

Kill the Sun

Chapter 56: Successful Session

When Nick saw Jenny fall asleep, he nodded with pride.

'That went quite smoothly,' he thought.

For the next 30 minutes, Nick waited in the Containment Unit to make sure that nothing was happening.

Nothing happened.

"I will be back in a bit," Nick told the Dreamer as he left the Containment Unit.

Naturally, the Dreamer didn't answer.

"How did it go?" Wyntor asked, standing in front of the exit of the Containment Unit.

"Perfect," Nick said with a grin. "She was obviously scared, but she didn't run away and voluntarily sat down to sleep."

Wyntor also smiled. "You found a good one this time, Nick."

Nick nodded. "Yep! If everything works out, she will take the shift after mine, which should be from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. I will arrive at 6 a.m. now every morning since I'm not the only one working with the Dreamer anymore."

"Sounds great," Wyntor said. "Now, we only need one more person."

Nick sighed. "I'm not looking forward to more of these interviews, but that's why I'm getting paid more."

Wyntor chuckled a bit. "That's how it works, yes."

"Is Pator back?" Nick asked.

"He's outside," Wyntor said.

Nick nodded and walked out of the door.

Nick quickly found Pator and talked to him a bit before going back to the hotel.

After entering Horua's room, a bitter smile appeared on Nick's face, and he sat on the bed beside Horua.

As always during the day, Horua sat on his bed, just looking into empty space without doing anything.

"Hey, Horua. You remember the new employee I told you about this morning?"

Nick talked to Horua for a while, telling him everything about his day.

After that, Nick got Horua some soup and some water.

"I'll be right back. I also have to check up on Jenny," Nick said before going back to the warehouse.

Nick entered the Containment Unit and saw that nothing had changed.

For the next eight hours, Nick went back and forth between the warehouse and Horua's room.

Finally, the eight hours were up, and it was time for Nick to wake up Jenny.

"Hey, eight hours are over," Nick said to the Dreamer, still standing over Jenny.

The Dreamer had been focused on Jenny's closed eyes, but a moment later, its head slowly moved back.

It slowly turned to look at Nick before going back to its corner.

Nick just nodded before walking up to Jenny.

After gently nudging her for a while, Jenny slowly opened her eyes.

But then, her eyes suddenly shot open, and she immediately pulled her arms up like she was trying to protect herself from an attacker.

"Wow, wow, calm down, Jenny!" Nick shouted.

Jenny froze. "Nick?" she asked in confusion.

Then, she slowly lowered her arms and looked around.

"Oh, right!" she shouted before her eyes fixed on the Dreamer.

She still felt scared looking at it, but it was not as bad as before.

"Is it over?" Jenny asked.

"Yep," Nick answered. "Eight hours are up. You successfully finished your first session with a Specter! Congratulations!"

Jenny almost couldn't believe it.

She had done it!

She had actually worked with a Specter!

So, did this mean that she was a real Zephyx Extractor now?

She didn't feel any different, though.

"Come, let's go out," Nick said.

Jenny looked more at the Dreamer as she followed Nick out of the Containment Unit.

When the door closed behind her, she felt like a huge pressure had vanished from her shoulder.

"Want to see how much Zephyx you made?" Nick asked with a smile.

Jenny's eyes opened wide with intrigue, and she nodded.

Nick led her to the console and looked at the gauge.

Yet, when Nick saw the results, he was surprised.

"Four grams," he said with interest.

"Is that a lot?" Jenny asked.

"For the company, four grams represent 4,000 credits," Nick said. "For you, it represents 400 credits."

Jenny just looked with shock and surprise at the gauge.

400 credits.

She had just earned 400 credits.

For just eight hours of work.

For just this bit of work, Jenny had secured two months of taxes for her and her partner.

It was ridiculous!

"Want your money?" Nick asked.

Jenny felt a bit put on the spot, but she still nodded sheepishly. "Sorry, but I really need it."

"Of course," Nick said with a chuckle. "Wyntor already went home. So, let me get your money."

Nick walked over to Wyntor's office and opened it with a key.

Inside Wyntor's office, Nick took out a thin sheet of malleable metal and put it on the desk.

The next moment, Nick grabbed a couple of different metallic stamps and heated them on some kind of hot plate.

Lastly, Nick stamped the number 400 into the malleable piece of metal and then stamped Dark Dream's official stamp on the bottom.

After waiting for a bit, Nick grabbed the bottom of the piece of metal and pulled.

A second piece of metal with a different color was pulled out of the first piece of metal.

The second piece of metal also had the number 400 and the company's stamp on it.

Naturally, the first piece of metal was some kind of document that allowed the owner to take 400 credits out of Dark Dream's account, and the second piece of metal was a copy.

Nick left the copy on Wyntor's desk and left with the first piece of metal.

"Here you go," Nick said, handing the first piece of metal to Jenny.

Jenny just looked at it with confusion.

"Hand this to this bank," Nick said, pointing at a symbol at the corner of the piece of metal. "They will keep the plate and give you 400 credits in exchange."

Jenny looked with wonder at the plate.

"By the way," Nick said, remembering something. "You should have an ability now."

Jenny looked at Nick with a bit of confusion.

"You know, an ability from a Specter," Nick said. "The very thing that makes Zephyx Extractors Zephyx Extractors."

Jenny realized what Nick meant and looked at her hands with wonder.

"What kind of ability?" she asked.

"I dunno."

Chapter 57: Ability

Jenny just looked at Nick with dumbfound confusion.

"I have no idea," Nick repeated. "My Zephyx Synchronizer was already attuned when I came into contact with the Dreamer, which was why I didn't get its ability, and the only other person who worked with it is in some sort of coma."

"Coma?" Jenny asked in shock.

"Yeah, I didn't want to tell you before you worked with the Dreamer since it would make you more nervous without a good reason," Nick said. "Let's just say that I messed up with the last person. I took someone that obviously didn't have the mental fortitude to work with a Specter."

"But I believed in you, and my trust was not misplaced."

Jenny became a bit more nervous when she heard that someone had been put into a coma because of the Dreamer.

"What happened?" Jenny asked.

Nick sighed. "After five hours, the Dreamer walked away from him, and he started to have a seizure. He hasn't really woken up since then. That was about two weeks ago."

"You, on the other hand, finished the full eight hours, which means that you're not in danger," Nick added.

Jenny was still a bit uncertain, but she didn't complain.

She had just earned 400 credits, which was insane.

"Anyway," Nick said. "You should really try to find out what kind of ability you unlocked. If you feel uncomfortable trying alone, we can try tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, I need you here at 2 pm. 2 pm, on the dot, enter the Containment Unit and tell the Dreamer to wake me up. I'll show you how to operate this thing," Nick said as he pointed at the console of the Containment Unit.

For the next ten minutes, Nick showed Jenny how to operate the console, and eventually, Jenny left to go to the bank and home.

After Jenny left, Nick went to one part of the Containment Unit, which he then unlocked with a key.

Inside, Nick found a small tube with something that looked like white powder.

This was Zephyx.

Nick carefully took out the tube and put an empty one in before closing the metal plate again.

After that, Nick entered Wyntor's office and put the tube of Zephyx on top of the copy of Jenny's payment.

When he was done, Nick nodded once in satisfaction and left the warehouse.

Nick checked up on Horua, slept for four hours, checked up on Horua again, and slept for another three hours.

Nick grabbed a quick bite to eat and entered the warehouse.

Pator was already here.

Pator always had to come early since Nick was working with the Dreamer during this time.

After some small talk, Nick entered the Dreamer's Containment Unit and fell asleep.

About eight hours later, Nick opened his eyes and saw Jenny standing beside him.

"Already time to stand up?" Nick asked with a yawn.

Jenny nodded with a smile. "Yep."

Nick nodded, stood up, and walked out of the Containment Unit.

Jenny followed him.

"I know what kind of ability I have," Jenny said.

"Oh?" Nick asked with interest. "Tell me."

"I'll show you!" Jenny said with some excitement. "Don't worry. It won't hurt."

Nick nodded.

Jenny walked over and put her hands on Nick's head.

Nick just looked with confusion at her.

Then, Nick yawned again and started to get drowsy.

Nick's eyes closed by themselves, and he felt weakness enter his limbs.

Jenny slowly removed her hands from Nick's head, and the drowsiness became weaker.

Nick opened his eyes again and realized what had happened.

"You can make people fall asleep?" Nick asked.

Jenny nodded. "Just like the Dreamer!"

Nick was excited to find out, but he also had to furrow his brows.

"That's not very useful for combat," he said.

"I thought that too initially, but I'm not so sure anymore," Jenny said.

Nick looked at her with a raised eyebrow.

"If my opponent doesn't know that I'm their opponent, I can get close to them and... well..." Jenny explained as she started to feel a bit awkward.

Nick just scratched the back of his head in confusion. "And what?" he asked.

"Well, you know," Jenny said. "Tell them to come to my place, hug them, and... you know..."

"Oh! That!" Nick said. "You mean seduce them and covertly use your ability while hugging their head or something, right?"

"Yes, that," Jenny said with a bit of embarrassment. "While I use my ability, my opponent falls into a very deep sleep. They won't easily wake up, even if I make a lot of noise. While they are asleep, I can probably collapse the entire house, and they would only notice when the ceiling hits them."

Nick nodded with interest.

"Also, that's not everything," Jenny said.

"Oh?" Nick uttered.

"I can also somewhat look into dreams," Jenny said.

"Look into dreams?" Nick asked. "Can you control them like the Dreamer?"

Jenny shook her head. "No, I can't do that, but I can somewhat feel what's happening in their dreams. I tried it a bit with my partner last night. I didn't find out a lot, but I think that's because I'm simply not used to this ability yet. With more practice, I can probably find out more."

"That's very interesting," Nick said with a nod. "Have you told Wyntor already?"

Jenny nodded. "Yes. He told me that there might be other uses for my ability. When there is an opportunity, he might give me some other tasks."

"Makes sense," Nick said.

"By the way," Jenny added. "Wyntor wants to talk to you."

"Sure thing," Nick said. "I'll talk to him while you're sleeping."

Jenny and Nick talked for a bit more before they entered the Dreamer's Containment Unit.

This time, falling asleep was even easier for Jenny.

Eventually, Nick left the Containment Unit and went into Wyntor's office.

He saw Wyntor looking at several sheets of paper.

"Hey, Wyntor. You wanted to see me?" Nick asked.

"Yes, Nick," Wyntor said. "Please, sit down."

Wyntor gestured to a chair in front of his desk.

Nick felt a bit uncomfortable.

Chapter 58: Growth

Nick nervously sat down.

He knew that something was up since Wyntor was taking on a very distant and professional tone.

"What's up?" Nick asked.

Wyntor took hold of the copy of the metal plate Nick had made the day before and showed it to Nick. "This."

Nick raised an eyebrow.

"I know that yesterday was a special day and all since Jenny needed the money quickly, but you can't just forge my signature. If I wanted to, I could sue you and get all of your money," Wyntor said.

"But everything was correct, right?" Nick asked. "So, there are no issues."

Wyntor slightly shook his head. "Yes, the amount was correct, but you went too far and meddled with my job. I never meddle with your job since it's your job."

"Nick, you cannot hand out money to people in the name of the company. You do not have the right or the power to do that," Wyntor said with a serious voice.

Nick furrowed his brows. "Then, what should I have done? She needed the money."

"Call me," Wyntor said. "I told you how you can reach me. Just call me. I would have arrived within 30 minutes and would have given her the money."

Nick looked a bit uncomfortable. "You've worked for nearly 16 hours yesterday. I didn't want to waste another hour of your time."

"I get where you are coming from," Wyntor said, "but you can't just hand out money. If there is an emergency like the one yesterday, call me. It doesn't matter what happened before that. If there is a genuine emergency, you always need to call me."

Nick sighed. "Fine. I won't meddle in your tasks anymore, Wyntor."

Wyntor smiled and nodded. "Then, there are no issues, Nick."

The next moment, Wyntor took out a metal plate and handed it to Nick. "I will give Jenny her money at the same time as you. In general, I look at the revenue from yesterday and hand you two the money at about 2 p.m. When you're both here."

Nick nodded and took the metal plate.

He could see the number 1,800 on it.

Since Nick produced seven grams of Zephyx, he got 1,400 credits for his own work, and since he was the Chief Zephyx Extractor, he also got 10% of what Jenny produced, which was another 400 credits.

1,800 credits in a day.

That was a lot, even for the people in the Outer City.

Usually, people in the Outer City earned between 1,500 and 4,000 credits per month.

Nick was making 1,800 per day.

Sure enough, being a Zephyx Extractor was extremely lucrative.

Nick took the metal plate and pocketed it.

"Everything going well with Jenny?" Wyntor asked.

Nick nodded. "Nothing to complain about."

"Good," Wyntor answered with a smile.

After some more small talk, Nick left Wyntor's office and went to Horua.

When Nick entered Horua's room, he saw Pator cleaning up.

After greeting each other, Pator told Nick about the next candidates.

Nick told Pator to send them to his room in 30 minutes one by one, as always.

30 minutes later, a person walked into Nick's room, and the two of them talked about many things over the next hour.

Sadly, the candidate seemed quite fidgety and nervous, which meant that he most likely wasn't a fit for the position of Zephyx Extractor.

The second person wasn't any better.

The third person seemed a bit weird. Just to be careful, Nick refused them.

After dealing with Horua again and eating some things, Nick went to wake up Jenny, and the two of them went home.

This was how a normal day for Nick went.

He woke up, worked with the Dreamer, talked a bit with Jenny, got his money, dealt with Horua, interviewed a couple of people, talked with Jenny again, dealt with Horua one more time, and went to sleep.

One day.

About two weeks later, Nick finally found a third candidate.

His name was Trevor, and he also came from the Dregs.

Trevor seemed to be quite a confident individual who smirked a lot.

He was pretty good at socializing and seemed to be the center of every gathering.

Some people perceived him to be annoying, but others found him to be charming and amusing.

When he met the Dreamer for the first time, he mostly smiled bitterly and cracked several jokes.

Apparently, that was his method of coping with intense fear and stressful situations. He was just laughing and trying to lighten the spirits of everyone.

Luckily, Trevor managed to work with the Dreamer without issues, and eight hours later, he woke up with his new ability.

Just like Jenny, Trevor could put people to sleep and observe part of their dreams.

When Wyntor met Trevor, he thought that the Dreamer's ability fit him very well.

Jenny was very straightforward and honest, which meant that deception was not in her blood.

However, Trevor was different.

Trevor had a very loud and direct personality, and he was good at masking his intentions.

If Wyntor ever needed some kind of secret agent, Trevor would be a much better fit than Jenny.

From now on, Trevor would take the shift from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

This meant that the Dreamer's output had reached its maximum potential.

Per day, Nick produced seven grams of Zephyx, Jenny produced four grams of Zephyx, and Trevor produced five grams of Zephyx for a total of 16 grams of Zephyx.

That meant Dark Dream was bringing in 16,000 credits per day!

For one more month, everyone worked with the Dreamer.

That was when Wyntor wanted to talk to Nick again.

With the money now flowing in and the Dreamer being worked with at full efficiency, it was now time to expand.

They needed a second Specter.

Sadly, since the company wasn't earning enough to create a full team of Investigators, it was once more up to Nick to find the next Specter.

But this time, it wouldn't be as easy.

At least, that was what Nick thought.

Chapter 59: Levels

"We currently have liquid funds of a bit over 400,000 credits. That means we can purchase another Containment Unit," Wyntor said as he sat in front of Nick in his office.

"400,000 credits?" Nick asked. "I thought we only had something like 250,000 credits."

"There are a couple of tricks that can increase the value of our Zephyx," Wyntor said. "My job is not only for show, after all. If I don't do a good job, the money that comes in doesn't reach its full potential."

Nick just nodded.

Nick had never suspected that Wyntor wasn't working.

Even though Nick didn't know what Wyntor was doing all day, he still trusted in him.

There were probably many things that Wyntor was doing that Nick and his two employees didn't even notice.

"So, we can get a new Containment Unit and get a second Specter?" Nick asked.

Wyntor nodded. "I've been in talks with a manufacturer for Containment Units, and I managed to get quite a good deal. Under normal circumstances, the next level of Containment Unit costs about 1.5 million credits, but in exchange for exclusively buying their products, I managed to snag one of those for the price of a cheap one at around 450,000 credits."

Nick's eyes widened in surprise and wonder.

As someone who had never worked in a company before, Wyntor's work always seemed so nebulous to Nick.

While Nick trusted that Wyntor was working, he had never really felt the impact.

But now, Nick actually saw what impact Wyntor had on the business.

The entire business had only brought in something like 250,000 credits of Zephyx for its savings account.

Yet, due to Wyntor, all of that increased to 400,000 credits.

And now, Wyntor had essentially brought in another million credits in goods.

Just by cleverly negotiating with some people, Wyntor had essentially brought in four times as much money as the remaining employees combined!

Naturally, without the employees, Wyntor wouldn't be able to get that much money, but still, Wyntor was increasing the wealth of Dark Dream a lot!

"The Containment Unit I am going to purchase has a light tunnel, which means we don't need to light it with artificial light anymore," Wyntor explained. "Additionally, it can withstand Adolescent Specters, which should also secure our future with the Dreamer."

"Due to the Dreamer's rapid growth and since we constantly need to light its Containment Unit, I will put the Dreamer into the new Containment Unit. We can use its current Containment Unit for a new Specter."

Nick nodded.

Nick had noticed that the Dreamer's output of Zephyx had increased a couple of days before.

By now, Nick was producing ten grams of Zephyx, Jenny was producing six, and Trevor was producing eight.

Since the Zephyx production for all employees increased at the same time, it meant that the reason for that was with the Specter.

Nick hadn't been sure what had happened, but Wyntor had known.

The Dreamer was growing more powerful.

Every Specter needed to feed to become stronger, and the Dreamer was no exception.

Naturally, the Dreamer's power increased by giving people nightmares, and by constantly working with it for two months, it had gotten a lot of food.

According to Wyntor's calculations, the Dreamer had reached the Peak of the Hatchling Stage.

In every stage, there were five levels.

Initial, Early, Mid, Late, Peak.

Each level had an increase of power of about 1.5 to the previous level.

So, if an Initial Hatchling had a power of 1, an Early Hatchling would have 1.5, a Mid Hatchling would have about 2.3, a Late Hatchling would have about 3.4, and a Peak Hatchling would have about 5.

This meant that a Peak Hatchling was about five times as powerful as an Initial Hatchling.

Surprisingly, that was also about equal to Nick's strength increase when his ability was activated.

Whenever a Specter advanced a level, the power of its ability increased, as well as its physical strength.

Back when Nick had caught the Dreamer, the Dreamer had been a Mid Hatchling, close to becoming a Late Hatchling.

This meant its physical power had been about 2.3 times stronger than the power of an Initial Hatchling.

Based on the body and the type of Specter, an Initial Hatchling was about as strong as an average adult male or stronger.

In the Dreamer's case, it would have been about as strong as an average adult male since it was not a physical fighter.

Naturally, without his ability, Nick's power had also been about as strong as an average adult male, but he still counted as much stronger than average in the Dregs since everyone was malnourished.

That had been why the Dreamer had been so much more powerful than Nick.

But when Nick's ability activated, he had been much more powerful than the Dreamer.

Yet, if the Dreamer had been as powerful back then as it was now, Nick wouldn't have been able to put up a fight.

It would have simply torn Nick apart.

Right now, the Dreamer was just as powerful as Nick had been when he had captured it with his ability active.

However, one had to remember that Zephyx Extractors could also become more powerful.

When the Dreamer produced Zephyx, Nick also absorbed part of the Zephyx, but it was important to note that Nick's increase in power wasn't compromising the Zephyx production.

When a Zephyx Extractor worked with a Specter, both of them produced Zephyx, but only the Zephyx produced by the Specter would be harvested.

The Zephyx produced by the Zephyx Extractor would never leave the Extractor's body and would immediately get absorbed, increasing the Extractor's power.

In general, the Zephyx the Extractor produced was about 20% of what the Specter produced, but this ratio could vary.

This meant if Nick made the Dreamer produce ten grams of Zephyx, Nick would gain about two grams of Zephyx for himself.

Under normal circumstances, this would mean that the Dreamer would grow five times as quickly as Nick.

However, one had to remember that the Containment Unit harvested 90% of the Zephyx, which meant that, from the ten grams produced, the Dreamer could only keep one gram.

But then, one also had to keep in mind that three different people were working with the Dreamer for a total of about 24 grams of Zephyx every day.

This meant, per day, the Dreamer was growing by about 2.4 grams of Zephyx, and Nick was growing by about two grams.

Yet, due to the difference in level, Nick didn't need as much Zephyx as the Dreamer to advance, which meant that he was growing quicker.

So, what did this mean for Nick's actual power?

Well, just yesterday, Nick had managed to advance another level, and right now...

Nick was at the Late First Stage.

Or Late Newbie, if one used the unofficial denotation.

Chapter 60: Adolescent

In essence, this meant that Nick was about 3.4 times as powerful as he had been when he had caught the Dreamer.

Since the Dreamer didn't have an ability useful for combat, Nick could have probably caught the Dreamer even without his ability if he had been that powerful back then.

But that didn't mean that Specters were no longer dangerous.

The physical bodies of the Specters were only a small part of their strength.

The truly threatening and terrifying part was their ability.

For example, due to his family, Wyntor had gained a very powerful ability from a Specter.

The ability wasn't very useful for capturing Specters, but it was incredibly useful for staying alive.

The ability had come from the Specter called The Blinding Light.

The Blinding Light was a level three Specter that looked like a floating ball of light.

The Specter belonged to Kugelblitz, which was how Wyntor had been able to gain its ability.

While The Blinding Light could theoretically smash into someone with its body, that was not why it was dangerous.

Its true power was its ability to burn people.

The Blinding Light could burn any living being in its vicinity...

Unless they directly looked at it.

However, if they directly looked at The Blinding Light, their eyes would burn away.

In essence, one was exchanging their sight for survival.

If one lost their eyes, they would become immune to the burning effect of The Blinding Light.

This effectively meant that one had to fight The Blinding Light without eyes.

If The Blinding Light were a Hatchling and if Nick had tried to catch it, things would have turned out very differently.

The Blinding Light's ability was actually useful for combat, compared to the Dreamer's ability.

Nick wouldn't be sure how to capture The Blinding Light if it were a Hatchling, and he also wouldn't be sure if he could survive.

Luckily, the Dreamer didn't have a useful ability for combat.

When Wyntor told Nick about The Blinding Light, he also told him how much he hated it.

Wyntor had its ability, and to gain its ability, Wyntor had needed to lose his eyes five times.

He said that this had been the most painful experience of his life.

Wyntor even told Nick that it usually wouldn't take that many times to gain The Blinding Light's ability.

Usually, people only needed to have their eyes burned thrice.

Some even got it after only two times.

But Wyntor needed five times.

Of course, Nick asked why, and Wyntor's answer was pretty simple.

"It means I'm not talented in producing Zephyx. It means I have no talent for becoming a Zephyx Extractor."

Naturally, being a Zephyx Extractor was one of the most prestigious professions in the world, and it was more than enough to become an heir to the Melfion family.

Yet, since Wyntor had no talent, he had to go the administrative route and become an amazing businessman.

But for that, he needed money, which was why they were now talking about getting a second Specter.

"Don't forget that, even though you've grown much more powerful, a Specter, even a Hatchling, can still prove to be your death," Wyntor said with a warning tone.

"Naturally, I don't expect you to go after an Adolescent Specter. The Dreamer will become an Adolescent Specter soon enough, and it will occupy the new Containment Unit. This means we need another Hatchling."

Nick nodded.

"Anyway," Wyntor continued. "I followed up on Jenny's clue regarding the Riker Strikers."

"Oh?" Nick uttered, looking at Wyntor with interest.

"I found out quite some interesting pieces of information," Wyntor said. "For example, the Riker Strikers have only appeared in the Dregs about five years ago."

"Before that, there had been no Riker Strikers."

Nick nodded. He remembered that no one had talked about the Riker Strikers back then, but they very quickly appeared.

It was almost like they became extremely powerful overnight.

Back then, Nick had barely been eleven years old, and he had been busy getting his own life on track, which was why he had barely noticed anything.

"Their leader, Riker, had also seemingly appeared out of nowhere," Wyntor continued. "Well, seemingly. After a lot of digging, I actually found some sightings of him before he became the leader of the Riker Strikers."

"Based on witness accounts, Riker was someone that worked for The Hub, and he accepted basically every single dirty mission that gave a lot of money."

"He mostly did assassinations, beating people up, extorting money, threatening people, and so on."

"He amassed quite a bit of wealth for the Dregs' standards."

"Now, if this were everything, he wouldn't seem strange, but there are two things that rubbed me the wrong way when I heard them," Wyntor said.

Nick leaned forward with interest.

"First," Wyntor said as he lifted his right index finger, "he didn't always accept the job with the biggest paycheck."

"Of course, under normal circumstances, that doesn't seem strange. After all, jobs that pay very well often require you to do horrible things or very dangerous things."

"But in his case, the opposite was true."

"He didn't actually aim for the best-paying jobs, but for the jobs that needed him to commit the most horrible acts."

Nick's eyes widened in surprise.

"People just think that he went for the jobs with the biggest reward since those jobs were also the most horrifying ones, most of the time."

"I understand that some people want a lot of money, but it is very strange that he specifically ignores money just so he can commit more horrible deeds," Wyntor said.

Nick furrowed his brows and nodded. "Yes, that doesn't seem normal."

Wyntor also nodded. "The second thing is even more surprising."

Wyntor leaned forward.

"Not even a single merchant that sells food recalls ever selling food to Riker."

Nick's eyes widened.

Now, that was very suspicious!

"That means Jenny was right, right?" Nick asked.

Wyntor nodded. "Most likely."

"I think Riker is a Specter."

Nick became excited when he heard that.

"Don't get excited just yet," Wyntor said with a serious expression.

Nick looked with a raised eyebrow at Wyntor.

"Based on how long he has operated in the Dregs and how far his social power has grown, I'm quite certain of one thing."

"Riker is not a Hatchling."

"He's an Adolescent."

"That means we can't go after him just yet."