

The Sun 71

Chapter 71 – Silent Work

Nick explained what he had been thinking about to Wyntor, who just looked at Nick with a skeptical expression.

"So, you're actually serious?" Wyntor asked. "You actually want to improve the lives of the people of the Dregs?"

Nick nodded without hesitation.

"Why?" Wyntor asked. "They've never done anything for you. From what I've heard, all of them didn't care about you, and many of them even wanted to steal your things. Why would you want to sacrifice the stuff you earned to help people like them?"

"It's the system, not the individual person," Nick said. "If there were no taxes, the number of violent crimes would drop significantly. If the people had access to better food, they wouldn't need to fight others for valuable nutrients."

"Yes, there are many people that are unnecessarily cruel and extremely selfish. Naturally, these people don't deserve to get a better life."

"But I can't judge all of the poor people because some of them are monsters."

"Just like how I can't call all the rich people monsters because they are not helping us."

"Right now, the people in the Dregs suffer, and some of them can improve their lives."

"However, I want it the other way around."

"I want everyone to have a good life, and if they do bad stuff, their lives will worsen."

"I think everyone deserves a chance, and I want to do my best to make this possible."

Wyntor still looked at Nick with a skeptical expression. "That's a tall order, you know?"

Nick nodded. "I know. If I want to help everyone in the Dregs on such a fundamental level, I probably need to become as powerful as Albert, at least. Maybe even more powerful."

"But, at least then, my power has actual value and meaning."

Wyntor rubbed his chin as he looked at Nick.

"So, in short, you want to become much stronger. Power is the source that allows you to realize your dreams, right?" he asked.

"I guess you could put it like that," Nick said with a nod.

"Alright," Wyntor said.

The next moment, Wyntor sighed.

"I'm happy to hear that, you know?"

This time, it was Nick who looked at Wyntor with skepticism. "Why?"

"I was afraid that you would become complacent," Wyntor said with a laugh. "You always told me that you just want a better life. I was afraid that you would take it easy as soon as your livelihood became secure."

"But since you now have such a grand goal, you probably have no reason to become complacent."

Nick scratched the back of his head in embarrassment. "Yeah, I guess so."

Wyntor nodded. "Alright. Then, let's deal with the corpses."

Nick nodded with a smile.

"I've sent Pator home for today, Jenny is currently working, and Trevor won't be here for several hours," Wyntor said. "They have also not been informed about our decision to give the Parasite a couple of corpses, and I want to keep it that way."

"Working with the Parasite is illegal, and if we are found out, Crimson Fungus City will crack down on us. I will be able to get through this thanks to my family, but you won't survive. I hope you understand how important this is," Wyntor said.

Nick nodded solemnly. "I fully understand. I also don't want to die."

Wyntor nodded back in mutual understanding.

"Bring them over," Wyntor said as he walked around the Dreamer's Containment Unit.

Nick pulled the hearse behind him and followed Wyntor.

Near the back of the warehouse, Wyntor stopped.

Wyntor kneeled down and pointed at one of the shiny metal plates on the ground. "Since we want to keep this a secret, I can't commission someone to create easy access to the sewers, which means you have to do it."

"I've already looked at the blueprints of the warehouse, and I've seen where all the important pipes and cables go through. There should be nothing important below this place, which is why I want to make this the entrance to the sewers."

Nick nodded and walked over to the plate.

"To make the warehouse stable, the screws have been welded onto the metal plates, making it effectively impossible to remove them," Wyntor said as he pointed at one of the screws.

"I want you to tear them out without breaking them. I don't want there to be any signs."

Nick nodded. "Of course."

Wyntor also nodded and left Nick to work.

Nick needed his ability active for this.

Over the next 30 minutes, Nick removed the screws carefully.

It was extremely difficult to remove them without destroying the welding covering their edges.

Nevertheless, by carefully rotating them, Nick managed to keep the welding on the screws while removing it from the plate itself.

When he was done, he called Wyntor back, who nodded in appreciation.

"Good work," Wyntor said. "Now, slowly remove it."

Nick removed all the screws one by one and carefully put them to the side.

Then, he slowly lifted the plate.

The plate wasn't that heavy, which was why Nick didn't need his ability.

After removing the plate, Nick saw a small and dark crawlspace with another set of plates.

Luckily, the second set of plates was not welded shut, but the plates were far bigger and heavier.

Each plate weighed over 400 kilos.

Wyntor left so that Nick's ability could reactivate, and over the next ten minutes, Nick managed to take one of the massive plates off.

As soon as the plate was pushed to the side, the horrible stench of the sewers entered the warehouse.

'We'll have to deal with the stench,' Nick thought. 'Luckily, nobody's here right now.'

Nick called Wyntor back, and when Wyntor saw the disgusting black abyss, he took a deep breath.

Since they were not in the Dregs, there were no grates that let light enter the sewers, which meant that the sewers below the warehouse were pitch black.

Luckily, since the warehouse had many small holes in its ceiling, the light from the warehouse also reached the sewers, creating an isolated beam of light in a seemingly eternity of darkness.

"Call him," Wyntor said.

Nick nodded.

Chapter 72 – Trade Negotiations

"Hey, Parasite," Nick half-shouted. "I'm here for our trade."

Silence.

Nothing.

No answer came.

Nick looked at Wyntor with furrowed brows.

Splash!

Finally, a splash came from below them, and the two of them saw the head of a rat poking out of the water below them.

"This better be worth it," the rat said. "It takes a lot of energy to get a body through the Eternal's domain."

While Specters weren't targeted by the Nightmare, their minions were.

However, someone as powerful as the Parasite had some ways to get his minion through a corridor of darkness.

"I got the nine corpses," Nick said.

The rat seemed quite surprised when it heard that. "You do?" it asked in surprise.

Nick nodded. "Yes, I do, but I want the location of a useful Specter that I can actually handle."

"Sure, sure!" the rat said quickly. "I already know exactly which one to give you, and I am absolutely certain that you will like this one."

Nick furrowed his brows and looked at Wyntor.

Wyntor nodded.

"Good," Nick said. "Then, do we just dump the corpses in here?"

"Hmmm, can you send them down somewhere else?" the rat asked. "Getting that many of my minions here costs a lot of energy."

"No, we can't," Wyntor said from the side. "You know better than anyone else that nobody is allowed to help you. I can justify taking the corpses here because we are a Zephyx Manufacturer, and many Specters need corpses, but I can't justify taking them somewhere else."

"I'm not going to risk my business unnecessarily."

The rat didn't seem happy at all.

"If I get enough of my minions here to consume the corpse, I need to expend over 30% of the resources I would get from them. That means I would only get six instead of nine corpses, which means I need another four or five corpses to make this a fair trade," the rat said.

"How you transport the corpses is not our problem," Wyntor said. "You told my employee, when you made the offer, that he only needs to dump the corpses into the sewers. You did not specify where and at what time to do it."

"Based on your offer, we can dump the corpses, all at once, without informing you, into a pit of pure darkness as long as it is within the sewer's domain."

"Frankly, your logistical issues are not relevant to this negotiation," Wyntor said.

The rat really didn't like what it was hearing.

"Are you going to miss out on a Specter just because you don't want to get four more corpses real quick?" the rat asked.

"Are you?" Wyntor answered. "You're the one going back on your word."

"I'm not going back on my word!" the Parasite shouted in anger. "You are effectively only giving me six corpses instead of nine! You're scamming me!"

"No, we are not," Wyntor answered calmly but firmly. "We are the procurers of the corpses, and we are selling them at wholesale. There's a reason why the actual merchants generally ask for 30% more. If you sell the corpses to your customers, you will get the worth of nine corpses out of them."

"What are you even talking about?!" the rat shouted. "I'm not a fucking merchant!"

"So?" Wyntor answered. "We are the producers of said corpses. If you are not willing to sell them for more, that's not our problem. The trade agreement stands. Now, do you want the corpses right now?"

The rat seemed like it was about to die of anger. "Fine!" it shouted. "But I will remember this for the future."

"You are free to make us a new offer after fulfilling this one," Wyntor calmly answered. "You might be our best option for obtaining information regarding Specters right now, but if your offer is too disadvantageous for us, you will lose this position."

"At some point, creating an Investigator team or buying Specters from other Manufacturers might be more cost-effective than accepting your offers."

"In the end, it's up to you," Wyntor said evenly.

The rat just glared at Wyntor without saying anything for several seconds.

"Like father like son," the rat grumbled. "Fine!"

"Give me some minutes."

"Of course," Wyntor answered before looking away from the dark hole.

While they were waiting, Nick saw Wyntor leaning away from the hole and sighing in relief.

Nick was quite surprised when he saw that.

Just now, Wyntor had seemed extremely confident and in control, but as soon as he was outside the Parasite's perception, he lost all that confidence.

"Ready the corpses," Wyntor said as he casually motioned for Nick to bring the hearse.

"Of course," Nick answered as he pulled over the hearse.

Then, a couple of minutes of silence passed.

"I'm ready."

Nick and Wyntor looked into the hole again.

Even though they had been prepared, a cold shudder still ran down their backs when they saw the heads of over a hundred rats poking out of the water.

"Alright," Nick answered. "Want them one by one or all at once?"

"One by one," one of the rats said.

Nick stood up, grabbed one of the corpses, and hurled it into the hole.

SPLASH!

When the corpse hit the water, Nick saw the rats all jumping onto it with fervor.

Nick didn't notice it, but the Parasite's anger nearly vanished at this moment.

The Parasite had only asked for corpses, which meant that Nick could have also thrown in a malnourished little girl, which wouldn't have given the Parasite a lot of energy.

However, the corpse that Nick had thrown in was of a big and muscular man.

That was a high-quality corpse for the Parasite.

And when Nick dumped the other corpses, the Parasite actually felt like he was lucky.

All of these corpses were high-quality corpses!

The Parasite even had to get over more rats since the corpses were so big.

Eventually, all but one of the rats left.

"Well?" Wyntor asked.

The rat looked at Wyntor with a wide grin.

"I'll keep my word."

"I'll tell you. You're going to love this one!"

Chapter 73 – Possession Specter

Nick and Wyntor were listening to the Parasite intently.

"You're going to love this," the Parasite said. "This Specter is easy to capture, easy to find, and easy to work with."

Wyntor looked at the Parasite with furrowed brows. "That sounds a bit too good to be true."

"And it would be," the rat shouted, "but you guys are in luck."

"The Specter I'm going to tell you about is my competition, and I want to get rid of him. If he weren't eating so many of my corpses, I would never give his location to anyone for just ten corpses."

Wyntor just gestured for the Parasite to continue.

"I'm calling him the Screaming Coffin," the Parasite said.

"Screaming Coffin?" Wyntor repeated. "Does this mean what I think it means?"

"Yep!" the rat said with a smile. "It's a Possession Specter, the very thing all of you Zephyx Manufacturers want."

Wyntor looked at the rat with a suspicious expression. "And you're going to hand that Specter to us just like that?"

"Well," the Parasite slowly said. "Why not view it as a nice favor from me for our future negotiations?"

"Sure," Wyntor slowly said with an uncertain tone. "So, where is this Screaming Coffin, and what does it do?"

"Right here," the rat said. "In fact, you're not even 30 meters away from it."

This surprised Nick and Wyntor, and they looked around.

Sadly, since the sewers were so dark, they couldn't see much.

"This guy eats the same stuff as me, human corpses," the rat said, "but he takes way longer to digest them, and he isn't very fast."

"The Screaming Coffin is moving around the bottom of the sewers, and whenever he finds a corpse, he swims toward it and consumes it."

"While the guy is just a Hatchling, I can't overwhelm him with just my minions, which is why I have to give him corpses from time to time. In fact, I had to protect the corpses you guys gave me quite fiercely just now since he wanted them very badly."

When Nick heard about the Screaming Coffin, he furrowed his brows.

Sure, a Possession Specter was the best Specter possible for Zephyx extraction.

They didn't run away.

They didn't fight back.

They were easy to work with.

A Possession Specter essentially represented free money for a Zephyx Manufacturer.

However, there was one bad thing.

One couldn't attune one's Zephyx Synchronizer to a Possession Specter.

This meant that Nick's issue still wasn't solved.

He still needed a Specter that had a high compatibility with his ability.

"How powerful is it?" Wyntor asked while Nick was thinking about the issue with his ability.

"Not at all," the Parasite said with a dismissing tone. "He has a couple of grabby tendrils, but Nick should easily be strong enough to resist it. Especially since he doesn't technically have a perception since he's just an object."

"In fact, if Nick isn't careful, he might accidentally rip the poor guy into two."

All of this sounded too good to be true, and Nick still felt suspicious.

Was the Parasite planning something?

"Thank you," Wyntor said from the side. "We will be capturing the Screaming Coffin in a couple of days."

"In a couple of days?" the Parasite repeated. "Why not now? The guy is literally below me."

"You said the Screaming Coffin consumes corpses, correct?" Wyntor asked.

The rat nodded.

"And we just procured nine corpses. However, we don't have these corpses anymore."

"If we capture the Screaming Coffin right now, it needs corpses to stay placated, but if we go out and immediately get even more corpses after getting so many just hours ago, the guards might suspect us."

"So, we have to act like we already have the Screaming Coffin and that the nine corpses went to it."

"Because of that, I want to wait for three to five days before capturing it."

The rat didn't seem happy, but the Parasite understood Wyntor's decision.

"Fine," the Parasite answered. "Just call me when you need his location, but don't call me just to chat. Getting one of my minions to this isolated location wastes too much energy, and if I'm getting called for some dumb reasons, I might start charging you for my consultations."

"Of course," Wyntor said. "Thank you for the trade, and we will be calling for you when it's time to capture the Screaming Coffin."

"Sure," the rat said before diving into the water and vanishing.

The next moment, Wyntor turned to Nick. "Close everything up. No one must know what happened."

Nick was pulled out of his thoughts and nodded.

After a couple of minutes, everything had been put back, and Nick looked at Wyntor again.

"I still need a proper Specter for my Ability Advancement," Nick said.

"I know," Wyntor said, "but it's actually extremely good that we got a Possession Specter this time."

A smile appeared on Wyntor's face. "The Screaming Coffin probably produces a lot of Zephyx since it is consuming human corpses. Specters that consume humans tend to produce a lot of Zephyx in very little time."

"With it and the Dreamer, we will be producing a great amount of Zephyx every day, which will allow us to buy more advanced things."

"Your advancement is still over a year away, and we have plenty of time to accumulate wealth during that time," Wyntor said. "Don't forget that there are not only Specters roaming around that we humans haven't found yet but that there are also ones that are simply too troublesome to capture and contain."

"With enough money, we might even be able to get a Containment Unit for a Force Specter," Wyntor said with a smirk.

Nick's eyebrows rose in positive surprise.

If Nick could also choose from some Force Specters, his number of choices would improve tremendously.

In the end, Nick accepted that getting a Possession Specter was a good thing.

Best of all, Nick probably didn't even need to hire more Zephyx Extractors for the new Specter.

Chapter 74 – One More

After getting rid of all the different signs that pointed towards a trade with the Parasite, Nick left the warehouse again and dealt with Horua.

By now, Nick had become completely used to dealing with Horua, and he had found his rhythm.

Since it had been three months, Horua had grown by quite a bit. Nick even needed to buy him some new clothes.

Sadly, Horua had not yet shown any signs of getting better.

A couple of days ago, Nick had taken Jenny to Horua to see if she could do something with the ability she had gotten from the Dreamer.

When Jenny had seen how old Horua was, she had been extremely shocked.

Nick had always seemed like an extremely competent and friendly boss.

But now, she was confronted with the fact that Nick had essentially thrown a child in front of the Dreamer.

This didn't fit Jenny's image of Nick at all.

Nevertheless, she couldn't ignore the proof right in front of her.

After Horua went to sleep, Jenny tried to view his dreams.

But there weren't any.

According to Jenny, Horua simply wasn't dreaming at all.

The two of them asked Wyntor about this the next day. After all, Wyntor had been taught a lot by the tutors his family had hired.

Wyntor said that, normally, dreaming was simply the brain of a person reorganizing the memories they had written down that day, which was also why almost all dreams were somehow related to some thoughts one had had during that day.

The fact that Horua wasn't dreaming actually wasn't very surprising.

After all, Horua didn't perceive anything, which meant that he most likely didn't create new memories.

So, he also didn't dream.

There was simply nothing to dream about.

When Nick heard that, he could only sigh.

He wanted to help Horua.

Horua had been in this state for a quarter of a year, and Nick knew that this wasn't a life worth living.

Would he wake up on his own?

The doctor said it was possible.

But what if he wouldn't?

Should he simply ask the Dreamer to wake Horua up?

But what if that caused even more pain to Horua?

What if Horua would have simply woken up a week later?

For now, Nick decided against using the Dreamer and continued caring for Horua.

Over the next couple of days, Nick only traveled between Horua and the warehouse.

He didn't return to the Dregs to search for another Specter.

Nick had to act like they had already caught a Specter.

Four days after the trade with the Parasite, it was time.

During the late hours, Nick went into the warehouse.

Even though the sun always shone, most people still slept during the night.

Horua had also already gone to sleep, which meant that Nick could stay outside for around four hours before he had to check up on Horua again.

After entering the warehouse, Nick waited for Wyntor, who showed up just a couple of minutes later.

At this moment, it was shortly after midnight.

"You ready?" Nick asked.

Wyntor nodded. "Get the corpse," he said before handing Nick a token.

It was a special token that gave Nick permission to "create and collect" one corpse in the Dregs.

Nick took the token and left the warehouse.

During these hours, there were not many people on the streets, and the city felt almost dead.

After some minutes, Nick entered the Dregs.

As soon as he arrived, he jumped on top of one building and quietly moved from rooftop to rooftop.

Nick didn't want to be perceived while also having a good vantage point.

He was searching for a fitting corpse.

For the next couple of minutes, Nick saw a couple of groups of people walking around, but he didn't pay them any mind.

They weren't doing anything shady.

Nick also saw a couple of gatherings, but that was also quite normal.

Many of the people of the Dregs didn't feel safe at night, which was why some of them created small groups, and some of these people kept watch over the houses during the night.

After a couple more minutes, Nick saw a small group of men covertly moving through the alleys.

When he saw them, Nick paid special attention to them.

The way they were sneaking around was suspicious.

But after a bit of watching, Nick realized that they were just a small squad from the Insurance Gang.

The Insurance Gang regularly walked through the Dregs to advertise their services.

These groups often held hundreds, if not thousands, of credits in their palms, which was why they were sneaking around like this.

When he found out that they were from the Insurance Gang, Nick ignored them again.

Some minutes later, Nick saw a woman breaking into a house.

Nick didn't care.

Then, he saw a couple of men having sex with a woman in an alleyway.

The woman didn't seem into it, but she also didn't seem too opposed, which was why Nick also ignored that.

Finally, 30 minutes after arriving in the Dregs, Nick found something interesting.

There was a tall 25-year-old woman walking through some alleyways.

Usually, Nick wouldn't care, but something made this very relevant to him.

The woman was wearing the badge of the Riker Strikers.

When Nick saw her with the badge, he hesitated for a bit.

But in the end, he knew that someone who chose to become part of the Riker Strikers couldn't possibly be a good person.

So, Nick jumped down from one of the rooftops and landed on her head with his knee.

Her brains splattered across the streets and dirtied Nick's clothing.

However, Nick just grabbed the corpse and jumped onto one of the rooftops again.

Some minutes later, Nick arrived in the Outer City, and when a guard looked at him, Nick simply threw the token he had received to him.

The guard looked at it, nodded, and followed Nick.

When they arrived at the warehouse, the guard left.

Inside the warehouse, Nick and Wyntor looked at each other.

And then, they nodded in understanding.

Chapter 75 – Screaming Coffin

Nick slowly opened the plates again, and a couple minutes later, they once more looked into the sewers.

Just like the last time, the sun illuminated a big spot on the surface.

"Parasite, we're ready!" Wyntor shouted.

The two of them waited for nearly half a minute.

"You're ready?" a rat asked after popping its head out of the water.

Wyntor and Nick nodded.

"We prepared a corpse to lure it out as well," Wyntor said.

The rat just snorted when it heard that. "One last meal in freedom, eh?" the rat commented to itself.

"Sure, that should work," the rat shouted. "The guy is currently roaming around the Dregs below the surface. If he feels a corpse, he will quickly come here."

"Good," Wyntor answered before turning to Nick. "Are you ready?"

Nick nodded and threw a rope down.

The rope unfurled until its end touched the liquid of the sewers.

Naturally, Nick needed a way back into the warehouse, and this rope would be his way out.

Then, Nick and Wyntor looked at the Parasite.

Silence.

"What?" the Parasite asked.

"With you here, I can't use my ability," Nick said. "You know that."

"Pfft, you don't need it," the rat said with a laugh. "The guy is a Possession Specter without a useful ability. Even more, the guy is only an Early Hatchling. Fighting him is like fighting an angry table. Trust me, I'm not going to ruin my future relationship with Dark Dream just to see you die."

Nick furrowed his brows and glanced at Wyntor.

Wyntor just shrugged casually.

"Alright," Nick said carefully.

The next moment, Nick went away from the hole and grabbed the corpse.

Splash!

Nick hurled it into the water, and just a bit later, he saw it float on the surface.

Silence.

20 seconds passed.

"Is it coming?" Nick asked.

"No idea," the rat said. "I tend to keep my minions outside of the water. It's not very healthy for them. But he should be on his way. Give it a minute."

Silence.

The three of them just looked at the floating corpse.

"Oh, there he is!" the rat suddenly said.

The next moment, something white slowly rose out of the sewers beside the corpse.

It was a pristine white bandage!

A moment later, several more strings of bandages rose out from the sewers.

Slowly, they wound themselves around the corpse, and just a bit later, the corpse began to submerge.

Nick took a deep breath and narrowed his eyes.

Then, Nick jumped into the hole.

SPLASH!

Nick hit the water beside one of the bandages, and he immediately grabbed it.

As soon as Nick held it, he felt a strong pull, and he immediately got pulled below the surface.

Naturally, the water was just as disgusting as the last time, but Nick didn't have the luxury of feeling disgusted right now.

He had to capture the Screaming Coffin!

Nick didn't let go of the bandage, and he quickly got pulled more and more into the depths.

Suddenly, several more white bandages appeared, and they started to come towards him slowly.

Luckily, the bandages were very slow. It was almost like the Screaming Coffin didn't feel any urgency or anger.

Which was actually the case.

As a Possession Specter that possessed an object, the Screaming Coffin didn't even really have a consciousness.

It had the same level of consciousness as a cell.

It just followed the most basic instincts.

RIIIP!

Suddenly, one of the bandages was ripped off as Nick pulled on it.

'What?' Nick thought in shock. 'I ripped it already?!'

That was when Nick realized that he was a couple of meters below the surface, which meant that neither Wyntor nor the Parasite could perceive him.

At this moment, Nick's body was over 15 times as powerful as the body of an average adult male, and the Screaming Coffin was only an Early Hatchling.

As soon as Nick ripped the bandage off, the other bandages started to slowly retreat.

Even though the Screaming Coffin had a very basic consciousness, when one of its bandages was ripped off, it still decided to stop its attempt to consume Nick.

'That's problematic,' Nick thought. 'I don't know where it is!'

Nick moved forward and grabbed two of the retreating bandages, but he didn't pull on them.

Instead, he simply kept them in his grasp.

The bandages wanted to slowly retreat, but after a couple of seconds, they started to slowly encompass Nick's arms.

Nick didn't do anything.

Soon, more bandages appeared around his body, and they also started to encompass him.

To make sure that Nick wasn't bound in a problematic position, he kept his arms and legs apart while also keeping all of his muscles flexed.

Even if the Screaming Coffin managed to wrap him in several bandages, all the bandages were still attached at one end, and with a single pull, Nick could tear them off.

Some seconds later, ten different bandages had grabbed Nick's body, and he felt himself get pulled downward.

Luckily, Nick was carrying a bit of Arclight on his waist, which meant that the Nightmare wasn't an issue right now.

10,000 credits was no longer something extremely expensive to Dark Dream.

After getting pulled down for a couple more meters, something appeared.

It was a luxurious black coffin.

At this moment, the coffin was closed, and twelve white bandages came out of the tiny gaps between the body and the lid of the coffin.

Nick looked at the coffin with narrowed eyes.

As Nick got closer, the coffin slowly slid open.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

Immediately, Nick felt like he was looking at an eternal ocean of hate-filled ghosts!

It was like an army of furious and unwilling corpses was screaming at Nick to join them.

They hated being doomed to this eternal existence of suffering, and they had long since lost all of their rationality.

All of them were filled with nothing but pure hatred for anything that didn't share their pain.

Nick's body shook when he heard the hate-filled screams, but he quickly calmed down, and only one thought shot through his mind.

'So, that's why it's called the Screaming Coffin!'

Chapter 76 – The Second Specter

The Screaming Coffin opened fully, and Nick saw a black void inside.

As soon as Nick saw the black void, he knew that he couldn't enter the coffin or he would die.

Power seemed to be irrelevant when encompassed by the Screaming Coffin.

Anything living would be turned into nourishment for the coffin.

Nick slightly moved his arms and felt that he could still use a lot of power.

For a bit, Nick let himself get pulled closer, and when they were only a bit less than two meters apart, Nick became active.

RIIIIPP!

Nick immediately ripped his left and right arms free, followed by his legs.

Immediately, the other bandages loosened, and shockingly, they even cut themselves off!

The Screaming Coffin immediately let go of Nick, leaving several parts of Nick's body encased in white bandages.

The Screaming Coffin quickly closed its lid, and when it was fully closed, Nick shot forward.

In an instant, Nick surrounded the closed coffin with his arms. Luckily, it wasn't too big.

The next moment, Nick surrounded the coffin with his legs so that it couldn't run away.

RIIIIPPP!

After that, Nick methodically ripped out all of the white bandages that came out of the gaps.

When the last bandage was cut, the coffin stopped moving. The only bit of life or movement Nick could feel was that it was shaking a bit.

By removing all of the bandages, Nick had turned the Screaming Coffin into something akin to a spider with all of its legs ripped out.

It was alive, but it couldn't move.

Nick carefully switched his hold and looked at it for a bit.

The coffin only lightly shook in place, which meant that it couldn't move anymore.

'I guess that's it?' Nick asked himself doubtfully in his mind.

'That was easy.'

Of course, Nick still realized that this coffin could essentially kill and prey on any normal human.

If it caught one of the members of the Riker Strikers, the man would be helpless.

A normal adult male simply didn't have the power to rip the bandages apart.

But on the other hand, the Screaming Coffin was also very slow.

If the human noticed the coffin before it reached him, they could probably just run away.

However, things were different in the sewers.

No human would be able to feel the Screaming Coffin coming.

In short, it was an ambush predator.

'I guess we have a second Specter now,' Nick thought as he grabbed the bottom of the coffin before lifting it.

Next, Nick swam upward while holding the coffin, and a couple of seconds later, he reached the surface.

First, Nick felt like the coffin had become many times heavier, but that was just Nick's ability deactivating.

When Nick lifted the coffin out of the water, he had to wildly paddle with his legs to keep his head above the water.

"I got it!" Nick shouted, but he immediately regretted shouting as some of the liquid entered his mouth.

"Great work! Bring it up!" Wyntor shouted.

"Nicely done, kid," the rat shouted.

Nick slowly pushed the coffin to the rope and tied a rope around it.

Sadly, there was not a lot of rope, which meant that he couldn't really secure it completely.

"Wyntor, I need you down here to keep the coffin in the loop. I don't think you have the power to pull both of us up," Nick shouted.

Wyntor looked at the sewers with disgust and anxiety, but he just gritted his teeth before nodding.

Wyntor slowly slid down the rope until he reached the coffin.

A disgusted and almost fearful expression appeared on Wyntor's face as he got submerged up to his chest in the sewers.

"Thanks," Nick said before grabbing the rope above Wyntor and easily pulling himself up.

When Nick reached the top, he walked a bit away from the edge and pulled.

Since no one could perceive Nick's exact location right now, his ability reactivated.

On the top, Nick pulled the rope to himself like there was almost nothing connected to it.

In the sewers, Wyntor felt an extremely powerful pull and was immediately lifted out of the sewers.

The coffin wobbled below Wyntor's ass, but he quickly shifted his weight to keep it in the loop.

Some seconds later, Wyntor grabbed the ceiling of the sewers and pulled himself carefully up while still grabbing the coffin with his legs.

Luckily, Wyntor wasn't weak.

In fact, he was a Mid Newbie since he had worked quite a bit with his father's Specters when he was young.

Nick quickly went forward and pulled Wyntor and the Screaming Coffin out.

Without waiting, Nick grabbed the Screaming Coffin and walked over to the Containment Unit in the middle of the warehouse.

They had already moved the Dreamer to its new Containment Unit a couple of days ago.

With Nick, Wyntor, and Jenny present, the Dreamer didn't even attempt to escape.

The Dreamer was now in a smaller Containment Unit, but a far more expensive and advanced one.

And the Screaming Coffin would now inhabit the Dreamer's old Containment Unit.

The alarm rang through the warehouse as the main gate of the Containment Unit was slowly opened.

Nick just walked into the Containment Unit, put the Screaming Coffin on the ground, and walked out again.

After closing the gate, he was done.

The Screaming Coffin was contained, and compared to the Dreamer, this thing was way easier to keep contained.

As long as it had something to eat, it probably wouldn't even move.

"Speaking of," Nick said before going to the hole.

When he looked down, he saw the rat sniffing the corpse they had thrown in earlier to lure out the Screaming Coffin.

"No!" Nick shouted. "I'm still using that!"

"Yeah, sure," the rat said absentmindedly as it retreated from the corpse.

Nick looked at the rope and saw that it was still bound to one of the Containment Units.

The next moment, Nick grabbed the rope and jumped back into the sewers.

Nick held the rope in one hand and grabbed the corpse with the other.

After a bit of shifting his weight, Nick managed to climb the rope with the corpse.

"Thanks!" Nick shouted into the hole.

"Just business!" the rat shouted back.

Then, Nick closed the hole to the sewers.

Finally, they got their second Specter, the Screaming Coffin!

Chapter 77 – Watching the Coffin

After closing the hole to the sewers, Nick walked over to Wyntor.

At this moment, Wyntor was standing near the edge of the warehouse below something that looked like a shower.

The shower head was spewing Cleansing Liquid onto Wyntor, getting rid of all the impurities and the stench.

Such a cleansing shower cost a couple thousand credits, and taking a shower cost around 50 credits, which made the shower quite expensive for normal people.

But as a Zephyx Manufacturer, Dark Dream easily had enough funds for something like this.

A cleansing shower counted amongst the most basic equipment for a Zephyx Manufacturer since it was relatively cheap while also dealing with many risks.

A clean environment was important.

Wyntor deactivated the shower and walked out. Fortunately, one didn't need to take off their clothing for the cleansing shower.

Nick walked past Wyntor and went under the shower himself.

About two minutes later, Nick came out again, and he quickly saw Wyntor dumping a tank of Cleansing Liquid onto the ground.

In an instant, everything began to sizzle, but about 20 seconds later, it stopped.

All the impurities of the ground had been cleaned, but there was still Cleansing Liquid left.

"I'll deal with this," Wyntor said as he grabbed a broom, pushing the remaining Cleansing Liquid towards dirty spots on the ground. "You go deal with the Screaming Coffin."

"Sure," Nick answered, not surprised that Wyntor was essentially cleaning the floor of the warehouse as the CEO.

Usually, this would be Pator's job, but since nobody was allowed to know about what was going on, Wyntor did it himself.

Nick walked over to the corpse he had retrieved and lifted it.

The corpse was leaving some trails of blood and grime, but Nick didn't mind.

Wyntor would deal with it.

A moment later, Nick opened the door to the Screaming Coffin's Containment Unit and walked in with the corpse.

After entering, Nick saw the Screaming Coffin shaking a bit while tiny pieces of white bandages came out of its edges.

'It has already started recovering,' Nick thought as he looked at the Screaming Coffin.

Nick slowly walked up to the Screaming Coffin and dumped the corpse beside it.

'Now, time to wait,' Nick thought as he looked at the Screaming Coffin.

The next moment, Nick sat down at the far corner, watching.

Nick wanted to see how the Screaming Coffin would consume the corpse.

Additionally, Nick wanted to know how long it would take for the Screaming Coffin to digest the corpse and become active again.

Time passed.

Over the next hour, the bandages grew by about ten centimeters, and the Screaming Coffin was almost able to move again.

An hour later, the Screaming Coffin could finally move again, but it was very slow.

It moved using its bandage-like legs.

In the water, it would probably just slide across the ground, but on land, it had to be careful.

The first thing the Screaming Coffin did was to look around the Containment Unit.

It was almost like an ant under a small glass, trying to climb up all the walls but failing.

Nick was just watching.

Based on what he was seeing, the Screaming Coffin didn't have any kind of perception since it was slowly crawling towards him while also trying to climb the walls.

When the Screaming Coffin's bandage touched Nick's hand, it retreated relatively quickly.

Quickly for the Screaming Coffin, which wasn't very fast by human standards.

While retreating, it still tried to climb the walls, and eventually, it ran around the entire room, reaching Nick's other side.

This time, it didn't immediately retreat.

Its bandages slowly touched Nick's hand and flowed over them.

The next moment, the Screaming Coffin used its white bandages to do something surprising.

With a lot of difficulties, it managed to actually stand up.

At that moment, Nick noticed that the Screaming Coffin was actually quite huge.

It was over two meters tall and over 80 centimeters wide.

The next moment...

AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!

The lid slowly slid open and fell to the side as the screams of the damned filled the Containment Unit.

Since it wasn't underwater this time, the screams were many times louder.

Nick actually felt pressure appear in his head due to the extremely loud screams.

Then, the coffin fell forward.

BANG!

And hit the ground.

Nick simply stepped to the side.

Obviously, the Screaming Coffin had tried to eat Nick just now, but since it didn't have its long bandages, it just tried to fall on top of him with its open maw.

When the opening of the coffin hit the ground, the screams immediately vanished.

The next moment, the Screaming Coffin pushed itself onto its back, and the loud screams returned.

Surprisingly, the first thing the Screaming Coffin did after that was to very quickly go to its lid to put it back on.

'Interesting,' Nick thought. 'It went faster to its lid than when it fled from me the first time it touched me in here. I guess the lid is extremely important to it.'

'Maybe it uses up a considerable amount of Zephyx while its lid is off?' Nick thought as he scratched his chin in thought.

The Screaming Coffin quickly put the lid back on, after which it slowed down considerably.

Then, it started to slowly crawl around the Containment Unit again.

When Nick saw that, he sighed in annoyance and stood up.

Nick walked over to the corpse in the middle of the Containment Unit and grabbed the corpse.

Then, he dumped the corpse into the Screaming Coffin's path.

After a bit, the Screaming Coffin touched the corpse.

Its white bandages touched it in many places, and eventually, the Screaming Coffin's lid opened again.

'It's not standing up this time,' Nick thought. 'That probably means it can tell that this human is actually dead.'

Sure enough, its short white bandages wound around the corpse as best as they could, and a couple of seconds later, the corpse was pulled into the open coffin.

With interest, Nick saw the corpse completely vanish.

It was like the corpse had entered a completely separate, dark dimension.

Another surprising thing was that the screams became very distant and quiet with the corpse inside.

The Screaming Coffin quickly put its lid back on.

And then...

Nothing.

It just lay there.

Doing nothing.

Chapter 78 – Trevor

For a couple of hours, Nick just watched the motionless coffin.

It was almost like it was just a normal coffin.

"Nick, time to work."

Wyntor's voice came out of the speakers inside the Containment Unit.

"Is it already six a.m.?" Nick asked.

"About to," Wyntor answered.

"Sure," Nick said. "Would be nice if you could keep a watch over the Screaming Coffin. It doesn't seem to do anything while it has a corpse inside of it, but I want to know when it actually starts to move around again. Don't worry, it is very slow, and you can easily retreat from it if it tries anything."

"Should be fine as long as you take a look inside every hour."

"Sure," Wyntor said. "I can do that."

By now, Nick had already opened the door and walked outside.

"By the way," Nick said, looking at Wyntor. "Can you also tell the others about the Screaming Coffin? They don't need to work with it, but they should know that we have a second Specter."

Wyntor furrowed his brows. "I don't want to tell everyone about every Specter."

"Why not?" Nick asked.

"Zephyx Manufacturers often send spies into other Zephyx Manufacturers, and after knowing everything about all the Specters, they often steal them."

"I will tell them that we have a second Specter, but I won't tell them any information about it. After all, they don't need to work with it, and it won't break out."

"Since it is a Possession Specter, it's very easy to take care of the Screaming Coffin. We just have to get corpses and dump them in here when it's done eating," Wyntor said.

Nick also furrowed his brows.

Jenny and Trevor were Nick's employees, and he trusted them.

He didn't like it that Wyntor wasn't telling them everything.

"If you think so," Nick said with a shrug, moving past him.

Obviously, Nick wasn't happy, but he wouldn't go against Wyntor's orders.

"Thanks," Wyntor said with a nod.

"Sure," Nick said absentmindedly as he walked over to the Dreamer's new Containment Unit.

The Dreamer's new Containment Unit was 3x3x3 meters big, which was a bit smaller than its old Containment Unit.

However, just by looking at it, one could tell that this one was way more expensive.

First of all, there were no visible wires or pipes.

Second of all, the Containment Unit was just a solid, clean, even, and black cube.

It almost looked like a cube of obsidian.

Well, except for the top.

The ceiling of the Containment Unit was made of a mysterious material that had some properties of glass.

From above the Containment Unit, one could see through the ceiling clearly, but when inside, one couldn't look out.

If this were a simple one-way mirror, it would be the other way around.

With a one-way mirror, the side that let the light enter would not be able to see through it, while the side that received the light could see through it.

This glass-like surface was also one of the biggest reasons why this Containment Unit was so expensive.

First of all, the people outside could see what was going on in the Containment Unit.

Second of all, the surface was extremely hard.

Third, the Zephyx Manufacturer didn't need to waste money on artificial light anymore.

Sadly, there was one problem with that part of the Containment Unit.

It couldn't isolate Force Specters.

But that was a small price to pay for all the conveniences.

This model was probably the one that was used and sold the most amongst Zephyx Manufacturers.

It was pretty cheap for a Containment Unit, could contain an Adolescent Specter, and was pretty small and sturdy.

This model was used to basically contain every Hatchling and Adolescent Specter that wasn't a Force Specter.

When Nick reached the black cube, he jumped up and landed on top of the Containment Unit.

Naturally, when Nick landed, it made quite a loud sound, but the Dreamer didn't seem to care as it continued to look at Trevor.

In front of the Dreamer lay a man with long black hair.

The man was around 185 centimeters tall and quite muscular with a chiseled jawline.

The Extractor uniform he was wearing made him seem even more impressive.

In a way, the man looked like someone who had come out of a fantasy.

That was Trevor.

Naturally, with his looks, Trevor had it extremely easy to make friends and pick up girls, which was also why Wyntor had chosen him over Jenny for any sensitive mission.

In a way, Trevor was a perfect spy or secret agent since he could get close to anyone easily.

Men wanted to be his friend, while women wanted to be his girlfriend.

When Nick saw that everything looked fine in the Containment Unit, he jumped down from the roof and walked in.

"Time to swap," Nick said.

The Dreamer slowly turned its head to look at Nick.

Even though Nick was used to working with the Dreamer, he still felt nervous in front of it.

Compared to the Screaming Coffin, the Dreamer was many times worse since it was actually dangerous to Nick.

Sure, the Screaming Coffin looked real scary and spooky when it screamed and crawled around with its white bandages, but the Dreamer could actually really kill Nick.

The Dreamer took some steps back, and Nick walked up to Trevor.

"Hey, time to wake up," Nick said.

However, Nick didn't touch or move Trevor.

Trevor had said that he hated touching other people or getting touched by them.

After a bit, Trevor slowly opened his eyes with a groan.

"Is it time already?" his deep voice said as he slowly sat up.

"Yep," Nick said. "Good work."

"Easy as pie, boss," Trevor said as he slowly stood up.

Then, Trevor stretched without any hurry and waved at the Dreamer. "Good work today," he told it.

The Dreamer didn't show any reaction.

"Can you answer me at least once?" Trevor asked with annoyance.

The Dreamer didn't do anything.

"Anyway, time for me to head home. Have fun, boss!" Trevor said, passing Nick.

"Trevor, go talk to Wyntor," Nick said.

Trevor stopped and turned to Nick with a worried look. "Am I in trouble?"

"No," Nick said with a laugh. "I caught a new Specter yesterday. The other Containment Unit is now occupied."

Trevor looked with surprise at Nick. "You caught another Specter?"

Nick nodded. "Wyntor is going to tell you everything you need to know."

"Oh, wow. Sure, I'll head there right now," Trevor said.

While Trevor walked out of the Containment Unit, Nick sat down in one of the corners and closed his eyes.

As always, the Dreamer slowly walked up to him.

And a minute later, Nick fell asleep.

Chapter 79 – Big Profits

When Nick woke up again, he directly went to Wyntor to ask him about the Screaming Coffin.

Apparently, the Screaming Coffin still hadn't moved.

By now, it had been consuming that one corpse for over twelve hours.

After a bit of talking, Nick went back to the hotel and checked up on Horua.

Luckily, Pator had dealt with Horua while Nick was working, which made things easier.

Every couple of hours, Nick returned to look at the Screaming Coffin, and after some time, Nick's times when he checked up on Horua perfectly matched the times he checked up on the Screaming Coffin.

After sleeping for four hours, Nick checked up on Horua and the Screaming Coffin again.

Nothing had changed.

When it was time for Nick's shift to start, he checked up on the Screaming Coffin again.

It still hadn't moved.

'It's been over 28 hours by now. If it were hungry, it would probably move around the Containment Unit and search for some food,' Nick thought. 'Does this mean that it takes more than 24 hours to consume a corpse?'

Before starting his next shift with the Dreamer, Nick told Wyntor to check on the coffin again.

When Nick came out again, he asked Wyntor, and Wyntor had something interesting to tell him.

"About six hours into your shift, it started to move around the Containment Unit," Wyntor said. "Right now, it's walking around, trying to escape to find some food. Luckily, it is very weak, and it doesn't even try to break the walls. It simply tries to find a way around the walls."

'Six hours after the start of my shift?' Nick thought. 'That should be about one-and-a-half days after I fed the corpse to it.'

Nick nodded. "Got it. Let me check up on it."

Wyntor nodded back and went into his office.

While Jenny was working with the Dreamer, Nick checked up on the Screaming Coffin.

But before he did, he checked up on the amount of Zephyx it produced.

'30 grams!' Nick thought in shock.

30 grams was a lot.

'Is that like one gram per hour?' Nick thought.

30 grams was about as much as the Dreamer produced daily.

Sure, the Screaming Coffin produced that in about 32 to 34 hours, but one also had to consider that it was only an Early Hatchling.

If the Screaming Coffin managed to become a Mid Hatchling, it might produce just as much as the Dreamer or even more.

And best of all, it didn't need anyone that was working with it.

It just needed a corpse.

Before entering, Nick took out the Zephyx storage of the Containment Unit and brought it into Wyntor's office.

As the Chief Zephyx Extractor, it was Nick's job to record all the produced Zephyx and to bring it to the sales department, which was just Wyntor at the moment.

Then, Nick entered the Screaming Coffin's Containment Unit again.

Sure enough, it was currently crawling around the Containment Unit like a spider with thirteen long white legs.

'It looks quite creepy,' Nick thought.

Nick imagined the Screaming Coffin silently walking around the forsaken parts of the Dregs on the hunt for some food.

But then, Nick had another thought.

After weighing his options for a bit, Nick decided to try it out.

He walked closer, and when he reached the Screaming Coffin, it started to use its long white bandages to encompass him.

But before it could do so, Nick kicked it.

The coffin lurched away but didn't get damaged since Nick hadn't used all of his power.

Nevertheless, Nick's kick was enough to tell the coffin that it didn't have the power to eat him.

Nick walked closer to the coffin.

And then, he jumped.

Donk!

And landed on top of the Screaming Coffin!

The Screaming Coffin immediately fell to the floor and pulled its bandages inward.

After that, Nick just sat down on the coffin.

Silence.

Nothing was happening.

"Come on!" Nick said with annoyance. "Move around a bit. I wanna ride you!"

However, the Specter just didn't move.

After a couple of minutes, Nick just sighed and walked away from the Screaming Coffin.

Another minute later, the Screaming Coffin slowly pulled out its white bandages again and started to circle the Containment Unit again.

'I don't think I can domesticate it. I think it's a bit too dumb to be a useful mount,' he thought with disappointment.

'Anyway, I should get some food for it.'

Nick left the Containment Unit and saw Pator.

"Hey, can you work a bit longer for today? I have somewhere to be, and I need someone to look out for Horua for the next two hours or so. Naturally, you will get paid for the extra time," Nick said.

"Sure, no problem!" Pator said. "Thanks for the extra money!"

"Thanks, Pator," Nick said with a smile before walking out of the warehouse.

'30 grams of Zephyx is about 30,000 credits in total. However, every corpse costs around 15,000 credits, and with the other costs, the Screaming Coffin only produces a profit of about 12,000 credits per corpse.'

'Luckily, none of my Zephyx Extractors need to work with it, which means there's more remaining for me!' Nick thought with a smile.

'That's about 2,000 credits more per day with only a little extra work!'

'Although, I have no idea what I should buy with all of this.'

'I'm earning so many credits, but they are just sitting in my bank account, collecting dust.'

As Nick reached the guard outpost, he stopped and scratched his head.

'Isn't that kind of what I've hated in other people in the past?'

'Just months ago, I thought that it would be great if everyone could just give a little of their overabundant wealth to help others.'

Slowly, Nick started to feel bad about having so many credits.

But he also felt like he deserved to have all these credits.

It was a complex mix of contrasting emotions.

Nick absentmindedly talked with the guards, and about a minute later, he came out with a token for a corpse.

'I don't even need the money to help the Dregs since I am paying for the corpses with the company's card,' Nick thought as he looked at the token.

'I really need something to do with my money.'

Chapter 80 – Investing

After searching in the Dregs for about an hour, Nick found a guy belonging to the Riker Strikers.

Just like last time, Nick just killed the guy and pulled him back to Dark Dream.

On his way, he handed the token back to the guards, who just thanked him for his patronage.

Nick threw the corpse into the Screaming Coffin's Containment Unit and watched it consume the corpse.

As always, the terrifying screams hurt Nick's ears quite a bit.

After Nick left the Containment Unit, he looked at the clock.

'About 3 p.m. That means it should be done between 10 p.m. tomorrow and 2 a.m. the day after tomorrow.'

Nick nodded and walked into Wyntor's office.

"Anything you need?" Wyntor asked without looking up from the sheet of paper he was writing on.

"Hey, Wyntor," Nick said. "What do I do with my money?"

"Invest it," Wyntor answered.

Nick furrowed his brows. "Like, in the company?"

Wyntor snorted. "No. I don't need your money right now, and I don't want to lose ownership of Dark Dream."

As the sole shareholder, Wyntor owned 100% of Dark Dream.

Even though Nick was the Chief Zephyx Extractor, he only held a very high management position. He was not an owner or director of the company.

Technically, if Wyntor wanted, he could throw Nick out without any issues, but that would be beyond stupid.

"You want to help the people of the Dregs, right?" Wyntor asked, putting the sheet of paper down.

Nick nodded.

"In that case, I would invest in your own power," Wyntor suggested.

"Into my power?" Nick repeated.

"Yep," Wyntor added. "Get some equipment. You are still fighting with your bare hands, and you're only using the official uniform of the city as your armor. Even more, if a Force Specter attacks you, you can't even do anything to it since you have no weapons to use against it."

"By getting a good weapon and armor, you can increase your own power by a lot," Wyntor said.

Nick's eyes widened in realization as he thought about all the things he could buy with the money he had already gathered.

But then, Nick became a bit confused. "And what does that have to do with me wanting to help the people of the Dregs?"

Wyntor chuckled a bit. "If you die, who will help the people of the Dregs? Even more, if you use 10% of your current income to help the people in the Dregs, that's about 300 credits per day, but if you use 10% of your income two years later when you're a level two Extractor, that might turn into 3,000 credits per day."

"The stronger you are, the more money you earn, and the more you help the people of the Dregs. The longer you live, the more payments the Dregs will receive."

"Because of that, I suggest investing about 80% of your income in your own power, keep 10% as a safety net, and use the remaining 10% to help the people," Wyntor explained.

Nick almost couldn't believe how easily Wyntor had fixed the very thing that Nick couldn't fix after thinking about it for a long time.

It was actually so easy and logical.

"Sounds great," Nick said with a bright smile. "So, where can I find equipment? What should I get first?"

"The most important thing for a Zephyx Extractor."

"A Barrier."

"A Barrier?" Nick asked in confusion.

"A Barrier is something you can put into your official uniform. If anything dangerous comes near you, the device will shield you from it."

"Since we are not Specters, we humans can't use our Zephyx without equipment, and a Barrier was one such piece of equipment."

"The Barrier uses your internal Zephyx storage to block any and all attacks. The stronger the attack it blocks, the more Zephyx it uses."

"While you can deal with punches, claws, and kicks without issues, you would be helpless if someone throws a vat of burning oil at you. Additionally, Force Specters almost always have attacks that are almost impossible to block with anything physical, and even other kinds of Specters can have these attacks."

"A Barrier will allow you to deal with attacks that normal humans can't deal with."

Nick listened to Wyntor intently. "That sounds very useful! How strong is such a barrier?"

"Depends on its price and your level," Wyntor said as he leaned back in the chair.

The next moment, Wyntor opened a big pocket on his chest and pulled something out.

It was a silver plate with a beautiful blue gem in the middle that seemed to shine like the ocean.

"That's mine," Wyntor said. "It can block all manners of attacks, deploys intelligently and automatically, has a malleable surface, is invisible while active, and blocks attacks at a ratio of five to one Zephyx. That means it uses one unit of my Zephyx to block five units of an enemy's Zephyx."

Nick took a deep breath.

"That sounds very expensive," he commented.

Wyntor chuckled. "Yeah, I can't buy something like that on my own. It was a gift from my father before I left to build Dark Dream. It costs like 100 million credits, but my father probably got it for half the price."

Nick sucked in a violent breath through his teeth.

100 million credits!

That was nearly a thousand times more than what Nick had earned so far!

"Yours will not be as good, but it will still help you a lot," Wyntor said. "For starters, I would suggest getting one that has a two-to-one conversion rate that can block most kinds of attacks."

"You should have just enough money to get a decent one, but don't spend everything on it. You also need a couple of one-time-use items and actual weapons. Try to keep what you spend on the Barrier at about 80% of the 80% you use to buy equipment."

Nick nodded. "Will do. Where can I buy something like that?"

"Well, usually you would need to enter the Inner City to get this stuff, but level one Zephyx Extractors are not allowed in the Inner City without a permit. You have to be a level two Zephyx Extractor first."

"But, of course, since there is a big market for equipment for Newbies, there is money to be made."

"Once a week, there's an open market in the Outer City for Newbies."

"Lucky for you, it's tomorrow."