

Lakirana španska stena

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法官狄

For a long time, there was just one language missing from my collection of Judge Dee translations. More than four and a half years ago I found a reference on the internet to an obscure Slovenian translation of *The Lacquered Screen* called *Lakirana španska stena*. Of course, I had to have it.

Over the years I regularly tried to find a copy of this translation, but it proved tantalisingly elusive. One time Google showed a copy for sale on a private Facebook page, but I didn't succeed in sending a message. And then it disappeared again.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained

Two months ago, I bought a Judge Dee translation from a Czech bookseller. Since The Czech Republic and Slovenia are quite near each other (or so I thought), I asked him if he had ever come across this rare Slovenian translation. He made it clear that The Czech Republic is in fact nowhere near Slovenia, but he also had a suggestion: why didn't I contact a Slovenian second-hand bookshop?

This was an option I had once briefly considered but which had seemed impractical at the time. Yet, why not? So I googled for Slovenian second-hand bookshops on the internet and found one that proclaimed itself to be "the



largest in the country". Since I don't speak a word of Slovenian, I sent an email in English hoping for the best but expecting nothing.

Flea market

Just a few hours later I was pleasantly surprised to find an answer in my mailbox. Someone called Gorazd wrote:

your info is correct ;)

it was published in a collection of detective stories called "nn romani" no. 131

these werent exactly books, but more like brochures and sold at news-stands

we dont have any of these at the moment, but my collegue said she would check at the local fleamarket on Sunday

How about that? Not only did I get an answer in perfectly readable English, but they were even prepared to go to great lengths to find me a copy.

When I enquired a week later whether they had found something at the flea market, the reply was that there hadn't been any NN-romans at all but that they were contacting some other sources. How nice is that?

Kindness will prevail

Then things went quiet. I was wondering what was going on but didn't want to push my luck, so I just waited. Finally, after six weeks, there it was: a message saying they had found a copy and if the quoted price was ok. It sure was!

Since Slovenia is part of the Eurozone, paying was a breeze. A few days later the book arrived in my letterbox. When I thanked Gorazd for his invaluable help, he wrote:

its a part of our mission to make people happy despite the cruel fact that we work for a corporation and literally for peanuts...

it is my belief that kindness and cooperation will win over competition and greed...and very soon :)

I sincerely hope he is right...

