

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 3: The Oracle Cities

### Chapter 217 - The -126th floor.

When Jake reappeared out of the portable Black Cube in the middle of Jay Parks' office, all of the group without exception, including the geneticist, scrutinized his appearance in search of change, to no avail.

Sarah, sitting cross-legged in one of the sofas with a glass of wine in her hand in a regal posture that exuded confidence and complacency, had already begun to undergo some changes.

Her already blond hair had gained a golden hue at its roots, while her skin had subtly gained a light tan, as if she had been sunbathing for several days. Her eyes were still brown for the time being, but they were now cashew-coloured.

Since the young woman had received her Myrmidian bloodline a few hours before he did, it gave Jake a good idea of what he could expect by the end of the evening. Because he now had a Myrtharian body, his Vitality had already doubled.

Looking at his new Status, Jake had briefly believed that his stats had not changed, but he was wrong. There was one thing that had changed and that was his species. He was no longer human, but Myrtharian and probably the only one of his kind.

The direct consequence was that his Body Stats may have been the same as before, but his physical capabilities had effectively doubled. The reason they had not changed numerically was that he was now compared to other Myrtharians. If he wished, he could easily change the display of his Status to compare himself to his former species.

Some stats such as Strength, Agility or Intelligence were temporarily halved until the cells were completely revamped, but his metabolism was now working at full speed, as evidenced by his non-nerfed Vitality.

The cap, however, was no longer the same. Whereas his Body Stats had peaked at 30-40 points before, and only for some of them like Strength or some sub attributes like Stamina or Flexibility, they could now continue to evolve without any restraint.

‘How, how do you feel?’ Esya stammered with a tense and worried face. Her sister and Will shared the same state of tension.

It seemed that Sarah’s changes were not limited to her appearance and that she had been quite obnoxious to them in recent hours. If Sarah lifted her chin a little higher, she would surely stare at the sky, or rather at the ceiling. There had to be a limit to her haughtiness! She clearly couldn’t control her new instincts.

‘I’m fine.’ Jake reassured them by forcing a slight smile.

His relaxed response released some of the tension accumulated by the rest of the group, but not completely. After all, he’d only just received his Bloodline. Who knew how he’d behave in a few hours.

‘It should be all right. My Bloodline shouldn’t have too much effect on my current personality.’ He insisted as he saw their faces falling apart.

‘You’re much stronger than you were before.’ Jay Parks remarked unexpectedly in a solemn tone... ‘You weren’t bad when you came in for a First Ordeal Player, but now you could easily join our Elite Player Program.’

Jake nodded without saying anything. He didn't ask what the program was, because he already had a small idea of it thanks to Lu Yan's explanations during his first Ordeal. The young woman had refused to join the government by signing the confidentiality clause that went with it.

The Earth Government had created a VR game 'Trial Worlds' simulating the concept of Ordeals, and was currently used to screen the population in search of individuals with the best potential to become Players.

This was confirmed because the best players of this VR game had directly obtained concrete benefits from the Oracle System by receiving their bracelets. Lu Yan had awakened her Seventh Stat directly and started straight from the Rank 2 of Private, giving her an invaluable lead.

In her own words, there were at least 2000 professional Trial Worlds players who were better than her and who had been recruited by the Earth Government at one time or another.

All these people had probably joined the Elite Player Program years before, but that didn't mean that the Earth Government had stopped recruiting potential recruits. Not everyone had played this VR game in the past, and the best selection criterion was still to find the Players with the best results in their First Ordeal.

Under this logic, Jake was indeed promising. Even though he had no intention of joining the program. He cherished his freedom.

Turning to his cousin, not forgetting to examine the geneticist's expression, Jake asked if it was possible for them to buy equipment before their next Ordeal. He pointed to his bare feet to illustrate the urgency of the matter.

He then noticed that the base of his nails had started to take on an intimidating silvery tint. His old nails would probably fall off once these new 'claws' were big enough.

Anya took a questioning look at the giant, who seemed totally unconcerned, and then another uncertain look at the six-pupil orange-eyed receptionist, who was still there for her greatest frustration.

'I'll inform the rest of the management at the center.' Elisabeth replied coldly as if it were a routine procedure.

In saying this, she completely ignored Jay Parks, who was supposedly one of the center's supervisors. Apparently, the geneticist was simply seen as a lunatic who was passionate about his research and hardly ever got involved in the political and administrative affairs of the center.

Paradoxically enough, this formal and standard response did not reassure Anya at all. The equipment was normally reserved for Evolvers and Players serving the government and could only be redeemed using their contribution points or by justifying the need to replace it after an official mission.

Nevertheless, she was aware that equipment was sometimes sold at high prices to other less advanced humanoid aliens and that the original Earthlings were supposed to be given priority regardless of their political orientation and ambitions. Unless they openly betrayed the Government's trust, there was no reason for the Government not to help its citizens.

Of course, this was with regard to standard equipment. The cutting edge equipment created by the center was reserved for a few hand-picked elites.

Anya decided to take them to the center's armoury, which the military already called the 'Contribution Hall,' in reference to the Mission Hall of the Oracle Cities.

The group bid farewell to Jay Parks and took the elevator they had come by in the opposite direction, finally stopping on the -126th floor. On this floor, they said farewell to the high-tech laboratories.

Tvulu vft guur zunifhut gw f cart md gfz jvuzu ovu fihmvmi gmooiul ar ovu eifll jartmj guvart vft guur zunifhut gw jufnmrl frt movuz lozfreu uypanquro. Tvu dimmz, jfiil frt huaiare juzu hmsuzut jaov quofi, frt lmqu hmzzatmzl hmrruhout om sfpiol ovfo Jfcu tuuqut aqnllfgiu jaov val hpzzuro hfnfgaiaoaual.

Several soldiers in irregular, mismatched commando uniforms were watching every move on this floor with the ruthless but falsely tranquil gaze of lurking predators. High-Rank Evolvers.

Behind the bar, a bald, bearded man in his late thirties was cleaning a kind of shotgun with a clean rag and a bottle of oil. The man was rather scruffy and had a typical South Asian physique. His origins must have been mixed, as he may as well have been Indian, Filipino or Thai.

His skin was rather dark, his eyes slightly slanted, but his muscles were shredded, with his forearms in particular having the merit of being the same size as his biceps. The 'barman' was wearing only a bullet-proof vest as a tee-shirt, completely revealing his arms. A tribal tattoo went from the top of his neck to the bottom of his left shoulder, completing the impression that he was not a person to be trifled with.

'Hey, Prajuk!' Anya exclaimed in a cutesy voice, as if the bartender was her favorite uncle.

Seeing her, the so-called Prajuk cracked a smile, unveiling his golden teeth instead of his incisors. He soon regained his professionalism, however, when he saw the group of people accompanying her. His eyes subtly narrowed when he saw Elizabeth, but he acted as if nothing was wrong. This woman was a real scourge.

‘Prajuk, I need clothes for my cousin and his friends, can you do something?’ His cousin begged politely with the tearful look of a kitten waiting for its kibble.

The barman inspected Jake, because he resembled the young woman slightly, and then Sarah, because her còcky face made him want to slap her in the face to take her down a peg or two. ‘Newbies...’ He sighed inside.

After probing the receptionist’s expression, he approved Anya’s request.

‘Follow me, please.’

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