Evolution 112

Chapter 112: The Trap Mechanism.

This was the truth!

Levi had decided on eliminating Stonebite and Thornlily the moment they sprinted in the direction of his chosen route.

He understood that if he ignored them and started the climb, they would be an immense pain in the ass... They might even get him killed, since he didn't possess any defensive ability besides echolocation.

He might be comfortable relying on it to evade attacks on the ground, but it was different when his body was hanging on a rigid sidewall.

As for his strategy? His echolocation gave him detailed information about what lay inside Thornlily internally.

In this manner, Levi found out that she was hollow with a weightless fungus-based lifeform in her head, allowing him to quickly detect her weakness, which was physicality.

A single punch was more than enough to finish the job if he landed a good one.

'Next phase... Reaching upper tiers.' Levi murmured inwardly, his heart beating out of his chest from the entire sequence, but he showed no emotions outside.

Levi decided to assume that everyone was a first-timer like him with a Nocturn's Pardon to protect his peace of mind from a raging guilty conscience.

In this manner, his emotions wouldn't be disturbed too heavily during the game... He knew if he lost his composure, it was game over.

Woah!!!

Abruptly, the skies were filled with cheers, appreciating Levi's risky but entertaining play.

"Three Body Problem! A peculiar name, an even weirder mask, but we all know... In the Nocturnal Ring, actions speak the loudest!" Gamemaster Gadget commented while having a close-up of Levi's hoodie on the big screen.

Levi heard the cheers and the commentary, making him lift his head and gaze directly at the skies filled with millions of faint spiritual auras... Instead of feeling a rush from this much attention and love, his heart only grew colder.

He didn't like it.

Not one bit.

But it made him understand at a personal level that in their eyes, he was the weird one... The outsider for not enjoying their cheers.

After all, the CRS Platform and Nocturnal Ring were ancient, too ancient, their existence became the norm... the accepted culture.

Levi didn't know if his feelings would change with time or if this feeling of aversion would remain with him forever.

He spent a decade under Nightcrawlers' torture and stood strong, and he had a feeling this may not be any different...

But for now... He decided on one thing.

Win.

As Levi used the noise to scan the entire pit and highlight his route, he swiftly started his climb, resembling a dark leopard on a hunt.

The chosen route had the best ridges and steps installed with minimum obstacles. This made Levi catch up to the slowest batch easily and surpass them in no time!

"No wonder he has eliminated Stonebite and Thornlily; he has figured out the best route to the peak!" Gamemaster Gadget's eyes gleamed, not expecting anyone to find it as quickly as Levi.

He was the one installing the map and knew every nook and cranny... The routes weren't balanced in the slightest. However, the Rifters teleported near the edges wouldn't know this.

Even the ones placed near the center were too focused on surviving the shattering crystal floor to bother with the routes.

Thus, the moment the game started, everyone focused on climbing or screwing with their competition.

Many Rifters were slowly realizing this fact after noticing that their routes were getting too difficult out of nowhere.

Sadly, it was just about to get way worse for them.

Abruptly, the walls near the rim started to sprout long, thick, juicy, dark green vines. They seemed to be reaching out to meet in the center, leaving the watchers and some of the Rifters startled.

"It's here! Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce to you this game's trap mechanism!" Gamemaster Gadget shared in delight, "The Vine Barrier!"

Hearing this, Levi and the remaining Rifters focused on the rim; their expressions turned sour at once. They had a feeling that the trap mechanism would be related to the rim, but this was still too much.

A vine barrier blocking their exit and seemingly growing infinitely? It made them understand that even if they arrived at the rim, they would be forced to clear it apart.

It would be much harder if other Rifters were nearby.

"The vines are tough, but not unbreakable... Though I can't say the same if they grew too thick." Gamemaster Gadget smirked, his twin large frontal teeth gleaming under the light.

Hearing this, the Rifters with a shitty route felt much worse.

Some even found themselves trapped with no way to climb up, forcing them to climb down and take a detour... But this placed them in another Rifter's comfort zone.

Since they were on a tight clock, they went at it immediately, blasting each other until one of them fell into the abyss.

Meanwhile, Levi's route was empty and as smooth as butter.

With his utilization of the Judgment's chainstaff, allowing him to link up into distant steps or ridges, his speed was so fast, it started to draw attention.

However, the closest Rifters to him had seen what he had done to Stonebite and Thornlily, making them lower their heads and focus on their climb.

They didn't want the smoke in the slightest.

But this didn't last for long.

Webwalker was close, and he had noticed him.

No hesitation, Webwalker ignored the Rifters on his way, crawling on the walls like he was sprinting on a flat surface.

"Sneaking to the surface while we are busy farming? How inconsiderate." Webwalker smiled coldly as he spewed a silky string in Levi's direction from the right side.

Already spotted on his radar, Levi evaded the silk easily and turned to face Webwalker. Then, he pulled his Judgment staff and secured it between two hard rocks under his curious eight hideous eyes.

Immediately after, Levi swung himself on top and rolled some of the excess chains around his wrist, leaving a single crown to dangle into the abyss.

"Oh, how cute, you think that's enou..."

Before Webwalker could finish his sentence, the crown disappeared, appearing above his head!

Bam!

Webwalker dodged the strike reflexively, letting the crown smash against the sidewall, cracking a whole chunk of it.

Seeing this, Webwalker knew that Levi's strikes were quite heavy, and it would suck to get hit by them.

Levi swiftly retracted the crown and continued with his assault, swinging the crown akin to a sledgehammer attached to a chain.

Bam! Bam! Bam!...

Alas, Webwalker was too quick with it, evading all of them without breaking a sweat. Though they did manage to piss him off.

"Silk Spit!"

Webwalker swiftly started sprinting around Levi while firing a continuous barrage of white sticky silk shots from his mouth.

'I am too limited here.' Levi's inner expression turned hard as he used whatever means possible to evade the silk shots.

Unfortunately, he couldn't make too much movement without the risk of slipping or getting caught by the webbing.

To make it worse, Webwalker was making sure to spray his shots near the wall, guaranteeing that even if it didn't hit Levi, it would stick there, limiting his movement even further.

Realizing that he might end up in a cocoon if he didn't do something, Levi started swinging his crown all over the place, smashing the wall around him, akin to a madman.

The silk shots tainted his chains, but he still kept swinging around rapidly.

"Lost it so quickly? How disappointing..." Webwalker sneered, staying away from the attacks while continuing to spit the silk shots.

He knew that it was only a matter of time before Levi became an immobile free target; he just needed to be patient.

Unfortunately for him, he wasn't the only one in the game.

'Chance at last!'

The moment Ssek-Varr noticed that his rival was being held up by Levi, his grin widened as he swiftly kicked off his climb in full gear!

He couldn't care less about hunting for Nocrix credits when the path for victory finally opened up to him.

"Ssek-Varr is making a run for it!" Gamemaster Gadget shouted, "With his astonishing climbing skills, it will be hard for anyone to catch up to him!"

The moment Webwalker heard this, he lifted his head to the sight of his rival screwing him over a big time.

"Shit!!... Count your lucky days!"

Webwalker instantly ignored Levi and gave chase, using his silky strings to swing from one wall to another, rapidly climbing up amidst the storm of elemental barrage fired at Ssek-Varr!

Both of them managed to get out of it in one piece; their movement was simply too elusive for the struggling newbies.

"Ssek-Varr! Stay right there!"

Hearing Webwalker's voice pulling further and further, Levi halted his attacks and pulled back the vibrating crown.

Feeling the intense vibrations, Levi knew... Webwalker was the lucky one.

Still, he had no intentions of wasting such a build-up.

He looked up at their spiritual auras, which were nearing the upper tiers, and knew immediately that he needed to pick up his pace.

Levi checked for the nearest step, which was still more than fifteen meters away from him.

Without wasting a split second, Levi pulled out his staff and continued his climb, rushing as fast as he could to the nearest step.

When he got to the appropriate range, he brought out his staff and used the same tactic to pull himself upward... He kept doing this over and over again, becoming much easier the closer he was to the upper tiers.

Unlike the mid-pit tiers, they were loaded with a network of swinging chains, broken beams, rotating platforms, and even a wooden staircase leading straight to the rim.

The only issue was the size of the upper-pit tier, having barely a twenty-meter radius, forcing everyone to be crammed in a dangerous zone.

As expected, the moment Webwalker caught up to Ssek-Varr, he didn't hesitate to engage in combat while both of them stood on top of a rotating hovering platform.

Seeing this, everyone's expressions lit up. They realized that it was their chance to catch up, or at least ensure their survival if one of those two crossed the rim.

Still, Levi was the fastest of them.

In no time, he swung himself to one of the wooden beams affixed to the wall, standing there calmly... His spiritual eyes, on the other hand, were locked on the two Newbie Hunters going at it in front of him.

Webwalker and Ssek-Varr noticed his existence the moment he landed on the beam. But, they acted ignorant, wanting to see his next move.

Would he ignore them and sneak to the rim? Ambush them? Or hide until they finish?

Neither.

To their surprise, Levi tightened his grip on the vibrating staff and walked in their direction, his expression unreadable behind the void.

"Oho, what do we have here?" Ssek-Varr snickered, "For him to be daring enough to join our battle, it seems you are losing your touch, Webwalker."

"Shut the f*ck up and let's get rid of him quickly before the others get close..." Webwalker's expression turned sour.

"Agreed, we can't continue our battle in peace otherwise."

Having allies was banned in the games, but ganging up wasn't... as long as the same gang would fight each other to the death after to secure the win.

The program refused to promote anything besides solo gameplay... However, they couldn't stop the Rifters from ganging up on others without affecting the program's entertainment.

After all, if Rifters decided to gang up, it would be without a contract and no telepathic communication.

Thus, trust was nothing but a fantasy.

In almost all the games, betrayals were more common than the sight of a nightcrawler... This was pure entertainment, which translated to higher viewership and payouts.

As expected, even when Webwalker and Ssek-Varr decided to get rid of Levi swiftly, their minds were plotting in the shadows.

The moment he lowers his guard, I will target him... He's a bigger threat than the Three-Body Problem.

This thought coursed through their minds simultaneously.

Unbeknownst to them... A thought also roamed Levi's mind as he jumped in their direction while swinging his staff with everything he had.

Thunder Chant... X5.

Release!