

## Evolution 177

Chapter 177: Sand Glider.

Soon, Levi's expression turned grim after spotting The Sandwitch's kill toll... No hesitation, he pressed on her highlighted clip.

The clip was ten seconds long... Yet, that was all she needed to commit one of the most brutal massacres Levi had ever witnessed.

Thirty Rifters were trapped inside a quicksand pool... kept within hardened sand coffins.

No screams, no movement... Only the sound of quicksand burying them slowly under a live stream.

The Sandwitch was sitting on top of a hardened sand platform above them... She had a humanoid build, but her entire appearance was covered behind a brown desert robe.

Only her eyes were shown to the world... vertical slit pupils glinting with a venomous green-gold hue, scanning the silent tombs with a predatory gaze.

The clip ended with the tombs buried completely... and the Sandwitch emitting strange, low-pitched whispers.

Levi remained silent for a moment and then went to search for her name and other clips... What he found left him with a sick stomach.

"Your first game has Newbie Hunters, and your second has a Soul Harvester." Ash'Kral chuckled, "I have to say, the universe works in mysterious ways."

Levi's lips twitched, knowing that he was referring to his great luck at unlocking abilities being balanced by his shitty luck in the games.

To have a Soul Harvester Witch with a Sand element Aspect in a desert-based game... How worse could it get?

"Soul Harvester... Nocturnal Ring sure allows anyone to enter and do as they please as long as they provide entertainment." Levi frowned, not liking what he found on the dimensional network.

Soul Harvester referred to Rifters who joined the platform not primarily to climb the ladder, for riches, honor, or such... Instead, they focused on killing as many Rifters as possible in every game.

Then, they harvested their souls before they could fade away into the aether... The Soul Harvesters were believed to be members of a Witchcraft Organization called the Black Loom.

Unlike The Duskbound Order and Solar Aegis Sanctuary... this organization preferred to keep itself hidden, in the shadows, carrying out its duties in silence.

No sponsorships, no events, just members spread across the chained universe and its realms to fulfill a single goal... Collect as many souls as possible.

For what purpose? No one knew for certain.

This was everything he could find with legitimate sources... the rest were a bunch of speculations and fantasy-based rumors.

Unsurprisingly, The Nocturnal Ring was one of the best places for its members to thrive... After all, everyone signed up to die here.

"Sandwitch, The Razer, Shadebite, Glassfang... Those four are the most dangerous on the list." Levi suddenly smiled wickedly, "Three of them are nightcrawlers, just like most of the Rifters in the game."

Although the difficulty had increased, Levi was not even close to being the same as in his last game... In here, he could actually go all out and be scared of nothing!

\*\*\*

Sometime later...

Levi had informed his brother and friends that he would be gone for a week or less to train in peace... Destination? Unknown.

If his brother wasn't using Neuralens, which collected his data through vision, he would have taken him with him and even told him about his Nocturnal identity.

But, as long as his little brother was wearing it, it was too much of a risk on both of them to tell him the truth.

The Three-Body Problem's identity had to remain a secret at all costs, with zero connection to Levi's real-world identity... At least not when he wasn't strong enough to survive the consequences.

Then, he packed up everything he needed inside the dimensional wallet and left the region. When he was far away and no one followed him, he used the dimensional key to Ash'Kral's little island.

Once he entered the Boundless Expanse, he received a dimensional message.

-You have a Package... Would you like to receive it now?-

"Must be the Sand Glider."

Levi pressed accept and waited less than two seconds before a small dimensional portal appeared in front of him... Then, his package was hurled at him, almost hitting him in the face.

"Sheesh... I know it's stressful to work in the Dimensional Delivery Department, but still..." Levi smiled wryly as he placed the package on the ground.

Based on what he read, the Rattoki clan was responsible for Logistics & Delivery, plus twenty more fields... such as Transportation, the Dimensional Network, Infrastructure Maintenance, Market Regulation & Trade Control, and more.

Thus... even though they possessed omnipotent authority, many of them disliked their jobs, believing that they had drawn the short end of the stick compared to their relatives... the Sciarani clan.

Well, supervising and commentating over entertaining Death Games did sound more fun than handling everyone's business.

"Wow... this looks amazing."

After opening the package, Levi was astounded by the Sand Glider's craftsmanship. He had already read about it in great detail, but he still didn't expect it to look as good as in the videos.

It was a dangerous-looking board made from dark brown wood, with glowing runes carved into its surface.

The runes were connected to two sharp, silent blades underneath... Between them sat a Thermocryst Core, sealed in black glass, which took heat from the atmosphere and channeled it into fuel and power.

The front was curved upward like a sword tip, made to slice through dunes, while small side fins with Ilthorien markings let it turn sharply and smoothly.

Before he turned it on, Levi sat next to it and started fiddling with its exterior and interior... his smile as wide as a child receiving a toy for the first time.

"Thermocryst Core... one of the seven cores crafted under the Dwarves' fine Arraycraft Engineering skills."

Levi murmured as he used his Harmonic Spine to peer through the black glass... What he saw made his smile widen even more in amazement.

He could see a miniature sun-like sphere orbiting slowly around itself... He used his finger to trace the runic inscriptions around the Glider until they met at the Thermocryst Core.

All was connected to one source.

"Ash'Kral... do you know how this core was made?" Levi wondered, knowing an ancient entity like him must have been there when it was made.

To his surprise, his guess was correct, and Ash'Kral actually bothered to answer him.

"It's made from a rare, heat-harvesting crystal that has been melted until its state turned liquid... Then, arrays are used to maintain this state." He explained lazily while standing on top of the Glider, "In this superheated state, the crystal can drink in heat from the atmosphere much more easily, acting akin to a supermagnet to heat."

"Once this process is done, other arrays are added to transform the heat into usable energy to power up the arrays and the Glider... Just like that, you have a Glider that can move for centuries as long as heat is around, and the materials hold strong."

"Fascinating..." Levi was intrigued even more... especially when he knew that there were six more similar cores that relied on different types of energies.

Yet, those seven cores were considered the holy grail of engines... They required almost no maintenance and could live on forever in their desired environments.

"Wait... did you just give me the Dwarves' trade secret to create the Thermocryst Core?" Levi suddenly asked.

"Just a part of it..." Ash'Kral replied, "The real secret lies in the arrays."

"You know it?"

"Yes."

"How..." Levi wondered, "Were you there when it was first made?"

Ash'Kral went silent for a moment as he gazed at the arrays and the Thermocryst Core... Then, his expression returned to normal.

"You could say that." He answered.

"..." Levi looked at him, feeling that something was missing in his response. But he knew that thinking about it would merely waste his time.

Ash'Kral was a well of secrets, a never-ending onion... Levi planned on taking his sweet time removing each layer at a time.

For now... Levi strapped his feet on the Glider, and turned it on with a wide, childish grin... The Glider roared to life, lifting Levi half a meter above the ground.

"This isn't so bad..."

Levi maintained his balance quite easily... his spatial awareness was elite.

"Leaning forward creates acceleration depending on the angle..."

Levi followed the instructions in the tutorial he read, holding his hands behind his back while leaning slightly forward.

The Glider responded, moving slowly forward... Levi kept the same position, desiring to circle around the island.

When he neared the edges, he slightly leaned to the side, making the Glider turn with him. Then, he continued going forward, increasing the speed bit by bit.

Once he completed the circle, he returned to the center and started circling Ash'Kral.

"This is so much fun... I can get used to owning one." Levi smiled widely, thinking of using one in the cities.

"It's called Sand Glider for a reason... the amount of heat it needs to keep it functional must be hot all year round." Ash'Kral shot down his dream. "You will merely waste your money."

"I know... But this isn't the only available Glider. I can purchase another one that uses an Essence Core more fit for our planet's ever-changing atmosphere."

"Good luck getting ripped off... those Gliders are sold for no less than thousands of Nocrix Credits," Ash'Kral said lazily.

"Can you not be such a buzzkill?" Levi's smile slowly faded, replaced with an irritated look.

"You asked."

"I never did..."

Levi's lips twitched after noticing Ash'Kral's teasing smile, knowing that he was messing with him again.

He ignored the asshole and restored his childlike smile... trying to learn some tricks like bouncing off the ground, spinning, and such... He fell a couple of times, but he easily stood up; the Glider had a built-in mechanism that automatically equilibrated itself.

After spending a couple of hours learning the basics, Levi had Ash'Kral design his little island into a small desert with overreaching dunes... spilling into the colorful void.

Then, he kicked off the real training, speeding across the desert around the island, using the dunes to fly into the air while doing basic tricks... Spinning, backflips, and even front flips!

Without the fear of death, Levi activated his daredevil mode, feeling like the Glider was becoming part of him more and more...

"Whoohoo!!"

At one point... Levi seemed to forget about everything.

His parents' death, Melissa's death, the Pit's massacre, and even what awaited him in this game... He just enjoyed his time playing around, resembling a kid's first time in a skate park.

In a sense... This might be Levi's first-ever time to just play... His childhood was the furthest thing imaginable from anything related to fun.

Right now... There were no nightcrawlers to torment him or humans to look at him weirdly... just him, the Glider, and the desert park... having the best time of his life.