

The Oracle Paths

Volume 2: The First Ordeal

Chapter 128 - Lucias' Misery

‘ Pardon ? ‘Princess Lucia gaped when she heard his proposal.

She had been watching their brutish training since they started and just by watching them sweat and make faces she could tell it was a pain. Furthermore, she only had dresses and tunics suitable for a young woman accustomed to the palace’s etiquette.

As Jake contemplated her behavior, it was easy for him to guess what thoughts were going through her mind. He may have been a former anti-social with a low emotional quotient, but it was hard to miss these details with an intelligence as high as his.

Firstly because time passed more slowly for him, so that he didn’t miss any changes in expression, and secondly because his brain could process much more data at once. Finally, he was calmer. He was gradually getting used to interacting with people for information or profit.

‘I guess you’re the kind of person who mopes that your whole life has been hell and there’s nothing you could have done to change it, right ? ‘Jake decided to taunt her a little bit to get her out of her comfort zone.

Contrary to his hoped-for reaction, she sat on the bench with her arms folded in a nonchalant manner.

‘So what ? That is indeed correct. ‘She simply replied without embarrassment.

‘You’re wrong. And you know it. ‘Jake objected coldly. ‘That would be true of anyone else, but not a pure-blooded Myrmidian like you. ‘

The young woman frowned, her arms crossed and slightly twitching. Finally a reaction that showed she wasn’t completely ignorant. All was not lost.

‘Do you realize that the recruits and gladiators here use the diluted Myrmidian blood of Priscus or Khazus for their training, yes or no ? ‘

‘Yes...‘ Lucia admitted with a nod. She couldn’t walk in broad daylight in the arena, but between her mother Anthonia’s passion for gladiatorial combat and her older sister Livia’s passion for gladiatorial combat, she knew all about how a Ludus operated .

‘So you know that the portion given to a recruit is 100 times less pure than the blood of a nobleman, which is four to five times less pure than yours. Moreover, the fact that you are Myrmidian means that your body also benefits from Myrmid’s Blessing. True so far ? ‘

‘That’s right...‘ The princess was brooding now. She knew exactly what he was going to say.

‘Therefore, for you a day of intensive training like ours is at least a year’s worth of recruit training. So tell me now, aren’t you responsible for your situation ? Your skinnyness, your anemia, your physical weakness ? These are just excuses! ‘

Jake was rather pleased with his speech, but when he saw the young woman’s body begin to shake and her eyes getting wet, he regretted

his words. Though, only for a second. After all, she needed a good kick in the buttock to get out of this vicious circle of self-pity.

He let her sob for a moment without saying anything, then when he saw that she was calming down, he began to speak again in a softer but firm tone, allowing no possibility of refusal.

‘Now that the problem has been identified, you will practice with us every day and eat exactly what I tell you to eat. If you refuse, I will spoon you down. I’m sure your mother and sister would be on my side.’

For a brief moment the Princess showed signs of hesitation as if looking for a valid excuse to refuse, then like a balloon with a hole in it, she shriveled on herself with a long sigh. Even her personality was too tame to decline.

A few minutes later Jake was back after having picked up some rookie clothes in the right size for the princess. He then used his Oracle to concoct a suitable training program for the young woman, and then simply wrote it down on a piece of parchment.

After that, he resumed his own training while supervising Lucia’s from time to time. He soon realized that she was indeed extremely weak. Even a kindergarten child was stronger. Her sprint speed was comparable to that of an obese person weighing 300 kg on Earth, while she herself weighed only 40 kg.

Even so, she obeyed. Her willpower was weak, and in order for her Myrmidian blood to activate, she had to keep up. That’s why Jake had designed a program within her reach that any recruit would consider ridiculously simple. Whenever he felt she was about to give up, his Shadow Guide would make him shout a well-meaning remark, skillfully playing between compliment and humiliation.

Every time Lucia thought she had done enough, her gaze would meet that of Jake, full of disdain and mockery, and every time the flame inside her would be rekindled as she gritted her teeth to focus on her exercise.

But Jake hadn't lied. Her blood was truly exceptional. After only half an hour of training she felt her Myrmidian blood awaken for the first time in years. The only times this had ever happened were when she had accompanied the Emperor to war and planned the strategies for future battles.

Huz arouiiaeurhu jfl ovu mriw ovare ovfo jfl zufiiw fgmsu ovu zulo frt ovfo vft guur lozureovurut gw vuz Mwzqatafr Bimmt. Esur ovmpév ao vft nfzoiw guur tzfarut dzmq vuz gw zunufout gimmt lfqniare, lvu zuqfarut mru md ovu ezufoulo qartl ar ovu Eqnazu.

When her blood was activated by her determination and effort, the Aether in the atmosphere she could not see began to flow towards her, and by a mechanism too complex to be understood, bound to her cells, transforming her organism in depth.

Where a non-Myrmidian could only see his Aether increase by consuming blood, Lucia's body was then profoundly altered, the Aetheric and Genetic Code interacting in a mysterious way, connected by an invisible link.

If she needed Jake's encouragement and mockery to persevere at first, that changed radically when the Blessing was activated. Each hour was the equivalent of over two weeks of training for a recruit regarding the Aether, and even though her body wasn't evolving as fast due to lack of nutrients, it was still terrifying.

Jake's Extrasensory Perception was still low, but he could sort of instinctively feel the difference. The way the Aether seemed to come

out of nowhere to join the Princess' body could be felt by Jake as it grazed him.

The biggest mystery was that the density of Aether in the air didn't seem to decrease, as if no matter how much Aether a person could steal, this world would retain its 8-point density forever.

Jake didn't know if the Aether was infinite and the question was far beyond his grasp. So he dispelled those fleeting thoughts to continue his training now that the young woman was on her way.

At noon he took it upon himself to order the Princess's meal according to the Shadow Guide's instructions, and the portions were copious to say the least. A wooden table had been set up under an awning in the secondary courtyard where they practiced so that the Princess could eat with them out of sight.

Hugo didn't say much, but he understood Jake's intention and thought it was a great idea. It was hard to know if the result would be successful, but it could only benefit the Princess.

Lucia was not frail without reason. Having been weak all her life, she had developed a bird's appetite. Her digestive system was certainly fragile and the volume of her stomach small, but she absolutely had to eat like an ogre if she wanted to regain her weight and strength.

Sm jvur Jfcu lfj vuz npo vuz hvahcur iue tmjr fdouz nuhcare f duj oarw gaoul jaov nzarhull tuhmzpq, vu juro arom fhoamr. Hu zpoviulliw flcut Hpem dmz vuin, frt ovu ojm md ovuq qfrfeut om dmzhu ovu Pzarhull om ljfiimj ojm gmjil md ezmfol frt f euruzmpl nmzoamr md qufo.

When they finally let her leave the table, Lucia was feeling nauseous and on the verge of vomiting, but when she saw Jake's eyes, she

swallowed the vomit that rose to her mouth. Jake's menacing look made it clear to her that if she threw up what she had just eaten, he would make sure she had a full stomach again before resuming her training.

Soon after, Lucia's training resumed again, marking the beginning of 19 days of misery for the princess, but also a change in her life for which she would be forever grateful.