

CRYSTALIS
MU
PART 7



Crystalis Mu (A Part of *The Crystalis Saga*)

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Ravage

Using Princess Onita's confidence against her by making his cousin believe she had control of his mind, Russell valiantly saved his aunt Queen Athena of Gonaga from being sacrificed to revive Oni's parents. Prior to Russell's escaping with Queen Athena and her husband – after King Octavius finally realized the error of his daughter's ways – Russell obliterated Oni's father with an energy sphere. Not long after he returned to Gonaga with its king and queen in his grip did Russell hear Dash's voice directing a few Gonagans to safety.

When the three landed beside Dash, Russell asked his mentor, "What happened to everyone, Old Man?"

"We've contacted Tyrong about what's goin' on," Dash informed his three returning friends. "Thankfully they're lettin' anyone who wants to come to Tyrong for haven to do so. Rini and Jade are on the ship waitin' for me to tell them to go."

King Octavius stayed silent for a few seconds before revealing his internal decision, "Athena will go with them."

The Queen of Gonaga didn't understand why Octavius would want to send her away until her husband said, "Those people... your people need someone who can sooth their worried souls. They need a true representative – no disrespect to Rini and Jade."

Russell remarked with a smirk, "None taken. I wouldn't want them talkin' to the Tyrongy government like they're runnin' somethin' 'round here."

"Don't doubt your sister," replied Dash. "Her gift of gab is most impressive. And Octavius is right, Athena. The people need to see your face. They haven't seen its beauty for far too long."

The whistling coming from Russell following Dash's statement about Athena's appearance was topped by his words, "You hear that, Unc? It took him awhile, but Dash is finally makin' a play for

Aunt Athena. Whaddya gonna do 'bout that?"

Rather than answer Russell's query, King Octavius thanked him for saving Athena from Dr. Vanski and Princess Onita before leaving alongside his wife. Worry shown in Athena's eyes as she walked with the king.

After Octavius asked his love about her mental state, Athena meekly said, "I don't know, but I think my nephew might need me sooner than later."

Dash and Russell left Gonaga's wrecked Marketplace, heading in the direction of the land's port & farmland. Their search for any remaining reanimated Jaradian soldiers that were revived by Princess Onita and the lost Gonagan Crystal was fruitless; much to the two's relief. In disbelief was Russell listening to Dash's story about Jade, Rini, and himself thwarting many living-dead attackers.

"You're tellin' me you didn't do all the work?" Russell asked.

Without hesitation, Dash confirmed, "Nope. Actually, I was tryin' hard to play catch up. Russ, you're incredibly strong, but don't underestimate your sister and Jas' jewel."

A follow up comment sat on the tip of Russell's tongue until he heard a familiar, feminine voice call his name.

Russell said to himself, "Well speak of the devil," while watching his approaching sister.

Getting within reaching distance of Russell, Rini questioned her sibling, "Where have you been?"

"Takin' care of family business," Russell responded. "Savin' Aunt Athena. Helpin' Uncle Octavius. Makin' sure the townspeople got on your boat. Y'know, typical hero stuff?"

Dash suddenly spoke up, "Yeah, I noticed (Russell) and Octavius bein' mighty chummy. I assume you figured out he truly does love her."

Like the king earlier in response to Russell's inappropriate statement, Russell ignored Dash to ask his sister, "Where's you're shadow?"

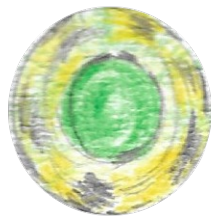
"You mean Jade? She's still at the port tying up some loose ends. You act like she isn't stuck

under you all of the time during training. You know she wants to be like you. I think she's been brainwashed by your big talk."

Straightening his body while placing his fists on the respective sides of his waist, Russell proclaimed, "Just you wait, Sis. I'll prove that it isn't just talk."

Rini took a spot beside Dash to converse about Russell as if he wasn't standing near them, "You know what, Uncle Dash? Russell might not be totally lying. Uncle Octavius told me about the great performance Russell gave to trick Onita and Dr. Vanski to save Aunt Athena. It seems if my big brother isn't strong enough to stop Onita, he can at least trick her into believing he can beat her."

Rini and Dash shared a loud laugh in front of a not-so-humored Russell. Without a noticeable reason, Russell's grimace turned into a smile. Dash's expression became the opposite of Russell's when he realized something powerful was coming their way.



Princess Onita of Gonaga stood in front of the former Empress Oni's revived mother proclaiming herself to be this woman's great-great-granddaughter. The method performed to pull Oni's only remaining parent into consciousness was that of sacrifice. Using Dr. Otto Vanski's entire life energy, Oni's mother reentered the world. But the Princess of Gonaga didn't create this meeting of generations for a simple family reunion. Princess Onita wanted to know about Gonaga's original queen. The astonished look on Oni's mother's face couldn't hide the truth her eyes expressed.

Oni's mother not speaking made Princess Onita explain the story she read while researching the lost Gonagan Crystal's whereabouts, "The spirit inside me identified Dr. Vanski as the person who

could help me complete my lineage. During my search for something powerful, Vanski revealed to me that the woman depicted in the history books as Gonaga's first queen truly isn't what history claims her to be."

The object of Princess Onita's attention listened intently as her informer continued, "Vanski, though old in body, was still sharp in mind. This woman he claimed as the first Queen of Gonaga was also the mother of the world's most destructive force, Empress Oni. But the one thing Vanski never told me before his timely death was why Gonaga's first queen had been banished and her history erased."

"So, you brought me back for that reason?" Oni's mother asked. "To complete your unearthed history lesson?"

"No, in actuality. I saved you from the brink of death to erase your very essence from this planet as Oni originally intended. You and the remnants of what used to be your second husband behind you gave Oni her first feeling of dominance. And I must admit that experiencing the same feeling taints your soul with bloodlust. With your death, I will absorb all of Gonaga's past history."

Knowingly confronted by death, Oni's mother pleaded to let her live. Princess Onita felt her ancestor's words, but liked her plan better. The fearful, quaking woman dropped to her knees; preparing to be struck down by her own family once again. Before Princess Onita's hand could move for the deathblow, a sudden rush of energy exposed itself to her. Princess Onita quickly realized that her potential victim possessed great strength.

Oni's mother had her eyes to the ground, waiting to take her final breath when her second intended harbinger of death demanded, "Rise."

Upon the following of her order, Princess Onita explained to her ancestor, "Your energy is enhanced by the pure Gonagan blood coursing through your veins. You could be beneficial in my success if I must take down my 'family' ... your family. Now, I believe we've spent enough time on this rock. It's time for us to go."

To the disbelief of Oni's mother, Princess Onita extended her right hand so they could hold

hands prior to exiting Vanski's home and his grave. With the woman responsible for Oni's birth in her grasp, the Princess of Gonaga ignored the aircraft she arrived on; gliding toward and eventually above her homeland in the direction of her biggest threats.

Princess Onita said to the woman clutching onto her for dear life after spotting Russell below, "Watch me give them a proper welcome."

In a flash, Princess Onita produced a fiery ball of energy almost twenty feet in diameter that she threw at one of the few places in Gonaga not completely ruined. Without saying a word, Dash, Russell & Rini ran in separate directions to avoid this incoming attack. Unbeknownst to Dash and Rini, this energy was only aimed at Russell. Princess Onita's powerful flames engulfed Russell with the sphere exploding soon after. Rini collided against the ground after the blast sent her flying backwards. Nearby homes and buildings around the energy were either disintegrated or set on fire. As Dash helped Rini, he noticed Russell's energy level; or lack thereof. Princess Onita neared the swirling dust where her energy cratered the land. Like Dash, the princess believed Russell was no more.

Gonaga's princess took a step from Russell's dusty tomb when she heard a male say, "Please don't think so lowly of me, cousin."

Before the princess could react, Russell flew out of his gritty cover; punching Onita's right between her eyes. The right-handed strike sent Princess Onita careening backwards, but didn't drop her. Gonaga's fighting royalty couldn't recover in time to avoid another right hand smacking her face. Russell's second punch forced the princess sailing until she hit the front wall of a small, half-destroyed gift shop. Onita's aggressor pressed forward, confronting the Princess of Gonaga before she could move from her position against the building. A smile formed on Russell's face while he used a succession of left & right hooks to the princess' body that drove blood into Onita's throat.

Following Russell's barrage he jumped into the air. Gazing upward, Princess Onita wiped the blood streaming down the sides of her mouth. From Russell formed a brown beam of his own energy. Princess Onita had no chance to move, feeling the ray collide with her chest prior to exploding around

Russell's target. Another grin graced Russell's face as the smoldering princess fell to her knees.

Not far from Gonaga's princess stood Dash in shock of what he was witnessing.

"How is this possible?" Dash said to himself. "Russ' energy level hasn't changed. Without even powerin' up, Russell just dropped a woman who was stronger than me, Jas, Jake and Serena combined when she still looked like a child. Is he really that strong?"

With Dash's focus on Russell, Dash never sensed Oni's mother creeping behind him.

Hastily grabbing Dash in a chokehold, this woman unknown to him commanded, "Don't move an inch!"

Dash coughing for air actually angered his unidentified choker made her say, "I told you not to move. Now I have to kill you."

Dash quickly fell chest first to the ground so Oni's mother slipped over his shoulders. Unable to stop the fall, Dash's attacker landed on her face. The supposed original matriarch of Gonaga rolled to her feet while blood leaked from her nose. Rather than strike, Dash asked this unidentified individual who she was.

"I am the namesake of your princess," she told Dash. "I am the mother of both Jarad and this land you defend. I am Onyda, the original Queen of Gonaga."

Onyda's words reverberated in Dash's mind. It didn't take long before Dash understood this woman was Oni's supposedly dead parent. Dash had to forget about this bold revelation and ready himself for battle. The mother of Oni rushed her target, looking to knock him out with a single left punch. Dash closed his eyes and braced himself for the strike, but felt nothing. Opening his eyes, Dash found Russell standing between himself and Onyda.

Though he was looking at the still Onyda, Russell's message was directed at Dash, "Don't worry, Old Man. I've got your back."

Rather than immediately push Russell to the side, Onyda needed to know how Russell got around Princess Onita and interrupted Dash's incoming pain. Without losing his widening grin, Russell

glanced behind Oni's mother at the destroyed gift shop that became Princess Onita's tomb.

Russell verbally confirmed what was going through Onyda's mind, "Yep, she's under there."

Onyda didn't seem overly concerned about the princess' life, but did want to prove her superiority by throwing a right-handed haymaker at Russell. Onyda's mark easily avoided the strike, but she wouldn't stop swinging punch after punch toward Russell's face. Russell grew tired of moving, standing still to give his punch-happy adversary an opportunity to actually land a strike. When the attack connected, Onyda felt her hand crumble. Onyda collapsed, screaming in agony as Russell stood over her.

Russell pulled the original Queen of Gonaga by her now broken hand, stating, "See ya later, witch."

With ease, Russell tossed his current enemy overhead. Onyda couldn't stop her descent in time to avoid a single punch from Russell against her chest that knocked the former queen into the same building Princess Onita was trapped underneath. Once Onyda hit the shattered concrete, Russell threw a ball of fist-sized energy at the destroyed shop. Upon hitting the first piece of rubble, Russell's projectile exploded; completely decimating the structure so it crushed Onyda. Russell turned around to see an astonished Dash staring at him.

It took him a while before Dash eventually voiced what was running through his mind, "How in the world did you do that without powerin' up?"

Russell answered with an all too familiar smile accenting his face, "Told you Onita would be no sweat."

Just as Russell began dusting himself off, he heard something hiss behind him. After the disturbing sound died an energy ray collided with Russell's back. Dash's eyes moved from his falling student to a hurt Princess Onita limping toward them. Choosing to attack rather than help Russell proved futile for Dash when the princess shot a beam that struck Dash's stomach, knocking the wind out of him. With Dash keeled over thanks to the energy's force, Princess Onita removed Dash's sword

holstered to his back.

Similar to Dash, Princess Onita realized she had two options, *I could kill Dash, or I could kill Russell.*

Taking a couple of seconds to weigh her options, Princess Onita turned in Russell's direction. The Princess of Gonaga kicked her cousin's prone face to keep him grounded. Fear ran through Dash when he looked to discover Princess Onita positioned above Russell with his sword dangling precariously over Russell's neck. Suddenly, something sparkling in the waning sun caught Dash's eye.

Princess Onita abruptly gurgled before she could decapitate her target. Drops of warm liquid patted Russell's head. As Russell peered up and Onita gazed down, their eyes both locked on Serena's sword protruding out of the princess' chest.

The voice behind Princess Onita's impaling told her, "If anyone's gonna kill my brother, it's gonna be me!"

That "something" catching Dash's eyes earlier was Rini running with her sword in hand. Rini held onto her sword's grip to yank the weapon out of Princess Onita. Gonaga's stabbed royalty stumbled around with blood pouring out of this newly created gaping hole for a few moments. In the distance, Jade sprinted to assist Russell.

When Jade reached him, Russell said in a serious tone, "I was just about to get up."

Jade couldn't help but laugh at her friend's comment. Princess Onita ignored her injury; attacking Rini while her wound slowly healed thanks to the Gonagan Crystal Dr. Otto Vanski & the first known one hanging from the princess' neck. Russell watched in amazement as his sister ducked and dodged every punch Onita threw. It didn't take long before Russell grew frustrated with Rini not changing her defensive strike into an offensive barrage.

"I guess it's time for *me* to finish this," Russell said to himself; unsheathing his father's prized sword.

Russell jumped into the sky directly above his quarreling relatives. A distressed Dash watched

Russell floating with his energy level rising for a powerful attack. Dash's focus moved from Russell to Rini when her power started matching her brother's. But like Oni during the former empress' battle against Russell & Rini's parents, Princess Onita was using her opponents' energy to predict the siblings' strategy. Throwing purple-colored energy at Princess Onita's face with the intent of temporarily blinding her adversary proved horrible for Rini. The princess smacked Rini's intended attack to her right, directly at Russell – who had planned to bring down his cousin with a sword slash down her back. Russell couldn't avoid Rini's energy from hitting his descending body. Rini realized the princess' attention being on Russell now allowed her to prepare another energy attack.

Due to his abrupt blindness from his sister's energy, Russell was unable to halt his falling into Princess Onita's awaiting clutches. His cousin instantly threw Russell in front of her as a shield. Before Rini could stop herself, she shot a purple energy sphere at the Princess of Gonaga and Russell. Princess Onita pushed Russell forward so he would take the brunt of Rini's attack. The energy exploded magnificently upon hitting its unintended target.

Everyone watched Russell's singed body drop to its knees. Rini immediately moved to her brother's side, trying to keep him conscious. A twisted grin formed on Princess Onita's face as she looked at her cousins. Dash pulled Jade beside him to formulate a plan.

Moving from Dash, Jade ran in her adversary's direction. The future ruler's eyes shot from Rini shaking her brother to Jade sailing through the air. Landing behind Gonaga's princess gave Jade the chance to kick Onita in her nearly healed back. When Jade went for another kick, Princess Onita spun around to catch the strike. Using Jade's own leg against her allowed Princess Onita to push Jade backwards into the dust. Jade immediately started rolling to avoid the princess' stomps.

As this was going on, Dash started focusing on bringing his energy level to its maximum. Jade successfully used her maneuvering to leg sweep Princess Onita by changing directions when the princess had one leg in the air. Quickly jumping to her feet, Jade unholstered her father's golden sickles. Sadly for Jade, Princess Onita kicked her in the stomach to prevent Jade from doing anything

with her weapons. Unbeknownst to the Princess of Gonaga was Dash running behind her. Following Rini's actions, Dash used the princess' single-minded concentration on her enemy – in this case Jade – to his advantage to sneak up on Princess Onita. The wound Rini caused on the Princess of Gonaga was still visible enough for Dash to make the injury his mark.

At the last possible second, Princess Onita realized Dash's clear sword was only inches away from her back. Upon understanding her position, Princess Onita sidestepped Dash so he cut nothing but air. Dash's miss Gonaga's royalty a chance to smash her elbows against his back. Though Dash's attack failed, the distraction and Princess Onita's subsequent strike allowed Jade to regain her sickles. Rather than wait for her enemy to turn, Jade jerked the unsuspecting princess around to diagonally slash Onita's chest with both sickles.

As she ripped Princess Onita's chest open, the tears streaming down Jade's face greatly reflected the pain in her heart as much as the words that she spoke soon after, "I'm so sorry, Onita. Please, don't let her control you anymore so we can be friends again."

Princess Onita's bloody body fell backwards until Jade pierced Onita's chest with her weapons. Holding onto the sickles' handles, Jade concentrated her energy into the weapons so Jade's power could flow through the princess and cook her. When the Princess of Gonaga started smoking, Jade let go of the sickles to prevent her old friend from dying. Princess Onita instantly collapsed after Jade relinquished her grip. Dash and Jade approached the mumbling daughter of King Octavius & Queen Athena, trying to overhear what she was saying.

"This body is too weak now," was the statement from Princess Onita that Dash understood. "I can't let it end like this because of someone else's weakness. I must have her."

Russell had regained consciousness while Jade stood over Onita's blood-soaked body. Without warning, the princess' right hand latched onto Jade's left ankle. Fear for her own safety didn't run through Jade's mind, but concern over the desperate look in Princess Onita's eyes.

Jade demanded Russell and Rini join her beside their adversary, "Guys, she's not looking too

well! We have to help her! We can't let her die!"

Russell ignored Rini's attempted assistance to stand up on his own when he finally didn't feel like his entire body was on fire. Following behind a slightly limping Russell was his sister as they followed Jade's order of taking a spot beside her.

Though he could see the same pained look in Princess Onita's eyes as Jade, Russell didn't agree with Jade's belief that his cousin didn't deserve death, "I loved the Onita we grew up with, but the girl we fought isn't her. This Onita needs to die or else the world will end up just like our parents. Is that what you want, Jade?"

The princess' gripping of Jade's leg loosened; halting a response to Russell's question. All eyes focused on Onita as the Princess of Gonaga stopped breathing.

Slightly frantic and grabbing the sides of his head, Dash said to himself in bewilderment, "Please, the can't be happenin'. We were supposed save her. I was supposed to save her... and redeem myself to them."

For several moments, silence swept the area. Starting to sob over Princess Onita's frame, Jade noticed the recovered Gonagan Crystal shimmering underneath Onita's tattered, bloody clothes. Jas' daughter dropped to her knees, removing the necklace containing both Gonagan Crystals.

Rini quickly asked Jade, "What are you doing with that?"

"You of all people should know what we can do with the Gonagan Crystal," Jade told her questioning friend. "Aunt Serena used the original crystal to return Gonaga to its state before Oni attacked it. With the second crystal we can restore Onita."

Verbally refuting Jade's idea was Russell, "Don't be so selfish! I love Onita, but what about everyone else? What about Gonaga? My mother saved the entire land. You want to possibly use the crystal's remainin' power to save one person? You can't think about yourself in a situation like this."

"Think about myself?" Jade replied; moving from her crouched position to stand face-to-face with the individual causing her so much unusual anger. "As if you're the person to give that kinda

advice right now. You might not want to accept it, but we all know the only reason you don't wanna help Onita is because you blame her for our families' deaths. Oni killed our parents through Onita, not Onita through her own free will. I've always thought you were cool, Russ. But for once, please just shut up!"

Russell's mouth opened for a rebuttal when Jade suddenly started clutching her stomach. Dash put his hands on Jade's shoulders prior to asking his seemingly aching protégé if she was okay. A terrible wail expelled from Jade's body topped off by a surge of energy that knocked her friends onto their backsides.

Russell screamed at Dash, "What's happenin' to her?"

Like Russell, Dash hadn't a clue why and how Jade was releasing so much energy. Almost a minute passed until Jade's powerful exertion subsided and Dash, Rini, and Russell were able to stand. Glaring at her rising friends, Jade cracked her neck and knuckles after wrapping Princess Onita's necklace around her left wrist. Dash's mind flashed back to his final battle with Empress Oni where she stood before him and his friends performing the exact same motions as Jade.

With dual voices of herself and the being that occupied Princess Onita, Jade said, "This new body feels good. This one has a better sense of her power than my granddaughter ever did."

Slowly nearing her best friend, Rini asked, "Jade, is that you?"

"Of course it is, you insolent fool. I just found out there's room for two thanks to the original Gonagan Crystal. Now, if you may, I'd like to continue our little session. I have a world to create after I destroy you like I did your weakling parents."

...to be continued