

# The Oracle Paths

## Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

### Chapter 520 - Bad Liar

Shortly thereafter, Jake and the others appeared in a flash of light around an Orange Cube secluded from the crowd. The small cobblestone square covered with multiple Orange Cubes was similar to the previous Oracle Cities they had visited.

As three humans appeared, accompanied by a gang of huge felines, the eyes of the nearby bystanders bulged with amazement and scrambled to clear the way. Two long-eared, waxy aliens looked at them questioningly before whispering something to a third fellow, who quietly slipped away into one of the narrow alleys, leaving behind an afterimage.

Jake, Kyle and Svara did not miss any of these details and the former Playboy scoffed at once,

‘It would seem that our appearance has already been noticed.’

‘It’s not necessarily Bhuzkoc’s men.’ Svara objected calmly. ‘Nawai males aren’t exactly the scheming type. I’d be surprised if his intelligence gain was enough to correct his personality shortcomings. If I’m not mistaken they’re the henchmen of one of his competitors.’

Jake concurred with a nod,

‘I followed Will’s advice. We’re in Melkree’ territory.’

‘Speaking of Will, where is he? Wasn’t he supposed to meet us here?’ Kyle inquired after glancing all around without finding a glimpse of the four-eyed man.

‘We’ll meet him somewhere else. He gave me an address.’ Jake replied cryptically.

Hu vft tzmnnut ovu atuf md guare arhmrlnahpmppl dzmq ovu qmquro ovuw vft qftu ovuaz ezfrt urozfrhu jaov f lypft md eafro duiarul. Tvu Opouz Svuiouz jfl himluiw jfohvut gw ovu sfzampI imhfi gaejael frt ovuaz arsuloaefoamrl vft fizuftw guur rmoahut. Jfcu vft duio jfohvut larhu val fzzasfi ar ovu Rut Dalozaho frt oval duuiare vft rmo iudo vaq usuz larhu.

When he arrived at the address Will had given him, Jake found himself face to face with a wooden building that was rather shabby and decrepit by Oracle City standards. The two-story shack was narrow with a rudimentary thatched roof. As opposed to a finished and professional rendering, it looked as if rough-cut logs had been stacked on top of each other at random until they were balanced by some inexplicable mystery.

Aesthetically, the result was frightening to see.

On the oval ancient wooden sign in front of the entrance door one could read in slobbering fluorescent paint: ‘The Melkree Bar’. Svara pursed her lips in disapproval when she saw this.

Jake remembered that the young woman’s blood had been red when he had given her a beating and didn’t immediately make the association, but comparing the fluorescent ink to her matching hair color he finally connected the dots. Evidently, Melkree wasn’t much better than Bhuzkoc and Shaktilar.

At the bar’s entrance, a burly humanoid goat whose fur looked like rotting seaweed briefly blocked their path with his spear, but he

eventually stepped aside when he realized that the trio and their band of felines had no intention of slowing down.

On Earth or anywhere else, Jake would have surely respected the rules, but in the Oracle Playground, where violence was forbidden, it was relatively simple to force their way through. All they had to do was move forward without a second thought. This bar was open to the public and this bouncer had no power to change the rules.

His only role was to intimidate. Which he had just sorely failed to do.

Once inside, the relaxed face of a certain businessman stiffened as he recognized them. Quickly straightening up, he urged the middle-aged woman massaging his back to go back to her activities before waving at them. The plump alien with slit pupils and long purple hair bowed respectfully revealing her sharp canines before walking away without saying anything.

‘I’ve been waiting for you for ages!’ Will whined pitifully while sipping his beer served in a huge wooden mug of the same aspect as the trunks making up the walls of the bar.

Jake and the others sneered in their hearts when they heard him speak. ‘Yeah, you sure do seem to have it hard.’

‘I didn’t know you had a thing for milfs.’ Kyle gave him a sarcastic wink before putting on an icy mask of fury. ‘But while you’re having fun, my sister is going through hell and I’d appreciate it if we could stay focused on the mission.’

The shopkeeper was slightly embarrassed, but not for long.

‘It’s just part of the job.’ Will played it down with an evasive hand gesture. ‘How do you think I got all this information? This generous ‘milf’ as you call her is Melkree’s agent and this bar is a front for buying, selling and trading all sorts of information. The Melkree

faction is like Switzerland here. It dips into everything, but tries to remain as neutral as possible while protecting the interests of both parties without compromising its own.'

The eloquent merchant emphasized his last words by staring at two neighboring tables in turn to remind them that it wasn't just Melkree's men in this bar, and thankfully they all took the hint.

Jake erected a telekinetic barrier around them and they each took a chair after ordering something to drink. As for the felines, this time they had to wait outside. Except for the four new additions, the felines were too bulky to fit through the door.

With their fluffy and elastic bodies, they could surely squeeze inside, but the bar was clearly not prepared for such a large crowd...

'So, tell us what you found out while working so hard...' Jake repeated professionally with a touch of cynicism.

Indifferent to his superior's innuendo, Will regained his seriousness, even putting on a grave face.

'It won't be easy... Maeve is alive and well, but she is currently Bhuzkoc's favorite concubine. If we simply wanted to snatch her or buy her back, it would be extremely complicated, since she is locked up in Bhuzkoc's palace, a mansion under high protection from which she almost never leaves. There are a hundred Evolvers inside, mostly Nawaii warriors who have completed at least four Ordeals, so even if we were allowed to fight there our odds wouldn't be that good.'

Kyle's chin and lips quivered in despair and horror at the news. The worst case scenario had happened. His pure, candid little sister had been so thoroughly molested by a vile, barbaric alien that she had become his favorite sêx toy.

Svara, who was familiar with her species' practices, remained unperturbed, but inwardly she was somewhat surprised. 'This kid managed to become his favorite concubine? The situation is not as bad as I feared.'

Of course, the female Nawai had her own concept of 'not as bad as I feared'. If Kyle knew what she was truly thinking, he would probably faint from anguish on the spot.

The trio then listened carefully to the rest of Will's report before locking themselves into a heavy silence. Apart from negotiating, rescuing Maeve was indeed practically impossible. By chance, the precarious situation of the Shelter offered them a second alternative, which unfortunately, according to Will, had no better chance of success.

His forehead knotted from his intense thinking, Jake finally asked, 'Do you have a plan? I'm assuming you didn't say all this to dissuade us from saving her.'

He knew the businessman. If he considered rescue impossible, he would have told them from the start. The fact that he took the time to explain everything to them proved that he had an idea in mind.

'We have a chance, but we'll have to wait a little longer. It will give me the time I need to gather more information about Bhuzkoc and his men. A mere masseuse is obviously not accredited to know all this.'

'Wait?! We're talking about my sister here!' Kyle suddenly yelled out of the blue. 'While we take our time, my sister has to serve this monster and endure all sorts of hardships.'

Will flinched, but his expression hardened immediately after.

‘Kyle, if you trust me, do as I say this time. If you really want to save your sister, you’re going to have to let your sister suffer some more, as unbearable as it is for her and for you.’

Jake didn’t want to intervene but deep inside he was already convinced. To his surprise, it was Svava who stood up for Will.

‘The merchant is right.’ She declared coldly. ‘For the moment Maeve is not in danger. She will be if we try to negotiate her release. I know Bhuzkoc. He’s a possessive male who refuses to give up his toys even when they’re broken. Even for a good price, he will rather abuse his ‘property’ until it expires to make sure he doesn’t get ripped off. Negotiating her release might even make things worse. Especially, now that we know she is his favorite concubine. Favorite concubine is not a glorious status among the Nawaii, but it’s not that easy to achieve and even less to keep. As long as she has that status we can at least be sure she’s healthy.’

Far from being appeased by this clarification, Kyle’s tortured face told them that he was about to commit a huge mistake. His fists were clenched so tightly that his knuckles turned white, and he was barely able to keep himself from smashing the table. After several deep breaths, he quietened down and said,

‘Fine, I’ll wait.’

Unfortunately, Jake and the others knew how to recognize a liar when they saw one, but they didn’t try to dissuade him anymore. It wasn’t like they were allowed to knock him out for his own good.

Sighing inwardly, they prepared for the inevitable.