

LAW OF THE DRAGON

Written by

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ACT 1

INT. DRAGON'S LAIR - NIGHT

The air ripples with heat and sparks within the lair of the Dragon. A pale-skinned knight in his early twenties wearing brilliantly shining armor with carefully combed black hair, PERCIVAL THE BOLD, sneaks through the cave followed by an army of attendants. As he moves, he takes heaps of golden treasures with him, handing them off to the attendants.

Percival's heist is nearly at an end, only two treasures remain. One, a glowing orb the size of Percival's head. The other, a rusted old crown. Percival tries to pick up the orb, but winces and flinches back as his hand is singed. Next, he picks up the crown, takes one look, and tosses it to the ground, shrugging.

PERCIVAL

(Whispering)

Our work here is done. Let us bring
this bounty to the king!

As Percival turns, the lair's exit in sight, a deafening roar from above shakes the Earth as a billowing gust of wind sweeps many attendants off their feet. Percival holds steady, draws his sword, and turns to face the source of the noise.

From an opening in the ceiling, HYROTHADAX, the Dread Wyrm of the Western Mountains, flies in. His body is massive, covered in black and gold scales, and eclipses everything else in the room. He pierces Percival with a furious gaze, eyes glowing bright red, as the attendants flee with the treasures. Percival puts on a brave face, but sweat pools on his brow.

HYROTHADAX

You have made a grave error this
day, child of Man.

Hyrothadax's voice seems to resonate with the stone around him, carrying the echo of ageless might. Percival points his sword at the dragon. Hyrothadax watches Percival's attendants flee and sneers.

PERCIVAL

It is you who have made an error
dragon! I, Percival the Bold, will
strike you-

Before Percival could finish his speech, Hyrothadax huffs. Steam erupts from his nostrils and Percival is swallowed up by the fog. When it clears, he is shaken, his armor clanking as he shivers.

HYROTHADAX

Flee, mortal. Flee to that rats
nest of stone and sand you call a
city, and know that you will come
to regret your actions for the rest
of your short, short life.

The ground crumbles as Hyrothadax's claws dig into the earth. Percival hesitantly turns to leave, starting at a brisk walk, then an all-out sprint. He makes it out of the lair alongside his attendants. The sun rises on the horizon, illuminating the fleeing Percival and his attendants.

EXT. CAPITAL SQUARE - DAY

Hundreds upon hundreds of buildings line the streets of the Capital, the most populated city in the Kingdom of Whitehallow. In a large circular clearing where several streets converge, a large crowd has gathered in front of a central stage.

The murmur of the crowd rises to a deafening cheer as two men take the stage. The first, Percival, wearing gold-plated armor that glimmers in the sun. The second, THE KING, age 80, an ancient looking man with long white hair dressed in flowing purple robes and wearing a golden crown, holding a sealed metal box.

THE KING

Citizens of The Kingdom of
Whitehallow, for years we have been
tormented by the Dread Wyrm of the
Western Mountains, that vile beast
which has haunted our great nation
since the day of its birth. Today,
I stand before you to proclaim that
the beast is defeated!

The crowd roars. Percival puffs out his chest as The King turns to face him.

THE KING (CONT'D)

Before you stands the hero of our
great kingdom, Percival the Bold!

Again, the crowd roars.

THE KING (CONT'D)
Ever has he fought for the
prosperity of you and I, ever has
he embarked on dangerous quests to
secure our future against the
monsters who would see us brought
to ruin, and today he has
accomplished his greatest feat of
all! The slaying of the Dread Wyrm
of the Western Mountains!

Once again, the crowd cheers. Even The King gives Percival a small clap.

The King opens the metal box, and inside is a glittering golden circlet with a single red ruby at its center.

THE KING (CONT'D)
And for this great deed, Percival
the Bold, it is my highest honor to
name you the Hero of Whitehallow,
protector of the realm, and
guardian-

Before The King can finish his speech, a roar sweeps over the square. A shadow forms on the crowd, the shadow of a dragon. As people begin to look up and spot the source of the shadow, the crowd screams. The King's face twists in terror as Hyrothadax lands in the middle of the square. Percival reaches to his belt and draws a sword, his face drained of color.

HYROTHADAX
Child of man, I warned you, you
would regret your deeds.

PERCIVAL
Foul beast! H-have you come to
destroy us?

HYROTHADAX
I have come to destroy you, and you
alone.

Percival gulps. His knees are shaking, but he puts on a brave face.

PERCIVAL
Then... then you have come to die!

HYROTHADAX
(laughing)
Die? Ha!
(MORE)

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
You could not kill me even if you
were twice the man you are. Nor
will you need to try.

At that, Percival and The King both look confused.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
Percival the "Bold", Hero of this
frail city, thief of my most
precious treasures, I...

Hyrothadax pauses, raising one clawed hand to his eyes,
squinting. Percival cocks his head.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
Ahem, I come before you today to...
file "suit"- yes- file suit against
you for...

Hyrothadax pauses.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
Grand theft of the... first degree.

Silence overtakes the square.

PERCIVAL
What?

HYROTHADAX
I believe my words are clear.

THE KING
(Laughing)
Ridiculous!

The King laughs aloud for a long, long time as Hyrothadax
stares him down.

THE KING (CONT'D)
You're suing Percival?

HYROTHADAX
Indeed.

THE KING
You?

HYROTHADAX
(Annoyed)
Yes.

THE KING

Impossible. I will not allow this.
A dragon in our courthouse? No
judge of mine will take such a
ridiculous-

As The King speaks, the crowd parts far from the stage as a woman in her sixties, JUDGE MAYTHORNE, pushes through, being as polite as she can. Her frizzy white hair falling over her shoulders stands in stark contrast to her black robes. As she approaches the stage, she puts on a pair of spectacles and faces The King.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

I would, your majesty.

THE KING

Maythorne? What is-

Judge Maythorne turns to Hyrothadax.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Do you have a lawyer?

HYROTHADAX

I can obtain such.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Good. Be back here in a week with someone to represent you and the case is on.

THE KING

No! I forbid this! You're willing to entertain the demands of this reptile?

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Is there any precedent stating that a dragon cannot sue a human?

The King pauses.

THE KING

Not that I-

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Exactly. One week from today, this case will proceed. Dread Wyrm-

HYROTHADAX

I am known as Hyrothadax.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Apologies. Hyrothadax, I look
forward to hearing your arguments.

HYROTHADAX

Then I shall return. Until then-

Hyrothadax stares down Percival.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)

Prepare yourself, child of man.

Hyrothadax flies away, leaving a stunned King, Percival, and crowd of citizens behind. Judge Maythorne hums, satisfied, and walks away.

INT. DRAGON'S LAIR - NIGHT

Back in the lair, a man in a well-assembled suit wipes sweat from his brow, looks up at Hyrothadax who looms over a now empty cavern, and turns to flee. Hyrothadax grumbles, and looks towards the ground.

HYROTHADAX

This generation of mankind has
grown weaker than I expected...

He looks towards the cave entrance and notices a rapidly devolving line of lawyers running away from the cavern. Hyrothadax sighs, then lowers his claw to the floor, picking up a rusted crown with two claws.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)

Then if no living human shall
attend me...

Hyrothadax raises the rusted crown and chants in a guttural, eldritch language. Green fire ignites around Hyrothadax's claws, twisting and coalescing into the rusted crown. On the final syllable of his chant, the flames explode outward.

When the flame subsides, Hyrothadax stares at his palm, hand up, and a new figure stands at the center of his hand, a skeleton wearing tattered rags. Its skull is alight with green fire, and bright emerald orbs of energy sit in its eye sockets. As he shakes its head, looking around disoriented, THIRUS speaks.

THIRUS

Ah ha ha! Foolish mortal who hath pulled me from death's embrace, I am Thirus, ruler of mankind, author of destruction, the doom and terror of-

As Thirus gets his bearings on his new surroundings, he looks up and sees Hyrothadax staring down at him. He pauses, and clears his throat.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

Of... the modern... man.

Thirus reels back.

HYROTHADAX

Thirus The Cruel, ancient tyrant-king of humanity, welcome back to the land of the living. I have a task for you.

Thirus gulps.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)

I have need of your expertise.

THIRUS

Ah, well, forgive me but... if it is matters of the arcane you seek guidance on... I am sure my knowledge pales in comparison to that of an elder dragon such as yourself.

HYROTHADAX

I have not summoned you for such reasons. Tell me, you are familiar with the human court of law, yes?

THIRUS

(confused)

I established the system, how could I not be?

HYROTHADAX

Good. Then I offer you a deal. In one weeks time, I am to appear before a judge to pursue the reclamation of my belongings. You will represent me.

Hyrothadax rases his other hand, and between his claws a green arcane sigil swirls.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)

The spell that binds you to this world, and to me, is temporary. In return for winning in the court of law, I will resurrect you permanently. Should you refuse...

Hyrothadax flexes his palm, and the sigil quivers. Thirus clutches his chest.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)

I would be more than happy to send you back to the realm of the dead.

There is a long silence before Thirus responds.

THIRUS

Should I succeed, you would not interfere with my great work, yes?

HYROTHADAX

You would be free to do as you wish. I concern myself not with the wars of mortals.

THIRUS

Then I accept.

Hyrothadax laughs heartily, pleased.

HYROTHADAX

Excellent. You have one week. Percival the Bold, hero of the Kingdom of Whitehallow, has stolen my treasure horde illegally. Gather what knowledge you can and prepare to face him in the court of law.

THIRUS

Whitehallow, hm? This kingdom is new to me, not of my time, you see. I will need to conduct extensive research.

HYROTHADAX

My archives are open to you.

Hyrothadax gestures, and a portion of the cavern wall slides away. Behind it, a vast library stretches out into the distance. The flames of Thirus' skull flare up.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
Learn what you can. Given your
wisdom, I have no doubt this shall
be a trivial matter.

Thirus coughs.

THIRUS
(worried)
Yes, surely. Trivial, yes!

Hyrothadax nods, sets Thirus down, then retreats deeper into the lair. He wraps himself around the glowing orb Percival failed to steal and winces, his flesh sizzling.

HYROTHADAX
(pained)
Time is of the essence. Proceed.

Thirus nods, then raises his hands, floating ominously over to the library as Hyrothadax closes his eyes.

ACT 2

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The old courthouse is packed full of people, all whispering and muttering. Hyrothadax's massive body dominates the room as he sits in front of a desk way too small for him. At his side is Thirus. To their left is a second desk with Percival and SIR MONIRE, a 50 year old man wearing an extravagant suit. Judge Maythorne sits at the court's bench at the front of the courthouse, looking resolute.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

(jokingly)

Well, I'm glad the builders of this place had the foresight to accommodate our draconic neighbors.

HYROTHADAX

(serious)

Indeed.

Judge Maythorne begins to speak, but a member of the audience stands up and interrupts. He points at Thirus, terrified.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

A lich! The dragon has brought a lich into our kingdom!

THIRUS

(laughing)

A lich? Nay, THE lich. You dare besmirch the name of Thirus with such disrespect?

The crowd's murmuring turns into an uproar. At the mention of the name "Thirus", even Judge Maythorne's stoic demeanor cracks as she shudders.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Thirus? As in Thirus the Cruel? The doom and terror of the modern man?

THIRUS

In what remains of my flesh.

Maythorne turns to Hyrothadax, a mix of anger and fear on her face.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

What is the meaning of this?

HYROTHADAX

You requested I return with a lawyer. I have.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

A lawyer, not the continent's most infamous tyrant!

HYROTHADAX

I assure you, Thirus possesses the requisite knowledge and skill to represent-

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

That's not the point! You've doomed us all by bringing him here!

Several guards make themselves known at the edge of the courtroom, brandishing spears and swords.

HYROTHADAX

Your safety is assured. The spell which binds Thirus to this world will prevent him from harming you or your kingdom.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Forgive me, but I cannot trust that.

Hyrothadax sighs.

HYROTHADAX

Humans, so quick to doubt. Should Thirus somehow break his arcane bonds, which he will not, I will lay down my own life in defense of your people. I assure you, I would not have brought him here if I believed he was a threat.

THIRUS

For the record, your honor, he is more than capable of defeating me without "laying down his life".

Judge Maythorne hesitates, but relaxes after a moment. She waves a hand, and the guards put away their weapons, though they remain poised to strike at any moment.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

The kingdom will hold you to that.
Let us proceed.

Judge Maythorne bangs a gavel, and Sir Monire and Percival stand. Thirus rushes to stand as well, and Hyrothadax tries his best to straighten his posture, though he nearly hits the ceiling.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE (CONT'D)
Court is now in session. As Supreme
Judge of the Kingdom of
Whitehallow, I will hear the case
of Hyrothadax versus Percival.

Judge Maythorne gestures to Thirus.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE (CONT'D)
The prosecution has the floor.
Please present your argument.

Thirus floats towards the bench and the crowd murmurs in contempt. Percival scowls and Sir Monire shudders. Thirus bows slightly, eliciting a confused look from Judge Maythorne.

THIRUS
Esteemed Supreme Judge of the
Kingdom of Whitehallow, I, Thirus,
in representation of the most
esteemed Hyrothadax, do humbly
prostrate myself before this great
institution to beg relief be given
to thee who begets my service, and-

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
There's... no need for the...
formalities? Speak plainly.

Thirus looks around and notices that some members of the audience are laughing quietly.

THIRUS
Hmph. It seems man has lost its
respect, after all I imparted upon
them.

Thirus clears his throat. He pauses to think about his next words.

THIRUS (CONT'D)
Your honor, my... client, has had
his rightful property stolen by the
defendant, the thief you call
Percival "the bold".
(MORE)

THIRUS (CONT'D)

In the dead of night, the defendant broke into his home, stole all that he owned, and made off like a bandit into the night.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

The court is very much aware. It is no secret what transpired.

THIRUS

But what *is* a secret, apparently, is the law he has so blatantly violated.

Thirus gestures grandly at Hyrothadax.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

As witness, I call Hyrothadax to the stand.

There's a pause, then Hyrothadax tries his best to shuffle over to the witness stand without crushing any furniture. After a drawn out moment where Hyrothadax is unsuccessful, Judge Maythorne gestures for Hyrothadax to remain where he is.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

Hyrothadax, exactly how long have you lived in the Western Mountains?

HYROTHADAX

Since before man had given them a name.

THIRUS

And during this time, you maintained sole ownership of the mountain range, yes?

HYROTHADAX

Indeed. 'Twas granted to me by this Kingdom's forefathers.

THIRUS

Let the record show that I have supplied the court with copies of this treaty. Your honor, this case is simple. The defendant broke into lands rightfully owned by my client and made off with his valuables. This is a clearly a case of Grand Theft, and my client should be compensated for the significant damages he has suffered.

Judge Maythorne nods.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
Will that be all?

Thirus nods and returns to his seat next to Hyrothadax, looking proud. Hyrothadax's expression is a mask.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE (CONT'D)
If the defense wishes to cross
examine the witness, you may
proceed.

Sir Monire stands. When he speaks, every word drips with nobility and elegance. He looks towards the witness stand, then corrects himself and looks at Hyrothadax, shaking his head.

SIR MONIRE
Such an unusual case this is, and
such an unusual situation too! You
say you own the Western Mountains?

HYROTHADAX
This is known.

SIR MONIRE
I see I see. Well, I've had a look
at that document your...
interesting lawyer procured for the
court.

Sir Monire picks up a sheaf of papers on his desk, waving them around absentmindedly.

SIR MONIRE (CONT'D)
What's interesting though, is that no records of them exist in our libraries. The Kingdom's archivists keep very detailed records, you see, so it struck me as odd that we didn't have this oh-so-critical land grant...

Sir Monire taps his temple as if he's had a life changing revelation.

SIR MONIRE (CONT'D)
But then, when I looked closer, I realized something. The Kingdom of Whitehallow never endorsed this document. No King or Queen of ours ever signed it, because...

Sir Monire shows the document to Judge Maythorne, pointing at a signature on the bottom. Beside the elegant writing, the text "Archean Empire" is visible.

SIR MONIRE (CONT'D)
...this treaty was signed by the
ruler of our forefathers, the
Emperor of Archea!

A murmur rises from the audience.

SIR MONIRE (CONT'D)
As you no doubt are aware your
honor, our kingdom is under no
obligation to honor the treaties of
our previous nation, given the
revolution and all.

Thirus hovers in the air slightly as the flames around his skull blaze.

THIRUS
Objection!

Judge Maythorne nods at Thirus, who points a bony finger at his desk, causing a weathered piece of parchment to float towards him.

THIRUS (CONT'D)
I thought much the same as you
human, until I did some digging in
the Royal Palace's archives.

PERCIVAL
You... you did some digging?

THIRUS
Yes.

PERCIVAL
Even I cannot get access to that
building! How in the realms were
you allowed in?

Thirus pauses and scratches his chin.

THIRUS
Call it discovery. Regardless,
within that archive was this.

Thirus gestures to the document and it floats over to Judge Maythorne. Maythorne puts on a pair of reading glasses, squints, and hums in acknowledgement.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

This document, signed by the first King of Whitehallow, guarantees that all previous nobility of the Archean Empire will have their existing land claims honored during the transition of power. As far as I can tell, it is legitimate.

THIRUS

And, pray tell, how does this document define "nobility"?

Judge Maythorne squints, then cracks a sly smile, as if she's catching on to Thrius' plan.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

"Any landowner of sufficient wealth meeting or exceeding the amount of five thousand gold pieces."

THIRUS

Now then, Hyrothadax, would you say you were in possession of this amount?

Hyrothadax laughs.

HYROTHADAX

Five thousand? If my collection was worth anything less than one hundred thousand gold pieces, I would be ashamed.

The audience, Maythorne, and Sir Monire all share a quiet gasp.

SIR MONIRE

Impossible. You'd be as wealthy as the entire royal family combined!

THIRUS

Percival, you've certainly become familiar, with my client's property. I have no doubt you've had the horde appraised. Would you say my client's assessment is accurate?

PERCIVAL

It is...

Another gasp from the audience followed by a cacophony of whispers. Sir Monire leans down to Percival.

SIR MONIRE
My fee just went up.

Percival nods solemnly.

HYROTHADAX
Though your definition of "nobility" is shallow and vain, I most certainly meet it. Therefore, am I not the rightful owner of the lands which Percival has so thoroughly pillaged?

Before Judge Maythorne can respond to Hyrothadax's question, Sir Monire speaks up.

SIR MONIRE
Pardon me, your honor, but I must request that we enter a short recess. This information may, well, may change my upcoming arguments, yes.

Judge Maythorne sighs. Hyrothadax's face twists into a scowl.

HYROTHADAX
You merely stall for time, human. Disgraceful, face me with courage head on, or do not face me at all.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
I see no legal reason to deny your request. This court is adjourned, we will reconvene at the top of the next hour.

Judge Maythorne bangs her gavel. Hyrothadax grumbles as the audience files out of the room. Thirus looks up to him and shrugs.

INT. COURTHOUSE EXTERIOR - DAY.

People mill about outside the courtroom, though they give Hyrothadax and Thirus a wide berth, who sit in a small park-like area far from the courthouse's front entrance. Thirus lounges on a wooden bench, arms and legs spread wide. His eyes narrow as he scans the crowd.

THIRUS
Hyrothadax, why do you care about this so much?

Hyrothadax lowers his head to Thirus' level and puffs out steam from his nostrils.

 THIRUS (CONT'D)
Wait! I meant no offence! Truly, it
is a simple curiosity!

Hyrothadax leans back and Thirus sighs in relief.

 HYROTHADAX
You do not know, then?

Thirus shrugs. Hyrothadax rises to his full height again, eyes closed.

 HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
My kind does not propagate in the
same manner as yours. We are
created, not born. When the time is
right, we imbue an arcane ritual
with a portion of our lifeforce to
create... an "egg" is a poor
descriptor, but it is one you will
understand.

Thirus nods and reaches into his disheveled rags as if he's searching for a pen and paper. He finds nothing.

 HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
This egg produces heat. Heat so
intense that it would destroy
itself without protection.

Thirus' eyes light up.

 THIRUS
The gold! It absorbs the heat,
then?

 HYROTHADAX
An observation befitting of your
great intellect. Indeed it does. I
felt the time was right to conduct
my ritual. It seems I was
incorrect.

 THIRUS
I see. To be completely honest with
you, I thought you just liked
money.

Hyrothadax's eyes narrow and another puff of steam escapes his nostrils. Thirus raises his hands in mock surrender.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Court resumes, and the audience as well as Hyrothadax, Thirus, Percival, Sir Monire, and Judge Maythorne have all returned to their former positions. A myriad of guards are in the room as well, though they seem more relaxed.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

With Sir Monire's recess having come to a close, I declare court once again in session. Now-

As Judge Maythorne speaks, a guard wearing battered and burnt armor bursts into the room. He is winded and looks like he just came from a warzone.

GUARD

Monsters! Monsters at the Southern Wall! The King has mobilized the guard for the kingdom's defense!

The guards react instantly, drawing their weapons and rushing out of the room. The audience panics and flees in kind. Even Percival looks nervous for a second before he steels himself. Judge Maythorne's eyes widen.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Given the imminent danger, I must order everyone to evacuate. Court is adjourned for the day, we will reconvene when the Kingdom's safety is assured.

Judge Maythorne bangs a gavel, then leaves the room. Percival charges valiantly out, following the still-leaving guards. Hyrothadax nods to Maythorne, then grabs Thirus in one claw and awkwardly makes his way out the large front doors.

THIRUS

How undignified...

INT. DRAGON'S LAIR - NIGHT

Hyrothadax and Thirus lounge in Hyrothadax's lair, killing time. Thirus lays on a stone slab and levitates some rocks around idly, and Hyrothadax sits protectively by the glowing orb, his egg. The egg occasionally sparks with violent energy, and each time it does Hyrothadax's brow furrows.

Thirus notices Hyrothadax's worry and stops levitating rocks as he sits up.

THIRUS

Why do this?

HYROTHADAX

Pardon?

THIRUS

Why allow these mortals to threaten
the safety of your child?

HYROTHADAX

There is no threat. We will win
this case.

THIRUS

And if you don't?

Hyrothadax does not respond as silence overtakes the lair.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

You have the power to raze that
puny Kingdom to the ground. With me
at your side, you could conquer the
continent. Together, we could
complete my great work and usher in
a golden age for all mankind. You
are to man as a boot is to an ant,
and yet you choose to play these
games. Why?

Hyrothadax sighs.

HYROTHADAX

Do you know why I signed that
treaty with the Archean Empire all
those years ago?

THIRUS

Surely as part of a larger scheme
to subjugate these lands.

HYROTHADAX

Before man had a name for these
mountains, I ruled this continent.
When a tribe of humanity encroached
on my lands, I struck them down.

Hyrothadax closes his eyes, the sound of burning fire and
screams can be faintly heard.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)

They sent their strongest hero to
strike me down in turn, but he too
was defeated.

The clashing of steel and a single scream is heard.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
But they did not stop. They sent
another.

More steel clashing, and more screams. Hyrothadax's face twists into a pained expression.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
They sent more, and more, and more,
and I struck them down in kind. But
they grew stronger. They kept
coming, and each time it was harder
and harder to walk away unscathed.

Thirus leans forward, enraptured.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
When that tribe of humans joined
hands into an Empire, I knew this
conflict would end in only two
ways. Either I would fight until
there were no more humans, or I
would die, and in either case, both
sides would never recover.

Hyrothadax sighs.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
I negotiated a truce, and since
that day I have vowed never to
raise my claw against mankind. When
violence begins, it will never end
until there is peace, or until
there is no one left.

A long silence stretches over the lair.

THIRUS
I see.

Thirus sits back, staring off into the distance contemplatively.

HYROTHADAX
But if I cannot retrieve my horde,
if the life of my spawn is
threatened... I know not what that
will push me to do.

THIRUS
There will be no need for such
worries.

Thirus stands, then puts a hand on Hyrothadax's front leg.

THIRUS (CONT'D)
We will win, we will retrieve your
horde, and your child's life will
be saved.

Hyrothadax closes his eyes and sighs. Thirus turns and makes his way to the library, his skeletal brow furrowed.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Court is once again in session. Thirus, Hyrothadax, Sir Monire, and Percival stand at their tables and Judge Maythorne sits at the bench. The audience is also present.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
Well the, let us resume.

Judge Maythorne bangs a gavel.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE (CONT'D)
Sir Monire, I assume you've had
ample time to compile your
arguments.

SIR MONIRE
Indeed.

Sir Monire stands and makes his way to the bench.

SIR MONIRE (CONT'D)
You see, I believe we've overlooked
a critical factor in the honorable
Thirus's evidence.

Sir Monire holds up a paper, the same document Thirus presented about noble landowners, to the bench and points at a specific line of text.

SIR MONIRE (CONT'D)
There's just one teeny-tiny
stipulation in this order, you see.
A triviality in any other case, but
here...

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
(Reading)
"....all human nobles shall be
guaranteed their claims to their
land..."

SIR MONIRE

And there it is! This order only protects human landowners. And, well, the prosecution isn't that.

Thirus stands abruptly and laughs.

THIRUS

Ah, did you think I did not account for this?

Thirus points at a paper on his table, and it floats over to Judge Maythorne.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

Yes, the order does specify only humans will retain their land claims, for some reason-

SIR MONIRE

To prevent monsters like you from owning half the continent!

Thirus breathes in sharply, then out slowly. He glances towards Hyrothadax.

THIRUS

I will exercise my infinite benevolence and pretend that I did not hear that. Before you, your honor, lies a law your King passed a mere ten years ago. "The Equality for All Act".

Judge Maythorne begins to read the document as Thirus continues speaking.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

The language of this act is very particular. It guarantees that all sapient beings in The Kingdom of Whitehallow will be free from discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, and, most critically in our case, species.

Judge Maythorne hums acknowledgement.

THIRUS (CONT'D)

I believe that stipulation was included to protect the rights of the elvish kingdom's tourists a continent over, but it also applies to my client, does it not?

(MORE)

THIRUS (CONT'D)
Surely, by definition, the old land
grant unfairly discriminates
against him, yes?

Sir Monire's face twists in annoyance.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
Hm, I see. Yes, this law would
render the previous order null and
void... Sir Monire, do you have any
argument to the contrary?

Sir Monire opens his mouth, closes it, raises his hand, then lowers it. Percival tugs on his sleeve, prompting Monire to lean down. Percival whispers into his ear, and he rises.

Judge Maythorne pierces Sir Monire with a sharp gaze, and Hyrothadax lets out a low laugh.

SIR MONIRE
(awkwardly)
My client has brought something to
my attention that I'd like to
review. I'd... like to call another
recess, your honor.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
Monire-

SIR MONIRE
I am guaranteed three recesses per
trial!

Judge Maythorne sighs, then bangs her gavel.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
(monotone)
This court is adjourned to resume
at the top of the next hour.

Thirus looks at Hyrothadax with confidence, and Hyrothadax smiles.

THIRUS
See? No need for worries. We have
them cornered!

HYROTHADAX
So it seems. So it seems...

All parties exit the courtroom.

ACT 3

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

People settle down in their seats as court resumes.
Hyrothadax looks smug, and Thirus holds his head high. Sir Monire and Percival, meanwhile, look surprisingly calm.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

I declare court in session once more. Monire, whatever you were discussing better have been good.

SIR MONIRE

I'd certainly say it was, yes. You see, my client has discovered something I believe we've all overlooked. Tell me, have you reviewed the records of legal certification in The Kingdom of Whitehallow?

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

I have.

SIR MONIRE

Then have you-

Percival stands abruptly, huffing and rolling his eyes.

PERCIVAL

Enough with this farce!

He turns and points angrily at Thirus.

PERCIVAL (CONT'D)

He's not even a lawyer!

Silence falls over the courtroom until Hyrothadax speaks.

HYROTHADAX

I have chosen Thirus to represent me in all legal matters.

PERCIVAL

But he's not a lawyer!

Sir Monire raises his hand.

SIR MONIRE

Meaning, he is not certified to practice law in The Kingdom of Whitehallow, yes.

Judge Maythorne scratches her chin, thoughtfully. She reaches under her seat at the bench, grabs a large tome, and reads for a moment.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

Then that would constitute fraud...

HYROTHADAX

Your honor, Thirus possesses the requisite knowledge of your laws to serve as my counsel.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

And yet, by representing you without certification, he is in violation of those laws...

THIRUS

But my arguments are sound!

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

But by law, they are invalid...

Judge Maythorne hangs her head low, then shoots a nasty glance at Percival and Sir Monire. She sighs, then bangs her gavel. Hyrothadax's eyes widen.

JUDGE MAYTHORNE (CONT'D)

Due to the prosecution's misrepresentation by an uncertified lawyer, I am forced to rule in defendant of the defendant in the matter of Hyrothadax versus Percival. The sum total of wealth Percival has... "acquired" is to remain in his possession.

HYROTHADAX

Your honor, please, you cannot do this! The life of my child is at stake!

JUDGE MAYTHORNE

(dismayed)

My hands are tied. I am sorry.

Percival and Sir Monire cheer and high-five. Thirus is stunned into silence.

Hyrothadax straightens and his eyes narrow. His claws tighten, scratching the floor. Tension builds throughout his body. Thirus raises a hand towards him.

THIRUS
(whispered to Hyrothadax)
Don't!

HYROTHADAX
(grimly)
If I must break my vows to save my child, then break them I must.

Before any moves can be made, a guard bursts through the courtroom entrance, the same one that alerted the court to the previous monster attack.

GUARD
Monsters! Monsters at the southern wall!

JUDGE MAYTHORNE
Again?

GUARD
Again!

Hyrothadax pauses, tension relaxing for but a moment. Thirus rushes to speak before it rises again.

THIRUS
(panicked)
Do not do this, you will live to regret it!

HYROTHADAX
I thought you would be the last person to defend these creatures.

Thirus nervously glances around the room, and Hyrothadax follows his gaze. Sitting in the stands is a mother and father accompanied by a small child. Hyrothadax sees this and his gaze softens. He stares for a drawn-out moment, then sighs deeply.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
Let this be my final kindness towards mankind.

Hyrothadax grabs Thirus in one claw and flies away, breaking through the courtroom ceiling as he makes his way to the Southern Wall.

EXT. SOUTHERN WALL - DAY

A horde of monsters roars and raves outside the walls of The Kingdom of Whitehallow. Wolves, orcs, goblins, beasts of all shapes and sizes rile up and prepare to attack.

The Kingdom's guards stand atop the wall, terrified. Suddenly, the shadow of a dragon passes over the horde, and an uncanny quiet fills the air.

Hyrothadax makes himself known with a deafening roar and a blast of fire. The fire obliterates a few of the monsters.

A green-tinged flame begins to swirl around the impact site of Hyrothadax's fire blast. Suddenly, the corpses of several monsters rise again, eyes glowing green. Several Kingdom guards look terrified, then look up to see Thirus standing on Hyrothadax's back, cackling.

THIRUS
Feeling better?

HYROTHADAX
This will not make up for what I have lost... but yes. Slightly.

The horde of monsters begins to flee, and the Kingdom guards cheer. Hyrothadax lands atop the wall, and the guards cheer louder. Hyrothadax flinches back, surprised at the reception.

THIRUS
Hmm, I expected these ones to flee.

HYROTHADAX
As did I...

The crowd of guards parts, and The King walks through the gap. He holds a glittering golden sword, clearly ceremonial. He stops at Hyrothadax's feet and clears his throat.

THE KING
You've done a great service to my Kingdom just now, Dread Wy- excuse me- Hyrothadax. Had we been forced to repel that horde on our own... I could only imagine the casualties...

HYROTHADAX
You are welcome, leader of man.

The King ponders for a moment. He looks to the fleeing monsters, then to Hyrothadax and Thirus.

THE KING

I have a proposition for the both of you. I heard what happened in your case. A terrible shame, really. It is my understanding you needed that gold to ensure the survival of your egg?

HYROTHADAX

Indeed.

THE KING

And Thirus, while your reputation... certainly precedes you, I believe that your internal government policies were quite fair for the time.

THIRUS

Of course they were. I seek only to guide mankind to a prosperous future. Through whatever means I must.

THE KING

Then my offer is as such. Should you both agree to live within the Capital and make a habit of repelling these monsters, I will allow you, Hyrothadax to store his egg within my personal vaults, and you, Thirus, to run for local office. Then, we all get what we want.

Hyrothadax laughs.

HYROTHADAX

A trivial matter! I accept!

THIRUS

Enticing, but I'm afraid I have a prior appointment with death. Since I lost the case and all.

Hyrothadax shakes his head.

HYROTHADAX

You may have lost the case, yes, but your counsel is the reason this opportunity has presented itself.

Hyrothadax raises his hand and chants a single ancient syllable.

HYROTHADAX (CONT'D)
You shall live again.

If Thirus had tear ducts, he would be weeping with joy.

THE KING
I believe district three is holding
its senatorial elections soon. I'm
sure we can get your name on the
ballot.

THIRUS
Please do! It is long since time
for me to conquer by word rather
than sword.

EXT. CAPITAL SQUARE - DAY

The square is bustling with activity. Across many walls, posters of a glowing green skeleton with outstretched arms are pasted everywhere. The bold caption reads: "VOTE FOR THIRUS - A GOLDEN AGE FOR DISTRICT THREE".

On the horizon, a large keep sits near the King's castle. Around its rooftops, two dragons fly. One is Hyrothadax, the other is much smaller, its body covered in black and gold scales. It roars a high pitch cry and Hyrothadax laughs.

In the center of the Capital Square, a statue of Percival is being torn down. Graffiti mars its stone, words like "thief" and "false hero" are scrawled in red paint.

In Percival's statue's place, a new sculpture is being built. It is of Hyrothadax, standing tall and proud, wings outstretched. Below it is an engraving reading "Our Kingdom's Valiant Protector".

FADE TO BLACK.