

The Sun 421

Chapter 421 – Difficult Work

Nick left the Containment Unit and checked the Zephyx container.

'84 grams,' Nick thought. 'If we subtract the cost of the Recovery Liquid, this comes to about 74 grams of profit.'

'The good thing is that there is no limit to how much Zephyx can be made in a day.'

'According to the report, the Blaze produces more Zephyx the more Zephyx it burns. As a Mid Veteran, my body is made of far more Zephyx than the body of a John. Because of that, it takes the Blaze more time to burn my arm, but it also produces more Zephyx that way.'

'A Peak John can hold their hand in the fire for a maximum of three seconds before it becomes so damaged that it has to be amputated.'

'However, the Peak John would still need a drop of Recovery Liquid, and the price of that doesn't fluctuate. Also, I can't just keep the Recovery Liquid from them since that would be barbaric.'

'I need to test more.'

Nick left the fourth floor to search for someone.

About two minutes later, he returned with a man of average height and black hair.

"Oh, it's a Possession Specter, Boss?" Taren asked.

Nick nodded and led Taren into the room.

When Taren saw the burning stick, he took a deep breath.

He really hoped that he didn't need to do what he thought he needed to do.

"It gains power by burning Zephyx," Nick said.

Taren's heart rate increased.

"Yes, it hurts just as much as you imagine," Nick added.

Taren closed his eyes.

"Will it increase my power?" he asked.

Except for Nick, Taren was probably the most power-hungry employee of Dark Dream.

He was the person that kicked the Can the most.

Sadly, he had become too strong to kick the Can, which meant that his growth had slowed down.

"It's an Initial Adult," Nick said.

Taren's eyes looked at the Blaze with absolute focus.

"It's basically just like the Can, but more painful and stronger," Nick said.

A complex mix of emotions appeared inside Taren.

He was afraid, but he was also glad that he finally had a way to grow stronger quicker!

"Okay," Taren said after a while. "What do I do?"

"I'll show you," Nick said as he approached the Blaze again.

Taren watched with bated breath.

Then, Nick took a breath and held his other hand into the Blaze.

SSSSSS!

The fire became violent, and Nick gritted his teeth.

Yet, from Taren's perspective, Nick barely showed any reaction.

He wasn't sure if Nick had exaggerated the pain or if he was just a monster.

Ten seconds later, Nick pulled his arm out and got a drop of Recovery Liquid.

Nick took a deep breath.

"That's it," he said. "However, since your body is weaker, you can only hold your hand in there for three seconds, four at maximum."

"After that, you are allowed to use one drop of Recovery Liquid," Nick explained.

Taren nodded. "Understood."

Then, he looked at the Blaze and approached.

He took a deep breath.

And then, he held his arm in.

"Ah, fuck!"

Taren shouted and pulled his arm out after just a single second.

His arm was red all over, but it wasn't as black or sinewy as Nick's arm had been.

Nevertheless, this was already painful enough, and a sweat broke out all over Taren's body.

Taren ran towards the faucet.

Bonk!

However, Nick stepped between him and the faucet.

"You were in there for barely a second. If you use the faucet now, we are going to break even, but we want a profit," Nick said neutrally.

Taren looked at Nick in shock.

"You can leave now or put your hand in there for another two seconds," Nick said.

Taren gritted his teeth.

This had hurt like absolute hell!

Taren kept looking at his burned arm, which was starting to shake.

He glanced at the door.

He looked at the Blaze.

He looked at the door.

He clenched his fists.

He wanted to continue, but it was just so fucking painful!

After a bit, Taren approached the Blaze again.

Then, he slowly extended his arm.

His arm went back and forth.

It approached the Blaze, quickly pulled back, went forward, pulled back, shot forward, shot backward, and so on.

"Fuck!" Taren shouted in rage and frustration.

Then, he shoved his arm into the Blaze.

And immediately pulled it out again.

"FUCK!" Taren shouted again.

He wanted to grow stronger!

But he just couldn't fucking do it!

"Why can't I fucking do this?!" Taren shouted in frustration.

This was one of the reasons why the city had given them this specific Specter.

It was extremely difficult to work with the Blaze.

Putting one's hand in the fire for just a tiny moment wasn't actually that difficult.

The difficult part was keeping it in the fire.

Burning pain was one of the worst pains in existence.

One had to remember that Extractors were employees, not slaves.

A Manufacturer couldn't force an Extractor to do something against their will unless they literally threatened the Extractor's life.

But then, an Extractor's loyalty would be compromised, which would be horrible for the Manufacturer.

Getting one's hands burned as a day job was not something most people would want.

It required extreme conviction to work with the Blaze in a profitable way.

Taren felt horrible right now.

He felt especially terrible when he remembered that Nick had held his arm in there for ten whole seconds, while he couldn't do it for three!

"Fuck!" Taren shouted in rage.

"Boss!"

Nick looked at the agitated Taren.

"I can't count like this!" Taren shouted. "Take my arms out when the three seconds are up!"

Nick's eyebrows rose.

Then, Taren turned to the Blaze with an absolutely mad glint in his eyes.

He rapidly breathed in and out.

Sweat broke out all across his body, and his eyes seemed to lose focus.

And then, he jumped forward and grabbed the burning piece of metal with both of his hands.

"AAAAAAHHHHHHH!"

Chapter 422 – The Bitch

BANG!

Nick pulled the screaming Taren away.

Both of his arms had been severely injured.

However, only his right arm was comparable to Nick's damaged arm.

That was because Nick had to pull Taren out after only two seconds since the other arm had been in there for one second already.

If he kept the arm in there for longer, it might be unsavable.

Nick put Taren's arms under the faucet and pressed the button.

One drop of liquid came out, and Taren rapidly rubbed it across both of his arms.

Taren's arms almost completely recovered within three seconds.

They were only a bit red.

Naturally, as a Peak John, Taren didn't need as much Recovery Liquid as Nick.

One drop was enough for both his arms.

Taren took a deep breath and sighed in relief.

His arms still hurt, but it was nothing compared to before.

"If you want, you can do that once per day per appendage," Nick said. "Recovery Liquid counts as foreign Zephyx, and if you use it too often on the same part of your body, your control over your Zephyx will permanently lower. Your body needs about 20 hours to fully assimilate the foreign Zephyx and make it its own."

Taren looked with surprise at Nick. "I didn't know that," he said.

Nick nodded. "It's not common knowledge since it's not relevant to many people. Not many Extractors need to use Recovery Liquid on a daily basis."

Of course, the two didn't even consider not using the Recovery Liquid.

The pain was crippling, and without the Recovery Liquid, they would be paralyzed with pain for hours.

Taren looked at the Blaze for a while.

The first time was always the most difficult, and now that the ordeal was behind him, he wasn't that much against working with the Blaze again.

"Once per day per appendage," Taren said.

Then, Taren looked at his legs.

But he shook his head.

Maybe tomorrow.

"I think I will work with it from time to time," Taren said.

Nick nodded.

"Boss," Taren said.

"Yes?" Nick asked.

"Could you help me again if I need it? Just like today?" Taren asked.

"Sure," Nick answered.

"Thanks," Taren said.

After that, the two of them left the Containment Unit, and Taren went back to his job as one of Dark Dream's two team leaders.

Meanwhile, Nick looked at the Containment Unit a bit more.

The city hadn't told Dark Dream the background of the Blaze, but Julian knew that anyway due to his connections.

A bit more than 25 years ago, people regularly vanished and reappeared.

Yet, when they reappeared, they were completely different from before.

They barely talked, got startled by every loud sound, and, especially interesting, they were absolutely terrified of fire.

All of them barely had any recollection of what was going on.

They only remembered parts, and these parts were filled with absolute fear, terror, and suffering.

Eventually, the origin of these disappearances was uncovered.

The Mistress, a Fanatic.

The Mistress had created a cult of normal people and even a couple of Extractors.

These people abducted citizens for the Mistress.

And, well, the Mistress gained power by causing pain.

The abducted people were put through the worst torture imaginable to satisfy the Mistress.

The only reason why the people weren't killed on top of that was to not anger the government too much.

If they killed every person they abducted, the Manufacturers and government would search much harder for the disappearances.

But in the end, Kugelblitz took care of the Mistress and her cult.

Ever since then, the Mistress has been contained within Kugelblitz, and she also gained a new nickname.

The Bitch.

Working with her was not fun at all.

Two years after the Mistress had been captured, the city found the Blaze.

An Adult Possession Specter.

Quite valuable and rare.

However, the existence of the Blaze had also given more credibility to Ghosty's theory regarding the origin of Possession Specters.

Apparently, the burning stick had been a torch that had been used to torture the people the Mistress' cult had abducted.

And back then, the burning stick had not been a Specter yet.

Based on Ghosty's theory, countless people had feared the torch, which had surrounded it with negative energies.

Not many objects had caused so much suffering in Crimson City, which was why this object had materialized as an Adult.

At least, that was the theory.

Ghosty's theory seemed quite credible.

Maybe a person had been put into a coffin and then thrown into the sewers, which could have created the Screaming Coffin.

Maybe the Glasses had caused an influential person to make many horrible mistakes in the past.

Maybe many people got injured while kicking the Can before it became a Specter.

These levels of suffering could correspond with the powers of the Possession Specters.

Of course, out of all these Possession Specters, the Blaze had caused the most suffering, which also made it the strongest.

'Maybe the Spilling Bottle was once used to poison someone,' Nick thought. 'That would explain why it's so weak.'

After looking at the Containment Unit for a bit more, Nick checked the Zephyx container again.

He wanted to know how much Zephyx Taren had produced.

'49 grams,' Nick thought. 'That's for both of his arms.'

'If we deduct the Recovery Liquid, that's about 39 grams of Zephyx in profit.'

Nick took a deep breath.

'No wonder the city gave us this Specter. While its potential is frighteningly high, effectively working with it is so difficult that it has a below-average output in relation to its power.'

'If Taren and I use it with both of our arms per day, it will come to about 220 grams of Zephyx per day, but we also need to deduct 30 grams for the Recovery Liquid.'

'190 grams a day is less than the Dreamer, which is an entire level lower.'

Nick closed the Zephyx container again.

'I don't think anyone else inside Dark Dream has the will to work with the Blaze.'

'I guess it's only Taren and I working with it.'

'Anyway, I should look at the other two Specters.'

Chapter 423 – Blood Cat

After leaving the fourth floor, Nick went to the fifth floor, the floor that held all the Specters used to train new Extractors.

One of the new Early Adolescents was very useful for training.

Although, it wasn't for Newbies, and it also wasn't necessarily for increasing an Extractor's level.

After reaching the fifth floor, Nick went to one of the eastern Containment Units.

He put his hand on the door and waited for a moment.

BANG! BANG!

Nick rapidly opened the door, entered, and quickly closed it.

BANG!

Then, Nick stepped to the side as a bloodred shadow shot past him, hitting the entrance.

Nick had expected that to happen, and he wasn't worried.

The red Specter immediately attacked Nick again, but Nick just quickly sidestepped.

It wasn't very difficult to avoid an Early Adolescent.

After all, Nick was a Mid Veteran.

As he kept evading, he looked at the new Specter.

It was a skinless cat.

It wasn't very big. At most, it was 30 centimeters high.

However, even though it wasn't very big, it was still quite dangerous.

That was due to its extreme speed.

It was definitely faster than a normal Early Adolescent.

Nick would put the cat's speed between Mid Adolescent and Late Adolescent.

This was the Blood Cat, another one of the Blood Ancestor's progenies.

Just like the Blood Hawk and the Blood Horse, the Blood Cat was not really sapient and just attacked whatever it saw.

It was impossible to reason with it or make it do anything that wasn't attacking the closest human.

BANG!

Nick kicked the Blood Cat, and its head exploded off its body.

BANG!

The head hit the wall and turned into meat paste.

However, the body didn't stop moving and kept attacking Nick.

But without a head, the body couldn't really sense Nick, and it just blindly attacked.

About five seconds later, the Blood Cat's severed head started to vanish as a new head appeared on its body, allowing it to sense Nick again.

Just like the other Blood Specters, the Blood Cat could give the ability of Hyper Regeneration, and it itself also had the same ability.

Working with it wasn't different from working with the Blood Horse or Blood Hawk.

The Extractor just needed to beat the Blood Cat up a couple of times and leave the Containment Unit.

However, compared to the Blood Hawk and Blood Horse, there was one additional thing that one had to look out for when working with the Blood Cat.

Its speed.

Its speed was not normal.

How was it so fast?

Well, Blood Specters, just like any other Specter, gained new abilities when they advanced.

As Hatchlings, the Blood Hawk and Blood Horse only had Hyper Regeneration, and that was it. Everything else was normal.

But since the Blood Cat was an Early Adolescent, it had an additional ability.

Luckily, the evolved abilities of Blood Specters were very simple, and they were always related to their physical powers.

Increased physical strength.

Increased defensive power.

Increased speed.

A Blood Specter would receive one of these three things when advancing.

As far as Nick knew, there was no Blood Specter, except for the Blood Ancestor, that had gained any other ability.

Naturally, the Blood Cat had the increased speed ability.

BANG!

Nick kicked the Blood Cat, and its body hit the wall.

Many bones broke all over its body, and huge parts of its exposed muscles tore apart.

As he watched the Blood Cat recover, Nick thought that he liked it quite a bit.

It was very simple to work with it, and it also gave Extractors practical experience in fighting.

In the cases of a Specter breaking out or an Extractor attacking, having practical experience in battle could save someone's life.

The Blood Hawk was a good introduction for Extractors since its physical body wasn't overwhelmingly powerful, and it also attacked in a very straight pattern.

The Blood Horse was a good intermediate opponent since it was physically stronger than the Extractors fighting it but wasn't very intelligent.

The Blood Cat was a great opponent for experienced Extractors since it was quite a bit faster than them and relentless in its attacks and pursuit.

If one wasn't prepared for the Blood Cat's brutal assault, one would quickly find their Barrier broken and their Zephyx depleted.

Of course, the tradeoff was that the Blood Cat was very dangerous as well.

If there was nobody inside the Containment Unit that could intervene if things turned horrible, Dark Dream might lose an Extractor.

But that was to be expected.

It was normal for Manufacturers to have dangerous Specters that required supervision.

Nick beat the Blood Cat up a couple more times, and when its regeneration slowed down considerably, he walked out of the Containment Unit.

'About seven fatal wounds,' Nick thought after leaving.

Then, he checked the Zephyx container.

'About 30 grams,' Nick thought with a sigh.

That was a pitiful amount of Zephyx, but he had expected something like that.

After all, working with the Blood Specters was different from working with other Specters since the Extractor was abusing the Blood Specter's regeneration ability to harvest Zephyx instead of making the Specter more powerful.

Naturally, a lot less Zephyx was produced this way.

'It's for the new Extractors,' Nick thought. 'Although, for now, it's also for the experienced Extractors. They haven't yet had a good opponent. Maybe it makes sense to send the Late Johns in alone, the Mid Johns in pairs, and the Early Johns in teams of four.'

'I'll tell Jenny later.'

'Or maybe it makes sense to transfer the weaker Johns into Taren's team. I mean, he is in charge of the training team.'

Nick scratched his chin.

'But that would unbalance the teams quite strongly, and Taren would need to take care of around two-thirds of all Extractors.'

Nick closed the small door leading to the Zephyx container again and turned to the stairs.

'I'll talk with them later. For now, I should take a look at our last new Specter.'

Chapter 424 – The Gambler

Nick left the fifth floor and walked to the second one.

For now, the second floor was designated for the unremarkable Physical Specters, like the Money Sink and the Bleeding Lady.

Of course, now, there was a third Specter as well.

Nick went to one of the western Containment Units and stopped in front of its entrance.

'Do I have enough money with me?' Nick thought as he checked his pockets.

Next, he retrieved several long pieces of metal.

Each of these pieces represented a thousand credits.

Nick had an entire stack of them.

'Should be enough,' he thought.

Naturally, since this Specter came from the city, Nick knew how to work with it.

Nick opened the door and walked inside.

Compared to earlier, Nick wasn't in a rush, and he entered at a leisurely pace.

He closed the door behind him and looked to the middle of the Containment Unit.

"Hello, hello! I presume you are a new customer?"

A tall man wearing a fancy suit and a black top hat stood in the middle of the room with a charming smile on his face.

In front of the man was a table with several decks of cards on top.

The table was made of a very rare material, wood, and its top was completely black.

This was one of Dark Dream's three new Specters.

The Gambler.

Nick walked towards the Gambler, who only looked at Nick with a toothy smile.

"Hi, I'm the Chief Zephyx Extractor of Dark Dream, your new place of residence," Nick said.

"Oh, so I'm in Dark Dream now?" the Gambler commented with interest. "I heard some of my previous customers talking about this place. You're a new Manufacturer, right?"

"Kind of," Nick said.

Obviously, the Gambler was very much sapient.

It was even quite intelligent.

"I can see that you are not a man of many words," the Gambler said as he retrieved one of the decks of cards.

The backside of every card had a black void on it with two red eyes in the center.

Then, the Gambler started to shuffle the cards casually.

"What are my new guidelines? Is it only money, or are we playing for keeps?" he asked.

"Money," Nick said.

"Oh, that's sad," the Gambler said with lament. "Are you really not interested in a real game? If you win once, you can earn a full kilo of Zephyx."

"The rules and the deck are fair. It's always a 50/50. Why don't you live a little?"

Nick looked with an unamused gaze at the Gambler.

"The document says it's more like 40/60," Nick said.

The Gambler laughed. "That's because most people are just not good at playing cards. With perfect strategy, the chances of winning are 50%. Maybe even more since I am not completely perfect myself."

"Not interested," Nick said. "Someone I know very well always says that you should minimize the things you can't control and maximize the things you can control."

"Why would I risk losing the Zephyx inside my body when I can increase it without risking it in a significant way?"

Nick looked into the Gambler's eyes.

"And I don't want any of my employees to do the same. Nobody is allowed to gamble with their Zephyx. Even if they want to."

"If I hear that any of my employees have gambled with their Zephyx with you, I will quarantine this Containment Unit for a month."

"Do you understand?" Nick asked.

The Gambler kept shuffling the deck and sighed. "Of course. Only playing for money."

Nick nodded. "Good."

Then, Nick took out the stack of metal plates and put them on the table.

When the Gambler saw that, his smile widened.

"Alright," the Gambler said. "Let's start with an easy game of chance. We both draw a card, and the stronger card wins. Is a bet of a thousand credits fine with you?"

Nick nodded.

The Gambler reached forward and pulled one of the metal plates out of the stack, placing it on the table.

Next, the Gambler cut the deck in half and gave Nick one half.

Both of them pulled their first card and looked at it.

When Nick saw the image on the card, his eyebrows rose in surprise.

The picture was of a big red slime in the middle of a Containment Unit.

On the top right was a five, and the card's name was in the middle of the top.

The Blood Ancestor.

"Where did you get this deck?" Nick asked as he looked at the card.

"I made it myself," the Gambler said. "I make new cards based on the Specters I've heard about. I don't know exactly how all of the Specters look, but I heard enough about every Specter in here that I can paint a pretty clear picture of them."

"Interesting," Nick said, looking at the card. "And where did you get that information from?"

"Don't you already know that, Nick?" the Gambler asked.

Nick was not surprised that the Gambler knew his name, even though he hadn't told him his name.

And yes, Nick knew how the Gambler knew all of this.

It was also possible to gamble with information.

In fact, one could gamble with almost everything, and the Gambler would accept the bet as long as he had the power to collect what he was owed.

The Gambler had probably worked with people from Ghosty's Lab to get enough information about the Blood Ancestor to create the card.

"So, what did you get?" the Gambler asked.

Nick placed the card down. "The Blood Ancestor."

When the Gambler saw that, he had to laugh.

"Wow, luck is a cruel mistress," he said.

Nick didn't show any reaction, but he felt a bit good.

After all, who didn't feel good when winning a game?

Then, the Gambler placed down his card.

When Nick saw the card, his eyes widened.

It was a forest of huge red mushrooms filled with holes that were dripping with blood.

The entire floor was covered with roots that looked like veins, and there were screaming faces on all the different caps of the mushrooms.

In the top right was a six, and the name of the card was...

The Crimson Fungus.

"To lose with a Fanatic," the Gambler said with a chuckle as he collected the metal plate.

"Truly tragic."

Chapter 425 – Ratio

Nick wasn't entirely sure if this was truly just a coincidence.

After all, getting the most powerful card immediately seemed quite unlikely.

'Is he trying to lure me into betting with information?' Nick thought as he looked at the Gambler.

"Is this a trick?" Nick asked.

"I can't break the rules or use any sort of trick," the Gambler said. "If I use a trick, I can't produce Zephyx."

"It's just bad luck," the Gambler added with a chuckle. "Also, if you're talking about the card, that one would've shown up at some point anyway. It just would've taken more rounds."

Nick's suspicions lessened but didn't completely vanish.

"Let's continue," Nick said, taking out a piece of the pile of credits.

"Certainly," the Gambler said, putting the piece to the side. "Is there any specific kind of game you want to play?"

"The same game again," Nick said.

"Well, that's a bit boring, but sure. I can accommodate you," the Gambler said as he pulled out another card.

Nick also pulled out his next card and looked at it.

Nick was shocked for just a small instant when he saw the Specter on the card.

The Talker!

For just a moment, Nick had thought that the Gambler had somehow already found out about the Talker, but then, he remembered that the Talker had been with the city before, and the Gambler had most likely heard about the Talker from there.

Nick placed the card down.

The Gambler just laughed and put his card down.

The card showed an old lady sitting on a blanket in the middle of a Containment Unit.

On the top right was a two, and the name of the card was the Other Old Lady.

"Seems like you won," the Gambler said. "Care for another round?"

Nick left the small piece of metal there. "We're going to play until all of this money is gone."

Keen eyes might have noticed that Nick had not gotten his reward.

Wasn't he supposed to get a thousand credits from the Gambler since he won?

Kind of.

Nick could demand the credits from the Gambler, but it was smarter to not take it back.

Instead, the Gambler just gave off a lot of Zephyx and kept the credits.

The Zephyx gained via this way was worth more than the thousand credits.

The Gambler produced Zephyx whenever a game was completed.

It didn't matter who won or lost.

The only difference was that the Gambler gave off more Zephyx when the Extractor won.

The two of them played 20 more rounds, and just as expected, the ratio of wins to losses was near 50%.

"How about we increase the bet for this round?" the Gambler asked.

"No," Nick immediately answered.

"Again?" the Gambler asked with a sigh.

The Gambler had asked that question during three different rounds.

Surprisingly, every time Nick won the round, and if he had agreed to up the bid, he would have gotten far more Zephyx.

"Why do you not want to make this more fun?" the Gambler asked.

"Because you're better at this than me," Nick answered. "Anything that makes the game more complex will decrease my likelihood of winning."

"50% is the highest I can possibly get."

"That's not true," the Gambler said. "There have been people that I played with who got more out of me than they gave me."

"Individual cases," Nick said evenly. "The average chance of winning is still in your favor."

"After all, if it weren't, you would have long since gone bankrupt," Nick said as he put the next card on the table.

He didn't even look at the card.

The Gambler looked at Nick for a bit before his smile returned.

"Well then, I guess we will continue playing this game," he said.

The two of them continued playing for over an hour, and eventually, Nick ran out of money.

"I presume that's it?" the Gambler asked.

Nick nodded. "How much Zephyx have you gained?"

The good thing about working with a cooperative and intelligent Specter was that one could ask them about their progress toward the next level.

"Nothing," the Gambler said. "If we were to play like this every hour, I would advance to the next level in 20 years."

Nick didn't like what he was hearing, but he also kind of expected that.

"I'll see what I can do," Nick said as he walked towards the exit.

"See you next time!" the Gambler shouted with a wave.

Nick left the Containment Unit and checked the Zephyx that had been produced.

'66 grams of Zephyx for a bit more than an hour,' Nick thought.

66 grams of Zephyx in an hour was insane for an Early Adolescent that could be worked with constantly.

However, Nick had paid 50,000 credits, which was the equivalent of about 50 grams of Zephyx.

Yet, even if one deducted that, it would still be a profit of 16 grams of Zephyx in a bit more than an hour.

That would be about 300 grams of Zephyx per day, which would make the Gambler the second most profitable Specter of Dark Dream after the Talker.

However, they were essentially absorbing all the Zephyx the Specter produced, and it barely had anything left to grow.

If they kept squeezing the Gambler as they were doing right now, it would never grow more powerful.

Obviously, that would be wasting the potential of the Gambler.

Nick obviously wanted the Gambler to grow more powerful so that it could produce more Zephyx, and there were two ways of achieving that.

One, changing the ratio of how much the Containment Unit absorbed.

Two, increasing the chances of losing the bet.

The more the Extractor won, the more Zephyx the Containment Unit received.

But on the other hand, the Gambler would lose Zephyx.

Nick put the Zephyx container away and went to the console of the Containment Unit.

After fidgeting with it for a bit, Nick changed the ratio of how much the Containment Unit absorbed.

He reduced it from 90% to 75%.

If someone were stationed in there constantly with an infinite supply of money, they would produce about 50 grams of Zephyx per day of actual profit.

Sadly, the number would fluctuate quite a bit since the cost and the revenue gained were very close to each other, which meant the profit margins were small and could fluctuate.

On some days, Dark Dream might even lose money.

However, it was worth it.

The more money Dark Dream lost, the faster the Gambler grew, and the more powerful it was, the higher the return of every bet placed in terms of Zephyx.

Dark Dream was essentially investing in the Gambler.

Chapter 426 – Useful Only on Paper

In the end, Nick assigned Jenny and many Late Johns to the Gambler.

The reason why Nick assigned Jenny to the Specter was the great amount of Zephyx the Gambler produced.

One had to remember that, in terms of revenue, the Gambler was producing a crazy amount of Zephyx.

When an Extractor worked with a Specter, they didn't absorb Zephyx according to the profit but according to the revenue.

Because of that, the Gambler increased the strength of an Extractor tremendously in a very short period of time.

Sadly, there was an upper limit on how much Zephyx someone could absorb per day.

That was why Nick had assigned so many different people to it.

Like this, none of the Zephyx would go to waste.

In a way, the Gambler was the perfect Specter to increase the power of many Extractors.

Nine people would reach their daily upper limit of Zephyx they could absorb, and all of them were Late Johns and Peak Johns.

As for the ability the Gambler gave, it was quite interesting.

It was in the category of Sensor abilities, but it wasn't really useful for a Sensor.

The Gambler gave someone the ability to feel if the odds of something were pretty bad.

That sounded incredible on paper.

Wouldn't someone be able to foresee whenever one was evading to the wrong side during a battle?

Wouldn't someone be able to make the perfect decisions when it came to strategy?

What about giving orders?

Wow, so many possibilities, right?

Sadly, people who believed this to be crazy powerful had no experience in how real life worked.

The feeling one got from the ability was quite subtle, and it grew weaker the less time there was to decide and the more disconnected a matter was from someone.

One wouldn't even be able to notice the subtle feeling during a fight.

One wouldn't be able to notice it when it came to deciding what someone else should do.

One couldn't use it for any choice that was more than a couple of seconds in the future, like planning an assault or similar things.

On paper, the ability was amazing.

Sadly, in almost every case that would give a big payoff, the ability just so happened to be useless.

But it wasn't completely useless.

It often worked as a warning if someone was about to be attacked.

It also made it easier to avoid saying something that might offend someone else.

It also helped someone avoid dangerous locations.

That was the truth of the matter.

Of course, people would still say that the potential of this ability was incredible.

Sure, it started out relatively weak, but it would become extremely strong later.

That might be possible, but people who relied on something like that were mostly na?ve.

Getting someone to that point of payoff required a lot of investment, and in these matters, it was impossible to invest in oneself.

One needed someone else who protected them, gave them money, gave them resources, and so on.

Of course, a couple of huge Manufacturers might decide to invest in someone like that.

But then, there was another issue.

The thing they invested in was one person.

After millions or billions of credits of investment, that person might finally be able to return the investment...

Just to get killed by somebody.

And all the investment vanished.

In the end, it was just too risky.

Nick decided to give a couple of new employees the ability, but he wasn't planning on using them in an excursion outside.

He viewed them as employees that would only work within Dark Dream.

Finally, Nick had dealt with the three new Specters.

Dark Dream officially had 17 Specters now.

Dark Dream had grown a lot, but it was still vastly inferior to Solace and the other Manufacturers.

Even if they doubled the number of their Specters, they would still be inferior.

Additionally, Nick was still missing a Late and/or Peak Adult.

If he didn't get one, he couldn't rationalize advancing past Late Veteran.

It was extremely difficult to get powerful Adults.

Specters like that were worth a lot of money, and even if someone had the money, no one was willing to sell them.

Dark Dream had to get new Specters the hard way.

Within the next couple of months, Nick took Irwin on several excursions in secret.

Irwin showed Nick around the outside, and Nick started to get very familiar with the wider wilderness.

Sadly, going too far away was still not an option.

The problem was the other cities.

Entering another city's territory would almost certainly result in Nick's death.

Even moving along the edges of the territory was already extremely dangerous since people from other cities could appear there, and these people were Experts, at the very least.

Nick and Irwin were stuck looking around an area with a radius of about 70 kilometers.

Sure, that was a huge area, but the senses of Experts and Specialists were terrifying, and they could sense Nick from kilometers away.

This meant that Nick and Irwin had to travel with absolute caution.

Luckily, they managed to capture a Specter within the next three months.

Sadly, it was a Mid Hatchling Possession Specter.

It was a rust-filled hammer, and it gained power by bludgeoning people.

Working with it was extremely difficult, and it barely gave off any Zephyx.

It didn't give any abilities, and it couldn't grow more powerful.

But it was still worth something due to it being a Specter.

Sadly, as it stood right now, the Rusty Hammer just kept a Containment Unit busy without doing anything.

Maybe they could sell it to someone else in the future.

Dark Dream was in a horrible spot.

They had to compete with all the other big Manufacturers in the outside world, but they didn't have a comparable force.

Dark Dream could only grow very slowly.

But then, four months after they had gained the Blaze, the Blood Cat, and the Gambler, an opportunity arrived.

A very powerful and unusual guest arrived in Dark Dream.

"I wish to talk to your Chief Zephyx Extractor," a tall man said with a neutral voice.

"O-of course!" the receptionist answered with a shaky voice while trying to keep a smile on her face. "I'll get him right now, Mr. Stairwell."

Mundus Stairwell, Anatomy's Chief Zephyx Extractor, just nodded.

Chapter 427 – Mundus Stairwell

Nick looked at Mundus with a neutral expression as he approached him.

"Welcome to Dark Dream," Nick said with a polite tone as he offered his hand.

While Nick was definitely not on Mundus' level, as the host, he showed good manners when offering his hand.

Mundus shook the hand as he looked into Nick's eyes. "Thank you. I've come with a business proposition."

"Glad to hear," Nick said as he gestured to the staircase. "Let's talk up in my office."

The two of them walked towards the Extractor shafts.

The door to one of the shafts opened, and Nick jumped from wall to wall until he reached the eighth floor.

Meanwhile, Mundus just slowly levitated upward below Nick.

Proper flight was an ability that could only be unlocked at the sixth level.

There were a couple of ways to unlock flight as a Specialist, but they only counted as pseudo-flight abilities.

For example, kicking the air to "jump" in a direction.

Specialists could do that, but it took quite a bit of power, and compared to running on the ground, this was much slower.

Meanwhile, Heroes could fly just as fast in the air as they traveled on the ground, and they didn't even need to use much Zephyx.

The two of them arrived on the eighth floor, and Nick could already see Julian standing in front of his office.

Mundus showed no reaction as he saw Julian.

However, Nick was quite nervous.

This was a huge risk.

They were about to have a longer conversation, and this time, Mundus was not in some kind of hurry.

This meant that he had all the time to look at Julian.

If Mundus suspected Julian of being a Specter, he would be able to feel that Julian was a Specter.

It was like having a spy in one's group.

If one didn't suspect the spy of being a spy, some signs might just appear as quirks.

Oh, the guy has long conversations with his wife after important meetings? Yeah, that often happens. His wife is very nosy.

Man, that one guy was really lucky that he wasn't part of the convoy that got ambushed by the enemy.

Only if someone already suspected them of being a spy would they be able to see the clues.

Another analogy would be a cheating partner.

Very often, people only realized that their partner was cheating when they were confronted with irrefutable evidence.

And then, they would feel like idiots because they ignored all these "obvious signs" from the past months.

In the same way, Julian's Zephyx was acting strangely.

It was reminiscent of how a Specter's Zephyx worked, but there were also abilities that made the Zephyx move this way.

Sadly, Julian was forced to attend this little meeting today.

When a Hero showed up in Dark Dream, not appearing for the meeting would be even more suspicious.

Every person would drop whatever they were doing and attend the meeting.

Nick walked over to Julian and stopped beside him, facing Mundus.

"What a surprising visit, Mundus," Julian said with a smile as he offered his hand.

The two of them shook hands.

"Let's talk away from prying eyes," Mundus said.

Mundus had never been a man for formalities or many words.

He didn't say a lot, and the few words he spoke were always direct and to the point.

"Of course," Julian said as he opened the door to Nick's office.

Then, the three of them stepped in.

Nick and Julian sat down behind the table while Mundus sat down in front of it.

Nick was used to dangerous situations, but sitting in front of Mundus still made him nervous.

This was a Hero, and he did not have a great disposition to Dark Dream.

Anatomy was the Manufacturer with the worst relationship with Dark Dream.

They were not enemies, but it was no secret that Anatomy was interested in consuming Dark Dream.

Dark Dream was just a fat piece of meat to them.

"So, what brings you here?" Julian asked with a smile.

Mundus remained silent for a couple of seconds as he looked at Nick and Julian.

Nick knew this tactic very well.

When there was a strong power imbalance, staying quiet for a while often made the weaker side nervous.

Nick had used that tactic regularly when talking with problematic employees or during negotiations with companies that weren't Manufacturers.

"Three months ago," Mundus started, "there has been an incident regarding the Forbidden Zone to the north."

Julian and Nick could already tell where this was going, and if they were right, this would be big money.

"Naturally, you already know what happened back then," Mundus said. "But what you don't know is that Kugelblitz has been trying very hard to find an opening to capture the Specter."

"However, that's not easy. The north is mostly unknown, and if they send a Hero, they might die. Sending more Heroes will increase the chances of success, but it might also spell the end for Kugelblitz."

"Kugelblitz has tried to capture more of the Specter's minions, but they only managed to capture two minions on the level of Elders in the past three months. Progress is slow and cumbersome."

"But as the undeniably strongest Manufacturer, Kugelblitz believes that they have all the time. If they are not confident in capturing the Specter, no one is."

"Time is not a factor for them. As long as they keep working on it, they will capture it. No matter if it takes a couple of months or an entire decade."

"And that is our opening," Mundus said.

"Who are you referring to with our?" Nick asked neutrally.

Julian didn't comment or react.

Mundus looked at Nick, who felt the atmosphere become tenser.

However, Nick remained calm.

Well, as calm as someone sitting in front of Mundus could be.

"Depending on your answer, this will include you as well," Mundus answered.

This confirmed Julian's and Nick's guesses.

Sure enough, this was a huge opportunity.

Chapter 428 – Most Likely

"Please, continue," Julian said with a happy smile.

Mundus looked back at Julian.

"Kugelblitz's progress is slow, and Anatomy intends to capitalize on that. If they won't grab the Specter, we will," he said.

"Nevertheless, the Specter has proven that it can rival a level six Extractor, which makes it very dangerous. Without more information, we also won't risk a confrontation."

"That's where Dark Dream comes into play," Mundus said before he turned to look at Nick.

"There has been no reliable method to lure the Specter's minions out. Kugelblitz has not managed to create one."

"It seems like the only way to get a minion is you."

Mundus looked into Nick's eyes, which looked back.

"Do you have a way to attract more minions?" he asked.

Naturally, Nick and Julian knew that this was a tricky question.

After all, this most likely concerned Envy.

If Nick said that the Specter was interested in him, Mundus would grow interested.

Why would a level six or level seven Specter be interested in a Veteran?

And if even such a strong Specter wanted something from Nick, maybe they would also be interested in acquiring this mysterious thing.

But if they said that they didn't have a way to lure the Specter out, things could also turn ugly.

For one, Mundus could become suspicious.

What did Dark Dream need to hide so badly that they even refused an opportunity to earn several Specters?

Or maybe Mundus believed them, in which case he would drop the matter and leave.

Everything was risky.

"Yes," Nick said.

Mundus' eyes slightly narrowed.

"Would you be interested in selling this method to us?" he asked.

"I'm sorry," Nick said, refusing the offer.

"Even for three Adults?" Mundus asked.

Julian chuckled.

"Drop it, Mundus," he said casually. "We're not selling."

"Only renting."

The room fell into silence.

"What a shame," Mundus said after a while.

"But I'm still interested in your offer to rent said method," Mundus said. "What are the expected results?"

Julian leaned back, showing that he wasn't going to be the one who would answer the question, which made Mundus look at Nick.

In Mundus' mind, he remembered how the previous CEO, one of Vernon's progenies, had valued this rookie Extractor with the strange name, Nick Nick.

He had put a lot of value on Nick, and now, even a Specialist like Julian put a lot of value on Nick.

Mundus could tell that Julian's confidence in Nick was so high that he even allowed Nick to speak for Dark Dream in the majority of cases.

Julian was so confident in Nick that he even let Nick attend the big yearly meeting as Dark Dream's sole representative.

There might be some actual value to the Extractor called Nick Nick.

Nick furrowed his brows as he prepared his answer.

"We can't be entirely sure," Nick said. "There are a lot of things to consider. The biggest factor of uncertainty is the Specter's intelligence. It has shown that it has a high level of intelligence, which makes it difficult to anticipate its actions."

Nick remained silent for a couple of seconds.

How would that mysterious Specter in the north act?

If it truly was one of Envy's servants, it would most likely try to get Nick as soon as it got an opportunity.

If Envy found out that it didn't do its best to capture Nick, it would kill the Specter.

However, just straight-up charging into the city was obviously too dangerous.

Otherwise, it would have already done so.

So, it needed to capture Nick without attacking the city.

The first time, it had sent a couple of Experts and a Specialist.

The second time, it had sent two Specialists.

But now, with several Specialists and Experts captured, it knew that the humans to its south were on high alert.

Sending its minions towards the south was extremely dangerous now.

The most intelligent course of action was to not send any minions and only strike when the humans felt safe enough to approach the sea.

There would need to be an irresistible incentive for the Specter to risk more of its minions.

Would Nick be that incentive?

Maybe.

Nick put himself in the shoes of the Specter to the north.

Most likely, the Specter was a Demon.

If it were a Fallen, it would be much more aggressive.

If the Specter attacked, it might lose even more of its minions.

And based on what Nick could see, this was a Specter that put great value on its minions.

Most likely, this was a Specter similar to the Parasite.

If someone killed all of the Parasite's minions, it would lose a devastating amount of Zephyx.

Every minion represented an investment.

Losing two Specialists was already a big blow to the Specter.

If it lost another two, the humans might gain the confidence to truly invade.

That would most likely prove to be extremely risky.

But on the other hand, if the Specter didn't try to catch Nick at such an opportune moment and Envy found out, it might actually die.

When it came to having Specters as servants, being true to one's words was the most important.

If Envy just kept threatening all its minions with their lives without actually going through with the threat, no one would listen to Envy anymore.

Envy had to kill problematic servants.

Because of that, the Specter to the north would genuinely be risking its life if it decided against attacking.

This was problematic, and Nick could imagine the pressure the Specter was under.

'What would I do in this situation?' Nick thought.

Nick thought about this for a couple of seconds.

Eventually, he took a deep breath.

"Most likely," he answered. "The Specter will attack with its full or close to its full force."

"Alternatively, nothing will happen."

"I don't think there is a between."

"It's either all or nothing."

Nick looked at Mundus.

"The Specter's minions are the people who have gone missing in the past, I have heard," Nick said.

Mundus didn't refute that statement.

"And since at least one Hero has vanished in the past, at least two Heroes will attack."

"The Hero that has vanished and the Specter itself, which should be a Demon. If there is another Hero minion, that one will most likely also show up."

"That's what I think will happen," Nick said.

Mundus, the only Hero of Anatomy, looked at Nick with a neutral expression.

Chapter 429 – The Three

Two weeks had passed since Mundus had visited Dark Dream.

After a lot of talking, Dark Dream and Anatomy had come to an agreement.

Nick would help Anatomy in exchange for several assets, namely Specters.

Of course, since Nick couldn't have been completely sure how the Specter to the north would react, the reward had been divided into several tiers.

If nothing happened, Dark Dream would not get anything.

If a weak force attacked, Dark Dream would get a Specter.

If a strong force attacked, Dark Dream would get two Specters.

And if Nick's involvement ended up contributing to the Specter's capture, Dark Dream would get a lot!

Anatomy was willing to make an amazing offer to Dark Dream.

After all, if this mission succeeded, Anatomy would gain their first Demon!

That would allow the three founders of Anatomy to advance inside the Hero Stage, and Kugelblitz would stop widening the gap between them.

This was the most important mission within the last decades for Anatomy, and they would not miss this chance just because Dark Dream wanted a couple of Specters.

Of course, due to the relationship between Dark Dream and Anatomy, an insurance clause had been created.

Anatomy was responsible for Nick's safety.

If they let Nick die, they would have to hand over a Fanatic and two Elders to Dark Dream.

Naturally, Dark Dream wouldn't truly be able to work with them, and these Specters would just be wasted money on them, but that wasn't the point.

The point was to create an incentive for Anatomy not to "accidentally" kill Nick.

Julian had a copy of the contract.

The city had a copy.

And even the governor had been informed.

Of course, telling the governor brought some risks with it since he was strongly involved with Kugelblitz, but it was a risk they had to take.

Firstly, Dark Dream demanded it.

Secondly, Kugelblitz could use the laws to damage Anatomy since they "risked integral city forces for personal gain" by going after the Specter with their own Extractors.

However, while there definitely was a risk, the chances of the information reaching Kugelblitz were low.

Yes, the governor was involved with Kugelblitz, but the governor was ultimately part of Aegis.

Aegis wasn't the biggest fan of monopolies since they generally produced less Zephyx, which meant that the city wouldn't pay as much to Aegis.

It was okay for a Manufacturer to be the most powerful in the city, but there should be at least one other Manufacturer that was comparable to them.

Lastly, if the secret got out and Kugelblitz stole the Specter, Anatomy would raise hell in the city, and the governor obviously wouldn't want that to happen.

Therefore, it was in the governor's best interest to keep this secret.

However, the governor also wasn't required to help Anatomy.

His involvement and dependency on Kugelblitz didn't allow him to help any other Manufacturer.

If he did, Kugelblitz would manipulate the rules and keep the Crimson Fungus from the governor, and with time, they could silently assassinate him.

Naturally, Ghosty's Lab also couldn't help Anatomy.

But the reason for that was simply that Ghosty's Lab wasn't strong enough to threaten a Demon.

Only Kugelblitz, Anatomy, and the governor were powerful enough.

Anatomy was on its own.

Two weeks after the negotiation, Nick waited in Dark Dream's main hall.

According to Mundus, today would be the day of the operation.

Anatomy was going to do it.

They were going to try to capture the Demon to the north.

After waiting for a couple of minutes, Nick saw a muscular man walking into Anatomy.

He looked extremely serious and wore the green uniform of Anatomy.

According to his uniform, he was a Veteran.

He looked around and quickly found Nick.

"Follow me," the person said in a neutral voice without greeting Nick.

Then, he just turned around.

Nick's expression didn't change, and he wordlessly walked after the Veteran.

The man sped up, and the two of them ran to the western part of the city.

The man slowed down and calmly entered an unassuming house near the edge of the city.

Nick entered the house after the man, and the door closed behind him on its own.

The house looked pretty normal from the inside as well.

"Nick," a cold and deep voice spoke from one of the rooms.

Nick glanced at the motionless Veteran beside him before walking towards the room.

As he looked into the room, he noticed three things.

First, the room was huge and almost encompassed the house's entire first floor.

Second, there was a big hole in the middle of the room, and the red mist from the Crimson Sea was constantly spilling out.

Third, there were three people standing beside the hole, and all three of them were looking at Nick with neutral eyes.

Under the gazes of the three of them, Nick felt enormous pressure.

These three were the leaders and owners of Anatomy.

Mundus Stairwell, a tall man with black hair that looked to be in his thirties. He owned 40% of Anatomy and was their Chief Zephyx Extractor. He was also their only Hero.

Zarren Harrow, also a tall man with black hair that looked to be in his thirties. He owned 30% of Anatomy and was one of their two Senior Directors. He was an extremely powerful Specialist.

Nick already knew these two, but he had never come into contact with the third person.

The third person was a small woman with icy blue hair. Her expression was just as cold as the expressions of the other two.

Just like the other two, she looked like she was in her thirties.

Nick had not seen this woman before, but he had certainly heard of her.

Ariel Cerillion, the other Senior Director of Anatomy. Just like Zarren Harrow, she was an extremely powerful Specialist.

Those three were the sole owners of Anatomy, and they dictated how Anatomy operated.

"Are you ready to leave?" Mundus asked, looking at Nick.

Chapter 430 – Two People

Nick looked at Mundus and nodded.

He was a bit intimidated by their combined presence, but Nick knew that they couldn't afford to kill him.

It would not be worth it.

The next moment, Zarren Harrow stepped forward.

SHING!

Suddenly, a grey puppet made of steel appeared in his hand, and when Nick saw the puppet, he felt the hairs on his back standing up.

This puppet felt extremely dangerous!

"We're going to take you out of the city," Zarren said. "I'll make sure that you don't accidentally look at the Crimson Sea."

Nick took a deep breath.

BANG!

Suddenly, Nick found himself in absolute darkness, and he felt his entire head being encased in steel.

His heart rate spiked, but since only his head was encased in darkness, he didn't get attacked by the Nightmare.

Well, not with the usual intensity, at least.

Nevertheless, having one's head encased in steel was a terrifying experience, and it wasn't easy for Nick to remain calm.

The next moment, he felt some kind of force pulling at him, and an instant later, Nick felt his Zephyx drain very slowly.

He could feel that his Barrier had activated, which meant that they were probably traveling through the city's underground.

SHING!

Suddenly, all the metal vanished, and Nick could finally see where he was.

Nick could see a couple of cliffs and a lot of wasteland around him.

He knew where this was.

This was close to the shore to the northeast of the city.

In barely a couple of seconds, Nick had gone from inside the city to the northeastern shore that was around 40 kilometers away from the city.

Sure enough, the speed of a Hero was incredible!

Nick also saw the three from Anatomy beside him.

"How are you going to lure the Specter out?" Mundus asked with a neutral voice.

Nick looked at the cliffs beside him.

"Don't worry about how," Nick said.

The atmosphere became tense, but Nick kept his cool.

"The important part is that I will lure the Specter out."

"I'm not sure if the Specter will immediately bite or if it will take a couple of minutes. However, if it doesn't bite within the first ten minutes, it won't bite at all."

"I need you to stay far away," Nick continued. "Most likely, it won't send anything after me if it sees that more than one person is close to me."

"I believe the Specter has the ability to sense the surroundings and infer a couple of things. I would even bet that, by seeing me, it can see anyone close to me as well. At least, that's what I think is why it is so hard to lure it out for the city and Kugelblitz. It's perception by perception if you want to call it that."

"Perception by perception," Ariel muttered from the side with a thoughtful voice.

Nick nodded. "Because of that, I can't have all of you staying close to me. You would need to be so far away that you can't see me anymore."

Zarren furrowed his brows.

Apparently, he didn't like the sound of that.

"We can't do that," he said. "We don't want to lose two Elders and a Fanatic. We have to see you to keep you alive."

"I'm sure you'll find a way," Nick said.

Zarren looked at Nick with narrowed eyes.

Nick just looked back neutrally.

Silence.

Then, Zarren looked at the ground with a thoughtful expression.

Finally, he looked at Ariel with a meaningful glance.

After that, Ariel had a thoughtful expression.

Everyone remained silent for about five seconds.

Eventually, Ariel looked at Zarren and nodded.

Zarren nodded back.

Then, he looked at Nick. "Fine," he said. "To summarize, you are to be left alone, and nobody is allowed to look at you while you lure the Specter out. But at the same time, you have to be protected from a Demon that is going to go after you with all of its power. Is that right?"

"Correct," Nick said. "If I am right with my guess, two or more Heroes or Demons will attack me mere seconds after I start the process."

"But only if you are unable to perceive me."

"That can be arranged," Mundus said from the side.

"Good," Nick said. "Then, I'll leave my life in your hands."

None of the three of them answered, and they just looked at each other.

Nick wasn't sure if they were communicating or not.

Seconds passed.

The three of them were still there.

Nick started to feel a bit awkward.

The three of them had to leave for Nick to start doing his thing.

Why were they still here?

"So, do we start now?" Nick asked after nearly a full minute of silence.

"No," Mundus answered.

"Oh, okay," Nick answered before he became silent again.

Silence.

More silence.

Minutes passed.

Nick had no idea what they were waiting for.

Nick just kept looking around awkwardly as the three people from Anatomy just waited.

Eventually, almost ten minutes later, the three from Anatomy all collectively looked towards the southeast.

Nick also looked in that direction, but he didn't see anything.

Some seconds later, a black dot appeared on the horizon, and Nick furrowed his brows.

What was that?

Some seconds later, a black dot appeared on the horizon, and SHING!

Nick's heart nearly stopped when two people suddenly arrived in front of him!

These two had traversed ten kilometers or so in just a second!

These were speeds that only Heroes could reach!

Did they get found out?!

However, based on the lack of reaction from the three people from Anatomy, the arrival of these two newcomers was expected.

Nick took a closer look at them.

Both of them were women, and they wore uniforms that Nick had never seen before.

One of them had long silver hair and looked to be in her 20s. Her height was average, and she wore a uniform with grey and black colors, which Nick had never seen before.

Her expression was severe, and she looked very annoyed.

The other one was a middle-aged woman with short brown hair. Her height was also average, but compared to the other one, she looked middle-aged.

She wore a completely silver outfit.

Compared to the other one, she had a more neutral disposition.

When they arrived, they shared a look with the three from Anatomy.

"Sorry for the delay. We had to make a detour," the second woman said with a polite tone.

"No problem," Mundus answered.

Then, the two women glanced at Nick. "Who's he?" the seemingly annoyed one asked.

"He's the bait," Mundus answered. "He's here voluntarily and won't die."

Nick nodded.

The woman with the neutral expression looked at him. "Who are you?"

"My name is Nick Nick, and I'm the Chief Zephyx Extractor of Dark Dream."

"Dark Dream?" the woman with the serious expression repeated in confusion as she looked at the other one.

The other one just shrugged. "Probably a small Manufacturer."

By now, Nick could take a good guess as to where these two came from.

"Well, glad to meet you, Nick," the woman with the nice expression said. "My name is Kevara Borrel, and I'm the governor of Metal Works City, which is about 200 kilometers to the east of Crimson City."

Kevara looked at the annoyed woman and gestured for her to introduce herself as well.

"Name's Liera Jenkins," the annoyed woman said. "I'm the Chief Zephyx Extractor of Adamantium."

'Just as expected,' Nick thought. 'Two Heroes from another city.'

'This might actually be enough to suppress the Specter.'