

The Oracle Paths

Volume 2: The First Ordeal

Chapter 138 – Battle of the Coliseum (part 6)

Glancing at his Shadow Guide, Jake confirmed once again that his Shadow Guide was behaving poorly. The only actions of his alter ego were limited to safe movements entirely dependent on what Jake was perceiving directly with his own senses. The omniscient aspect of the Oracle System was playing tricks on him, as if it was on standby or one of the variables in his calculation was wrong.

‘Oh, well, who cares... I just have to do it myself.’ Jake croaked with some scorn.

When he focused seriously, time seemed to slow down around him and during that split second he assimilated and processed as much relevant information as he could about the situation on the battlefield.

‘Okay, here we go.’

In a blast, he lifted his feet off the ground and leaned against the stone wall behind him. With his body parallel to the ground, he pushed on his legs with all his strength. Like General Myrmidian’s spears, he seemed to disappear briefly as the acceleration was so great.

A head flew through the air, accompanied by a geyser of blood. The severed head of the centurion devoted to torturing the lone Throsgenian gladiator alive still displayed a sadistic smile, a sign that until the very end he had not realized his own death.

A little earlier, Jake would certainly have continued on his trajectory until the momentum of his jump had been exhausted. But this time, no sooner had his body passed the beheaded centurion than he caught the latter by hooking him with his legs. With a small impulse, he managed to change direction and brake at the same time, allowing him to hit the ground again.

A few seconds later, the seven decurions still alive lay in their own blood as well, their faces frozen in an expression of horror and incomprehension. One stroke, one kill. No matter what they had tried, it had been as futile as putting out a fire with a glass of gasoline.

The Tribune who had come to assist them was one of those who had stood up to Jake from the beginning of the battle. Utterly unafraid of Jake's surprise attack, he raised his blade in a relaxed manner to ward off a piercing attack on his heart.

Yet unlike the resistance of the clash between the two gladiuses and the chilling CLANG he was expecting, he felt a searing pain tearing through his chest. As he lowered his eyes, he discovered a foreign blade plunged to the hilt in his heart.

'How?' With an expression of total disbelief, this was the only question the warrior asked before Jake decapitated him with a second whirling stroke.

Picking up the Aether in a hurry without showing the slightest change of expression, he then ran into the Tribune, busy tormenting Erwin who was still lying on the ground on the defensive.

When Jake arrived behind the Tribune, and by tacit agreement, the former astronaut used all of his Aether points to boost himself. Ignoring his partly reattached arm, he sprang to his feet and delivered a sharp thrust to his heart.

It was the distraction Jake needed. The Tribune parried Erwin's pitiful attempt with a sly smirk and Jake took the opportunity to skewer him from behind, the tip of his sword stopping just inches away from Erwin's face on the other side. The soldier was sprinkled with blood, but at least the surprise attack had been successful.

Wvaiu Jfcu vfzsulout ovu Auovuz fefar jaovmpo frw lvfzare lnazao frt iufno mrhu qmzu omjftzl Sfzfv, Kwiu frt Tvmqfl, Ezjar jfl darfiw fgiu om hmrhurozfou hmqniuouiw mr zufoofhvare val dzulviw fqnpofout fzq. Hufiare jmpit ofcu tfwl, usur juucl, jaov prhuzofar ruzSmpl zuhmsuzw, gpo ao jfl guoouz ovfr imlare val fzq.

The Aether of Vitality, which he could not fully dedicate to his shoulder because of the threat of the Tribune, finally played its part, a bright green light coating the wound. Within seconds, a crust formed, ensuring that the arm would not come off at the slightest effort.

But Jake was still too late. Kyle was the weakest of the trio consisting of himself, Sarah and Thomas. They were already struggling to resist the Three centurions, and the arrival of the two Tribunes had ruined all their hopes of survival.

While trying to tank a few blows for his allies, the Playboy had quickly lost an arm, then a second and finally both legs before being beheaded upon Jake's arrival. Nonetheless, he had bought them invaluable time.

Even Sarah, the personification of individualism, gritted her teeth in frustration at the sacrifice of her former college classmate. Thomas, for his part, had long since recognized him as friend and rival, and with an angry cry attacked the centurions in front of him, moving his blade in every direction as fast as he could to repel them.

At this intensity he was burning the candle at both ends and would burn out in no time. It was enough, however, for Jake to turn the tide.

After the death of two Tribunes, the other two Tribunes were more alert. Unlike the one that Jake and Erwin took in a pincer attack without having time to figure out what was befalling him, the two Tribunes turned away from Sarah and Thomas without hesitation to focus fully on him.

Lunging forward, Jake repeated the upward sword stroke that the Tribunes had used earlier to get rid of him. Aware of his plan, they leaned slightly and deflected the blade rather than parrying directly, proving that they were experienced veterans.

But as with the first Tribune, while the parry looked simple, they did not feel the gentle resistance on the tip of their blade indicating that the enemy's blow had been properly deflected. Instead, two swords sliced through the void and the right Tribune suddenly felt smaller.

Which... wasn't an impression. His body had just been cut in half crosswise at the waist, and while his lower half collapsed like a puppet with its strings cut, his still conscious upper half lost the support that held it at the proper height.

As the Tribune's torso toppled over and crashed face down into the sand, Jake walked on the back of his skull without remorse to deliver a killing blow to the second unscathed Tribune. The legless warrior's head sank a foot deep into the sand with an ugly cracking sound.

Vigilant like never before, the surviving Tribune refrained from blinking his eyes this time so as not to miss any of the action. AS

before, the parry seemed easy. The Throsgenian's blade was clearly pointing towards his heart.

The attack was clean, well executed, but nothing he couldn't anticipate. Seeing no irregularity, no feint, the Myrmidian could only defend as he was used to, as his logic dictated.

But it was at this very moment, when their swords were about to clash, that he witnessed a disconcerting scene. His own wrist tilted slightly, steering the blade out of its correct trajectory independently of his own will.

At the same time, Jake's arm began to undulate like a snake, adjusting its trajectory to ensure that the two swords would never collide. Of course, the phenomenon lasted only a fraction of a second. Too short for the Tribune to react, but decisive enough to change the course of the battle.

Jake's sword found the Tribune's heart and the Tribune died just like that. For the sake of completion, Jake then beheaded him to finish the job. With a few more moves, he executed the three centurions oppressing Sarah and Thomas with the same vicious attacks he had miraculously become capable of.

At this point, Jake had two options. Save Lu Yan, or save Hugo. Erwin made the decision for him with a wince of pain. With only his one valid arm, the soldier gathered all his Aether of Strength and Constitution in his legs to dash toward the General about to finish off Hugo, who was still unable to get up.

The latter had most of his bones broken and was still suffering from the concussion from when his skull had crashed into the wall. The simple fact of still being conscious with such injuries was already impressive. Unlike Jake and Erwin, the guy couldn't control his Aether.

Whether Erwin would succeed or not did not matter. Now that Erwin's decision was made, all he had to do was to rescue Lu Yan, who had held out until then, and then get everyone together to put an end to the General and this masquerade.
