

Evolution 149

Chapter 149: What's The Catch?

Inside Mountain Thurnak, where light was as dim as a candle in a moonless night, a medieval-style city was seen crowning its heart.

It was situated at the mountain's depth, which was half hollow to accommodate such a large city. Its buildings were carved and built on wide stone terraces.

At the center of the city stood a great castle. Its thick granite walls rose high above the rooftops, impaled by slim windows and guarded by round towers with tile roofs.

If the city weren't situated inside a mountain and cast a sinister atmosphere, akin to a ghost town, everyone would believe that it was an ancient city from the Medieval Era.

At the moment, Grave'Maw and his people were all inside the castle's throne chamber; the atmosphere was tense and grim.

"My Lord, they have taken down Kra'kki and Morio'ni nests...Based on their movement, they seem to plan on erasing all subsidiary nests and Stygian Gates before attacking the Mountain." Gar'nock informed, his rough tone resembled two rocks grinding against each other.

He was Grave'Maw's right hand, the strongest nightcrawler after him.

He looked like a creature made of clear quartz crystals...Under the crystals, a faint blue light shimmered periodically, akin to a heartbeat.

He had sharp crystal spikes sticking out from his forearms, while his hands and feet ended in blade-like points, piercing through the floor...He was a golem built for killing, nothing more, nothing less.

Yet, his appearance was still overshadowed by his lord.

"Let them...It's a small sacrifice for what shall come next." Grave'Maw spoke, his stony mouth barely moving.

He was sitting on his rocky throne, and yet, his size still towered over the tallest nightcrawler in the chamber.

Standing, he could reach up to a two-story building, six meters from the foot to the top of his bowl-shaped head.

His body looked like rough, dark boulders you'd find on a mountain slope, each crack and ridge protruding out like chunks of broken cliff.

His head was shaped like a deep cooking pot or an upside-down wooden bowl, its rim curving smoothly into his shoulders.

In the center of that 'bowl' sat a green crystal as big as a fist...It was dim, but it was for the better to remain like this.

His eyes looked like polished jade beads set into stone, dark green and faintly shining from their sockets...This light traveled across his entire rocky skin, seeping out like moss lit by moonlight.

He was a true golem from the Stoneborn Colossi Species with a harrowing origin...

"My lord, this is Darius we are talking about...I know he is a member of the Duskbound Order, an esteemed pawn piece like you, but still..." R'hytha voiced his concern, his tone shaking a bit, knowing that he was risking it.

Unlike the majority of the nightcrawlers around him, who were from the Stoneborn Colossi species or sub-species related to them, he resembled a centaur, but a mixture of a frog and a human.

He had the bottom half of a dark purple frog, but the upper body of a human. His human half was situated at the center of his back, making him look quite funny...Especially when his face and arms were those of a frog as well.

Although he was also an elite under Grave'Maw's command, an earned relic from a defeated nest, his status was nowhere near the elites of their lord's species.

Fortunately, they were in a war, and a united front must be presented.

"I don't trust him, but I trust that he will fulfill his end of the bargain." Grave'Maw said coolly, "He is the only pawn under our High Bishop, who has yet to fulfill his quota of refined Daywalkers' blood...This is his last chance, and he can't risk failing it."

As he was saying this, Grave'Maw couldn't help but recall his full discussion with Lord Darius a couple of hours ago.

He was chilling in his castle, watching some dimensional Death Games to pass the time, and the next thing he knew, he was invited by Lord Darius to his territory in the Boundless Expanse.

The Boundless Expanse...In the Ninth Sky Province...A couple of hours ago.

Grave'Maw and Lord Darius were seen sitting at a table in the center of a massive, mesmerizing garden, with green plants neatly arranged into a labyrinth.

All the paths led to their table, which was crafted out of smooth white marble. In the background, a gigantic mansion stood with a noble air. It was built out of wood and stone with square-glass windows spread out across its walls.

It was clear that it belonged to Lord Darius as its architecture carried an Earthly touch.

"Cute property...though, it's a bit wasted on such a great location...Prices have increased massively in the Ninth Sky Province after the Shadow Clan declared their intentions to build a base here." Grave'Maw said, nodding slightly in approval.

"I am not interested in building a nation; this is enough for me." Lord Darius replied calmly, taking a small sip of wine.

"Heh, you are still hung up on owning Heliodor's region." Grave'Maw chuckled, "Give it a rest already...I invaded it at its weakest and still failed."

"It's my birthright, and also...I am not you." Lord Darius replied, his tone unchanged.

"For someone requesting a meeting, you sure have no manners." Grave'Maw narrowed his eyes coldly, not a fan of being undermined.

Although they were both part of the Duskbound Order and subordinates under the same High Bishop, it was already established that in this organization, each person was on his own.

Besides respecting the obvious hierarchy, peers had nothing between them besides competition to climb the ladder.

"I am not here to ask for a favor, but a partnership that involves your survival as well." Lord Darius shared.

"Hmmm?" Grave'Maw leaned his head closer.

He understood that Lord Darius would never invite him unless it was something grave or he needed a big favor...This was his first time in Lord Darius' Boundless Domain, which said a lot.

"You will be attacked, and soon. I have all the details of the invasion, and I am willing to help with my share of protecting your territory." Lord Darius offered.

"Interesting..." Grave'Maw held his rocky chin thoughtfully.

He knew that humans weren't the only ones capable of invading his territory the moment he signed up for the CRS Platform...It could very well be another Nightcrawler nest or even Raiders from other planets in the same dimensional sector.

Though the most obvious answer would always be Heliodor's region.

"What's the catch?"

"I need your help setting up a blood refinement array in your mountain. I am missing my quota, and the Bishop is requesting it sooner than I anticipated." Lord Darius said.

"Heh, that's what you get for sticking to being a mole instead of free-roaming like us." Grave'Maw snickered.

He knew that Lord Darius had been sticking to the Heliodor region for a very long time; his eternal goal was to own it without exposing his identity.

However, as a member of the Duskbound Order, he had his duties to fulfill, and his identity conflicted with some of them.

It was normal for Grave'Maw to do whatever he wanted with Daywalkers, but it was different for Lord Darius.

"Mind your business, are you in or out?"

"Contract?"

"Contract."

No words needed, Lord Darius summoned an already crafted contract and shared it. Grave'Maw read it fully in a few moments...Then, he signed it.

The moment it was confirmed, Lord Darius eased up and said, "The Blood Hunters."

Yet, this was enough for Grave'Maw to understand everything.

"Oho? Little Idriss has finally decided to avenge his deadbeat father?" Grave'Maw smiled sinisterly, "How cute...It will be impolite not to send him to meet his dad."

"Do whatever you want with him." Lord Darius said sternly, "Just fight them in your mountain; I will deal with the rest."

"Also...This is an unsupervised Raid...Don't report it."

Since Lord Idriss was the leader of the Raid, and he was a registered Raider on the platform, he could only participate in systemized, supervised, and streamed dimensional raids.

Otherwise, Grave'Maw could report his unannounced transgression on his territory, which would penalize Lord Idriss heavily in the system...To the point, the Raid might not even happen.

However, this was only if Grave'Maw decided to report him the moment he noticed his transgression on his territory.

If the Raid was already commenced and he decided to fight back, it would be considered an unofficial Raid with no rules and no penalties...One could say, a normal invasion.

"Now, why would I do such a thing? No rules and in my territory...The Thurnak's mountain will be their eternal graveyard."

"Just be careful." Lord Darius warned, "For Idriss to make his move at last and through an unofficial Raid, it can only mean that he is amply prepared."

"He can prepare all he wants...I only need a few hours, and you have given them to me...It's a done deal." Grave'Maw uttered, assured.

Seeing this, Lord Darius focused on his part of the plan, silently hoping the stone head wouldn't ruin it.

He truly didn't want to destroy his agency after everything he had done to build it.

"What about the aftermath? I doubt you will survive it if the Blood Hunters are eliminated...They will assume the same mole was at work, and I believe your agency is one of the suspects in the Harrowing Forest." Grave'Maw smiled.

"Save your fake concerns...I have it covered." Lord Darius uttered calmly, his eyes suddenly reflecting a different scene.

A scene of a cloaked man riding on a brownish dragonfly-like nightmount, buzzing noisily as it flew in a thick forest, evading trees along the way.

His destination? Mountain Thurnak.