

The Sun 131

Chapter 131 – Whirlwind

After exchanging a couple more words, Reynold and Nick left Dark Dream.

"Hey Nick, you know of any good places to fight?" Reynold asked.

"There's a gym nearby," Nick said.

"Eh, that's not good," Reynold said. "If I accidentally punch too hard, I'll have to pay for their room. You know of a different place? Doesn't even have to be very sturdy. Just big."

Nick furrowed his brows.

"I don't know of such a place," Nick said. "There are a couple of abandoned places in the Dregs, but they are filled with houses or rubble. There's nothing like a wide arena."

"Abandoned places?" Reynold repeated with a smirk. "Can you show me one?"

"Sure," Nick said.

Then, Reynold started to laugh loudly, but he didn't tell Nick why he was laughing.

After a bit of walking, Nick jumped on top of one of the buildings at the edge of the Dregs and showed the empty houses to Reynold.

"This place has nearly no one since no one from the Outer City wants to live here, and nobody from the Dregs dares to live here. That means almost all of these houses were permanently empty. I'm not even sure who built them," Nick said.

Reynold grinned as he looked at the houses.

"Oh, this is going to be fun!" he said before jumping off the building.

The ground quaked when Reynold jumped, and the house beneath him almost broke into pieces.

That was very different from when Manela jumped.

Nick looked with surprise as Reynold jumped over 100 meters into the distance without a running start.

Boom.

Nick's eyes widened as he saw a cloud of dust explode when Reynold landed.

Even more, the house he landed on had turned into nothing but rubble.

It was almost like a meteor had fallen on one of the houses.

Then, Nick saw Reynold jump out of the destroyed house.

He flew almost 50 meters into the air before he landed on the neighboring house.

BOOOM!

The house exploded, and the metallic rubble shot in all directions.

BOOM BOOM BOOM!

Then, Nick saw one piece of rubble flying away after the other as Reynold unleashed punches and kicks at crazy speeds!

It was almost like Reynold had transformed into a whirlwind of violence!

In fewer than 30 seconds, Reynold had actually cleared the entire area he landed in of rubble.

He had destroyed a house and cleaned it up in no time at all!

Of course, the rubble wasn't truly "cleaned up".

After all, the rubble was now stuck in all the surrounding houses.

Nick could only take a deep breath.

He had often envisioned the powers of a Veteran, but the only demonstration he had ever seen had been by Manela when she had thrown her spear.

But this time, Nick truly saw what a Veteran could do.

This was no longer in the realm of what humans could do!

Reynold kicked metallic pieces several tons heavy into the distance like they were toys!

When he was done with the second house, he went back to the first house and cleaned that as well.

Then, Reynold just cleaned his hands with a satisfied smirk.

Reynold had created a sizable empty space, and with the border covered in a wall of rubble, it almost looked like an actual arena.

"Hey, Nick! What're you waiting for?!" Reynold shouted with an excited smile.

Nick scratched the back of his head before shrugging and jumping from house to house to reach Reynold in his new arena.

When Nick reached the arena, he noticed something.

There were two sizable holes in the ground.

Nick knew exactly where they had come from and looked at Reynold.

"How come you're not dirty?" Nick asked. "You fell into the sewers, right?"

Yes, the holes were where Reynold had landed.

With his force and weight, he had shot through the house and the floor like a cannonball, and by all intents and purposes, he must have landed in the sewers.

Yet, there was no bit of water on him.

Reynold just laughed loudly.

Ding! Ding!

Then, he knocked on the air around him, and Nick saw something ripple around Reynold.

"Oh, your Barrier, right," Nick said.

Naturally, a Veteran working for Kugelblitz had access to amazing equipment, and the Barriers they could use were probably just as amazing.

"I have to admit, though, I was spooked for a bit," Reynold shouted with loud laughter. "When I was submerged in the water down below, I felt the presence of the Nightmare and jumped away real quick!"

Reynold just kept laughing like something hilarious had happened.

One had to remember that, even though Reynold was incredibly powerful, he was just as helpless in front of the Nightmare as a normal person.

"What're you waiting for, Nick?" Reynold asked with a grin.

Nick was a bit confused.

"This arena isn't big enough," Reynold said. "We gotta get rid of two more houses."

"I took care of two, and now you have to take care of the other two."

Nick raised his brows in surprise as he looked at the houses surrounding him.

Everyone was used to seeing houses all the time, but when one seriously considered destroying one, one would realize how big these houses actually were.

"Destroy a house?" Nick repeated in confusion.

"Yeah, go ahead. Just like me," Reynold shouted with a laugh.

Nick scratched the back of his head.

He could guess that this was already part of his training, but he could also tell that this kind of training was very different from Manela's training.

Nick looked at the blades on his arms and furrowed his brows.

"Oh, wait a second," Reynold said. "Those are no good for such a task."

Nick raised an eyebrow and looked at Reynold.

"Luckily, I expected that you might need some weapons for our training," Reynold said as he took out something from behind his back.

Nick could see two heavy brown gauntlets and two heavy brown greaves that included two armored shoes.

"Your weapons are made for killing," Reynold said with a smirk.

"These are made for violence!"

Chapter 132 No Thinking

Nick looked at the four weapons with surprise and took off his own weapons.

"Where should I put these?" Nick asked, gesturing to his silver weapons.

"Just throw them in the corner somewhere," Reynold said dismissively.

This surprised Nick a bit. "No respect for the craftsmanship?"

Reynold shook his head in confusion. "Wait, what?"

"You know, treating weapons with respect," Nick said. "Manela told me that we are supposed to treat our weapons with respect."

"Why?" Reynold asked in genuine confusion. "They're objects. They're not alive. They don't care."

Nick scratched the back of his neck awkwardly. "Yeah, but Manela said that a lot of work goes into creating these sorts of weapons and that we should always treat them with respect."

Reynold snorted. "Manela's too serious and stuck up," he said with a dismissive wave. "We paid the craftsman, right? Therefore, they belong to us, and that means that we can do with them whatever we want."

"If we want, we can throw them into the sewers and leave. The craftsmen shouldn't care about what happens to their weapons. They got their money, and that's what they wanted in the first place."

Nick couldn't really argue with Reynold.

Logically speaking, Reynold was right.

However, Nick also thought that Manela was right.

In the end, Nick just put his weapons on the roof of a building he wouldn't destroy.

After that, he grabbed the weapons Reynold had taken out.

'Heavy!' Nick thought as soon as he lifted one of the greaves.

Nick estimated that the greaves and gauntlets put together were nearly as heavy as all of his spears.

Reynold laughed loudly as he saw how difficult it was for Nick to put on the greaves and gauntlets.

It was almost like this was the most hilarious thing in the world.

When Nick was finally done, he stood in the middle of the arena like his feet had been glued there.

Reynold clapped in his hands with laughter. "What are you waiting for?! Go!" he shouted in amusement.

Nick furrowed his brows and awkwardly waddled to one of the houses.

It was two stories high and almost ten meters long.

It was a very average house, but to the current Nick, it seemed gigantic.

He took a deep breath as he looked at the huge task in front of him.

He had no idea where to start.

"What are you daydreaming for? Go!" Reynold shouted.

"I'm planning," Nick shouted back.

"Nonsense!" Reynold shouted. "That's what others do, not us!"

Nick furrowed his brows and turned to Reynold.

"We are not like them," Reynold said with an arrogant smirk. "Planning, strategizing, feinting, retreating, whatever. We don't do that."

"We use our fists and legs!"

"Do you know what that means?"

Nick looked at Reynold with uncertainty before shaking his head.

"It means we have more weapons than all of them," Reynold shouted.

"Everyone else has one or two weapons. Big sword for both hands, two swords for both hands, big club, small clubs, big rifle, two pistols, throwing spears, rapiers, whips, whatever!"

"They all only have two weapons at most!"

"We have four!"

"As long as our enemy is within reach, they are helpless!"

"We kick and kick and punch and kick and punch and kick and kick and punch and punch and kick until there is nothing left of our enemy!"

"We attack faster and faster until they can't defend themselves anymore!"

"We don't think!"

"We punch!"

"We kick!"

"We unleash all our aggression and stomp their lights out!"

"We attack so fast that not even we know what kind of attack we will launch next, and if not even we can know that how will our enemy?"

Reynold laughed loudly.

Nick wasn't usually someone who got pumped and excited, especially not in recent times, but the way Reynold had shouted his sentences made even Nick's blood boil.

Nick took a deep breath as his heart rate increased, and he looked at the house again.

"Go!" Reynold shouted again.

Nick pulled his right arm back and swung it forward with all of his power.

BANG!

He hit the wall in front of him and created a massive dent in it.

However, the wall hadn't broken down yet.

The gauntlet was just way too heavy for Nick to swing properly.

'I need to change my-'

"Don't stop! Go!" Reynold shouted, interrupting Nick's thoughts.

Nick shook his head, gritted his teeth, and unleashed a kick.

BANG!

The wall in front of Nick got bent more until it caved in.

"Do it!" Reynold shouted with aggression. "Fucking do it! Fuck this house!"

"Destroy it!"

Nick gritted his teeth and punched again.

"Fuck it up! This asshole insulted your mother! Kill it!" Reynold shouted aggressively.

Nick snorted.

Reynold sure was a character.

"Fuck it up!"

"Kill the fucker!"

However, even though Nick found Reynold's shouts to be a bit embarrassing and funny, he couldn't deny that they worked.

Reynold actually managed to get Nick's blood pumping.

Nick continued kicking and punching the house in front of him.

Things proceeded very well for a couple of minutes, but then Nick started to get exhausted.

It was so exhausting to punch and kick something without any breaks with such heavy gauntlets and greaves.

"Me and all my homies hate this house! Destroy it!" Reynold shouted.

However, Reynold's shouts kept motivating Nick to continue punching and kicking.

RUMBLE!

Eventually, part of the second floor started to collapse.

Nick wanted to jump back, but he felt something kick him into the house.

"It's fighting back! Fuck it up!" Reynold shouted while kicking Nick into the house.

Nick became a bit panicked as the ceiling above him started to collapse.

In his desperation, he performed a powerful punch that bent the heavy metal plate that was falling on him.

Nick felt his entire body shake due to the impact.

But it had worked.

The plate was not falling on him anymore but on the ground beside him.

Yet, that wasn't the end.

More parts of the ceiling began to collapse.

"FUCK 'EM UP!" Reynold shouted like a violent beast.

Nick clenched his fists and started to punch the ceiling again.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

Chapter 133 Two Methods

"Alright, that's about enough," Reynold said as he pulled Nick back by his shoulders.

Nick's breathing had become extremely labored and heavy, but his eyes glared at the house with pure hatred and aggression.

After a couple of seconds, Nick's body sagged, and his breathing became deeper.

"There we go," Reynold said with a smirk as he let go of Nick, who fell onto his knees in exhaustion.

"You did good, Nick," Reynold said with a laugh. "You really fucked that house up!"

Nick slowly turned to look at the house.

It was half collapsed.

The front had completely collapsed, but the back was still at its original height.

Nick had punched the house for half an hour, and this was the result.

It had been extremely exhausting, but Nick got quite far.

"How's it feel?" Reynold asked, squatting beside Nick.

Nick thought about it for a bit as he looked at the house.

"Good," he said.

Reynold laughed loudly. "That's the way we like it!" he shouted as he slapped Nick's back, who started to cough.

"Nick," Reynold said with a quiet voice, for his standards, "we are not thinkers."

"We are not planners."

"Our power doesn't come from here," Reynold said as he pointed at his head.

"It comes from here," he said as he hit his chest with his fist.

"Our brains might make us move smarter, but our feelings make us move faster."

"Someone that needs to get home to protect their family from a threat will run much faster than normal."

"Someone that's filled with hatred and anger will attack much faster and with more power than normal."

"Our weapons are the fastest, and the best way to take advantage of that is to make them even faster."

"Punch faster and faster until nobody can defend anymore!"

"So what if an enemy sees our attack and blocks it? We just continued punching and kicking, and eventually, their foresight won't be of help anymore."

"What good is their intelligence and perception when their bodies can't move fast enough to defend?" Reynold shouted with a loud laugh.

Nick listened intently to Reynold's words.

The things Reynold was teaching Nick were very different from what Manela was teaching him.

Manela was very methodical and planning, while Reynold went all out.

One was the epitome of control, while the other was the epitome of chaos.

"Break's over," Reynold said with a smirk before shoving Nick forward. "Come on! Fuck 'em up!"

Nick took a deep breath and cracked his neck.

Then, he ran straight into the building violently.

He had thrown all the caution to the wind and decided to just go crazy, doing whatever his body was telling him to do.

"Come on! Do it! Fucking do it! Just do it!" Reynold kept shouting.

The house kept shaking under the impacts, and debris was falling from the house as Nick kept demolishing its insides.

20 minutes later, Reynold pulled Nick out again.

Nick nearly puked from exhaustion.

Manela's training was also extremely exhausting, but that kind of exhaustion was different from this one.

At the end of Manela's training, Nick felt like his body had been abused to its fullest extent, and it basically hurt everywhere.

But here, Nick felt like he was about to lose consciousness and die.

With Manela, it felt like Nick had exhausted his body.

With Reynold, it felt like Nick had exhausted his energy.

Another difference was that Manela never gave Nick any breaks, while Reynold forced Nick to take breaks several times.

"Look at that beauty," Reynold said with a smirk as he looked at the house.

Nick also looked at the house.

It had turned into rubble.

It was just a small hill of broken metal.

'That was me,' Nick thought.

'I did this.'

Nick still remembered how big and intimidating the house had been.

It had been a huge structure made of metal.

Now, it had turned into manageable pieces of rubble.

"Next, you gotta kick and punch the pieces so hard that they stick in the edge of the arena," Reynold said as he pointed at the edges of the arena.

When Reynold had destroyed the first two houses, he had kicked the rubble to the side with so much power that it got stuck in the surrounding houses, essentially creating a makeshift wall.

Nick realized that this would be very different from what he had done up until now.

Destroying the house had required a continued explosion of power, but throwing and burying these things in the surrounding houses required short bursts of power.

"Come on! Get to it!" Reynold shouted as he shoved Nick forward.

Nick took a deep breath and charged at the rubble.

He immediately kicked one of the pieces with all of his power.

BANG!

Sadly, the plate hit the building with its flat side and slid down.

Nick wanted to go forward and retrieve the plate.

"Forget it!" Reynold shouted. "You're thinking too much! You only have to bury them in the houses!"

"You don't have to throw from a distance!"

"Just keep punching and kicking at the hill of rubble until it's gone, and when some pieces are still at the edge of the arena, just stomp them into the buildings like they're a shitty stamp!"

"Come on! Faster! Stronger!"

Nick had already continued to attack the hill of rubble, and soon, many different pieces of debris were essentially flying everywhere.

Some of them were landing in the arena.

Some of them hit a building and slid down.

Some of them got buried in a building.

Nick just kept punching and attacking the rubble.

This time, there were no breaks.

Nick's breaks were between kicking the debris.

After all, he was now attacking many small pieces instead of one big piece.

That required many small explosions of power instead of one big one.

"Faster! Faster! Faster!" Reynold shouted.

"Fucking do it!"

"Fuck it up!"

"Kick the fucker!"

Under Reynold's constant shouts of motivation, Nick kept going at the hill of debris.

He didn't even notice the time passing.

Chapter 134 Men and Women

"And that's it!" Reynold shouted with laughter when he saw Nick punching the last piece of debris into a house wall.

Since Nick hadn't managed to make the majority stick to the walls, he just punched and kicked the debris into the walls from melee range.

As soon as Nick was done, he fell onto his back.

He didn't lose consciousness, but he still felt like he couldn't stay on his feet.

His entire body was burning and aching, and the heavy weapons Reynold had given him felt like they had fused to Nick's body.

For over three minutes, Nick couldn't even be bothered to think about anything.

He was just too busy trying to survive and breathe.

When Reynold saw that Nick's eyes regained focus, he walked over and squatted down beside Nick, smirking at him.

"Tough, isn't it?" Reynold asked.

Nick was so busy breathing heavily that he only nodded several seconds later.

"Training as a Zephyx Extractor is different from training as a normal person, Nick," Reynold said with a chuckle. "The more Zephyx we have, the quicker our regeneration becomes."

"As a Peak Newbie, you should be able to recover from something like this within 24 hours or so, which is just perfect for our training tomorrow."

Nick breathed heavily. "Is... training like this... very important?" he asked through gasps.

Reynold nodded. "Yep. Zephyx is our source of energy, and it also increases the power of our bodies."

"However, the increase is based on our fitness."

"For example, Manela is very fit and quite big, but her physical power can't compare to mine."

"Even though the inherent strength difference between sexes becomes less important the stronger we get since the average density of female muscle increases to almost the same density as male muscles, men still tend to train their bodies with more fervor, on average. Obviously, there are exceptions, but on average, that is still the case."

Nick furrowed his brows. "Are you sure?" he asked, slowly sitting up. "This doesn't seem like Manela. Maybe she just prioritizes flexibility and speed over pure strength due to her weapon."

Reynold laughed and shook his head a bit.

"That's an excuse and does not represent the truth. While it is true that an excessive amount of muscle can slow you down, that excessive amount of muscle must truly be excessive."

Reynold lifted his right arm and flexed it, showing his bulky muscles.

The next moment, he relaxed it and moved it over his shoulder.

His other arm also moved behind his back but from below.

After turning around, Nick saw what Reynold was doing.

Right now, Reynold's two hands were holding each other behind his back, one coming from above and one coming from below.

Almost all humans could do something like that, but for someone as muscular as Reynold, this was special.

Then, Reynold did the splits, eliciting a shocked expression from Nick.

"Lastly, our weight barely increases as we grow more powerful," Reynold said as he almost seemed to teleport into the distance.

"Even though I obviously weigh more than Manela, it's, at the absolute most, 100 kilos, and that's being extremely generous."

Reynold grinned. "And what's 100 kilos for a Veteran?"

Nick couldn't find a counterargument.

"But then, why doesn't she train like that?"

Reynold laughed loudly.

"Because she doesn't want to look like me," Reynold shouted.

Nick just looked at Reynold for a while.

That's it?

That was the entire reason?

"It's understandable, though," Reynold added. "There are a couple of female Extractors in Kugelblitz that have bodies very similar to mine, and damn, they're scary."

"If you were to see them, you would immediately think they are men, but the fact that they are women makes this so much scarier."

"Not in a negative sense, of course. It's just that being willing to sacrifice your outward appearance for power to this degree shows a terrifying amount of dedication and willpower."

"They are like iron soldiers, and you can tell their fanatic dedication to becoming stronger just from looking into their eyes."

"I mean, I want to become stronger as well, but damn, I can't compare to them."

Reynold laughed some more.

"I still want to live a little, you know?"

Nick furrowed his brows.

It sounded believable, but he still wanted to ask Manela in a couple of days.

"Anyway, enough talking," Reynold said. "We are over."

"Over?" Nick asked.

"We've been here for three and a half hours," Reynold said.

"Oh," Nick answered. "Sorry."

"Nah, it's fine," Reynold said with a dismissive wave. "We're just going to rectify that tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, you deal with the second house in two and a half hours. With your experience from today, this should be doable."

Nick took a deep breath.

Sure, he would definitely be faster tomorrow, but nearly an entire hour faster?

That would be brutal.

It would be just as brutal as today.

"Not surprising that you thought I would only hold out for ten days or so," Nick said with a sigh.

Reynold laughed loudly.

"We're going to turn you into a bronze titan!" Reynold shouted as he slapped Nick's back.

"You still have a bit of growing ahead of you, and if you eat enough while training hard, you should be able to squeeze a couple more centimeters out of your body!"

Nick hadn't really thought about it before, but now, he realized that he would enjoy being taller.

"Thank you, Reynold," Nick said as he stood up. "You taught me a lot today."

"No problem, boy!" Reynold shouted with a loud laugh. "I'm going to make a man out of you!"

Nick also laughed and nodded.

"Anyway, gotta go. Work calls!" Reynold said with a wave before he jumped into the distance.

"See you tomorrow!" Nick shouted after him.

For a bit, Nick just watched Reynold jumping into the distance.

He was very impressed by Reynold.

He was outstanding in basically every department.

'If the thing with Horua and Pator hadn't happened, maybe I would have become someone like this in the future,' Nick thought.

'But now...'

He could only sigh.

Chapter 135 Playing

Nick felt like his body was falling apart when he came home after eating two chickens.

The exhaustion of his body was so insanely deep.

As soon as he fell into his bed, he almost immediately fell asleep.

Naturally, since he fell asleep very early, he also woke up very early.

After Nick woke up, he still felt quite a couple of aches in his body, but they were far duller than yesterday.

Since he woke up so early, Nick decided to practice his punches and kicks without his weapons.

Not wearing these heavy weapons and having his ability active made all the movements very different.

It was almost like his legs and arms shot forward on their own.

Sadly, Nick had to change locations rather quickly when he heard a couple of creaking noises coming from the floor of his room.

While he wasn't hitting anything, the force he was applying to the ground while punching was still significant.

'Wait, didn't I build a place just for that yesterday?' Nick thought.

After looking at the clock, he realized that he still had three hours before he had to get breakfast and get to work.

So, Nick jumped towards the newly built arena.

Since Nick hadn't taken any of his weapons with him, he moved insanely fast.

However, he also felt a bit naked.

After walking around with his weapons every day, not carrying some of them felt very strange.

For the next three hours, Nick practiced several punches and kicks on one of the surrounding houses, but he made sure that he didn't touch the house that he was supposed to tear down this afternoon.

Since Nick's power was now much stronger due to his ability being active, he did more damage to the house than yesterday, but surprisingly, not that much more.

'Weapons really make a difference,' Nick thought. 'I'm five times stronger than yesterday, but I'm just twice as fast in destroying stuff.'

Nevertheless, Nick kept attacking the house as he tried out different ways of performing a punch.

While Manela always explained in detail how Nick was supposed to do something, Reynold didn't do that.

Instead, Reynold let Nick figure things out on his own.

'Maybe that's all I need?' Nick thought. 'I mean, at some point, if I punch enough times, my punches will become very strong and fast.'

'I guess it's less theory and more practice.'

Because of that, Nick decided to not think about how he was moving very much and just continued moving, but he still remained cautious that he didn't overexert himself for his training that afternoon.

This was only practice, not actual training.

Eventually, Nick got something to eat and entered Dark Dream.

"Good morning, Nick," Wyntor said from his office.

"Morning," Nick answered with a nod.

"How's Reynold's training?" Wyntor asked with a smirk.

"Exhausting," Nick immediately answered, "but also very good."

"I presume you can deal with it?" Wyntor asked.

Nick nodded. "I like his training. I wouldn't want to quit, even if you wanted me to."

"Good to hear," Wyntor said.

After that, Nick worked with the Dreamer and dealt with all of his duties, and before he knew it, it was time for his training with Reynold.

When Nick arrived at the arena, Reynold was already waiting there.

"Ready for a new day in hell?" Reynold asked with a loud laugh.

"Yes!" Nick shouted.

"Good! Good!" Reynold shouted as he threw the four weapons from yesterday to Nick.

Nick quickly switched into them and nodded at Reynold with conviction.

"You ready?" Reynold asked.

Nick nodded.

"Good," Reynold said.

Then, Reynold grabbed Nick, lifted him above his head, and threw him at the house he was supposed to tear down like a cannonball.

"Then get to it!" Reynold shouted with some aggression.

BOOM! BOOOM!

Nick shot through the house and came out on the other side.

Right now, Nick's blood was already pumping, but not for the same reason as yesterday.

'What the fuck?!' was the only thing Nick could think right now.

He felt like his body was hurting all over, and he wasn't even sure if he had broken something or not.

'Did I just fly through the entire house?' Nick thought.

However, his thoughts were cut short when he hit the house behind that one, which stopped his flight.

For a while, Nick just remained in the position he had landed in.

'Did that guy just throw me through a fucking house?!' Nick thought.

Nick looked at the hole he left behind.

He could see Reynold through it, who just smirked victoriously.

"Come on! We don't have all day!" Reynold shouted.

Nick shook his head a bit.

At that moment, Nick felt a hand on his shoulder.

Reynold had already arrived beside him.

"Too slow! We gotta hurry up! We only got two and a half hours today!" Reynold said quickly as he started to lift Nick again.

"Hey! Hey! Hey!" Nick shouted rapidly as he began to flail.

"Here we go!"

Reynold pulled Nick back with one hand.

"I bet I can also throw spears!"

Then, he threw Nick at the house like he was a spear.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Nick shot through the entire thing.

This time, he had positioned his fists in a way that pointed at the building while also protecting his head.

Nick felt his bones shake, but it didn't hurt nearly as much as the first throw.

On top of that, Nick managed to somewhat change his alignment and managed to land on his feet and knees, sliding for a couple of meters.

Luckily, the uniform of a Zephyx Extractor was extremely durable, and the skin and flesh on Nick's knees didn't get ground off.

Nick's breathing had already quickened as his fight or flight instinct kicked in.

This was actually dangerous!

"No time for thinking!" Reynold said as he grabbed Nick again.

"What are you doing?!" Nick shouted in a mix of fear and anger.

Reynold smiled brightly.

"Playing!"

Chapter 136 Recovery

For the next hour, Reynold kept grabbing Nick and throwing him through the house.

Naturally, the house collapsed quite quickly, but that didn't stop Reynold.

Instead of throwing Nick through the house, Reynold simply threw him into the pile until he got stuck there.

Nick kept asking what Reynold was doing, and Reynold kept answering with short answers like it was obvious what he was doing.

Playing.

Having fun.

"Aren't you supposed to train me?" Nick asked one time before being thrown again.

In response, Reynold just laughed loudly.

"Am I not?"

"No?" Nick said when Reynold pulled him out of the pile like a vegetable.

"We also gotta learn to defend, my boy!" Reynold shouted as he buried Nick in the debris again.

"Before you jump, you gotta learn how to fall," Reynold said as he pulled Nick out again.

"Today, I'm the one having fun!" Reynold shouted with loud laughter.

For once, he didn't immediately throw Nick into the pile again.

"You just have to learn to defend from what's coming!"

Nick gulped.

After that, Reynold changed his grip on Nick and held one of his ankles with his right arm.

"Whooooaaa!" Nick shouted as Reynold swung him around like a towel.

"Here goes!" Reynold shouted with a mad grin.

BANG!

Then, he used Nick like a stick and hit the pile with him.

A big part of the metallic debris exploded and scattered.

At the same time, some blood also splashed around.

Nick had protected his head with his forearms, but his forearms had received several cuts.

"That's no good!" Reynold shouted when he saw the blood. "You gotta use your weapons to defend, not your naked body!"

Before Nick could think about how he was supposed to do that, Reynold hit him into the pile again.

More blood.

"Come on!" Reynold shouted.

BANG!

"Ya gotta learn how to defend!"

BANG!

Several bruises had appeared on Nick's arms by now, and he was in a lot of pain.

However, Nick could deal with the pain.

After all, in the sewers, the Nightmare had put him through pain that was much, much worse.

Additionally, the more often Reynold swung Nick, the easier it became for Nick to defend.

The way Reynold swung Nick was almost identical every single time, and Nick had learned how to defend himself in this case.

"Good!" Reynold shouted with a laugh when he saw that Nick's injuries stopped increasing.

So, Reynold turned Nick and grabbed one of his wrists instead.

BANG!

Nick's flat body hit the pile.

At that moment, Nick's mind stopped working.

The power of the hit had been so strong that Nick felt unable to breathe.

It was like all of his organs tried to curl up.

"No time to relax!" Reynold shouted as he lifted Nick again.

At this point, Nick just wanted to get out.

The hits earlier were bad, but they just hurt.

These ones, on the other hand, felt genuinely dangerous.

Nick grabbed Reynold's hand and tried to pull his own hand out.

CRK!

"FUCK! Okay! Okay!" Nick shouted as he let go of Reynold.

Just now, Reynold had strengthened his grip, and Nick felt like his wrist was about to break in two!

"This is training, Nick! You can't run from training!" Reynold said with a smirk.

BANG!

Reynold hit Nick into the pile again.

This time, Nick managed to protect his torso by pulling his knees to his chest.

His shins hurt a lot, but it was better than last time.

Over the next couple of times, Nick became better and better at this until he even managed to directly land on his feet.

"Good job!" Reynold shouted with a grin. "Next!"

Reynold grabbed Nick at a seemingly random spot, jumped away from the pile, and threw him without any control at the pile.

Nick's body was spinning uncontrollably through the air, and Nick felt himself hit the pile with his ass first.

Once more, Nick started to receive injuries.

Reynold grabbed him at a different random spot and carelessly flung him at the pile again.

Nick spun uncontrollably again.

This happened several more times.

But slowly, Nick learned to adapt.

He managed to somewhat control the way his body was rotating in the air and how to tell where he currently was.

Nick started to hit the pile with his arms and legs more and more.

Until one moment...

BANG!

Nick hit the pile with the soles of his feet and stopped his momentum by kneeling down.

Naturally, the force of the throw still pushed him and the pile quite a bit, but Nick had essentially stabilized his position.

At this moment, Nick was very injured.

Blood was coming out from all over his body, and if he hadn't known about his increased recovery rate due to his Zephyx, he would have already tried to stop the training out of fear.

The pain was bad, but Nick's adrenaline did a great job suppressing it.

"Well done!" Reynold shouted before he grabbed Nick again.

Then, he just threw Nick in a random direction.

He wasn't even aiming for the pile anymore.

This time, Nick had to learn to land on flat ground and on vertical walls, but with his previous experience, he quickly got used to it.

After that, Reynold also randomly changed the angle at which he was throwing Nick.

Sometimes, Nick flew almost perfectly straight into the air, and other times, he skidded across the floor like a pebble skipping across a river.

Nick became better and better.

Finally, Reynold wasn't even throwing Nick anymore.

Now, Reynold was "lightly" punching and kicking Nick.

These punches and kicks were not designed to injure him but to throw and push him.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

In no time at all, Nick started to recover very quickly after every punch and kick, and he even managed to see Reynold coming before he actually grabbed his body.

At that moment, Nick realized how much he had actually learned today.

He was able to recover from such powerful punches and kicks so quickly!

That was incredible!

Chapter 137 First Week

"HAHAHAHA! Good! Good!" Reynold shouted with laughter as he clapped loudly.

By now, Nick had stopped bleeding.

Sure, there were plenty of dried clots of blood all over his body, but he was no longer actively bleeding from anywhere.

"That should about do it!" Reynold shouted as he slowly approached Nick.

Nick felt nervous when Reynold was approaching him, but he just kept telling himself that the training was over.

After all, why else would Reynold slowly walk towards Nick like this?

Nevertheless, after being thrown around for who knew how long, Nick still felt nervous.

Since he now also had some time to calm down, Nick also looked around the arena.

Sure enough, all the debris had been thrown into the border of the arena.

The entire house had been destroyed and cleaned up.

'To think that Reynold did all of this by swinging me around,' Nick thought.

It was so bizarre.

Nick had once thought about destroying a house, but he had never thought about being the tool of someone that destroyed said house.

"Reynold, you taught me so much today," Nick said with a sigh as he realized how stark the difference between the start of today's training and now was.

In the beginning, Nick was getting injured by everything, but now, he felt comfortable being thrown around in any imaginable way.

If he were to fight someone more powerful than him, Nick would at least be able to recover from a powerful attack and continue running away.

If Nick were attacked by someone much stronger, it would be over as soon as the enemy managed to throw Nick to the ground, but with this training, such a throw might even become an opportunity for Nick.

After all, not everyone would expect Nick to suddenly flip in the air, which might result in them misjudging the trajectory of their target and crashing against a building or something.

That was an extremely important skill to have.

"It's what I do," Reynold shouted with a loud laugh.

Then, he turned to the arena and grandly gestured towards it. "Also, our arena is finally done! Next week, we can truly start training!"

"Next week? Oh, right!" Nick said, realizing that they only had two days of training this week.

Manela had four days, and Reynold had three days, but this week, he only had two due to Julian having taken one of them.

This meant that Nick would only see Reynold again in five days since he would spend the next four with Manela.

"How late is it?" Nick asked.

Reynold looked at something on his wrist.

When Nick had first seen this thing, he had been awestruck.

A clock for a wrist!

He hadn't even known that was possible!

"We are about done. We cleaned the house in two and a half hours," Reynold said with a grin.

"You threw me around for two and a half hours?" Nick asked.

Reynold just laughed loudly. "How else are you going to learn? You know, not everyone gets the opportunity to be flung around like this for hours on end."

Nick couldn't disagree.

"Anyway, I'm looking forward to our three days next week," Reynold said.

Nick nodded. "Thanks again."

"No problem, my boy," Reynold said as he slapped Nick's shoulder again.

The two of them gave their farewells and split up.

Nick went to buy some food, and for the evening, he decided to focus on getting reacquainted with his spears in the training area that Manela had shown him.

Nick's first week of training with his weapons was officially over, and he had learned a lot.

Next day, he met Manela at the training ground again.

After spending two days with Reynold, Manela didn't seem as big as before to Nick.

Manela nodded when she saw Nick. "Get warmed up. You know how," she ordered.

Nick nodded, jumped down the building, and used his spears to get to the five spots in the training field.

It took Nick just seven minutes while carrying all five of his spears.

When he arrived back on top of the building, Manela looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "You move differently," she commented.

"I do?" Nick repeated in surprise.

How was he moving differently?

"It's like you're no longer afraid of stumbling or falling over," Manela explained.

"Oh, yeah," Nick said with a nod. "My other teacher taught me yesterday."

"Yesterday?" Manela asked with furrowed brows. "I don't think that's something that can be taught in just a single day. Who's your teacher?"

"He's also a Veteran from Kugelblitz," Nick said.

Manela didn't show any reaction.

"It's a pretty big guy called Reynold. He's teaching me how to fight with my fist weapons," Nick said.

A light appeared in Manela's eyes. "Reynold? The loud one?"

"Yes, the loud one," Nick answered with a chuckle.

Manela nodded. "How did he teach you?" she asked, the suspicion in her voice replaced by curiosity.

Nick scratched the back of his head. "Reynold destroyed a house by throwing and swinging me."

Manela furrowed her brows in confusion and skepticism.

What did Nick mean by that?

Nick explained what had happened in more detail, and eventually, Manela could only accept that this was truly how Reynold had trained Nick.

Although, the more she thought about it, the more it started to make sense.

In a way, it was like Nick was fighting with his life on the line against someone far more powerful than him for over two hours.

After being thrown around that many times, even an idiot would learn how to avoid getting injured.

"It's good that Reynold is teaching you," Manela said. "He's one of the vice team leaders for us Veterans, you know that?"

Nick blinked a couple of times in surprise. "No, I don't."

"Well," Manela said, "we have around 40 Veterans in Kugelblitz, which are split into four teams with ten members each."

"One of the ten members of each team is a team leader, and every team leader has two vice team leaders. So, to break it down, there is one team leader, two vice team leaders, and seven normal Veterans in every team of Veterans in Kugelblitz."

"And Reynold is one of them."

'This means that Reynold is outstanding even for the standards of Kugelblitz!' Nick thought.

"What about you?" Nick asked.

Chapter 138 A Job

"I'm just a normal member," Manela said.

"Oh," Nick answered.

"Is that surprising to you?" she asked.

"Oh, no! Sorry if it came across like I was disappointed," Nick said hastily.

"It didn't," Manela added emotionlessly. "I was simply asking a question."

"Oh, ok," Nick said.

He didn't say anything for three seconds.

"Well, I was a bit surprised," Nick said. "You seem like someone who knows how to take charge of a situation."

Manela glanced at Nick. "I can see how I can give off that impression. In fact, I used to be a team leader in Ghosty's Lab before I switched to Kugelblitz."

"You were in Ghosty's Lab before?" Nick asked in surprise.

Manela nodded. "Over half of the staff come from other Manufacturers. Kugelblitz rarely hires Newbies and Johns since everyone else wants to join us anyways."

Nick nodded. "That makes sense."

Manela didn't answer.

"Hey, Manela?" Nick asked.

Manela looked at Nick.

"Do you want to be a team leader again?"

Manela snorted. "No."

This surprised Nick. "Why not?"

"It's not as cracked up as it seems to be," she said. "In a big corporation, power and hierarchy work very differently."

"You can probably just tell Wyntor that you want an Extractor removed, and they get fired."

"That's not how it works in big corporations."

"If an Extractor makes trouble, I have to file several complaints with upper management, who will then tell me to handle the issue."

"When I show that it hasn't improved, they will talk a bit with the Extractor, which might make things even worse since the Extractor will now hate me even more than before."

"After several times of this exact thing, I can finally get rid of the person that has made trouble in my team for so long."

"The power from both sides looks very different."

"Employees believe that their superior is completely in control at all times and that they almost can't resist."

"Meanwhile, the superior almost feels like the employee is in control."

"If an employee is rude to me, the only thing I can do to them is reprimand them, and if that doesn't work, I need to put in a lot of effort to convince upper management to reprimand them."

"However, if I am rude to an employee, upper management will immediately pull me out and tear into me and tell me that I can't possibly talk like that to my team. Even if they were rude first."

"Additionally, whenever I give an order, there is nothing I can do really if they just say no."

"What if they say no? If I give the order again, they will just say no again. I also can't attack them or force them. In the end, I have to talk to my superior and get them to do something about it, which might take several days or weeks, and on top of that, they will believe that I am the incompetent one because I can't control my team."

Nick just listened to Manela's rant in stunned silence.

"Being a team leader is filled with stress and annoyance, which is why I am not interested in that position anymore," Manela said.

"What about becoming an Expert?" Nick asked. "Wouldn't becoming a team leader give you some sort of advantage?"

"Who says I want to be an Expert?" Manela asked.

Now, this took Nick by surprise. "You don't?"

"I am already in enough danger by working with the Adult Specters. I finally managed to work with them without being in too much danger, and I'm not about to go through the same thing again with Elders."

"Is it that bad?" Nick asked.

"Nick," Manela said. "What is a Zephyx Extractor?"

Nick blinked a couple of times. "I'm not sure," he said.

"It's not a philosophical question," Manela said.

"It's a job," she added.

"A Zephyx Extractor is a job."

"Why do you do a job?" she asked.

"Money?" Nick answered with a question.

"Correct, money," Manela said, evenly looking at Nick. "If none of us were getting paid, almost nobody would show up to work."

"That's the undeniable truth."

"We do work so that we can live. We don't live so that we can work," Manela said.

"I'm earning more than enough."

"I'm strong enough."

"I am secure enough."

"I have enough free time."

"Why would I sacrifice all of my security and free time for more money and strength?"

"My goal is not to become the strongest person in the world. My goal is to lead a happy life."

"Work is work. Life is life."

"That's it," Manela explained.

Nick understood what Manela was saying, but in a way, it felt strange.

Yes, being a Zephyx Extractor is a job, but it also allowed someone to unlock incredible powers.

Wasn't Manela interested in being able to do things that she could only dream of right now?

Didn't she want to become stronger?

Nick also remembered what Reynold had said about Manela.

He had said that Manela wasn't interested in training as much as Reynold due to her appearance.

Back then, Nick hadn't fully believed Reynold, but now, he did.

Right, if Manela only viewed this as a job, why would she sacrifice her appearance for it?

Nick knew that this was Manela's choice and her opinion, but it just felt so strange to him.

"You don't want to become more powerful?" he asked.

"Of course I do," Manela answered, "but in this world, power comes with responsibility and work."

"The Experts dedicate their entire life to work, and half of them don't even have a partner."

"That's not a life I want to live."

"While I am interested in becoming more powerful, I am not willing to put in the time and work required to become more powerful."

"Becoming stronger just isn't as attractive as it used to be."

Manela looked at the horizon.

"Many people dream of becoming the most powerful in this world."

"However, being the most powerful probably also means being the busiest."

"And that's not something that is appealing to me."

Chapter 139 Three Months

After talking a bit more, Manela said that they had wasted enough time and that they would start training immediately.

For the next four days, Manela kept instructing Nick on how to throw his spears while also constantly refreshing the basics he had already learned.

After that, Nick had three days of training with Reynold.

During these three days, Reynold kept charging at Nick, trying to hit him.

Reynold wanted Nick to get acquainted with making quick and correct decisions in a stressful and hectic situation.

Since Nick was using fist weapons, he needed to be the fastest person in a close-combat fight, which also meant making the quickest decisions.

In essence, Reynold was shoving all kinds of movements into Nick's subconscious.

The more familiar movements became, the quicker they could be performed.

Sadly, something like this would take a long time.

Then, it was time for Nick's training with Manela again.

Back and forth.

Back and forth.

While Nick was training with his weapons, Jenny and Trevor were also training in their weapons.

Jenny had found a good teacher for her long-distance rifle in an experienced guard team working for Gemini.

While the guard team didn't have a single Zephyx Extractor, their tactics, teamwork, and mastery over weapons made them dangerous to even Veterans.

Jenny's teacher was the sniper of this team, and he wielded an incredibly expensive and powerful rifle that could be loaded with Zephyx-based ammunition and even used Zephyx as a source of power.

The rifle cost over three million credits, and it was the only thing that allowed the guard team to threaten a Veteran.

Firing such a rifle cost over 50,000 credits per shot, and if the appropriate fortifications were not in place, the recoil would even break several bones of the sniper.

So, even though he was not a Zephyx Extractor, the gunner was still extremely experienced and more than good enough to teach Jenny.

Meanwhile, Trevor found a sort of club for convertible spear users.

Trevor had a spear with a retractable shaft, which meant that the spear could also be used as a dagger.

Such a weapon was officially called a convertible spear.

Only very few people were using convertible spears, which was why this club was formed.

It basically included over half of all the people who used this kind of weapon, and the strongest person in the club was an Expert.

The Expert instructed the two Veterans, and the two Veterans instructed all of the Johns.

Any Newbies got instructed by different Johns.

Membership for this club was rather cheap, but it came with the duty to instruct one's juniors.

Nevertheless, Trevor was also making amazing strides in learning how to wield his weapon.

The members of Dark Dream were becoming more powerful.

As several weeks passed, the three Extractors also began to change.

Jenny and Trevor had already become Peak Newbies, just like Nick.

Since Jenny's training was mostly focused on stealth, running away, aiming, and shooting, she became a bit more muscular, but not in a very noticeable way.

Although, many men on the streets kept turning their heads when she passed by them.

Jenny had also cut off the bangs that went down the right side of her head.

These bangs had often gotten in her way while she was trying to look through the sight of her rifle.

In the end, she decided to remove the bangs on her right while keeping the ones on her left, giving her an asymmetrical but striking appearance.

Meanwhile, Trevor was becoming more muscular, but also not by much.

Trevor had already been quite fit before joining Dark Dream. On top of that, Trevor actively avoided becoming too muscular.

After all, he was supposed to be Wyntor's undercover agent, which meant that he had to fit in with strangers.

He had to be charming and handsome, not intimidating.

But the biggest change was Nick.

Reynold was going hard on Nick.

Every week, Reynold got another brilliant idea, and Nick left every day with either heavy injuries or an absolutely exhausted body.

Sometimes, even both.

But the hard work was showing results!

Since Nick could train to death every single day due to his recovery, the growth of Nick's muscles was unparalleled.

While Nick had always been quite fit, he had never looked like an actual warrior.

But now, he did.

Nick wasn't as muscular as Reynold, but he was getting there.

When he flexed one of his arms, one could already see all the different muscles in quite a bit of detail.

Additionally, Nick's back and legs had also become much bigger since he was carrying his extremely heavy weapons every single day.

Another good thing was that Nick was growing, which improved his power even more.

About six months had passed since the founding of Dark Dream, and Nick had grown by about five centimeters, which put him at 178 centimeters.

From the looks of things, Nick was having a growth spurt, and it was probably also his last one.

So, he was doing his best and kept training and eating a lot to extend his growth spurt.

Reaching a height of 190 centimeters was impossible, but reaching one of 185 centimeters should still be possible.

After three months of training, Jenny, Trevor, and Nick became very confident in their power.

One night, Dark Dream held a secret meeting, and Wyntor told Trevor and Jenny about the spy that was spying on Dark Dream every few nights or so.

Then, Wyntor told them what his plan was.

The next time the spy showed up, Nick would kill him, which would provoke Cycle, Ardum's company.

That meant that working would become many times more dangerous and that every employee would become a target.

While it was illegal to kill a Zephyx Extractor, nobody really investigated these things unless they happened in the middle of the day in the middle of the street.

Surprisingly, Jenny and Trevor had no complaints.

Dark Dream had taken them out of the Dregs, and they were willing to do anything for it!

Chapter 140 Waiting

For the next couple of days, Nick went to sleep directly after training and stood up deep in the night.

Then, for the first couple of hours after waking up, Nick waited on top of a neighboring building while watching Dark Dream's warehouse.

It was finally time.

Wars and conflicts between Manufacturers could happen for any reason.

Sometimes, it was as major as an assassination, but other times, it was simply because one Extractor looked at another one with shifty eyes.

But most of the time, it was simply small things that spiraled out of control.

In a certain way, there was no enmity between Cycle and Dark Dream.

Both of them were just working on their Specters.

It was just that Ardum had acted like an asshole towards Wyntor, but to be fair, Wyntor acted like an asshole back.

And then came the entire spy business.

Under normal circumstances, something like this would be easily resolved by confronting the other Manufacturer and demanding payment from them.

The other Manufacturer would apologize deeply, say that this was an order given by a rogue manager, and pull all members back.

Of course, that was a lie, but that didn't matter.

In the political game, only the surface counted.

As long as there was no concrete proof, the public wouldn't be happy with seeing one Manufacturer attacking another.

Additionally, when it came to big Manufacturers with over a hundred employees, it was also important that everyone perceived themselves to be fighting a defensive war.

The other company was the one antagonizing and attacking them!

They were just defending themselves!

But if a Manufacturer ordered their Extractors to attack someone they perceive to be innocent, things could become very troublesome.

One had to remember that these were companies, not countries.

These were employees, not soldiers.

If a Manufacturer decided to act like a tyrant that attacked any other Manufacturer just for existing, many of their Extractors would quit and join another Manufacturer.

Because of that, it was important to show proof that going against another Manufacturer was justified.

In a way, this also counted for Dark Dream.

If Wyntor just randomly ordered Jenny to assassinate the wife of some Extractor, things would become very troublesome.

Maybe, Jenny would even run to the wife and tell her everything.

After that, the other company would take her with them.

Wyntor would demand them to hand her over while denying everything, but they would keep protecting Jenny and making her one of their employees.

Giving assassination orders was always very risky without being able to provide a very compelling reason.

Luckily, Dark Dream had their reason.

All three Extractors had seen how much of an asshole Ardum was, which was already more than enough for them.

Then that entire thing with Pator appeared, and now, there was even another spy.

Wyntor didn't need to fear his employees abandoning ship.

They were all unified against Cycle.

But what about Cycle?

They had six Newbies and two Johns, including Ardum, and only Ardum had ever come into direct contact with Dark Dream.

Their spy had also seen Dark Dream, but they had not come into contact with them.

The remaining six employees had never seen anyone from Dark Dream.

What if a war suddenly broke out between these two Manufacturers?

Well, without a good reason, Ardum's employees wouldn't feel great risking their lives fighting some random people they had never heard of.

This meant that Ardum would need some time to prepare a good lie to get their people to follow him into war.

If he didn't have one, some of his employees might transfer to Dark Dream.

'From what Wyntor said, Ardum probably doesn't expect his spy to die,' Nick thought as he watched the ceiling of Dark Dream from a neighboring house.

'Ardum is too arrogant and thinks he has everything under control.'

However, Nick was still a bit skeptical.

After all, while Wyntor was extremely intelligent, he could also be wrong sometimes.

What if Ardum just acted like a dumbass to fool Wyntor into lowering his guard?

'For now, it doesn't matter. Wyntor is the CEO, and I just have to trust in him. I just have to wait for the spy to appear.'

The spy had been coming fewer and fewer times.

They were probably cautious due to the guards that Wyntor had hired.

'I wonder what they are even looking for,' Nick thought. 'I don't see what Ardum would gain from looking into our warehouse after so long.'

'I mean, I get it in the beginning since he probably just wanted to know what it looked like, but what's the point of keeping watch? He's seen everything already,' Nick thought as he scratched the back of his head.

'Is there a different reason for sending the spy?'

'What if they are actually not a spy?'

'I mean, I've never seen them. I just feel their presence from time to time.'

Nick kept thinking about that for a while, but in the end, he just shrugged.

'It's Wyntor's problem, not mine. I just need to deal with the spy.'

A couple hours passed.

Nick was extremely bored.

'Oh?' Nick thought as his body stiffened.

Nick just saw something white silently landing on the roof of Dark Dream.

It was shortly before 5 a.m. at this moment, which was when the shift of the guards changed.

One could say it was the perfect opportunity for someone to do something.

Nick took out a pair of binoculars that Wyntor had given him and looked at the white thing on top of Dark Dream.

'Someone wearing a white cloak,' Nick thought.

The person on top of Dark Dream wore a white cloak that made it difficult to see them under the constant light of the sun.

Then, Nick saw the person fidgeting around with something, but he couldn't see exactly what it was due to the huge cloak.

'Well, whatever it is, it can't be good.'

Nick took a deep breath.

He didn't look forward to it.