

# CLEAVER OF SIN

## CLEAVER OF SIN #Chapter 11: The Awakening - Read CLEAVER OF SIN Chapter 11: The Awakening

### Chapter 11: The Awakening

Zarek entered the hall with measured calm, a subtle smile playing on his lips. Though merely a butler by title, he was reputed to wield the greatest influence within the Wargrave family, second only to the Primarch himself.

Within the rigid hierarchy, the Great Elders stood next in authority, followed by the Elders. Yet Zarek had shattered this order. He held no formal rank or title, but his role as the Primarch's personal butler and trusted right hand afforded him unparalleled power.

Like Lyra, Zarek had been assigned to the Primarch from birth. He had stood by the Primarch's side from the very beginning, saving his life on many occasions during his youth.

Though only a butler by title, none dared to underestimate or confront him, fear of the Primarch's wrath was enough to keep all in check.

Of course, Asher learned much of this from Lyra. During those four days of confinement, he did far more than eat and sleep and exercise; he pressed Lyra for every scrap of knowledge she could offer, determined to understand the intricate web surrounding his family.

"Forgive my lateness, Tenth Sun. I hadn't anticipated the matter I was attending to would take longer than expected," Zarek said smoothly, a composed smile lingering on his lips.

"No problem, Zarek. A short delay is hardly an issue," Asher replied evenly.

Zarek inclined his head and approached the pedestal. "You are already familiar with the process, Tenth Sun. There's no need for me to reiterate it, unless you wish me to?"

Asher shook his head firmly. "No need. Let's begin."

'Just like every cliché story, all I have to do is place my hand on this floating crystal orb,' Asher mused.

His hand rose deliberately, moving toward the orb. It hovered above the smooth surface for a few tense seconds as he drew in a deep breath, then exhaled steadily. In the next moment, his palm made contact with the orb.

Every pair of eyes in the hall sharpened, fixed intently on him, anticipation hanging thick in the air as they waited to witness what would unfold.

Seconds stretched on, yet the orb remained inert, its surface cold and lifeless. A wave of disbelief rippled through the assembly, could a Wargrave truly fail to awaken? The silence was thick with unspoken doubts and murmurs.

Thalric's smile deepened into a knowing smirk, his confidence vindicated. He had anticipated this very outcome.

With a quiet mental sigh, Zarek prepared to announce the outcome, but before the words could leave his lips, the orb suddenly flared to life. Its glow intensified rapidly, bathing the room in a radiant light as Astra surged outward in powerful waves.

Asher felt an unfamiliar energy surge into his body, heat radiating from within as a golden aura flickered briefly around him. It was as if his very blood vessels were igniting, yet he understood this was no pain, but the awakening of his Astra veins.

A few seconds passed as the radiant glow of the orb gradually faded, eventually returning to its dormant, lifeless state. A smile slowly spread across Asher's lips.

Though he had been confident he would awaken, the brief moment of silence, the orb's initial failure to respond, had shaken him deeply.

After all, who would willingly abandon the comfort of such a powerful family to start anew with nothing?

"Congratulations, Tenth Sun. Welcome to the path of the strong," Zarek intoned calmly, a warm smile softening his features.

"Thank you, Zarek," Asher replied, returning the smile. Without another word, Zarek turned and strode away.

Whispers rippled through the hall as murmurs of relief spread among the Elders and Great Elders. It wasn't personal concern for Asher, they cared little for him individually but a complete failure by a Wargrave to awaken would have been a blight on their family's honor.

At least that stain had been averted. Among those present was the Librarian Asher had encountered four days prior.

The Sun and Moon remained as stoic and unreadable as ever. Without a word or glance in Asher's direction, they rose and strode toward the door, their personal maids silently following in their wake. Yet, one Sun lingered, seated with a faint, knowing smile fixed on Asher.

Thalric's smug expression dissolved into a deep frown, disbelief etched across his features. Though stunned, he refrained from causing a scene, quietly, he stood and exited the hall.

Neither the Great Elders, the Elders, nor the Suns and Moon cared to inquire about the weapon or element Asher had awakened. After all, one who had failed his awakening twice, how far could such a one truly rise on the path of power?

And their assumptions were not without merit. Those who awaken only on their third attempt often find themselves destined to falter early, striking insurmountable barriers that confine them forever to mediocrity.

Lyra, standing quietly to the side, watched with a subtle smile as her Young Master successfully awakened. Yet she remained silent, her gaze shifting as a figure approached, Zarek.

The moment he drew near, her smile vanished, replaced by a composed greeting.

"Good morning, Zarek."

"You already know why I'm here," Zarek said calmly. "Now that the Tenth Sun has awakened, will you continue to serve him personally, or will you return to the Circle?"

Following the awakening of their charge, a maid or butler faced a choice: to continue serving their designated Sun or Moon indefinitely, or to return to the ranks of the household staff.

Zarek had chosen the former, as had most maids and butlers before him. Yet choosing to remain was only half the battle, whether the Sun or Moon accepted their continued service was an entirely different matter.

"I choose to serve the Tenth Sun until death," Lyra replied with calm resolve.

Zarek nodded approvingly and handed her a document. "Sign this, and have him sign it as well. Return it to me no later than tomorrow."

Without another word, Zarek turned and exited. Lyra slipped the document into her space ring and gave a small nod in acknowledgment.

Asher stood firm, a faint smile playing on his lips. The moment he awakened, a subtle 'ding' echoed in his mind, a clear sign of a system activating. He didn't need an explanation; instinctively, he knew what it meant.

Eager to explore this new interface and to confirm the weapon he had awakened, though he was already certain of his element, feeling its power coursing within him, he prepared to delve into it.

The absence of anyone lingering to inquire about his weapon or element barely registered.

Before he could engage with the system, footsteps echoed from ahead. Asher lifted his gaze to see who approached.

It was the First Sun: Malrik Wargrave.

## **Chapter 12: Misunderstood?**

Asher watched with quiet intensity as Malrik Wargrave, the First Sun, advanced with unhurried, deliberate strides. A perpetual smile played on his lips, but it did little to soften the weight of his presence. His eyes shimmered an icy blue, matching the hue of his hair, and his broad shoulders carried an air of effortless authority.

Unconsciously, Asher swallowed hard. Though newly awakened, he could already feel the overwhelming pressure that radiated from Malrik, a presence so immense it seemed to bend the very air around him. The smile, calm and confident, only served to make him appear all the more formidable.

Despite standing at an impressive 6'1", Asher felt insignificant in comparison. Before Malrik's towering eight-foot frame, he seemed no greater than a child standing before a titan.

'I wonder what the First Sun of this family is truly like... Is he mad, or merely misunderstood?' Asher thought, carefully maintaining a neutral expression. From what he could recall, the original Asher had never actually spoken with Malrik.

In fact, their only encounter had been a fleeting moment, when Malrik observed him in silence from a window during training, their eyes meeting just once.

Malrik came to a halt before Asher, then slowly lowered himself to Asher's eye level, placing a firm yet gentle hand atop his head.

"Congratulations on your awakening, youngest," he said, a rare smile gracing his lips, his eyes reflecting genuine warmth.

Asher remained motionless, momentarily stunned by the unexpected gesture. He had anticipated intimidation, not praise, from the man known for his fearsome reputation. After a brief pause, he composed himself, forcing a polite smile.

"Thank you, First Sun," he replied carefully. He had never met Malrik before, and it felt wiser to use the man's title rather than his name.

"There's no need for such formality," Malrik said calmly, his smile graceful. "I'm your elder brother, your eldest sibling. Call me Malrik. We shouldn't speak to each other like strangers."

Asher gave a small nod in response, though inwardly, disbelief churned within him. The First Sun, this man feared and revered in equal measure, was being... cordial. Almost normal. It didn't sit right.

Part of him screamed that it was all an elaborate act.

'Perhaps the First Sun enjoys these kinds of games,' Asher thought warily. 'Playing with people, twisting their thoughts.' He had read about such characters too many times in the pages of novels, those who wore kindness like a mask. And in a world as brutal as this one, kindness was often the most dangerous lie of all.

"So, what brings you here, Malrik?" Asher asked, adapting with surprising ease to the First Sun's request for familiarity.

"Oh, nothing much," Malrik replied casually, his tone light. "I simply came to witness your awakening."

As the two began to walk side by side, leaving the Awakening Hall behind, a quiet rhythm settled between them. Behind them, at a respectful distance of ten steps, followed Lyra and Malrik's personal butler, silent shadows granting the brothers space for their conversation.

From the fragments of memory now accessible to him, Asher realized that Malrik had been present at all of his previous awakenings.

Over the past four days, Lyra had shared bits of insight, enough to paint a broader picture of the man walking beside him.

The First Sun was considered an enigma by nearly everyone. He smiled at all, treated everyone with the same disarming charm, making it nearly impossible to gauge his true thoughts, except for his enemies.

To most, that ever-present smile had long ceased to be comforting. Many believed it to be a mask, something carefully crafted to conceal a far more dangerous reality beneath.

"Then what if I hadn't awakened?" Asher asked quietly as they passed a cluster of maids along the corridor.

The smile on Malrik's face remained steady, unfazed. "I always knew you would awaken. After all, you are a Wargrave. But if you hadn't..." He paused thoughtfully before continuing, "I planned to take you under my wing."

Asher's steps faltered. Malrik's openness made it easier to speak than he expected. "Why?" he asked, his voice genuine and unguarded.

"Why? Because why wouldn't I care for my sibling?" Malrik replied simply, reaching out to pat Asher's head once more.

Asher gently removed the hand and smoothed his hair back into place. They resumed walking, though a contemplative silence settled between them.

After a few minutes, they arrived at Asher's door and paused, standing side by side before it.

"You're not curious about the weapon and element I awakened?" Asher asked calmly. Though indifferent toward most Wargrave family members, he wasn't so callous as to disregard genuine care when it was shown to him.

He was no maniac, after all.

Malrik's expression remained composed. "I am curious," he admitted quietly, "but I'd rather not see it just yet. I want to witness it when you've mastered control, when you can wield it in battle. Perhaps then, we can spar."

Asher found himself at a loss for words. The idea of Malrik wanting to spar with someone freshly awakened bordered on madness. Yet, he did not protest.

This was typical of the Wargrave bloodline, passionate, battle-hardened, and relentless. He simply nodded in quiet acceptance.

'Perhaps this is who he truly is,' Asher reflected, 'and not the monster so many believe him to be' But, in truth, he understood very little.

Then Malrik raised his hand, and a rectangular wooden talisman materialized in his palm, seemingly summoned from the ring on his finger.

He extended it toward Asher and spoke with quiet calmness, "If you ever need my aid, infuse this with your Astra, and I will be there without delay."

Asher took the talisman, studying its intricate craftsmanship with a mixture of admiration and curiosity. After a moment, he looked up and asked, "You're leaving?"

Malrik gave a slow nod. "We Wargraves don't waste time idling. Train hard, or you'll perish from some unknown threat, youngest." With that, he turned and walked away in calm, measured strides.

Asher watched Malrik and his butler retreat down the corridor, then allowed himself his first genuine smile. "Thank you, big brother," he said softly.

Malrik's footsteps came to a sudden halt. His head turned slightly, a subtle smile touching his lips as he replied, "Anytime, youngest." The moment the words left his mouth, he vanished, no longer bothering to walk.

'Can he teleport? Or is his speed simply that extraordinary?' Asher wondered, stepping into his room, his mind already racing with possibilities, superhuman strength, lightning-fast speed, and the countless powers that might lie ahead.

### **Chapter 13: Open?**

Upon entering his room, Asher sank onto the edge of his bed, immediately lost in thought. Lyra, sensing his introspection, remained silent, standing quietly by his side.

After a few moments, Asher lifted his gaze and looked toward her. "You may leave. I need to review the changes that occurred after the awakening."

Without a word, Lyra stepped forward, and the file Zarek had entrusted to her materialized in her palm. She handed it to Asher, who began to scan its contents with an unreadable expression. At the bottom left of the document, his eyes caught Lyra's signature.

"Hmmm, are you certain you wish to remain my permanent maid?" Asher asked quietly after finishing the file. Once he signed this document, he alone would have authority over Lyra, even the Primarch himself would be powerless to command her..... Or at least that's why the Wargrave laws says.

"Yes, Young Master," Lyra replied with a respectful bow.

Most maids would have abandoned Asher the moment he awakened, after all, they assumed he wouldn't progress far, having awakened only on his last attempt. Such a failure would inevitably affect their own lives: diminished cultivation resources, reduced pay, and a drop in status.

It was, by all accounts, a poor bargain. Yet Lyra chose to remain by his side, fully aware of the risks she faced in losing all those privileges.

Asher was well aware of the implications, though he didn't understand why Lyra chose to remain. He decided not to ask.

Instead, he simply nodded, approached the table before him, and took up a pen. With a steady hand, he signed the document and handed the file back to her.

"You may leave. Don't stand by the door this time. Return to your quarters."

Without hesitation, Lyra accepted the file and departed. She understood that Asher wished to immerse himself immediately in the details of his awakening, after all, it was the natural course for anyone in his position.

A faint smile graced her lips as she made her way back to the maids' quarters.

Now alone, Asher could no longer contain his excitement. With a surge of joy, he mentally shouted, 'System!'

[Ding]

[Acknowledging Host...]

[System Assimilating...]

[2%... 30%... 50%... 70%... 80%... 100%]

[System Interface Booting...]

Name: Asher Wargrave

Age: Seventeen

Bloodline: The Wargrave Lineage

Titles: [Youngest Heir] [Tenth Sun] [Disgrace of the Wargrave]

Life Rank: Faintstar

Sub Life Rank: Dust

Affinity: Lightning

Strength: 13 → 26

Agility: 13 → 26

Vitality: 14 → 28

Perception: 9 → 18



NOTE: Normal human stat cap before awakening: 10

Wargrave stat cap before awakening: 15

System Inventory: Empty]

Asher's eyes gleamed with fascination as he absorbed every detail displayed on the system panel.

His gaze lingered on the Life Rank, the equivalent of cultivation levels in this world.

'From what I've read, the Life Ranks progress as follows: Faintstar — Kindlestar — Brightstar — Blazestar — Swiftstar — Firmstar — Wavestar — Voidstar — Soulstar — Crownstar. Ten ranks in total' He thought.

He then shifted his attention to the sub-rank beneath it, which the progression was: Dust — Spark — Flare — Pulse — Radiant for all Life Ranks.

Asher's eyes settled on his affinity. From the very moment of his awakening, he had sensed a newfound connection to the element, an intimate bond that had been absent just four days prior. He realized that with but a single thought, he could command it at will.

Raising his right hand, lightning effortlessly danced and crackled around his fingertips, responding seamlessly to his command. He could feel the surge of Astra energy within him fueling the elemental display.

Instinctively, he understood that once his Astra was depleted, his control over the lightning would vanish.

Nonetheless, a smile blossomed across his face. This was nothing short of an impossible feat in his past life. But here, he could command the very forces of nature with effortless ease. The thought of future battles made his smile widen, anticipation bubbling beneath his calm exterior.

Then, suddenly, his thoughts faltered. 'Wait. What am I thinking?' he thought. 'Is the Wargrave bloodline turning me into a battle-crazed fanatic like the rest?' Yet despite the unease, he couldn't deny the surge of joy that came from wielding such supernatural power firsthand.

With renewed focus, Asher's eyes returned to the system interface, his gaze sweeping over his attributes. Every single stat had literally doubled. He could feel his body pulsating with newfound energy, stronger, sharper, faster than ever before.

The man he was yesterday was incomparable to the one he had become today. Such was the undeniable miracle of awakening.

His eyes then settled on his Perception stat, noticeably lower than the rest. Yet Asher understood why, the original Asher had never honed his senses, focusing solely on physical training. That explained why his other attributes soared while perception lagged behind.

Asher felt the Astra energy coursing through every fiber of his being, invigorating and strengthening each part of his body. He could sense the Astra veins winding within him, much like the network of blood vessels that sustained life.

'The greater the flow of Astra energy, the higher one's Life Rank,' Asher reflected.

His eyes shifted to the "Note" notification beneath the attributes. 'Truly a family of monsters,' Asher mused as he read the message. The Wargraves had clearly surpassed even humanity's natural limits, at least before the Awakening.

He had read of their extraordinary physical prowess in the library, but the reality was staggering: a full 50% increase in Physical stat alone was almost unfathomable.

But Asher knew this was merely the baseline; countless skills and techniques existed to amplify people's power.

'If the original Asher hadn't wasted an entire year drowning himself in alcohol, his physique might have reached its absolute peak,' he thought bitterly.

Then his eyes caught the final line on the system panel, and a smile crept across his face. 'At least my system has an inventory. Now, all I need is a space ring to conceal it,' Asher mused.

He reached for the rectangular wooden talisman the First Sun had given him earlier. With a mere thought, the talisman vanished from his palm, only to reappear instantaneously moments later. Asher nodded in quiet satisfaction, pleased with the seamless test.

With a thought, the system interface vanished

'Time to find out what weapon I've awakened,' Asher thought, an unshakable feeling stirring deep within his soul, as if the weapon itself were calling out to him.

Just as he prepared to answer the silent call, the system interface abruptly reappeared, as if displeased at having been ignored.

[Ding]

[Newbie Package Distribution in Progress]

[Open?]

## Chapter 14: Assimilation

Asher came to an abrupt halt as the system interface materialized once again before him. His eyes scanned the notification, and for a moment, he stood motionless, caught off guard by its contents. He hadn't anticipated this development.

But, in hindsight, it wasn't entirely surprising. After all, the system had offered little in the way of tangible benefits, serving primarily as a display for his stats and granting access to an unlimited inventory.

A smile tugged at his lips as a surge of excitement rushed through his veins. Who didn't know about newbie gifts? In countless novels, they were essentially overpowered starter packs, tools that gave protagonists an early edge.

'System, do you even need to ask? Open it, immediately.'

Asher's thoughts brimmed with anticipation, his expectations soaring to unimaginable heights.

[Affirmative, Host.]

[Opening Newbie Package...]

[Congratulations, Host. You have received: Absolute Physique]

Asher read each notification carefully, eyes scanning every word with sharp focus. He had no intention of skipping anything, this was his cheat, his golden ticket.

'System, display the details of the Absolute Physique. I might not know what it is exactly, but anything with "Absolute" in the name has to be broken-tier, right?' he thought, a grin spreading across his face, anticipation gleaming in his eyes.

[Ding]

[The details of the Absolute Physique cannot be displayed until the Host completes assimilation]

The system's chime echoed in his mind.

Asher's expression shifted into a frown as he read the message. His mind immediately leapt to the countless tropes he'd seen before, assimilation usually meant agony.

It was almost a given: searing pain, bones reshaping, muscles tearing and reforming... and, of course, the inevitable black goo oozing from his body as impurities were purged. The mental image alone made him frown more.

With that thought lingering in his mind, Asher made his way to the bathroom. He stripped off his clothes, leaving only his boxers, and lowered himself into a lotus position on the cool tiled floor. The atmosphere was still, heavy with anticipation.

Grabbing a piece of cloth, he bit down hard, steeling himself for the torment he was certain would follow. His eyes, however, burned with unshakable resolve, no amount of pain would deter him.

'System, begin assimilation of the physique, now.'

[Affirmative, Host]

The moment the system responded, a surge of energy exploded within Asher's body.

It was unlike anything he had ever felt, pure, unfiltered power rushing through every fiber of his being. His veins bulged, muscles tensed, bones groaned under unseen pressure. Ligaments stretched and tightened, his brain pulsed like a beating drum, and even his eyes burned as if being reforged from the inside out.

It was as though his entire existence was being rewritten, every cell, every thread of his being restructured with brutal precision. Deep within him, his Astra veins suddenly expanded, then contracted violently, condensing and refining themselves.

Even the small trace of Astra he possessed from awakening began to swell, becoming denser, more potent.

To Asher's surprise, a sense of serenity washed over him.

The world around him seemed to shift, brighter, clearer, almost surreal. The dull whites of the bathroom tiles now shimmered with an almost ethereal clarity, and the air itself felt lighter. His mind sharpened, every thought crisp and focused. Even his heartbeat pulsed with a quiet joy, as though his very soul was celebrating the transformation.

And yet, the agony he had steelled himself for... never came.

Instead, he felt an overwhelming comfort, as if wrapped in the embrace of something ancient and powerful. His body continued to rebuild itself from the inside out, each adjustment smooth, seamless, perfect.

Then, just as swiftly as it began, the energy faded.

The brilliance receded, and Asher found himself once again grounded in the present. The bathroom was just a bathroom. But he... he was no longer the same.

Asher sat in a quiet daze, savoring the lingering echoes of the transcendent state, as if clinging to the final notes of a melody before they faded into silence.

"Is this what enlightenment feels like in those cultivation novels?" he murmured, voice barely above a whisper, a faint smile tugging at his lips.

Slowly, he rose to his feet. If he had felt energized after his awakening, now he was overflowing with energy, every fiber of his being humming with quiet power. He could feel it in his breath, in his heartbeat, in the very way he moved.

A quick glance in the mirror confirmed what he already sensed. His height had increased, rising from 6'1" to a towering 6'3". His skin, already flawless, now radiated an unnatural perfection, smooth, radiant, and unmarred, as though sculpted by divinity itself.

"I feel like I could destroy a mountain with a single punch," Asher muttered, eyes locked onto his reflection in the mirror.

His body remained lean, no exaggerated bulk, but beneath that streamlined frame, he could sense the sheer, compressed strength coiled within his muscles like a drawn bowstring. Every movement felt lighter, more precise, yet brimming with latent power.

Of course, he wasn't naive. He knew it was just the illusion that came with a sudden surge in strength. No, he couldn't shatter mountains... not yet.

Still, the temptation to test himself gnawed at him.

He cleared his throat, and even his voice carried a subtle change, deeper, more resonant, like tempered steel.

"Status," he commanded, his tone thick and steady.

The system's interface flickered to life before Asher's eyes, displaying his updated profile in glowing texts:

[Name: Asher Wargrave

Age: Seventeen

Bloodline: The Wargrave Lineage

Physique: Absolute Physique

Titles: [Youngest Heir] [Tenth Sun] [Disgrace of the Wargrave] [Unique Body Holder] (New!)

Life Rank: Faintstar

Sub Life Rank: Spark

Affinity: Lightning

Strength: 26 → 52

Agility: 26 → 52

Vitality: 28 → 56

Perception: 18 → 50]

Asher carefully scanned every detail once more. The system had updated his profile, adding the Absolute Physique and a brand-new title to his list.

His gaze lingered on the Sub Life Rank Spark. A slow, triumphant smile blossomed across his lips. He had only awakened some minutes ago, yet now, he had already broken through a minor realm.

He could feel the increased flow of Astra pulsing vividly through his veins, surging with newfound intensity. 'Too bad Astra can't be measured numerically like the other stats,' Asher thought silently.

But, this limitation did little to dampen his enthusiasm. His eyes eagerly scanned each attribute once again, a growing smile spreading across his face as he confirmed what he already suspected, every stat had instantly doubled once more, just as they had during his awakening.

"At this rate, won't I be a god by tomorrow morning?" Asher said with a grin, his confidence soaring.

Then his eyes landed on his Perception stat, an astounding leap from eighteen to fifty. The jump was far greater than he had initially realized.

Suddenly, a new awareness dawned on him: he could perceive everything happening within a five-meter radius around him with crystal clarity. In his earlier excitement, he hadn't even noticed this remarkable change.

He could now see with perfect clarity behind him, beside him, his vision encompassing everything within a five-meter radius as if no blind spots existed. The world around him appeared sharper, purer, as though an entirely new dimension had unfolded before his eyes.

Then, an idea struck him.

Slowly, he closed his eyes to test it, and to his astonishment, his heightened perception remained unbroken, his awareness persisting with flawless clarity despite the darkness.

"System, if you keep spoiling me like this, I might just marry you tomorrow," Asher joked, laughter bubbling from his lips. Who didn't love being spoiled?

"Now, show me the details of the Absolute Physique," he added with a wide grin, anticipation shining in his eyes.

[Affirmative, Host]

## **Chapter 15: Benefits**

[Affirmative, Host]

[Absolute Physique:

Description: A gift from the system to the Host.

Abilities:

1. Perfect Muscle Memory — Once the Host performs a physical action, his body memorizes and refines it instantly.
2. Optimal Movement Efficiency — No wasted movement; every step, breath, or swing is subconsciously calculated for the best result.
3. Limitless Physical Growth — The Host's body evolves with experience, automatically optimizing itself through combat or training. Gain strength, agility, and reaction time rapidly.
4. Instinctive Adaptation — Host body reacts before his brain processes danger, almost like a predictive instinct.
5. Battle Intuition — The Host doesn't just move perfectly; he understands enemy movement patterns at a subconscious level, improving rapidly with each fight.
6. Omni Perception — A passive sensory ability that grants the Host absolute 360 degree awareness of his surroundings]

Asher meticulously examined each ability bestowed by the physique, a wave of disbelief washing over him. He swallowed hard, his mind spiraling into a whirlwind of contemplation.

'Isn't this Absolute Physique a bit too overpowered' he wondered, his gaze fixed unwaveringly on the system panel before him.

Earlier, he had joked about ascending to godhood by morning, but now, that notion felt far less absurd.

Perfect Muscle Memory granted him the extraordinary ability to master his weapon form after merely one or two swings. Any martial technique he executed even once would be instantly ingrained, an almost absurd advantage.

But that was not all. With Perfect Muscle Memory, he could effortlessly wield any weapon he picked up, surpassing even those who had dedicated years to mastering it.

Not to mention its battlefield applications, his reaction time would soar to unparalleled heights. Even when pushed to the brink of exhaustion, his attacks would flow with flawless precision.

Asher found himself at a loss for words. Every ability granted by the Absolute Physique seamlessly complemented the others. With Battle Intuition sharpening his instincts, he was poised to become an unstoppable force on the battlefield.

Though Asher lagged three years behind his peers in every other respect, the Absolute Physique had effectively erased the disparity between them. While he remained at a lower life rank, his stats had already reached an impressively high threshold.

He could feel the overwhelming surge of Astra coursing through his veins, an amount no one at his level should possess. Once again, the Absolute Physique had bridged that divide with remarkable ease.

His peers held higher life ranks in name alone. In terms of physique and Astra, he was already on par with them. However, when it came to control, he remained lacking, having just awakened, his mastery over Astra and elemental manipulation was virtually nonexistent.

But, with the power of his Absolute Physique, that gap could be erased in the blink of an eye.

Two individuals sharing the same life rank did not necessarily possess equal quantities of Astra. Ultimately, it all depended on the strength and capacity of their Astra veins.

In this world, there were even those who awakened rare abilities capable of harnessing ten times the Astra typically available to others at their rank.

Asher shook his head, now wasn't the time to dwell on comparisons. Besides, he hadn't truly had any peers of his own.

The Wargrave strictly forbade any of their heirs from leaving the household until they awakened, which meant Asher had spent all seventeen years of his life confined within these walls.



"Time to find out about the weapon," Asher said with a faint smile, anticipation stirring within him. Would fate grant him yet another overpowered gift? Was he truly favored by Lady Luck?

But first, he chose to dress, realizing there was no trace of the ominous black goo he had imagined. Perhaps he had simply overthought it.

With that, he made his way back to his room. Sitting softly on the edge of his bed, he steadied his breath and quieted his mind, focusing once more on the faint, silent call he had felt earlier.

Within seconds, something responded.

In a sudden flash of white light, a faint weight settled into Asher's hand. His gaze dropped instantly, drawn to the object that had materialized before him.

The weapon was long and gleamed with a refined silver sheen. Its slender frame spoke of elegance, and its tapered, razor-sharp tip made its purpose unmistakable, it was designed to pierce, to thrust with precision and grace.

A rapier.

But this was no ordinary rapier.

Its edges were unlike any Asher had ever seen, lined with jagged, serrated edges that ran along its length like a row of razor-sharp teeth.

These tooth-like notches weren't meant for clean slashes; they were designed to tear, to rend through flesh and armor alike with brutal efficiency.

It was a weapon forged not only for precision, but for devastation.

Asher's eyes gleamed as he studied the rapier in his grasp. It trembled faintly in his hand, almost as if it were alive, responding to his touch, resonating with something deep within him.

His fingers glided along its sleek silver surface, and with every second, the connection between them grew stronger, inexplicably familiar.

A smile tugged at his lips, widening the longer he gazed at the weapon. As if attuned to his emotions, the rapier began to hum with greater intensity, its subtle vibrations echoing the silent bond forming between wielder and blade.

Asher addressed the system, 'System, can you provide me with the details on the rapier?'"

[Ding]

[Please note, Host: the system does not disclose information on things unrelated to itself. However, since both the system and the rapier are linked to your soul, compliance is granted]

The system responded immediately, though with a reluctant tone, as if burdened by the extra effort.

"Wait... you reside within my soul? I assumed you'd be in my mind, like other systems."

[Negative, Host]

[However, the system's presence within the Host soul offers certain benefits]

Asher sat frozen in disbelief at the thought of the system still have gifts to offer.

"Why didn't you inform me sooner?"

[The Host did not inquire]

Asher arched an eyebrow, intrigued by the system's response.

"Is there anything else I should be aware of? I'm asking now."

[Negative, Host]

"Very well. Then show me these benefits you speak of."

[Affirmative, Host]

## **Chapter 16: Virelass**

[Affirmative, Host]

The system chimed in, and the text across the panel shifted smoothly.

[System Benefits Granted to the Host:

1. Mind Shield — The Host is rendered completely immune to all forms of mental interference, including but not limited to mind reading, mind control, memory manipulation, illusions, empathic intrusions, and other psychic abilities.

2. Soul Guard — The Host's soul is fully protected by the system, rendering all forms of soul-based attacks and manipulations ineffective.]

Asher gazed at the system interface with a subtle smile. With this protection, he was no longer a walking open book. In this world, individuals capable of reading minds did exist, though they rarely spoke of such abilities.

After all, mental intrusion was a hidden trump card, guarded in silence. Still, such individuals were exceptionally rare.

'How does one even defend against soul attacks in this world? Are there truly individuals born with soul-related abilities?' Asher pondered, a faint crease forming on his brow.

He shook his head, brushing the thought aside. There was no point in dwelling on such things that didn't affect him.

'System, provide the details of the rapier,' Asher thought, his eyes drifting down to the weapon still resting in his grasp.

[Affirmative, Host]

[Name: ???

Description:

A soul-bound weapon, awakened through the Host's longing affinity for the sword. Unlike conventional rapiers, typically designed for speed and precision thrusts, this blade defies standard limitations. It exists beyond the boundaries of form and expectation, a manifestation of the Host's will and essence.

Abilities:

1. Position Marker — The rapier allows the Host to teleport instantly to any of three marked locations. No cooldown. Unlimited range. Requires no Astra. Immune to spatial interference.
2. Astra Veil — The rapier passively stores up to 30% of the Host's total Astra reserves, preserving energy for any moments.
3. Crimson Pact — The blade passively absorbs the blood of defeated enemies, using it to regenerate the Host's injuries without conscious activation.]

Asher's smile deepened as he read through the system's notification.

He examined each ability granted by the rapier, his expression glowing with quiet satisfaction. And why wouldn't he smile? Even the first ability alone was already overpowered.

He could teleport to any location marked by his rapier, no Astra required, no concern for distance. In moments of danger, this would be his ultimate escape route. Though limited to three marks, Asher felt no disappointment; he was content, not greedy.

The best part? Even spatial restrictions meant nothing. He could bypass them entirely. 'Simply too overpowered,' Asher mused, a spark of excitement flickering in his eyes.

The second ability; Astra Veil, was another game changer. The rapier could passively store up to thirty percent of his total Astra reserves, effectively acting as a reservoir for emergencies.

Asher could sense the Astra stored within the blade; it was intimately connected to him. With a single thought, he knew the stored energy could be transferred instantly into his body.

However, he couldn't draw on it now, his Astra veins were already brimming, overflowing with Astra. What made this ability even more remarkable was its passive regeneration.

The moment any amount of Astra, be it a mere one percent, was used, the rapier would immediately begin replenishing that exact portion without delay.

Then there was the final ability; Crimson Pact, a passive effect that allowed the rapier to heal his injuries by absorbing the blood of his enemies. However, Asher quickly realized this ability wasn't as straightforward as it first appeared.

The effectiveness of the healing was tied to the quality and potency of the blood consumed. After all, one couldn't expect to regenerate a severed arm using the blood of mere rats.

The stronger the opponent, the more potent their life essence, and the greater the healing that followed.

Besides, this was Asher's favorite ability out of the three. He didn't know how often he might be injured in the future, but one thing was certain, he had no intention of placing his survival in anyone else's hands.

In this world; Crymora, there were no healing potions, no universal remedies, no so-called healing mages. Instead, healing was a rare, innate ability. People were born with it, not taught.

And even then, its effectiveness depended entirely on how well one honed it, what techniques or skills they could forge from their own unique potential and abilities.

Asher nodded in satisfaction, a quiet confidence settling over him. His rapier's abilities truly covered every essential aspect: teleportation for swift movement, or a timely

escape; Astra Veil, a vital reserve of energy in a world powered by Astra; and healing, an indispensable skill in a realm where death could strike without warning. In Crymora, such an ability wasn't just advantageous, it was necessary for survival.

As if responding to his satisfaction, the sword hummed softly in his grasp, as though whispering, 'I know, I'm just that good.'

Asher's gaze lingered on the rapier, feeling the deepening bond between them. It was a known truth amongst Wargraves: every weapon awakened after their awakening always possessed at least one ability. There was no exception.

"I should give you a name," Asher murmured, sensing that simply calling it 'rapier' or 'sword' no longer did justice to the weapon's significance.

He paused, lost in thought, searching for the perfect name.

"Virelass," he finally spoke, the word rolling off his tongue with utter calmness.

"From this moment on, you shall be known as Virelass," Asher spoke with a heavy tone.

The rapier hummed again, and Asher felt the bond between them deepen. Suddenly, the blade slipped from his grasp and began to float effortlessly at his side. Asher watched silently, a calm acceptance settling over him as the rapier hovered there, steady and ready.

'System, what is happening?' Asher inquired, but the system remained silent, offering no response.

'Ah, of course, the system had already made it clear it would not address matters unrelated to itself,' he reminded himself.

'It seems our bond has grown stronger, granting the rapier the ability to float on its own,' Asher mused. 'Could it acquire even more abilities in the future?' But Asher wasn't sure about that since it would make the already overpowered Wargrave bloodline even more broken at this point.

Still, Asher couldn't help but consider the advantages of a weapon capable of independent movement. In the event of an assassination attempt while the wielder slept, the sword could act as a silent guardian, defending its master without hesitation.

And it needn't be limited to assassination, any sudden sneak attack could be met with swift, autonomous defense.

## **Chapter 17: Cultivating**

As Asher was done checking out his weapon and its new 'ability', he decided to let Virelass just continue floating beside him.

'Since I've settled everything on the system, my affinity and weapon. I should try cultivation next,' Asher thought as he adjusted his sitting position. His legs crossed over each other with his forearm on his knees as he sat in a lotus position.

'Cultivation in this world is basically sensing the Astra in the air and drawing it into the Astra veins through the skin pores,' Asher's thoughts churned as he went over things on cultivation he had read in the library.

Taking a deep breath, Asher closed his eyes and allowed his senses to expand. He could already passively sense Astra in the air, but this time, he was actively doing it. Asher instantly controlled the Asters, drawing them to his skin pores. His Absolute Physique instantly seemed to come alive as Astra flowed into his body with frightening speed.

Asher could feel Astra flowing through his skin pores and directly flowing into his Astra veins.

The Spinal vein was the first to receive the Astra, then the Spinal vein redistributed the Astra to various veins: heart, brain, limbs, liver, kidneys, lungs, eyes, solar plexus, and palms.

Asher felt surreal and calm as each vein received Astra, each vein having a network of micro veins throughout the body, further enhancing the body and increasing the amount of Astra that flows into the Astra veins.

To break through in Life ranks, one has to expand the Astra veins' capacity and strengthen the walls of their Astra veins.

In return, the Astra veins strengthen the entire body system while also increasing the capacity to hold more Astra.

Hours went by as Asher sat down without moving. Only the rhythm of his breathing process could be heard in the room as Astra flowed through him.

Suddenly, Asher felt his internal structure start to subtly adjust as his Astra veins seemed to contract and strengthen, then expanded gently and slowly.

A few minutes later, Asher opened his eyes. He could see Virelass floating beside him without returning to his soul.

'I have broken through. Isn't this a bit too fast?' Asher thought as he felt his body had changed.

'System, is this a result of my Absolute Physique?' Asher asked the system.

[Affirmative, Host]

Asher smiled. He liked this unnamed benefit the physique brought. But he wasn't delusional to think him increasing his Life Rank would be this easy. He knew it was simply because he was still at the bottom stages of the Life Rank.

'Status,' Asher thought.

[Name: Asher Wargrave

Age: Seventeen

Bloodline: The Wargrave Lineage

Physique: Absolute Physique

Titles: [Youngest Heir] [Tenth Sun] [Disgrace of the Wargrave] [Unique Body Holder]

Life Rank: Faintstar

Sub Life Rank: Flare

Affinity: Lightning

Strength: 52 → 57

Agility: 52 → 57

Vitality: 56 → 58

Perception: 50 → 52]

Asher smiled as he went over his system panel. Seeing his progress made him want to train more.

'If I stay in an Astra-rich environment, my cultivation speed should be faster,' Asher thought.

'It seems this time my stats didn't double. If it did, I might have been afraid at the speed I'm gaining strength,' Asher thought.

He saw there were differences in increment between each stat. Perception and vitality increased by two, but strength and agility increased by five.

'Understandable,' Asher thought.

If vitality was that easy to increase, didn't it mean he would simply live for thousands of years?

'Besides, other people's stats might not increase by so much when they break through. Mine would increase by this much due to my Physique,' Asher nodded in thought as it made more sense.

With that, Asher's gaze shifted to the window beside him. It was already dark as the moonlight filtered into his room.

"Damn. It's already dark," Asher murmured as his gaze turned to the clock hanging on the wall.

'It's already 10 pm. Let's sleep then,' Asher thought, and with that, he slipped under his duvet. Virelass vanished as it returned to his soul.

The morning sun rose as its rays of light were cast into Asher's room as he slept.

A knock on the door woke Asher from his sleep. He rubbed his eyes groggily. He didn't need to think who it was; he knew it was Lyra.

"Come in," Asher spoke as he came down from his bed. At his words, the door opened and Lyra walked in. She saw Asher standing on the side, seemingly ready to start the day.

She raised an eyebrow in surprise as she saw him, then she smiled and greeted, "Good morning, Young Master."

Asher's gaze turned to her as he noticed the smile. "You seem happy this morning. What's the occasion?" he asked.

"I'm just glad you awakened, Young Master," Lyra simply replied as her smile was already gone.

Asher didn't reply. He simply went to the bathroom and went through his daily routine. Lyra handed him the clothes for the day as she spoke.

"Young Master, you will be meeting the Primarch today. It's better to look your best," Lyra spoke.

Asher paused, surprised at what he had just heard. "When was this decided, Lyra, and why wasn't I informed earlier?" Asher spoke.



"I was informed by Mr Zarek yesterday afternoon when I went to submit the file, Young Master. But I wasn't able to inform you as you didn't want to be disturbed for the day," Lyra replied calmly.

Then it clicked with him. He had told Lyra he didn't want to be disturbed throughout yesterday, which was why she didn't even bring him lunch or dinner.

But on the other hand, it didn't matter if he was informed or not. What could he possibly prepare for in a meeting with the Primarch?

"When will I be meeting Father?" Asher asked as he quickly dressed.

"Mr. Zarek would be here by 10 a.m., so I'm guessing the meeting is by that time," Lyra spoke.

Asher's gaze turned to the clock once again. 'I still have some time left,' Asher thought.

"Quickly bring my meal. I need to be done with everything before Zarek arrives," Asher replied.

Lyra nodded then stepped out. The moment the door closed behind her, Asher felt her presence instantly vanish.

'Is she running instead of walking?' Asher thought.

In less than a minute, Lyra had returned with breakfast. Asher ate quickly. The moment it hit 10 o'clock on the clock wall, a knock echoed through the room.

## **Chapter 18: Reinstate**

Asher turned to Lyra and nodded. Receiving the command, Lyra opened the door.

"Good morning, Mr. Zarek," Lyra greeted with an expressionless face.

"Morning, Lyra," Zarek replied, his gaze turning to Asher, who was wiping his mouth with a napkin.

As his gaze landed on Asher, a soft smile appeared on his lips. Then he spoke, "Are you ready, Tenth Sun?"

"I am, Zarek," Asher replied calmly as he rose from his seat.

'I never thought I would be meeting him this early,' Asher thought as he stepped out of his room, following closely behind Zarek with Lyra following behind him.

They met no maids on the way as they made their way through some hallways.

Asher's thoughts spiraled as he walked gently, but his steps remained steady and composed. Asher noticed, as he walked, his feet no longer made any sound as they met the floor beneath him. But he wasn't the only one who had noticed this, Zarek and Lyra noticed, but none said anything.

'Damn. This Absolute Physique is insane. Perfect muscle memory and optimal movement efficiency have simply accomplished such a feat just by walking. Even if I become nervous when meeting the Primarch, my body might not react externally. This could give me the best poker face in existence. Combined with my Mind Shield ability from the system, can anyone even know or guess what I am thinking at any time?' Asher thought.

As Asher was lost in thought, they arrived before a huge black door with just a few designs in black on the door. There were no guards, besides, who could possibly guard the Primarch?

"Tenth Sun, the Primarch is within. You can go in," Zarek spoke with a gentle bow. He and Lyra wouldn't be accompanying him inside.

Asher nodded, then took a step past Zarek. The huge black door instantly opened to his presence. Asher's eyes darted across the room; shelves stood against the wall as books fitted into each of them. Two couches could be seen at the sides, then at the front, a table with various documents on it.

A man stood with a book in his hands, his hair golden, matching the color of his eyes, his shoulders broad, standing at a staggering 8'2" in height. His presence was serene and calm. If Asher's eyes weren't on the man before him, he wouldn't notice him, as the man seemed one with his surroundings.

Without waiting a single second, Asher bowed slightly, his hand rising and resting on the left side of his chest as he greeted, "I greet the Primarch." His voice was calm, just loud enough to reach the man before him.

"Congratulations on your awakening," the man finally spoke, his gaze never leaving the book in his hand.

"Thank you, Primarch," Asher replied as he lifted himself from his bowing position.

"And congratulations on your consecutive breakthroughs. It seems the history of those awakening on the third try becoming mediocre doesn't affect the Wargrave Bloodline," the Primarch spoke, the book in his hand closing with a soft thud, his golden colored eyes turning to Asher.

Asher's heartbeat quickened as the Primarch congratulated him on his breakthrough.

"It is what is expected of me, Primarch," Asher replied, his hands clasped behind his back as he stood straight.

'So that's why Lyra and Zarek were smiling, they had noticed. Would have been weird if the Primarch hadn't noticed,' Asher thought.

"Do you know why you are here?" the Primarch continued.

"I'm guessing it's for my training," Asher replied calmly.

"Indeed it is. As a Wargrave, we don't waste time on anything. Your training will be starting today. As you had failed your awakening consecutively, you shouldn't be qualified to train with the Firsts, but I will reinstate this as a gift for your breakthrough," the Primarch spoke, his eyes on Asher as if reading him like the book he held before.

"Thank you, Primarch," Asher replied.

"Let me see your weapon and element," the Primarch ordered.

Asher instantly raised his hand, and lightning coursed through it. At his side, Virelass appeared, floating gently beside him.

"Hmmm. Lightning and a rapier. A unique kind of rapier also," the Primarch spoke as he gazed at Virelass.

"To think you've achieved this level of connection with your weapon in just a day," the Primarch continued.

Asher didn't reply; he simply stood there without a word.

"You have thirty minutes to prepare. Zarek will be taking you to the training ground. I hope you perform well during the true awakening. You may leave now," the Primarch spoke in finality.

Asher bowed once more, then turned on his heels and stepped out of the room, the huge black door closing behind him. He saw Lyra waiting for him; Zarek was already gone.

"How was the meeting, Young Master?" Lyra asked as she followed behind Asher.

"Good. I will be heading to the First training ground. The Primarch has reinstated me," Asher replied as he walked towards his room.

"Congratulations, Young Master," Lyra replied.

Asher didn't reply; he simply kept walking. He hadn't expected the Primarch to call him just to talk about his training. But at least he was rewarded with a better training ground for his breakthrough.

'He didn't ask about Virelass's ability,' Asher thought.

'Sighs. I said "Thank you" more times than I can count,' Asher thought, as most of his replies to the Primarch were just "Thank you, Primarch."

'The First training ground, huh?' Asher thought.

As a Ducal noble family, the Wargrave recruited children to train before and after their awakening. Those who awaken on their first try are sent to the First training ground; those who awaken on their second try are sent to the Second training ground; and those who awaken on their third try are sent to the Third awakening ground. As for those who fail to awaken, they would simply be asked to leave the Wargrave estate.

Per the rules, Asher was meant to be sent to the Third training ground, but the Primarch has sent him to the First.

History has shown that those who awaken on their first try always tend to be better than those who awaken on their second try, hence the Wargrave division of training grounds.

In the case of someone who awakened on their second try being able to match people who

awakened on their first, they would be transferred to the First training ground.

## **Chapter 19: True Awakening**

Asher stood silently in his room, removing his clothes with deliberate motions. A flurry of thoughts raced through his mind, uncertainty gripped him, and he had no idea what to expect or what might come next.

From the fragmented memories he possessed, the original Asher had never once stepped foot on the training grounds. They were reserved solely for those who had recently awakened, serving as a place of preparation and training until the age of eighteen.

Upon reaching the age of eighteen, every trainee was expected to confront real combat, undertaking missions assigned by the Wargrave family.

Though Asher was only seventeen, he doubted he would remain in the First Training Ground for the entirety of the year, especially in light of the true awakening the Primarch had spoken of.

The true awakening was a sacred rite of the Wargrave family, a ritual that stood apart from the conventional awakening. While the standard awakening involved the use of an orb to activate one's Astra veins, the Wargrave family's tradition was far more brutal and unforgiving.

Six months after the initial awakening of their Astra veins, the family's Suns and Moons were cast into a wild, untamed forest with no guidance or aid. From that point on, survival became the only teacher.

They either returned having seen the world for what it truly was, cruel, vast, and indifferent, or perished, swallowed whole by its merciless depths.

From the tender age of fifteen, the moment their Astra veins first stirred, the Wargrave family exposed their direct descendants to the raw, unfiltered horrors of the world. It was their way of forging strength through suffering, of shaping heirs through hardship.

But Asher's awakening had come late, at seventeen. His own trial, the true awakening, would begin in six months.

Ordinary children recruited into the Wargrave household were spared this merciless tradition. As they were not of the Primarch's direct bloodline, they were exempt from the ritual. Their training ended at eighteen, whereupon they could begin crafting their own horrors, on their own terms.

Truthfully, Asher had no idea what to expect from the so-called true awakening. The Suns and Moons who returned from it never spoke of their experiences, silence was the only testament they gave.

Still, he could imagine the nature of it: battles drenched in blood, survival against monsters twisted and evolved through Astra. Whatever else the ritual entailed remained shrouded in mystery. For now, all he could do was wait... six more months until the unknown became his reality.

A knock echoed through the room, pulling Asher from the depths of his thoughts and snapping him back to the present.

"Come in," he said flatly.

As expected, it was Lyra. She stepped inside with quiet familiarity, holding a neatly folded set of clothing in her hands. This time, it was his training uniform, a form-fitting, pitch-black ensemble consisting of a long-sleeved compression shirt and matching trousers.

"Your training clothes, Young Master," Lyra said softly as she handed the uniform to Asher.

He gave a silent nod, accepting the garments before slipping into them without a word.

Asher shifted and moved, testing the feel of the outfit. After a few motions, he gave a subtle nod of approval. The fabric clung to him like a second skin, offering no resistance to his movements, it was less a uniform and more an extension of his body.

Asher exhaled deeply and seated himself on the edge of his bed, awaiting Zarek, who was tasked with escorting him to the training grounds.

At that very moment, Virelass returned to his soul. Minutes later, another knock echoed through the room. This time, Asher did not issue a command for the visitor to enter.

Instead, he rose, approached the door, and opened it himself. His gaze settled on Zarek, who stood tall, poised and composed as always.

"Are you ready, Tenth Sun?" Zarek asked, his eyes fixed intently on Asher.

"I am," Asher replied with a nod.

"Then let us proceed," Zarek said, pivoting gracefully on his heel. Asher followed close behind, unfamiliar with the path to the First Training Ground. A few steps behind them, Lyra moved in silence, trailing their footsteps.

Zarek led them out of the building and into an entirely different sector of the compound. As they moved, Asher passed several guards, each bearing weapons at their sides. He spared them brief glances but did not slow his stride.

Before long, they arrived at a vast structure, its architecture divided clearly into three distinct sections. Zarek offered no explanation and remained silent, his pace unbroken. Still, Asher could surmise that these divisions marked the three training grounds.

Passing through a set of doors, Zarek and Asher entered the First Training Ground. By this point, Lyra had quietly slipped away, only trainees were permitted within the grounds. Still, she remained nearby, concealed but within reach, ready to intervene at a moment's notice.

After crossing another threshold, they stepped into a brightly lit room. At its center stood a modest table, behind which a man sat with composed posture. Two empty chairs faced him, clearly prepared for his guest.

Hearing the door open without so much as a knock, the man spoke without lifting his gaze from the photograph before him.

"Who is it?"

"It's been a while, Boris," Zarek replied, his eyes settling on the man seated across the room.

Recognizing the voice, Boris immediately looked up, his expression shifting as he locked eyes with Zarek. A warm smile spread across his face as he rose from his chair.

"Good morning, Mr. Zarek," he greeted, his gaze then drifting to Asher, who stood quietly at Zarek's side.

Within the Wargrave estate, Asher's identity was unmistakable. Everyone knew of him, the Wargrave who had failed his awakening, the one believed to be bound by a future with little promise.

"Good morning, Tenth Sun," Boris said, this time lowering himself into a respectful bow.

Asher offered no words in return, only a curt nod of acknowledgment.

"And how may I assist you today, Mr. Zarek?" Boris asked, his smile gentle as he gestured for both men to take a seat.

Zarek settled into his chair, one leg crossed elegantly over the other, his fingers interlocked and resting calmly on his knee. Asher took the seat beside him in silence.

Though Zarek said nothing at first, he was well aware that Boris had already inferred the reason for their visit, Asher's presence made that all too clear. Still, there was no time for formalities or small talk. He had a duty to fulfill and was expected back at the Primarch's side without delay.

## **Chapter 20: Harold**

"I'm here to register the Tenth Sun in the First Training Ground," Zarek said without preamble, striking directly at the heart of the matter.

Boris's gaze flickered to Asher for the briefest moment, though his composed smile did not falter.

"Mr. Zarek," he began, his tone polite yet firm, "I'm sure you're well aware of the rules. I have no authority to enroll the Tenth Sun in the First Training Ground. Doing so would be a direct violation of family law, one that would quite literally cost me my head."

Zarek shook his head slowly. "I'm not here to impose my authority, that would be no different from madness," he said calmly. "This is a direct order from the Primarch, granted as a reward for his current Life Rank, despite having awakened only a day ago."

As he spoke, a folded parchment scroll materialized in his hand. Without hesitation, he extended it toward Boris.

Boris accepted the scroll without a word. From the moment Asher had entered the room, he had sensed the young man's Life Rank. He had been surprised, of course, according to the reports, Asher had only awakened the day before. But Boris had chosen not to reveal his astonishment.

Only one person in Wargrave's recorded history had achieved anything remotely similar: the current Primarch, who had reached his first breakthrough the day after his awakening. Even so, that feat paled in comparison to what stood before him now.

With careful hands, Boris unfolded the scroll and read through its contents. His eyes paused at the end, where the unmistakable seal of the Primarch had been stamped, a mark of unquestionable authority.

'I need to find a way to control my presence. I can't have people reading me like an open book,' Asher thought, his gaze distant but focused.

He had no intention of concealing his power or capabilities. But the idea of being so easily deciphered was something he found deeply unsettling.

Turning to Zarek, he broke the silence.

"Zarek, does controlling my presence have anything to do with my mastery over Astra?"

Zarek turned to Asher, clearly surprised by the question. A faint smile curved his lips as he replied, "It seems the Tenth Sun has grown tired of being so easily read."

He gave a slight shake of his head, a quiet note of amusement in his expression, before continuing.

"People being able to perceive your Life Rank has little to do with your control over Astra or the amount flowing through your veins. It's more about the aura you emit, the presence you unconsciously project. That's what others pick up on. As for sensing the actual quantity of Astra within someone, that's a far rarer ability, and only those with a particular gift or trained perception can manage such a feat."

Asher gave a small nod. "Thank you, Zarek."

Since it had nothing to do with Astra control, there was no reason to delay. Without another word, he closed his eyes, shifting his focus inward, seeking the subtle rhythm of his own aura.

Zarek and Boris remained silent, watching intently as the young Wargrave sat still, eyes shut.



A few seconds passed.

Then, Asher opened his eyes, and his presence was gone.

His aura, once unmistakable in the room, had vanished without a trace, as if it had never existed.

Zarek and Boris exchanged a glance, faint smiles forming on their faces. Concealing one's Life Rank was a skill taught early through basic training, nothing extraordinary in itself. But to grasp it instinctively, within seconds and with only a single explanation, marked Asher not just as talented, but as a genius among geniuses.

As Asher's gaze settled on Boris, the older man offered a warm smile and spoke, "Welcome to the First Training Ground, Tenth Sun."

Reaching into a drawer beneath the table, Boris retrieved a form and handed it to him.

"I'll be under your care," Asher replied calmly, accepting the form. Picking up a pen, he filled it out swiftly, the fields were simple, requesting only basic information. Just a formality.

Zarek rose from his seat the moment Asher finished. "Since my part here is done, I'll be taking my leave," he said, his tone measured.

Without waiting for a reply, he turned and made his way toward the door, disappearing through it moments later.

Once the form was completed, Boris leaned back slightly and took a more formal tone.

"Before anything else, allow me to brief you on the structure and expectations within the First Training Ground."

He proceeded to outline the rules with practiced precision, the strict timeframes for each session, the types of training conducted daily, and the standards each trainee was expected to uphold.

From endurance drills to combat simulations, every element was designed to temper both body and mind under constant pressure.

Asher remained silent throughout, absorbing every word with calm focus. He committed the details to memory, understanding that discipline would be expected, not requested.

After the explanation concluded, Boris rose from his seat and gestured for Asher to follow. He led him through a corridor that opened into an expansive courtyard, vast, sunlit, and humming with intensity.

Before Asher stretched a field alive with movement. Over a hundred trainees were jogging in formation, their strides heavy, their faces drawn tight with exertion. Chests rose and fell rapidly as they fought for breath. Some looked moments away from collapse; others had already succumbed, lying sprawled on the training ground with sweat-soaked clothes and trembling limbs.

The air was thick with heat, fatigue, and the unspoken will to endure.

Up ahead, a man stood at the forefront of the training field, his voice thundering above the rhythmic pounding of feet.

"Keep moving! Don't stop until your legs give out! Push beyond the limit!"

His tone was sharp, each word driving into the trainees like hammer blows. Sweat streamed down faces, muscles trembled with exhaustion, but none dared to defy his command.

Then, mid-shout, the man's head suddenly turned. His sharp gaze locked onto Boris and Asher standing at the edge of the field.

"Stop!" he barked. "You have five minutes to recover."

Without delay, he strode across the ground, heading towards edge of the field. Reaching them, he halted and bowed slightly.

"Good morning, Tenth Sun," he greeted respectfully.

Asher, in his usual quiet manner, responded only with a brief nod of acknowledgment.

Turning to Boris, the man straightened. "What can I do for you, Head Instructor?"

"The Tenth Sun is now assigned to the First Training Ground," Boris stated flatly. He could see the storm of questions flickering in the man's eyes, but he had no interest in indulging them. Without another word, he turned and walked away.

'So he's the Head Instructor. He won't be directly training us, just overseeing everything to ensure results.'

Asher thought, as he watched Boris's retreating figure.

"My name is Harold Tenth Sun," the man beside him said, his tone composed yet firm. "I'll be your physical fitness instructor. My sessions run from 7 a.m. to noon."

As he spoke, Harold guided Asher toward a clearing where other trainees sat, drenched in sweat and gasping for breath.

'Looks like I'm already late on the first day,' Asher thought, walking in step with Harold.