

## Evolution 158

Chapter 158: Drank on Carnage.

"Melissa..."

Rayan stood frozen... His fists clenched so tight they bled. He didn't say anything at first... just stared at what was left; blood, shards of ivory, and the hollow shell of the girl who never gave up, even when her body failed her.

"We lost her..." he muttered, voice tight. "She won... and we still lost her."

He turned away, jaw trembling. "Damn it, Mel..."

"No... This isn't real."

Meanwhile, Jojo's legs almost gave in... They kept shaking as she stared at her friend's motionless body, and the gleaming blue gemstone next to her.

She wanted to go check on her, not believing that she was gone... But they knew that it was no time to mourn, as there were still five more elites, with three of them being handled by Nurah alone.

"Don't lose focus! Or we will be joining her soon!" Nurah uttered sternly; her classmates' death moved nothing in her... As a Blackthorn, death was an acquaintance.

She was crouching with her hands planted in her shadow up to their elbows... Her shadow was stretched and connected to three more shadows, branching out from the center.

The other shadows belonged to the three elites, using her ultimate ability, Shadow Puppetry, to control them through their shadows and fight against each other!

If she wasn't already occupied, using everything in her powers to keep those three busy, she could have helped out Melissa... But alas, as strong as she was, Nurah couldn't be everywhere.

As for the two elites? They had just witnessed the death of another close nest member, leaving them seething in rage.

Only Demetris, Jojo, and Rayan were left to fight them off.

However, Demetris was huffing tiredly with many flesh wounds... Jojo seemed to have wasted most of her spiritual energy on her last attack, leaving her standing on the ground with them... Rayan's legs were already shaking nonstop; his running all over the place had caught up to him.

The elites were only pissed, not tired in the slightest.

At the end of the day... These were Tier 3 nightcrawlers, and they were a mixed match of Juniors and Rookies.

"You little shits will pay for this!"

The two golems pointed their arms simultaneously, ready to fire one last execution barrage... Their arms were focused on just Jojo and Rayan, but they made sure not to make it obvious.

Demetris had been fighting one of them all this time, showing everyone that he had it in him to fight against an elite solo.

But in reality, the elite wasn't going all out... He was informed about Demetris' status as a Duskbound Order member, forcing him to act it out to keep his identity hidden.

Demetris' shallow flesh wounds were the evidence.

'Shit, shit, shit, if everyone dies, my cover will be exposed...' Demetris's heart was beating in agitation as he gazed at the fury burning in the elites' eyes.

Only an idiot wouldn't connect the dots if Demetris survived, and the others failed to.

Just as he was about to voice his concerns to his lord, a sudden furious voice resounded from the skies... A voice so familiar, he could not sleep without dreaming of killing its owner.

...

Sometime earlier... In the back of the army.

Two massive mountains of corpses and stone fragments were being built slowly, stacking on the sides of the Vermillion Fortress.

Slice! Slice! Slice...

Levi was still going at it after slaying close to half the nightcrawlers' army... His arms had already gone numb, but he kept going at it, pushing his limits more and more until he entered a bloodthirsty stance.

His posture sank low like a predator, and a slow exhale left his lips... calm, cold, detached.

He moved before he thought. A blur of limbs and sound.

Slash. Step. Twist. Elbow. Thrust.

Each kill fed something inside him... an old hunger buried beneath reason... He was lost in the slaughter.

Arthur could see it.

His brother wasn't fighting anymore... He was harvesting.

'Levi... When did you become like this?'

Arthur murmured to himself, realizing that his big brother had changed, not for the better, not for the worse... Just changed.

He could feel that his brother was carrying some kind of weight on his chest... He believed that it was from that cursed night... as this way of slaughter could only be excused as a coping mechanism.

Arthur was only half-right; the anger, hatred, guilt, all negative emotions buried deep within Levi's heart from the cursed night, and his first game were slowly being vented off with each swing, crush, and slice.

Levi was enjoying it; he was enjoying it so much, he was too deep in his bloodthirsty state to check on his friends and how they were doing.

How could he remember them when his audible vision reflected a world of red akin to him drowning in a sea of blood? His mind was shut off, focused on a single task... Kill as many nightcrawlers as possible.

Fortunately, Arthur was still sane and knew that their friends would be struggling against the elites.

He started shouting Levi's name, but his response was slicing three lunging crippled nightcrawlers in the sky, their blood spraying him akin to a waterfall.

Realizing that his brother was out of it, and this might be bad for him since he hadn't taken a single break from the moment he started, Arthur intervened.

He used his ultimate ability to create another wall separating Levi and the nightcrawlers... Then, he finished it off by locking the fortress ceiling, uncaring that it would cut off the tree's life.

Ting! Ting!

The moment it rose, Levi's crowns smashed against its hardened surface, sending a powerful jolt, almost knocking the staff from his hands.

"Huh?"

Only then did Levi wake up from his stupor, noticing that his bloodied hands were shaking so much it hurt.

"Bro, are you okay?" Arthur asked, concerned.

"Oh yea... just a bit tired..." Levi replied, memories of what went down in his bloodthirsty stance flooding his mind.

When he noticed that his energy tank was on its last drops, Levi felt chills course down his spine... He realized that if his brother hadn't intervened, his fuel would have run out, and he would have tapped into his life force to keep the abilities active.

Only after feeding off the years of his life would the abilities turn off.

If his Death Chime Field went down, the fortress would have been overrun by a sea of nightcrawlers, turning it into a death trap.

Swiftly, Levi wiped his bloody face with his sleeve, just to find that he only defiled it further. He was all sticky and nasty, from head to bottom.

"Arthur, quickly feed me growth totems to restore my energy... I am all out." He rushed, listening to the monsters' bombardment on the fortress.

Arthur did as he was told and helped Levi restore close to 60% of his reserve, taking more than six growth totems.

This was an insane intake just to restore energy, but at the same time, it was worth it... Levi's reserves were fat enough to allow this slaughter to happen.

Quickly, Levi extended his echolocation until his friends' battles appeared in his mind... Immediately, his expression turned chilling at the sight of Omar lodged in a boulder, Keira's ravaged body, dead on the spot, and finally... Melissa's severed torso.

The instant he heard a heartbeat in Melissa's chest, Levi shouted, "Arthur, get us out! Melissa is about to die!"

"Say less!"

Arthur's expression turned solemn as he pulled his shield from the fortress's wall... Then, he uttered, "Absorb."

The fortress shimmered as it started breaking off into vermillion light particles, rushing back into its gemstone.

The moment they were exposed, the nightcrawlers rushed them from all directions.

"Arthur, get down!"

Levi shouted as he reactivated his ultimate ability, Echoforging: Twinblade Style.



Once Arthur crouched down, Levi spun his staff around, the echo blades slicing up everything within a ten-meter diameter!

Thud! Thud...

The area was cleared in an instant, the nightcrawlers dropping akin to flies. Then, Levi swiftly jumped on Vyra, who was already waiting for them. He pulled his brother up, and they took off in the air... Destination, rescuing their friends!

As for the nightcrawlers' army? Barely a hundred were left, and they could deal with it later.

For now, Melissa's well-being was Levi's priority as he kept his echolocation focused on her, watching her final glorious moments.

Ka-thump...

A heartbeat was followed by Melissa casting her third-stage innate ability: Ivory Bloom.

Ka-thump...

Another heart pulsed, making Levi see Melissa turn into a flower of bones as she severed the golem into two.

Ka-thump...

Another heartbeat... This one slowed, weak, barely pumping anything. But it still showed Melissa aiming her bow one last time at the golem and blowing his core apart.

"No, no, no, no... Faster, Vyra! Faster!"

Levi kept repeating in agitation, his mind focused on a single note... A single thump, wanting nothing in this world but to hear it resound in his soul.

Ka-thump...

Alas, Levi heard it, but it was so feeble, he was the only one in the universe who heard it... Not even Melissa.

Thud...

Melissa's arm fell on the ground, followed by an eerie silence.

In this eerie silence, Levi watched with lips parted as her spiritual aura slowly faded away into the darkness... akin to a firefly in its last moments.

Levi tried his best to refuse it, to ignore it, but he knew...

Melissa was gone.

Levi glanced at his bloody hands, the harmonic spine painting them as red as spoiled wine.

Then, he started laughing... The emotional turmoil was so heavy, the Harmonic Spine was disturbed, showing Levi a world of vibrating frequencies.

"Big bro... Don't tell me."

Noticing such a maddening image, Arthur's heart sank to the bottom of his stomach... He shook Levi's shoulder to tell him what was going on, but Levi didn't seem to feel it.

He kept laughing until the irony died with a piece of his soul.

His knuckles tightened on the staff, whitening... Blood still steamed on his staff.

He had been too deep in it... too busy chasing death to notice her life.

"...Damn it..."

His auditory vision locked on her crumpled figure, bones cracked, blood soaking the ground beneath her.

If he hadn't been so obsessed... so drunk on carnage... he could've been there.

He could've saved her.

But he hadn't.

And now... she was gone.

Forever.