells were exhausting to the body or not. Manipulating the earth around him hadn't particularly taxed him. Maybe a little mentally, but nothing a good nap couldn't solve.

This situation was different, however. He wasn't sure, but he had a hunch that the lvl0 spell was drawing some of its energy from the frail physique of the young woman. Perhaps the spell was set up this way to allow spells to be cast when several mages were competing to control the Aether in the same area.

If an enemy had superior Extrasensory Perception and Intelligence, it was indeed possible for that enemy to prevent a weaker mage from casting his spells by preventing him from absorbing the Aether around him. In this case, the only recourse was to use his own stamina and vitality to provide the required energy.

Jake had not been able to verify this because the earth manipulation he had resorted to was not greater than his Vitality and Constitution.

The only relatively exhausting moment had been when he had melted the lava soil into a container. For a brief moment he had felt the backlash, but it was too brief to really affect him.

Hearing that Jake wanted to do another test, Enya agreed without batting an eyelid. She was curious to see what he would do this time.

A new fireball the size of a tennis ball materialized above her palm like the previous time. But this time, instead of simply gathering the Aether above Enya's palm to make the fireball grow, he forced the Aether in question to condense further.

An amount of Aether equivalent to that used to create the watermelon-sized fireball earlier was concentrated into a space barely larger than an apricot core in no time at all.

Nm qfoouz vmj qphv vu dmhplut guwmrt ovfo, val quart duio f cart md arofreakiu zulalofrhu. Al vu ozaut om arlalo, f lvfzn nfar ar val ouqniul euroiw qftu vaq zufiaXu ovfo oval jmpit gu f gft atuf.

Under the effect of this condensed Aether, the heart of the ball of fire quickly turned yellow, then white to the point of becoming as blinding as a sun. At that moment, Jake had no doubt that this tiny ball of fire would be deadly to anyone who deigned to take it head-on.

But all of a sudden the fireball began to grow at an accelerated rate a fraction of a second later, as though there was a catching up phenomenon. Once the condensed Aether turned into flames, the pressure exerted by Jake's mind dissipated. Therefore, his control was limited to the Aether alone. The flames were completely out of control at his current level.

Enya deactivated the spell in panic before the fireball charred them all. Sarah and Esya had already retreated several meters for safety, while Jake had actually dispersed the Aether as soon as he had seen the fireball swell. It took a few seconds for the young woman to catch her breath after that. Even though Jake had taken control of the Aether, she was still exhausted.

‘It was an interesting experience.’ Jake said seriously, as if an accident hadn’t nearly happened.

The main conclusion was that even an Aether skill or spell lv10 could be formidable in the right hands. A spell as harmless as producing the light from a flashlight with his hands could become a weapon of mass destruction if the caster’s Aether control was exceptional.

These Aether skills lv10 were also good starting points to get familiar with more technical Aetheric manipulations. If Jake had possessed this spell instead of Enya, he certainly could have burned the Slug to death instead of running away with his tail between his legs.

‘I guess there are no such thing as bad Aether skills, just people making bad choices.’ Jake may have made a mistake when he chose the manual on Aether manipulation.

In the long run, it was one of the best choices he could have made, but there was no way of knowing what the future would bring. He needed to be alive to enjoy it. ‘And I’m still on chapter two...’ Jake lampooned inside.

Now that he was done with his experiments, it was time to move on to treatment. Sarah didn’t mind Jake checking her out while she bandaged her wounds, but the two noblewomen were much more prudish and conservative. Being watched half-naked by a man who wasn’t their husband was absolutely unthinkable.

This was not at all surprising, Jake reasoned, since the two sisters belonged to a medieval civilization. They hadn't really talked about their home planet and country, but neither had Jake after all. It wasn't the priority of the moment.

To avoid the insistent gaze of Jake, who remained a healthy man, the three women isolated themselves in Esya's booth, leaving Jake alone to smash his knees again. He had reabsorbed the Aether in the crystals to be in the best possible condition.

Jake sat down and let himself slide against the wall, contemplating at length his two broken knees with a concerned expression. Every time he thought it was time to start, his breath would quicken suddenly and he would freak out soon after.

It was going to hurt!

After a long quarter of an hour, Jake figured that at this rate he would still be at the same point at the end of the day. Taking a few quick, deep breaths to give himself some courage, he put his first-aid kit next to him so he wouldn't have to move around and then he took action.

The Yellow Aether of Constitution of his kneecaps was moved to his thighs and calves to make his knees more fragile, then he concentrated the Red Aether of Strength in his arms and especially his index finger. Counting up to 3, he thrust his forefingers into the holes of his half-closed knees when he reached 2.

CRACK!

'FUCK!'

Jake's scream frightened the three women in the next booth, who thought for a minute that they were under attack. Even the wall couldn't silence Jake's cry of agony.

He had screamed in pain with his 250 Aether Strength points. A rocket at liftoff would've been more discreet.