

Leveling up the World

Chapter 10: The Arrangement

Seeing the village chiefs granddaughter wasn't on the top of Dallion's list. In fact, after what they had subjected him and his mother to, he didn't want to have anything to do with the entire Luor family. His previous self might have accepted the cruelty and arrogance as a sad fact of life, but the Dallion who had come from Earth, didn't.

The ring suits you well, the boy said. It was the first snarky comment he could make, only then noticing that the girl was actually wearing it.

Oh, err she paused. Possibly it was a trick of the light, but Dallion was almost certain he saw her face change color. I'm not here for that. The girl hid her hands behind her back.

Like all the Luor family she was straw blond, hair neatly combed in a braid over her shoulder. Her clothes were simple, yet elegant; improved at least twice and frequently mended, they were better suited on the pages of a fashion catalogue. As much as he disliked her, Dallion had to admit they stood well on her.

Gloria Luor, as distant memory suggested, was the chief's second youngest grandchild. An awakened, like her brother, she was granted a special status in the village. Rarely lifting a finger to help anyone, she spent most of her time at her mansion. According to the local gossip, Aspior had actively been searching for eligible suitors for her hand, with the aim of increasing his influence.

Is everything alright, brother? Linner asked from the river.

It's fine, Lin, Gloria answered in Dallion's stead. I'm just here to thank your brother for the ring he improved for me.

Concern remained written on the child's face.

It's fine. Dallion nodded with a smile. You just find that perfect pebble, okay?

Okay Linner wasn't entirely convinced, but still went back to what he was doing. Even so, he still shot a curious glance at the two every now and again.

I used to be like him once, Gloria whispered as she moved closer to Dallion.

Poor and afraid? Dallion couldn't resist.

Carefree and happy.

Yeah, must be difficult living in luxury. Getting everything you wish for he shook his head in faux pity. Must be really tough.

I make my own clothes, the girl said with an icy hardness to her voice. Its expected from me. But what do you know, youve only been awakened for five days?

Well, its been a breeze so far, Dallion lied. Maybe this awakened thing isnt as difficult as your family makes it out to be.

You think its easy? Gloria crossed her arms. You were lucky with the ring! I dont know what skill you were given, but its not going to be enough.

Dallion opened his mouth to say something, but the girl continued before a sound could leave his throat.

In two days, youll be called to grandfathers house to help the village, Gloria went on. Youll be given a task impossible to complete at your current awakened level. And even if you miraculously manage that, in a week youll be called on again, and again, until you fail.

There were no two ways about it, the girl was right. As much as Dallion trained, there was no way he could get out of this, not after attracting so much attention. He had been lucky once, he could be lucky a few more times as well, but at some point, that luck would run out and then fall would be all the greater both for him and his family.

Whats it to you? The boy asked.

Does it matter? Gloria gave him a smug look. Can you afford to refuse any help at this point?

No doubt it was a risk, but so was doing nothing. Nothing stopped Dallion from ignoring her, or even playing along with no intention of keeping any promise he made. In the back of his mind, though, a small voice whispered that this was an opportunity he might never again have.

Your awakened level is one, right? The Girl persisted. Dallion didnt reply.

As long as its one, you can only have one skill, and whatever the skill, it wont be enough for the upcoming task. Trust me.

It takes months of practice to reach a breakthrough point. Dallion recited what his mother had told him.

Years, Gloria corrected. And theres no guarantee youll succeed from the first time. However, theres also another way.

What?

This was the first time Dallion heard of this. Given that he'd only been in this world for a week, it shouldn't have been that big of a surprise. Given the nature of awakening, though, hearing that there was a way to bypass years of training, felt like a pretty substantial cheat.

There's a way for you to breakthrough to your second level of awakening, and do it tomorrow, the girl whispered. However, you'll have to decide now.

The last time Dallion had been forced to make an instant decision was when applying for college. At the time he hadn't been too thrilled by the prospect, wanting to enjoy another year of freedom before. His father, though, had given him an ultimatum: apply immediately or say goodbye to any associated financial support. Now, like then, the boy was presented with one option.

How difficult will it be? Dallion asked.

Nothing you can't handle.

And I suppose I mustn't tell anyone else about this?

That would be best.

Guess I don't have a choice, Dallion sighed theatrically. His performance seemed to have an effect, for the girl looked down, partial guilt appearing on her expression. What do I have to do?

Meet me here at midnight tonight. Make sure no one finds out about this.

That sounded like a trap if Dallion had ever heard one.

Okay. Then again, there were ways to spring a trap. Anything else.

No. Gloria turned around. Oh, and thanks for the ring, she whispered before hastily walking away.

Midnight tonight, Dallion thought. Things were getting interesting possibly too interesting.

Brother, brother! Linner splashed through the water running towards him. I found it! I found the perfect pebble.

That's great! Dallion rushed to meet him. Give it here and let me do my magic.

And I found the perfect plan for tonight

