

Evolution 119

Chapter 119: Treasure or Life?

A few minutes later...

Inside a ruined town with old, small two-story houses covered in moss and plants, two men and one woman were seen zigzagging across the ruins with desperate expressions.

Boom! Boom!...

Explosions were resounding behind them, shattering and brutalizing the soulless town even further.

"You better not get hit! I ain't going back to save either of you!" Selma shouted at her partners while evading the elemental barrage.

She was lean with cropped black hair tied in a topknot and light makeup a bit ruined with dirt.

"Shit, shit, shit, I can feel my legs giving in!"

"I can't keep up...Cough, we have...been...running for over six hours..."

Her partners in crime seemed to be on their last bits of fuel.

It was bad enough that one of them appeared to be dragging his feet instead of running, huffing and puffing, akin to a dead-tired dog.

Looking at their bad shapes made Selma grit her teeth in frustration and anger. She wasn't aiming her rage at them, but at the bastards chasing after them relentlessly for more than six hours without a moment to catch their breath.

Although she knew that it was her fault for stealing the Sensebound Pearl from deep within the Distorted Ancient Site, especially since the other party had been exploring it first, she still had no intention of giving up the artifact.

If it were a regional conflict between Daywalkers, getting caught pulling a stunt like this would land her in serious trouble. But between unaligned regions? The fallout would stay confined to the agencies' feud, with the regional governments keeping their hands clean.

Of course, this was applied only to low-ranked Daywalkers.

'Damn it, do I give it up to secure our safety? Or, should we turn around and take them on? The reinforcement will be here in less than five minutes. I just need to buy some time...'

Before Selma could finish her thought process, a sudden whisper resounded near her ear. It showed unannounced, akin to a passing ghost.

"I can save you for a price..."

"Who's there?!"

Selma immediately looked around her with a creeped-up expression, feeling like they were being watched, but finding nothing.

She didn't even consider the message to be from her own people...she'd never heard his voice before. Besides, they wouldn't pull this kind of bullshit with her life on the line.

"I can help you escape with your friends in one piece, but I need the Sensebound Pearl as payment. We can sign a Nocturnal contract to ensure a satisfactory result for both of us."

The same voice swooshed near Selma's ear, showing his real desire without hesitation.

The moment she heard this, Selma's expression turned for the worse, believing that the voice's owner was part of their enemies.

Although she hadn't seen a Sound Elementalist with the chasing squad, it was the only viable explanation.

'Trying to make me sign a contract to hand over the artifact without a fight? After getting so close to owning it? Heh, I ain't that naive.' Selma sneered coldly as she glanced behind her at the leader of the chasing party.

'Is that b*tch taunting me?'

Dray's eyes narrowed after noticing the way Selma was looking at him.

He had messy, shoulder-length brown hair that kept falling over his sharp, watchful eyes. His lean, muscular build and tan skin made it clear he lived out in the wild.

He wore just the basics...rough clothes made from natural materials, giving him a raw, almost Tarzan-like vibe.

His appearance matched his weapon choice greatly as he held a wooden boomerang on top of his shoulder.

"Daring to taunt in this situation...You are asking for it."

Dray pulled two growth totems from his back and absorbed the stored sunlight with a reluctant, but stern look. They were the last growth totems in his possession, and he wanted to save them for emergencies, but he no longer had the patience to continue with the chase.

The moment his solar energy tank was recuperated a bit, Dray hurled the boomerang into the sky while shouting, "Primal Storm Arts: Wind Shred!"

Whoosh!

It glowed faintly while riding an emerging storm. With each spin, the storm grew stronger until a giant, dusty tornado was manifested behind Selma and her party!

This wasn't all...The tornado kept hurling wind blades in every direction, slicing trees, houses, and forcing Selma's party into hiding behind the ruined buildings.

"Crap, it's pulling me backward!"

"I am out of solar energy already, Selma, help!"

Selma's partners were the first to feel the rage of the storm. They wanted to run away from it, but the tornado's pulling force was too powerful. They couldn't utilize their abilities to protect themselves because they had already wasted their solar energy to survive the chase.

"Good shit, captain!"

"Haha, as expected of Tempestryn Lineage heir! No one can rival your Primal Storm Arts!"

"Go around the tornado and cut them off!"

Uncaring about his squadmates' attempts to curry favor with him, Dray's eyes were on nothing but the Sensebound Pearl.

However, just as he was about to dash through his tornado and get himself launched towards Selma's party, he was stunned to see the tornado getting snuffed out, akin to a thrift store candle. Even his spinning boomerang was forced to halt midair.

Whoosh...

Selma, Dray, and the rest of the Daywalkers were suddenly alarmed after noticing a peculiar change in the trajectory of the wind. It was blowing from up north, but now, it switched to the south.

When Selma noticed the disturbed look on Dray's face, she knew that he had nothing to do with this.

'Wait, don't tell me it's...'

Before she could finish her thought, her eyes were allured by the sight of two newly risen hurricanes, five times bigger than Dray's!!

They were approaching her party and Dray's from opposite sides, seemingly pushing them to get close and face each other!

"We are getting third-partyed!" Dray swiftly ordered, "Retrieve the artifact!"

He realized that the best chance they had to retrieve the Sensebound Pearl was now. Selma and her party were weak and disoriented while their paths to escape had been cut off.

Although his party was in a similar situation, he fully believed in his chances to escape with the artifact. He just needed to get his hands on it.

Witnessing Dray and his party members rushing at them with zealous expressions, Selma's countenance couldn't help but turn grim. She glanced at her partners, and that one look was enough to let her know that they would be utterly useless in the battle.

She turned around and gazed at the raging tornado. As she narrowed her eyes at it, an image of a wavy draconic silhouette manifested.

Before she could think too much about it, the same voice echoed in her ears.

"Treasure or Life?" The voice insisted indifferently, "Choose wisely."

Time seemed to have slowed down for Selma. Many thoughts coursed through her mind as she scanned the dire situation she was in.

When her eyes landed on the cruel, desperate look on Dray's face, she instantly knew that he was going to do everything to retrieve the artifact...In simpler terms, he wouldn't hesitate to kill them even when it was heavily frowned upon for Daywalkers to slay each other.

Although they were part of two different holy regions, the governments would not sit idly by when their Daywalkers were slain by others.

The dead Daywalker would have his data collected. His agency and the government would work hand in hand to right his murder.

The governments didn't care if it was a mere conflict between Daywalkers, but killing each other was too extreme and frowned upon by most regions.

This was the purpose of the World Regional Alliance...Ensuring that peace and union remain strong between most holy regions worldwide.

To maintain this peace, such cases were forwarded to them for the sake of investigating the death of the Daywalker and enforcing a fitting punishment if it was warranted.

In the case of Selma, Dary had every right to slay them since they stole his artifact and refused to return it.

While it was frowned upon for a Daywalker to kill another, if there was a legitimate reason for such an act, the assailant usually walked free.

Selma knew that she wasn't on the side of the victim, even if she had been killed.

'Treasure or life...'

Levi's voice echoed in her mind, causing her grimace to change for the worse.

"Life, you bastard! Now help us!"

Before her voice could travel far, a Nocturnal contract manifested in front of her eyes. It had only two paragraphs written on it and was signed by a censored name. Yet, she didn't dare read them when Dray and his party were getting so close to them.

Levi seemed to anticipate her woes and made sure to give her the free time to read it. He sent a telepathic order to Vyra.

'Keep them away.'

The wyvern's slitted pupils narrowed dangerously as she dashed outside of the hurricane and headed straight for Dray and his party.

Then, with a single flap of her wings, the two hurricanes fell apart into a dozen smaller tornadoes, rushing towards Dray's party!

"Break them off if you can! If not, avoid them at all costs!" Dray shouted angrily while throwing his boomerang at Vyra.

Alas, Vyra evaded it easily...Her speed was simply too great in the air, leaving Dray to switch his focus to her owner.

Since Vyra was flying under the sunlight, it could only mean that it was a nightmount...A powerful one at that, which made him cautious about the strength of the ambusher.

While he was trying to locate Levi, Selma's expression hardened at the realization that Levi could do the same to her party, which was already weakened beyond recognition.

'The artifact is a lost cause...I have to save myself and those two idiots.'

Selma took advantage of Dray's party disorder to read the contract terms swiftly. When she noticed that it was a standard rescue/payment contract, she signed it with a hopeless look.

The contract ensured that Levi would secure their safety from their assailants. As a reward, they would give him the Sensebound Pearl. They couldn't attack each other until the contract duration ended, which lasted for two hours.

Since each contract ate a small piece of one's soul, no one wanted to sign multiple long-term contracts...Two hours were more than enough for Levi to get to safety before the contract term ends.

'It's signed... now it's my turn to fulfill my obligations.'

Levi smiled serenely as he stepped out of the ruined houses, heading towards Dray and his people, who were still fighting off the approaching tornadoes.

He was wearing a black scarf around his head, hiding his face completely. As he was walking towards them, he was smashing his Judgment's chainstaff left and right on the ground, creating a sonorous rhythm.

As the rhythm kept increasing in volume, Dray and the rest of his people finally noticed the peculiar stranger.

"Who are you? Show your face!"

Dary hollered murderously while pointing his boomerang at Levi, realizing that all of this mess was his doing.

Levi ignored him and kept tapping his staff left and right with each step he took until it started vibrating vigorously in his hands.

Then, he pointed it at Dray's party and uttered calmly, "You are a long way from home, Solmarians."