

Evolution 301

Chapter 301: Hot Potato.

"Seal... I also assumed as much later on." Levi frowned, "The letter didn't make much sense to me... it gave me the feeling that the Priest didn't truly care about the Ashora Bloodline being saved as he wrote, but more about retrieving the Sun Amulet from the Dawn Phoenix."

Dominic and Feng Ling nodded in agreement, reaching the same conclusion... they could tell the Sun Amulet wasn't like anything they had expected. In fact, they instantly connected the dots and realized that the Radian wanted the Sun Amulet for the sake of Emperor Azhukar.

But why? As the question echoed in their minds, the first two things that came to their attention were: the dimensional wallet, or seeking to rescue Azhukar from imprisonment.

'What do you think?' Feng Ling asked telepathically.

'I have my money on the dimensional wallet.' Dominic said, 'Ashora Empire isn't in the dimensional sector of our supervising Radian... this means, he wouldn't have much contact with him to care about saving him. He is after his treasures, and the Saviors didn't give us such details to keep us in the dark about them so we wouldn't get greedy.'

Feng Ling nodded in agreement... he knew that the Radians couldn't care less about anyone outside their social status... in their eyes, even Azhukar was nothing more than a strong follower.

But a follower was always a follower.

'This is quite bothersome.' Dominic knitted his eyebrows, 'Giving him the broken Sun Amulet would help us with nothing... he doesn't care about the death toll or the effort, only the result. But, if we don't hand it to him, he might assume we found the secret and somehow managed to keep the dimensional wallet.'

Dominic understood that dealing with Radians required three things: respect, reliability, and truth.

He wouldn't dare lie to them as he knew that the supervising Radian would have the tools to fish out the broken Sun Amulet... if he found it on them, it would only get worse for their planet as a whole.

'In other words... we must hand the broken Sun Amulet to the Saviors and explain the situation in full detail.' Feng Ling said solemnly, 'We can't have his wrath backfire on us.'

'Yes... but, since he desires the dimensional wallet, this means that he seeks a certain treasure or a couple at most.' Dominic held his chin thoughtfully, 'A Radian will never greed for a whole wallet as they have Azhukar's treasures just lying around in the Upper Realms... Azhukar might have stored what the Radian wanted in the treasury and not his wallet.'

'Doubtful... if even a Radian sought after such treasure, its value must be so high, Azhukar would be a fool to leave it in the treasury and not on him.' Feng Ling shook his head.

'I know... It's a shot in the dark, but we have to.' Dominic uttered sternly, 'If the Bishop were to ever hear about the broken Sun Amulet, he will know that we are out of cards, and we have no backing... trust me, he will get aggressive, and your continent won't handle it.'

'...How bothersome, indeed.' Feng Ling rubbed his eyelids.

Meanwhile, Levi could tell they were speaking telepathically. He couldn't hear their words, but their expressions said enough... his lie had been accepted, and they were already discussing possible ways to deal with their dilemma.

'As much as it pains me... I can't have them know about the Cannon, or Azhukar's wallet.' Levi thought inwardly.

Levi knew the smartest choice to make was to please the supervising Radian with what he wanted... such a decision was going to affect the entire planet in a good way, and bring them closer to their eternal freedom from the nightcrawlers.

He wasn't keeping the cannon on him because it was a powerful S+ Artifact... he understood that it was nothing more than a hot potato. If a Radian wanted it badly, he was going to do whatever it took to find it again. This meant Levi and the others might be put in the Radian's crosshair.

To make matters worse? Levi couldn't use the cannon currently, even if he wanted to... as mentioned before, the artifacts must be registered under one's name before utilization if one wanted to operate them.

The same went for artifacts based on dark energy, which the nightcrawlers and other Shadow Dimension natives used. The artifacts were the same... the only difference was the decided-on fuel choice.

It was like the Solar Aegis Sanctuary was the government controlling gasoline and prohibiting anyone from using it in their vehicles unless they had their names registered on that specific vehicle.

After all, a process must be happening for an artifact that had no relation to solar or dark energy, for it to accept operation under them... only those two organizations had this kind of power in everyone's knowledge.

'The same applies to other artifacts in the wallet... all of them are registered under Azhukar's name, which makes them nothing more than collectible junk unless...' Levi removed the next thought from his mind.

He knew that he could sell those treasures in the network anonymously... after all, with Azhukar's death, the registered artifacts would have the chance to replace his name with another.

However, Levi knew that the moment Azhukar's registered artifacts started having their names changed, they would leave a trail for the Radian to follow.

He might not reach Levi through the trail since the Boundless Expanse's privacy laws were strict on everyone... ancient races included... but the fact that his treasures appeared in the market implied two things:

Either Levi lied to everyone and somehow possessed the wallet, or Azhukar had died and someone else found his wallet. The last thing Levi needed was to be in a Radian's crosshair, considering his bloodline situation.

In simpler terms... Levi couldn't touch those artifacts until he was strong enough to handle the consequences of dealing with a Radian.

After a few more questions to finalize the report, Dominic and Feng Ling left Levi to rest in peace.

If Dominic and Feng Ling had suspected that Levi might be lying without breaking the contract, they would have scrutinized his story, questioning every detail.

But, Nocturnal Contracts' authority was simply unquestionable... unless one had more than a single seed.

As for Jasmine's loot from the treasury? They decided to inquire about it the next morning after everyone recovered a bit from such a horrid exploration attempt.

In their eyes, anything that could have gone bad went.

If only they knew the truth.

If only they knew that if it wasn't for Jasmine and Levi, no one would have returned.

If only they knew that Levi had single-handedly defeated Azhukar... a name that struck terror in the hearts of many... their reaction would have been so much different.

But these secrets... they must be taken to the grave.

With them gone, Levi turned to Jasmine, and he found that she was also looking at him.

-Is everyone safe?- Jasmine asked... her memory blank.

-Our team, yes... but the other two lost a couple of members.- Levi signed back, -I don't know how they will handle it once they find out...-

Levi knew that it was a horrible thing to do... to erase their memories of what happened to their friends, as it would leave them without closure. But, it had to be done.

If it were the old Levi, he would have started questioning the morality of such a decision... but now? Whether it was moral or not, he only cared about the big picture.

And he simply couldn't leave Jasmine's and his secrets in their hands... one of them already allowed his greed to screw everyone up and almost get them killed.

He had no plans for a repeat.

Chapter 302: Can't Catch a Break.

The only ones he deemed worthy of knowing some of his secrets at the moment were: Arthur and Jasmine. This meant Levi planned on restoring their memories alone and leaving Shia, Jojo, and Nurah in the dark.

They might be some of his best friends, teammates he could trust his back to, but... his secrets were simply too potent.

Just the notion of being Half-Radian was scary enough... imagine finding out that he was also part Oblivar, and a wielder of three Origin Seeds?

Such knowledge was nothing more than a heavy burden, and he didn't want to put it on their shoulders and ruin what they had... at least, not until he was certain they were in it for the long run, no matter what happened.

A couple of hours later...

Levi, Arthur, Shia, Evangeline, Tyrese, and the rest of the exploration Daywalkers were called to Dominic's office.

Levi had met with his brother, friends, and the other teams earlier... they only talked a little about what happened at the distorted site before they got called in.

Dominic had already updated them on what Levi told him... so he didn't go into too many details with them.

Right now, they were taking a see-through glass elevator towards the topmost floors... As Levi pushed his harmonic spine to the limit, he was left absent-mindedly gazing at the immense interior of the World Tree.

It was alive with a woody, fresh scent... its inside wasn't hollow in the normal sense... it was a world made of wood, branches, leaves, and modern architecture in the helm.

Such a union was nothing like what Levi had seen in his region's Willow Grove... as his auditable vision spread wide, it painted a distinct scene of silver and brown mixed in utmost flawlessness... its huge branches spread out like a spider web, and on them stood small town districts, where the majority of the workers lived with their families.

Their houses were built from a mixture of wood and metal in a way that made the metal blend with the bark and leaves around them.

There were hundreds of massive sky bridges crafted of glass and vines, connecting the towns to the central city at the World Tree's heart. Some bridges were for pedestrians, and others were reserved for vehicles and such.

Meanwhile, the great city in the center had tall towers made from bark, steel, and glass... but most of them were covered in green moss, which illuminated softly under the Aurora Australis.

The tree's interior had many exposed gateways in the bark for the sake of the bridges to reach the branches... and they allowed the southern aurora lights to peek through the city, casting one of the most beautiful views in Levi's life.

Soft rivers coursed through narrow channels on the ground... waterfalls between buildings, their droplets reflecting the luminescent green light of moss and the aurora lights.

People moved through the tree's interior systematically and with a purpose akin to ants infesting it.

Even though it felt modern... with light systems, platforms, and sky bridges... everything still looked alive and natural, as if the technology grew from the tree itself.

The mix of life and structure made it feel less like a city built inside a tree and more like a city that the tree had grown to protect.

And yet... he wasn't in the right mood to appreciate it.

His mind drifted to what Dominic was about to discuss with them in his office while his auditory vision feasted on a banquet of beauty.

"Levi?"

Soon, Arthur nudged his brother gently, waking him from his stupor.

"Hmm?"

"You good?"

"Yes." Levi smiled serenely, "I was just lost in thought for a bit."

"Aren't we all?" Tyrese sighed.

He was leaning against the elevator wall while playing with a cigarette box... he wanted to smoke a blunt badly to kill off this feeling of helplessness and confusion, but no smoking was allowed inside the World Tree... only in reserved locations.

"This is truly one of the worst exploration attempts I have ever done..." Evangeline interjected with a tired expression, sharing the same feeling as them.

"We knew the risks... we knew we might lose some of our teammates, but..." Mira smiled wryly, "To lose them... and not remember how, it stings... badly."

"At least we were saved." Tyrese said with a stern expression as he gazed at Levi, "I owe you a big one, truly."

"We all do." Evangeline nodded... her assumption of Levi and his team was shifted for the better and remained as such.

After all, the last thing they remembered was being saved by Levi's team... and after they woke up, they were told that Levi saved them again from Azhukar's grasp.

How could they not feel indebted to him or his team? Though even if their memories were erased, the fact still stood... Nick screwed everything up, leaving Jasmine and Levi to pull off a miraculous recovery from a doomed situation.

From today onward, they could only speak words of praise to them if they had an ounce of gratitude in their hearts.

It looked like no one thought differently, as Levi could see their emotions... There was nothing there but goodwill in his direction.

'Ah... let's hope nothing new arises.' Levi sighed inwardly, 'I am done for today...'

At the moment, all Levi wanted was to sleep and leave this cursed day in his shadow... others had slept like babies, but he couldn't, not until he was assured that the day truly ended in his favor.

A few minutes later, Levi and the others arrived at Dominic's office... they found Feng Ling and a couple of important Sanctuary members standing on the sides. After Dominic greeted and checked on their well-being again, he gave them new Neuralens devices.

"Unfortunately, everyone's Neuralens devices were lost or destroyed, but... we are glad that you made it out alive." Dominic said with a gentle smile, "That's what matters the most... the future generation survives and grows, so we can pass them the torch."

"What are your plans with the fatalities?" Tyrese asked calmly while setting up the Neuralens on his ear and eye.

"They deserve an honored burial." Dominic replied, "Their bodies can't be retrieved, so we decided to hold the funeral in the World Tree... we will invite their family members and close ones."

Evangeline and the others' expressions turned gloomy... but they could do nothing but nod in understanding.

'I don't know how we survived. But, we were truly lucky that none of us was picked by Azhukar... Namaste.'

Jojo sent a dimensional message, her voice sympathetic like the others, but relieved for her friends. Arthur and the girls shared the same sentiment as hers.

However, before they could think that they had come off clean, Dominic mentioned with a solemn tone after a deep cough.

"Speaking of funerals... I am afraid I have some bad news." Dominic stared in Levi's team's direction, "I know the lot of you have taken an interest in this site mainly to help your instructor... but, I am afraid such responsibility was taken off your shoulders."

"Huh?"

Hearing this, Levi's heart skipped a beat... a reaction shared by his friends as their expressions turned dazed for a moment.

They had a bad feeling about what was about to come out of Dominic's mouth... and sadly, their instincts were right.

"Seraphis Veyne, sadly, has passed away."

"..."

"..."

"..."

As Arthur and the girls were left in shock, Levi merely lifted his head with a bitter smile and said inwardly, 'I can't catch a break... can't I?'

Chapter 303: Fulfilling The Full Cycle.

While Levi was left in a trance at the heartbreak news, Arthur and the rest stood in stunned disbelief... they stared at Dominic in silence for a few moments before Arthur finally spoke, his tone filled with confusion.

"What... what do you mean? We were told that he still has months to live... we even found treasures rich with life force for him. How can he just pass away?"

Jojo's lips parted, but no sound came out... Shia shook her head slightly while Nurah looked down, her fists clenched.

Levi just stared at Dominic, waiting for him to say something that made sense... he had his own assumption on the matter, but he didn't want to accept it until Dominic confirmed it.

Dominic did as he was told.

"The Hound has succeeded in winning the spiritual trial imposed by Seraphis," Dominic took a breath. "It has devoured the knowledge of his seed..."

He paused, looking at each of them.

"That means... it has withered beyond redemption. He is gone."

"..."

"..."

"..."

This time, Levi and his friends were left silenced... as much as they refused to admit it, they knew that Dominic had no reason to lie to them.

If the Hound truly won the spiritual trial, then there was only one known outcome... Death.

For a long while, they just stood there, lost in their thoughts... Tyrese, Evangeline, and their teams shared a sympathetic glance.

They thought that Levi's team was lucky to get out of the site without losing anyone, but it seemed like they assumed too early.

'Ash'Kral... is there really no way to help him?' Levi asked.

'No... spiritual trials are not a game.' Ash'Kral shook his head, 'The moment someone decides to trap their enemy in a spiritual trial, they are betting their life and death... if the enemy fails to conclude the spiritual trial, he would remain trapped in the Rift of Binding Laws until he dies of spiritual exhaustion. But, if he succeeded, he earns everything... including the soul of his enemy.'

'Soul... doesn't this mean there is a possibility of returning Seraphis' soul to his body?' Levi frowned.

'Not really... the seed's evolutionary path knowledge is intricately connected to one's soul... this means losing one's seed knowledge is the same as losing their seed and their soul.' Ash'Kral shared, 'After all, the soul has also evolved and benefited from the seed... stripping a Daywalker of his seed will leave nothing behind.'

Levi hung his head low, deep in his thoughts... he understood that Daywalkers were their Shadowlife seeds. As much as many seed owners described them as parasites, in reality, the seeds should be considered to be symbiotic creatures.

This was the reason Daywalkers separate from their contracted nightcrawlers only when they reach Tier 7... the growth stage of fruition, giving them access to newly born Shadowlife seeds within them.

Those Shadowlife seeds carried the entirety of their evolutionary path... which meant they only needed to restart again following the same order and recipes to reach a similar Tier. This process wasn't straightforward, but it worked, and it took way less time than the first attempt, considering that one of the hardest parts of evolution was actually finding the required knowledge to keep on climbing.

Now... Seraphis and his contracted nightcrawler had their entire knowledge devoured, leaving them with nothing but an empty shell of a seed... how could their bodies and souls survive such a cut-off?

'As long as no one sought after the Glorious Evolution, their evolutionary path would always remain linked to their seeds.' The Titan shared calmly, 'The Glorious Evolution is the sole solution to maintain everything while completely forsaking the Shadowlife seed since it means reaching the final circle of the Shadowlife Tree... Death.'

Levi smiled wryly, 'In other words... to break free from our power system, we need to help our seeds complete their full circle.'

The tenants nodded in approval.

Levi could only sigh helplessly... he wanted to save his instructor dearly, but... if even those two ancient relics had no method to help him, he could only accept the reality before him.

"Seraphis might have passed away, but he went out with honor and courage." Feng Ling said sternly, "He decided to sacrifice himself to ensure your safety because he believed in you... He believed that the future of our planet is you, and I truly hope that you show him he was right in his assessment."

Hearing this, Arthur, Levi, and the girls stood up straight; their expressions turning solemn... they knew that Feng Ling was implying that he wished them to stay on the right side of history... the side of humanity.

Feng Ling had seen too many fallen Daywalkers... Demetris was a small taste. He had yet to leave Seraphis' tutelage and had already betrayed the human race with his brother.

It was that easy to switch sides... especially when the situation looked hopeless for Earthlings.

Feng Ling understood that Levi and his friends were going to meet many situations that would drive them to question their loyalty to Earth... he just hoped that before they could make such a decision, they would think of their Instructor and his beliefs in them.

"The last thing we will do is disappoint our Instructor," Levi replied sternly.

Levi respected Seraphis a big deal... although they didn't spend much time with each other, he was one of the first Daywalkers who gave him a chance instead of doubting him due to his disability.

If it wasn't for him, Levi was almost certain that he would have gotten kicked out of the assembly. It was going to be extremely challenging to explain his contract with Ash'Kral, considering his condition.

"What about the Hound?" Nurah asked, her tone chilling. "Did he escape?"

Levi and the others' expressions turned cold as well... at this moment, their hearts were filled with 30% sadness and 70% rage.

They didn't cry, not because they didn't feel emotional about their instructor's passing, but because they knew that even if they helped him recover his life force, the fact still stood... his death was guaranteed the moment the Hound passed his spiritual trial.

There was no going back on such a decision.

So, they somewhat already accepted Seraphis' eventual death some time ago... but this didn't mean that they wouldn't fight to find him the necessary life force to at least wake him up in case the Hound failed the trial.

Now that the Hound had succeeded, their hearts were left seething in rage.

"Unfortunately, killing the Hound isn't a simple task... the Bishop will raise hell on your continent if we kill him out of nowhere." Dominic shook his head.

"What kind of crap is this?" Arthur narrowed his eyes coldly, "Are you telling us that he has killed our instructor, and still, we can do nothing to him?"

"Ponytail... the Bishops aren't to be messed with." Tyrese sighed, "We have our own Bishop ruling over the Black Citadel Eternal Empire... his authority is the highest in North America, and all nightcrawlers' nests listen to his orders even if they didn't fall under his territory... that's how much authority they had. If you were to poke one, they wouldn't hesitate to make a wound of it and lash out to spread their corruption further."

"What about the Saviors? The f*ck is their job then?" Shia frowned in irritation, "I can understand trying to maintain the world's peace... but to stand by and watch the Bishops punish us, what purpose do they serve exactly? What are they saving exactly?"

"..."

"..."

"..."

Shia's words, as harsh as they were, did hit home in everyone's hearts... not even Feng Ling scolded her for talking shit about them in their headquarters.

Seeing this, Dominic merely showed a forced smile... he could tell that the latest generation wasn't too fond of the Saviors. But he could understand them.

In the past decade, the Saviors rarely made an appearance... and even if they did to defend a region, they usually lost.

Dominic knew that they were choosing the easiest option to disconnect themselves from Earth without losing too many of their members against the Conquerors.

In this manner, they could be freed to start again on a fresh planet that needed their standard 'saving' alone... the moment too much effort was required, most of them bailed out and started fresh. Of course, this kind of treatment was reserved only for planets with bad potential.

As much as Dominic wanted to believe that this wouldn't be the case for the Saviors responsible for their planet, day by day, year by year... that belief was slowly corroding with each fallen region.

Seeing that they were clearly upset about the whole situation, Feng Ling showed them the holographic recording of Dominic beating the living hell out of the Hound.

"Is that really him?"

Everyone watched with dazed expressions, not expecting to witness the scary Hound from Grave'Maw's expedition being played around with like a piece of garbage by Dominic.

Chapter 304: Every Win Matters.

"I know it ain't much, but this is the best we can do without dooming your region." Dominic sighed while returning to his seat, "The Hound is just one pawn from dozens belonging to each Bishop... there are seven Bishops ruling our soil and oceans. As long as we don't have the necessary strength to survive their wrath as natives, we can't place our hope on the Saviors helping us against them."

Levi and the rest understood that this wasn't easy on Dominic too... as the supervisor of the SAS Headquarters, he possessed the highest form of authority on Earth, having even direct contact with the Saviors and possibly the supervising Radian if he had something good to offer. And yet, he was just as helpless as them if not more.

"I want you to listen to me... if you truly feel outraged, I need you to focus on nothing but your growth." Dominic said solemnly, "Channel the anger into growth... and once you reach their level, you will never need to tiptoe around the Bishop or any other bastard out there that wants us dead."

"Easier said than done."

Tyrese scoffed under his breath, not affected by his motivational speech... it wasn't just him.

"What? Feeling discouraged already?" Dominic added with an indifferent look, "I am an Ecliptic Daywalker and I believe I can become a Radian Daywalker in a couple of years at most if some dots align... if I can do it, if I reach their level, why can't you?"

This time, Tyrese kept his mouth shut... sure, becoming a Radian Daywalker appeared like a cloudy dream viewed from a distance.

But with Dominic being around, that distant dream became somewhat clearer whether they liked to admit it or not... after all, if he could do it, so could they, as long as they put in the work.

"Listen... for now, forget about the Bishops, the Hound, and the other big guys... I want you to focus on what you can do at the moment to help yourselves and our planet, and people as a whole... in about two months, there is going to be a Faction vs. Faction War Event within the Great Campaign." Dominic spoke seriously, "I know that you have just gotten out of an unenviable situation, but I think this is the time for you to actually push harder than ever, not relax... you have tasted a breath of death, and I encourage you to keep it fresh in your mouths."

Hearing this, everyone locked in and listened to what Dominic had to offer.

"This kind of event is held once in the qualification period... it's not a standard Raid. It's four teams vs. four teams from both factions... If the Raiders Faction won, you will earn their treasures combined, which I believe their value can cross past one million Solar Aegis Coins... In addition, the winner teams will earn their qualification slots in the final tournament right away, not requiring to continue gathering points." Dominic paused, "It's a massive opportunity and only the top four teams in the current ranking will have a chance of joining it."

"It is indeed a great opportunity to earn our slot and a decent bite of resources to push our growth higher... however, I have heard that such an event almost always includes a twist that ensures infighting between the teams within each Faction..." Evangeline frowned, "Most crucially, only one Faction can survive the Death Game."

Arthur and the girls' pupils thinned out a bit... even Levi wasn't comfortable with the notion of joining forces with Yanhuan's team, which would most definitely be picked, and two other random teams in a Death Game that enforced them to work with each other to survive while at the same time putting a twist to make them turn on each other.

However, as deadly as it sounded, Levi knew that it was going to save them an immense amount of effort and hard work if they won it... after all, the more Raids they participated in, the higher the chances of landing on one that might get them killed or at least lose a few members along the way.

Death Games weren't a joke to be spammed nonstop and expect to win them all the time.

"I know it's a difficult decision to make, but I do hope you think about it..." Dominic added, "I want only the best of the best to represent us in the event to ensure our win, considering that every major or small win we get against Conquerors on the big screen will make the unbound nightcrawlers either avoid our planet or leave it to an easier one to conquer."

"Weakness invites weakness... that's the law of the jungle." Feng Ling nodded in support, "Our planet was invaded because we used to be weak... we had nothing going for us but our technology, and unfortunately, it's useless in the CRS Platform, which decides our fate. But now, it's different... if we can't deal with the Bishops, we must at least repel the rest of the nightcrawlers from picking our planet to invade... even if your efforts stopped only a few hundreds or thousands, it means that we have reduced our burden."

When it was spun like this, Tyrese and the rest of the pessimists had their approach changed a little... sure, the risk was still high, but he was right.

Avoiding the big fights, which would have high viewership, meant leaving this opportunity to other teams weaker than them... if they were to lose, or worse, get their asses absolutely demolished, the tens or hundreds of millions of viewers would be left with a single thought implanted in their minds.

Earth was free for the taking.

This would increase the number of nightcrawlers pouring in, making it nearly impossible to slow down the Shadow Dimension's corruption.

"Always remember... our real fight is against the corrupting atmosphere, and we must do whatever it takes to slow it down... only then will we have a chance to reach the necessary strength to fight the real battle against the seven tumors."

...

After Dominic was done, he told them to think about it thoroughly and sent them away, leaving only Jasmine and Levi behind... Whether they decided to join the Faction War or not, it was up to them in the end.

With them gone, Dominic kicked off the discussion about the treasury... he requested from Levi to let him view the loot she gathered, and he approved of it.

He knew that Dominic wouldn't find what he was seeking after.

As expected, the treasures looted were great alright, and yet, he still shook his head in disappointment... nothing was great enough to make the Radian seek Azhukar's dimensional wallet.

Then, he told them to split the treasures as they saw fit since Levi did bring in the Sun Amulet even if it was broken. In simpler terms, the contract's terms still stood, and this allowed his team to keep 100% of the loot.

After they were finally dismissed, Levi and Jasmine took the elevator together and headed to their assigned rooms in the Conference Area. It was also within the central city but exclusive only to the teams approved in the Conference.

After thrashing Yanhuan and what happened in the ancient site, there was no question about Levi's team's capabilities.

Ting!

The elevator doors slid open with a soft chime... Levi stepped out first, Jasmine right beside him, talking through signs with each other.

However, Levi stopped mid-sentence the moment he noticed Yanhuan waiting in the hallway with his teammates... they were leaning casually against the wall like they had been there for a short while.

Yanhuan had his arms crossed and a smug look on his face he tried his best to hide.

"Well, well," he said loudly, his tone laced with polite but disguised mockery. "The heroes of the great exploration finally return... Three teams, and still a massive failure. I'm impressed."

Levi didn't even slow down. His head remained affixed as he walked forward toward his assigned room.

"Not in the mood, Yanhuan... please, just go." He said, sighing...

He had just received the news of his instructor passing away, the last thing he needed was to deal with Yanhuan, whose ego was clearly beyond bruised after their last fight... if it was even proper to call it a 'fight'.

Yanhuan pushed off the wall, stepping right in front of him.

"Not in the mood? You should've thought about that before leading everyone into disaster. Your lack of experience cost us an A Grade site... and the lives of multiple talented Daywalkers." He scolded sternly,

"I admit you're strong... but strength doesn't matter as much inside ancient distorted sites. Experience is the key, and you still sought to make your first exploration be an A Grade site."

Levi stopped for a moment, his expression turning frigid by the second.

Upon hearing this after everything that Levi had done... for himself and for the safety of others, he didn't know why, but it rubbed him the wrong way.

Usually, he wouldn't mind such nonsense, knowing deep down that baseless words would never hurt him... however, not this time.

He felt a dark cloud turning chaotic in his heart and soul... it agitated him beyond reason, leaving him to start walking straight in the direction of Yanhuan, his visage as cold as a winter night.

"Yanhuan... I am not going to repeat myself a third time." Levi uttered word by word while continuing to step closer to him, "Get, out, of, my, way."

"Or what?" Yanhuan sneered, "This is the World Tree... everyone is free to express their opinio..."

Alas, before he could finish his sentence, his eyes flashed white for a split second. Amid the ear-piercing pitch, the only sounds his ears caught were the gasps of his teammates and the small crowd nearby.

As he felt his cheek tingling nonstop, Yanhuan touched it while staring at Levi's vibrating palm with a stunned expression.

'Did... did he just slap me?'

Chapter 305: I Trust Him.

Yanhuan staggered a step back, his cheek burning while his eyes were wide in shock as the stunned crowd struggled to process what had just happened.

They had heard rumors about a clip circling in the network of Levi making a fool of Yanhuan near the ancient site's camp... but everything was still new, leaving them doubting the rumors' validity.

But now? As they watched Levi outright slap Yanhuan like a father disciplining a son, they accepted the rumors' validity instantly.

"Levi!" Guo Shi was the first to shout, his voice filled with outrage. "What the hell do you think you're doing!?"

"You've gone too far this time!"

Li Mie stepped forward as well, her backpack already summoned, leaving the crowd taking a step back after hearing the agitated buzzing of her bees.

The rest of their teammates joined in, voicing their outrage and summoning their weapons... yet none dared to make a move on Levi. They might have been angry, but they weren't foolish enough to attack him... not after witnessing how he had effortlessly put both Evangeline and Yanhuan in their place in under five minutes.

Fortunately... Levi gave them a way out.

Without a word, he walked straight past them... calm, composed, utterly unbothered. He didn't explain himself or apologize.

Behind him, Yanhuan trembled; his teeth were clenched in fury... he tried to move, to chase after Levi, to say something, anything... but his body wouldn't respond.

His limbs felt as though they were buried under an ocean. So did Guo Shi's, Li Mie's, and the rest of their teammates... even the buzzing bees quieted down all of a sudden.

Many staff members were powerful Warden Daywalkers, which allowed them to see the truth behind their unexpected silence.

"This... it can't be... how can someone at his seed growth stage have such an immense spiritual aura?"

"Insane... I have heard he is an Anomaly class talent, but this is a bit too much, don't you think?"

Two staff members expressed their shock as they watched Levi's immense colorful spiritual aura manifest as Ash'Kral... it was holding onto Yanhuan and the rest of his teammates with spiritual arms and tails, locking them in place as Levi continued walking away with Jasmine next to him.

The spectating Daywalkers could see Yanhuan and his people attempting to summon their spiritual auras to fight back, but to no avail... they got snuffed out almost immediately, like they were going against an actual Solarbound Daywalker.

As Levi's soul gradually absorbed the Leviathan's, it began to grow stronger at a noticeable pace.

Thus, they stood frozen, like statues... relics of what once was the best of their generation.

All eyes turned to Levi and Jasmine as they disappeared down the corridor like dealing with Yanhuan's ego was the last thing on their minds.

Usually, Levi would have been more tactful in how he handled such a situation due to Yanhuan's background, but to be honest, he really couldn't care anymore.

He had no intentions of playing the 'dance' with Yanhuan... he hoped that slap would be the reminder Yanhuan needed if he ever dared to get into his business again.

When the crushing weight finally lifted, Yanhuan gasped, his knees nearly buckling... his heart started pounding as realization hit him. Levi's spiritual prowess had skyrocketed, far beyond what it used to be.

He assumed at once that Levi might have received a massive boost or enhancement inside the ancient site.

'The sheer pressure he emitted now... it was terrifying.' Yanhuan thought inwardly... his expression stern on the outside, but within, his soul was tingling in dread.

He could tell... if Levi wanted, he could easily ruin him... and this time, both physically and spiritually.

And yet, beneath the fear, a flicker of something else burned inside his eyes... Resolve.

"So he's gotten stronger," Yanhuan muttered, rubbing his cheek, his jaw tight. "Good... that just means I'll have to get even stronger."

Li Mie turned to him, still fuming. "You should report this... If the authorities hear about it, Levi will be penalized."

Yanhuan gave her a cold glare and said nothing... but, Li Mei knew that she shouldn't have said that to him.

She assumed right... Yanhuan might be an egotistical prince, who was used to be worshiped and bathing under the spotlight, but he was no fool to play the victim role.

Getting slapped in public was one thing, but to report it to the authorities was another... no one liked snitches, it was a universal consensus. If he wanted to recover his reputation, there was only one thing he could do.

He looked toward the direction Levi had taken, his eyes filled with cold determination.

"We have to come out first in the upcoming Factions War Event... to show everyone that being the best isn't just about strength... it's about leading, winning, proving who truly deserves the top."

Although Yanhuan knew deep down that he couldn't surpass Levi unless he broke through to Solarbound rank, this didn't mean that he planned on eating both humiliation and remaining quiet.

Getting humiliated was also a part of life... but, how he handled the situation mattered the most.

With him not lashing out and showing everyone that he still aimed to reclaim his number one spot in the upcoming faction, even though he was slapped, the staff members looked at him a bit differently.

"At least, he isn't a spoiled brat like the lot of them."

"Tell me about it."

"Still... I doubt he can recover from this... that boy's spiritual talent is something of a fantasy."

"True... imagine how powerful his spiritual prowess will be if he becomes a Solarbound? Sheesh, I actually believe he might be able to take down someone a couple stages ahead of him."

"Haha... a couple of Daywalkers like him and our planet's future will brighten up."

As Yanhuan walked away with his teammates, his brows kept twitching once in a while, not too fond of the soft chatter floating in the air.

'Keep disregarding me... I will show you all what I am truly capable of... just wait.'

His contracted Nightcrawler could only roll his eyes in silence, having a feeling that his partner would not let this situation go down until he got smacked a couple more times... Either way, he left himself out of it.

...

Meanwhile, Jasmine was silently following behind Levi; her peculiar swirling eye reflecting an untold darkness within Levi's heart.

'What happened in there... this isn't the same Levi we entered the site with.'

She thought inwardly, trying her best to remember but to no avail... she felt like something was blocking her memories from showing up, and this bothered her, a lot.

'Once you settle in your room, you should use target erasure to recover our memories.' N'ibby uttered.

Jasmine nodded in understanding... she knew that if something was blocking their memories, it could be erased with her powers. But, if her memories were removed from the source, there wasn't much she could do about it. She didn't use it in the hospital since she wanted to be alone to test it out.

After a short while, they separated and went to their assigned rooms... Levi had already told everyone to gather in his room after fifteen minutes to split up the loot and discuss their next move as a squad.

When Jasmine closed the wooden door behind her, she couldn't help but smile a little at how cozy and calm her room was. Her room wasn't large, but it had a natural warmth that made it feel like a retreat from the rest of the world.

The walls were paneled with smooth, honey-colored wood. The light was not harsh as bioluminescent bulbs embedded in glass orbs were the sole method of illumination.

Plants filled the corners... lush ferns, small flowering vines, and a tall, slender tree with silver-green leaves that swayed gently when Jasmine opened the window.

The furniture was simple but beautifully made: a wooden bed with smooth curves and linen sheets, a small desk carved from wood that still bore faint green veins of life running through it, and shelves where more plants, trinkets, and handwritten notes shared the space.

There were only a few electrical devices around... fridge, oven, and such large devices were not included in the rooms since there was a nearby public cafeteria in the building for all Raiders... Though, there was a small toilet in each room.

After she sat on the bed, Jasmine scanned the room for any spying pieces of hardware, such as cameras, eavesdropping bugs, and such.

'Nothing... looks like they respect the Daywalkers' privacy.' Jasmine sighed in relief.

As for worrying about the rest of the Daywalkers spying on her? She wasn't too concerned. She heard that such classified locations were built with the World's Tree bark... this provided the rooms with its spiritual protection, making it near impossible for anyone to see through the walls with their spiritual vision.

Yet, the biggest protection was the fact no one could spy on another inside their rooms without the World Tree finding out about it and marking them for the authorities to handle.

No further ado, Jasmine pointed a finger towards the right temple... the tip was covered in white ink.

The moment the ink touched her skin, it was absorbed and coursed through her bloodstream until it arrived at her brain... then, the white ink started searching for anything foreign that was messing with her memories.

After a short search, the white ink found what it was looking for... Jasmine was stunned to find out that her white ink had found a shadowy region within her brain. It was so small, it was barely visible to the naked eye.

However, she knew it was there because her white ink was slowly erasing it. The moment it finished, a chill ran up her spine as her veiled memories started gushing in nonstop.

Flashes appeared on the surface of her mind... she saw everything that had been erased by Levi... saving everyone from Azhukar's Dominion, Levi using his Void Form to protect them, the hauntingly beautiful violin piece he played, Azhukar's final moment, Levi handing her countless treasures from Azhukar's wallet to cleanse and make them usable, and finally, her discussion with Levi about his plan.

The last memory uncovered was of Levi signing with a soft smile.

-I will restore your memories the moment I am assured the SAS Headquarters bought our story.-

After the recollection was done, Jasmine opened her eyes. Her room returned... cozy and wooden. But her heart was pounding. The darkness was gone... But what it revealed... she wasn't sure what to think of it.

The memories blocked were so vital and carried such intense emotions that the moment she restored them, a tear landed on the bedsheets without her realizing it.

Jasmine ignored it and kept taking deep breaths to stabilize her heart and emotions... it might have been brief, but the emotional overload was too much since she also recalled the agony of Reality Limbo she went through and finally... that beautiful haunting violin verse Levi played to take down Azhukar.

The entire scene was already impactful... but, to be able to hear its beauty made it an unforgettable experience... especially for a deaf's first time ever hearing music.

'Jasmine... do you remember what I told you?' N'ibby said indifferently.

The moment Jasmine restored her memories, N'ibby recalled hers too.

'Yes. You told me to hide my ability to restore my memories to test Levi.' Jasmine nodded.

'Good... he promised your memories back, and now we will see if he is truly a man of his word or not.' N'ibby said.

Jasmine went quiet for a moment... then, she smiled sweetly, 'I trust him... he is going to tell me sooner or later.'

'I do hope so... for his sake.' N'ibby said depressively.

Chapter 306: You're Either Telling Him, or I Will.

Sometime later...

Levi, Jasmine, and the rest of the team gathered in his room... it carried the same vibe and appearance as Jasmine's room.

Arthur sat on the floor with Jojo while Shia lay on the swinging hammock chair with a lollipop in her mouth. Nurah sat on the bed with Jasmine, and finally Levi remained standing, leaning against the wall.

The news of Seraphis' death was still ravaging their minds. When Levi saw that most of them had a disappointed, grieving look, he spoke up... his voice was calm and steady.

"Seraphis wouldn't want this."

Everyone turned their eyes toward him.

His voice wasn't loud, but it captured their attention almost instantly.

"He fought until the end... not because he wanted to die a hero, but because he believed we'd keep going when he couldn't."

Arthur showed a forced smile. "We know... we know it's up to us to carry on with his legacy, but... I don't know."

Levi turned his head toward him and added calmly, "You think Seraphis would've let you sit around sulking like a lost kid? No, he knows better... he understands that his sacrifice was a necessity to keep us going on the mission he bestows upon us."

Upon hearing this, everyone remembered the very first class they attended under Seraphis' tutelage... the rest of the Instructors started with introductions and some basic subjects; meanwhile, Seraphis shared with them the truth about their planet and the screwed situation it was in.

"He burdened us with the truth because he recognized that we have what it took to do something about it... he died with the same belief." Levi knitted his brows. "I don't know about you, but I am planning to honor his memory with exactly what he desired from us... to become one of the pillars for our home."

Silence took over the room for a few moments as everyone was left deep in thought... but their expressions were slowly changing from a tint of depression to determination.

"You're right... Damn it, you're right." Arthur stood up with a resolved look. "Seraphis wouldn't forgive us if we allowed his memory to consume us instead of enriching us."

"I didn't take lessons under him during my rookie days, but I always wished he was my instructor." Shia smiled. "He was that good... although he is gone now, I am glad that his latest students were you guys... No one is more fit to carry on his legacy but us."

"The Legacy of Lion Heart..." Nurah chuckled. "I am in."

...

Meanwhile, inside Levi's Spiritual Leywell, the Titan shook his head as he listened to their discussion. He turned to face Ash'Kral, who was sipping a cup of tea, and asked, 'Why did we have to lie to him?'

Ash'Kral didn't answer right away... He slowly raised the cup to his lips, took a sip, and set it down again with his tiny paws.

'Because it is not a lie... it's impossible to achieve the required condition to return Seraphis' Shadowlife seed when dealing with people like the Hound,' he said calmly. 'And even if it wasn't, it's a waste of time and resources...'

The Titan's heavy brow furrowed. 'A waste of time? Look at him... he has gotten too many hits, and I am afraid it's beginning to take a toll on his mental... giving him some hope won't hurt.'

Ash'Kral scoffed, looking at his old friend dead in the eye.

"Seraphis had his purpose... He fulfilled it. Bringing him back now would do nothing but drag Levi into a hole he doesn't need to fall into. The man's knowledge and soul were stolen... we might revive him through that Array if we recovered his knowledge and soul, but it's better to move forward than dwell on dead weight.'

The Titan let out a deep sigh. 'You're too cold... Ash.'

Ash'Kral's tone didn't change. 'I'm realistic... My goal isn't to make Levi happy. It's to make him strong enough to survive and reach the required strength in one piece. I don't care about satisfying every emotional whim he has.'

As much as Ash'Kral seemed to be changing and opening up to Levi, in reality, he was the same as ever... he only cared about his goal and what needed to be done to achieve it. Even when he decided to help Levi's friends get stronger, like Shia by giving Levi the requested bloodline, it was for the sake of having a chance to awaken another ally of his.

Whether it worked or not, he had nothing to lose.

Meanwhile, reviving Seraphis didn't fit in the same narrative... he couldn't use him. Worse, it would steal too much of Levi's attention and force him to risk his life for no reason but to save someone who instructed him for a couple of months.

Ash'Kral failed to see any positives.

The Titan exhaled heavily, still not convinced.

'I understand your reasoning, Ash'Kral. You've always been like this... direct, brutal, unbending. But if you keep treating everyone around you like they don't matter, one day, when you reach your goal, you'll have no one left. What kind of victory is that?'

Ash'Kral's eyes narrowed slightly... He didn't respond. He reached for his cup again, took another slow sip, and spoke coldly.

'The only reason I'm still alive... is to avenge her. Once that's done, I won't have any reason to keep going. So no... I'm not worried about who stands beside me at the end.'

The Titan was left silent, but his gaze softened just a bit, filled with something that looked like disappointment rather than anger. He could see that Ash'Kral he fought alongside had long been changed into a much merciless, colder version.

'You're going against everything that she fought hard for...' he said firmly. 'But I know you won't change just because I tell you to.'

He straightened in his chair and leaned closer to Ash'Kral, resting his arms on the table... his gaze looked stern.

'I wanted to do things your way, but it seems like you're losing it... if this is your sole reasoning for not telling the full truth, then I don't support it... Levi is already doing everything he can, and the least he deserves is a truthful answer when he asks for your help.' He paused. 'Whether he chooses to revive Seraphis or not, that's his decision, not yours or mine.'

Ash'Kral looked at him silently, realizing that he was slowly losing his old friend to Levi's side... but he expected as much. The Titan was always a big softie.

He just listened to him continue.

'The boy needs some hope in his life. He's slipping... growing darker slowly. You've seen it. And that's not sustainable as much as you want him to become like that forever. Don't forget, he doesn't have just one seed inside him, but three. If he keeps drowning in that darkness, he'll lose balance... And when that happens, everything he's built will crumble, and so as your dreams with it.'

His expression hardened while his tone carried the weight of command.

'So, you're either telling him, or I will.'

Ash'Kral sat still for a long time, lost in thought... his expression didn't change as he listened to Levi and his friends cheer for Seraphis' legacy.

After a long pause, he let out a soft breath and showed a small unreadable smile.

'I'll tell him when the right time comes,' he replied.

'Well, that sounds good to me, but don't forget... Seraphis' body needs to be maintained properly if Levi is going to attempt it... if he is buried, it's over.'

The Titan nodded once, though not entirely pleased... But this was better than withholding information from Levi on matters that concerned his close ones.

'For now... the only thing he needs to focus on is achieving the soul split process successfully,' Ash'Kral added as he glanced at the Leviathan's soul still getting devoured slowly. 'With the treasures in his wallet, he will need just the mental preparation to make it happen.'

'That's more reason to tell him,' the Titan said. 'Nothing motivates us more than the possibility of saving the life of someone dear to us... you know it more than anyone else.'

The last sentence struck a nerve for Ash'Kral... but in a good way. He realized that the Titan might be right as he knew that chasing strength for the sake of revenge did wonder, but to chase strength to save or protect those close to you bestows one with unimaginable will.

A will that Levi was going to need dearly for his upcoming torturous breakthrough.

'So?'

'Fine... sheesh, when did you get so pushy and annoying.' Ash'Kral's eyelids twitched. 'I will tell him tomorrow... but if something were to happen to him, you will be held responsible.'

'I don't mind.' The Titan shrugged, unbothered.

Chapter 307: Breaking The News.

The Next Morning...

Levi and his friends returned to Helidor's region to attend Seraphis' funeral and pack their things. With the upcoming conference and the possibility of staying at the World Tree for several months, they couldn't leave without first checking on their friends and families, and getting everything in order.

As for the treasures in Jasmine's wallet? They had already split them up equally among each other... they took 15% of the wallet's value each.

This left 10%, but they didn't split it... Levi decided to donate 5% to the government for standing up for them and keeping their word. The last 5% would go to Rayan, Sergio, Jamal, and any other close friends they had.

Although they reached this far, they didn't forget their day ones... the people they fought alongside and survived with. It might help them push further along their evolutionary path and show up for their region when it needed them.

Right now, Levi and his friends were escorted to the High Council the moment they emerged from Willow Grove's dimensional mirror.

After they stepped inside the Council's main hall, a wave of applause rained down on them, surprising them a little.

"What's going on?"

Arthur whispered near Jojo's ear, just to have her slap it away in annoyance without answering him.

Arthur wasn't left waiting for an answer.

The High Chancellor announced with a pleased smile, "Good work, everyone... Feng Ling has updated me about everything. We are glad that you have returned safely. We can tell the exploration wasn't easy."

"No, it wasn't... and yet, we came back bearing gifts," Arthur spoke coolly as he took his seat in the center of the hall.

Jojo and the girls rolled their eyes, but they let him have his moment... they sat next to him and saw that all Governors and Agency leaders attended besides Lord Idriss.

'Where is my father?' Shia wondered inwardly, seeing that her mother took his seat to represent him.

"Whatever gift you brought with you, I want you to keep it and use it." The High Chancellor smiled kindly, "If we want you to evolve beyond Solarbound rank, you must invest everything in yourselves... trust me, if you think you have a lot now, you won't have the same judgment once your path is blocked."

Hearing this, Levi and his friends nodded in understanding... they had a feeling their government wouldn't accept their gift, but they still wanted to offer.

"Feng Ling told me that Dominic has broken the news to you about Seraphis." Hicham sighed, "I don't know how you received it, but I hope you remain strong... for him."

"My thoughts exactly." The High Chancellor nodded, "We already plan to hold a funeral of the highest honor for Seraphis... his services to the government, to the region, to our people, they have been nothing but extraordinary, and he deserves it."

Levi and the others nodded in support.

"We know you've been summoned to the Conference, so we'll hold the funeral in three days to avoid keeping you here longer than necessary," the High Chancellor said with a warm smile. "You continue to make us proud to be Heliodorians, and we pray you stay on the same path... It's been a long time since we old fogies have felt this excited about anything."

The Governors chuckled, agreeing with his statement.

"We will keep doing our best." Levi nodded respectfully.

"That's all I ask of you," the High Chancellor said with a faint smile. "Keep moving forward... that's how you honor those who fell."

With that final statement, Levi and his friends were excused. The Council didn't discuss their decision about joining the Factions' bonus event... they knew it was theirs to make, and all they could do was support them from afar.

For they had proven, over and over again, they could handle their business alone.

After leaving the Council, Shia called for their friends to meet them in their favorite hanging spot... the Morningstars restaurant's rooftop.

Levi told them that he was going to catch up to them later with his brother... When the girls heard this, they decided to go home too and meet up after an hour or so.

But Levi didn't go to his apartment... he went out of the region with his brother on top of Vyra, stopping only when they landed on the peak of a small cliff.

"What are we doing here, big bro?" Arthur wondered as he tried to pat Vyra, but she almost bit his hand off.

"I will tell you when Jasmine arrives." Levi smiled.

"Jasmine?" Arthur's heart skipped a beat. 'Did he bring me here to help him ask her out?'

"Hahaha, I didn't think you had it in you." Arthur grinned, still teasing Vyra with his hand, not scared of losing it.

"Hmm? What are you on about?"

Seeing that Vyra's anger levels were on the rise, Levi ordered her to go on a short flight before she snapped at his little brother... Vyra made sure to blow dust in Arthur's direction with a faint smirk before leaving them.

"Come on, it's me..." Arthur coughed off the dust while approaching Levi, "I am totally on your side, just tell me what I need to do to help you win her over."

"???"

Levi was left confused for a moment, and then it hit him... his little brother thought he wanted to confess his love to Jasmine.

"Don't be stupid, it's not like that." Levi swiftly corrected the confusion lest his brother do something foolish. He switched to dimensional messages and said, 'I want to tell you both the truth of what happened in the ancient site.'

The moment Arthur heard this, he dropped the jokester act and turned off his Neuralens device to stop the recording.

Before he could ask him what he meant, Arthur spotted a black dot fast approaching from a distance... it turned out to be Jasmine on her nightmount.

She descended next to them and looked around her in confusion, seeing that it was just the three.

-I thought you called all of us here?- She asked, signing.

'Turn off your Neuralens first.' Levi sent a message.

Hearing this, Jasmine's heart skipped a beat too, but it was for the right reason, unlike Arthur... she could tell from Levi's expression that he was ready to remove the veil of their memories.

'I told you.'

'Whatever.'

N'ibby rolled her eyes and remained silent, not too fond of Jasmine's feelings and thoughts about Levi... she could see that she was getting way too close to him. N'ibby didn't trust him or Ash'Kral one bit... especially Ash'Kral.

After Jasmine turned off her Neuralens device, Levi pointed two fingers in their direction... before they could react, two shadowy strings emerged and touched their foreheads. Then, the shadowy strings made contact with the darkness blocking their memories. However, instead of extending and covering more, it was absorbed.

This happened only in Arthur's brain... Levi was left confused for a moment after sensing that his veil of darkness was nowhere to be found in Jasmine's brain.

When he saw her playful, innocent smile, he knew what had happened... he smiled wryly while shaking his head.

'Fair enough.' He said telepathically.

While Arthur was left stunned and somewhat horrified by the hidden truth of the ancient site, Jasmine covered her lips in amusement as she stared at Levi.

But their gaze didn't linger for long... Arthur dropped to the ground with his forehead sweating all over. He slowly turned his gaze to his brother and Jasmine.

Then, he asked his brother with a stern tone, 'Levi... what are we?'

Arthur had seen himself almost become Azhukar's vessel because of his Radian bloodline... then, he watched his brother being consumed by the void and saving them.

No need to mention Jasmine's own peculiar transformation and ability to summon a dominion while being at the Warden rank.

But for now... he only wanted to know about their origin, and most importantly... if they were even humans.

Levi walked towards Arthur and crouched next to him... then, he replied with a bitter smile, 'I am afraid that's a question I still have no answer for.'

Chapter 308: I Have Three.

'Radian bloodline... I knew something was weird when you got burnt off from cultivating... but I didn't think for a second it would be related to Radians,' Arthur uttered with a dazed look.

He didn't bother asking Levi about his parents' relation to this... he knew that his brother would have told him if he had figured out anything about their origin.

'That's the awakening of my bloodline... it enabled me to absorb the divine light of our region's pillar,' Levi shared. 'That's why I checked if you felt any connection with it... I wanted to see if you could absorb it too.'

'Absorbing the divine light?!" Arthur's eyes widened. 'That's a cheat! It must be of higher quality than standard sunlight.'

'Quite significantly,' Levi nodded.

'I figured that something was off about you two, but to have Radian bloodlines... that wasn't it,' Khu'zan commented, not expecting to sign a contract with a Half-Radian.

He knew that was something extremely rare in the universe since other Half-Radians were considered Trueborn under Radians' authority... if there was one thing they abhorred, it was to have any sort of connection to nightcrawlers.

It was a punishable Sin in their Society.

But when he recalled Levi's Void Form, he couldn't help but smile wryly, having no idea what was going on.

N'ibby and Jasmine were also taken aback... they had already guessed that Levi should have the Void Origin Seed due to his Half-Olivar bloodline, but to possess the Radian bloodline too? That came as a shock.

'Levi... mind I ask you how many Origin Seeds you own?' Jasmine wondered in intrigue, recalling that Levi's spiritual aura always showed three colors.

She didn't think much of it before, as many others had colorful spiritual auras, but now? She figured out the ludicrous truth. She wanted him to confirm it to be sure.

The moment Levi decided to bring Jasmine into his inner circle, he no longer felt the need to hide the truth from her. She wasn't ordinary either, and he knew she was the only one who could truly understand his situation.

Thus, he came out clean with a composed tone, 'I have three.'

'...'

'...'

'...'

Jasmine, N'ibby, and Khu'zan were left stunned instantly... meanwhile, Arthur scratched his head in confusion.

'Origin Seeds? What are those?' he asked.

'Three? Three?! How?! Just how?!' Khu'zan lost his composure, shouting on the bridge of darkness.

He could understand Levi having one by some miracle... but three? This was beyond common sense or logic.

Ash'Kral merely wiped his ears lazily, acting deaf... he didn't want to join this discussion to avoid dealing with this kind of reaction.

'Are you serious?' N'ibby narrowed her eyes. 'You know that having three Origin Seeds is a curse, not a blessing, right? I don't even know how you're still alive.'

'I know... but I am managing it for now,' Levi replied calmly.

'Managing it?' N'ibby scoffed. 'No one manages the Equilibrium of Chaos... It's one of the sole theories that is still left unsolved and has taken the lives of anyone daring to test it out.'

'Equilibrium of Chaos?'

This time, even Jasmine and Khu'zan were left confused, having never heard of such a theory before.

'It's a theory that proposes finding balance within the chaotic nature of three Origin Seeds clashing in one host... It's simply impossible,' N'ibby shook her head. 'Each Origin Seed has an extreme persona that desires its host to match it... But with three Origin Seeds, they all want the same and will make sure to get it even if it means torturing their host.'

Hearing this, Arthur was the first to show a deep frown... he might not hear N'ibby, but Khu'zan was delivering everything she said to him.

'Levi, is this true?' he asked, already knowing the answer.

'It's true for them... not me,' Levi replied with a faint smile. 'I already told you, I have it under control... if I wasn't, I wouldn't have spilled the truth and worry you, right?'

Levi had planned on taking the truth about the Three-Body Problem to the grave to avoid worrying his brother needlessly; however, he realized that was nothing but wishful thinking.

Arthur was bound to find out the truth sooner or later; it might as well come from him rather than him finding out somewhere else, like the truth about his Radian bloodline found by Azhukar.

Before N'ibby could interject with some soul-crushing facts, Jasmine stopped her... she was still confused about this whole situation Levi was in, but she knew one thing... he trusted them with the truth so they could support each other in their paths, not create problems by meddling in his life.

'I don't know... everything is so confusing to me right now,' Arthur knitted his eyebrows. 'But if you tell me you have it covered, I trust you.'

'Don't worry... me and Ash'Kral know what we are doing.'

'Ash'Kral...' Arthur narrowed his eyes coldly. 'Khu'zan, flip him the middle finger for me... that bastard is responsible for this. I know Levi is still hiding the full truth to protect me. I am not stupid... Origin Seeds must be of higher quality than Shadowlife Seeds. For my brother to own three, this can only bring chaos and trouble for him. That f*cker knew this and still chose to sign him.'

Khu'zan glanced in Ash'Kral's direction... he already had a feeling that Ash'Kral was no regular nightcrawler the moment he decided to sign Levi.

But he didn't flip him... whether he forced Levi to sign the contract or not, the fact still stood that Levi signed it, and his growth had exploded. For a blind civilian, this was more than anyone could ever dream of.

'Enough about me... Jasmine, mind telling us how you were able to summon a Dominion while still being a Warden Daywalker?' Levi switched the focus to Jasmine.

He was fine sharing some truths about himself with his inner circle, but he had no plans to share everything... like his secret identity as the Celestial.

If they managed to connect the dots and figure it out, then good for them, but he wasn't going to air out everything.

'Didn't he tell you?' N'ibby asked while gazing at Ash'Kral. 'If you own an Origin Seed, you obtain early limited access to Dominions at Warden rank... however, using them comes with a nasty punishment and a price based on the seed's laws. In Jasmine's case, she falls into Reality Limbo and has to pay an immense amount of life force to offset it.'

'Prick, is this true?'

'Yes, I was planning to tell you when you get closer to Warden rank,' Ash'Kral yawned. 'There was no point in learning about it if you are at risk of dying to reach Pathfinder rank.'

'Asshole... I am getting sick of you deciding what I need to know or not.' Levi's brows twitched in irritation. 'Why can't you be like N'ibby? Look at them, they look like they were cut from the same cloth.'

Hearing this, Ash'Kral coughed and remained silent... he realized that if he were to tell Levi the truth about Seraphis now, he was definitely going to lose it.

'The prick loves withholding information from me, so no...' Levi smiled. 'Thank you for letting me know.'

'Hmm, I get it,' N'ibby nodded while glancing at Ash'Kral. 'He looks like it.'

Levi ignored the irked Ash'Kral and kept pushing to find out more about Jasmine and N'ibby. He could tell that her origin story might not be utterly real or complete.

'May I know what exactly happened?' Levi added. 'I don't know much about my origins... what about you? Was it the truth that you were born in the Shadow Dimension, which ruined your hearing?'

'I didn't lie about that,' Jasmine smiled bitterly. 'I was born in the Shadow Dimension and my father Hicham was the one who found me... he is my foster parent, and I have asked him about my origin and real family, but he told me he has no idea either.'

'Sir Hicham isn't your father...' Levi showed a hint of astonishment.

Chapter 309: Ancestral Dominion.

Jasmine nodded and said, 'I told you before that I was seeking to recover my hearing by treating the Cindral Rot curse... that's not a lie, but it's not the full truth... I am searching for my real parents if they are still alive, to understand what really happened.'

'I see... do you have any clues?' Levi asked.

'Unfortunately... nothing.' Jasmine shook her head. 'I have been traveling the world with my father to run international rescue missions and such, but the main goal was to seek clues... but we struck out.'

'What about N'ibby?' Levi frowned. 'How can she also possess relations to your bloodline and somehow find you here?'

This was the biggest mystery to Levi at the moment... Ash'Kral had been keeping watch over Levi for years, and still, when they signed a contract, he had no connection to Void or Sun Laws.

Meanwhile, both Jasmine and N'ibby shared the same connection to Ink and Erasure... two Laws that had been claimed to have no one else to command them after the disappearance of the Primordial Tree of Creation and Erasure with its followers.

How... how could those two find each other throughout the seemingly infinite universe?

'That's a topic for another discussion.' N'ibby swiftly shut it down. 'You had your Neuralens devices turned off for more than five minutes... the authorities will be notified if you keep them off for longer.'

Hearing this, Levi knew that she wasn't comfortable yet sharing the truth, just like him refusing to let out more than he needed... instead of pushing for an answer, Levi nodded in agreement.

'You're right, we have reached a new ground today, and I am satisfied with the results.'

'Me too.'

Jasmine smiled sweetly, feeling like a massive weight was removed from her heart... to know that Levi and Arthur knew her truth and didn't seem to feel any differently about her was one of her dreams... to be accepted as she was.

'What about Shia, Nurah, and Jojo?' Arthur suddenly wondered.

'No... not yet.' Levi rejected. 'I care for them as my friends, but I am not going to bring them in on my secrets unless I am certain I can trust them fully.'

Levi trusted Jasmine because she didn't hesitate to abuse her Laws to save his brother and the others... her utmost loyalty to her friends was borderline naive. But he liked that about her, as it made him feel more comfortable bringing her into his inner circle.

Most importantly, she was also a holder of an Origin Seed... he could discuss the subject with her and seek assistance when needed.

Shia and the girls were still not at that level yet.

What he meant by this... he wasn't sure yet that the girls were going to keep up with him if he continued reaching newer ranks. Jasmine could definitely keep up, while Arthur had a chance to keep up if the Titan's plan succeeded.

As long as Levi wasn't sure they could keep up, he wouldn't drop such bombshells on them and leave the truth burning a hole in their minds when he decided to climb past them.

It was the same situation with Rayan, Sergio, and Jamal... he cared for them dearly as his friends, but he wasn't foolish enough to tell them his secrets when he knew that their paths might not cross again someday.

'I see...' Arthur murmured.

'Arthur... don't make me regret this.' Levi hardened his tone, knowing that his little brother was a softie with a big mouth.

'You kidding?' Arthur shook his head. 'My lips are sealed... I will never disclose matters that can endanger you... not to anyone.'

'Good.' Levi smiled.

As for Jasmine? He didn't need to worry about her... N'ibby cared about her protection more than anything else. He could tell that it was her idea to test if he would keep his word and recover Jasmine's memories or not.

'Alright, let's head back... we will continue this discussion later.'

After Levi returned to his apartment with his brother, he didn't tell him about his plan to have the Titan inhabit his Shadowlife Seed. He told him to focus on his growth and reach Warden Rank first... then, he could see what he could do about his dormant Radian bloodline.

When Arthur heard this, he didn't know how Levi was going to achieve it, but he left it to his brother to handle.

He closed his room's door behind him, deciding to use all his remaining Growth Totems to push his progress as fast as he could, knowing that the resources he had were enough to help him buy more.

'That went better than expected.' Levi smiled as he watched his brother focus on his growth without pressuring him with more questions.

This was what he liked about his little brother. He trusted him fully and didn't need too many answers... just enough to have his heart at ease.

Levi planned on bringing him even closer into his business, but he required access to his Spiritual Leywell so they could talk there freely without needing to shut off the Neuralens each time.

N'ibby might have used the Neuralens excuse to dodge the question, but she was right... Levi knew that if the Neuralens device was turned off for too long, it would raise alarms in the department responsible for supervising their data... it was even more serious for high-value Daywalkers like them since it might mean that they were in danger.

'Ash'Kral... do you have anything else to add?'

Levi's tone suddenly turned cold as he stepped inside his Spiritual Leywell, finding the Titan and Ash'Kral playing a board game to pass the time.

'What?' Ash'Kral gave him an unbothered side glance. 'Stop being so fussy over nothing... I told you I was planning to tell you when you are close to Warden Rank. If you were to know about it, that's the only thing you would be thinking about, and it might ruin your development.'

Levi stepped closer to him and placed his hands on the table, leaning closer to Ash'Kral's face... then, he uttered coldly, 'Ash'Kral... I don't care if you hide information about your past or your fcked up goal. But with matters related to me and my evolutionary path, I expect to know everything! You're not my father to decide for me. I am already going through hell as it is... don't make it harder than it is.'

'If you see me as a partner, act like it... Otherwise, I am not playing this game anymore.'

'I told you.'

The Titan chuckled while moving a piece on the board, anticipating Levi snapping at Ash'Kral sooner or later. He knew that Levi's patience was running thin with Ash'Kral in such matters.

Now, with his persona faintly corroded to the dark side, it was easier to snap than to hold it in. Just like what happened with Yanhuan.

'How bothersome.' Ash'Kral massaged his temple and said, 'Fine... if you reach Warden Rank, you will have limited access to a Dominion... but since the Dominion belongs to the Ancestral Tree and not yours, the punishment and payment aren't something easily manageable... You saw your little girlfriend's condition after abusing it.'

'What do you mean by that?' Levi frowned, taking a seat next to them.

He knew that other Seed holders unlocked a Dominion as a reward after reaching Solarbound Rank... but the Dominion was based on their evolutionary path. If they focused on a single Aspect from the very beginning, the Dominion would match it with a reasonable authority.

However, if their powers were all over the place, the Dominion would be weaker since it wouldn't favor a single Aspect but multiple ones... this left their Dominion with a split authority.

But to use the Ancestral Tree's own Dominion? That was something new.

'Ancestral Dominions are based on Laws, not Aspects...' Ash'Kral explained. 'The Dominions you are used to seeing involve a single Aspect or multiple ones under the same Law... but in the case of Ancestral Dominions, you are bestowed with the authority to command all the Aspects falling under that specific Law it wielded.'

'Such as?'

'If you used the Ancestral Sun Tree's Dominion... you would be given control of Radiation, Fission, Fusion, Sunflames, Plasma, and even lower Aspects like Fire,' Ash'Kral added. 'The same goes for the Nine Senses Tree and the Void Tree.'

'That sounds too powerful... no wonder Jasmine managed to escape from Azhukar's Dominion.' Levi held his chin thoughtfully. 'But why? Why is such access given if it demands such a grave price?'

'It's simple really...' The Titan replied with a soft, elderly smile. 'If you manage to push an Origin Seed to a Pre-Mature Tree stage, it sees you as a decent host that might help it achieve its cycle... while it can't give you full access to its Dominion, a limited one to save yourself in an emergency isn't too bad.'

'...'

When Levi heard this, he couldn't help but gulp a mouthful as his gaze switched to the three celestial Seeds in the sky... he realized that such a reward was based on a single Origin Seed desiring to help its host survive for the sake of fulfilling its cycle.

But... what he had wasn't the same.

'Heh, see?' Ash'Kral snickered. 'You were living in peaceful ignorance, and now... your mind will be consumed with the idea that these three Divas will leave you to eat dirt before bestowing their Dominion access to you if you don't satisfy their needs first.'

'Shut up.' Levi's lips twitched. 'I don't care... tell me everything, always. I will deal with it as I see fit.'

'Well, if you say so...' Ash'Kral coughed. 'I got one more thing to say.'

'Hmm? What is it? Spill it out.' Levi frowned, not having a good feeling about this.

'I lied before... Seraphis can be revived through a special Array as long as I have the Pride Fruit, which contains his evolutionary knowledge and bits of his soul.'

'Huh?' Levi was left stunned.

Chapter 310: Empty Casket.

"Don't lose your mind on me again." Ash'Kral shared calmly, "Although there is a way, I still consider it an impossibility... because you need to fight the Hound inside the Rift of Binding Laws, and somehow make him put you inside the spiritual trial to devour his shadowlife seed and its knowledge... if by some miracle you succeeded in this, you won't go through just the spiritual trial imposed by the Hound, but also the same spiritual trial belonging to Seraphis. Only when you pass them both will you be eligible for the knowledge transfer process."

"I might have hid the truth, but it changes nothing... the odds are still not in your favor, and I don't want you to waste your time on this. If it weren't for Old Bark annoying me with it, I would have spared you from such a hassle."

Levi remained silent for a few moments, deep in thought... he wanted to lash out at Ash'Kral for lying to him, but he saw no benefits in doing so.

Ash'Kral was... Ash'Kral. Hiding the truth and spewing lies was in his nature.

Thus, he turned to the Titan and asked calmly, "Elder, is this true?"

"I am afraid it is." The Titan replied, "Usually, it's impossible to revive someone who has lost their soul or shadowlife seed... However, if it was devoured by another seed holder, it left a small chance for revival since both knowledge and soul were stored inside... Ash'Kral is the Array Grandmaster, who has pioneered the revival array, calling it: Return To Roots Array. If there is one person who can pull it off, it's him... but."

"But, I need to get Seraphis' Pride Fruit first." Levi finished it for him.

"Also, Seraphis' corpse needs to be preserved." The Titan added, "If you truly want to go through with this, you have to find a way to maintain his corpse."

"Of course I will do it." Levi uttered coldly, "The Hound is the Bishop's loyal dog... if I am going to get to the Bishop, he will be a hindrance... my fate is already intertwined with him whether you liked it or not."

"We already know that, but killing him is one thing, and being put in a spiritual trial is another." Ash'Kral scoffed, "It's the last thing anyone would do... they would rather die than expose their most traumatic experience to their enemies. Worse, if they conquered it, they would strengthen their enemy, and no one wants that."

Levi understood that Ash'Kral was speaking a ton of sense... if Seraphis wasn't focused on protecting them during the expedition, he would have died honorably rather than put the Hound in his spiritual trial.

That's because, although the spiritual trial was based on the seed holder, in reality, the seed itself was the arbiter... it made sure to create the most heart-wrenching and soul-crushing spiritual trial based on the memories of its owner. Only if they succeeded would it deem them worthy of having his evolutionary knowledge transferred.

"I will see what I can do when the time comes." Levi said calmly, "For now, I have to convince the High Chancellor to bury an empty casket."

Some time later...

Levi and the High Chancellor were standing in front of Seraphis' frozen corpse inside the medical pod... they hadn't removed him yet, waiting for the last day to start the cleansing preparation.

"High Chancellor... I am thankful you took some time off from your busy schedule to entertain my request." Levi spoke respectfully.

"Of course." The High Chancellor gave a wrinkly smile, "Never hesitate to ask for my help... we are all here for you and your team."

"Much appreciated." Levi took a deep breath and requested, "I seek your assistance in convincing the government to bury an empty casket."

"Hmmm?" The High Chancellor's brows crooked in confusion.

Not needing to ask... Levi went on and explained the situation to him. He didn't mention Ash'Kral's name, but he did tell him that he had found from a credible source that Seraphis might still have a chance of returning to life.

He didn't tell him 'the how' to avoid scaring him off... after all, the Hound was a Blazewarden, and the High Chancellor was the only one in their region at the same rank.

"This... what you're asking is too difficult to pull." The High Chancellor frowned, "We have already announced the funeral to the public, and if we decide to bury an empty casket, it will show."

Levi nodded in understanding... he knew that many Daywalkers could easily notice that the casket was empty, which would create chaos in the Funeral. After all, telling the council might be easy, but they couldn't hide it from the public.

"That's why I want the funeral to go as planned." Levi shared, "After it finishes, we can dig up Seraphis in a few days and preserve his body in ice again... If I succeeded in reviving him, then we can come clean, and I doubt anyone will be upset with having Seraphis returning to duty... if I fail, well, nothing changes... we can bury him in the same spot again and no one has to know."

The High Chancellor kept his thoughts to himself... he glanced at Levi's serious expression and then at Seraphis' peaceful visage.

He could tell that Levi wasn't having difficulty coping with Seraphis' death... he was brought this subject to him because he was assured of his information.

Although the High Chancellor would rather have Seraphis buried instead of having Levi risk his life to save him, he knew that wasn't an option.

Just because Levi came to him, it didn't mean that he wasn't going to go for it if he said no... this made him understand that the best option was to go along with him. At least, he would know what's going on then.

Still... he had to double-check.

"How certain are you about this? As much as I would love to have Seraphis join us again, I know reviving someone isn't common... it requires sacrifice regardless of the method chosen." He asked solemnly, "So tell me... how much are you sacrificing?"

"Trust me when I tell you... It's not enough for what Instructor Seraphis has done for me." Levi replied, his tone unflinching.

"I see..." The High Chancellor smiled kindly as he patted Levi on the back, "Albeit short, Seraphis has surely installed the right qualities in you lads... I am proud."

"Is that a yes, sir?"

"Do what you have to do... we will handle the funeral and maintain his body. Just promise me you won't take too much of an unnecessary risk. The last thing Seraphis or either of us would want is to have you lose your life on this quest." The High Chancellor sighed, "Seraphis will bite my head off if he knew I approved of this."

"Mine too." Levi chuckled.

After Levi received the approval, he finally went to meet up with his friends on the rooftop... of course, he didn't tell them about any of this, and he knew the High Chancellor would also keep it to himself... At most, he would share it with his trusted circle since this was an unofficial work.

While Levi was enjoying his time with his friends' company and eating good food, Dominic was standing in front of the World Tree's dimensional mirror. He was holding the broken Sun Amulet in his hand, glancing at it once in a while.

This time, he was wearing an actual formal black suit and had his hair combed to look professional... one glance, and anyone would doubt if this was truly the same Dominic. Though his current appearance was more fitting for his role.

He was waiting alone... waiting to be called.

'I hope this works...' He let out a soft exhalation as he fixed his tie, seemingly a bit nervous.

Then, the dimensional mirror rippled faintly, and he heard a single deep authoritative voice shake his spirit.

'Enter.'