

# Kill the Sun

## Chapter 61: Ability Advancement

"An Adolescent?" Nick repeated.

Wyntor nodded. "I am not entirely sure how he gains more power, but based on his behavior in the past, I would say that he becomes stronger by causing others fear or by just doing horrible things. I'm not sure about the specifics."

"Riker has been in the Dregs for quite a while, and by now, he has amassed a gang with over 50 members. He has probably caused an incredible amount of grief, which should have given him a lot of power. I doubt very much that he's a Hatchling."

Nick looked with worry at Wyntor. "Could he be an Adult Specter?" he asked.

Wyntor shook his head. "Very unlikely. It takes a lot for a Specter to grow."

"We have been feeding the Dreamer 24/7, and after months, it still only advanced by 1.5 levels. If we keep going at this rate, it will probably take three years or so to turn the Dreamer into an Adult Specter."

"And that's considering that we keep feeding him with powerful Zephyx Extractors. Nick, you have to keep in mind that something stronger also produces much more Zephyx. For example, if we keep sending in Newbie Extractors while the Dreamer is an Adolescent, it would take over 15 years for it to become an Adult."

"While Riker has a great reach, a lot of his terror is spread over his gang, and I don't think that suffering by proxy gives as much Zephyx as directly inflicting the suffering."

"At most, Riker is a Late Adolescent, and I'm already very generous with that evaluation. Most likely, he's an Early or Mid Adolescent," Wyntor explained.

Nick just furrowed his brows. "And we don't have a shot at taking him?"

Wyntor shook his head. "Since the difference between Realms is a twofold increase in power and since Riker is most likely an Early Adolescent, his

physical power would be about five times as much as you, and that's only considering his physical power."

"He most likely also has an ability that is very useful in combat, which would make it extremely difficult to deal with him. Even if you could keep your ability perpetually active, you would most likely lose."

Nick could only sigh when he heard that.

"So, we don't go after Riker just yet," Nick said.

"We don't," Wyntor repeated.

"But then what?" Nick asked. "We are out of ideas now."

"That's how all the Zephyx Manufacturers feel," Wyntor told Nick. "Getting the Specters is always the most difficult part."

Nick could only sigh.

"Guess that means that I have to go out and find a Specter again."

"Sadly, yes," Wyntor said. "We are still lacking the funds to create a full team of Investigators."

Nick sighed once again. "Okay," he said. "I'll do my best and look for a Specter, but I'm honestly not sure where I can find one."

Wyntor nodded. "This time, our survival isn't dependent on your rapid success. Even if you don't find one immediately, we are still earning money with the Dreamer."

"If there is a deadline, it will most likely be when you are about to become a level two Extractor, but that should still take a bit more than a year or two," Wyntor said.

"You mean the Ability Advancement?" Nick asked.

Wyntor nodded.

"I guess you're right," Nick said. "I don't think the Dreamer would advance my ability in a very useful or meaningful way."

What made the advancements between Stages different from advancements between levels?

Why was a Peak level one Zephyx Extractor becoming an Initial level two Zephyx Extractor far more meaningful than an Initial level two Zephyx Extractor becoming an Early level two Zephyx Extractor?

Two reasons.

First, the increase in power was twofold instead of 1.5-fold.

But more importantly, the ability of the person also advanced.

By absorbing Zephyx, the Extractor's Zephyx Synchronizer would also become bigger, and eventually, it would become big enough to support a stronger ability.

When one was ready to reach the next Stage, one's Zephyx Synchronizer would regain the ability to synchronize with a Specter, but this new synchronization was different from the first one.

During the initial synchronization, the Extractor's Zephyx Synchronizer would try to fully copy the Specter's ability.

But during the second synchronization, the Zephyx Synchronizer would combine the new ability with the old one, creating a new one.

For example, Wyntor had the ability of The Blinding Light, and if he were to advance by attuning his Zephyx Synchronizer with the Dreamer, Wyntor's ability would transform.

Maybe Wyntor's light would also cause hallucinations?

Maybe Wyntor's light would make its targets tired?

Maybe Wyntor would gain the ability to read the thoughts of his enemy while his ability was active?

No matter what case were true, Wyntor's initial ability would remain the dominant one, and the Dreamer's ability would need to somehow fit into Wyntor's initial ability.

Naturally, there were very compatible abilities and very incompatible ones.

For example, Wyntor's ability and the Dreamer's ability were not compatible at all.

One of them dealt with bright light and very noticeable attacks, while the other one was a very covert ability that relied on the element of surprise.

So, what if Nick used the Dreamer to advance his ability?

Well, in a certain way, the Dreamer's ability was quite compatible with Nick's ability since both of them used the element of surprise.

However, they differed very much in how they were used.

Nick's ability wanted to kill the enemy, while the Dreamer's ability wanted to manipulate or spy on them.

Even more, both abilities would only be able to unleash their powers with the element of surprise but became useless after that.

That was not what Nick wanted.

The Ability Advancement was the best way to transform Nick's ability into one that could be used more than once in a battle.

And the Dreamer's ability wouldn't help Nick in achieving that.

Because of that, Nick needed another Specter.

And that was why the deadline for capturing the next Specter was Nick's advancement to the second level, which would take one to two years.

## **Chapter 62: Competition**

After talking with Wyntor for a bit more, Nick left the warehouse.

Nick had already finished his session with the Dreamer today, and since he didn't need to interview any new applicants, he decided to fully focus on finding the next Specter.

However, that was easier said than done.

Just like the last time, Nick had no idea where to find one.

And this time, he probably wouldn't get saved by an Inspector who wanted to help the general public.

At least he had a lot of time.

For the first time in quite a while, Nick returned to the Dregs.

He hadn't been here ever since he had gotten some food for Horua after Nick had caught the Dreamer.

As Nick entered the Dregs, everyone threw glances at him.

Naturally, Nick was required to wear his Zephyx Extractor uniform, which was why everyone was looking at him.

The red and black colors on the high-quality uniform made him stick out like a sore thumb among the poor denizens of the Dregs.

"Did anything unnatural happen lately?" Nick asked one of the people looking at him from the side of the road.

The young man with black hair just looked back at Nick with surprise.

"You mean besides the appearance of a Zephyx Extractor?" the man asked.  
"No, not really."

Nick nodded. "I belong to Dark Dream, a new Zephyx Manufacturer, and I have already dealt with a Specter that was living in the Dregs that was too troublesome for the other Manufacturers. Please, tell me if there is anything suspicious that the Inspectors told you not to worry about."

The man blinked a couple of times in surprise and started to scratch the back of his head in thought.

For about five seconds, he remained silent.

"I don't think I got anything of importance," the man said with an uncertain expression.

Nick furrowed his brows. "Are you sure? You don't seem sure."

The man looked a bit uncomfortable. "Well, there's something, but I really don't think it's the doing of a Specter."

Nick's gaze became solemn. "Tell me."

The man looked even more uncomfortable. "You sure?" he asked.

"I'm sure," Nick said seriously.

"Well," the man said.

"I've had diarrhea for the last week, but I didn't change my diet."

Silence.

"And?" Nick asked.

"That's it," the man said.

Nick's excitement vanished, and he just looked at the man with a deadpan expression.

"Have you tried the rust lick?" Nick asked.

The man scratched the back of his head.

"Yeah, I think that might solve the issue. Thanks," he said.

Nick released a sigh but nodded nevertheless.

"If anything pops up, tell me," he said.

"Of course!" the man answered.

Nick just turned around and walked away.

He wasn't very bothered or angry.

Back when he had been searching for the Dreamer, he had had conversations like this all the time.

Life in the Dregs was horrendous, and many times, people just took a Specter's doing as natural.

A Specter's actions were horrible, and the life in the Dregs was horrible.

So, what was the difference?

That was why people in the Dregs often overlooked signs of Specters.

Since life was so shit here, people expected to have nightmares, which was why no one noticed the Dreamer.

Since there were cruel criminals everywhere, people expected there to be horrible people, which was why no one noticed that Riker was most likely a Specter.

The Specters perfectly blended into the Dregs, which was why it was so difficult to find them here.

Sadly, the Outer City and Inner City were completely free of Specters since all the powerful Manufacturers paid special attention to these places.

Whether he liked it or not, Nick needed to find a Specter in the Dregs.

Nick kept talking to more people, but just like the last time, he found no clues.

At least, this time, the Inspectors weren't making fun of him.

Instead, the Inspectors refused to talk to Nick besides superfluous and polite small talk.

Nick now officially belonged to the competition.

Every two hours, Nick went back to the hotel to check up on Horua, but these were his only breaks.

For the remaining time, Nick kept wandering through the Dregs while talking to people.

When the day was over, Nick went to bed.

The next day, he worked with the Dreamer again, talked to Wyntor a bit, and went back to searching.

This was how the next week passed.

For over a week, Nick had been searching for a clue, but he just couldn't find one.

By now, Nick had heard about all the mundane issues of the people, but none of them pointed towards a Specter.

Another week passed.

BANG!

As Nick walked through the Dregs, he suddenly heard the sound of a loud explosion followed by the sound of something big collapsing.

Nick noticed that a big building in the distance had collapsed, and he immediately charged into a small alley at the side.

As soon as Nick entered the alley, his ability activated, and with one swift jump, Nick landed on top of a house.

BANG!

The metal below Nick's feet bent as he charged forward with all of his power.

Within 20 seconds, Nick reached the building.

Yet, he didn't like what he was seeing at this moment.

Right now, there were three people standing in front of a big pile of metallic rubble.

The person at the front was currently holding something in his hand that looked like a small worm with several tentacles growing from its mouth.

Nick was 95% sure that this thing was a Specter.

However, Nick was also sure that he wouldn't get it.

After all, the three people in front of the pile of rubble wore Zephyx Extractor uniforms.

Nick could only sigh.



"You're late," the leader said, turning to Nick, who was still on the roof of a building.

Nick was quite surprised that the Extractor had noticed him.

"Good luck next time!" the leader said with a laugh.

Then, he left with his two colleagues and the Specter.

## Chapter 63: Sound

Nick sighed.

'That's one less Specter I can catch,' he thought.

Naturally, Nick wasn't the only person searching for Specters in the Dregs, which made things that much more difficult for him.

More days passed.

Eventually, Nick found a clue.

A small family told Nick that there were scary things happening in their house.

From time to time, stuff moved around, and they even heard stuff shaking in other rooms.

Some of them even claimed that they heard voices coming from below them, which couldn't be possible since the sewers were directly below them.

Nick followed up on the clue and entered their house.

After staying in their house for a while, Nick suddenly felt his ability deactivate, even though no one was in the room with him.

But then, his ability activated again a couple of seconds later.

Nick furrowed his brows and took a step forward in the empty room.

His ability deactivated again.

Three seconds later, it reactivated.

Nick knew what that meant.

'Someone is hearing me but can't see me,' he thought.

Since Nick's ability deactivated if anyone sensed him, it also meant that it deactivated when someone heard him make a sound.

At that moment, the person or Specter knew where Nick was since they knew where the sound came from.

But if they didn't see Nick and if Nick didn't give off more sounds, they wouldn't be able to perceive him again.

After all, Nick could have already walked away from the spot where the sound had been made, making it uncertain for the listener whether he was there or not.

'They can hear me but not see me,' Nick thought. 'This either means that the Specter is blind or that it is not inside the room.'

Nick very silently took a step to the side.

His ability didn't deactivate.

Then, Nick quietly opened a door.

Usually, houses in the Dregs didn't have any doors, but this one did.

When Nick was slowly opening the door, his ability didn't deactivate.

'That means the Specter is also not in that room,' Nick thought, looking at the door he was opening.

The next moment, Nick took a couple of normal steps.

His ability deactivated again.

Three seconds later, it reactivated.

After that, Nick silently crept over to another door and quietly opened it.

His ability didn't deactivate.

'Means it is also not in that room,' Nick thought.

Nick scratched his chin. 'These are the only two adjacent rooms.'

The next moment, Nick grabbed an uneven spot on one of the metallic walls and pulled himself up.

Ding. Ding.

Nick quietly knocked on the ceiling of the room.

His ability didn't deactivate.

Ding! Ding!

Nick used some more power.

His ability didn't deactivate.

DING!

Now, it deactivated.

'Means the Specter is not above me as well. That knock was so loud that every adjacent room heard it,' Nick thought.

Then, Nick walked to one of the walls and quietly knocked at it.

The same thing happened, and Nick's ability only deactivated after a pretty strong knock.

After that, Nick tried the other wall.

Same thing.

'That only leaves one spot,' Nick thought as he looked at the floor.

Slowly, Nick went to his knees.

And then, he quietly knocked on the floor.

Ding.

Nick's ability immediately deactivated.

Nick narrowed his eyes. 'In the sewers, huh?'

The next moment, Nick went to the rusty wall again and climbed it a bit.

After that, Nick put his feet on the wall and looked at the ground.

His ability had become active again.

BOOOOOM!

Nick shot at the ground, and as soon as he hit it, the metallic plates broke apart.

The rusty plates couldn't possibly resist such a tremendous shockwave.

As the entire floor collapsed, Nick's ability didn't deactivate, surprisingly.

Although, that was actually logical. After all, with sounds of collapsing metal plates coming from everywhere, no one could tell where Nick was just based on sound.

As the floor was collapsing, Nick rapidly took out a tube and destroyed it.

WHOOOM!

A bright domain of Arclight appeared, encompassing the falling metallic plates.

The dark sewer lit up, and Nick quickly found something that wasn't supposed to be there.

Just two meters below where the old floor had been was some kind of scaffolding made of pieces of rusty metal.

And then, Nick saw something else.

There was someone on the piece of scaffolding.

It was a middle-aged man, and he was in the process of ducking, which was quite understandable since the ceiling above him had just exploded.

BANG!

One of Nick's legs kicked one of the falling metal plates, shooting him towards the guy.

CRACK!

Nick's elbow hit the guy's chest and pushed him toward the scaffolding, which broke apart as well.

When Nick's elbow had hit the guy, he had felt many of his bones break, which told him one thing.

'That's a human,' Nick thought.

Sure, Nick had shot at the guy with quite a bit of power, but a Specter wouldn't get injured this heavily as long as it wasn't an Initial Hatchling.

Nick had just caused a genuinely life-threatening injury, which wouldn't have happened if this were a Specter.

Nick gritted his teeth in frustration.

'You idiot!' Nick thought as he jumped away from the breaking scaffolding.

The fact that Nick's ability hadn't deactivated meant that the guy was not able to perceive any other person right now.

The guy probably couldn't muster the mental capacity for proper spatial awareness after having his chest caved in, which meant that he didn't know where Nick was.

Nick grabbed one of the pieces of scaffolding that didn't break and threw himself back into the room at the top.

Not all the plates had collapsed.

As soon as Nick landed, he looked into the sewers.

Splash!

Several metal plates fell into the sewers, as well as the guy.

'Yeah, that guy is not surviving,' Nick thought.

The next moment, Nick just snorted in annoyance.

'What the fuck were you even doing down there? There are enough houses for everyone! Why would you live below someone else's house?!'

Nick just kept looking into the sewers, which had calmed down by now.

Ten seconds passed.

'Guess he lost consciousness.'

'I am not a fan of killing people, but I'm not going to mourn a dumbfuck like that.'

## **Chapter 64: Profiting?**

'Why was he even here? Like, did he live here?' Nick thought.

'Probably not. That scaffolding was quite rickety and not very big.'

'But then, what the fuck was that guy doing below this house?'

'I mean, the tenants said that spooky things were happening in their house, which was most likely his doing.'

'But why? I mean, did he do it on purpose? Based on what the tenants said, it had to have been on purpose.'

'This means this guy was down here for a reason, and I don't think it's a very honest and nice one.'

In the end, Nick could only sigh.

'I guess the answer died with him.'

Splash, splash, splash.

The next moment, Nick saw and heard several things entering the water.

Nick raised an eyebrow when he saw a couple of rats swimming towards the place where the guy had fallen into the sewers.

"Thanks, Nick!"

Nick moved his head over the edge and looked at where the voice had come from.

A rat was clinging to the ceiling, looking at him from about two meters away.

"Nine more of those, and I'll tell you where you can find a weak Specter," the rat said with a smirk.

Nick furrowed his brows and didn't answer.

"Oh, come on," the rat said. "You've killed for less."

A memory shot through Nick's mind, and an annoyed expression appeared on his face.

Under normal circumstances, Nick would say that he would never consider the Parasite's offer.

However, he had been searching for a Specter for three weeks now, and the latest clue had turned out to be just some random dude.

Nick was quite frustrated and annoyed.

For about ten seconds, he didn't say anything.

Meanwhile, the color of the sewers below Nick had turned a bit redder.

"I'll consider it," Nick said.

"Great!" the rat said, excitedly clapping its little hands while keeping itself clinging to the ceiling with its hindlegs. "I'm looking forward to it! Just throw them in the sewers!"

Nick snorted.

"Why was that guy even here?" Nick asked.

"He was a stalker," the rat said.

"A stalker?" Nick repeated.

"Yep. He kept rambling on and on about the love of his life and how he would make everyone leave the house so that he could be with her," the rat said.

"Total nutjob."

"Huh," Nick uttered in something that was and wasn't surprise at the same time.

The next moment, Nick pulled his head out of the sewers again and stood up.

Nick exited the room and walked out of the house.

After exiting, Nick saw two people waiting for him.

One of them was a middle-aged man, and the other was a 14-year-old girl.

The man was quite muscular and burly, and based on the things he was wearing, Nick could tell that he was someone working for the Peddlers, one of the four big gangs.

Those two were the inhabitants of the house.

Nick's eyes fell on the young girl.

'I guess that was his target,' Nick thought.

The next moment, Nick looked at the man. 'And with her father present, the stalker didn't dare to directly do anything to her.'

'Guess killing someone isn't always bad.'

The burly man quickly came up to Nick with a nervous and scared expression.

Surprisingly, his daughter didn't seem as anxious as her father.

"We just heard a loud bang!" the father said. "Did you find the Specter?"

"Daddy, it's not a Specter," the daughter said with a groan. "If it were, we would already be dead."



"Let daddy talk with the Extractor, honey," the father said as he lightly patted his daughter's head.

The daughter just snorted and looked to the side, but she didn't escape from her father's head pats.

"So?" the father asked, looking at Nick.

"It was a guy," Nick said.

"A guy?" the father repeated in shock.

"Told you it wasn't a Specter," the daughter said with a prideful smirk.

Nick nodded. "Some guy built some kind of scaffolding in the sewers below your house. When I knew that someone or something was below your house, I broke through your floor and found him."

Many memories shot through the father's mind, and his fear and anxiety were very quickly replaced with pure rage.

Some random guy was living below his house and causing him so much worry?!

"Where is he?" the father asked with a dark tone.

"His scaffolding broke, and he fell into the sewers," Nick said. "The Parasite quickly took care of him."

The man snorted with aggression. "Lucky bastard," he grumbled.

"Anyway, I have to thank you, sir," the man said with a respectful tone.

"Without you, I would have probably lost my home."

Nick nodded with a neutral expression. "If you ever find any information regarding any possible Specters, please contact us. If you actually find one, you will have helped us far more than I have helped you today."

"Of course," the man said, hitting his chest once to emphasize that he was serious. "I will tell my men to keep an eye out!"

Nick nodded again. "Good. By the way, you should fix the floor in one of your living rooms."

"That's not a problem, sir," the man said with a laugh. "Thank you again."

The next moment, the man pushed his daughter forward a bit. "Say thanks to the nice man, honey."

The girl furrowed her brows, but her expression quickly turned into a friendly smile before politely bowing to Nick. "Thank you so much, sir!"

Nick nodded one last time and walked away.

Some seconds later, Nick just sighed.

'And the search continues,' he thought with annoyance.

'Three weeks.'

'Three fucking weeks.'

'How long until I can finally get some clues for a Specter?!'

As Nick walked, his short conversation with the Parasite shot through his mind.

Nick walked in silence.

'Nine more corpses, huh?'

Nick looked at the sky with a thoughtful expression.

'Is it really that bad?'

'I mean, there are plenty of people that deserve to die, right?'

'Is it so bad that I profit from these deaths?'

Nick wasn't sure.

