The Walker Of Voids

Chapter 31: Show-Off [1]

"Sir... Sir!" A panting man with a clipboard in his hand barged into a luxurious room, his eyes staring at the floor as he tried his best to formulate the words in his mind.

"Christopher... How many times have I told you to knock before entering? Just because you are my cousin does not mean you can disrespect me. Imagine what your colleagues would think of me if I let you do this all the time?" A silver-haired man sighed while turning around on his gold-embroidered chair.

"It's important, sir!" Christopher stood up and attempted to straighten his back, yet before he could fully do so, he felt a mountain-like pressure fall onto his shoulders, causing him to almost lose balance and fall to the ground.

"Let me guess. This is about that new boy, am I correct? He calls himself Null I believe." The man stood up from his chair with a speed that caused it to fling back and slam into the glass window situated behind him.

However, despite the power it had slammed into the window with, there was not a single scratch on it, let alone a break in either item.

"Y-You knew?!" The man gasped as his knees finally gave out.

"Of course, I knew. Who do you think the top organizations call when they want to speak with the adventurer's association?" The man smiled while walking around his desk and fixing his cuffs.

He looked like he was wearing an expensive three-piece suit with golden runes that looked both aesthetically pleasing and immensely powerful.

He wore several rings on his fingers, and while one would not be capable of seeing it at first glance, if they were to look closely, they would recognize that the rings were for pure combat use.

"S-Sir... I didn't know that you were already informed!" Christopher pleaded, yet the silver-haired man did not stop walking until he was right in front of the kneeling man.

"Do not worry. I do not wish to hurt you." The silver-haired man whispered, and despite the words coming out of his mouth being ones that would cause Christopher to dance in celebration, he did not move a muscle.

Shivers went down his spine while cold sweat covered his back, dripping onto the floor below him and creating a small puddle formed out of pure fear.

"Instead, I need you to go downstairs, gather the press and tell those assholes that we won't sell out any of our members even if the emperor himself asked us to. Is that understood?" The man asked with his signature smile, casting a shadow over Christopher.

"Y-Yes sir." The man cried before getting up and running out of the room. Unbeknownst to him, a faint shadow followed right behind him. While most would not be capable of seeing it, those who could see it had a name for it.

'The shadow of death' is what most called it, yet they also had a name for the person it followed.

'The Death King's Curse...'

***

"I know you two are kids and all, but to become great warriors like Noah and me, you must start training from the first day of your awakenings. No more slacking around, no more taking breaks whenever you want to, and definitely no more of that crappy half-assed behavior I saw in both of you before. Is that understood!?" Benjamin roared an act that caused the entire training area to shake uncontrollably.

The training room was vast, reaching close to the size of football fields that scattered the world during the Technological Explosion, an era that is deemed the most important period in human time.

While it was quite large on the inside, that was a simple change created by a space-time refraction module. Different artifacts would be capable of producing such a result, making a small room the size of a football field and making the time inside flow much slower than the time on the outside.

The training room was fully white, almost like a mental asylum, yet a little worse.

"Yes sir!" Lloyd and Zack both shouted while saluting, a scene that put a smile on Benjamin's cold and emotionless face.

"Now run around the training area 15 times and come back here to carry out your warm-up exercises." Benjamin smiled warmly, yet both Lloyd and Zack could see past it and into his sinister smile, enjoying every second of their dreadful expressions.

To be exact, he was only enjoying Zack's dreadful expression since Lloyd wasn't showing anything despite this torturous activity being put on mainly to punish Lloyd for all the crap he had put them through the night before.

Without batting an eye, Lloyd simply turned around and began to jog. On the other hand, Zack tried to give his father a pleading expression, yet his father simply acted like he didn't see it.

A few minutes quickly passed, allowing Zack to catch up to Lloyd, yet when he finally got to him, all he could do was grit his teeth and swear under his breath.

"You better pay me back for this. They are trying to punish you while bringing me into it." Zack complained.

"Sure." Lloyd replied without even looking at Zack.

They quickly completed 15 laps around the training room, and while this might have seemed like a menial task to even those who had not awakened, this was simply not the case.

Training rooms had been created with the design and intention of training the body, the soul, the mind, and a person's ability. Different features could be applied to the room, such as increasing the gravity and the room's landscape.

'The gravity is at least three times higher than that of the outside world.' Lloyd concluded after jumping around on one leg for a few seconds.

"For now, there is no need for you guys to do muscle training, and instead, I'm going to teach you how to control your abilities and strength." Benjamin announced with his back facing them, yet despite not being able to see his face, Lloyd could still sense that Benjamin was annoyed.

"Ugh! Finally!" Zack shouted and instantly fell onto his knees, sweat dripping from his brows and chin.

"Lloyd, you don't seem too tired. How about you start us off by showing us your abilities?" Benjamin asked with the same smile as before.

"Sure." Lloyd shrugged, and without skipping a beat, he sunk into the ground.

Despite his exhaustion, Zack watched on with widened eyes while his father looked at the shadow with a scrutiny one would not see in the eyes of many.

After fully sinking into the ground, Lloyd moved 5 meters away and reappeared before walking to the same spot he was standing on a few seconds back.

He repeated the activity with [Shadow Claw] and [Shadow Enhancement], showcasing them without batting an eye or breaking a sweat. While he knew this would be suspicious in the eyes of the others, he could still use the same excuse as last time.

Of course, he did not make the mistake of showing off any of the abilities he had gained from killing his opponents, but he made sure to show off the ones that he knew Zack and the others were aware of.

"You don't look tired at all. Where did you learn how to use your abilities so well?" Benjamin asked with narrowed eyes, yet after seeing Lloyd blush, look away and scratch the back of his neck, he could only let out a sigh and continue his training session.

"Alright, Zack. Get your ass up here and start showing off what you've got." Benjamin shouted, making Zack grunt as he lazily got off the floor before getting into a fighting stance.

"I only have like 2 abilities, so don't mind me if it a little underwhelming." Zack complained.

"Making excuses already?" Lloyd chuckled, an act that made Zack grit his teeth and glare at Lloyd.

"I'll show you!" He roared, and within an instant, both Benjamin and Lloyd were left wide-eyed.

Fwoosh

The wind in the room picked up quite quickly, and before the two knew it, two objects created out of a translucent red light formed behind Zack in the shape of 2-meter-long swords.

'To think one could use bloodlust this way... It is his ability after all, but his use of it is brilliant.' Lloyd inwardly praised with folded arms.

On the other hand, Benjamin had a grave expression on his face, and while Lloyd did not understand why this was the case, he did not have to wait long for the answer to reach him.

Swoosh

Swoosh

'Ah... Damnit.'

Lloyd stepped to the side with a mildly alarmed expression, narrowly avoiding one of the swords before turning around and catching the other by holding it from the blade's hilt with his shadow claw.

"God damnit, Zack! Was there a need for you to try and kill me?!" Lloyd complained while struggling to keep the blade in his hand.

Shatter

Before Lloyd could stabilize the blade, he felt it shatter in his hands as Benjamin appeared at his side with an unnerved expression. Lloyd assumed that the reason for this expression was Zack's loss of control. Little did he know, it was because of him.

Looking forward, they could both see Zack kneeling on the floor with his hands firmly placed on his ears while a pair of swords slowly formed behind him.

"Zack! You must try and control it. You cannot let the bloodlust take control of your mind! That is the trial of a berzerker!" Benjamin shouted, yet both of them were aware that Zack would not be able to hear them no matter how much they cried for his attention.

"I'm guessing this is where you go and knock him out?" Lloyd asked with a raised brow.

"Me? Hahaha! Of course not."

"What do you mean of course not?!" Lloyd pointed at Benjamin accusingly. He had a bad premonition about what was to come.

"You're the one who's going to knock him out." Benjamin smiled.

"Me? Fight him? You must have gone made." Lloyd tried to laugh, but it was quickly caught in his throat when he felt himself pushed forward by a large hand.

"You can't be serious, right?" Lloyd asked as an imaginary tear trickled down his cheek.

"Woo. I believe in you, Lloyd!"

'I hate him!'

Boom

Realizing that he could not avoid fighting Zack in his current state, Lloyd launched himself forward at 10% of his max speed, yet even that was faster than what would usually be achieved by those who had been awakened for less than 3 days.

Benjamin's eyes narrowed as he analyzed Lloyd's every movement, and while he could not see anything wrong for now, he kept a keen eye on everything Lloyd did, from his martial arts to his casual fighting style.

After Lloyd reached within a 4-meter radius of Zack, he felt the wind and mana in the room shift slightly, and without skipping a beat, he leaned to the side and dodged the incoming sword by a hair's breadth.

Within that instant, the room's shadows flickered while the room's bright white light became dimmer. It was as if a shadow had been cast onto the room itself, yet Lloyd's eyes seemed to shine a brighter shade of violet despite everything seemingly becoming dimmer.

"Shadow Enhancement." Lloyd muttered, yet his words echoed like thunder.

The shadows in the room quickly flickered before morphing into a tangible substance that promptly wrapped itself around Lloyd's entire arm and a bit of his torso.

On the other hand, Zack was not one to wait for his opponent to power up. Within a moment, a bright flash of light seemed to have blinded Lloyd, yet when the blade had shot past him, Zack could see that he had completely missed his target...

The target was leaving the shadow below his feet and appearing right behind him with a shadow-covered arm waiting to explode with all its might.

Zack did not waste another second as he immediately took out his waraxe and swung it toward Lloyd's head.

"Sleep." Those were the only words Zack could hear before something seemed to stop his axe in its tracks while his vision turned white before fading to black

Thud

Chapter 32: Show-Off [2]

"Sleep."

Thud

Thud

Thud

Boom

As if his body had suddenly become a skipping stone, Zack's body was lifelessly flung threw the training room. His unconscious body bounced off the floor several times before he finally crashed into the wall on the other side of the room, yet the explosion from it was enough to make Lloyd let out a small breath of relief.

He didn't want to have to use any more strength than he had just done. While he had expected to use at most 20% of his power, he was forced into using 25%.

While this number might not seem like much of a difference to a normal person, it was enough of a jump in power to make the likes of Benjamin suspicious.

Of course, Lloyd could try blaming the increase in power on his ability, but that is a short-term solution, not a long-term one.

"Good work. Didn't know you had such moves." Benjamin commented.

"Moves? I simply used my abilities with the correct timing." Lloyd replied with a small smile.

"Haha. As humble as always, I see. Good to see that didn't change in you." Benjamin laughed, and while Lloyd laughed right after him, it was more awkward since he didn't know why they were laughing.

He couldn't have changed that much, right? His eyes were purple, but that was about it, right?

Yes, he also realized that his personality changes a little when he puts the mask on and takes upon the name of Null, but that would happen with everyone, right? No one like to be observed. No one likes to be watched, so their personality and demeanor change when they are anonymous...

Right?

Shaking his head off those thoughts, Lloyd took in a deep breath before looking away from Benjamin's enormous frame to look at the unconscious Zack laying behind him.

"You think he's going to be okay? I hit him with everything I got... That can't be good, right?" Lloyd asked, yet all he received was a hearty belly laugh before a large hand-held rested on his shoulder.

"We are the Glades..." He whispered, his voice now more serious than before despite the expression on his face remaining the same, yet, Lloyd could not help but have a sinister feeling crawl up his back.

"Do you think that we would fall to such a punch?" He asked, and as if on queue, a loud explosion entered their ears, causing Lloyd to look over before widening his eyes in surprise.

Zack stood in the middle of the rubble with bloodshot eyes and bulging muscles. It looked like he had been taken over by a wild animal, yet Lloyd knew better than to underestimate Zack's power at that moment.

"That is our berzerker form. When our bodies refuse to stand, it takes over and makes us into wild beasts. It took me decades to get a semblance of control and rationality in that form, yet the boy before you has no such practice." Benjamin chuckled before taking several steps back.

"Don't worry! I won't let you die, haha-" Benjamin tried to laugh, yet his eyes widened in an instant before creasing into a deep frown.

Lloyd simply stood there with a nervous expression, yet after feeling the bloodlust emanating from Zack and the power exploding off his muscles, he finally made a decision, something not many would have been capable of making under the pressure of such a powerful bloodlust.

'His father is going to protect him anyway, right? So it's okay if I just try...' Lloyd paused, his eyes losing a glint they had before, while his nervous demeanor vanished into thin air like it had never existed in the first place.

'To kill him, right?'

The silence in the training room was deafening.

The tension could have been cut with a knife.

Everything was silent, yet it was not.

The low panting was almost inaudible.

The sound of Zack's blood boiling raged, yet Lloyd and Benjamin heard none of it.

'Right?' Lloyd thought as his eyes suddenly radiated violet light that came out in the form of ethereal smoke.

Without thinking twice, Lloyd summoned his katana, which began to glow with the runes that Grisha had embedded into it. Killing intent seemed to seep out of his skin, slowly flooding the training hall.

The ground around his feet began to crack, and just when he was about to shoot forward with the speed of a bullet, a subtle click drowned the room and entered his ears with a loud bang.

"Dinner is ready!" Olivia, Lloyd's mother, shouted as she opened the door.

The tension in the room seemed to almost melt like ice cream in 100-degree weather, and within that instant of distraction, it also seemed like Zack had snapped out of his berserk state.

"We'll be right there..." Lloyd answered while returning his blade to his watch to be stored safely before walking towards the exit. On the other hand, the other two didn't move from their spots, as one of them was gasping for air while the other was shocked beyond words.

"Big bro! How was training?" Asked Alice with a goofy smile on her face.

"It was good Alice, thanks for asking." Lloyd replied with an equally large smile that seemed to come from the bottom of his heart.

"Let's dig in, shall we?" Layla smiled and served everyone, yet behind her smile, her heart was pounding like never before.

"Honey, is something wrong?" She asked with a frown, yet instead of answering the question, Benjamin simply stared at Lloyd for a bit longer before shaking his head.

Layla looked at her son; however, he also seemed fine despite being particularly exhausted.

"So who won?" Elana teasingly asked, yet after feeling the gloomy atmosphere coming off both Benjamin and Zack, her eyes widened, and she was finally forced to look over to her brother, who was casually eating.

"Holy sh*t! Lil bro, did you actually win?" She exclaimed, yet before anyone could answer-

"Lloyd? Win! Hahahahaha!" Delly cut in before letting out a hearty laugh that seemed to come out of the pits of her stomach.

'Is she a demon?' Almost everyone thought simultaneously after hearing her laugh, yet they quickly shook the thought out of their minds before turning their attention toward Lloyd.

Feeling the eyes of everyone on the table lingering on him, Lloyd could not help but fluster-

"Why is everyone looking at me?" He asked, his cheeks being dyed slightly pink.

"Who won!" Elana shouted.

"Uh... What do you mean who won? It was a spar."

"I know it was a spar, but who did better?" Elana asked, her hand balling into a fist as she got herself ready to punch her brother in the head out of annoyance.

"Well, I guess it was a draw then?" Lloyd replied, yet before his sister's fist could flatten him, Benjamin parted his lips and muttered-

"Lloyd won, fair and square..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"Ben, are you sure? Like, I know we are friends and all, but you don't have to-"

"I'm not lying, right Zack?" Ben cut off Lloyd's father before looking over to Zack.

"Yes... I lost pretty badly." Zack laughed awkwardly before ruffling his own hair.

"Hey, Lloyd. Are you sure you're only a 2-star talent? I know talents can change and all, but that only happens to people who are 1 in a million. Plus, it only occurs when someone ascends to the next commandment." Ana asked.

She was skeptical, yet when she saw her brother's innocent and clueless food-stuffed face, she could not help but let out a sigh and drop the subject.

"I don't understand why everyone is surprised. I always beat him when we sparred in the past, what's so different about it now?"

Hearing Lloyd's words, they all wanted to say something but chose against it.

How were they supposed to tell Lloyd that Zack was simply born genetically superior to Lloyd? That is a conversation that would ruin a child's dreams and hopes; how could they do that to him over a simple dinner table.

Of course, Lloyd was more than aware of what they were getting at, but they didn't know that.

Dinner after that was eaten in complete silence. While the rest of them felt awkward, Lloyd was never one to start a conversation, while Zack's body hurt too much for him to care about a bit of awkwardness.

After dinner, everyone went to do their own thing. The girls watched reality tv shows, while Benjamin and Noah simply went outside to do whatever grown men did at that time of day.

Lloyd's little brother simply used his smartwatch to look at some children's videos, while Layal and Olivia went out back to have a glass of wine in peace.

That left Lloyd and Zack, however-.

"Zack? Are you awake, man?" Lloyd asked and glanced over to the bed across the room, yet after hearing Zack's rhythmic breathing and calm heartbeat and sensing his close-to-nonexistent presence, he could not help but let out a defeated sigh.

Getting up from his bed, Lloyd muttered under his breath-

"Show me nearby dungeons."

[Nearby Dungeons]

A holographic map appeared in front of him, one that only the user of the watch could see, or at least that's what he believed after doing countless tests.

'I can go to an unauthorized dungeon. Dungeon finding is a pretty good job. Depending on the grade of the dungeon, I can be paid between $5k and $50 Million... God knows how much a 4th commandment dungeon would give me.' Lloyd inwardly laughed, yet his face turned grim after thinking of the implications of such a dungeon.

'However, I don't think it would be good for anyone if I found such a dungeon. The entire planet would have to be evacuated, and the army's best would have to come over. It would be a disaster.' He thought as a shiver went down his spine.

In the end, Lloyd chose on an authorized temporary dungeon and tried to go to sleep, yet after an hour of failing to do so, he finally got up and made a decision.

'I have to be back by sun rise... If I'm not, then I'm as good as dead!'

'I have to be back by sun rise... If I'm not, then I'm as good as dead!'