

Evolution 109

Chapter 109: Gamemaster Gadget.

Levi didn't know whether to appreciate his ethics or curse him for choosing only the ones that served him. But he dropped the matter at once.

Although he would love to own this island, he understood that he couldn't do so without affecting his rank in the Nocturnal Ring.

After all, he was now homeless and would be put against other Homeless Rifiers. But, once he became an Owner, even if he never played once in the program, he would fight against other Owners.

Although the collective power level was the primary decider of the players' average strength in any game, Levi would rather be put against other Homeless Rifiers in his first game.

Strong or not, an Owner implied a rich background, which was all he needed to know.

"Time flows faster in the Boundless Expense at a rate of 2 times the standard Earth's time unless it is changed." Ash'Kral shared, "This means you can train for about twenty hours here before your training session begins."

Levi's first training session under Seraphis would be carried out in about ten hours... This gave him twenty hours in the Boundless Domain.

Since Levi could only enter and leave the Boundless Domain once a month, those twenty hours were too precious.

"Then, let's make them count." Levi requested calmly while spinning his staff, "Recreate the Wailing Bones Pit's map... I have some ideas I wanna try."

A Week Later...

Levi returned to the same forest where he first entered Ash'Kral's Boundless Domain... Only a few minutes remained before the Summoning. He had to be in an empty place so that the dimensional portal wouldn't draw attention.

In the past week, he trained with the sole focus of winning the game. This meant working on his climbing skills, fighting while attached to walls, what to do if he fell down, and the list goes on... Most importantly, the main strategy to achieve success.

It was difficult at the start and required immense effort, but Levi improved with time until he was somewhat satisfied with his performance.

Fortunately, Rifiers in this rank were all homeless and couldn't access the Boundless Realm physically. Since time flew x2 faster in the realm, the Rifiers residing in it would be given two weeks of preparation, unlike him.

As for his brother, friends, and the class? He told them nothing and kept going to his classes like normal.

He planned on telling Arthur, but not now, not when he wasn't sure if he would adapt to the Nocturnal Ring or not.

"Here it comes."

Soon, Levi took a deep breath as he sensed the emergence of the Nocturnal Ring's contract in front of him... Similarly, it turned into a rippling portal with a door frame. Only this one reflected nothing, but a shadowy word:

Ready?

Levi's foot hovered over the shadowy threshold... his heart thundered in his chest. A thrill sparked through him... this was the moment he'd trained for, but at the same time, his stomach tightened with fear.

He swallowed hard, breath catching as he stepped inside the portal, understanding that whether in victory or defeat, this death game was about to change him forever...

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The Boundless Expense... The Echoing Ossuary.

The Ossuary was a vast open wasteland scarred by countless deep abysses used to punish the worst criminals in the history of the CRS Platform and the Nocturnal Ring...Criminals were thrown into tens of thousands of pits to suffer for eternity.

The ground was damp and stained, and a constant wind howled across the plain, carrying a foul, metallic stench of decay.

The skies were gloomy as if a storm were about to come, but it never did.

On the jagged earth around one particularly large pit, about thirty Rifiers of various races stood scattered, their figures dim against the gloom.

Most of them were either covering their faces with masks or had changed their facial appearance straightaway.

Yet the disguise wasn't enough to hide their unease as they kept glancing at each other in silence, sizing up their competitors.

Soon, a dimensional portal manifested near the pit, and everyone turned their eyes to the newcomer.

The Rifiers stood around the edge of the deep pit, watching... He stepped out of the portal onto cracked earth, wearing black pants and tight black leather armor.

A dark cloak hid his back, and a hood covered his face.

So far, nothing surprising... But as he lifted his head to face everyone, the Rifiers froze in place, their stunned eyes affixed on the man's face.

It was no face... Under that hood, they saw only a deep void with three stars orbiting each other... one red, one gold, one dark, its lining appearing once in a while.

The wind howled, but it felt quieter around him.

The Rifiers gulped as he took slow, steady steps toward them, their hearts pounding at the sight of something so strange and silent.

Soon, the man sat on a lonesome rock and kept his head lowered, silently awaiting the start of the Death Game.

"Is that even a mask...?"

"Who is he? A newbie?"

"Three Body Problem? What kind of name is that?"

The Rifiers were bewildered and a bit curious, their gazes never leaving Levi. They had seen plenty of peculiar masks, some freaky, some adorable, and some as twisted as they could be... Yet this was the first time they saw a mask with three orbiting stars in it.

It was too unsettling, leaving them incapable of understanding how he could see with such a mask on.

Somewhere far from the gathering, two Rifiers were seen chilling... One was leaning against a boulder, and the other was sitting on top of it.

"You think he is a threat?" Webwalker wondered.

He was a humanoid spider with a jointed body covered in dark, hard plates. He had four arms, each ending in small hooked claws, and two legs with sharp talons on the feet.

He was wearing a peculiar spider's mask with its legs making a circle around each of his eight violet eyes... Based on his humanoid form, he was part of the Spiderkin Race like Queen Dra'Webra, which was included in the Nightcrawlers' seemingly infinite pool of species.

Nightcrawlers were so many and part of an incredible number of species, which made it extremely difficult to recognize them from some races.

The moment a nightcrawler evolved to tier 3, they were awarded with not just intelligence, but the ability to shapeshift between humanoid and bestial form.

However, a good rule of thumb was that if a race appeared too bestial or monstrous, there was a high chance it would be part of the Nightcrawlers' race.

Even if not, there might be a chance since they possess the innate ability to invade one's dreams and take over their body and memories.

In other words, they were everywhere, integrated deep with every known race...

"Unlikely, even my grandpa can look creepy and mysterious with that mask on." Ssek-Varr snickered, unfazed by Levi's appearance.

He was a lizardman, over six feet tall (181 cm), and had green scales with slightly darker stripes. His yellow eyes had slit pupils under a low brow.

A row of small spikes ran from the top of his head down his long, curled-up tail... He wore a brown leather armor with no boots on, letting his lizardly feet enjoy the air.

"I don't know, I am just saying..." Webwalker murmured, "I know we will be dealing with newbies, but it won't hurt to keep our guards up."

"Webwalker? Are you losing your edge?" Ssek-Varr sneered, "This is a climbing game with flight restrictions. The winner will be between us, so don't pay them any heed and focus on your real competition... me."

"Otherwise, you will be walking out with a missing map fragment," Ssek-Varr smirked, his long purple tongue slithering out once in a while.

Although they seemed to know each other, it didn't look like they had any intentions of cooperating in this game.

It was expected since allying with an opponent was forbidden... They could talk all day long, but once the game started, it was a free-for-all with no mercy in sight.

Just as Webwalker was about to retort, a thunderclap resounded across the plains, forcing everyone to lift their heads.

There he was, the Gamemaster... Hovering in the dimly lit skies ominously. Alas, after a single lightning flash, the ominous atmosphere collapsed.

A half-meter gray squirrel with a milky white tail, wearing a black tuxedo and bowtie, showed up. He had his hands held behind his back as he scanned all the attending Rifters solemnly; his vibrissae (whiskers) were moving faintly in the wind.

"Thirty, good, no one decided to bail." The Gamemaster introduced coolly with a squeaky voice, "I am Gamemaster Gadget... I will be officiating your game under the authority of Sire Nocturn."