

The Crafts 74

Chapter 74: Is This The End?

Astar retreated under the cover of Klein's existence, whereas Wally had stayed behind to fight the monster along with his friend. However, this was nothing more than a suicidal action. A second level Apertures Opening stage desolate beast wasn't something two teens below the peak of the Body Strengthening stage in their early years could take on.

"Roar!"

"Watch out!" Wally barely let out his shout before the helokiel had jumped Klein again.

Bang

The creature smashed its claws into the light shield and Klein was once again thrown a couple of metres away.

"Klein." Wally worriedly let out a shout.

The helokiel turned and glanced at him with intense bloodlust exposed in its eyes.

'Shit.'

Wally only had enough time to let out a thought before a shadow appeared in front of him.

Bang

A green flicker appeared in front of Wally, shielding him from the attack of the helokiel. However, just like Klein, he was thrown away by the impact.

The protective shield bracelets given to the students were all high quality items. Since it was made in consideration of a second level beast's potential attack, the deployment speed of the shields equally matched such monsters and even slightly exceeded some of them.

In this fashion, even if the students were too slow to respond to an attack, the shield would come up at the very second before they were attacked.

"Roar!"

The helokiel let out an intimidating roar as it asserted dominance. The nearby stellar energy in the atmosphere immediately into it and was absorbed in a flurry as the monster's aura blazed.

The reason the helokiel had lost the first half of the battle was a mix of the duo having coordinated perfectly with Astar, who had taken a booster drug to help increase his strength to hold it back. Following that, they were on an aggressive offense, targeting its weak points while working in an almost perfect sync.

The helokiel had also underestimated them from the start as they were weaker than it, so when the trio had taken hold of the battle's momentum, it was too late for it to counter. If it had taken them seriously from the start, they might have beaten it, but after taking severe injuries.

However, now it was different.

Not only was the team of three brought down to two with the most important individual departing, but the helokiel was now at the second level. The difference between the first and second level was a large hurdle, almost the same as the first level and the peak of the Body Strengthening stage.

At the first level of the Apertures Opening stage, one could still be considered as a Body Strengthening stage practitioner of some sorts. This was because, despite being able to now store and utilise stellar energy, there wasn't so much contained in the body of a first level stellar practitioner.

Most of the time, the stellar energy was sparsely used, and even when it was, it could only be employed to boost one's strength.

This was why it was still possible, but not certain, for a peak Body Strengthening stage practitioner to defeat a first level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner, especially with a vestige.

However, when the topic of focus changed to a second level, winning was a dream. One would have to be a mythical genius to be able to win at the peak of the Body Strengthening stage, but anything

below was ludicrously impractical. As for a mythical genius? In the more than three thousand years of history, Erete under the Oklo Dynasty has never witnessed such a legend.

The helokiel didn't move right away to finish off the duo, but intoxicated itself in the new sensation of power. Suddenly, the stellar energy visibly gathered to its mouth as the monster let out an even more terrifying roar.

Crack

Wally's shield began to crack under the pressure of the sonic attack, but his mind wasn't on it. Instead, he ran towards Klein to check up on him. As the roar was a stellar energy attack, the shield could defend against it, but not for long as the attacker was at the second level, which was the shield's limit.

"Are you alright?" Wally asked as he helped Klein up.

Klein's shield was heavily damaged and filled with many more cracks than Wally's. Just from appearance alone, it looked as if it would collapse any second. This made Wally even more anxious, but there was nothing he could do about it.

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"You should have run away when you had the chance." Klein let out a few words as he barely got his footing.

Even with the shield in place, some of the force from the helokiel's blow had got him. It was a second level desolate beast and the shield had already been damaged, so this was unavoidable.

"Even if I got away, you wouldn't have lasted this long. It would have come after me right away. At least with both of us, we can buy Astar some time." Wally said.

"Yeah..."

"It's coming." Wally stopped talking and faced the desolate beast with his friend.

The helokiel saw that the effect of its sonic attack wasn't as impressive as a close-up. This had to do with the fact that it was still inept with stellar energy skills, but to the helokiel, this was an insult. The two insects that had injured it were still standing even after three attacks.

"Roar!"

The helokiel suddenly disappeared from the vision of Wally and Klein, before appearing in front of Klein.

"Watch out."

Wally had guessed that it would aim for Klein first as the latter's shield was visibly more damaged than his. The second before the helokiel had made its move, he had swiftly jumped in between the duo and brandished his spear in front of Klein.

Just as he had predicted, the helokiel appeared in front of Klein, but with Wally in the way, it had to face him first.

Bang

"Wally!" Klein's eyes went red as he stared at Wally's fleeting body. He could already guess what had happened and his body shivered in response.

The helokiel didn't care about Wally, whom it had sent flying. It promptly turned its attention back to Klein and swung its claws at him.

'Is this it?'

Klein froze at the sight of the helokiel, which had now exceeded a two metres height after its advancement.

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The claw crashed into the shield, but this time around, the shield shattered on impact, exposing Klein to the remnant force of the attack.

"Klein!"

Wally, who had forced himself to recover quickly, gazed ahead and witnessed as the helokiel's claw was dyed red.

The helokiel's blood was green, not red.

"Ahhhh!"

Tears gushed out from Wally's eyes as he let out a scream like never before.

Klein's body fell to the floor as the helokiel turned its attention to Wally who was crying in pain. Desolate beasts weren't entirely brainless and were actually much smarter than most animals. It stared at Wally for a second, then abruptly grinned. Although it couldn't understand emotions as effectively as humans, it could understand that Wally was in pain after what it did.

The helokiel bent down and glanced at Klein's body, before lifting its right claw and brandishing at the body once again.

Splat

Blood sprayed once again and the helokiel grinned even more fiendishly.

"Bastard!" Wally cursed as he bit his lips.

He gripped his spear tightly and with his eyes filled with red, Wally charged at the monster.

Even though Wally knew that this was suicidal, even though he knew that doing so was meaningless, even though he knew that doing so couldn't change what had happened to Klein, Wally was still outraged at the brutality and behaviour of the helokiel.

The helokiel maintained its grin and abruptly flashed, appearing before Wally.

As if expecting this, Wally had already swung his vestige at it. This time around, it was glowing a dull purple light just like before.

In that one second before the helokiel's claw struck him, Wally glanced at the desolate beast who appeared at him as he had expected, managing to utter out only one word as he stabbed out.

"Rez."

The spear let out a muffled hum and began to visibly shudder, but Wally kept it under control as he thrust it out.

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Schtick

At the same time the helokiel's claw struck his barrier, the vestige managed to pierce it, stabbing deep into its body.

"Roar!"

The helokiel let out a painful roar as it halted in its steps. As for Wally, he was thrown away by the attack. His shield had shattered, but as the desolate beast held back at the last instance, Wally wasn't severely injured but thrown away.

However, not being severely injured didn't mean Wally was tossed out unscathed.

"Hehe. Even if I go down, I'll make sure you regret it." Wally simultaneously laughed and cried as he bled from his head and body.

"I'm sorry, Klein. I couldn't make it in time. Mom, Dad, sis, I failed you. I couldn't do it in the end, and I'm going to die here. Little Tom, your big brother couldn't become rich and famous, and buy you spaceship collections as I promised."

With no shot at surviving, his body bleeding and his best friend dead, Wally couldn't see a reason to keep going. It wasn't that he wanted to end it all, but there was literally no way to survive this

scenario. His body was aching and he couldn't find the strength to stand up and fight. Even if he could, the helokiel wasn't an opponent Wally could beat.

Wally knew that he would die here, but what pained him the most was that he couldn't see his family one last time. He couldn't call them or even anyone as for some reason, the communicators had no service.

So, Wally decided to record a voice note and send it out to them. As long as the communicator wasn't destroyed, the message would be sent once there was service.

"If there's some God in this world, please, keep them safe and watch over them for me. Mister Lucas, I'm sorry, but I might not be able to fulfill my own end of the bargain." Wally cried with a smile before closing his eyes.

Boom

Just then, an explosion sounded.