

The Oracle Paths

Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

Chapter 513 - Cowardice Is Their Prison

A wave of red flames crashed against the shield again, but only caused an insignificant ripple before fading away without causing any visible damage. The mage was about to rant again when two smaller, pinkish comets stabilized beside him. As their radiance dissipated, two beautiful young women with long, silky pink hair were revealed in the light of the Aether Sun Core.

‘Dad! I already told you this was a misunderstanding!’ Esya hastily clung to her father’s arm like a koala bear in the vain hope of preventing him from committing another folly.

Her baby skin was as red as a beetroot from embarrassment. Enya, who was standing behind facepalmed while stifling a long exasperated sigh.

‘Father, I already told you nothing happened.’ The elder sister repeated in an exhausted voice. ‘He merely saved our lives and we’ve been part of his Faction ever since.’

‘Simply saved your lives, my àss!’ The rabid man, who bore an uncanny resemblance to them, went completely mad upon hearing this. ‘He stole my darling daughter’s first kiss! If he’s worthy, he’ll have to marry her. If not, he will die by my hand!’

Jerking out of his daughter’s embrace, he resumed banging against the force field with enormous fireballs. Ignoring everyone, the

impacts continued to reverberate, generating huge shockwaves until the Fire Archmage finally got tired of it.

After a while, unable to stand it any longer, Enya snapped,

‘Dad, stop it! You can see there’s no one here! Believe me, he’s not the type to hide. If he was here, he would have smashed your face in long ago.’

‘Hmmmph, that remains to be proven!’ Their father harrumphed with an unconvinced scowl. ‘In that case, where is he?’

‘Cough, cough... Jake isn’t here. He’ll be back in a few hours.’

An embarrassed cough echoed from the other side of the shield. If Jake had been there, he would have recognized Will, who had joined him on Thelma a short time later. Having his trust and no hostile intent, the businessman was obviously allowed to teleport to his island.

‘Is that you Jake?! This is the scruffy guy you have chosen?’ The Fire Archmage sneered with deep disappointment. ‘He smells like a crooked merchant. I already told you I didn’t want a salesman in my house.’

Will intended to smooth things over to buy Jake some time, but the contemptuous insults immediately cut off his desire to argue with this oddball. Without any reluctance, he joined Jake and Kyle on Thelma, leaving the father of the two sisters to fuss all alone. And who cared if he tried to kill them when they returned. That was Jake’s problem anyway.

‘Goddamn it! When are you going to stop being like that!’ Enya sharply huffed, her voice suddenly rising to a high pitch. ‘Mom

already left you because of your sick jealousy. Do you want to lose your daughters the same way?!

From dull anger to an expression dripping with guilt, the family man instantly shifted his attitude, morphing willingly into a wimp.

‘Forgive me my darling daughter. It won’t happen again. I promise not to do anything to that young man... I just want to talk with him for a few minutes...’

As he said this, both sisters heard his knuckles crack against each other as he clenched his teeth so hard they could be heard grinding from over a mile away. If Jake really did appear before his eyes, he’d probably be taken over on the spot by a ferocious beast that didn’t respond to anything.

‘Dad!’ Enya exclaimed, glaring at him. ‘If you keep this up, I’m going to ban you from my Floating Island and you’ll only be able to see us in your dreams.’

‘You wouldn’t dare?!’

‘Oh yes we would!’ The two sisters retorted in one voice, hands on hips with a fierce expression on their doll-like faces.

When necessary, they could show their fangs too.

Their father stared at them in turn, his mind torn between the urge to keep his daughters’ approval and the urge to heed his instincts to get rid of that evil boy Jake Wilderth, who could only be a terrible influence on his beloved girls. One thing was for sure, before they got involved with him, they would never have dared to confront him like that!

Thankfully, his common sense finally kicked in. The Floating Island’s force field below him was unbreachable and he would only be

wasting his time struggling here. Besides, his time was extremely valuable.

Between his duties to the Velsyos Empire and his status as the Velseyel clan's Duke, he was a busy man, not to mention the many enemies of the empire and his family who were on the lookout for the slightest misstep on his part. The truth was that their family was in a tight spot.

'Fine, I'll leave him be for now. Tell him to come see me when he gets back.'

'No way.' Enya flatly refused. 'The way you've been acting here, there's no way we're taking him into your territory. Not to mention that you guys could get hurt.'

'Don't worry about him, I promise not to kill him.' The Fire Archmage guffawed sadistically as he perceived his daughter's concern.

'I'm not worried about him, I'm worried about you.' Enya snorted angrily. 'Can you survive with just a head? Because he can.'

'Hmph, I demand to see!'

Their father was still as arrogant and angry as ever, but after this he visibly mellowed. The reality was that he was indeed stronger than Jake as it stood. With one more Ordeal under his belt and his status as a Fire Archmage even before his first Ordeal, his power was already exceptional even before he arrived on B842.

Where the two sisters had been caught off guard by the loss of their Mana Core, their father had not been so badly affected. He had lost the massive amount of energy contained in his Mana Core, but the benefits his body had gained from decades of absorbing the Fire Element could not be invalidated so easily.

As a result, his Body Stats were far above that of a normal human, especially his Intelligence and Perception. And although he was not a Fire Knight, his physical strength and reflexes far exceeded those of an ordinary man.

His progression curve had therefore started from a higher point and such an advantage could not be compensated for so easily.

Nevertheless, he had inquired about this Jake and the exploits of this human frightened him a little. At the speed he was evolving, if he didn't get killed in an Ordeal, the sky was his limit.

From what his daughters had told him, this Earthling seemed terrified of dying and rather individualistic, but behaved in these Ordeals extremely competitively without abandoning his comrades.

However... He was also selfish and he didn't like the way he treated his daughters like common stooges...

Swallowing his grumpiness, the Fire Archmage took one last look at the deserted Floating Island below him, then with a snort disappeared in a long trail of red flames.

Tvu ojm lalouzl gzufvut f laev md zuiaud fl ovuw jfohvut vaq zfhare gfhc om ovu Yuiimj Cpgu mr ovuaz alifrt, gpo lmmr ovuaz frkauow zuopzrut.

'Do you think it will be okay when these two time bombs meet?' Esya murmured with a tight throat of apprehension.

Enya frowned but refrained from answering. After a moment, she sighed again and said,

'Worst comes to worst, you'll have to marry him.'

Esya turned as red as a tomato, but she did not look down. Instead, she replied valiantly,

‘I’m not afraid to marry him. What I fear is what will happen when he refuses.’

Enya opened her mouth to retort something, then finally refrained. Instead, she nodded,

‘You’re right. That would indeed be the worst case scenario...’

Meanwhile, Jake, Kyle, Will, Svava and the gang of felines had finally reached their destination. Behind Svava, they opened their eyes one after the other and discovered their new surroundings.

With an expert sweep of his eyes, Jake immediately identified the narrow platform he was standing on as the top of an Oracle Shelter’s Transportation Tower. The Yellow Cube they had just arrived by was the only one present in the very center of the platform and no one was there to greet them. It remained to be seen if they were on B842 or a private Floating Island.

However, given the cloudy sky shimmering above their heads and distorted by the Black Cube’s invisible walls camouflaging the place, the answer was obvious. They were back on planet B842.

‘Where are we?’ Will asked nervously.

It had been a long time since he had returned to such a dingy Oracle Shelter, and he had forgotten about the misery and austerity that were omnipresent in these places. Here there were no Oracle Guardians, no guards to ensure their safety or answer their questions. Only Oracle Drones fluttering and buzzing about like a swarm of tireless flies.

‘We’re in Bhuzkoc territory.’ Svava replied somberly with a watchful expression.

‘Bhuzkoc?’ Mufasa growled as he sniffed the air curiously.

‘The Nawai tribal leader who holds Kyle’s sister. He’s a local tyrant. The primitive and desperate environment here allows him to do as he pleases without fear of retribution. He’s got quite a reputation around here, and not exactly a good one.’

‘I don’t get it.’ Kyle confessed guardedly. ‘Even if he’s a bully, what’s to stop the citizens from leaving here? There’s no shortage of Oracle Shelters and Cities.’

‘The price.’ Jake replied apathetically. ‘It’s easy to forget, but most people stuck in these Oracle Shelters don’t even have the courage to leave. Without taking any risks or participating in any Ordeals how could they effectively earn Aether? Even if they could, it’s too late now. The Digestors on the planet are much stronger than they were a month ago when we arrived. To survive, goodwill is no longer enough.’

Svara confirmed with a nod.

‘Their cowardice is their prison. The only hope they have left is the Red Cube. But if they’re still here, it’s because they don’t have the courage to take the plunge.. Accepting the protection of a tyrant, even an evil one, is the only solution they have left.’