

Evolution 129

Chapter 129: The First Expedition.

Two Weeks Later...

Rain fell in soft silver lines, weaving a soft stillness over the Training Center.

No sun to coax the fields today, no blinding light to summon the Daywalkers into the open. Instead, the earth drank deeply, and the silence outside grew dense with falling drops.

Inside the Dorms, everyone was seen snuggled with their own blanket, either as large groups in front of a massive holographic screen or as individuals in their rooms.

All the screens showed the same feed.

Levi, Arthur, Nurah, and Jojo treading under the rain inside a ghost city, with tens of thousands of buildings, ruined, forgotten, left behind in the past.

This ancient city was the true appearance of their world behind the glam of advanced technology and the artificial safety...

Meanwhile, Instructor Seraphis was following them from the air on a hoverboard. Two weeks earlier, when Levi made the commotion of picking Nyxformis Burrow and putting it on blast for anyone daring to bet against his squad, the news reached Instructor Seraphis quickly.

Instead of putting some sense in Levi and Nurah, the two daring brats, as other Instructors anticipated, Seraphis decided to approve it on one condition...Jojo had to be added to their team.

Levi had no problems with this, and if it wasn't for Seraphis' three-member condition, he would have taken his original party.

Although Jojo was added to the squad, which increased their odds of success, Abel, Demetris, and many other Daywalkers still decided to bet some big numbers against them.

Since the wager depended on the entire team's effort, everyone was included in it. In other words, if they failed, they would pay together; if they succeeded, they would earn.

As for Melissa and Rayan? They weren't upset to have Jojo taken from their squad because it increased Levi's squad's chances at success.

Instructor Seraphis put Omar in their squad to complete it since he was the only one left uninvited in the classroom.

Although they weren't too pleased in the beginning with having Omar in their team compared to one of their friends, their minds were changed after they succeeded in clearing their first Twilight Burrow five days ago.

It wasn't easy, and Melissa had made many mistakes that left her a bit depressed for a while, but they pulled it off with just three of them, earning them a ticket to join the Blood Hunters' expedition.

Demetris' squad also succeeded a week earlier, resulting in some viral reactions on the network after they managed to clear it in less than two hours!

Success was one thing with those harsh conditions, but to pull it off in less than two hours? Those were the numbers of veterans.

After this expedition, Demetris' name started to gain some attention in the network again to his pleasant surprise.

Alas, his fifteen minutes of fame lasted a couple of days at most before the release date of Levi's squad expedition was announced by the Training Center's social account.

The moment the public found out the decided date was no less than three days away, many of them cleared a spot in their schedule to watch the live stream.

A squad of the top four freshmen challenging the toughest Twilight Burrow in years while still being Rookies; who wouldn't tune in?

The event had gotten so big, many gambling dens had taken part in it, allowing everyone to place bets either in favor of or against Levi's squad.

"Our boys sure have grown." Jamal smiled while wiping a fake tear, "To choose Nyxformis Burrow as their first expedition, they are making me proud."

"Grown? It's been less than a month since they joined the Center." Sergio complained, "Other Daywalkers should have been burying their heads in books and cultivation, not going out on death missions."

"Is Papa Sergio worried?" Shia teased.

"Shut up, I just don't want them to die so young." Sergio retorted angrily, but his true emotions couldn't be hidden.

"Come on now, you think Levi will risk his life if he wasn't confident?" Shia smiled.

"Like what happened in the Harrowing Forest?"

"..."

Shio was left speechless, realizing that Levi was bold enough to risk his life for the sake of a recommendation letter, almost getting himself and his brother dead.

While he was smart, he wasn't shy of risks...

"Well, I trust them to get the job done." Shia steeled her tone, "None of them are ordinary Daywalkers, and the world will soon see it."

Meanwhile, Lord Idriss, Madam Naima, Feng Ling, Sir Alaric, and many other upper-rank Daywalkers also tuned in to the stream...Each for their own reasons.

Some out of curiosity, some out of support, and some seemingly seeking chances to interfere.

But Instructor Seraphis was like a protective hawk mother in the skies...Anyone daring to target his babies would deal with him personally.

Right now, he had landed on the roof of a split skyscraper and watched as his trainees made a circle in the middle of a street.

While he was streaming the expedition, Arthur and the others were also showing their POVs to the public. The Training Center's staff was responsible for the camera work to give the viewers a good time.

"Do you need a rendition of the plan or should we commence?" Levi asked calmly.

"It's pretty simple, so there isn't much to repeat." Nurah shrugged.

"I am good, my role is the easiest," Arthur smirked.

Everyone turned to Jojo, and she clasped her hands gently, but her mouth was nothing but that, "If the gorilla doesn't need a rendition, then we are good to go...Namaste."

"Are you calling me dumb, Baldy?" Arthur narrowed his eyes.

"You're asking?"

"I have to; it's difficult to guess one's true intentions when they preach something and do the opposite." Arthur snickered.

Just as Jojo was about to fire back, Nurah giggled while covering her mouth, "With your constant bickering, you sound like a married couple."

"He wishes!"

"She wishes!"

Both of them snapped at the remark and turned to glare at each other.

"Enough." Levi uttered sternly, "We are in the wastelands, act like it."

Everyone quietened down and focused on the mission at hand, except Nurah, who was still giggling under her breath.

Levi ignored her and started the mission with the first phase of the plan: Discovery and Pooling.

He tapped into the rainstorm's noise in the background and highlighted it in his mind until a soundwave bridge appeared before him.

Levi touched the string and strung it akin to a guitar string. The sound waves bloomed in his world, expanding beyond the surface level.

They searched after every opening underneath the city and traveled alongside them until they were connected to a network of tunnels!

They were a few meters underneath the surface, but they were leading to the depths of the underground.

A few moments later, most of the sound waves met at a gigantic open space cave. They kept sending pulses, each one allowing Levi to scout its interior and whoever was inside. As anticipated, it was packed to the brim with ants, moving and cluttering all over the place.

While his spiritual vision could detect nightcrawlers as well, its range wasn't great over long distances...the underground nest was quite far away.

Levi wanted to scan from such a distance for an important reason.

"The nest's heart is a kilometer away and sixty meters deep under. There are close to one hundred ants in the heart, while hundreds more are spread out across the city." Levi updated, his head lowered.

"Hundred...Hmm, it's manageable." Nurah replied.

Seeing everyone nodding in acceptance, Levi took off in the direction of the nest's heart while the others chased after him.

They stuck close to him since he was constantly scouting ahead for the ants to ensure that they reached it without getting detected...Even if they met a single helpless ant, they hid and covered their tracks.

"Interesting approach." Madam Naima commented, "They are attempting to strike the heart right away without taking out the outer circle guards."

"In any other nest, this will work just fine..." Lord Idriss shook his head, "Nyxformis Queen Ant will call every ant back to the heart the moment it feels threatened."

Madam Naima agreed, knowing that Nyxformis Burrow's difficulty lay mostly in the Nyxformis Queen's protective approach...Once it felt an ounce of danger, it holed up most ants near her Stygian Gate to defend it.

Although this posed no difficulty to the governmental mass destruction weapons or high-ranking Daywalkers, the Rookies and Juniors struggled immensely to deal with so many ants at the same time.

Since this nest was under the Training Center's ownership, no one had the right to attack it besides their people, under its predetermined conditions.

The conditions were simple: nightmounts and higher-grade totems were banned in combat.

This ensured that the Rookie and Junior Daywalker squads cleared the nest and earned the fat five-thousand-coin reward for each.

After all, the entire nest's value was less than the reward.

It was an extreme test for Daredevils' newbies.

A few minutes later, Levi and his squad arrived at the southern economic side of the ruined city...There were about three small skyscrapers still holding strong.

Instructor Seraphis landed on one of them and sat on the edge, watching his students gather on a nearby three-story building with a hole in its ceiling.

Under the heavy rain, the sky was gloomy and dark, allowing many daring ants to expose themselves on the surface.

Arthur lowered his head and watched the Nyxformis ants walking on the streets, nibbling on plants and such.

It was a shadowy, obsidian-black insect with long, fuzzy limbs. It had giant circular eyes and antennas, long enough that they were about to touch the ground.

"Do I still make my move, or should we eliminate them first?" Arthur inquired.

"Just ignore them." Levi said, "All ants will be alarmed soon enough."

"Aight...I guess it's time to get my guns out."

With a wide grin, Arthur rolled up his wet sports track sleeves to his elbows. Then, he summoned his signature weapon, the dark metallic shield with silver edges and a big Obsidian Gem in its center.

'Kha'zun, are you ready to give everyone a show?' Arthur checked with his contracted nightwalker while stepping onto the edge of the roof.

'A show? I am too old for this crap.'

Kha'zun yawned, his mouth appearing at the bottom of the shield.

Arthur's eyelids twitched, but he didn't allow his boring elderly nightcrawler ruin his vibes. He turned to his brother and affixed the shield in front of him.

"Hit me!"

"With pleasure."

Levi summoned his masterpiece of a staff and didn't hesitate to swing it on Arthur's shield, hitting it with everything he got.

Bang!

The staff vibrated intensely at the recoil while the main force was already absorbed completely by the Obsidian Gemstone.

Bang!...Bang!..

Levi didn't stop for a moment as he kept raining down on Arthur with a storm of attacks until the gemstone was shimmering as bright as a minisun. Of course, those loud noises could never go unnoticed by the ants.

Almost every ant in a five-kilometer vicinity or more was alarmed and swiftly warned their Queen.

Uncaring about any of this, Arthur walked to the edge of the roof and strapped his shield on his back after absorbing all the kinetic energy within him.

Because he was wearing a tracksuit, his transformation was mostly hidden. However, the shown parts still made everyone wonder what Arthur was about to do.

"Silver Armament."

Arthur activated his second innate ability, covering his entire arms in silver steel. Then, he glanced at the center of the street, where some ants were standing high alert.

Before anyone could know it, Arthur was in the air with his right fist pulled back and a gigantic grin painted on his face.

"Heavens Breaker Arts: Jet Wings Fist!"

The wind howled past him as he dropped like a stone, silver arm glowing faintly from stored energy. The ants looked up...too late.

Arthur slammed his fist into the cracked pavement.

BOOOM!!

The street exploded in an instant!

Stone, dust, and blood flew in all directions as a giant crater tore open beneath the impact. The ants didn't even scream. Just red mist and twisted limbs where they stood!

The viewers watched this scene with widened mouths, incapable of believing a mere Rookie Daywalker was capable of such destruction.

"How..."

Mantis murmured in disbelief as he watched the stream with his brother and some of their friends.

"It can't be! Even with his amazing strength, it is simply illogical for him to deliver such a devastating blow with his arm and not ruin it from the recoil!" Masai exclaimed next to him, uncaring about Demetris' ugly expression.

As everyone's stunned eyes were affixed on Arthur, who rose slowly from his crouch, dust trailing off his shoulders, their answer arrived in the shape of:

Twin jets of hot steam released through small vents on either side of the black shield!

Smoke coiled upward behind him in the shape of two silent wings unfurling... He didn't speak...he didn't have to. The destruction around him said it all.

As he jumped away from the crater, it started cracking a bit by bit until the dirt collapsed into a pitch-dark abyss.

Arthur glanced once below. Then, he turned to his squadmates, just to find them jumping in the direction of the abyss.

"Give them hell, big bro."

With a faint smirk, Arthur extended his palm upward, and as Levi passed by him in midair, he gave him a perfect resounding dap.

Meanwhile, Jojo only gave him a middle finger, but he acted blind to it, not wanting to ruin his cool moment on live stream.