

Get Your Giggle On

Part.3 : Jiggling Jaden

Jaden was in the middle of one of his most brilliant dueling performances ever. He had defeated Yugi's Egyptian God Cards, Seto Kaiba's Blue Eyes Ultimate Dragon and Zane's Chimeratech Overdragon in rapid succession. He was on the brink of being crowned the King of Games in front of a record-breaking crowd on international television. And he'd saved the world twice before breakfast, too; how could the day be any better? Syrus was whispering something to him. It sounded like...

"Wake UP, Jay!" Syrus hissed.

Jaden lifted his head and stifled a yawn. "Did I fall asleep in class again?"

"Yup," replied Syrus. "But luckily my using makeup to draw open eyes on your eyelids fooled Dr Crowler."

"At least he never calls on either of us any more, now that he's going for that Teacher of the Year award and trying to get the highest percentage of correct in-class answers."

Just then Dr Crowler heard the two students whispering, and turned towards them with a sharp look. He opened his Detention book and took out his pen to inscribe J Yuki and S Truesdale, but noticed that he'd already used up his quota of detention assignments for the week. "You two slackers are lucky this time, but don't let me catch you holding a private conversation in my class again!" he snapped.

The brief tension in the air dissolved when the bell rang a moment later. Jaden wiped his eyelids clean of mascara. Then he and Syrus went to their mailboxes. For some reason, Syrus seemed a bit antsy on the way there. Just for fun, Jaden let Syrus walk in front of him and then grabbed him from behind. Syrus squealed loudly and jumped almost a foot in the air. "Jaden, don't!"

"Gee, Syrus, what's wrong? Usually you just giggle when I do that."

"Wrong? Nothing's wrong. Let's just see if we have any mail," Syrus said quickly.

Jaden wasn't expecting any mail in his box, and was surprised to see a handwritten envelope. But for some reason he was more struck by Syrus' seeming to be relieved at not having any mail. That was unlike Syrus. Usually he approached his box with an anxiously hopeful air, and was disappointed when, as usually happened, he found it empty. Jaden slipped the envelope into his jacket pocket.

He didn't open the envelope until after he dropped Syrus off at the Advanced Intermediate Dueling Class. Then he remembered the letter and tore it open. It looked like an invitation. Well, that was cool. The Sacred Dueling Room... sweet! 4:15... wasn't that, like, between 4:00 and 4:30? Something like that, he thought. Help with what he needed most... he had no idea what that could be, but whatever might happen there, Jaden sensed a challenge, and there was no way he was gonna back down!

There was one thing Jaden had to do, though. He was almost sure this was the afternoon he was supposed to have a training duel with Chazz to try out some new attribute-based decks. He'd better go find Chazz and see if they could do that the next day.

Chazz had been debating with himself whether or not to keep his supposed appointment. After all he'd never agreed to keep coming back before he'd dueled that weird tickle torturer... and had it been a dude or a chick? He'd never been able to figure it out. Then again, it could get him out of some lame training duel with Jaden... Chazz still hadn't made up his mind when Jaden found him.

"Hey, Chazz, what's up?" Jaden began.

"Uhh, Jaden, about this afternoon... Chazz began, but Jaden interrupted him.

"Glad you brought that up, Chazz. I was going to mention it to you..."

"You see, I think something else has come up, and maybe we should put it off..."

"Whoa!" exclaimed Jaden. "You wanted to put it off too? I was all ready for it, but now I think there's something that might turn out to be really important for me to do today, if you don't mind. So what do you say we do it tomorrow instead? That okay with you, buddy? Thanks, Chazz!" And without waiting for a verbal answer, Jaden darted off.

Chazz looked after Jaden suspiciously. Jaden put off a training duel voluntarily? He was usually all gung ho about these sorts of things in an annoyingly cliched kind of way. It would have to be something really interesting to get him to throw over a training duel... could it be? The more Chazz thought about it the more sure he was that he had to be right... and that would definitely be worth the price of admission, even if that price would be taken out on his sensitive barefeet. Oh, yeah, Chazz decided, he'd keep the appointment.

That Jaden just happened to be in the vicinity of the Sacred Dueling Room between the hour and quarter past struck him as being more a product of chance than design. Usually it was when he tried to be on time for things that something always came up to make him late. But he did generally manage to be on time to meet a challenge, and as the quarter hour struck he entered the antechamber of the Sacred Dueling Room and kicked off his sneakers. As he reached down to peel off his socks, he noticed the holes in the toes. How did he keep getting holes in his socks when he went barefoot as often as possible? Had socks been the custom, he'd have had to explain that this had been his only clean pair - well, almost clean. Cheerfully stuffing the socks into his sneakers, Jaden advanced purposefully into the main room.

Jaden saw the robed and hooded figure on the other side of the room, and asked, "You invited me here for a duel, didn't you?"

He heard the digitized voice answer, "You don't waste time. Yes. If you win, I shall give you something of great value to you, something you'll find most helpful. If you lose, you and I will play a little game, and that will be helpful to me."

"Whatevs," Jaden brushed aside the explanation, eager to duel. "Just get your game on!" They both drew.

"As you like," said the other. "I'll go first. I summon Fire Princess in attack mode, and I think I'll just play two cards face down. Then I'll end my turn."

Jaden laughed. “So you’re gonna try to protect Fire Princess with your face-downs while you increase your life points and let Fire Princess’ special effect lower my life points, hunh? Not a bad strategy, but I can beat it. I summon Elemental Hero Wildheart, who has more attack points and isn’t affected by traps. Wildheart, attack!” Fire Princess was destroyed, and the stranger’s life points dropped to 7800. “Now I’ll throw down a face-down and end my turn,” Jaden said. He was off to a good start, and it was likely to get even better. Not only was his face-down Hero Barrier, which would stop one attack while he had an Elemental Hero face-up on the field, but in his hand he still held Wroughtweiler, Polymerization, and two of his favourite Elemental heroes, Clayman and Sparkman, which he could combine to make the Thunder Giant.

The other drew a card. “Perfect! But before I play this, I’ll set one more card face down. Now to do something about Wildheart. I summon Harpie Lady 3. She only has 1300 attack points, but your monster that battles with her cannot attack for your next two turns. Harpie Lady 3, attack!”

Wildheart won the battle, and the stranger’s life points dropped to 7600. When the other ended his turn, Jaden drew Elemental Hero Avian. Okay, Avian didn’t fuse with either Clayman or Sparkman, but he could still bring out Elemental Hero Thunder Giant, with 2400 attack points. He played Polymerization.

“Time for a trap!” cried the other. “I activate Dark Deal. I pay 1000 life points to stop your spell card’s effect. Instead of your fusing two monsters together, your card forces me to discard one of the cards in my hand, and I have two. Shall I discard the card in my right hand or my left?”

Jaden chose the card in the stranger’s right hand. “Aha, you chose Goldd, Wu-Lord of Dark World! When Goldd is discarded to the graveyard by a card effect, I can summon it directly to the field, and he has 2300 attack points!”

“2300 attack points?” cried Jaden. “Some move!”

“And it gets better. Because it was your card’s effect that made me discard Goldd, I can destroy up to two cards on your side of the field. So I destroy your Wildheart and your face-down card, leaving you with an empty field! It is still your turn, though.”

“Gee, there goes that plan,” Jaden said. “I guess I’d better just throw down a monster in defense mode and end my turn,” as he set Wroughtweiler.

“It seems I’ve taken control of this duel,” the digitized voice rasped. “And now I’ll summon the card I just drew - Granadora! This monster gives me 1000 life points when I summon it, though I do lose 2000 points if it’s destroyed. Now I’m back up 7600 life points. I’ll activate one of my face-down cards, the Equip spell Axe of Despair, to give Goldd an extra 1000 attack points. Now Goldd will attack your monster.”

“Thanks!” Jaden said. “By destroying Wroughtweiler in battle, you let me take Polymerization and Wildheart back from the graveyard into my hand.”

“True,” said the other, “but now Granadora can attack your life points directly for 1900 points of damage!” The attack went through, and the stranger took the lead 7600-6100.

Jaden drew and said, “But now I can try my fusion again - Go, Polymerization! Now you’ll see what my Thunder Giant can do!”

“Not so fast, Jaden! I still have a face-down card. And guess what it is?”

“Uh... Mask of Restrict? That won't work... fusion material monsters aren't considered tributes.”

“No, it's another Dark Deal. This will bring my life points down to 6600, but you still can't do your fusion and your card makes me discard the only card I have left in my hand...”

“Is it another Dark World monster? I wanna get some of those; that Goldd was sweet!”

“Sorry. This card is Elephant Statue of Disaster. I don't get to summon it to the field, but when your card effect sends it from my hand to the graveyard, you take 2000 points of damage!”

“Whoa!” Jaden exclaimed. “That puts you ahead, 6600-4100. But I think there's something you forgot. Okay, you're ahead in life points and you have two big monsters on the field, but now you're out of face-downs and your hand is empty. That means you can't stop me from playing spell cards, like the card I just drew this turn - Graceful Charity! Now I draw three cards and discard two.”

Jaden, whose hand had been down to Wildheart, Sparkman, Clayman and Avian, looked delighted with his draw. “I have to discard two cards, so I'll send Clayman and Avian to the graveyard. But now I'll bring them right back to my hand with one of the cards I just drew - Dark Factory of Mass Production, which lets me put two normal monsters from my graveyard into my hand. Now you've stopped me from using Polymerization, but there are other ways to get out fusions, like this field card Fusion Gate. Now I can just

remove my Elemental Heroes from play to bring out my fusions. So first it's goodbye Clayman and Sparkman, hello Thunder Giant! And finally, Avian and the last card I just drew, Burstinatrix, can fuse into Elemental Hero Flame Wingman!”

Jaden's eyes shone as he finally succeeded in bringing out two of his favourite monsters. “Very impressive,” said his opponent, “but you've forgotten something. My Goldd has more attack points than either Thunder Giant or Flame Wingman.”

Jaden replied, “But its original attack strength was 2300. And Thunder Giant has a super power. If I discard a card, and I still have Wildheart left in my hand, I can destroy one monster on your side of the field with an original attack strength below Thunder Giant's. So say goodbye to your Goldd card!”

“What!!! How can this be?” cried the other.

“And now I'll enter my Battle Phase,” went on Jaden. First, Flame Wingman will attack Granadora. That does 200 points of damage to you, and since Granadora is destroyed, you said yourself that's 2000 more! And then there's Flame Wingman's super power; by destroying your monster in battle, he does damage equal to the destroyed monster's attack strength - another 1900. And Thunder Giant can still attack, which is another 2400 points of damage!”

Jaden was about to say, “That's game!” as he watched his opponent's life point count plummet. But the tally stopped at 100. Had he miscalculated? He knew he should have stayed awake in math class. Still, what difference did it make? With no cards in hand or on the field, and with Jaden's life points still at a fairly healthy 4100, surely this mysterious stranger was as good as lost.

“That was a fine move,” said the voice. “But now I draw.” Jaden could have guessed what the draw would be - though when he was in this situation he always drew Elemental Hero Bubbleman.

“Pot of Greed!” Jaden waited for the explanation everyone always gave about drawing two cards, although even Syrus got that one right on his Spell Test, but the stranger declined to point out the obvious. Jaden thought he saw the mask smile as the other looked at the two newly drawn cards.

Now, Jaden, prepare yourself for one of the most fearsome creatures in all of Duel Monsters,” said the other in a theatrical voice. “I summon... AMEBA, in ATTACK MODE!!!”

“Ameba? Ahheehhehe!!!” Jaden started to giggle. Here he’d been preparing himself for some sweet-looking monster that would give Syrus nightmares for a week. He pointed and kept laughing until he had to bend and hold his stomach. And after all that he was supposed to be frightened of a big blob with only 300 attack points? It was TOO FUNNY - he couldn’t stop laughing, even as he felt his knees start to buckle. And then Jaden sank to the floor, laughing helplessly and kicking his bare feet about in the air.

When Jaden finally recovered from his fit of hysterics, his opponent played his other card - Creature Swap.

“Oh!” said Jaden, “I get it! You give me Ameba and I have to give you a monster. That’s not so good.”

“And when you take control of Ameba, you also take 2000 damage to your life points.”

“Geez, again with this 2000 points of damage. Now, what do I give you?” Jaden asked himself. If he gave Thunder Giant, an attack on Ameba would finish him, as he was now down to 2100 life points. But Flame Wingman would do 1800 damage with the attack and 300 with the special effect. Either way, it was game.

“Wow, I guess you got me,” said Jaden as his life points ran out. “Sweet duel! So what’s your reward?”

The stranger beckoned Jaden through to the secret chamber. When he saw the table selected for him with the straps, Jaden asked, “What, are you gonna put me on the table and do mad scientist experiments exploring my brain? I don’t think you’ll find anything there... uhhh, wait a minute, that didn’t come out quite right...”

“You wouldn’t exactly call it an experiement. But before you get on the table, you get to select a present in one of these boxes.”

“A present? Sweet! I didn’t notice the boxes. Let’s see; I’ll take this one!” Jaden opened a box and drew out an ornate antique hairbrush. He studied the object for a moment. “Oh, yeah... I’ve seen these before, and I THINK I even know what it does... don’t tell me...”

“It’s a hairbrush.”

Jaden smacked his head. “My bad! I KNEW there was something I forgot to do today! I bet I was gonna wash my hair too as well as brush it. Can I get on the table now?”

“Be my guest.”

As Jaden hopped onto the table, decided to take off his jacket, and adjusted his arms and legs through the straps, behind a screen on the other side of the room Chazz and Syrus, already strapped

onto their tables, heard all of Jaden's encounter with their conqueror. Syrus was surprised that Jaden seemed so calm about the experience. Chazz was almost amused by Jaden's complete lack of any sense of surprise or danger in the encounter. "He has no idea what's coming to him," Chazz thought. "Just wait until he gets tickled by that hairbrush..." Chazz started to smile until he realized that, if all went as it had done the week before, he and Syrus would share Jaden's fate.

When Jaden was securely strapped in, he asked, "So now what?"

The hooded figure seemed interested in Jaden's black t-shirt. "Do you always wear such inexpensive clothing?"

"Well, I spend most of my spare cash on cards. Besides, what does it matter what I wear?"

"It's just that you could look quite presentable if you dressed well. This material does nothing for you. I hear cashmere is quite nice..."

"Sure, if I wanted to look all rich like Chazz, maybe... as if! I mean, he spends half an hour getting his hair right every day; can you believe that?"

On the other side of the room, Syrus snickered silently. Chazz thought, "You are so dead, Yuki..."

"But even if you must wear cheap t-shirts, you might at least try not having holes under the arms," the stranger said to Jaden.

"Holes? I didn't see any holes," replied Jaden. "I think that's because it's a black shirt. Maybe if I wore white instead I could notice holes better."

"Well, this hole is so big I can put my entire finger right through it. And it looks as if you have an equally large hole on the other side... yes, you do!" admonished the masked figure.

Jaden felt two gloved fingers working through the holes in his shirt and wiggling around. "Hahaha - hey, that tickles!" he exclaimed, beginning to giggle.

"Well, there you are then," said the other. "I certainly don't think I ought to be able to stick my fingers through holes in your shirt and be able to wiggle them around enough to tickle you... like this!" The fingers wiggled more freely as the holes through which they'd come expanded.

Laughing intermittently, Jaden was just able to say, "You know, hohoho, I almost wonder, huhhuhuh, if you got me here... heeheehee... to tickle me, like, on purpose - oohooohoo!!!"

On the other side of the room, Chazz thought, "Wow, who died and made you Sherlock Holmes?" Syrus debated whether he should call out to Jaden, but was too afraid of the consequences to do so.

"Yes, this shirt is falling apart," complained the stranger, who had inserted more fingers into the growing holes, the fingers wiggling faster and more freely in Jaden's sensitive armpits.

"Hahahaahuhhahahaahuhhaa!!!" Jaden began to writhe involuntarily as he laughed. "That could be a good thing... ohhohohuhho ... I like my arms freeeeeeeeheeheehee... when I duel!" After a burst of vigorous laughter, he went on when he had a bit of breath, "In fact, I've been thinking about going sleeveless. You wouldn't want to cut my sleeves off for me, would you?"

“I’m happy to oblige,” said the stranger, taking a pair of scissors and making short work of Jaden’s sleeves.

“By the way, Jaden, I haven’t asked you yet if you can guess who I am.”

“Should I know you?” asked Jaden. “Gee, if I had to guess, it’s pretty obvious that you must be Dr Crowler, given your wei... I mean, interesting outfit and your being able to plot to get me here and determination to tickle me, and did you get Zane or Chazz to be your assistant?”

“Dr Crowler? You really think I’m DR CROWLER? I should make you pay for that... and of course I can... in laughter, and with your own present, too, now that I have such free access.” The stranger took up Jaden’s present and applied it to Jaden’s exposed armpits. Jaden howled immediately, and continued to buck and laugh so loudly that he never heard Chazz and Syrus being wheeled out to join him.

When Jaden finally felt the tickling from the hairbrush stop, he was gradually able to halt his flow of incessant laughter. Eventually he could speak. “That was sweet! I’m really getting tired; this is a better workout than hitting the gym with Bastion, a mistake I won’t make again anytime soon. But this is a lot more fun, too!” Then he noticed the other students. “Hey, Sy! Chazz! What’s up?”

“What do you think?” answered Chazz. Syrus just nodded.

“Not much after all this laughing,” said Jaden. Then the penny began to drop. “Oh! Is this why you changed our plans for this afternoon? And... did you have your own duels here?”

“Last week,” said Chazz, while Syrus said, “The week before last.”

“Wow, you must be some duelist,” Jaden told the stranger, “if you’ve beaten all three of us. But why did Chazz and Sy come back today? What are you gonna do with them?”

“Probably just what you’d do if you had us tied us like this,” said Chazz. Syrus told Chazz, “Definitely.” The stranger’s assistants who had wheeled out Chazz and Syrus produced two more hairbrushes.”

“It’s time we start again,” said the stranger. “I think we’ll begin with your friends, given your recent exertions. But we won’t do their armpits; there’s a more convenient spot to tickle.”

“Whatever,” said Jaden. The minions began their hairbrush work. Chazz, who’d been able to remain stoic for a while the week before, screamed immediately. The prickliness of the brush bristles and the particular tenderness of his rarely-bared feet added a slight painfulness to the tickling sensation. It was far too much for him, and he let out a mixture of a few screams with building laughter at once as he felt the brush go back and forth across his soles.

Syrus’ tiny feet were small enough that it felt as if the brush were tickling his whole foot all at once, then his other foot. He squealed and squealed with rapid giggles, which grew higher in pitch whenever the brush strayed to the base of his toes.

Listening to Syrus and Chazz laugh, it didn’t take Jaden long to make a request. “Now that I’ve gotten my second wind, could you tickle my feet too?”

“Of course,” said the stranger automatically. Then, “Wait a second... are you saying that you actually WANT to have your feet tickled?”

“Sure!” answered Jaden. “It’s lots of fun, it makes me laugh, and when I’m finished it feels like a really good workout, only better. Besides, listening to Chazz and Sy laughing like this is really making me want to get my giggle on!”

“Very interesting. You’re certainly original, I grant you that. And a vigorous round of foot-tickling was certainly in the programme all along...”

“Sweet!” cried Jaden, wiggling his toes. “So c’mon, gimme your best shot!”

Chazz, hearing this through a slight break in his own howls of laughter, thought, “Leave it to Jaden to give a pep talk to a tickle-torturer,” then felt a new sensation as his tickler moved the brush to the tops of his feet and started in giggling again. Syrus, whose fear had heightened his reactions, was beyond rational thought.

As Jaden’s barefeet were tougher than those of Chazz, he almost wasn’t sure whether he really felt the first touch of the hairbrush or whether it were still his anticipation of the moment. But the brush was able to go a bit deeper, triggering a flood of pure tickling sensations. Jaden laughed happily right away. Soon he felt one of his favourite reactions to being tickled; the hairbrush working up and down his soles unlocked some sort of gate he could sometimes sense within himself. The opening of that inner gate released the part of him that let him surrender completely to the tickling as the consciousness disappeared from his incessant laughter and his entire body danced involuntarily in place in the straps as if Jaden were possessed.

Eventually Jaden and his friends had been tickled as long as his conqueror had planned. When the tickling stopped, Jaden took a little longer to recover himself than either Syrus or Chazz, though they had suffered quite enough on their own tables. When Jaden was finally able to speak, he was full of his usual enthusiasm. “Wow, that was sweet! I really needed a good laugh!” he exclaimed.

“So it appears,” replied the stranger. “Would you care to guess at my identity again?”

“Well, if you’re not Dr Crowler... sorry, I can’t really think right now!” Jaden replied.

“Chazz? Syrus? Does either of you have another guess?” But neither did.

“Well, then, you know the drill. Same time next week. Don’t forget. And don’t think you can give it a miss on purpose. Things won’t be so pleasant then.”

“Whoa! You mean I get to come back and get tickled again?” asked Jaden. Receiving an affirmative reply, he assured the tickler he’d be there and make sure Chazz and Syrus showed, too. Then the young men were escorted back to the antechamber, where they corrected their attire and returned to the school.

“So you actually like being tickled and you’ll ADMIT it?” Chazz asked Jaden as they walked, while Syrus looked at Jaden as if the events of the afternoon had just explained quite a few things to him.

“What’s not to like, right, Sy? You seemed pretty ticklish yourself, Chazz!” Jaden smiled and gestured.

“Don’t even think about it!” Chazz prevented himself from running away in an undignified manner, but he wondered what can of worms might just have been opened.

“Well, you can’t stop me from thinking!” Jaden cried cheerfully, “Maybe you can stop me from tickling you, but then again, maybe you can’t - we’ll see!” as he grabbed Syrus from behind and made him squeal.