

The Oracle Paths

Volume 2: The First Ordeal

Chapter 83 – Slave auction (part 3)

Jake didn't have much time to meditate on these theories. The AI of his Oracle device may have been a duplicated and altered consciousness, but from the moment it had been assigned to him, she had become a different person.

If years or decades later he met the original Xi, who might no longer be of this world anymore, it was a good bet that the two XIs would have very little in common. Furthermore, the majority of his AI's memories being locked, she was only a shadow of her former self right now.

Meanwhile, the individual slave auctions kept going. What should have been a repetitive and monotonous process took a completely different turn when one participant decided to influence his sale.

Toleus had presented him as a Throsgen farmer qualified for field work, when he wanted to fight and become stronger. Apart from a few tradesmen in great need of fresh labour, hardly anyone had been interested.

Unfortunately, he had no notion of fighting and a sturdy but ordinary physique. To get the attention he wanted, he simply reiterated what his Shadow Guide had advised him to do.

'I'm not a farmer, I'm a warrior and I will die as such!' He shouted in Throsgenian language with his chin raised and a proud countenance.

‘What did that barbarian say?’, ‘We don’t understand that lout’s tongue at all!’

After two legionnaires knocked the daring Throsgenian to the ground, Toleus regained his composure, deciding to play the slave’s game. After all, a fighter sold better than a ploughman.

‘He said... I’m not a farmer, I’m a warrior and I’ll die a warrior.’ The auctioneer slowly translated in an amused tone. ‘Well, this is a deal-changer. I’m sure with such fighting spirit this slave will make an excellent recruit for your ludus. »

A ruj jfsu md qpzqpzarel gzmcu mpo, ovur ovu qfr ar ovu jvaou omef hfiqiw frmrprhut ovu lfqu lpq md 50 emit hmarl vu vft nzusampliw nzmhifaqut dmz ovu dadow-wufz-mit lifsu.Tval oaqu rm mru hvfiureut val gat frt vu jmr ovu fphoamr uflaiw.

From beginning to end, his expression remained unchanged, but one could feel that he was pleased with his acquisition. A weak body could be trained, the handling of weapons taught, but changing the mentality was always an uncertain process. Those slaves with a natural fighting spirit were the ones with the best potential.

At the sight of the satisfied face of the Player in question, it was obvious that he had achieved his goal. The mission similar to that of Jake, which he had probably triggered, had been accomplished successfully.

Following this initial achievement, other participants in the Ordeal appeared in succession. Some were content with the opportunities provided by their Throsgen background, letting themselves be carried along by the current. Others, by contrast, also tried to attract attention by proving their worth in a variety of ways.

Some announced their *désiré* to fight directly, while others, more subtle, showed their dangerousness through their body language. Naturally, many failed to prove their worth as they wished. Even by imitating the Shadow Guide, it was not so easy to simulate self-confidence or ferocity.

And then it was Will's turn. He did a simple action, but one that automatically set him apart from the ignorant majority. He spoke in Myrmidian.

The loss of intelligence during the transformation into Throsgenian had prevented many participants from noticing one of their major pitfalls. They were all speaking Throsgenian.

And yet, in the summary provided by the Oracle System at the beginning of the Ordeal, it was mentioned that they would be given a perfect fluency in Throsgenian and Myrmidian. Now, since the very start, each Throsgen slave had announced his intentions by speaking Throsgenian.

By this simple action, they had shown that their education and intelligence was limited. Of course, their new owners would realize soon enough that they all spoke Myrmidian perfectly. But at this time, they had no idea of it.

Will already had a high IQ to begin with, and had retained sufficient discernment to appreciate his strengths and weaknesses. Despite his robust Throsgenian appearance, the alteration in his physique had not corrected his extreme myopia.

The problem was that he no longer had his glasses. Since his arrival in Heliодas, he hadn't been able to see much.

He never for a second considered the possibility that the Myrmid empire was advanced enough to manufacture glasses adapted to his

visual impairment, let alone lenses. There may have been a solution in this world, but it was not within his reach.

So Will decided to put his trade and negotiating skills to good use. After all, marketing, business travel, and negotiation were his specialties. Jake could handle the combat aspect and he would handle the rest.

‘I am fluent in Myrmidian and Throsgenian, I can read, write and count. Don’t trust this Toleus guy’s information, it’s totally made up.’ Will said in a perfect Myrmidian accent in a confident tone, drawing the jailer’s hateful gaze upon him.

He had been very seriously gathering information about the background of his slaves. He was crooked and greedy, but he did his job well. By his action, this slave had completely disgraced him in the eyes of the crowd. Sadly, it was true that this time he had lacked rigor.

This slave was simply evaluated as the wealthy heir of one of the wealthiest clans in Throsgen lands. How could he have guessed that these idiots, barely smarter than their primate counterparts, could be so spirited. That was his mistake.

‘It would appear a mistake was made in gathering information. Please accept my sincerest apologies.’ Toleus apologized immediately, promising it would never happen again.

‘In any case, this is excellent news for all of you. Literate Throsgens are extremely rare. Therefore, the minimum price will be set at 25 gold pieces. »

‘35 gold pieces!’ A nobleman with sideburns and drenched in sweat shouted out his price.

« 40 ! »

« 45 ! »

« ... »

‘120 gold pieces! »

The price escalated very quickly, surpassing in an instant that of the fifty-year-old slave bought by Princess Livia. In the end, the one who had the final word was the young obese man wearing the ceremonial armour of gold and silver and sharing the light brown hair and olive skin of the princess.

‘150 gold coins! ‘The fat man, dripping with sweat in his armour, cut short the negotiations. As with the Princess, a silence pervaded the audience, as no one dared to outbid him.

Delighted with his impact on the crowd, he bowed slightly towards the assembly to show his gratitude. However, all saw it as insolence and contempt.

‘I, Quintius Caelius Helvius, owe you a great debt of gratitude. I will not forget your benevolence. »

Of course, it was just empty talk. The Quintius clan was the richest in the Myrmid empire after the Sextus, the current ruling clan. According to the legends, the great Myrmidian clans were all direct descendants of the Great Hero Myrmid, and the latter was said to have had so many descendants that he simply named them using numbers.

Seeing Will’s success, other Players regained a semblance of lucidity and repeated his feat in front of the stunned face of Toleus. Once might have been a mistake, twice an unfortunate coincidence,

but after about ten times the decurion no longer dared to face the crowd's gaze. Heads would be chopped off on his return.

Since when did so many Throsgenians speak Myrmidian fluently?
And without an accent to boot?

Farfiw, mriw ovu iflo gfohv md lifsul zuqfarut. Tvu mrul Tmiupl hmrlatuzut ukhunoamrfi. Spznzaloreiw, Jfcu, Lfqaru, Yuzmtu, ovu Alafr hmpniu frt ovu mru jaov ovu ownahfi Mattiu EflouZR nwwlaypu, juzu fii ar oval ezmpn. Suzuruiw, ovuw hiaqgut mrom ovu lofeu loaii gmprt om ufhv movuz gw ovuaz hvfarl.

Kyle and Sarah had been sold out shortly before. Sarah had had nothing to do. Her beauty had created a real commotion, one that Princess Livia had put an end to by purchasing Sarah for the exorbitant sum of 300 gold coins. Otherwise with her looks, the young woman's fate would have been to end up as a sexual tool for those old Myrmidian perverts.

Kyle had not had to invoke the warrior's card either, since his identity was apparently that of a young Throsgen warrior incapacitated on the battlefield. He had no memory of it, of course, but it suited his own interests.

'These last six slaves are the final batch and the apex of my collection.' Toleus calmly said with extreme seriousness. 'Each one of them has a unique identity, but the information I've been able to gather about them is extremely limited. At any rate, what matters is that General Flavius considered them exceptional. »

The middle-aged man in white toga whose gold chests were full to bursting point suddenly got up from his sedan chair. He wasn't the only one. General Flavius was one of the most powerful Myrmidians in the empire and an outstanding leader.

His judgment was known to be infallible.
