

The Oracle Paths

Volume 5: The Last Tutorial

Chapter 523 - One Punch Man

‘Hmm?’ Jake raised an eyebrow as he picked up a communication from his bracelet. ‘Kyle?’

Listening to the contents of the telepathic message, a thoughtful frown darkened his face.

‘What is it, my friend?’ The alien Grash asked cheerfully as he noticed his change in attitude.

Although he had gulped down the equivalent of an entire keg of cleaning alcohol his body showed no signs of inebriation. The stamina of this pig-like alien was simply terrifying.

‘Negotiations have failed.’ Jake replied frankly as he stood up.

Turning to Grash, who after all had been a friendly drinking buddy until now, he said seriously,

‘My friend was attacked. I hope you won’t stop me from rescuing him.’

‘Attacked?’ Grash grunted knowingly. ‘It would seem that the advent of the Dungeon Digester is imminent. Its influence does not seem to be confined to that of a single Oracle Shelter... Fear not, I am not Bhuzkoc’s slave. I’m just a guest of honour temporarily recruited to increase security in these troubled times. However, I am being paid handsomely for this job. If you attack... I will have to stop you. As you’ve been nice, I won’t kill you.’

It wasn't an idle threat. Jake felt the murderous pressure that had faded crush him again. It made him realize how foolish it was to trust an Evolver's outward demeanor.

As their intelligence increased, even a once stupid alien like Grash could show excellent social skills when the situation called for it. While his primordial traits of happy-go-lucky and epicurean hadn't disappeared, he definitely wasn't as naive as he made himself out to be.

'I'm sorry, but even though you're stronger than me, I have to save my friend.' Jake retorted solemnly, drawing a brand new sword.

His Wormak machete had suffered badly from his battle with Nylreg, and he realized the importance of a good weapon. Unfortunately, he had not yet had time to upgrade his equipment. This new dark steel sword was a blade he had hastily forged with his new Metal Bending Skill.

Grash looked at the toothpick that served as his weapon with amusement before finally laughing out loud.

'Fine, it's been a while since I've been in a good fight! Bring it on! Let me see what you can do! If the Oracle Drones don't intervene, this will be the first time I've ever let off steam in an Oracle City...'

If Jake was still hesitating, the second distress message he received from Kyle at that very moment strengthened his resolve. With firm resolve, he made his move.

With the alien's monstrous killing aura, Jake didn't dare underestimate him. He struck with full power. Boosted by Bloodline Ignition, Aether Conversion, Myrtharian Warrior/Spiritual Trance, his Telekinesis, and Aether Control, the downward sword strike on Grash struck like thunder.

Before the white-hot blade even arrived, a blast of ionized air slapped the giant's porcine face forcing him to squint. The next moment, Jake disappeared from his previous location releasing a supersonic shockwave, then reappeared crouching almost simultaneously a few feet behind Grash.

Time seemed to stand still for a brief moment as the air was torn apart by cataclysmic temperatures and winds, and then it began to flow again.

Jake, who had been motionless, then spat out a spray of blood several meters long. The blade of his brand new sword evaporated into smoke, leaving only the guard in his hand.

The scene was not as miserable as Kyle's, who had puked his guts out, his magma-like blood giving him an almost charismatic air despite his defeat. However, both Grash and Jake knew just how badly wounded he was.

In comparison, the giant lifted his huge greatsword in front of his face and inspected the slight notch in the middle of the blade with a saddened expression. A tiny gash had severed the insertion between the thumb and forefinger of the hand holding his sword's hilt, but the bleeding had already stopped. Without a doubt, the winner of their altercation was obvious.

'You lost.' Grash said coolly. 'But this strike was not bad. If I wasn't a Fifth-Ordeal Player, this fight might have been different. Now listen up. Save your friend and get out of here. Things are going to get out of hand any minute. For five minutes, I'll be in the infirmary 'bandaging my wound'. You know what I mean, right ? If you're still here when I get back, things will get ugly.'

Jake frowned as he chose silence. Through this exchange of blows he had learned many things, but the most troubling was undoubtedly

that the Oracle Drones were no longer doing their job here. This would have consequences, some good and some not so good, but mostly it meant that the situation was about to take a turn for the worse.

Discarding the hilt of his now useless sword, Jake calmed his breathing and stood up expressionlessly. For a bystander, it was hard to imagine that his lungs and heart had practically been crushed seconds earlier.

Without looking back, Jake charged into the palace and no Evolvers this time dared to intercept him. He was somewhat surprised by this lack of resistance, but with Kyle's urgent predicament he brushed his suspicions off his mind.

Al vu nllut ovzmpév ovu nfifhu efou, vu lptturiw vufzt nfracut hzaul rufzgw, frt vu zuhuasut fr uquzeurhw qullfeu dzmq Waii frt Ssfzf. Tvu qullfeu jfl gzaud, gpo aqnfhodpi rmuovuiull.

‘The Oracle Playground is under attack.’

His eyes narrowed as he read the message, but he currently had a more concerning matter to deal with. As soon as he entered the mansion's grounds, powerful Evolvers' breaths emerged all around him and he shifted back into fighting stance.

He thought he had triggered these reactions, but when he heard a shrill, oh-so-familiar cackling sound, he realized that the worst-case scenario had just happened. The Black Cube had been infiltrated!

Normally it was possible for low-level Digestors to spawn in Oracle Shelters, but this was relatively rare and the Oracle Drones were usually able to handle this threat. The emergence of Digestors in the Oracle Playground or an Oracle City was much more unusual.

But for once, this calamity served its purpose. As these powerful Aetheric signatures quickly moved away to deal with the incoming enemies, Jake took the opportunity to go in incognito.

Tapping his feet and reactivating his invisibility, his speed suddenly accelerated and he slalomed like a shadow through the various guards on the alert who had stayed behind to defend the mansion. These Evolvers were at a lower level than the warriors who had just left and he managed to sneak further inside without any trouble.

A few seconds later, Jake smashed the final door open and his majestic figure stormed inside the throne room where Kyle, Maeve, Bhuzkoc and his two bodyguards were standing.

As the thick armored door shattered, everyone looked at him with different reactions. Bhuzkoc turned to him and pursed his lips in annoyance, pausing the movement of his sharp knife that was working hard to peel away Kyle's skin like a piece of fruit. The two Evolvers gave him a hostile, albeit guarded, look, while Maeve and the other three slaves cast a dumbfounded gaze.

As for Kyle, he was nothing more than a bloody mess. A macabre work of art after Bhuzkoc had practically butchered him alive to force him to sign his Slave Contract. It was a miracle that the young man was still alive, and considering his critical condition he had resisted fiercely until his arrival.

Looking at Maeve's tears and pale terrorized face, as well as Bhuzkoc's sadistic and carnivorous, almost hateful grin, Jake had a vague idea of what had happened.

'Jake, kill this bastard for me!' Kyle shouted in a heartbreaking voice. Despite his condition, his rage had long since superseded his pain. Even if he was dying, he wanted to see this Bhuzkoc get his ass kicked.

‘Who are y-?’

BAM!

Who was Jake? Even though he was mostly individualistic and self-centered, he wasn't the type to let a bastard get away with it after roughing up his friends and subordinates. It was the minimum of decency that a mature and responsible person should have.

Thus, it was his fist that answered Bhuzkoc's question. After his bitter failure against Grash, Jake had shed his last bit of complacency and he punched again with all his strength, but this time he added a powerful Soul Arrow projected through his Myrtharian Eyes and the providential support of his Aether Sun Core.

When the mini sun appeared behind him, everyone reflexively closed their eyes as the burning rays of the radioactive ball lashed his back. Although his armor, back and the back of his skull quickly melted despite the advancement of his Bloodline, the temporary power gain was no joke.

This fiery heat momentarily amplified his powers, giving him an inexhaustible flow of energy and increased control. Under the effect of this incredible buff, this mighty punch was nothing like the previous attack against Grash.

Almost incredulously, his fist went straight through Bhuzkoc's face, distorting and imploding half the bones in his head without any effort. In slow motion, one could see the thick skin of the barbarian's face distort like the surface of a pond into which one would have just dumped a large stone.

A blink of an eye later, the shockwave and the terrible explosion resounded and the broken body of the barbarian was ejected like a cannonball into his golden throne, which was in turn uprooted from

the ground and went to embed itself deeply into the opposite wall, which had been considered highly resilient until then.

Seeing the alien's battered state, which had been so proud and valiant just seconds earlier, Kyle, Maeve, and the two bodyguards almost forgot about their conflict.. The two siblings, who were the original victims of this monster, suddenly felt a surge of compassion for their abuser without realizing it.