

The Oracle Paths

Volume 2: The First Ordeal

Chapter 127 - It would be ok, right?

Jake and Hugo accepted the deal without batting an eyelid. In exchange, they would be treated the same as Khazus and Priscus. They had volunteered to provide their blood without dilution to those who had actively participated in the previous day's battle.

Since he knew that the blood of a nobleman like Priscus was not even a quarter as efficient as Lucia's, his enthusiasm for this reward had been cooled. With their wounds from the previous day Jake would have expected Priscus and Khazus to take a rest, but he learned the sad truth from the mouth of Servius Cassius, who seemed to have decided to trust them completely.

The man was certainly a better judge of character than Jake, since he had no trouble determining who among the few slaves still present was reliable and who was not. The reason why so many traitors were able to stay under his roof for so long incognito was in large part because he had little contact with gladiators outside of a professional setting.

But after the mutiny of the day before his mistrust was at its highest and he had asked for a detailed report from Khazus and Priscus on every remaining recruit and gladiator. Both of them were professionals and had easily been able to reconstruct the events in the cantina. Even if Lutex had been doomed, they too believed that he could have survived until help was forthcoming.

The absence of fatal injuries had not deceived them, as had Miya's weird death. If Lu Yan thought she had hidden her game well enough, that was no longer the case. Khazus may not have known about Aether's manipulation, but that didn't mean that the supernatural didn't exist in this world. Without going that far, it simply meant that Lu Yan was stronger than she claimed.

Lu Yan and her brother had helped Khazus regain the upper hand, though, and as such they could not be among the traitors. The death of Khazus would please many people, especially the Primus clan.

Yet, the truth was worrying. In spite of the apparent victories of Gerulf, Khazus and Priscus, it remained undeniable that all three had been successfully poisoned. Some of their strength had been taken from them the day before, which explained why they were in poor shape when the poison stopped working on their bodies.

Losing 20% of their strength for a normal human was not so bad, but it was a different story for Myrmidians of their stature. It would take a considerable amount of time to recover this 20% unless they could defeat enemies of their level consecutively. The problem was that at their current level of power it was almost impossible to find a suitable opponent.

Simply training was also insufficient. The higher their stats climbed, the closer they got to their physical and Aetheric limits. Progress was not so fast even with hard work.

Khazus and Priscus had been prepared for the possibility of being poisoned for years and knew how to recognize conventional poisons. Unfortunately, it was not cyanide that had been used to poison them. Furthermore, their Constitution and Vitality were too high to be permanently affected by such a poison.

After analysis it was revealed that the poison used was ricin. Extracted from castor beans and 6,000 times more toxic than cyanide, it was an almost odourless poison and extremely easy to make. The skills required were barely higher than those needed to make pasta with tomato sauce.

All you had to do was press the seeds to extract the oil. The remaining toxic cake contained the infamous ricin. Consumed it killed an adult human within a few days by causing hemorrhagic gastroenteritis, progressing to severe dehydration, collapse and death.

By respiratory tract, the symptoms were much more severe. Inhalation caused eye and pharyngeal irritation, followed by hemorrhagic pulmonary edema with respiratory distress.

lo jfl ovu luhmrt quovmt ovfo jfl hvmlur gw dpqaefoare ovu zmmql ar jvahv Guzpid, Kvfxpl frt Pzalhpl zulatut. Tvu lquii jfl dfaro, lm ovu ovzuu eiftafomzl tat rmo aqqutafouiw rmoahu ovu allpu. Tmkahaow jfl mriw ozaeeuzut 4-8 vmpzl fdouz fglmznoamr ar f rmzqfi vppqr, gpo jaov ovuaz quofgmialq ao omme mriw f duj qarpoul.

The final word was that even though Khazus and Priscus still looked brave, only Gerulf was still the same as yesterday. Not being Myrmidian and not consuming blood, his strength had not been taken away from him. Anyway, his constitution was higher, and the poison had had a limited effect on him despite the much higher amount inhaled.

Gerulf, however, had to fight this Templar Player out of nowhere in a weakened state. According to Cassius, the Kinthar was still sleeping underground where Jake had buried it. God only knew when the giant would decide to come out of his hole.

Jake had obviously asked for Princess Lucia's blood as payment, claiming that the faster he progressed the better he would protect her. Servius Cassius had immediately refused.

Lucia was too weak. After a lifetime of having her precious blood drawn by the Emperor, she was almost as weak as a newborn baby suffering from cancer. For one thing, she suffered from severe anemia, and for another, the impact of the defeats on her body was out of all proportion to that of a normal Myrmidian.

When Jake and the other Players consumed Myrmid blood their Aether would be stimulated, allowing it to grow slowly with proper training and challenges. Their bodies, however, would remain unchanged. The muscle gain simply came from a regular weight training routine and a proper diet.

It was different for the Myrmidians. In addition to the Myrmidian Blessing in their blood, they also had the Myrmid Body to go with it. Every victory and defeat affected their real bodies at the same time. Even though they were unable to see the Aether and were unaware of its existence, it did not change this factual reality.

After reaching the 100-point Aether limit of Constitution the previous night, Jake had realized that Gerulf's incredible Constitution, which he had estimated to be over 1000, was not the result of his Aether alone, but of his physique.

He now believed that the giant had 100 Aether points in Constitution just like him, his body acting in synergy with his Aether to achieve such resilience. This was bad news for the people of Earth, as their physique was quite weak in comparison.

Even his cat Crunch had more potential than him at the moment. By devouring his victims, he was gaining Aether, but his body was also

evolving like a damn Pokemon. This gave a substantial advantage to very tall people.

On Earth their high mass would have made them slow and lacking in stamina, but in the Mirror Universe mass didn't matter as much. With an Aether of Strength of 100, a weight of 100kg would only be felt like 10. Every extra kilo of muscle would be worth ten times as much.

Bodybuilders with grotesque bodies paradoxically had now the optimal physique to survive.

The only way to change this reality was to find a way to change one's anatomy and genetics. Becoming taller was a first solution, but his growth had been over since long ago. He had grown a little by increasing his Constitution Aether, proof that the Aether still interacted with his body to some extent, but the effect was too limited.

In any case, the games at the Coliseum were not cancelled. Cassius did not yet know why, but it seemed that Lucius Sextus, the Crown Prince, was not responsible for the attack. Perhaps he knew that his sister had taken refuge in this Ludus, but he didn't care. Lucia's pure blood was a well-kept secret.

After accepting Cassius' proposal, Jake and Hugo resumed their training. The only difference was they had to do it without straying far from the princess. The princess accompanied them to Gerulf's private court, where she watched them train in boredom on a wooden bench.

Jake soon realized that Cassius had coddled her too much. No matter how weak she was, she would never recover by sitting around. It was well known that if you wanted to cure someone who was overly

cold sensitive, all you had to do was expose them to the cold. This was especially true for a pure-blooded Myrmidian.

If she did her best, she could accomplish in one day what would require a full Ordeal to recruits consuming Priscus' blood diluted to 1/100.

Tired of watching her wallow in her mediocrity, Jake put down the huge dumbbells he was holding and walked towards the Princess. He knew the girl was too weak to give her blood, but if she wasn't, it would be okay, right?

Seeing Jake's eyes judging her from head to toe like a piece of meat at the butcher's shop Lucia couldn't help but feel uncomfortable.

'Why don't you come practice with us?'

[Satu Mallamr: Rfalu Pzarhull Lphaf arom f ozpu jfzzamz!]

[Rewards: Experience point for Authority level, better rating, Lucia's blood]
