

The Walker Of Voids

Chapter 26: Third Void Walk [1] - Stage 1 Collapse

As Null walked away from the trio he was previously talking to, he returned his attention to the energy that was coursing through his veins and running rampant within his body. He felt as if cold water was streaming his insides, and while the experience felt as good as a cold breeze in the middle of a summer day, he could not help but feel slightly worried about the volume of energy within his body.

However, his worries were unfounded as almost half the energy had been digested in the 1 and a half minutes it took him to reach the others, and from what he could feel, nothing had happened yet except the gradual return of the pain coursing through his very being.

'Must be mana strain...' He thought to himself.

It made sense. He used an enormous amount of mana that he would have been capable of using if not for his second void walk, which gave him an immense boost in all his attributes, including his mana pool.

"What's my current progress?" Null asked while looking at his watch.

[64%]

Null simply nodded, yet he was internally shocked by how killing a single hobgoblin could bring him so much closer to becoming a first commandment.

Of course, he also knew that the path from here on out would be extremely difficult, not only because of the predictable increase in the difficulty of his Void Walks, but also due to how long it might take to reach the next commandments.

'Every commandment has its own power scaling. People choose to power scale using anything from metals to titles. Us humans can be so simple sometimes. Superficial even.

"Hey, Null! Over here!" Rosepetal waved, causing Null to look towards her with a tilt of the head in response to her annoying shouting.

"Watch this!" She waved him over, and when he finally got to her, his eyes were locked on her mobile phone that was showing the battle between him and Transcendent against the goblin chief.

"I have to say, you two do make a pretty good team. I've never seen him fight like that with anyone before. He is more of a loner when it comes to these things. I'm worried that it might kill him one day haha." Poisonlily chimed in.

However, instead of replying to Poisonlily, Null looked around for a moment before asking-

"Do any of you happen to have something that can cure mana strain?"

"Hmm... I think I have a mana replenishing bottle in my storage device. Why do you need it?" She tilted her head in curiosity.

"My insides feel like they are on fire." Null shrugged.

"Hahaha. Nice try. If you were actually going through mana strain, you would be crying and puking non-stop. It is incredibly painful, you know." She laughed.

"I would never do that. That would be incredibly humiliating." Null sighed.

"Well then, you're probably faking it then."

"How long does it take for the pain to subside?" Null asked without a change in his cold tone.

"Usually a few hours." She explained.

"I see. I'll just wait then." Null muttered and began to walk away, but Rosepetal quickly stopped him.

"Are you sure? It looks like you used a lot of mana..."

"No need. I'll just-" However before Null could refuse, a hand holding a glass bottle with blue liquid inside it extended towards him.

"She's correct, you know. You haven't even reached the first commandment. Don't be stubborn." Damien argued while flashing his signature smile.

Seeing Damien's gesture, Null knew what was coming but took the bottle anyway, turned around, and gulped it down after lifting his mask slightly.

Returning the glass bottle, Null tried to walk away, but he was quickly stopped again.

"Mr. Null. I have a proposition." Damien announced, catching the attention of almost everyone.

Halting his steps, Null turned around.

"Not interested."

Without skipping a beat, he turned around and walked away.

"Wait!" Damien shouted.

'This clearing is starting to agitate me. Could have sworn there were more trees here.'
Null rubbed his temple.

"We can give you anything. Money? Fame? All our families are rich and famous with varying degrees of political power. Our families can easily nurture you and your family!"
Damien attempted to persuade.

"Apologies, but I am still not interested." Null waved, but instead of walking away like his previous attempts, he slowly sunk into his own shadow, leaving everyone completely stunned.

"Did he just sink into his own shadow to avoid a conversation..." Rosepetal asked with a complex expression on her face.

"Absolute genius." Monarch nodded approvingly while the rest looked at him with a disapproving expression.

The rest of the day went as expected. The reapers and Osmygold's team went out to get some drinks and stayed out for the rest of the night before returning at sunrise.

On the other hand, Lloyd was sitting in the middle of his room in the lotus position as he continued to meditate for longer than he could recall. The main reason for that was the fact that he had to absorb a lot of the hobgoblin's dormant energies into his cells equally.

While the body would have completed that task of distributing the energy if the amount was small, the same could not be said when the energy comes from a creature in the mid stages of the first commandment. This forced Lloyd to take things into his own hands and direct the energy to all his cells equally.

After several hours, Lloyd finally opened his eyes and looked at the mirror to see if there were any changes.

"What the hell? Did my abs become more defined? I mean, I'm not complaining, but damn. At this rate, I might qualify for a bodybuilding competition." Lloyd chuckled while posing in the mirror.

"I don't have any real muscle, so I'm not sure why my body is making it look like I do... Wouldn't it just reduce my mobility while making me less flexible?" He asked himself, but after another glance, he narrowed his eyes and came to a conclusion.

"My muscles don't seem to have increased in size. They've just become more defined. In due time, I'm more likely to look like a statue of a greek god rather than a heavy professional bodybuilder."

Nodding, Lloyd quickly put on his mask, changed into suitable battle wear, and went to the gymnasium to train.

Of course, no one he knew was there due to them either puking their guts out or being completely blacked out, making the session both lonely and extremely productive. Of course, he didn't have Osmygold's expertise in training, but instead, he had a variety of strangers willing to spar against him, allowing him to create a variety of new combos, as well as creative ways to use his abilities.

After that, he would go hunting for goblins in the forest to increase his power before returning to the inn and meditating in order to comprehend his shadow affinity.

3 days passed in a flash, and before Lloyd knew it, he had been in the dungeon labyrinth for a little over 5 days.

[Ding]

[Unread message: 3 days ago]

"Hmm?" Lloyd frowned and thought of what it could be, but when he couldn't think of anything significant, he simply tapped onto the light purple inbox message and checked it out.

[Unread message: -

Changes have been made to your status screen]

"Oh? Show my my status screen then." Lloyd replied with a slightly excited tone of voice.

A low chime entered his ears as the screen in front of him disappeared before being replaced by another purple transparent screen.

Lloyd's eyes quickly scanned over the entire screen onto two words that made his mouth gape in surprise while his eyes arched upwards in excitement.

A smile could not help but crawl up the corner of his lips, and before he knew it, he was muttering the words-

"Holy f*cking sh*t."

Two days passed in the blink of an eye, and while everything seemed normal on the surface, there was on a particular difference that some have noticed.

"Is Null some kind of training maniac?" Asked a girl no older than 17 years old. Her crimson hair gently danced in the winds as she sat atop a tall wall that had been erected around the town for what looked like decades.

"You guys know him the best, I would have expected you to know." A girl with black hair and emerald eyes sneered.

"We've known him for two days more than you guys. However, I have to say, his training has become a lot more intense in the last 2 days compared to the other 5." Osmygold stroked his beard before scanning the city with his hazel eyes.

"What a show-off. I bet he's doing all this to impress the girls." Peacexelr complained.

"I don't think he is that kind of person." A boy's voice chimed in, causing the red of them to widen their eyes before looking towards the source.

As their eyes darted toward the source, their shook for a moment before a collective sigh of relief left their agape mouths.

"Trans... You shouldn't scare us like that." Poisonlily complained while Trans simply laughed at her.

"Starforger, huh..." Osmygold sighed while eyeing the hoverboard Transcendent was standing on, allowing him to float above the wall without making any noise other than a low wooshing on the wind whenever he glided around.

"Have you checked on Null lately?" Rosepetal asked with a tilt of the head.

"Hmm? Why me?" Transcendent asked with an irritated smile.

"Well, you guys seemed like a dream team. I watched back the footage, and you guys worked really well together. I would have thought that you would have checked up on him, or he would have opened up to you?" Rosepetal shrugged.

"Well I haven't really talked to him at all so..."

"He's been training for about 20 hours a day before returning to his room on 4. That has to be unhealthy, right?" Poisonlily groaned while the rest simply nodded with different expressions on their faces.

"Wait... I actually haven't seen him leave his room today. Have you guys?" Rose asked before seeing everyone else shake their heads.

"Maybe he's getting some sleep?" Transcendent joked.

"No way. For more than 7 hours? Impossible!" Poisonlily gasped while the rest laughed without a care in the world.

[Choose your weapon]

A monotone voice entered Lloyd's ears before 10 weapons appeared before him.

Lloyd didn't bother looking at the rest of the weapons, as within an instant, his eyes locked upon a katana before his hand stretched towards it and wrapped around its hilt.

[You have chosen your weapon]

[Void Walk shall commence in 5]

[4]

[3]

[2]

[1]

The darkness of the void around Lloyd began to warp and break before it wrapped around him and made him disappear from that plane.

In an instant, Lloyd found himself standing in a forest clearing, yet unlike last time, he could not feel the hundreds of presences around him...

Instead, he only felt one...

"Come on out wherever you are..." Lloyd muttered with a cold-blooded smile on his face. Unlike the lack of expressions when he put his mask on, Lloyd's expression was crazed...

It was the smile of a predator. A serial killer.

And the Alpha Shadow wolf recognized that.

However, it was too late for it to run since-

DOOOM

Lloyd's vibrant violet eyes darted toward the wolf before his smile extended to a widened grin.

"Let's play a little game, shall we?"

Chapter 27: Third Void Walk [2] - The First Void Walker

"Let's play a little game, shall we?"

With those words echoing throughout the lunar forest, silence descended upon it while an intense killing intent exploded out of Lloyd's body and covered its entirety.

Without a second of hesitation, the wolf began to flee with as much speed as possible, yet it was too late for it to do anything at this point.

That small creature it bullied a little more than a week ago had become a creature that could contend with it, and if that wasn't enough, it had also turned crazy in less than a week.

Its animal instincts told it to get as far away as possible, while its pride as an alpha wolf begged it to stay and fight to its last breath.

Who would have known that a second of hesitation would doom it?

Boom

The ground cracked around Lloyd's feet before a dust cloud was kicked up several meters into the air.

As Lloyd left the ground, his body catapulted through the dust cloud, allowing him to speed past the clearing and narrowly miss the trees that were still standing.

A loud whoosh echoed throughout the forest, and before the wolf could understand what was happening, Lloyd was in front of it with a katana blitzing past its tail and cutting it cleanly off.

The wolf let out a loud howl while Lloyd slid to a stop before readying his blade and shooting forward, yet this time, the wolf was ready for what was coming.

The shadows around it began to flicker wildly while mana began to flood out of its body.

"So you wanna participate now? Fine by me." Lloyd let out a savage grin and shot forward, but what he saw next made him widen his eyes in surprise.

As the shadows flickered, they slowly rose and began to form in the shape of a wolf.

"Shadow clones?" Lloyd muttered with a frown and quickly jumped over one of the clones to avoid its extended paw and sharp claws.

'So that's how you escaped last time...' Lloyd thought to himself and recalled his last encounter.

'I thought it teleported when I hit it last time, and it became nothing but shadows, but to think it had this trump card the entire time? Truly fascinating...' Lloyd thought with an excited grin before slashing in an arc and decapitating one of the clones.

'They are weaker than the original. I'd say they have 1/10th of the original's strength, but this ability was never made for fighting... It was created to trick and overwhelm. However, if a third commandment individual were to get their hands on this, they would be capable of completely and utterly ruining an army of 2nd commandments with ease...' Lloyd thought to himself as he snapped his wrist and killed two clones in the process.

"What an amazing ability..." He thought aloud, yet in an instant, his curiosity and fascination vanished before his aura flickered green in envy and greed.

Several wolf clones attacked him at the moment, and despite their attacks still having the capability of killing Lloyd due to their shadow claw ability, he did not retreat and instead placed one of his palms on the ground.

At that moment, it was like time itself froze while the winds began to howl all on their own.

Lloyd's eyes slowly shifted upwards, and when he finally locked eyes with the original, he let out a devilish smile.

"I want it..." Lloyd muttered, his eyes flashing an orangy red for a millisecond before returning to normal.

"And I'm going to take it."

Crackle

"Whether you like it or not..."

Crackle Crackle

"Burn."

FWOOOOOSH

In that very instance, flames gushed out of the palm of his hand before engulfing everything in a 5-meter radius.

The clones did not even have a second to whimper in pain as their bodies had been incinerated before realizing what had hit them. On the other hand, the distance between Lloyd and the original was simply flung away in the other direction, causing it to crash into several trees before regaining its balance.

Wounds and burns littered its body, but it did not wait another second to dash to the side as something wooshed past it, barely grazing its cheek.

Opening its mouth wide, it let out a deafening howl that sent shockwaves toward Lloyd.

"Tsk..."

Seeing that he could not duck or move away from the attack in time, Lloyd placed his two forefingers on the base of the blade before beginning to slide his fingers to the top.

Of course, there was no way that he had the speed of casting his ability before the sound wave hit him, yet he didn't have to.

His body immediately disappeared after taking a miniature step forward before reappearing behind the wolf; however, instead of coating his blade with runes, he covered it with vibrant blue and orange flames that flickered beautifully.

The blade tore through the air horizontally, causing it to distort slightly, and while the wolf finally understood what had happened, it was already too late for it to do anything.

Sching

Sizzle

Fwhooom

[Flower Petal Style - Horizon Slash]

It was nothing but a flash of light, yet when the light finally subsided, all that remained were the ashes of a wolf that once ruled those lands.

Every tree within a certain radius turned into dust, while the ground had become scorched beyond recognition, making it look like hell herself had stepped foot onto those lands.

Pant *Pant* *Pant*

Breathing heavily, Lloyd lowered himself to the ground and held his chest.

'I used too much mana... I haven't learned how to control my fire abilities, yet here I am trying to erase a forest from existence.' Lloyd chuckled, but a moment after, he began to grimace in pain.

Crack

Rumble

"Hmm?" Lloyd's eyes widened before darting around in confusion. However, it did not take him long to find the source of the disturbance. After all, it was too large for him to miss.

Tilting his head upwards, Lloyd stared at the crack in the sky as it slowly expanded to envelop the stars and moon.

Lloyd could do nothing but watch as the crack became larger and larger, and before he knew it, the crack had expanded to the point of no return, deleting everything in sight while expanding into a white void with no end in sight.

"Wow... I didn't think you had it in you." A feminine voice entered Lloyd's ears, yet even after looking around for several seconds, Lloyd could not see her. It was as if she was the white void itself, yet how could that be possible?

Unless...

"Three void walks and you already beat the first stage? That has to be a record, right?" She exclaimed in surprise, but that did not change how Lloyd looked at her at the moment.

"Oh, sorry. You, humans, tend not to trust things you can't see with your own two eyes-" The voice chuckled as the white void began to shift and warp randomly.

"Yet..." She muttered, and with that mutter, the space warped to create a figure.

"You're not human anymore, are you?"

Finally landing on the ground, a soft click echoed into the vast void, yet he felt something touch his shoulder before Lloyd could understand what was happening.

Swoosh

Without a moment of hesitation, Lloyd's hand swung back in an arch towards the thing that touched him, yet a frown appeared on his face after not feeling like he had hit anything.

"Come on now, no need to be hasty with your attacks."

Lloyd's eyes widened, and he quickly turned around, yet he saw something this time.

A light-skinned woman with pitch black wavy hair draped down her shoulders. Her beauty was otherworldly and almost angelic, while her aura seemed to scream with the power of a monarch.

She wore a cosmic dress that clung to her well-endowed figure. A dress that seemed to have been created from the very fabric of space itself. However, despite her otherworldly beauty and immense power, it was her piercing violet eyes that caught Lloyd's attention. The eyes of a sadistic maniac mixed in with the eyes of a grieving, vengeful soul that had lost everything in its pursuit of salvation.

He didn't know why he recognized those eyes, but at that moment, the thought of recognizing her eyes were the least of his worries.

"Who are you?"

After all, why would anyone care about such things-

"Oh, I must have forgotten to introduce myself. You get clumsy when you are alone for a few millennia."

When they are in the presence of-

"My name is Eris , The Queen of Chaos..."

"And the first Void Walker."

Chapter 28: Third Void Walk [3] - Luck and Misfortune

"The first void walker?" Lloyd asked with suspicion.

"Yes! The first void walker ever!" The woman boasted.

"You said your name is Eris?" Lloyd asked with now narrowed eyes.

"Yes! Yes! Look, you're getting it! If you had the mental state of those humans, you probably would have fainted by now hahaha!" Eris Laughed.

"Eris, the Greek goddess of discord, strife and chaos?" Lloyd sighed.

"Hey! What was with that disappointed sigh?!" Eris grumbled while crossing her arms.

"Nothing..."

"Nope! It was clearly something." She argued while pointing at Lloyd accusingly.

"Stop the act. I know fake when I see it." Lloyd sneered; however, instead of denying the accusation, her puffed cheeks quickly returned to normal while her energetic mood disappeared instantly, making it seem like it was never there in the first place.

It was as if Lloyd was looking at a totally different person as if she had just taken off her mask and shown her true colors.

"You're more impressive than I thought." She muttered under her breath before resting her face on her fist.

"Why did you bring me here? I'm assuming that you don't meet with all void walkers..." Lloyd took a step back and stared into Eris' now ice-cold violet eyes.

"I don't, but it has been quite a long time since someone had beaten the first stage in less than 5 void walks." She explained, her voice now monotone, almost as if conversing with Lloyd alone would have bored her to death.

"Okay? Then can I leave?" Lloyd let out an innocent smile that caused Eris to chuckle.

"Of course not. I want to see how good you are up close." She let out a grin that reached from ear to ear, making Lloyd almost see the devil behind her pearly white teeth.

"Actually, I'm good haha." Lloyd tried to argue while slowly retreating, a scene that Eris looked on at in amusement.

"Why not? It's a simple inspection." She laughed.

"Nope! There are laws against this, now you know!"

"Oh, really?" Eris asked with sincere curiosity in her eyes.

"Y-Yes!"

"Too bad, there are no laws like that in my realm." She shrugged and disappeared from where she stood, and before Lloyd could understand what had just happened, he watched as his perspective began to descend before two loud thuds reached his ears.

He could barely move his eyes, but when he did, the sight of a bleeding headless corpse entered his vision, followed by the scene of a black-haired beauty wiping the blood off her hands with a cloth that seemed to have appeared out of thin air.

"What are you doing?" She asked while Lloyd's vision began to fade.

Was this the end of him?

Did he just live 8 days of his life on the edge of death at every moment, just for him to die to the likes of her?

'If I look at the bright side... I died to someone with power beyond human comprehension...' Lloyd tried to smile, but due to his brain slowly shutting down, the only thing he could do was allow his eyes to flicker in a final effort to live.

Yet it was all in vain... Or so he thought.

"Get up already."

GASP

Taking a deep yet quick breath in, Lloyd began to gasp to refill his brain with oxygen, yet after a few breaths, he realized that there was no need for such an effort.

"I-I'm alive?!" Lloyd roared out in happiness while touching every part of his neck to ensure it was still intact. He was still hyperventilating due to the stress and pain he felt after being literally decapitated, but it was nothing compared to the mental scar he had just gained.

"That was probably the closest you will ever come to death without actually dying. This will make your killing intent stronger, but you'll need a few days to recover properly." Eris explained, yet when hearing her voice, Lloyd felt nothing but seething rage bubble inside him, ready to burst at a moment's notice.

Killing intent gushed out of Lloyd's body like water through a floodgate. Of course, it was nowhere near powerful enough to penetrate the naturally dominant monarchical aura around Eris, yet it was just enough for it to grab her interest.

Her eyes slowly widened as she looked at the thick aura around Lloyd, yet after a few moments, she closed her eyes and let out a sincere smile.

Boom

On the other hand, Lloyd did not wait for another second as, within an instant, he catapulted himself into the air with his flames before pointing his hands at Eris.

"Incinerate!" He roared, and within an instant, blue and orange flames burst forward in a blinding array of colorful explosions.

However...

"I have to say..." A feminine voice entered Lloyd's ears, but that was to be expected. There was no way some normal flames would have the ability to even touch Eris in her own realm. However, Lloyd wasn't idle either.

Without wasting another second, he burst forward with a pitch black saber in his hand as several purple runes shone upon it.

Boom

'Sh*t!' Lloyd cursed when he saw that his kick had landed into the palm of her hand and had been completely nullified alongside his foot's mobility since it was stuck within a tight iron-clad grip.

Gritting his teeth, Lloyd manifested flames behind his other foot and used them as thrusters to let out a devastating kick.

Thud

Eris did not even bat an eye as she caught the other foot effortlessly.

Seeing this, Lloyd let out a devilish smile and, without any notice-

BOOM

Flames burst forth from the soles of his feet as the rest of his mana disappeared. The flames expanded, creating a beautiful flurry of enormous blue and orange fireballs rising from the ground in a spectacular fashion.

However, as the flames dispersed, the silhouette of two figures could be seen through the blaze.

"Good flames. That attack would have killed the average mid-stage first commandment." Eris complimented with his two hands still gripping tightly onto Lloyd's feet without letting go.

Despite that, she was spotless, without a single dust particle on her. It was as if she lived in a completely different realm, making her indestructible in the perspective of any mortal.

However, Lloyd was no mere mortal.

Woosh

Lloyd swung his blade in a horizontal arch aiming for Eris' neck, however-

Clang

Without exuding any signs of effort, Eris blocked Lloyd's blade with nothing but her finger.

"Hmmm. Aspect of Void? The ability to enchant anything you touch and make it a powerful weapon capable of easily killing anyone in your commandment... Well, that's the case for at least the first and second commandments. The power difference becomes quite large in the later commandments." She chuckled while Lloyd gritted his teeth.

"It's a good ability to have early on, alongside that monarch's aura of yours." Eris nodded in apparent satisfaction.

"Monarchs... How do you know about-" Lloyd tried to ask, yet instead of hearing him out, Eris snapped his blade in half before digging half of it into his heart while slitting his throat with the other.

It all happened in the blink of an eye, yet Lloyd continued to suffer as he slowly drowned in his own blood, struggling to swallow and breathe until eventually.

Thump-...

His heart ceased to beat.

Without even giving Lloyd's corpse a second glance, Eris slowly walked toward her throne while contemplating on her encounter.

After finally sitting on her throne, Eris leaned back and let out a sigh while muttering-

"Uni... Just what are you thinking going around creating another of my kind..." Eris paused before a frown appeared on her face as she looked at the small star at the center of her palm flickering between ivory purple-

"A human at that..."

And crimson red.

Gasp

Laying in a puddle of his own sweat, Lloyd flung up and took in a cold breath.

'W-What happened... I-I don't remember...' Lloyd rubbed his temples as he tried to recall any memories of what happened after killing the alpha shadow wolf, yet despite how hard he tried, he always felt like he was just inches away from those memories without the capability of coming any closer.

As if coming closer would be detrimental to him, possibly even hurting him.

Ding

Suddenly, a low ring entered his ears, making him look at his watch, which looked like it had been blinking purple for quite a while now.

"Uhm, uh... Open message." Lloyd finally gasped out while trying to get his thoughts straight.

[Unread message: -

2 Changes have been made to your status screen]

"Uh... I don't know. Show me the changes then!" Lloyd grumbled.

[Name: Lloyd Elrod]

[Commandment: ---]

[Race: Void Walker]

[Class: Walker of Voids]

[Talent: 2-Star]

[Affinity: Shadows]

[Passive Ability: Night Vision - Shadow Sustenance - Soundless Steps]

[Abilities: 4-Dimensional Thought - Shadow Enhancement- Shadow Claw - Shadow Movement - Flame Control - Presence Concealment - Shadow Clone]

[Passive Race Ability: Monarch's Aura, ???]

[Race Abilities: Aspect of Void - Void Channel - Void Gaze - Void Step]

For a moment, the streets outside seemed to have turned silent, as if the winds had stopped and the planet itself had stopped spinning.

Everything became silent as Lloyd's eyes widened as if they had suddenly become saucers.

"Oh... I see." Were the only words Lloyd could mutter, but who could blame him? He had never seen anyone have as many abilities as him in the same commandment.

Scrap that; only elites of the third commandment would have the number of abilities he does, yet he gained all of these abilities without even reaching the first commandment. What are the chances that he is that lucky?

As a war general from world war 4 had explained, "Lucky men are followed by a streak of misfortune, and those who have been followed by a streak of luck are bound to fall the hardest."

However, there was one problem...

Lloyd had no idea which category he belonged to.

Was it just dumb luck, or was it an elaborate chain of events that would eventually lead to his death?

Chapter 29: Return [1]

Back at the wall, Rosepetal looked into the distance with narrowed eyes as if she was trying to look past something and peer into another realm.

While this caught the attention of many, most of the guards and the people of the town saw her as nothing but a tourist who happened to be interested in everything she saw; however, to her team, she looked like she had seen a glimpse of something important and was trying to find it again.

"Are you sure she is okay?" Poisonlily asked with a worried tone.

"I'm sure she is fine. I don't know what it is, but sometimes she says that she sees things that others don't. She calls them fluctuations." Osmygold sighed.

"Fluctuations of what exactly?" Poisonlily tilted her head a few degrees, allowing her long black and green hair to fall to her side.

"What I told you is everything I know." Osmygold closed his eyes and shook his head, yet a moment later, his eyes opened as he was pulled toward them roughly by a hand.

"Osmy... Look! Can you see that?" Rosepetal asked with widened eyes. Her complexion suddenly worsened in mere seconds as his face became oddly pale. Her hand shivered without any signs of stopping, and the look in her eyes would have made anyone think that the apocalypse was coming.

"What is it?" Osmygold asked calmly, yet his expression looked severe.

"S-Something is coming... Something big!" She screamed and pointed toward a particular area.

"That's..." Osmygold froze before a frown slowly took form.

"Isn't that the inn you guys are in?" Poisonlily asked, yet instead of getting an answer, she saw a brilliant flash of light before the two people beside her disappeared.

Carrying Rosepetal in his arms, Osmygold flew through the air by jumping from building to building, leaving nothing but a streak of white light behind him.

"Osmy..." Rosepetal muttered, yet her voice sent a chill down Osmygold's spine.

"It's here..."

DOOOOOOM

In an instant, everything within a large radius of the inn was enshrouded in powerful killing intent; however, unlike the killing intent they felt when Null had unleashed bloodlust, this one was different.

It was a calculated cold energy as if it weren't created to intimidate, but rather, as if it derived from the very existence of a being.

An energy created by the very atoms in the air shaking in fear, distorting the air and everything around it to create the illusion of killing intent.

A fluctuation only created by the descent of a being of the highest race, like a monarch stepping foot into the mortal slums.

However, just as it came, it disappeared within seconds, allowing everyone in the affected area to let out a breath they had no idea they were holding.

While most stayed frozen at their spots for several seconds, not a second passed before one of the inn doors creaked open and a man wearing a long black trenchcoat and jet black mask left through them.

Everyone stared with flabbergasted expressions, yet Rosepetal and Osmygold rushed over to the man without thinking twice.

"Null! Are you okay? Did you feel that?" Rosepetal asked while Osmygold narrowed his eyes at Null with slight suspicion.

"Yes." Null simply replied.

"Did you see what caused it?" Rosepetal asked, and while Lloyd would have usually thought of telling them to truth, his thought process as Null was a little different.

"No. I just felt a powerful killing intent and left immediately." Null lied through his teeth.

He was well aware that the energy was caused by him, but he was certain that it wasn't killing intent. The only reason he had not tried to further investigate was due to the fact that he was too entranced by his status that he had completely ignored the energy leaking out of him for several seconds.

"Oh, good then. That thing was powerful. Could have probably killed all of us pretty easily." She sighed while Null simply narrowed his eyes before looking away and glancing at his watch.

'I might have made a slight miscalculation.' He thought to himself.

Null has spent approximately 7 days inside the labyrinth, and while that would have been fine if he had entered it in the morning, he found himself slightly delayed by the sign-up process, which meant he would have had to enter the labyrinth at 4 pm.

7 days in the labyrinth dungeons equates to about 16 hours and 48 minutes in the outside world, meaning that if he were to leave at this instant, it would be around 10 am.

'I'll need an excuse for not coming home the day before, and right now, I can't think of any. If I lie, Mrs. Glade will definitely recognize it. I need a lie that incorporates the truth.' Null stroked his chin, yet after several seconds, he simply shrugged. It wasn't his problem; after all, it was Lloyd's.

"We should get going." Null stated.

"Yeah, 7 days is more than enough. I don't think another 'boss' goblin will spawn soon." Osmygold nodded before looking at his watch and sending out a signal to everyone on the team alongside the 7 reapers.

They did not have to wait long as they all appeared at the meeting location in a matter of minutes, Peacexelr coming last.

"You look horrible." Null remarked when seeing Peacexelr, a statement that made everyone chuckle due to Null's cold tone when saying it.

"Shut up." Peacexelr snarled, making Null raise a brow in surprise.

'I never knew his hatred for me would become this intense. I thought of him as nothing but a child throwing a tantrum, but now I can see that he might be a problem in the future.' Null thought to himself but quickly chose to forget about it in the meantime.

"We were thinking of leaving today too, and since you guys are leaving, why not go together, share contact details, and have a drink every now and then. We can go on raids together if you'd like." Damien suggested.

"Sounds good." Osmygold grinned before stretching out his hand.

"It's been nice working with you, and I hope we work together in the future. I know I am an old man now and probably won't ever have the capability of keeping up with all of you, but I'd like it if we work together for now and until I can no longer work with you guys." Osmygold announced with a sad yet determined smile.

"Don't worry, old man, even if we pass you in strength, with your experience, I'm certain you'll surpass us in no time." Monarch laughed, causing the broadsword on his back to rattle in its chains.

"Haha. I sure hope so."

"Does everyone have everything on them?" Null asked coldly, cutting off the conversation and getting to the part he perceived the most important.

"Yep."

"Yes."

"I believe so."

"Most likely."

"I don't even have an inn."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

Everyone simply stared at Transcendent with an agape expression, looking at him as if he were a member of a new alien species.

"Where the hell did you sleep?" Trishaless could not help but exclaim.

"He's always like this. A rich cheapskate." OracleOfFlames sneered.

"Let's stop wasting time with chit-chat. How are we going to leave?" Null asked.

"Oh, there is a teleportation ring in this town, but we can also just tap our dimensional space ring 3 times with the intention to leave." Rosepetal explained while taking the opportunity to inch closer to Null.

"I see." Null nodded and looked away without giving her a second glance.

"Then let's go shall we." Damien smiled before tapping his ring and disappearing from where he stood.

Everyone quickly followed, leaving Null to take one last glance at the place before tapping his ring three times and disappearing from where he stood in a bright flash of

light, yet unlike everyone else's flashes, his one seemed to have been contaminated by a little bit of ivory purple.

"The adventurer's association thanks you for your services. I hope we get to see you again." The cashier smiled before looking at the next person in line.

Null walked off while looking at his watch, which showed him a screen stating-

[Current Balance: \$20625]

'I'll be damned...' Null thought to himself, yet after recalling all the hunting, he did as part of his training, it made sense.

"Uhm. Mr. Null?" A girl with blonde hair and blue eyes walked up to Null with a sheathed blade in her hand.

"Yes Grisha?" Null turned towards the girl.

"I fixed your sword, but with the money you gained you should probably think of buying a new one." Grisha advised before handing the katana to Null.

"Why is that?" Null unsheathed the blade and began to examine everything from its texture to the sharpness of the edge itself.

'Feels the same... In fact, it feels a little bit sharper. I can also feel mana beating inside it so she most likely used runes to make the blade itself better.' Null analyzed.

"There are blacksmiths out there that can do a much better job than that." Grisha pointed at the katana before continuing.

"I think you should consider it. They are masters of their crafts and are capable of creating amazing swords."

"They are expensive though." Null retorted.

"It's worth it." She tried to argue.

"Why would I ask someone else to make me a weapon..."

"When I have you?" Null asked as he continued to analyze the blade from tip to base, so he could not notice that Grisha had become beet red.

"W-W-W-Wha-at?" She stuttered.

"I trust that you are talented and will also improve at your crafts... Or am I wrong?" Null shifted his view and looked her straight in the eyes.

Grisha felt a warm feeling inside her heart in that instant before a determined expression appeared on her face.

"I will do my best, Mr. Null!" She exclaimed before walking off with confidence.

'Mr. Null said he trusts me!' She inwardly squealed. Null, on the other hand-

'Free weapons supplier, check.' He inwardly thought.

"Uhm, by the way, who should get the hobgoblin core? We split the goblin general's money between all of us, but the hobgoblin was all Transcendent and Null." Relish, who was usually quiet, could not help but comment.

"I did something too!" OracleOfFlames retorted.

"They did 90% of the work. You just happened to be there when they killed the hobgoblin." Damien stated matter-of-factly.

"Well, I think Null should have it." Transcendent cut in before an argument could commence.

"Huh... Why?" Monarch could not help but ask.

"Well, he was the one to decapitate the hobgoblin, right? It only makes sense for him to get it." Transcendent argued, and since he was the only other person who could have gotten the core, no one argued against his decision.

Taking out a crimson orb no bigger than the side of one's palm, Damien handed it to Null, who quickly stored it in his watch's storage space.

'I'll need to get an upgrade after this. My storage space is almost full,' Null scratched his temple.

"Let's exchange contact information then shall we?" Damien suggested, and without skipping a beat, everyone pushed their wrists forward until the familiar *ding* entered their ears.

Quickly saying their goodbyes, everyone went on their merry way, trying their hardest to avoid all the press outside the building. While most of the seven reapers left in a limo or a luxurious car, Null and the rest decided to leave on foot while being escorted by members of the adventurer's association.

"We have arrived at your destination sir." The association's escorting driver announced, snapping Lloyd out of his daydream.

With a smile, Lloyd thanked the man for his service, yet before he could leave, the man could not help but advise-

"Sir. I know it is not my place to speak, but as someone much older than you and with much more knowledge and experience, I'd advise you to tell your family about your identity as Null."

"Why is that?" Lloyd asked, his eyes narrowing down onto the man driving.

"It is better if they know from you rather than find out by having to identify your corpse. In situations of disaster, too, it is always good to keep those you love close, no matter what. Pushing them away with silly things like secret identities is foolish. And if they find out in another way, they might have hard time trusting you properly again." The man replied.

"Am I right to think that the association will not spread my information?" Lloyd asked, his voice now cold.

"That is correct, Sir. We are not allowed to tell others of your information even if you are a threat to the government, so do not worry about any of us telling your family. All I was doing was advising you." The man shrugged.

"Thank you for the ride." Lloyd simply replied before stepping back and turning around.

Taking a deep breath, he relaxed his face into a warm smile.

Knock Knock Knock

[Author's note: Sorry about the crappy scheduling. I couldn't upload any chapters for the past few days because I was really busy with university work. I'll try not to have that happen again, but if I do get busy, I'll try my hardest to have more chapters in stock, just in case. Also, please vote using your power stones. Votes have been dropping dramatically lately, and it would be nice to have a few more votes every now and then, haha.]

Chapter 30: Return [2]

Knock Knock Knock

Lloyd waited several seconds, yet even though he was almost certain that his family would all be home this early in the morning, he could not help but think of several things that might have kept them out of the house, an example being him going missing for an entire night without a GPS signal to track his whereabouts.

'I don't think I thought this through properly. If my GPS signal suddenly disappears after all the weird behavior I exhibited, they will think I am likely in trouble. They will most likely attribute all my behaviors to my joining a criminal community or organization I'm not allowed to tell anyone about.'

Scratching his chin, Lloyd's frown deepened before a sigh left his mouth in defeat.

Allowing the scanner to take a scan at his watch, he heard the sound of mechanical locks unlocking the door before it opened with a final click.

'I guess I can do nothing but wait until they get back. Calling them would also be a suitable option since it would relieve them, but feigning ignorance would help me get past the situation without many problems. On the other hand...'

Lloyd's footsteps halted as he entered the dimmed hallways and towards the living room.

Ring Ring

Ring Ring

"Hello?! Lloyd is that you?" A voice shouted from the other side of the speaker.

"Yeah. Where are you guys? Did my family go somewhere with you guys?" Lloyd asked as he sunk into the sofa before using the tv remote to open the tv.

"What the f*ck, bro!? Where have you been? We haven't seen you since you left, and your parents are worried sick. We searched the entire city for you!" Zack shouted from the other side, making Lloyd let out an inaudible chuckle.

"Isn't that a little bit of an exaggeration? Why would you search the entire city just because I've been gone for a few hours?" Lloyd asked with audible amusement in his voice.

"You think this is f*cking funny bro?!" Zack roared in feigned anger. Lloyd could tell that Zack was relieved to hear Lloyd's voice, but he could also feel a little resentment behind his words.

"Alright, alright!" Lloyd waved his hands in defeat even though he knew no one could see him doing such an action.

While most people liked talking with face time, people like Lloyd enjoyed not having their facial expressions scrutinized over the phone. One could say it was Lloyd's inner introvert speaking, while others would simply call him old-fashioned.

"I'll compensate for the time you guys spent looking for me. I didn't know you guys would take it so seriously, to be honest." Lloyd chuckled while Zack simply sighed in frustration. He could hear the tv in the background and could already imagine Lloyd sitting on the sofa with his legs up, relaxing as he watched the latest news channels.

"Alright, talk to you later. I've already messaged everyone, and they should be coming back. Also, according to my mom, my sister and I will stay over for a couple more nights, or at least until the entrance ceremonies begin." Zack explained before hanging up immediately after.

"Bastard didn't even say bye." Lloyd sneered, but a smile crossed his face when he looked up at the TV showing the latest news.

[Presenter: Today on our show, we have an esteemed member of the seven reapers group, Arthur Starforger, better known as Transcendent in the adventurer community.]

Applause rang out through the studio as the camera panned toward a man sitting in the shadow. However, the next instant, lights began beaming toward him, allowing the audience and watchers to fully see the man.

His 6ft 2 stature was not undermined by the fact that he was sitting since his lean yet ripped stature trumped most.

With his hair that boundaries between silver and blonde, alongside his pale blue eyes that shone through the very shadows themselves, one could tell at a mere glance that Arthur was a lady killer in his own sense.

Lloyd had heard of adventurers with significantly good looks getting their own communities online, but he had never seen a crowd of women cheer so loudly before for someone who was not an intergalactic celebrity.

[Presenter: Mr. Starforger, it hasn't been too long since we last met, has it.]

[Arthur: No, it has not. I believe we have been meeting a little too often, actually. Have my actions been that eye-catching to the public?]

[Presenter: Hahahaha. For someone with a pseudo-mythic class, you sure are very humble about your talents. However, I'm sorry to disappoint you today, but your fame in the last 24 hours has been shared by another individual] The presenter laughed heartily, causing Arthur to let out a small smile.

[Arthur: I am well aware. If I'm talented, then I have no idea what he was. He deserves his current fame.]

Several gasps could be heard throughout the studio, but Arthur simply continued.

[Arthur: My main partner for this raid, Mr. Null, is remarkable in every way, shape, and form.]

[Presenter: Why do you say that? He seemed to have done just as well as you in the raid despite us not having heard of him before. You would think such a talent would have been spotted sooner.] The presenter laughed but eagerly waited for Arthur's answer.

[Arthur: Well, regarding that, what I'm about to tell you might shock you, but according to Mr. Null's team, this was the first time he had gone out for a raid.]

[Presenter: Hahaha... Well, that's impossible. It would simply not make sense. One cannot have the experience shown by Mr. Null without fighting monsters like the goblins in the past. Goblins are intelligent and cruel; their sight alone would have caused most to wet their underwear] He laughed.

[Arthur: I don't know what to tell you, but that's all I know about him. He is a very secretive person, and it was very hard to get him to talk to me, let alone divulge his secrets.] Arthur shrugged, causing the presenter to feel even more excited than before.

The interview continued for another 30 minutes or so, and in that time frame, the presenter had asked everything he could think of relating to Null, from how the rest of the reapers felt about him to the question of if Null would be joining them.

Of course, Arthur kept many things to himself, but to give credit where credit is due, Arthur did not lie once, an act that caused a small smile to creep up Lloyd's mouth.

Click

Lloyd's smile disappeared for a moment; however, after remembering the role he had to play to make his story believable, he let on a cheerful smile and continued watching tv as if he hadn't just heard the front door click open.

"Lloyd?!" A feminine voice entered his ears, yet he waited until she was in his line of sight before answering nonchalantly-

"Yeah?"

To his surprise, he was wrapped into a tight hug he could not escape from within seconds.

"M-Mom! You're killing me!" He pleaded.

"What happened?! Where were you?" She asked with a crestfallen expression.

"I was just outside for a few hours." Lloyd argued.

"Few hours!? You've been gone for an entire day! You've been acting all weird since that break-in. Is there something I should know? You know you can tell me anything, right?" She pouted but didn't let go of Lloyd.

"You worried your mother sick you know." Another voice berated.

Looking at the woman standing at the door frame, Lloyd's eyes flickered with worry before the emotion disappeared as if it had never been there.

Taking in a deep breath, he calmed his heart and slowly pushed his mother off him, to her dismay, of course.

"Sorry?" Lloyd scratched his head.

"Where were you?" She asked, but instead of answering straight away, Lloyd's face turned into a mixture of confusion while a frown appeared on it.

"With all due respect, Mrs. Glade-"

"Mrs. Glade?" Lloyd's mother asked in confusion.

"... Aunt Layla, there is no need for all of you to know about my whereabouts at all times." Lloyd argued.

"Why didn't you answer your calls then?" Layla frowned.

"I wanted a little bit of privacy," Lloyd replied, and since half of that was true, it didn't set off alarms in Layla's head.

However, it did tell her-

'A half truth?' She thought, her frown deepening.

"For an entire night?" She asked.

"With all due respect-"

"Answer her question. And stop being so formal. This isn't an interview," Lloyd's mother commanded, causing him to wince slightly before sighing out in defeat.

"Come on. What were you doing." Layla crossed her arms.

"Uhm, well... I was out with a girl."

"..."

"..."

"Uhm... Sorry for not telling you." Lloyd scratched the back of his head with an innocent smile, and while Lloyd's mother had a hundred questions running through her mind, Layla seemed preoccupied with something else as a frown crawled down her face.

"You got yourself a girlfriend, left with her for over 24 hours and didn't tell us a single thing?" Lloyd's mother roared, yet he still seemed completely unfazed, mostly because of the fact he could not imagine his mother's reaction if she even knew a fraction of the truth. Hell, she might not have even believed him.

"I wanted a little bit of privacy. You guys are so up my ass all the time that I just felt I could not be around you anymore." Lloyd lied. In reality, they were pretty good at giving him personal space unless it was the sisters he talked about.

He used this to his advantage by distancing himself from his family and making Layla think he was telling the truth.

"R-Really?" His mother asked, her voice on the verge of breaking. Seeing this, Lloyd could not help but feel an ounce of pain in his heart, but at the same time, he was certain this was the best thing to do. On the other hand, Layla had a nerve bulging behind her bangs, but she kept her facial expression the same.

After a few more minutes of speaking to his mother, the rest of the family came back alongside the Glades, who all had equally annoyed expressions on their faces.

Lloyd said the same thing to them, and Layla held back the urge to smack him in the temple and leave him unconscious.

"So when do we meet this bitc-... I mean, when do we meet this girl." Zack's older sister asked, making everyone look at her with a weird expressions.

"You don't. I like my privacy." Lloyd sneered.

So you made us run around out there like maniacs just for us to not know who this mysterious woman is?" Zack asked.

"Yep." Lloyd let out a smile and showed Zack a thumbs-up. The two bickered for a while before they all retreated to their bedrooms after a long day of both stress and activity, yet in a way, Lloyd needed that sleep the most as he knew the next week-

[Next Void Walk: After the entrance ceremony.]

Would be a stressful one.

