

Verdatia

The Journal Entries of Marshat, and Arion Prime, and the continuation of one of the biggest conspiracies ever to rock the very infrastructure of Arion society.

Part 3

Journal Entry 14

It has been three days since my last entry. Something incredible has happened to me. I can fly! The Hicondae have grafted impressive leather wings to my back, allowing me the pleasure and freedom of glorious flight!

After seeing how rapidly I healed from my battle with the enhanced humanoid, especially from the deep cuts from his nails, they decided that I would make an ideal subject for their biological enhancement program they were trying desperately to master. They excelled at creating new types of creatures but were thus far unable to enhance existing life. I, once again, was the exception.

My speed of recovery and stable genetics allowed the surgery to work. I slept through the procedure, for a full day they tell me. The dosage of anesthetic was immense but necessary for my Arion physiology. I can feel the wings on my back, I am aware of them every bit as I am my own arms and hands. How can I describe the sensation of suddenly having an extra pair of limbs? They modified my nervous system to handle the additions, and a whole new world has opened up.

But the best part is the flying. Of course I have flown in aircraft, and spacecraft, but never under my own power. I haven't even tried a hang glider before. The freedom of three dimensional movement is remarkable. The Velorians take this ability for granted no doubt. Soaring, swooping, gliding, feeling the wind beneath my wings, the sun on my back, the exhilaration of pulling out of a power dive seconds before impact with the ground, knowing that no height is unattainable, no barrier is uncrossable, no prize lies outside my reach!

The Hicondae estimate that my DNA will mutate the cellular structure of the wings in a matter of days, and they will soon be every bit as indestructible as the rest of me. Until then it is best that I stay out of action, for I am vulnerable.

I never dreamed that one day I would fly. Now I have an impressive seven foot wingspan! When folded behind me they are no encumbrance at all, and I believe sleep will not be a problem if I wrap them around me. Some day I may read back over this entry and remember the sheer joy of my first flight, but I hope I never forget in the first place. I hope I never take these beautiful wings for granted. The Hicondae have my undying thanks.

What other weapons and abilities can they bestow upon me? What other enhancements can they make? I need every edge I can get if I am to eventually combat the Protector-goddess. In any case, I now at least look more the part of Kal, the demon.

Journal Entry 14 continued

Now that the adrenaline has come down a bit, a question has entered my head and has been nagging at me. It's best that I write it down and not forget. Why does this plant species have the technology to graft wings onto a humanoid species, especially when they are at war with one? This warrants questioning tomorrow.

| Journal Entry 15

Question: Why does a plant species have the technology to graft wings onto a humanoid species? Answer: "We never intended to use the surgery on ourselves, it is for our *Welsage*. Unfortunately, they grafts never took because humanoid regeneration is too slow."

Question: What are the *Welsage*?

Answer: "They are humanoids we capture in raids as children. We raise them on a diet of humanoid flesh, teach them to hate their own race, and release them to attack the humanoids. The psychological effect is shattering, it helps give us an edge in the war."

Question: Where do you keep humanoid flesh?

Answer: "We slaughter executed prisoners, butcher the meat, and use it exclusively for feeding livestock, the *Welsage*, our creatures, anything that needs to eat meat. We don't keep much if it around for very long, we use it very fast."

Question: What do you mean everything that needs to eat meat?

Answer: "It is the only kind of edible meat we have. Our creatures are all poisonous, so the humanoids can't use them if they are captured. And we simply extract nutrients from the ground when we rest."

Question: Does that mean I have been eating people??

Answer: "Yes."

I simply turned and left. This revelation is too much to deal with. I don't know how I feel about it. I can't blame them, by feeding the *Welsage* and their creatures with humanoid flesh, it teaches them to see the humanoids as prey, to be killed. It makes sense. But all this time, all these weeks, I have been a cannibal. Without knowing it.

We do the same thing with the *Kintzi*, it shouldn't be any big deal. The *Kintzi* eat humanoids all the time. They should, they're predators. But to personally engage in this, is it any worse than encouraging it? Is it much different from simply killing them? I need to go out for a flight to clear my head. Four days ago I would never have dreamed I would ever say that. Four days ago I would never have dreamed I would have eaten humanoid flesh.

| Journal Entry 16

I am fascinated by the concept of the *Welsage*. I was taken two cities away to visit a *Welsage* training facility. I have to give the *Hicondae* credit, they are utterly ruthless when it comes to this war. They have absolutely no respect for humanoid life. The *Welsage* pit is filthy, they live like animals. They are allowed no freedom whatsoever.

This treatment turns them into feral killing machines. With a taste for humanoid flesh and a talent for torture. The males are castrated and the females are chemically sterilized. They don't even menstruate because of the drugs they are given. The whole group is kept naked and in anarchy, but rarely fight among themselves. Their aggression is used instead on the prisoners of war who are not executed.

I saw three humanoid soldiers thrown into the *Welsage* pit while I was there. The slobbering creatures descended on the first one instantly, eating him alive and impervious to his screams. There was nothing left of him but bone and some blood, and hair scattered around the area. They even ate his face and most of the skin around his skull.

When the second soldier was thrown in, a few of the weaker Welsage who couldn't get enough to eat from the first one tore chunks off him and left him to bleed. He was in a deep state of shock within seconds and after the initial excruciating pain he probably didn't feel a thing for the rest of the time. He eventually died on his own from blood loss and shock.

The third soldier thrown in distracted the group from the second, which was why he was not killed outright. They had eaten so they did not kill this one, they maimed and tortured him. They took delight and pleasure from the pain they produced. They tore out his hair, put out an eye, clawed his arms and body and tore off sections of his skin. Then he was pulled up from the pit by a rope and taken to a Volk Way-on. A Hicondae turned to me and explained.

"This one will be taken back to the humanoids. He will tell them how the Welsage killed his friends and tortured him, and they will grow to fear them. The Welsage are our army of horror, they instill fear and revulsion in all who see them, and many run in terror from the stories they have heard. They are savage, though, and not true warriors. They are defeated in combat by well-trained forces who stand their ground, but nevertheless they are cheap and their psychological effect is awesome."

As a fourth humanoid soldier was being led to the Welsage pit, I noticed him draw a small dagger from his belt. He stabbed and killed the tentacled creature that acted as manacles for the Hicondae, and surprised and beat down both his guards. As he made a break for the surrounded forest (Hicondae cities are always surrounded by forest, they provide excellent cover and are hard to find without air support) he found himself stopped by none other than the Kal he had grown to fear in the past few days. He was paralyzed in my presence so I was able to stop him just by being there.

"I respect you soldier, what is your name?"

"I... I am Corporal Raje, 131st Regiment, 7th Artillery Battalion. Are you, are you really the Kal that the goddess has told us of?"

"I am." I did not lie. The goddess obviously meant the Arions, under the guise of demons so these people would understand. I feel confident that I am indeed Kal, but I still can't get over how Kryptonian that damn name sounds. "Please, tell me then, why is it you are not with the others? Where are your ships that fly higher than the clouds and weapons of destruction? Why have you sided with the Hicondae? None of this is as the prophesy foretold!"

"Tell me this prophesy."

"When the goddess arrived, she saved us from the Hicondae's city destroying monsters. After her cathedral was built, she told us of the Kal, demons who will descend from the sky from ships the size of a city. They will bring weapons more powerful than anything we could create and seek to destroy both us and the Hicondae. After that she started creating her acolytes. She told us that only those worthy by birthright would be so blessed, and help her to destroy the Kal when they come."

"She was wrong." This brought a startled look to his face. He would never have dreamed that his goddess could be flawed in any way. "I come alone, to destroy first the acolytes and then the goddess. I need no others, none of our weapons, nor do I need my ship. I will destroy your goddess and return this world to the Hicondae. And there is nothing your goddess can do about it."

The soldier looked confused and terrified. "She will come for you, hunt you down and kill you. She and her acolytes, she prophesied it!"

"She knows she cannot leave her city. The Hicondae would overrun it at their first opportunity. You have few forces there to deal with a full-scale invasion, you have become dependent on your false goddess." At that I lifted him into the air by his neck. He tried with all his might to break my grip but was helpless against my Arion might. "Tell your goddess to send her acolytes against me. But be careful, while I could be anywhere by morning, I know where she is."

Effortlessly, I tossed the panic stricken soldier into the Volk Way-on with the other. He will deliver the message. And if I know Velorian arrogance, she will send her pitiful mutations against me. They will fail. I must have a world with the Hicondae researchers as soon as possible. It may be time to reveal to them the secret of a Velorian's weakness.

| Journal Entry 17

Well that didn't take long at all. The Velorian has already sent her acolytes to try and flush me out. The two remaining have joined together and are commanding a major force, pounding through city after city leaving destruction in their wake.

This is a dangerous strategy. While the damage they are causing is immense, the attack force is leaving the humanoid cities with much smaller defensive forces than usual. The Hicondae have planned an attack on several key humanoid cities that is to be executed in conjunction with a mock attack on the assault force. Although they are giving us an opportunity to deliver a massive blow to their border cities, the damage they are causing is great as well.

I will be a major participant in the mock attack on the assault force. The plan is this: The humanoid forces probably do not have enough troops left for another attack any time soon. A small force consisting mostly of creatures the Hicondae call *Mathet* will engage the assault force, led by me and backed by a handful of Hicondae forces. The *Mathet* are five foot bipedal reptiles with claws literally made of steel, which leads me to wonder if they could do the same with gold.

Meanwhile, the border Hicondae cities will band together their remaining forces, leaving no defending troops, and attack key humanoid cities near the borderlands. They plan to hit at least two major construction facilities and a training camp, among other secondary targets. The plan is risky in many ways.

First, it is essential that I destroy the acolytes. If I fall, they will tear through the *Mathet* with little difficulty. I recall that one has heat vision, which gives her an advantage over hand-to-hand fighters like most of the Hicondae creatures.

Second, it is only a gamble the the small, quick *Mathet* will be able to hold off the assault force long enough for the coordinated strike to make its mark and send defending forces back to the border cities. If they fail, nearly all the border cities will be taken, giving the humanoids a distinct advantage. This is not my biggest worry, however, since the humanoid forces have already been in several engagements and have doubtless lost much in the way of troops and equipment.

Third, since our attack force is spread so thin our estimates of the defending forces must be accurate. We cannot afford to waste resources on this assault.

All together, a tricky venture and one the humanoids are probably not expecting. We hope they are expecting us to concentrate on their assault force and whittle down our forces little by little while destroying our cities.

When did I start referring to the Hicondae and myself as "us?" I feel so accepted here, I guess they have become my adopted race.

| Journal Entry 18

Our troops are in place, as soon as we get the signal from the border cities, we will release the *Mathet* and begin the attack. The *Mathet* are not expected to survive the encounter, this is merely diversionary.

The Mathet and the Hicondae are getting restless. Not half a mile away from us lies the humanoid assault force that has destroyed three cities in a single day. I know they will fight bravely, I just hope they will remember not to join the main battle. That is reserved for the Mathet and myself.

| *Journal Entry 18 continued*

It is hard to say who won this confrontation, at least from where I stand. I'm not even sure if I can say that I won my own personal battle with the acolytes. There is still no word from the border cities, their deadline is drawing near.

The battle was interesting to say the least. I was impressed a few days ago by the savagery of the Welsage, but the blood lust exhibited by the Mathet was easily their equal. Our small army surrounded the encampment, unnoticed. On the signal, the Mathet bolted like lightning into the humanoid encampment, catching the guards *off* guard and tearing them into shreds. They showed no interest in food, only killing. These creatures would never survive if left to themselves in a natural ecosystem. They would hunt all their prey into extinction for the fun of it and starve.

The rest of the encampment sprang to action far more quickly than I would ever have expected. These people knew only war, and had for hundreds if not thousands of years. Their weapons were just as effective on the Mathet as their claws were on the humanoids body armor. In my long history in the Arion military, I have never seen a battlefield so blood soaked. The few humanoids who tried to take positions outside of the clearing were killed by Hicondae snipers, who managed to remain hidden throughout the battle. Any who found them were killed instantly by a poison-tipped dart.

The most dangerous opponents to our side of course were the enhanced humanoids. The Mathet were unable to do more than give them a few scratches and abrasions. Once the battle was in full motion, I entered the fray.

The enhanced humanoids were unaware of my new wings. Their attention was also fully focused on the ground battle. My entrance could not have been more perfect. I flew to what must have been over five miles into the air. I could barely see my target below, the one who had heat vision. She was clearly the more dangerous of the two, I thought at the time. I plummeted downward at full speed, using my wings to stabilize myself and aim my decent. But for all my aim, I could not have predicted her movement in such an intense battle. I struck a glancing blow to her back, just on her right side, as she moved at the last instant to engage another Mathet. Instead of killing her as I intended, I merely struck her unconscious, and buried myself in the dirt to my waist.

I was on my feet again in an instant. My sudden appearance must have been terrifying to the other enhanced humanoid. Not to mention the unexpected addition of my huge leathery wings. She froze for the half second I needed to strike her with a full blast from my heat vision, sending her crashing through the forest at the edge of the clearing. Two down, or so I thought, and I hadn't even been touched yet. Now I would be able to kill the first, find the second, and only have to deal with them one at a time.

But even as I dropped to one knee to destroy the unconscious one, I heard the cracking and shattering of wood from the forest. Admittedly, I froze just as badly as my victim had as she *flew* from the forest directly at me like some kind of missile! I had not fully comprehended the warning the male enhanced humanoid had given me, *all of the enhancements had a supremis power!*

I was knocked to the ground by the impact but was on my feet again before the woman could turn around. At least she wasn't as maneuverable as a Velorian, but judging (correctly) from the speed of her flight, she was stronger than I had first expected her to be. I chose the wrong woman to attack first, this one was clearly the more dangerous opponent!

I wanted a weapon. I wanted something to hit her with. I wanted to have every edge I could in the battle. Most of all, I wanted to take this battle away from the main battleground, where we could inadvertently kill the Mathet during our struggle. I found my weapon in the unconscious woman, lifting her by her hair I swung her like a demolitionball club (I had a .455 batting average in the Academy, and once destroyed 4 targets in a single game. Needless to say, we won that game.).

I haven't lost my touch since the Academy days. The women collided with a crash that knocked everyone around us for 10 feet to the ground. Dropping the woman in my hands, I jumped and then flew after the flier. She regained her composure quickly, I admired her ability to block out the pain she must be feeling. Without wings, she was more maneuverable than I, but I was the stronger. We met in the air, as I had planned, to take the fight away from the battlefield.

The battle was decided before it began. She was weaker than I, and did not exploit her maneuverability as I expected her to. She had never fought another flyer before. The few pathetic blows she landed on me were worthless. I beat her until she could barely remain in the air, and then began to crush the life out of her. I couldn't be sure, but mixed with the pain, was that pleasure in her twisted countenance? And if it was, what kind of sick woman was this?

But before I could finish the job I caught the violet glow of heat vision out of the corner of my eye. Damn the luck! The other one had regained consciousness! I had to even the odds at any cost. Hoping that the flyer had sustained enough damage for her enhanced healing ability to turn on itself and finish the job for me, I dropped her and flew for the other one.

This time, however, she met my assault with a full frontal blast from her heat vision. It seared my flesh painfully, but not enough to hinder my attack. Still, I had to shield my sensitive eyes from her attack, fearing my own power suffer feedback. And then I realized that just as the flyer had never fought a flyer before, this woman had never fought a man with heat vision of his own.

Working my way painfully through the intense beams, I landed a powerful blow on her chin, averting her gaze and bringing an end to the pain. She sprang back, obviously attempting to use her greatest power and weapon again. But I struck first, and as I had hoped she did not know about the feedback heat vision could cause when directed *into* the eyes. She could not handle the pain, dropped to her knees and covered her eyes. Thin grey wisps of smoke snaked their way through her fingers and wafted across her forehead. When she removed her hands I saw the most gruesome sight, her eye sockets were burned and empty! She screamed for a second before I thrust three fingers through her empty left eye, shattering some bone around the entrance, and pulled out as much bloody matter as I could get a hold of. She fell backwards, instantly dead.

It was at that time that I heard the call to retreat from the Hicondae leader. The Mathet were nearly all dead, and so were many humanoids but not enough. I turned my heat vision quickly upon their communications equipment, and covered the Hicondae retreat as well as I could.

I do not know if the flyer is dead. I do not know if the base had additional communications equipment or how much they managed to tell their nearest base. I do not know if the Protector is going to come after me personally or not now. As much as she stands to gain by destroying me, she also stands to lose much if the Hicondae coordinate an attack on her city at the same time.

What I do know is that my feelings are beginning to betray me. I have been without a woman for far too long. My hands wandered as I was crushing the flyer, my cock stood fully erect, I held her perhaps a bit too gently, and was that pleasure on her face or just my desire to see it? I had cracked some of her ribs, but I could have done more damage more quickly if I had felt the pure hate for her that I wanted to.

So here I sit, full of self-doubt. I know the Velorian could kill me at any time, if she could only find a way to leave her city protected. Could she? The majority of her spare forces are deep in our territory, and now two, maybe all three of her enhancements are dead. I will continue to coordinate my efforts with the Hicondae for now. I was supposed to have died within hours of arriving on this planet. The Arions have turned their backs on me. I have nothing left to lose. The Hicondae are my people now. And of course Shill, somehow I think he knows I am troubled. I must rest now. The Hicondae attacks do not rest for even a day. I must be ready to fight tomorrow.

[On to part 4.](#)