

Evolution 138

Chapter 138: The Whispering Bids Auction.

Two days later, at the brink of dawn...

Levi was seen sitting inside the back of a fancy limousine, wearing a formal black suit, a black shirt, a black tie, black shoes, and black glasses... Just blackity black black.

His hair was combed to the back and smoothed with cream gel, making him resemble a bossman on his way to a business deal.

Next to him, Shia's eyelids kept twitching at his appearance. She was wearing a semi-formal orange dress with a low cut and a thin pair of orange sunglasses, matching great with her crimson hair and black heels with red bottoms.

Unlike Levi, she appeared akin to a fiery torch, unextinguishable, eternally rebellious.

"I know you're blind, but it wouldn't hurt if you wore other colors," Shia said.

"What's the point?" Levi shrugged.

"You will look more charismatic, fashionable, and you won't be emitting such a depressive vibe," Shia chided.

"I don't wear clothes for others," Levi replied casually. "Clothes are meant for comfort and cold protection."

If it wasn't for the Auction House having a dress code, Levi wouldn't have hesitated to turn up in his hoodie.

"Argh, such a boyish answer." Shia rolled her eyes.

She could tell that Levi truly had no issues with looking as fashionable as a rug, but she didn't want him to stay like this.

In her eyes, Levi had insane potential appearance-wise if he just decided to give fashion a chance.

But you can't change who doesn't want to be changed.

Thus, she dropped the matter for now and pulled out a holographic screen with tens of enlisted items on it... However, they were all greyed out with no details, not even a name.

There was a timer on top of the list, showing thirty seconds counting down.

"The auctioned items list is about to drop," Shia shared with an intrigued tone.

"Oh, I hope it has what I need," Levi wished.

"Most definitely," Shia assured. "I don't know which kind of treasures you seek, but they can't be that rare, considering it's your first evolution."

"I do wish so." Levi nodded.

Levi hadn't shared the materials for his evolution with Shia, even if they were only two. It was known knowledge to keep one's evolutionary materials a secret unless one was planning to concoct a known evolutionary formula.

After all, a single natural treasure was all it took for an Agency to reverse engineer a remarkable or perfect evolutionary formula... It would take time and an insane amount of resources, but it was doable.

Every Daywalker was advised to do the same. Shia understood this and didn't take Levi's withdrawal to heart. Though it drove her to ponder the possibility of him attempting to create a perfect evolutionary formula.

After all, she had no idea if Levi truly had nothing more than Bleed'er's evolutionary formula.

Soon, the thirty-second window ended, and the auction list came to life. Tens of treasures' pictures came to life with their full names, details, and bidding price at the bottom... Only three items remained hidden.

Shia shared the list with Levi, and he had Astra AI report the details of each item. When she was done, Levi showed a faint, pleased smile.

"Looks like someone is going broke tonight." Shia chuckled.

"Broke is a state of mind," Levi uttered casually while fixing his tie. "I ain't never been a brokie and never will."

Shia rolled her eyes again, incapable of taking anything he said seriously when he looked like he was roleplaying the ancient, infamous Top G. He just needed a cigar in hand and Jojo's hairstyle to complete the look.

...

Sometime later... Inside the Solar Aegis Sanctuary, 12th floor.

The stone archway of the corridor swallowed the sound of Levi's footsteps as he entered the auction hall with Shia beside him.

Thick silence adhered to the air, broken only by a few murmurs here and there.

Tiered seats curved around a wide central platform veiled in thin light... The Bidding stage, where dreams either come true or get shattered into oblivion.

Levi took a seat near the lower edge of the amphitheater, keeping his back straight, his fingers resting calmly on his knees. Shia sat next to him, drawing the attention of many attendees.

While the seats weren't the best, Levi understood that securing a ticket to this auction was already a blessing.

The Whispering Bids Auction House was the most exclusive in the region. Many Warden Daywalkers fail to purchase a ticket even if they have the money for it... That's because the auction house favored social status above all.

Because of this, the auction was filled with both native and foreign famous Daywalkers with either insane strength to back it up or a reputable family lineage.

Shia's family had access to six tickets, and Shia took two. One for her and one belonged to her big brother. She wasn't too concerned about this, knowing that her big brother never attended such events...Plus, he was far away on a mission.

As Levi scanned the room out of habit, not out of curiosity, he couldn't help but feel a bit awed. He was surrounded by contained, pressuring spiritual auras of all kinds and forms.

While he couldn't see anyone's nightcrawlers since they were banned from hanging around the Willow Grove's bridge of darkness, he could tell that he was amidst the strongest of what this region could offer.

Soon, Levi's spiritual vision was attracted to a familiar aura, sitting on top of a VIP balcony.

'Nurah... Is she here to buy the materials for her evolution?' Levi murmured to himself, recognizing the spiritual aura as belonging to his classmate, Nurah.

Indeed, Nurah was covered in storm-colored robes trimmed with sharp silver. She looked as beautiful as she could get.

As Nurah's eyes roamed around the place too, she quickly noticed Levi facing her from the bottom.

She almost didn't recognize him from his new appearance, leaving her a bit dazed. Shia might not be a fan of Levi's all-black depressive style, but it seemed to have clicked something in Nurah's.

'So handsome...'

Her favorite color was black, and to see Levi clad in all black made her skip a beat.

Still, when her gaze met his, she lifted her hand lightly in greeting, a simple tilt of her fingers. Levi returned it with a nod and the faintest lift of his own hand. They understood each other well enough to keep their distance in such a setting.

But then, he saw the woman beside her.

She was seated like a statue. Straight-backed, chin high, her robes deep violet with black lining that glistened faintly along the cuffs.

Her hair, dark with streaks of ember gold, flowed over her shoulders like molten silk, untouched by time. Her spiritual aura wrapped her like a coiled serpent basking in the still heat.

She resembled Nurah to the point, she could be considered a mature version of her... Beautiful and stern.

Nurah's mother... Ysara Blackthorn.

Levi hadn't expected her to be here. Not at a public auction. Not at something like this.

As his gaze lingered, the woman did not move. Her aura held steady in the same high seat.

But then...

"Never linger your gaze for more than a second... It's the average time for highly perceptive entities to notice your spiritual vision."

The voice whispered to his right.

Levi stiffened.

Slowly, he turned. No one sat beside him. Yet he felt her there... warmth, pressure, a presence so real it brushed his shoulder. But when he glanced up, her spiritual aura still sat beside Nurah, unmoved...

'How...'

His throat tightened for a moment. She hadn't used any powers to project her voice.

She was sitting right next to him in her physical body.

The shocking part? No one seemed to notice her, not even Shia, who was sitting on the other side.

"My apologies, Madam... I didn't mean to linger my gaze." Levi expressed his guilt.

He understood that high-ranked Daywalkers didn't like being watched through spiritual vision since it implied being sneaky for something.

"Don't be alarmed," Ysara's voice came again. Calm, polished, patient. "I am not mad; it's only advice."

"Ah... Much appreciated." Levi's tone relaxed.

Ysara sized up Levi silently, her dark pools of ink scanning every inch of him. She heard Nurah speak great of him in almost any conversation she had in the past month... She even told her about his disability.

Hearing about his disability had intrigued her more than the norm. Now that she was this close to him, she couldn't help but try to find out if he had any secrets that enabled him to develop to this state.

Alas, she found nothing else but Levi's armed tattoo of Ash'Kral... Still, her interest only grew.

"Say, child, how do you feel about becoming an Assassin?" asked Ysara straightforwardly.

Levi almost choked on his saliva after hearing such a blunt question. Though he swiftly realized she was checking if he was interested in joining the Midnight Slayers agency.

"I'm grateful," he said quietly. "But I've already accepted terms with the Blood Hunters. That path is set."

A moment of stillness passed. No sound. No breath. Then, her voice returned, just a shade colder.

"Pity. You have the makings of someone who belongs in darkness."

Levi went silent, his expression turning calm.

He faced the stage and murmured, "The light has never reached me... I don't belong in the darkness; I am already part of it."

A pause.

"Spoken like someone who's been watching the dark too long... Don't stare too much, or the abyss will one day stare back."

Then her presence vanished. Gone as if it had never sat beside him.

He looked again at the upper seats. She hadn't moved. Her aura remained unchanged. But now her eyes were on the stage.

Ting!

A bell rang once, low and sharp... The auction began.

And Levi still couldn't shake the chill from his side, understanding that if she had any intentions to eliminate him, he wouldn't even know how he died...

'Ysara Blackthorn...The most powerful assassin in the Northern District... Her reputation precedes her.'
Levi murmured inwardly.