

## Evolution 116

Chapter 116: The Death of Innocence, and The Birth of a Legend.

Levi said, gritting his teeth until sparks were about to fly, his heart was ripped apart by the guilt and regret of what was to come.

He knew what was about to happen; he knew that if he pulled off his move, no one would survive... He knew all of this...yet he had to do it... To win, to climb, to rise above all and achieve his goals.

He accepted that casualties would paint his road, or so he thought... This was his life now; there was no escaping from it.

As a rational person, he genuinely assumed that just because he'd accepted being part of this merciless system, his mind and heart would be spared.

But alas... He was still a human, and a child...

Woaaaahh!!!

"By Sire Nocturn's light... did you witness that?! Three Body Problem hurled himself through those thick vines as if he were a blazing star cleaving the night sky!! Each shattered strand trailed behind him like cosmic embers!"

Gamemaster Gadget spoke at last... Excitement and exhilaration clouded his face.

He was stunned the entire duration of Levi's flight, leaving him to wonder how he could be this lucky to commentate on the first game of a newborn legend.

He had been commentating on hundreds of games in the Homeless rank, and yet, not a single one had given him the same feeling as watching Levi's ascent.

The mask, the voice, the outfit, the skills, and the psychopathic persona...Everything screamed that he was in the presence of greatness on the rise.

He wanted to be part of it.

He extended his arms widely and shouted, allowing the passion for the game to speak for him.

"Feel your hearts pound, Watchers!! His legs drove through that vine barrier with the force of thunder... he emerged on the rim shining brighter than any celestial beacon!!"

Just as he was about to yell out Levi's name, he felt his tongue twist at how long it was... at how peculiar it sounded.

But this wasn't his first rodeo... His excited, squirrel-like eyes darted across Levi's entire appearance until... they landed on the Celestial Stars.

A single word came to him, akin to a prophecy that needed telling.

He placed Levi's face on the big screen for thrilled watchers to relish before he bellowed at the top of his voice:

"Let your blood boil, let your voices thunder... CHEER FOR THE ONE AND ONLY... THE CELESTIAL!"

THE CELESTIAL!... THE CELESTIAL!... THE CELESTIAL!

The watchers exploded with cheers, chanting Levi's newly bestowed nickname until their voices went hoarse.

Most of them chose to spectate the games in this shitty rank purely for the giggles and the cheap price of admission.

The Homeless rank was split into five segments, starting with a Noctrian Power Scale ranging from 5N to 12N.

This was the current average power scale in this game. It was the lowest of the low, the bare minimum to be accepted.

Usually, it was for Rifiers just starting their evolution, like newly evolved Tier-3 Nightcrawlers and such.

Thus, the watchers had low expectations of everyone, knowing they were more likely to do something funny than epic.

Levi's existence was the last thing they anticipated at this level.

The stunt he had pulled off was so completely out of the norm for this rank, it made them feel their money was more than well spent.

How could they not cheer for him? How could they not scream? How could anyone not get infected by this energy?

Just like a virus unleashed, the atmosphere became electric; cheers clouded the skies, uncaring that more than seventeen Rifiers were still giving their all to survive.

Some watchers even went further, hoping for their failure out loud, wanting Levi to be the sole survivor... believing deep in their twisted hearts that he alone deserved to stand on the surface.

To their great satisfaction... they had gotten their wish.

Noooo...

The closest Rifter to the rim was crushed to death by the closing walls; his outstretched hand had only one finger outside the rim.

Rumble!

With one final earthquake, the rim closed for eternity; no sound escaped the pit... only one bloody finger remained on the surface... the lone remnant of the twenty-nine participating Rifters.

Of course, many had a Nocturn's Pardon activated, saving them from true death, but still... not everyone enjoyed such a luxury.

Levi had no idea who possessed one and who did not.

The one thing he knew... his way of winning had eliminated everyone.

Although he knew that had it not been him, Webwalker would have done it in a heartbeat... but this changed nothing.

As he wallowed in a deep pit of sorrow and sickening guilt, Gamemaster Gadget's voice roared across the plains:

"Silence falls over the Wailing Bone Pit... for only one soul remains standing! Thirty entered, thirty fought for their lives... and only the Three Body Problem, The Celestial, has conquered the depths and emerged as sole survivor!"

The watchers kept on cheering, reveling in the spectacle.

"Watch now as Nocturn himself bestows a new honor upon our champion!"

As the Gamemaster spoke, brilliant crimson letters began to glow above Levi's hood...

-THE PITCULLER-

Etched in living blood, each rune dripping and fusing into his mantle of victory.

"Behold! The title bleeds down his form, a testament to every shattered bone and every echoing scream he overcame!" Gamemaster Gadget went wild, "In the Nocturnal Ring, legends are written in blood and bone... and tonight, The Celestial's name will be carved into eternity!"

Just as he prepared to conclude with one final passionate shout, Levi stood with great difficulty and opened a dimensional portal home.

Without bothering to turn his head or acknowledge anyone's cheers or love, he stepped through unflinchingly on his healthy leg, disappearing into the rippling void.

Yet Levi's ears were powerful enough; they picked up on the distant echoing voice of Gamemaster Gadget, fading into the void...

His final words?

"Will the Celestial test his mettle against the stars themselves? Don't blink, or you will miss history in the making..."

With that final word, the portal closed, and Levi's knees gave in at last. He collapsed, head to the ground. His wounds healed the moment he left under Nocturn's authority.

Yet nothing could heal the infected mental damage...

His hands had turned into tightened fists, his lips were purple from biting so hard, and his stomach churned violently, forcing him to swallow back his vomit.

The watchers didn't seem bothered by his arrogant persona; they welcomed it, believing only such an image fit the bestowed Celestial nickname.

Unbeknownst to them, the mysterious psychopath...who drove horror into rivals' hearts and proved there were levels even at rock bottom, was nothing but a teenager who had never killed anyone...

No one knew, for he was weeping silently the entire time of his celebration, but had no eyes to shed tears...

Was he mourning the slaughter? Or the grim future ahead, filled with nothing but death and misery?

Maybe both... Maybe neither, but one thing was certain.

Levi wasn't ready yet for the Nocturnal Ring, or at least, the mental burden it demanded. He still had work to do on himself to survive such savagery without feeling...

Unlike the CRS Platform, which placed Levi against his planet's invaders, easing his heart to erase them, the Nocturnal Ring was different.

It was a free-for-all buffet, and only the most cruel would rise above all.

"You did a good job, son..." Ash'Kral sighed faintly, "Trust me, it gets easier with time..."

"That's the thing..." Levi said, his voice shaky, "It shouldn't..."