

Evolution 221

Chapter 221: Carrying Their Own Weight.

"Keep it up! He is bound to break!" Syc'closs shouted while increasing the number of frosted projectiles.

Alas, Arthur never did... his feet were digging into the bridge, but unmoving.

The heat merely burned off the uniform's cloth on his arms and a bit of his torso, exposing his massive, veiny muscles.

In the end, Syc'closs and his partners were forced to stop; their energy reservoir was getting exhausted with no good results.

-Haha! You can never take down Big Tank!- Rayan cheered.

-F*cker must be feeling himself, knowing that hundreds of millions are staring at his muscles.- Sergio cursed with a faint smirk, noticing Arthur low-key flexing, trying his best to look cool as always.

The rest of the watchers also cheered in excitement, enjoying every moment of the game so far... Yet, this was only the beginning of the end.

Out of nowhere, Levi appeared with his arms crossed behind his back, hovering tens of meters above Syc'closs and his teammates... He was standing above the upper crown of his staff, which was floating rigidly, with the bottom crown locked on his enemies.

He neither said nor did anything... he just kept standing there, menacingly.

Yet, his presence was so oppressive, it made Syc'closs and his teammates consider retreating for the first time.

They could tell he was the Psych Specialist who had pierced a hole in Kraev'Morr's chest and was the orchestrator of this travesty... Great Psych Specialists were feared and respected across all ranks.

Alas, the moment Levi arrived, no one was going anywhere.

With a finger snap, aetheric chains manifested from the bridge surface and caught their arms and legs, forcing them to remain still in place.

Then, the viewers watched with widened, elated eyes as Levi pointed his finger above him, creating close to a hundred vibrating sound arrows all directed at The Drowned Court's team.

Yet, he wasn't done.

Each arrow contained newly emerging concentrated aether marbles, which were also vibrating at different frequencies!

Since both sound and aether were invisible to normal vision... if a commoner were to see the sky, they would find nothing but a hundred faint green dots, resembling fireflies.

But, Syc'closs and his teammates knew... they would get disintegrated if those projectiles landed on them.

'ICE DOME! NOW!'

Syc'closs gave up on trying to free himself from the aetheric chains, opening his mouth wide to release torrents of water. His teammates had done the same, using teamwork to swiftly build a massive dome of water in less than a second.

Then, they switched to using Frost Aspect, releasing a chilling air from their mouths, hitting the water dome, transforming it into a thick ice dome in no time.

Seeing this, Levi waved his finger, and the arrows lined up one after the other until a giant spear of fireflies was formed...However, before he could use it, Arthur's voice resounded around the bridge.

"Big bro! Leave it to me!"

Arthur absorbed all the kinetic energy from the frost barrage earlier... then, he pointed the central vermillion gemheart in the Ice Dome's direction, changing his bracing stance with a wide grin.

Knowing what he was about to do, Nurah, Shia, and Jojo retreated a fair distance... then, they watched Arthur shout out loud, "Drown this, you bastards!"

A bright vermillion beam erupted from the central gemheart, tearing across the bridge in a straight line until...

BOOM!

It slammed into the massive ice dome, drilling a scorching hole clean through its core! Steam erupted in a massive pillar, hiding the dome from everyone's eyes.

Everyone's but Gamemaster Sparks, whose experience was unmatched... he anticipated such a reaction and split his streaming vision from the beam to the interior of the dome, showing the viewers the beam slamming into Zyr'rKalith's chest... a clean hit.

A millisecond later... a violent burst of kinetic heat and pressure ignited his flesh, turning it charred black in an instant, before crumpling lifelessly onto the shattered ice.

The two remaining nightcrawlers stared in horror at what remained of their teammate's body, the aroma of burnt flesh and bone filling their noses.

They were just conversing amongst each other on how to escape from Levi's chains before the beam pierced through their most trusted defensive ability, killing one of their own under their eyes.

"...One down," Arthur growled, the glow in his veins dimming while the hot steam from the recoil burnt through his skin yet again... but, this time, Arthur took a knee down, his energy reservoir was at its limit.

His abilities were powerful, but they consumed a ton of energy... Yet, Arthur didn't seem to care, grinning from ear to ear as he listened to the viewers screaming his name in the sky.

"The name is Arthur... Arthur Larson, remember it."

He looked up and uttered indifferently while flexing his biceps on the low, making many girls start losing their minds.

But not Nurah, Shia, and Jojo, who rolled their eyes at his cringy attempts to look cool.

"Keep the idiot safe... I will finish it." Nurah said with a smile while walking seductively in the direction of the pierced Ice Dome.

As the viewers tracked her, thinking what she had in mind, Nurah disappeared out of their sight... the moment their thoughts strayed, she was gone.

Seeing her travel across the spiritual bridge of darkness instantly to appear inside the dome, Levi glanced upward at the rain of arrows.

He smiled wryly... 'What am I supposed to do with these?'

He knew that once Nurah got inside, their fate was decided.

With a swift motion, Nurah activated a flashbomb artifact, unleashing a sudden, unnatural burst of illumination inside the dome.

Syc'closs and Thyss'Rahl noticed their shadows stretching across the frozen walls, while Nurah stood upside down on the dome's ceiling, her feet sinking into her shadow... or rather, shadows!

Her latest mutation made her skin slightly iridescent and subtly warped, almost like fractured glass in sunlight... as long as one body part was exposed to a light source, instead of a single shadow, the mutation generated two distinct shadows!

'Blackthorn Shadow Arts: Night Reaver Waltz.'

After the illumination died out and the ice dome turned dim again, everyone was startled to see five shadowy figures detaching from the walls... forming spectral duplicates armed with shadowy daggers.

Nurah had activated her second perfect ultimate ability... an ability that allowed her to gain control of any shadows in the vicinity... hers or not!

Syc'closs and Thyss'Rahl were unnerved as their own shadows peeled away from their bodies, entities that felt nothing like shadows at all... shifting between tangible and intangible, alive and dead, spirit and flesh.

Swiftly, they attempted to flood the Ice Dome with water, believing that the shadowy figures would collapse... alas, the gushing waters went through their intangible forms, not changing them one bit.

Under this stunning sight, the shadowy clones lunged at them with their daggers, aiming for their vitals, no mercy, no hesitation!

'Hydro Pulse Singularity!'

Desperate, Syc'closs used his ultimate ability, uncaring about his ensnared ally getting hit by it.

He compressed water into a dense core within him and released it as a supersonic blade in all directions! The blade was so sharp, it sliced through Thyss'Rahl's body like it was made out of butter, and so as the Ice Dome, cutting it in half.

Yet... the moment it touched the shadowy clones, they seemed to phase out of the blade, akin to shadows from another dimension... once the blade went away, their bodies turned tangible again with their daggers.

'I am fighting against ghosts...' Syc'closs thought, his face displaying nothing but utter despair as he stared at the daggers mere inches from him.

Slice! Slice! Slice!...

Under the stunned gaze of the audience, the massacre ended within seconds... both nightcrawlers were left decapitated, and even the already lifeless Thyss'Rahl was not spared.

The shadows retracted, leaving Nurah alone in the center of the Ice Dome... her figure slipping seamlessly out of one of the five phantoms, indistinguishable from them, yet carrying their ghostly gift.... the ability to shift between spectral and flesh.

Nurah stepped outside of the dome, holding the heads of the two Tier 4 nightcrawlers... not a single drop of blood tainted her clothes or skin.

A flawless execution demonstrating why she was referred to as a monster from her childhood, leaving her traumatized by the term.

Although Levi's aetheric ensnarement played a huge role in keeping their enemies locked in place... when it came to Nurah, it didn't really matter that much to her.

He could have freed them, and the result would still be the same.

Although Nurah rarely tried to show off, once she did... it stole everyone's breath away, making them understand why she was the third strongest Daywalker in Heliodor's Raiders team... below only Levi and Jasmine, surpassing even Arthur.

Her powers might have looked simple... but as she often claimed, her shadows were anything but ordinary. Which meant her Aspect was far more complex than it appeared.

"Sorry... I ruined your party." Nurah giggled at Levi, watching him still holding onto the rain of agitated, explosive arrows in case things went south.

Chapter 222: Total Wipe Out.

"No worries... at least, I got some action compared to Jasmine." Levi chuckled as he swiped his hand to the side, firing the rain of explosive arrows to the sea.

Boom! Boom!...

The moment the arrows struck the surface, the viewers' hearts jumped... the explosions erupted in rapid succession, dozens at once, like a fleet of warships unleashing their cannons, sending mist everywhere.

"True, I feel bad for Jasmine... she didn't get to do anything."

Nurah sighed while hurling the heads into the water. Then, she grouped up with the rest, and they walked on the bridge one next to the other, returning to their base.

As the viewers watched them laugh and tease Jojo, whose bald scalp was still shriveled from dehydration, they honestly didn't know how to react.

They had expected many things, but a total wipe-out in less than five minutes, while half of them seemingly not going all out? Nope... not this.

If even Gamemaster Sparks was taken aback by this development, how could the others react? Well, one thing was for certain... Heliodor's viewers absolutely loved it.

"Ladies and gentlemen! You'd better get those jaws up off the floor, 'cause what you just witnessed was no ordinary raid! This was a statement! Heliodor's Raiders just walked into the scene and showed us that they meant business!"

Gamemaster Sparks pointed his cane at Shia and continued passionately while smoke was emitting around him.

"First up...Shia! The bloodthirsty barbarian with a sinister smile, swingin' her blade like the battlefield will never claim her soul! Ain't no blood she won't spill, ain't no enemy she won't carve up! Ain't no wound she can't heal from!"

The audience cheered, and Shia's name was chanted over and over again, making her wave her hand lazily while pulling a lollipop from her pocket.

Swiftly, the focus was on Arthur, who was trying to keep his aloof, cool appearance, but a twitching grin kept failing him.

"Then we got Arthur! the wall, the shield, the damn fortress that walks! But don't get it confused, this ain't no passive guard dog. When that switch flips, he turns into a powerhouse that'll crush you flat and grin while doin' it!"

'Guard dog? The f*ck does he mean by that?' Arthur's widening grin froze, feeling betrayed by the Gamemaster.

Still, the viewers spared no amount of noise on him, knowing that he was one of the MVPs of this game... he protected, slayed, and did it in style.

"Next up, Nurah! the silent killer, the deadly assassin. One second you see her shadow, the next second, you're on the floor wonderin' where your head went! That girl doesn't dance with death... she is the damn waltz of shadows!"

Nurah blew kisses to the sky, her seductive beauty made many male fans lose their cool and utter some unholy things that they wished to be done to them... the most repeated comment was... Step on me, Queen Nurah!

Gamemaster swiftly changed the focus to the shriveled Jojo, who was touching her cracked skin with an annoyed look.

"Jojo! Don't sleep on her now. Martial arts mixed with spiritual prowess... Fast fists, sharper kicks, hurting both body and soul!"

The viewers gave her some love, not forgetting how she forced a Tier 4 nightcrawler to commence a suicidal move just to deal with her.

"And finally Levi! The..."

Before Gamemaster Sparks could even get started, the crowd thundered so loudly, it felt like they were attempting to bring the sky down!

Gamemaster Sparks smirked at such a reaction, expecting this much from the captain, who made this entire fight as smooth as it had appeared. Without him, the others would have struggled immensely since the Drowned Court were known to bully their enemies from the safety of the depths.

Levi's Aetheric Grasp murdered their advantage and left no corpse.

"The maestro, the puppet master, the captain playin' the long game from the backlines. He orchestrates with his masterful control of the elusive Aether energy! Every move, every strike, every damn victory note... it all flows to his tempo!"

Once he finished, Levi smiled serenely and waved his hand at the viewers, who were chanting his full name... Levi didn't care much about the attention, but he knew that the moment he joined the CRS Platform, he was under the radar.

In simpler terms, he needed to be the opposite of the Celestial in everything he did... akin to having an alter ego.

'You worry too much, I already told you... With you registering under two seeds, no way in hell anyone will link you to the Celestial even if you shared some similarities...' Ash'Kral said, 'Two different serial codes imply two unique seeds, and the general consensus denies such a possibility of a single person having two.'

'I know, but it wouldn't hurt to be extra safe,' Levi said solemnly, 'All it takes is one person to ignore common sense... plus, I have already screwed up by showing my sniper rifle to Darius... you told me that now both him and the Bishop should have such information.'

Levi hadn't forgotten about the day he fought Lord Darius in Demetris' body... at the time, his rationality was clouded by emotions, and made him risk everything to kill him, even if it meant exposing his second weapon.

Levi prided himself on his rationality and calm thinking; yet, whenever that cursed night or anything tied to it resurfaced, the buried rage, resentment, helplessness, and every festering negative emotion in his heart surged out uncontrollably.

If it wasn't for this, he would have realized that the smartest decision was to let Lord Darius take Demetris away... or maybe, he realized it, but he still couldn't let him walk away after everything that they did... he just couldn't.

Now, he had to deal with the consequences of such a decision... knowing that one day, they would come knocking, he just didn't know when. The only thing he could do was increase his strength as much as possible, to prepare for that day.

'Don't worry, that ain't happening now... at the moment, the Celestial is still nothing but a cool 'phenomena' in the lower ranks... he isn't as important as you make him be compared to the true Nobles in the Ring... although your latest clip of slaying the Leviathan has already hit the two billion viewership mark, it is still far from making a massive splash in the entire dimensional network.'

'Sooner or later... I will be getting there, and then, no one will be able to ignore me.' Levi uttered indifferently, 'I have to be ready for that day... no more mistakes.'

As Levi walked across the bridge with his friends, Gamemaster Sparks shouted in the background.

"So remember this night... cause this is your introduction to Heliodor's Raiders... the rising superstars of our beloved CRS Platform!"

Kaboom! Kaboom!...

As the last sentence was uttered, Gamemaster Sparks bowed, akin to a performer under the background of fireworks exploding in the sky.

"Good morning, good evening, and good night."

With a snap of a finger, the sky was cleared out from the watchers in no less than two seconds, returning the Tri-Crucible Isles to its peaceful state.

Levi and the others weren't too surprised by this... if there was a team wipeout or a title achievement, the Rifters get to summon the Omnigenie and choose a wish.

They couldn't do this under the eyes of the viewers... Wishes were so private, not even the Gamemasters had the right to know what anyone had wished for.

After Gamemaster Sparks descended to meet them at the bridge with a brimming smile, he told them that the Genie could be summoned on the Altar... he had already fulfilled the condition of the summoning for them, which was collecting all Blood Rites on the map.

Since Levi's team had wiped out the Drowned Court, they were instantly rewarded with the wish... an incentive by the system to push for such endings.

Though this didn't mean they had claimed the title, just the wish.

"I have to say... I never thought I would have enjoyed being demoted to such piss-low rank... but, you have given me a new perspective, and reminded me of who I used to be." Gamemaster Sparks said... his pimp-like accent was nowhere to be seen.

"Does that mean you are planning to stick by for some time?" Levi smiled.

"Not a chance, I am getting the hell out of here at the first opportunity."

Levi and the others' lips twitched, but they said nothing...

"Aight, you know what to do... Once you complete your wish, you will be teleported straight to the Drowned Court nest. You can take it from there."

Seeing everyone nodding in understanding, Gamemaster Sparks made a peace sign and stepped into an emerging dimensional portal, leaving the team on their own.

Levi and the others swiftly returned to the Altar and saw Jasmine sitting in the same position... although the game finished, she was still drawing on that piece of paper.

When she saw them, she waved with a faint smile and sent a dimensional message, 'Was it any fun?'

In the past fifteen days, Jasmine had opened up slowly to her teammates after spending so many hours training, hunting, and just simply hanging out... now, she was comfortable enough to send dimensional messages, even though she knew that the voice they heard was of her depressed nightcrawler, not hers.

But Levi and the others were unbothered by it, which made Jasmine drop using holographic sentences and signs unless outsiders were involved... for now, her friends and father were the only ones who heard her telepathic voice.

'Killing nightcrawlers invading our planet under the cheers of millions? How can it not be fun?' Arthur grinned, having enjoyed his first raid thoroughly.

'You must have been bored.' Nurah said, 'Next raid is on me... I will keep guard.'

Jasmine shook her head with the same smile, 'It's okay... I enjoyed my time drawing.'

She then turned the scroll and showed them the insanely detailed island they were on, drawn with nothing but black ink... she drew the forest, the moon, and the altar in the center. Although she wasn't using colors, the drawing still carried the map's crimson atmosphere.

'Looks pretty... can I keep it?' Jojo requested.

'Sure.'

Jasmine offered her the drawing, knowing that without her signature, it served as nothing but a piece of art.

Soon, everyone switched their focus to the illuminating scarlet Altar... Levi stepped forward and followed the instructions to summon the Omnigenie of this Order... Sanguigenie.

"By lifeblood and vow, I call thee... Omnigenie of blood, appear. Grant my wish, carved in scarlet flame." Levi uttered the incantation he found in the game's details.

At once, the Altar was activated... Countless Blood Rites were hovering slightly above each Ilthorien Major Rune on its surface.

The Blood Rites resembled a giant blood droplet, and when the Altar was activated, they started dropping one by one in a sequence.

With each drop, the Ilthorien lines kept shining until the entire array was as bright as the crimson moon.

Once the final drop landed on the center, which had a Major Rune of Blood on it in the shape of 'B', a crimson beam shot into the heavens, forcing everyone to take a step back.

"What a powerful oppressive force... It feels like I am being pressed by the universe." Levi muttered.

Chapter 223: Genie Wish System.

His heartbeats increased as his spiritual vision showed him a frightening scene of a wild red-wine spiritual aura contained inside the beam... it seemed to be screaming to be released, but the beam forced it to remain in place.

After a brief struggle, the wild spiritual aura began transforming into the genie's body...

A single glowing eye with the same major rune of blood (B) burned at the center of its featureless face.

Golden bracelets glistened on its misty crimson wrists, and a broad golden collar rested around its neck... Its final form looked like smoke colored with blood, with its lower body merging into a long, flowing mist.

After the summoning was completed, the beam dimmed out, but the array stayed active. The Omnigenie crossed its arms and gazed at Levi and the rest expressionlessly.

Then, it uttered: "Voice your wish."

Its voice was cosmic and raspy, like they were spoken to by the universe itself.

'Whoa... I have seen videos of OmniGenies being summoned, but experiencing it in real life is not the same.'

Arthur spoke telepathically, his message delivered to his teammates across the dimensional network.

The others nodded in support, feeling somewhat tense around this mysterious entity... an entity whose true origins and purpose in serving the CRS Platform were unknown to them.

All they knew from the network was that the OmniGenies were bound to the very foundation of the universe.

They were not omnipotent, but custodians of one of the rarest and lineage-bound aspects... The Wish Aspect.

Some considered Genies as an ancient race born from the fundamental laws of the universe since their powers didn't stem from Shadowlife seeds, and some believed they were man-made entities under Nocturn's hands.

He was the only entity known in the entire universe with the power to replicate reality as it was... the Boundless Expanse was the best proof of such a theory.

Though none were assured.

For now... the only confirmed knowledge to the public was that Genies came in many shapes and forms, each one tied to an elemental or conceptual essence.

Naming a few: Blood Genies (Sanguigenie), Wind Genies (Zephyrogenie), Fire Genies (Pyrogenie), Water Genies (Aquagenie), Earth Genies (Terragenie), Shadow Genies (Umbragenie), and Light Genies (Solarigenie).

Each Genie had the power to bestow wishes based on its essence...

Sanguigenie before them could grant wishes tied to Vitality, Life essence, Blood Aspect-related Lineages, Evolutionary Recipes, Materials, Artifacts, Treasures, and the list goes on.

If the genie commanded a different essence, the list would more or less remain the same, with changes to the Aspect or Law it touched upon.

While the Nocturnal Ring had its titles bestow privileges related to the Boundless Expanse, the prize system in the CRS Platform was the Genie Wish System.

After all, the CRS Platform was a systemized war... not like the Nocturnal Ring, which had the infrastructure necessary to motivate the Rifiers to aim for the titles, which were linked to the Boundless Expanse.

Plus, the CRS Platform already had a main reward... which was the Yearly Stability Rewards for Conquerors and Saviors faction, creating treasuries for the Raiders to steal.

In this manner, a full circle was completed, with all parties amply rewarded for their efforts.

The Genie Wish System was the bonus for anyone daring to aim for their titles or wipe out the other team.

"Shia, this one is for you." Levi smiled.

Levi, being the captain, was responsible for the wish distribution... he created a fair system, where the team members would have an exclusive wish if the Game's Genie was related to one of their Aspects. If it weren't, the wish would be team-based.

Everyone agreed to this system, understanding that there was a massive difference between an exclusive wish and a team-based wish.

If they went for a team-based wish, they would be limited to weak bodily enhancements such as increasing their lifespan, vitality, enhancing the richness of their blood, or such.

The enhancement quality was based on the Genie Order and its access to the Wish Aspect... The way to know their Order was The Eye.

One eye implied the weakest Order Genie, and Nine Eyes was believed to be the peak.

Naturally, the Genie's Order corresponded to the Death Game's rank... in this case, Invaders, Sentinels, and Marauders.

On the other hand, if Shia were to make the wish exclusive to her... she would have access to Blood Aspect-related Lineages, Evolutionary Recipes, Materials, Artifacts, and such.

All were extremely important and useful for her Blood-Aspect Evolutionary Path.

"Are you guys really sure about this?" Shia asked, a bit hesitant to go for it.

"Yes, we already talked about this." Arthur grinned, "I would rather have us snatch such opportunities to get empowered immensely, than waste them in cheap team-wide enhancements."

"He is right... with the number of Genies being in the hundreds, it is extremely rare to find a Genie corresponding to our aspects since they are based on the Death Game's theme." Nurah nodded.

This game was the best example... although the map was around water to give an advantage for the defending team, the OmniGenie was Sanguigenie.

This wasn't a coincidence... the system worked like this to ensure that the defending Faction wouldn't keep getting Genies corresponding to their Aspects while the challengers got none.

"Oki!"

Seeing that her friends were really cool with it, Shia couldn't help but get excited... she eagerly stepped closer to the Genie and requested access to the Library of Blood Aspect-related Lineage Bloodlines, which she could wish for.

She didn't request the Genie, as that would have counted as a wish fulfilled... they didn't give a shit about the Rifters. Once they uttered a wish near them and they had the power to fulfill it, they would go for it.

Soon, a list of Lineage Bloodlines appeared before Shia and her friends:

House Veyrath: Blood reveals visions of the past or future. House Draelis: Blood takes form as spectral beasts that obey their will. House Thalyss: Blood that can steal or transfer life essence. House Kaerith: Blood crystallizes or sharpens into metallic implements. House Myrrath: Blood that bursts into flames or combusts violently. House Vaelith: Blood can heal, enhance, or empower allies temporarily. House Eryndor: Blood corrodes or dissolves matter upon contact. House Sylthar: Blood carries curses or subtly manipulates emotions. House Zhaemir: Blood can be sentient, forming tendrils or grasping shapes independently. House Rhyssar: Blood can track or mark individuals, creating a mystical bond.

All of those Lineages were known to have taken the Blood Aspect and perfected a single use of it until it became its own signature Lineage Aspect... just like Lord Idriss' Blood-Fusion Aspect.

If Shia were to choose any of them, they would get linked to the Shadowlife seed's library and give her an almost guaranteed chance to unlock that said Aspect.

This meant she would be able to create techniques from that specific Aspect much more easily, her visualization having an actual link... instead of visualizing techniques from the massive library of Blood Aspect.

"I think there are higher quality bloodlines than this, but the Genie's rank doesn't allow it to bestow their bloodlines," Levi asked, "Are you sure you want to commit to a Lineage bloodline now?"

"I know they aren't the best of quality... but this is a fine opportunity to narrow my evolutionary path to a path of my choice," Shia said with a solemn tone.

Shia knew that if she chose a bloodline now, her next perfect evolution would have her unlock amazing abilities from the chosen Aspect... She simply got rid of the randomness of it whole, wanting to choose a bloodline that fit her fighting style exclusively, which would make it easier to have a domain fitting her.

In video game terms... Blood Aspect was the Main class, while Blood-Fusion, Pyroblood, Crystablood, Wraithblood, Seerblood, and such Aspects were considered sub-classes.

Each Lineage mastered either a single subclass, multiple subclasses, or even an entire main class, depending on their affinity to said main Aspect.

Radians and such Ancient Lineages were the letter.

'Ash'Kral, is there any unknown bloodline that isn't mentioned in the list, but the Genie can still bestow it?' Levi checked with the Wikipedia in his mind.

'Hmmm... based on the girl's close range and barbaric fighting style, there might be one fitting her greatly.' Ash'Kral said, recalling a specific extinct lineage.

'Really? What is it?'

'House Throgar... valiant, barbaric warriors from the Trueborn Gorrathi Race... they used to be one of the most feared races during the early days of the CRS Platform establishment.'

'House Throgar... Gorrathi Race.' The Titan murmured, 'These names somewhat ring a bell.'

'Old Bark, how can you forget about their bloodline?' Ash'Kral frowned, sending a telepathic message, 'Their ancestors fought alongside us... remember? The followers of that red-haired murderous hobo witch?'

The moment he mentioned this, memories flashed across the Titan's mind of hundreds of tribal tall berserkers with scarlet tattoos.

They had dark maroon skin and eyes that glowed crimson when enraged. Their teeth were sharper than humans', and they wielded weapons ranging from one-handed axes, double-handed axes, and glaives.

Although there were a mere hundred of them, their ways of fighting spilled terror across the enemy lines, as they knew no such thing as tiredness, injuries, or death!

As long as they had access to blood, they were literally immortal in combat; not even slashing their bodies in half could finish them.

Those were the ancestors of House Throgar, which meant the bloodline Shia was getting was at the bottom of the food chain in that Lineage... however, the funny thing about bloodlines, as long as there was a connection, an evolutionary path was created.

'Ah... such valiant warriors... I can't believe even they went extinct.' The Titan smiled wryly, 'They sure have cleaned us out.'

'They have, but we can always rebuild.' Ash'Kral said, his eyes affixed on Levi and his friends.

Usually, Ash'Kral wouldn't bother giving his time on matters unrelated to Levi's growth... but it seemed like he stopped seeing Levi as the sole gear in his goal.

'If I revived House Throgar's bloodline, there might be a chance I could revive their ancestral bloodline, which will lead to reviving that blood-harvesting witch.' He thought to himself while giving Levi the information he needed to convince Shia.

When Levi relayed the news and told her to check on them in the dimensional network... nothing came up. Yet, Levi still insisted on her wishing for the bloodline, telling her to put her trust in him.

Hearing this, Shia kept staring at Levi for a few moments... then, she gave him a slight nod and voiced her wish to Genie even when she had no legitimate reference to the bloodline.

But for Shia? Levi's word was all the legitimacy she needed.

Once her wish was voiced, the Sanguigenie uncrossed his arms and pointed a finger at Shia's heart... then, it uttered emotionlessly: "Wish has been granted."

Before anyone could react, the Sanguigenie broke off into crimson mist... the array slowly dimming out.

Everyone swiftly crowded around Shia and asked her how she felt... but she shook her head, telling them that she felt no difference.

"It seems the bloodline is dormant and will be awakened only once you evolve to Warden rank." Levi shared.

Levi knew that his situation was different from Shia's... he had awakened his Half-Raidian bloodline the moment he obtained the Sun Origin seed.

But for those who possessed Shadowlife seeds, the bloodlines could only awaken through evolution, since everything was stored within the genetic code... and the Shadowlife seed would read those codes only during the process of granting rewards to its host.

"Most likely." Shia nodded in agreement.

"Imagine if it never awakened." Arthur grinned, wanting to tease Shia a bit.

"Imagine if I cut your ponytail while you're sleeping," Shia replied, smiling.

Arthur felt chills course down his long, glamorous ponytail, knowing that when it came to hair, Shia was a little bit crazy.

"Heh, why so quiet?" Jojo smirked, "Are you scared of her?"

Arthur looked down at Jojo for a moment in confusion, and then he turned to his friends.

"When did raisins learn to talk?" He asked, gazing at her shriveled bald head, which resembled a raisin.

"Asshole."

Levi and the girls stifled their laughter after noticing Jojo drinking another recovery totem with an annoyed expression; her scalp refused to heal back to its shiny, smooth appearance.

"Alright, let's get moving... we have a treasury to loot."

With a faint smirk, Levi opened up a dimensional portal through his will, and everyone walked through it.

Chapter 224: The Great Campaign Rankings.

The moment they exited the portal, their eyes were met with the sight of a small holy pillar showering more than fifteen kilometers of surface area, with a small mountain in the center of it.

This was Drowned Court's nest.

"All nightcrawlers should be dead unless they escaped before their team's defeat." Nurah stretched lazily, "Ah, this is so much easier... if only those f*ckers did their job as saviors, our planet would be squeaky clean."

"Let's get started... We have three hours at most before the protection of the Holy Light fades and leaves us under the mercy of thieves."

Levi ordered while swiftly stepping inside the Holy Light, knowing that it was harmless to the winning team.

Once a Raider team won the Death Game, the Radians sent down a holy pillar from the heavens, distinguishing between neither humans nor nightcrawlers.

Anyone daring to step inside would get burned to ash besides the winning Raiders, who were given a three-hour blessing to loot the treasury.

As for whether the nest held human hostages? The platform enforced that any participating nest must not have anyone from a different race within their nest before the Death Game started... otherwise, they would be penalized heavily.

That's why most major nests kept their hostages in different locations away from the registered nest.

Those hostages weren't really used to interfere in the decision of the Death Game or such... the nightcrawlers weren't that daring to screw around with the CRS Platform's rules.

They kept them around because they feasted on their light... considering them as nothing more than a supply for a constant stream of solar energy.

That's if they refused to give up their bodies to help them become Sleepwalkers.

With this kind of horror happening to humans daily across the globe, how could Levi and the others not enjoy murdering the nightcrawlers daring to invade their planet?

While there were a few, very few, good apples among the nightcrawlers, the majority of them sought nothing but their evolutions, desiring to achieve it at all costs... regardless of how much destruction and fatalities they left behind.

Sometime later...

Levi and his friends returned to Heliodor's capital through another dimensional portal the moment they finished clearing the nest... When it came to the CRS Platform, transportation was always taken care of.

As for the nest? They found nothing moving in it... only hundreds of crystallized seeds lying everywhere, ranging from Tier 1 to Tier 3.

Tier 3 nightcrawlers had no access to the dimensional network since they weren't part of the team... since they were on their own in this forsaken piece of land, they had no source of information about their team's results.

But, they had full belief that they would wipe the floor with Levi's team; their leader's utter confidence in the past fifteen days had rubbed off on them.

Alas... Before they knew it, they were lasered down from the heavens, turning them into ash in an instant.

Meanwhile, Levi and the others had stepped straight into the High Council's auditorium, returned to the exact location they had entered the Game's map.

Clap! Clap! Clap!...

The moment the light hit their faces, everyone was left dazed a bit as they stared at the governors and agency leaders giving them a standing ovation... big, proud smiles across their faces.

Even the High Chancellor was clapping with a smile, his wrinkly face spilling with joy.

"You sure have made us proud." He praised.

"I knew you guys were powerful, but still, it wasn't enough to prepare me for witnessing such a glorious moment." A governor complimented.

The rest shared the same sentiment... after the High Chancellor came to them with the plan to create a superteam, they were a bit hesitant to vote for it.

However, when the three big agencies got involved and they heard the names of the team, it made them understand that maybe they would have a shot at making waves in the Great Campaign.

In their eyes, even if the team failed to win it, if they did great, the exposure would help their region expand its international influence.

Thus, they approved it and left the work to the three big agencies... This raid was the first time they watched the team in full motion.

They had to admit it now more than ever... Heliodor's Raiders genuinely had a shot at winning the Campaign... How could they not show their full support?

"Take a chair, all of you did great." Lord Idriss offered, smiling faintly.

"We just did our job." Levi replied with a serene tone as he gazed at the governors in front of him.

Heliodor's region had ten Governors, and all of them were at Solarbound rank and governed a settlement or multiple ones in rare cases... Since the government banned being an agency leader and a governor at the same time, none of them had an agency under their name.

However, being a settlement governor meant being part of the High Council and the government... no agency was bigger than the government.

Then, Levi sat down on one of the six chairs prepared for them... his teammates sitting after him.

"It was one hell of a job... to wipe out a Shadow Castle nest with multiple Tier 4 nightcrawlers is no easy task." Lord Hicham smiled wryly, "To do it without my daughter's assistance... I don't know how to feel about this."

Lord Hicham and the rest of the Governors believed Jasmine was going to play a vital role in their first raid since she was considered the strongest in the team... Yet, they left her behind to draw in peace while they took care of their enemies.

"It was my decision." Levi smiled, "It's best to keep our strongest cards hidden since the true competition has yet to show itself."

Lord Idriss and the others nodded in approval, knowing that the Drowned Court team's strength was decent, but it was nowhere close to the qualified teams they would be facing in the tournament's brackets.

They were so powerful, the team would still have difficulty beating them if they evolved to Warden ranks through perfect evolutions... if it wasn't this hard, Earthlings wouldn't have a single win under their belt for decades now.

The Duskbound Order was sponsoring the nightcrawlers' nests... and they had already prepared the eight qualified teams.

"How about the nest? Have you looted the treasury and closed the main Stygian Gates?" The High Chancellor inquired.

"Yes, and yes,"

Levi confirmed while bringing out two giant pouches... one filled with a portion of the crystallized seeds, and the other with about 10% worth of the treasury.

Then, he placed them in front and said, "As decided in the contract, here is your 30% Saviors' Tax, and 10% treasury tax... I threw in some extra."

The High Chancellor shook his head with a kind smile, "Keep them... you will need all the resources possible for your next evolutions."

"Those two taxes are a default term in the Daywalkers' ID contract... but it's not applied for you." Lord Idriss said, "You represent us, you are already carrying your duty to the region."

"If you say so."

With a cough, Arthur swiftly took back the pouches and placed them in his wallet under everyone's twitching eyelids... he gave no time for polite back-and-forth chitchat.

Levi smiled, unbothered... if his brother didn't do it, he was going to retrieve it. The Larson brothers knew no such thing as shame when it came to free money.

"We were waiting for you to return to check your team's position in the ranking."

High Chancellor stood up while chuckling softly... then, he pulled out a dimensional screen, showing the current rankings of the Great Campaign Raider teams.

The list showed more than two hundred teams.

It might be small considering that the Campaign included the entire world, but one shouldn't forget that the teams had a condition of being limited to Tier 4 nightcrawlers and Warden Daywalkers.

//1- Halamar's Region: The Imperial Raiders... Campaign Points: 1600 points.

2- Veythralis' Region: Make USA Great Again... Campaign Points: 1500 points.

3- Heliodor's Region: Heliodor's Raiders... Campaign Points: 1000 points.

4- Auravel's Region: Justice Sword... Campaign Points: 900 points.

5- Eryndral's Region: The Ashen Tribunal... Campaign Points: 800 points.

6- Thalurean's Region: The Serpent Concord... Campaign Points: 750 points.

7- Elyraeth's Region: Eternal Winter... Campaign Points: 700 points.

8- Veythoria's Region: The Sovereignty... Campaign Points: 600 points.//

9- Zephyris' Region: Dune Chasers... Campaign Points: 550 points.

10- Vardhan's Region: The Silent Lotus... Campaign Points: 500 points.//

While the list was long, Levi and the others didn't have to scroll before finding their team's name... which was a first for their region.

It was right there, sitting proudly in third rank, between the strongest regions in the world... this left most governors with brimming grins, feeling a sense of pride wash over them.

In the case of Levi's team, they focused more on the top two teams above them.

"We finished the game in less than five minutes, and we still came third?" Arthur frowned, "I know we didn't go all out... but still, why is the gap in points so wide?"

Chapter 225: Seraphis's Numbered Days.

Most of the teams had already played their first game a day after the registration period, timing it to perfection, unlike them, who needed extra time to train together.

After all, those teams had been created months before the start of the Great Campaign... this allowed Levi's team to see how each one had performed in their Raids.

"You have seen their performance... they utterly obliterated the nightcrawlers in less than two minutes." Lord Idriss answered, "Though luck also played a major role..."

"The titles," Levi replied.

"Yes, they were fortunate enough to land in a game design that rewarded them titles by slaying the nightcrawlers in a specific way... they achieved it in under two minutes, which increased their points immensely." Lord Idriss nodded.

"How is that fair... our game's design forces us to wait for the Blood Rites to spawn before collecting them." Jojo knitted her eyebrows, "If we did that, the raid would take half an hour, which meant our points would be affected negatively."

"There is no such thing as fairness in the Great Campaign." High Chancellor advised calmly, "The nightcrawlers' nests in the event are under the mercy of the Raiders... they have no control over who challenges them, which means the weakest ones get taken out first, like what you did to the Drowned Court, while the strongest earn points by the duration of their nest's survival and the number of successful defenses."

Hearing this, the team understood that the event creators kept the raiding system as it was while rewarding points based on what they achieved in the Raids.

Although Levi's team had earned the Genie wish, the title could be bestowed only after fulfilling its conditions, regardless of how strict they were or how time-consuming.

That's because the Death Games were created by the CRS Platform's Gamemasters and pooled into a single library, which the Gamemasters could filter out based on their desired conditions (environment, duration, and such), and then the game would be picked randomly by the system.

"Don't sweat such details... unless your luck is absolutely horrendous, you will eventually be given games that can be ended fast while finishing whatever side-quest for the title... the rest of the teams will also eventually draw the short stick."

Hearing this, Levi couldn't help but sweat a little... it won't be that bad, right? He thought, recalling his shitty luck in the games.

"It's all probabilities, and the only way to defeat them is to remain consistent in winning every Raid." The High Chancellor clapped his hands and added with a smile, "Now, with your amazing performance, it's assured we will be invited to the Conference in two months when they start bringing in more teams besides the ones from the top ten regions."

Levi and the others nodded... they had already done their thorough research on the GRA Conference. They found some interesting, but understandable facts.

One of them was that the Conference was held a month before the Great Campaign registration started... In that month, only one team from the top ten regions was invited exclusively to help them enjoy all the resources without other teams crowding them.

It was one of the many benefits of the Solar Aegis Sanctuary for being ranked the highest in the world.

Meanwhile, for the rest of the teams, the invitations were handed off only after two months of the Conference launch... this gave all the applied Raiding teams plenty of chances to get some exposure from their raids. Considering that each raid had a fifteen-day preparation window.

Then, the best chosen ten teams would join the Conference next to the initial ten... most of those teams were almost always from the top twenty regions.

"Two months, huh... It's not so bad. We can squeeze a couple of raids until we get invited." Arthur said.

"You can... but unfortunately, Seraphis doesn't have that kind of time." Lord Idriss sighed helplessly.

He wasn't a man of guilt, as he would do anything for the sake of his region's survival. But the fate of his friend lay in his hands, and even he, a strong-willed man, kept having guilty thoughts eating him away ever since the expedition.

How could he forget what he had done to make him join their hidden scheme?

"What do you mean?"

Levi and his friends showed solemn expressions at once.

"His vitals are falling drastically for some reason... and the doctors have given him less than a month to live, from the predicted six months... we have already put him in a cryosleep, freezing his body to avoid any further deterioration." The High Chancellor shared.

"Less than a month... it can't be."

Levi and the others were left stunned, not expecting such a curveball... they had been told that the government and three big agencies were doing everything in their power to find a potion, medicine, recovery totems, whatever was potent enough to restore some of his lifespan.

Unfortunately, exhausting one's lifespan was incurable with less than Grade A healing items... if one was healthy and drank a Grade C or B lifespan-increasing medicine, chances were high of adding a couple of decades or more, depending on how rich his current lifespan was.

On the other hand, if it was already on its last legs, the medicine would do nothing to him. It was like drinking colorful water.

It made sense if we considered those potions, recovery totems, and similar items as nothing more than enhancement drugs... they boosted vitality, cured diseases, and did whatever they could to help extend one's lifespan.

But what Seraphis needed was a miracle medicine... a medicine that could literally add more time from nothing.

Such miraculous treasures were graded A, but their rarity and price were so high, it might bankrupt their entire government if they dared to purchase one.

That's why Levi and the others were advised not to waste their wish on a vitality potion or such from the Omnigenie... with his Order being level one, he couldn't bestow a medicine higher than Grade B.

If there was a slight chance of it working, they wouldn't have wasted a second and wished for a miracle.

"I hate to admit it, but we are out of good options... we have two alternatives left." The High Chancellor sighed, "The first one is to put him in a Boundless Immortality Resort... but we all know that can't be sustained for more than a month based on our budget."

Levi and the others nodded in understanding, their expressions grim... besides Jasmine, who didn't have much interaction with Instructor Seraphis.

'Boundless Immortality Resort... that's not something our region can afford.' Levi thought to himself.

He knew that such Resorts were built in territories with a high omnipotent level, surpassing O5... In addition, only nobles at the Duke rank were given the license to build them on their territories.

Due to such extreme conditions, any Immortality Resort charged horrendous fees of ten thousand credits a day to their residents!

Although the price was so high that it could bankrupt regions in months, they were worth it for the right kind of people.

The name implied it... Anyone staying in the resort could not die, even if they had one last day in their life before they crossed over to the Boundless Expanse.

Nocturn's Authority kept them alive no matter how hard the Grim Reaper tried to take their souls.

However, there was another negative besides the price... the Immortality effect was applicable only in the Resort.

The moment someone left its premises, Nocturn's Blessing expired, returning their bodies to the same state they came in.

So, this option was a desperate Hail Mary to buy time for Seraphis... nothing more, nothing less.

"What's the second option?" Levi asked, having a feeling that it was going to involve them.

He wasn't stupid... if it had nothing to do with them, the High Chancellor wouldn't have brought any of this to their attention.

"A few days ago, we got some news about the emergence of an Ancient Distorted Site from the rubble of the fallen Sphinx's region." The High Chancellor paused, "It is believed to be a Grade A site."

"Grade A?!" Arthur exclaimed.

Levi and his friends raised a brow in surprise at his reaction.

"You know what it implies?"

"Not really... but, I know Grade A is high." Arthur coughed.

"Sometimes, I wish you had no mouth." A muscle under Jojo's eye spasmed in vexation.

Chapter 226: On His Radar.

Not wanting another bicker session to start between these two, Levi asked the High Chancellor for more details... he knew that such Ancient Distorted Sites rarely made an appearance on their planet's soil.

Many conditions needed to be fulfilled for even a low-grade site to emerge... for one as high as this to emerge? It implied that the entire world was going to make a move on it... nightcrawlers and humans alike!

After all, those sites were connected to ancient ruins of civilizations across the entire universe and its realms, which were touched by the corruption of the Shadow dimension, but weren't completely devoured by it.

This gave birth to Distorted Sites, where corruption's levels were just enough to create artifacts, natural materials, and such resources from the ancient memories of the site, while simultaneously giving a chance to non-Shadow dimension creatures to explore them somewhat safely.

"I know that Ancient Distorted Sites emerge only when a certain area with a rich history has been corrupted, which makes it possible for the Shadow dimension to turn it into a gateway, connecting it across dimensions to another area that shares great similarities in its history." Levi inquired, "Since it emerged in the fallen Sphinx's region, does this imply the gate will link us to an Ancient Distorted Site filled with treasures related to desert, undead, sunfire, spirit, and maybe even life?"

"I know that much..." Arthur murmured on the side, but everyone ignored him.

"That's the gist of it." Lord Idriss nodded, "We don't know for sure, but if there might be a place for a miraculous medicine, we believe there is a high chance it will be in this Distorted Site."

"But... why are you telling us this?" Nurah tilted her head in confusion, "Such a treasure-rich ground will be sought after by even Solarbound Daywalkers and Tier 5 nightcrawlers... I doubt we have what it takes to survive such a conflict."

When treasures of such rare affinities emerged, hell broke loose... not even Solarbound Daywalkers could 100% survive such exploration. The true danger wasn't even related to the Site itself... but the monsters it attracted.

"We also thought the same and had plans to send Feng Ling, Hicham, Madam Ysara, and Idriss to explore it... However, we have just received news that Solar Aegis Sanctuaries Headquarters had claimed it under its jurisdiction."

"They did?" Shia's gaze lingered, filled with confusion.

"Yes." The High Chancellor said, "We don't know why for sure... but the news mentioned that it planned on using it as a training mission for the first three ranked teams in the Conference... but we all know, that was just a part of it."

The Governors nodded in agreement... they understood that claiming the site under their jurisdiction implied investing a Holy Pillar to keep outsiders away... at least, until the teams entered the gate and it was about to close.

Holy Pillars weren't free resources... The CRS Platform using them for their Death Games was one thing, and the Sanctuaries applying to use one was another.

After all, the Solar Aegis Sanctuaries branches on such planets were run by the Saviors... not the Radians, who were given their blessings and such.

Although they could descend on the planets if a situation called for their attendance, it seldom happened.

The SAS Headquarters clearly needed something from the site, and with the Conference already running, why not use it as a mission for the teams to retrieve it? Win-win.

"Again... why does this concern us?" Nurah frowned, "As much as I would like to head there and test my luck, for myself, and the Instructor, I doubt we are welcomed."

"We weren't welcomed before... but not after today." Levi answered her, his gaze affixed on their name in the top three ranking.

"You mean it's possible to have us join the exploration even though we have yet to be invited?" Arthur raised an eyebrow in surprise.

"That's what we will be trying to do..." The High Chancellor nodded, "You guys have already done a great job at putting your name on the map... It's our turn to sell your potential to the Headquarters and make an exception, given Seraphis' dire situation."

"The Ancient Distorted Site Exploration is believed to be planned in two weeks from now, so it's best that you don't commit to any other raid until we try our chances first."

Levi and the others nodded in understanding.

"Again... amazing job, and I hope you keep the same consistency in your future raids." The High Chancellor smiled, "We have already eaten enough of your time, go take a rest... we will reach out if there is any development."

The Governors also gave them some words of encouragement, understanding that the hope of a greater nation fell on their shoulders.

Levi and the rest gave them head nods in appreciation and left the Council.

The moment they exited the door, they glanced at each other and asked simultaneously, "The Rooftop?"

The Shadow Dimension... Inverse Sanctrum.

While Levi and his friends had grouped up on the roof to meet up with Rayan, Jamal, and Sergio to discuss their successful bets, the Bishop was seen sitting on his throne, his shadowy head resting on his palm.

He had a dimensional screen in front of him, showing him the latest piece of news his pawns across the continent of Africa had collected.

As he kept scrolling through the endless useless updates and intel, his eyes finally moved after noticing a significant piece of news... The emergence of the Ancient Distorted Site in the Sphinx's region.

"Grade A site... a Gate showing signs of opening up inside the Great Pyramid of Giza... Interesting... but it has fallen under the Solar Aegis Sanctuary's jurisdiction? That's gonna be annoying... Hmm?" He murmured... But then, he got pissed off after noticing that the news was three days old.

This was an unacceptable delay, but he had no one to take it on... He had taken Lord Darius as his right hand because of how early he got such important news due to his high standing in his region.

The rest of his pawns were either nest owners or had low access to classified information from their regions... Darius was different.

Yet, the Bishop's ego was too high up to let himself feel an ounce of remorse for his decision to eliminate Darius... for all of his importance, he was too hung up on reclaiming Heliodor's region for himself, and he didn't like that.

The Bishop wanted everything to be about him... A pawn should have no dreams or goals bigger than his master.

'Hound... are you still stuck inside that little domain? Do I really need to come down there and drag you out?' The Bishop reached out to the Hound, his tone not too pleased.

'No need, master...' The Hound replied with an indifferent tone, 'I am almost done...'

'Good, I will need you for an errand.'

'Understood.'

'If you won't make it out in the next two weeks, I will send Rain instead.'

'No need to involve that creep... I will be there.'

'You better.'

With that final warning, the Bishop closed the dimensional connection and started tapping his finger on the throne's armrest, his mind suddenly wandering to what occurred in the Silent Convergence.

It was held some time ago and lasted for a day... as expected, with him coming short of Refined Daywalkers' Blood, his time didn't go pleasantly.

But, he toughed through the storm of mockery under the emotionless eyes of The Black Veil and accepted his punishment gracefully... a grim challenge for someone with an ego of a continent.

While he was under the abuse of his peers, the one thing that kept him sane was the treasured eyes of Levi.

'Radian Descendant... you are full of secrets.'

He thought to himself, a scene replaying of Levi switching his staff to a sniper rifle to kill Demetris... He obtained the information from Darius before he finished him off.

If it wasn't for the Silent Convergence being around the corner, which consumed most of his mind, he would have given Levi's situation more attention.

Now that the Hound was about to be freed, he already had him on his radar... and he wanted him alive.

If it were up to him, he would have made his move personally, just like what he did when he retrieved Levi's eyes... However, Levi and his teammates were part of the Great Campaign, which placed them under the protection of the CRS Platform until the event ended.

Protection in the sense that neither force from the Duskbound Order nor the Solar Aegis Sanctuary could make a move on either team of both sides.

The Bishop was part of the Duskbound Order, so were his pawns... on the other hand, the Hound and Rain weren't officially registered in the organization!

They were considered the Bishop's personal dogs... raised personally by him through some questionable means from childhood, but they still belonged to him.

They were loyal to the Bishop, not the organization... this gave the Bishop the reach to carry on such missions, which should have been frowned upon under the CRS Platform's rules.

'What else do you have in store for me? Maybe, my dream of promotion in this decade isn't killed yet.' He said, while a sinister smile formed slowly on his shadowy face.

Chapter 227: Preparing for The Duo Seed Evolution.

Sometime later...

Levi was seen sitting on the couch of his apartment alone... Arthur had decided to stay with Rayan and help him out if needed with his evolution situation.

The bets they made came back profitable with 1.5 odds, which were quite amazing considering that this was their first raid.

Levi had bet on his team with his entire capital of credits, which was around half a million... With those odds, he cashed out on another two hundred and fifty thousand Nocrix credits, leaving him a quarter short of a million!

Still, he was quite far from hitting a minimum of two million to kick off his business.

Now that their team's prowess was exposed, he knew that the odds would be reduced after what they did to the Drowned Court... so the earnings wouldn't be that high, unless he made specific risky bets.

As for the treasury? They had already taken the materials or artifacts that fit them during the looting phase... whatever was left had been split up amongst them equally.

Not the treasures, just the value of it.

Levi had given Shia the treasures to be handed to Lord Idriss to offload them in their region's market... while the value would take a slight hit due to the poor situation of their Daywalkers, none of them cared as much.

Those treasures would help boost the economy of their region and empower their Daywalkers, which they were already starting to have a great shortage of.

This situation wasn't enforced on the raiders, but encouraged by the government... one would be surprised by just how many raiding teams went through with it for the sake of the region's stability.

For all their faults, no one wanted their region to get weakened as they knew that was the first sign of its eventual collapse.

After everyone split up, Levi returned to the apartment to start the preparations for his upcoming duo Sun and Void seeds' evolutions.

He had already reached the evolution stage of Junior rank a few days ago after a torturous two weeks of cultivation sessions.

With the Nine Senses seed's hunger being satisfied, he was allowed at last to feed the other two pissed-off toddlers.

Fortunately, his previous failed cultivation method of using heat and cold to negate each other had worked wonders on both seeds... as envisioned!

With his spiritual prowess developing to such an amazing state, he was capable of feeding them simultaneously... Solar energy for Sun Seed, and Dark energy for Void Seed.

The two seeds didn't care about getting fed both at the same time, as long as they were being fed.

In this manner, Levi's cultivation sessions went incredibly smoothly without much pain... the only issue was that he needed to keep moving all over the region's perimeter to find more condensed dark energy clouds.

After many sessions, Levi started to figure out that those clouds were bound to expire once and for all... This created quite an issue, considering he needed to be under a holy light to keep the cultivation's speed at its best.

Though that was a problem for his future self... right now, he was at the second rookie stage of both seeds, and he was nearing the third final stage.

He planned on evolving tonight if his cultivation sessions went just as smoothly, and he found the last remaining material he needed... Radian Fog.

'I bought Solarleaf, found Sunroot in Grave'Maw's treasury, and I am on a dimensional auction for Helios Oil... I just need Radiant Fog, and I can create its evolutionary recipe... the Void's evolutionary recipe's materials are already on standby.' Levi spoke to himself while lying on the couch, chilling with a dimensional screen open before him.

It was showing an online bidding war on Helios Oil, which was in its last three hours...

Ting!

-You have been outbid.-

'Damn it, it's already on twenty thousand Nocrix Credits, what the hell is this... It's just a D-grade natural treasure.' Levi's lips twitched in vexation.

'Heh... you have yet to see the true horror.' Ash'Kral sneered, 'At least you have an auction now... You can find what you need. Just wait until you reach Junior rank with those two seeds, and you will be requiring minimum C-grade natural treasures.'

'That sounds ominous...' Levi gulped, 'How bad can it be?'

'Nobles can't get their hands on them type of bad.' Ash'Kral replied, 'The moment treasures related to Sun or Void-based Aspects hit C-grade, they are officially off the public markets... if you want them, you

need a massive network that helps you get the news about them before they can even get auctioned off... that's the only way to secure them at somewhat of a reasonable price... if not, you will find them in private auctions not even Baron Nobles were invited to... still, they will skin you alive before you leave their auction.'

'Of course, there is always the Infinity Shop, but your rank is too low to have access to such treasures.'

'Dear lord... day by day, I come to an understanding of why you are so broke...' Levi said, sighing helplessly.

'Was adding 'so' necessary?' Ash'Kral curled his lip in annoyance.

'This is why you need to get into the Ancient Distorted Site.' The Titan said solemnly, 'A-Grade site with Sun, Undead, Life, Desert, and such rare affinities are considered holy places... this is the place where people find those treasures to put in the markets besides the crafted or the ones earned in the two platforms.'

'I know, but it's not up to me.' Levi smiled wryly, 'I can only wish our government could pull a miracle and get us in somehow.'

'Screw your government, they are most definitely going to drop the ball.' Ash'Kral frowned, 'You should start thinking of ways to sneak in.'

'Sneak in? Is that even possible?' Levi knitted his eyebrows in confusion.

They were just told that the SAS Headquarters had put it under their jurisdiction, which meant anyone daring to sneak in would turn to charred toast.

Just like using the divine chains on nightcrawlers... they were registered under a certain name, and anyone besides them could not touch the chains without getting burnt.

Or the holy pillar that fell on the nest, which they were immune to.

It was all in the registered names, which was the reason everyone in the CRS Platform needed to use their real full names to keep the continuity.

If Levi dared to sneak into the site while his name wasn't registered, even if he had some Radian traits, his ass would be fried to a crisp.

'Well, you'd better hope you will awaken a mutation that helps you survive the holy light or something.' Ash'Kral suggested.

Levi went silent, actually giving this insane idea some thought... though, since nothing was in his hands now, he could only focus on what he could do.

'If I can't find Radian Fog in less than two weeks, nothing matters.'

With that being said, Levi added a new bet on Helios Oil and left the apartment... his destination? His other studio, as he decided to take his search on the streets.

Boundless Expanse... Nocturn's Heart City.

Levi was seen walking amongst the bustling streets in the city's Main Hub... shops and vendors were all over the streets, with even some people placing their stuff on the ground. The market was lively and crowded with shouts, arguments, and bargains flooding the streets.

The smell was all over the place, leaving everything to the imagination about its source. As Levi walked steadily with a faint, serene smile on his face, he kept scanning every item in sight, using his Harmonic Spine.

The public markets were mixed... There were the legit vendors and the scammers, claiming one thing, but selling something else.

Unlike the Infinity Shop, where the items' authenticity was regulated under the system, the public markets were a jungle, where everyone was on their own.

Of course, the legitimate shops couldn't afford to sell fake products for fear of losing their merchant licence, but the street vendors were fair game.

Levi came here for them specifically, knowing that what he sought could only surface through scam artists with questionable sources.

'So far nothing much...' Levi murmured, looking for a golden-like fog contained in a bottle or such.

But, after walking for over an hour and even getting lost twice in the maze of alleys, he ended up with nothing to show for but a couple of failed scamming attempts.

'Ash'Kral, I refuse to believe that you have lived for eons and you have not a single contact for a black merchant...'

Levi sighed, knowing that looking for a specific treasure in those streets was harder than weighing fire on a scale. He could walk all day, ask all day, and still, he wouldn't have covered 20% of the market.

'Well... I do have a contact, but he doesn't sell his products with credits.' Ash'Kral shared.

Levi immediately glanced at his ass cheeks and then uttered sternly, 'I ain't that desperate.'

'Idiot, where did your nasty mind go to?' Ash'Kral rolled his eye, 'The cheap bastard buys knowledge, information, tips, whatever is useful but unknown... It's their business design.'

'Knowledge?' Levi raised an eyebrow, 'Can't I sell him some perfect and remarkable evolutionary recipes?'

'You think you're the first partner I've had that had the idea of selling my hard-earned research?' Ash'Kral muttered, 'Unappreciative brats.'

'Wait... how many recipes have they sold already?'

Levi felt chills course down his spine after being reminded that his access to Ash'Kral's knowledge was shared by dozens... Ash'Kral never mentioned this before when he was talking about selling his recipes to get rich, but now, he understood... the bastard was just being himself... an asshole, who was waiting for him to find out on his own, but there was too much going on in Levi's mind to think about it at the time.

'About 80%?' Ash'Kral sniggered, 'Shit, I think at least 10% of your planet's Daywalkers are using my recipes indirectly.'

'...' Levi was left silent.

Although 80% meant a lot of things, as some people might buy the recipes and keep them private to build a Lineage of them... while the others wouldn't hesitate to sell them back, spreading the recipes more and more until they became public knowledge.

That's what happened to many remarkable evolutionary recipes, as it was hard to keep them a secret when too many hands were involved... in the case of Ash'Kral, you best believe that was the case.

'Don't feel so bad, you can still sell them for a decent price of ten thousand credits each or a hundred thousand credits for my latest research.' Ash'Kral said.

Although the amounts were decent, Levi was expecting to sell each one for fifty thousand or more... he had a whole plan of finding a good auction house and starting a partnership with them, selling three to four recipes each week to keep the business going until he had his own shop.

This would help him build his first network for his upcoming Leviathan-based rare products while also earning enough to lease a property here.

But now... his dreams were shattered beyond salvation.

'I am such a f*cking idiot.'

Levi covered his face, wanting to erase such a memory from his mind. Then, he asked the asshole for the black merchant contact, believing that he had a source of information that only a select few had...

Speaking of the devil, a new notification rang in Levi's mind.

-The Great Kraken's Heart has been imported to the Ninth Province and will be sold in The Cursed Coin Exchange in about a week.-

'Well, that's a piece of information I can trade.' Levi smiled... the risk he took to slay the Leviathan was rewarding him daily as long as he kept it active.

Although he couldn't do much with the information before, since he had no use for such expensive material, but now?

'Suit yourself... when he asks for your referral, tell him it's Ellina... he had the best relationship with her compared to my other partners.' Ash'Kral said while giving him the contact number and her private password.

'He doesn't know you?' Levi asked.

'No, and I prefer it stays that way.'

'Okay.'

No further ado, Levi called the number and listened to it ring for a few moments... just as he started to think that no one was on the other side, the call was picked up.

'Your referral.'

'Ellina.'

'Password.'

'Life is just paint smeared on a rotten canvas... I wish it had stayed empty.'

Chapter 228: The Black Slime Archive Syndicate.

'An NDA contract has been sent to your inbox... once you sign it, the details will be sent.'

Click.

The recipient hung up the call immediately... with no NDA contract signed, there was nothing to be discussed.

Levi clicked on the contract and checked its details while leaning against a wall in the market... no one could see the dimensional screens and nocturnal contracts unless he wanted to share them.

After a thorough read, Levi signed the contract at once... it was a standard NDA contract that ensured that he wouldn't expose the black merchant's identity or his location.

-You have received a D-mail.-

Hearing the notification, Levi checked his mail inbox and found that the details of the shop's location were all there. He brought out the city's map and marked the location, which gave him a GPS tracker to guide him.

Levi tapped into the cosmetic shop on his profile interface and picked a random owl mask that hid his upper face, leaving only his mouth and chin exposed.

Then, he pulled his hood low as he strolled through Nocturn's City, following the tracker. The streets were alive with gamblers, beggars, and mercenaries, all too busy to notice him slip into a shabby little grocery shop tucked between two towering buildings.

The air smelled of dried herbs and rotting fruit. Meanwhile, behind the counter, a frail old man with cloudy eyes and cracked blue skin greeted him.

Levi gave no reply... he simply showed him the signed contract.

"Newblood... welcome." The old man smiled, pushing aside a crate of wilted cabbage-like plants, revealing a narrow staircase descending into darkness.

Levi descended for a few moments... the steps creaking under his shoes until the faint scent of incense replaced the stink of fruit.

At the bottom, lanterns lit themselves, revealing a massive, dimly lit underground society with tens of masked people spread all over the place.

They were checking the giant library of shelves, which were filled with forbidden relics, bottled curses and blessings, Vile and Solar totems, strange body parts in green containers, and more...

Wherever Levi's auditory vision landed, a peculiar treasure met him... such a sight had raised his hopes of finding what he needed.

Seeing a new mask joining them, the soft chatter died slowly as everyone focused on Levi, sizing him up and down... But then, a voice brought them to reality.

"As you were."

A black slime wearing a white bowtie slid across the floor in the direction of Levi, his ancient voice forcing everyone to focus on their purchases.

"Hello, new friend... I am Knowledge Master, the general manager of the Black Slime Archive Syndicate branch in the 2nd Province... but you can call me Mr KM."

The slime greeted Levi with a toothless smile and a single eye with thousands of black strips as a pupil. He had no heart, core, or a Shadowlife seed... just the eye and a body oozing with black slime.

"Greeting." Levi nodded slightly and said, "I am here to find something."

"Don't we all?" Mr. KM smiled, "Follow me."

Mr. KM took Levi through the underground merchant hall and entered a private office... Levi sat down in front of a wooden desk after being offered, while Mr. KM devoured his chair and took its form.

Then, he smiled and asked, "How's Ellina?"

"Dead."

"Ah... I expected as much after our contract was terminated." Mr. KM smiled wryly, "Though I wished it ended differently... that girl's view on life was so bleak, I hope she experienced some kind of joy before she kicked the bucket."

'Was she depressed or something?' Levi asked Ash'Kral, not knowing much about Ellina besides her being the only one to create fifteen Darkness Aspect-based innate abilities... she was the only partner truly accepted by the Void seed.

'Depressed? Nah, she just hated life and everything and everyone in it because of her chosen path...'
Ash'Kral waved his wing dismissively.

'...' Levi was left speechless.

Isn't that the definition of depression? He thought.

But, he wasn't here to discuss an old partner, whom he knew nothing about... Levi swiftly changed the subject back to his desired treasure.

"I am here seeking Radiant Fog... a D-grade natural treasure."

"Radiant Fog... hmm, let me check if we have him on us... If not, we will sell you the information to obtain it from the easiest to the hardest." Mr. KM said.

"Fine by me." Levi nodded.

Hearing this, Mr. KM closed his eye and went silent for a few moments... his eye was still visible behind the transparent yellow gooey substance, making Levi focus on a single strip illuminated with billions of tiny inscriptions.

They were so small, he wouldn't be able to see them if it weren't for the Harmonic Spine zooming capabilities.

'The Archive Managers... Knowledge Masters... The Greedy Intellectual Collectors.' Levi named a few of the names given to Mr. KM's species as he kept staring at him in silent fascination.

He was told by Ash'Kral that his race species was named Archivara... They were part of the Slime Massive Race library of species, and considered the most intelligent and ancient.

While most slimes served as nothing but cannon fodder due to their insane regenerative prowess, which made them borderline immortal, the Archivara species were different.

They ran the Black Slime Archive Syndicate... an underground society, where knowledge and information were more than just words.

They were the treasure and the currency.

Unlike standard Black Markets, the Slime Archive Syndicate focused on information and knowledge mostly... the treasures bought and sold here were just a bonus.

They were archived for a reason... any piece of knowledge they obtained got sent straight to the Mother Slime, which was in a hidden location, only a select few knew about.

The Mother Slime was believed to be the original slime, and that every other species of slime across the timeline came out of her... as long as she was alive, no slime would ever die or get possessed by a nightcrawler.

Pieces of her soul were in each one of her children, which gave them holy protection against their attempts.

Most importantly, she archived the information and allowed all of her Archivara slimes to store more or extract anything through establishing a connection with her.

'You see those rings in his eye? Each ring represents a certain access to the Mother Slime's Archive... one ring illuminating means low access.' Ash'Kral shared, seeing that Levi was scanning Mr. KM's eye nonstop.

'How marvelous... they have access to a well of useful and very important knowledge... I can't believe what kind of lore they have collected across the ages.' Levi murmured, 'I wonder how they are still going strong.'

In Levi's eyes, no matter how hard they tried to hide the Mother Slime's location, she was bound to be located if the Primordial Trees paid them any attention.

'They are already followers of Nocturn... he keeps them safe in his realm and they share their archive with him.' Ash'Kral answered.

'Figures.' Levi nodded, not too surprised.

Nocturn was like the godfather of refugees, fugitives, and anyone seeking protection. His realm was a home for everyone and anyone... a cultural melting pot.

"Here it is." Mr. KM suddenly smiled, "Apologies for the delay, I had to search in all Provinces' branches if they still had one left... lucky for you, I found it in the Ninth Province's branch."

"Thank you." Levi sighed in relief, "You do delivery, right?"

"Of course, it's instant." Mr. KM leaned closer and said, "Now, let's talk payment... what do you have for me?"

Mr. KM didn't bother telling Levi how things were operated inside their establishment... if he had a referral from one of his old regular customers, then he was expected to know the details.

Fortunately, Ash'Kral had Levi covered.

"I have insider information about Leviathans' materials shipments and such," Levi said calmly.

"Oooh... me likey." Mr. KM's smile widened in satisfaction.

"I have fresh and two-week-old." Levi asked, "You want them all?"

"Start with the old ones." Mr. KM said, "Although two weeks is a bit too late for such critical information, we can still extract value from it."

"As you wish."

Levi began to list off every piece of insider intel he was given by the system, whether they were related to Leviathans' materials getting sold, exported, imported, traded, or whatnot.

He finished it with the latest piece of information, which had the highest value... utilization-wise.

Once he was done, the Slime was left nodding in satisfaction.

"Good, good, good... my branch was always lacking in Leviathan-based information, which made us look bad compared to our other branches... So, I am very appreciative of you coming to share with us."

'Lacking? I smell an opportunity.' Levi's spiritual eyes gleamed.

No hesitation, he shifted his entire perspective from a buyer to seeking a partnership... he understood that the information in his possession was losing its value each time he failed to make a move on it.

With the prices of Leviathans' materials being traded in hundreds of thousands of credits minimum, reaching up to millions for the rarest, he didn't have what it took at his current level to be part of it.

But now?

"What if I said I have a continuous stream of such knowledge?" Levi said calmly.

Mr. KM's smile froze for a moment... and then, his entire demeanor shifted as well. He saw Levi as a normal customer who brought in some information he obtained through chance for a trade... but a continuous stream implied either access to the system or a massive network in relation to the Leviathans.

Both situations had no business being owned by a normal citizen or even a low-ranked Noble.

Since titles' privileges remained exclusive to the Rifiers winning them, there was no way in hell anyone could connect Levi's information source to be The Leviathan's Slayer.

"I am listening." Mr. KM said, crossing his slimy arms.

Chapter 229: Sun and Void Unlocked Abilities.

"I need Sun and Void natural materials... any grade available." Levi said, "I wish to have a partnership, where you provide me with either the materials or at least information on getting the higher-grade ones before they hit the markets."

"Sun and Void... what you are asking is not cheap." Mr. KM replied calmly, "Such affinities, which are linked to two Ancient Bloodlines, aren't easily obtained... we are the ones getting approached for information about them, not to sell them. So, I cannot guarantee we will always have them in our stores, but their information is something we can do."

"Hmmm... not good enough." Levi shook his head, "I need you to guarantee me a first call the moment any treasure lands in any branch of your Syndicate."

"Such guarantees are added in the contract only from a reliable source." Mr. KM narrowed his slimy eyebrow, which made his eye... well, remain unchanged. "How can we trust that your source will always be reliable?"

"Simple... we add a contingency in the contract." Levi smiled, "I know my source will always be reliable... but, if you are still unconvinced, we can add a payment I have to pay each time my information turns out to be a bust."

"Confident... I like it." Mr. KM's smile widened again, loving nothing more than having reliable sources of such classified information.

As for fearing that Levi was selling them useless information and lies? He knew that Levi knew better... no one had an ounce of courage to try and fool the Black Slime Archive Syndicate.

Anyone under Nocturn's payroll instantly elevated them to untouchable, unscrewable powerhouses... not even Kings and Queens dared mess with them in Boundless soil.

Even if one was dumb enough to do it, or he simply knew no better and had a bad source, the Syndicate was able to figure out the information's legitimacy through their immense channels.

Just like with Levi's information, he had just given... a minute barely passed, and the information's legitimacy had already been checked to be valid, giving Mr. KM the green light.

"What can I say, your proposal is too hard to pass on." Mr. KM reached out with a slimy hand for a handshake, "Welcome aboard... Partner."

"Glad to be doing business with you." Levi shook his hand, smiling.

Fifteen minutes later, Levi left the underground store after getting what he needed... he had signed a new partnership contract with Mr. KM, which had him provide exclusive Leviathans' intel to the Syndicate.

The return? First dibs in the entire Boundless Expanse for Sun and Void information and treasures if they got their hands on them.

Of course, Levi wasn't dumb enough to kill off his source of Leviathan's materials forever... he added a term that ensured he could get out of the partnership any time he wanted without needing to pay anything.

After all, this was a business transaction, not a devil contract.

But Mr. KM was a sleazy merchant and made the contract too lucrative to give up on... he added Levi to the partnership program, which gave him early access to the shared information of the other exclusive partners... not the information itself, but a snippet, in case any of them wanted to buy it before it hit the customers' view.

As Levi was walking on the streets, he was checking a screen with tens of thousands of snippets related to dirt on kingdoms, empires, public figures, nobles... vital information about death games, fugitives' locations, Ancient Distorted Sites' locations, and so much more...

The list was so big, he even ended up finding out information about the emergence of the Ancient Distorted Site on their planet... though, the snippet only mentioned: An A-grade Ancient Distorted Site related to Sun, Undead, Desert, Life affinities.

The details: location, time of its emergence, who was participating, who owned the location, and such could be disclosed only once the information was purchased or traded with equal value information.

'Damn... whoever buys this information is screwed.' Levi knitted his eyebrows, 'They can price such information with tens of thousands of credits, knowing that it was utterly useless.'

'What did you expect?' Ash'Kral said lazily, 'The Slime Syndicate is still sleazy merchants at the end of the day... they are archiving information for the sake of their Mother, who can't experience the world by herself... simultaneously, they are selling them for profit to keep their dominance in the Underground Intelligence Network.'

'A Hive Slime... that's a first.'

Levi couldn't help but chuckle... the more he learned about the universe, the more confused he got.

Sometime later...

Levi had decided to concoct the two evolutionary recipes in the Boundless Expanse Labs... he couldn't risk concocting those two formulas in the real world while knowing that someone might be spying on him.

On the other hand, the Boundless Expanse Labs were 100% secure under Nocturn's Authority.

Unfortunately, when he checked for any lab openings, he found that the closest one was in three days... no bother, Levi reserved the slot and left the city, returning to the real world.

He still had some growth to do to reach the third stage in both rookie ranks. He trained with the violin for a while until nightfall; his progress was slowly on the rise.

When the divine pillar blessed the region, Levi started another hunting journey for dark energy clouds, making sure to focus only on ones in the outskirts.

While it was time-consuming, at least no risk was involved.

After a couple of hours of moving all over the place, Levi had finally achieved it... 15% each!

No further ado, Levi returned to his apartment and took a shower... when he was done, he sat in his bedroom in a towel and pressed on the shimmering Ash'Kral's tattoo on his arm... both tattoos could be used to access the Ancestral Planes even though one was fake.

Then, he was taken inside the Ancestral Sun Rooted Plane.

The moment he stepped inside, a heat wave assaulted him like he was in the presence of the sun itself.

"Someone happy to see me?"

The moment Levi finished his sentence, he found himself sent flying by another powerful heat wave, resembling a Sun corona.

"Cough... I guess not."

Levi smiled wryly, noticing that the Sun Tree was still pissed off at him for choosing the Nine Senses seed before it.

He was a Half-Radian and still dared not prioritize it. How could it not be pissed off at him?

Levi swiftly dropped the playful teasing and switched his focus to a giant golden leaf shaped as three pyramids stacked above each other... the biggest one was at the base, while the smallest was at the top.

"I still have two abilities to unlock."

Levi had decided to unlock all four abilities of Sun and Void after he reached the evolution stage... he was already swamped with sound + Aetheric technique creation to unlock two more abilities, which

would most definitely split his focus. But now, he could unlock all four at the same time and work on them simultaneously.

Levi reached out to two triangle-like leaves slightly higher in position than the ones at the very bottom... then, he pulled them out and turned them around, their details appearing as such:

//Radiance Pulse: Explodes stored solar energy outward in waves, each pulse stronger than the last, capable of igniting large areas.

Sun Jets: Propelling forward by channeling stored solar energy into the feet, releasing either bursts of radiant force like miniature solar flares or a continuous jet-like exhaust flame.//

"Hmmm, not bad, I guess."

Levi rubbed his chin, already thinking of many ways he could use those two abilities to enrich his combat style.

Although the abilities' qualities were still not as great as Ash'Kral's, it didn't really matter that much to him... any solar-based ability is a nuke to a nightcrawler.

"Wait, will I get burnt off if I use Sun Jets?" Levi wondered.

Radiance Pulse could be channeled through his weapon, but Sun Jets seemed to target his feet's soles... Levi wasn't comfortable yet with his heat resistance.

"Depends on the concentration and your current heat resistance." Ash'Kral said, "Do some limit testing to find out."

Levi nodded and left the Ancestral Plane, understanding that he couldn't get any good reading here.

Once he left, he pressed on the Void seed on his tattoo, entering the Void Ancestral Plane.

This time, he was able to see a small circular, misty, shadowy leaf with fourteen sparks... Levi floated to it and pressed on two sparks, knowing that each one represented an innate ability.

There weren't many, but he wasn't complaining.

//Veil of the Forgotten: erases your presence from anyone's memory while cloaked in darkness.

Darkness Coating: Anything touched is wrapped in dark energy, turning into a dark creature under the user's command. Living beings become Umbral Servants stripped of will; objects and terrain awaken as shadow-forged guardians. Sunlight can burn away the coating, and overuse risks corrupting the user.//

"Oh... now these are more interesting." Ash'Kral smiled nostalgically, "Darkness Coating was one of Ellina's signature abilities."

"It does sound powerful." Levi agreed, "The ability to turn living beings into servants without a will and even awaken terrain into shadowy guardians? This sounds more like an ultimate ability."

"Well, it is." Ash'Kral smirked, "This is Ellina's awarded ultimate ability after her first evolution."

"Ultimate? I actually landed on a previous partner's ultimate?!" Levi's expression turned bright at once.

Ash'Kral had already told him that the three seed libraries had abilities mixed with ultimate abilities that belonged to him or his past partners.

Since the three seeds gave birth to new ultimate abilities each time he awakened as a reward, those previous ultimates were added as normal innate abilities.

However, because Ash'Kral's abilities were in the millions, Levi didn't dream he would land on one someday by chance... he doubted it might even happen with the Sun seed's library.

Still, the Void seed held only a limited pool of abilities, guaranteeing that he would unlock them eventually... he just hadn't expected it to happen so soon.

"Sweet... I even unlocked an ability that helps me erase my presence from people's memories. It might come in handy someday." Levi smiled, quite satisfied with today's haul of abilities: they were mixed from mental, movement, offense, and area of effect abilities... a balanced haul.

No further ado, he left the Ancestral Plane and took off towards any empty location he could find outside of the region, flying on top of Vyra.

This time, he didn't ask his friends or his brother to accompany him. He also made sure to fly as far as he could from his region, not wanting to meet with anyone who knew him.

Vyra kept going south until the Great Sahara Desert's borders started to show.

'Easy girl, here is fine.'

Levi stopped Vyra after noticing the skies started to shift from clear to cloudy... Vyra descended and dropped him off on dry, brown ground with dead plants everywhere.

Levi kept his gaze affixed on the crackling gray stormy clouds appearing in his echolocation... he knew that he had arrived at the far exterior borders of the Eternal Empire; the strongest and biggest nest in their continent.

If he dared to keep on going, he would start to find subsidiary nightcrawlers' nests of all sizes and types under the empire. He could already see plenty of nightcrawlers in the distance.

After gazing at this sight for a few moments, Levi could only utter two words indifferently, "One day..."

Chapter 230: The Void Seed's Corruption.

Then, he jumped back on Vyra and went to another place with no nightcrawlers around, just a desolate desert with a few dried, cracked mounds here and there.

He knew that the Eternal Empire had secured borders, and if those nightcrawlers saw him, they wouldn't hesitate to give chase.

As he had assumed, the moment his presence neared the borders, it was already picked up by the border patrols...

"You saw that?"

"Yes... probably a human that knew no better."

"Wow... look at that speed, their nightmount doesn't mess around."

Three nightcrawlers shaped like humanoid moths conversed amongst each other as they gazed at the speeding Vyra... Their eyes were glowing lavender, and they had slender limbs ending in clawed hands covered in dark scales.

"What do you think? Go abuse them a little?"

"Why not? I'm kinda bored."

"True... patrolling an Eternal Kingdom's borders is like patrolling an isolated fortress... no one is dumb enough to invade it."

Once a decision was made, the three nightcrawlers snickered in amusement as they extended their wings with star-like patterns... then, with a faint smirk, they bolted in Levi's direction. Their speed wasn't as fast as Vyra's, but it was damn close!

It was like they were competing on who would reach him first.

Unbeknownst to being turned into hunted prey to pass the time, Levi was just getting set up to test out Sun Jets... taking off his shoes and even his pants in case they were going to catch fire.

He was in the middle of nowhere under the soft illumination of a full moon night. He didn't give a shit about being in his boxers.

"Alright... let's see how bad this will hurt... hmm?"

Just as Levi was about to activate Sun Leap, his echolocation instantly detected the fast approach of three unknown grey auras from tens of kilometers away... Being so close to the Eternal Kingdom's borders made him set his echolocation on a massive radius for extra safety.

"Will you look at that... they really were stupid enough to chase me down for tens of kilometers."

Levi was left speechless.

"Oh well... testing is always better with live subjects."

Soon, a wicked grin broke on his lips as he activated Umbral Crown to hide his identity... covering his clothes and face in shadowy mist, making it impossible to see past it.

...

"Wait? Where did he go? Did we lose him?"

"Impossible, V'eyriss... he was just there... he couldn't have escaped in such a short window unless he teleported or something."

Meanwhile, the three moth-like nightcrawlers were left arguing amongst each other as they kept scanning the desolate desert beneath them with no results.

Levi's presence was erased.

For Tier 4 nightcrawlers, who took pride in their scouting abilities as border patrols, this wasn't a normal occurrence.

"Then, where did he g..."

Whoosh!!

Suddenly, the world slowed down for V'eyriss... before he could finish his sentence, his eyes caught a sight he could never explain throughout the full length of his life.

A humanoid man covered in shadowy mist, shooting through their formation at unfathomable speed, with one leg pointed into the sky, akin to a lance... a lance of pure concentrated sunfire, piercing one of his partners with fury!

His partner didn't know how to react before he found his body turning to ash... ash that scattered like dust on the wind, leaving behind fiery sparkles as a trail.

V'eyriss froze... the smell of burnt flesh filled his nostrils as he gazed at the space where his partner used to be, turned into a cloud of ash.

No thoughts, no words, nothing... V'eyriss's survival instincts took over the wheel as he swiftly changed his flight trajectory and started flapping his wings with every ounce of strength in his body.

One order was leading him... RUN!

His partner was a split second late to make the same decision, and he paid for it almost instantly... Levi changed his trajectory midair by using Aetheric Chains on himself before he could pull away from them.

Levi spun sharply midair, sunfire flashing down his leg. In a single motion, he unleashed Solar Pulse... his kick bursting out in a blazing arc, slicing forward like a golden blade of fire!

Slice!

The second nightcrawler's body was split in half like it was made out of a cardboard sheet... then both halves were engulfed in flames, letting him release a single harrowing screech before joining his partner into the aether.

'No, no, no, no, no, no... not like this... not like this...'

Hearing the brief screech, V'eyriss didn't even dare to turn his head and look back... he kept flapping his wings like he had met the Grim Reaper himself, his heart beating out of his chest in pure dread.

He didn't even know what had ambushed them, and he didn't want to know... the only thing he wanted at the moment was to return to the safe embrace of his nest.

Alas... his body suddenly froze in place, his wings refusing to flap once.

'Please, please, please!! Please work!!'

No matter how much he begged, his entire body was stiffened in midair, leaving him incapable of even turning his head anymore.

Levi had used the full strength of his Aetheric Chain on him, catching him even while mid-flight!

Then, his body was yanked violently backward until his neck was caught in Levi's grip... Levi leaned in close to V'eyriss's right shoulder, his breath brushing against the moth's skin.

Levi could feel V'eyriss's heart beating so fast it was about to explode, yet he only showed a wicked smile.

"Coat of Darkness." He uttered.

Just like a royal decree, the dark mist surrounding Levi seeped into V'eyriss's nose, mouth, and ears, reaching his brain in an instant... then, they rewired everything about him to enforce a single Will.

The Will of his new owner... Levi.

Meanwhile, the rest of the darkness engulfed his body from head to toe, turning him into a humanoid moth-like creature born out of pure darkness.

No more features... nothing. Just an Umbral subject with crimson eyes and a single purpose in life... to obey his master.

The moment Levi released V'eyriss from his neck, he flew in front of him and then immediately fell on one knee in midair, his head lowered.

"Master... your servant awaits your orders." He uttered, his voice devoid of emotions or his previous personality.

"A Tier 4 nightcrawler bowing to me..." Levi smirked coldly, "I can get used to that."

Levi never imagined a day when he would possess powers to enslave nightcrawlers, and possibly any other living creature... and he could already envision the insane utilization he could have with it.

'Don't get too excited now,' Ash'Kral said calmly, 'I admit the ability is indeed powerful... but it comes at a cost.'

"I know... the more I use it, the more corrupted I get." Levi wondered, "But I am using Umbral Crown, shouldn't it protect me from said corruption?"

'Oh, you poor kid... You think the corruption is purely physical?' Ash'Kral sneered, 'You are dealing with the Void Seed powers... the Anchor of Nothingness. The corruption is soul-bound. It twists your soul, your identity, your personality, your life... until it leaves nothing but an empty husk of nothingness.'

'Just like what happened to Ellina...'

Once Ellina was mentioned, Levi recalled the password she had for the Slime Syndicate... Life is just paint smeared on a rotten canvas... I wish it had stayed empty.

Such a bleak way of looking at life made him assume that maybe she was pessimistic or depressed by nature... but now, he knew that it was the corruption of overusing Darkness Coating, or possibly any other powerful Void-based ability.

'Wait... so am I f*cked if I overuse any decent void-based ability?' Levi's expression didn't look so good. 'Is there any solution to this?'

'There are only two solutions: have the Ancient Oblivar Bloodline, which is a similar rank to the Radian Bloodline... the more you grow, the higher your resistance will get to such corruption, both physically and spiritually. Ellina used to have a Lowborn bloodline related to the Oblivar Bloodline, which helped her build some affinity with the Void seed, but it was not enough to help her survive the potent corruption... just delay it.'

'Ancient Oblivar Bloodline...' Levi murmured, 'Isn't that one of the infamous Royal Bloodlines in the Shadow dimension? How can I get something like this?'

'You can obtain a Lowborn bloodline related to it and then build your way up by upgrading it as you evolve... Lowborn, Highborn, and then Ancient Bloodline... or be blessed by the Void Origin seed... all it takes is one mutation related to their ancient bloodline.' Ash'Kral said.

'Wait, I can become a half Oblivar from a single mutation?' Levi raised an eyebrow in surprise.

He could understand obtaining Lowborn or even Highborn, but a straight-out Ancient Bloodline from a mere mutation was something he didn't dare imagine.

"Having a bloodline helps with the growth of the seeds and dealing with their influencing wills... and in the case of Shadowlife seeds, helps in getting better mutations related to either host's bloodline... In simpler terms, Shadowlife seeds can never bestow old bloodlines, just create new ones." Ash'Kral shared, "But Origin seeds are different... they have their own will, and they can decide whether they want to bless you with a shitty mutation or a great one... bloodline or not... if you didn't have the bloodline to wield such a mutation, they will give you one."

"I see... so that means the key to getting better mutations is the Resonance system," Levi murmured, recalling that Ash'Kral said that his friendly relationship was the main cause for the Nine Senses Seed to bless him with the best Auditory organ in the universe.

Although he didn't tell him which race owned such an organ, he could tell that they must also have an Ancient Bloodline, or at least a Highborn one.

All in all, Levi knew that the first solution wasn't accessible to him at the moment... the easiest way to obtain a genetic code of bloodlines was through using the Genie system, like what Shia did to obtain the Lowborn Bloodline of House Throgar. But, he knew that landing on such a genie in the games was purely based on luck.

As for the other methods? They involved Grandmaster alchemists and Evolutionists, whose focus centered mainly on genetic manipulation.

Levi was neither rich enough to afford a bloodline transplant nor daring enough to risk having his peculiar genetic code exposed.

Meanwhile, the Void Origin seed blessing him did seem like a plausible outcome, but it depended on his familiarity with it... at the moment, Levi didn't think he had enough to receive such a blessing.

'What's the second solution?'

'The second solution, and the best one is still The Soul-Split Theory... In the case of bloodlines, you won't get immunity from the corruption or their aspects... it takes time and effort, too. But, if you were to split your soul and have a part of it fit to the Void's persona and its corruptive nature for emotionless chaos and anarchy... each time you use its powers, your split soul will be the one corrupted, not you, since it will contain the Void seed.

The other must fit the Sun's persona for order and justice... though, because you are Half-Radian, the influence on its soul wouldn't be as heavy as the first one.'

He paused.

'Then, the Main soul will be neutral under the Nine Senses' appreciation for staying true to one's true identity.' Ash'Kral said, 'After you succeed in pulling it off, once you attempt to break through Solarbound rank, you can unite them again... the two opposites will keep balance intact once merged with your main soul... at least, that's my theory.'

'That sounds like a stretch...'

The Titan shook his head, knowing of the grave consequences for taking such a path... but, he also knew that the Three-Body Problem had no safe solution or any solution at all.

"Well, I knew it was too good to be true."

Levi chuckled in self-mockery, finding out day by day that those three seeds were genuinely gunning to kill him or twist him.