

Evolution 331

Chapter 331: Counter For Everything.

Death by third attack? As the explosion scene replayed in their minds, the viewers felt a sudden chill course down their spines, realizing that Levi was using a freaking nuke born out of sunflame and void as a defensive ability!

They saw the Masked Butcher's powerful strike absolutely obliterated and devoured like it was a mere leaf getting hit by a nuke's shockwave!

'This... this is not normal.' N'ibby commented with a solemn tone mixed with shock, 'It's impossible to create such a complicated technique without having a decent resonance of all three Origin Seeds... that's even more impossible, considering their conflicting extreme personas!'

'I don't really know how he did it... But, I already told you.' Jasmine showed a sweet, proud smile, 'It's Levi... if he can get us out of that ancient site alive and rich, he can do anything.'

Whoooooaaah!! Celestial! Celestial! Celestial!!...

After a brief moment of daze... Levi's established fans from the two games didn't give a shit about what he was or wasn't... all they cared about was seeing their idol absolutely ruin everyone else with his usual mysterious flair!

To see him mix sunflame and void to create a nuke-like technique with a violin... nothing was more ludicrous and brazen than this!

"With that kind of ability as defense, I can't risk hitting him with melee range abilities... this bastard, he knew exactly what to use in this game."

The Masked Butcher muttered with an irked expression as he watched Levi create another dome and feed it with sunflame and void energies.

It looked like the rest caught up.

"The Celestial is proving to all why the best Defense is Offense!" Gamemaster Gamble shouted passionately, "As long as he keeps using the same defensive technique, almost no one will dare strike him up close in fear of getting consumed by those opposite raging energies!"

Gamemaster Gamble was correct... the best Defense was Offense.

During Levi's preparations, he understood that this concept was one of the keys to gaining an edge in the game.

They were given limited chances to attack or defend... Levi realized that he must create a defensive technique that would fight back for him. Whether it did damage or not to his enemies, it would put them on their toes since those under attack couldn't use defensive abilities.

In simpler terms, each time they were attacking, they put themselves at risk of getting punched back by the defensive ability if it was built with an offensive angle.

This kind of thinking helped Levi discover how to abuse the sunflame and void aspects' conflicting nature to his advantage and create one of his greatest defensive techniques in his arsenal: Aether Split-Note Detonation.

A technique that touched upon Sound, Sunflame, Void, and Aether Aspects to come into life... Levi might have made it look easy, but in reality, there was so much going on behind the scenes to bring it to life without endangering himself too.

After all, he was sitting inside the dome, and yet, the explosion hadn't touched him.

-Three minutes left before the Celestial's turn to attack... since the Masked Butcher challenged him using a pure offensive tactic, he is f*cked if he doesn't finish this during his turn.-

-Celestial has truly put him in a difficult spot...-

The watchers started sympathizing with the Masked Butcher... they knew that he was extremely powerful in close range, but as a nightcrawler, he simply couldn't risk getting close to a defensive technique that released sunflames outward.

His only solutions were to switch to spiritual attacks or projectiles if they were capable of piercing through the dome without exploding it.

'I need to weaken him, then finish him off with my ultimate.' The Masked Butcher narrowed his eyes coldly, 'This is my only way to slay him before the roles switch.'

The Masked Butcher wasn't at his wits' end yet... he swiftly returned tens of meters away from Levi and then sliced his palm open.

Before the blood could spill out, he smashed his palm on the floor and then shouted, "Bloodline Eruption!"

The spilled blood spread under the floor tiles like roots, approaching Levi rapidly... Levi glanced at the blood roots and didn't bother using the same defensive technique.

He raised the bow and played a different tune this time... the aetheric barrier around him was immediately devoured by a raging circle of sunflame with Levi in the center.

The moment the slithering blood roots reached the burning zone, they evaporated into red mist, incapable of passing through it to finish off the attack.

The Masked Butcher clicked his tongue in irritation and stopped forcing it, not daring to waste time... instead, he switched to a different attack.

He tore a long bone shard from his own arm, then shaped it up as a sharp javelin... he tightened his grasp on the shard and empowered his arm by increasing the size of his muscles through Flesh Aspect.

The Masked Butcher didn't call himself that for no reason... he wielded Blood, Flesh, Bone, and Metal Aspects... his entire body was a weapon of destruction.

The moment his arm's size doubled, and so did his legs, the Masked Butcher aimed the bone javelin at Levi and then tightened all of his muscles to the limit.

Seeing this, Levi instantly switched his tune to a dark, harrowing, and depressed one... following the tune, the sunflames died out and were replaced by a pitch-dark energy spilling out of Levi's clothes into the ground, but away from the sunflame chair.

Then, the void manifested into a pitch-dark wall in front of him with a swirling, almost invisible animation.

When the Masked Butcher saw it, he gritted his teeth and suddenly jumped into the sky, taking everyone by surprise.

In an instant, he appeared hundreds of meters above the ground... before he could fall off, he aimed the bone javelin at Levi's hooded scalp and hurled it while roaring, "CELESTIAL!!"

The bone javelin was so fast, it arrived above Levi's head at the exact time of his shout... alas, it was fast, but it could never be faster than a wall of nothingness.

With a mere sharp tune, the wall of void appeared instantly above Levi's head, like a symbiote creature being controlled by his violin.

The moment the bone javelin touched it, it sank within it and never appeared again... utterly devoured without leaving a fragment behind.

Thud!!

The Masked Butcher landed on the floor behind Levi and turned slowly to face him... yet, Levi didn't even bother turning his chair, showing him his wide open back.

Levi wasn't being arrogant or underestimating him... he simply had no reason to turn when his harmonic spine showed him a 360 vision of the area.

Though he did lift his hand and show three fingers... still not speaking.

Yet, this slight move made the Masked Butcher livid, feeling like he was being taunted. However, he didn't let his emotions get the best of him.

'I have two minutes left...' The Masked Butcher thought carefully about his next attack, 'The creep can use that dome defensive ability to negate my powerful melee attacks... void wall to devour my ranged attacks, and sunflame to eat my sneaky attacks... I don't have anything else that can break those defenses besides my ultimate.'

'Shit... just how did he become this powerful?! He was gone for less than six months!'

The Masked Butcher narrowed his eyes, showing a tough front on the outside... but on the inside, the panic was slowly eating him away.

The Ace card that he made fun of earlier had become the most dreaded card in his life... for he knew, Levi would only need one sunflame-based attack to finish him off.

'Wait... don't tell me he predicted that I won't bring defensive cards and that's why he didn't bother to risk special cards?'

The Masked Butcher felt his heart skip a beat as he gazed at Levi's menacing, but silent back...

Chapter 332: Resting The Violin.

He was absolutely right! The moment Levi accepted the notion of the Masked Butcher coming for the kill, he put himself in his shoes.

That's when he figured out that he would never waste a special card slot on a defensive card that might not work against his sun-flame-based attacks.

What's the best offensive combo? It was none other than a numbered nine Offensive card and a King card.

He trusted his judgment and committed to an Ace card on offense while believing that a numbered nine Defensive card would be enough to deal with whatever he threw at him.

He had that much belief in Aether Two-Note Detonation.

He was right to believe in it as the Masked Butcher had gone through five more offensive techniques and still... nothing could bypass Levi's defenses.

If he used an overwhelming attack, Aether Two-Note Detonation got rid of it... if he used anything else, Levi had the antidote prepared. Even if the Masked Butcher could wield great spiritual attacks, Levi had something stored for them.

With thirty seconds remaining on the clock, the Masked Butcher was left heaving raggedly, his forehead drenched in sweat.

He had only one more attack and an ultimate ability... the Masked Butcher glanced at the clock and noticed that he was running out of time.

'I can't risk my last attack to be a normal technique.' The Masked Butcher narrowed his eyes coldly, 'I have to end this right now, right here... regardless of what it takes.'

The Masked Butcher straightened his pose and took a deep breath... then, he pulled the King card and faced it in Levi's direction.

"I don't care if I am leaving this room crawling and bleeding... your legacy shall perish here." The Masked Butcher uttered coldly as the King card disintegrated in his hand.

"King Card has been used!" Gamemaster Gamble shouted eagerly, "Are the Celestial's defenses enough to handle it?!"

The Masked Butcher stopped moving... his breathing slowed, and he lowered his cleaver to his side.

For a second, it looked like he was done... but then he dragged the blade across his own ribs! The cut was long and deep, causing blood to spill out in a thick stream.

Yet, he didn't flinch.

He made other cuts across his shoulders, then another down his thighs... he looked like a madman who was giving up. But Levi only showed a deep frown, realizing that the Masked Butcher wasn't kidding around. He truly was going all out, using the most wicked and powerful ultimate in his disposal.

As blood poured from every wound, running down his cloth in sheets, the crowd went silent, unsure if he was killing himself or preparing something worse.

Then his body reacted as the blood leaking out turned darker, thicker... almost syrup-like. But his muscles started squirming and twitching like crazy for a moment.

Then... his entire figure started swelling, veins bulging, as his muscles kept increasing in size from head to toe!

His body was expanding at a speed that looked painful... and it was, as his frame stretched upward, ribs widening, legs thickening until they resembled support pillars.

Such a transformation didn't come without a price.

More blood poured out, but with every drop he lost, new blood coursed through him... blood rich with growth hormones, forcing his body to keep expanding far beyond normal limits!

His height climbed past four meters... five... six... he didn't stop until he reached seven meters tall!

The viewers gasped in shock as they gazed at this newly born scarlet giant, whose mist of blood evaporated around him with every breath he took, hanging in the air like a red fog!

His skin turned darker as a layer of hardened blood began forming along his arms and chest... crystallized, like armor grown from his own veins.

Beneath it, sections of bone pushed outward, shaping into a crude, natural plating that locked his bloated muscular body in place so it wouldn't burst from the pressure inside.

His Cleaver used to be massive, but now? It looked like he was holding a ruler... this didn't last for long as the Cleaver also started stretching and expanding in his hand, becoming a weapon that fit his new size... massive, brutal, and heavy enough to crater the ground with a tap!

When the transformation finally completed, the Masked Butcher stood completely still, covered in crystallized blood armor and bone while surrounded by a slow-moving red mist.

His breathing was harsh, looking like he couldn't maintain this form for long... but his bloodshot eyes behind the mask showed nothing but a reflection of Levi.

He wanted him dead... at all cost.

Meanwhile, while he was going through his transformation, Levi didn't wait for him to finish... he had kicked off with his defensive preparations.

He had already created an aetheric layered dome infused with Void and Sunflame... though, this time he created the dome about twenty meters away from him.

It was like the moment Levi figured out how to create the Aetheric Infused System, all possibilities were unlocked.

Seeing this, the Masked Butcher raised his Cleaver to the Heavens and uttered, his murderous rugged voice booming across the room.

"I am going to slice your explosion apart... you have my wo..."

Alas, before he could finish his promise, the words stuck in his throat after noticing Levi creating two more layers a mere half a meter behind the first ones!

He didn't stop there... he kept going, adding a layer after a layer, playing the violin with such passion and speed; it felt like watching Wallace Hartley's band playing one last tune while the Titanic was sinking to its damnation!

"No, no, no..."

The Masked Butcher felt his heart skip a beat in dread as he watched the layers stacking one dark, one gold, one dark, one gold, until they stopped three meters away from Levi.

Only then did Levi slow down his playing and lift his head, gazing into the Masked Butcher's face.

"You attack, you die... you don't attack, you die." He uttered emotionlessly.

The watchers were left stunned, their hearts beating out of place in excitement and anticipation... on one side, they had the Masked Butcher using his strongest ultimate.

On the other side, they had the Celestial stacking up defensive nukes.

They could tell... one of them wasn't making it out of this alive.

"I made peace with my choice!" The Masked Butcher tightened his grip on the Cleaver and roared as he swung it down, "CELESTIAL!!! I SHALL SURVIVE FOR I AM DESTINED FOR GREATNESS!!!"

When he swung, the cleaver didn't just cut the air... it seemed to slice reality itself!

A long, overwhelming aura shot out from the blade, forming a scarlet strike that looked like a giant blade of blood-charged force!

It roared forward and slammed into Levi's outer dome!

The moment contact was about to happen, Levi dragged the bow on the strings, releasing a harrowing high-tuned pitch, acting like a detonation fuse.

Then... Ka-ooooooooom!!

A powerful burst of energy swallowed the scarlet blade, ripping it apart, but it didn't fully erase it this time... residue of its energy rolled forward until it hit the next layer of Levi's defense!

That one exploded too, making the blast grow larger and brighter... although the Masked Butcher saw a chain reaction starting with each dome collapsing into pure chaotic force of Void and Sunflame, he kept swinging his Meat Cleaver left and right... roaring at the top of his lungs as he did so!

Whoosh! Whoosh!...

Scarlet blades kept slicing through the battlefield, crashing into the growing wall of destruction... but they kept vanishing instantly, eaten by the expanding shockwave.

He swung a fourth time, then a fifth, then a sixth, each strike bigger and heavier than the last, making the viewers understand that he wasn't pulling his fists!

Alas, every blade he fired only made the explosion swell, pushing it closer and closer to him.

The Masked Butcher watched it come... felt the ground tremble and the air vacuumed, but he couldn't move... he glanced at the clock and saw that only a couple seconds remained before his turn ended.

This was it... he knew there was nowhere to go... nothing could outrun the fate awaiting him in Levi's turn.

So, he swung harder until his fingers split, and his cleaver groaned under the strain.

Two seconds.

The explosion was tens of meters away... the heat and chill ruined the atmosphere in front of him.

One second.

The explosion was at his feet... his body had already started breaking apart, but he still made another swinging animation, not giving up until the last moment.

Sadly...

"CELESTIA..."

His final scream was also devoured by the golden and dark explosion, getting erased almost instantly without a trace...

The explosion continued for a second more before finally disappearing into a flash, leaving a similar artistic canva on the floor, but with a radius of two kilometers.

As for Levi?

He was still in the same position... no more aetheric-infused dome around him.

Just him.

On a chair of gentle sunflames.

Resting the violin gently near his feet... the three celestial stars were the only things still in movement in the entire room.

Jasmine, N'ibby, and the rest of the watchers were left staring at him with shocked eyes... having no clue what the hell had just happened.

Gamemaster Gamble was there to awaken them from their stupor... he shouted with spit hitting the microphone, "The winner of the first round without using an offensive card... The Celestial!!"

Chapter 333: Two Down.

-He's gone... he's actually gone!-

-That's not a fight, that's suicide by explosion!-

-The Masked Butcher chose to go out swinging! I respect that, but dear lord... what can anyone do against that defensive technique?! It's not even an ultimate!-

-It's powerful against the Masked Butcher because he is a nightcrawler... but I don't know if it will have the same destructive prowess against other Rifters.-

-I guess we have to watch to find out! I can't wait!-

The watchers and live viewers in the network kept debating nonstop about the prowess of Levi's defensive technique. They witnessed with their own eyes how it erased the Masked Butcher while he was at his strongest.

They wondered if such a result was due to his fatal weakness against sunflame or if it was really as powerful as it looked.

This was the first time they saw anyone merge Void and Sunflame... questions were bound to be asked.

Though... they knew the only way to truly know its prowess was if Levi used a similar technique purely offensively against non-nightcrawlers.

"The Celestial has won without using an offensive card! He has a full five minutes to reset... let's see what the others are doing."

Gamemaster Gamble commented while pulling the curtains on Levi's combat room... hearing this, most of the watchers switched to other rooms, but many others decided to stay... even when they knew that Levi wasn't going to be doing anything.

These were his hardcore fans, but Levi really didn't pay them much attention... after all, he wasn't doing this for the fame, and since ignoring them seemed to keep adding more hardcore viewers, he kept doing it.

As his loyal viewers stuck behind to watch him sitting in silence... Levi was deep in his thoughts.

'Aether Infusion... mastering this system really made winning this game seem more feasible than ever.' Levi smiled under the mask, recalling the torture he went through to master this system.

It took him about an entire week of two hours' rest each day to master it, but only a couple of days to create many powerful and effective techniques off it.

That's how difficult it was... after all, Levi couldn't just infuse a single aspect and be done with it. He also had to infuse Void by figuring out dark energy's natural frequency.

Then, he had to learn how to agitate them separately to reach resonance while keeping the aetheric infusion's integrity to keep them contained and separate.

It was one of the most complicated systems he had created and operated... and if it wasn't for his resonance crossing 15% on all seeds, he would never be able to pull it off.

'The round went better than expected... although the Ace is wasted, it doesn't matter... I earned the Masked Butcher's Joker card.'

Levi thought as he held the two Joker cards in his hand... he didn't know how the others were doing, but he knew one thing... it was really difficult to earn a second Joker card in the first round. Its value was too good, considering he could use it and still possess another one for emergencies.

'Though... if I used it, I will transfer it to another Rifter.' Levi frowned, 'I have a great advantage against the Masked Butcher... but my battles against the rest will be different, and I can't waste it needlessly. This card might be the reason I win this game.'

Levi decided to wait patiently for the others to finish before he could speculate on his next move... in this game, information was everything.

Too bad, Gamemaster Gamble made it hard to figure out what happened in each room, leaving them to take their opponents' words on it.

About five minutes later...

"First Round is over! Rifiers, you may step out from your rooms and rest... You have five minutes before the second round starts." Gamemaster Gamble announced as he opened the gates for everyone.

Everyone started walking out of the rooms in duos like they went inside for a quick chat... when Levi got out and saw that most Rifiers were uninjured, he wasn't too surprised. Though this thought started changing after seeing Drayven exiting the Hollow Titan's room with a body filled with injuries.

He was limping, his scarlet scales were broken or shattered fully, and his wings were shredded and tattered all over... he looked like absolute shit.

"The f*ck you lookin' at?" Drayven growled murderously at everyone, seeing their startled looks.

Meanwhile, the Hollow Titan's obsidian-dark skin was unscratched... he neither spoke nor looked at them with his singular gloomy white eye in the middle of his face... he just went to the platform and waited for the next round to start silently.

'Hollow Titan... Monolith Lineage... from the videos I saw, I knew he was going to be trouble... but to leave Drayven in this state.' Levi frowned, 'That's a curveball.'

"Ahhh... some fresh air at last."

Suddenly, everyone's attention was switched to the Dealer, who strolled out of Dreambreaker's room alone... he stretched his arms behind his back with a wide, casual smile, uncaring that the door behind him closed.

When the rest of the Rifiers saw that both his door and Levi's closed without anyone else walking out, their expressions hardened abruptly.

"Firstly, congratulations to the Celestial and The Dealer!" Gamemaster Gamble laughed excitedly, "I can't believe two Rifiers were eliminated in the first round, but I ain't complaining..."

Hearing the confirmation, Drayven, Madam Future, The Light Eater, and the rest of the Rifiers were all left staring at Levi and the Dealer differently.

'Interesting... I can understand the Dealer killing his target since he was a challenger... but how did the Celestial do it in a defensive position?' Madam Future murmured inwardly.

'Did the Masked Butcher pick only offensive cards? It's the only way for him to die.' The Ruiner thought calmly.

'Shit... these two already possess two Joker cards now... the question is, did they get them using special cards or not?' Drayven narrowed his eyes coldly.

"You have five minutes... enjoy your break, you will need it."

After dropping this, Gamemaster disappeared with a poof... Levi and the rest of the Rifiers kept gazing at each other in silence, everyone clearly trying their best to read the situation of their enemies.

'Drayven looks weak and hurt... this assures me he will use a Queen card in the next round to gain immunity and heal his wounds.' Levi pondered deeply, 'I will be a challenger next round, while he will be a challengee... this is my opportunity to eliminate him by using the Joker card to cancel his Queen card and finish him with an offensive card... but.'

Levi realized... he wasn't the only one who reached this conclusion. The rest of the challengers were all staring at Drayven, akin to a sheep that was stuck in a den of wolves.

"Heh... if you think I am that easy, go for it... I will make you pay a grave price." Drayven snickered, unfazed.

"Big words... but alas, your state makes you appear like a dragon bearing a toothless mouth." The Dealer chuckled, leaning against a wall while shuffling his cards playfully.

"Then, I guess we will meet on the third round when the reshuffle occurs." Drayven sneered icily.

No one was surprised by what he said... they knew that after two rounds, the challengers and challengee go through a randomized pick again. This ensured that the rounds wouldn't end up with the same matchups all the time.

The Dealer continued chuckling and switched his focus to Levi... he opened his mouth, but then, he paused... the side of his eye glanced at his deck.

But then, he blinked, and that look disappeared... the same casual smile returned, and he asked curiously, "Celestial, how did you finish off the Masked Butcher? I knew you're going to emerge safe, but I didn't think you would eliminate him."

"..."

Levi merely stared at him silently until the rest of the Rifiers gave up, realizing that they wouldn't be getting answers from Levi... they could count the number of words he uttered in his previous two games with their hands.

Though the question did bore a hole in their minds. Since they weren't getting anything from him, they switched to the Dealer.

"You keep asking questions, but I don't see you answering any." Drayven sneered, "What? Worried we will figure out you burnt through your special cards to win? Dreambreaker is no easy target, and I doubt he went down without a fight."

Chapter 334: The Dealer.

The Dealer chuckled for a moment and then shrugged his shoulders, "I only played a game of luck with him... it's unfortunate he picked the wrong card."

'Played a game... picked the wrong card... is he talking about the game's cards or his own tarot cards?' Levi knitted his brows.

Levi had watched the Dealer's games multiple times during his breaks... and yet, he was the sole Rifter in this game that he still hadn't figured out his powers in detail.

When he asked Ash'Kral and the Titan about it, they told him that they didn't interact that much with his race or Lineage... they were one of the few races outside the eternal conflict between the Trees of Life and Death.

The only thing they were known for in public was their periodical fortune-telling festival they host on the Boundless Expanse... anything else, they keep themselves reserved from public matters.

In fact, the Dealer shouldn't even be participating in the Nocturnal Ring since their Lineage believed it brought bad karma to abuse their close connection to fate for such superficial matters.

As everyone quietened down, looking like no one had any intentions of partnership, the Dealer suddenly offered with an easy-going smile, "Celestial... how about you challenge me?"

The Light Eater and the others glanced in Levi's direction immediately... they didn't know why the Dealer would go for Levi, but they recognized that anyone in touch with fate almost never makes a bad decision.

Everyone could tell... the Dealer wasn't looking for a fight.

'Is he seeking match fixing in the next round?' Levi thought.

The moment the Dealer stepped out of the room alone, Levi knew that it opened up the possibility of match-fixing the next round... if he challenged him with a Joker card and a low defensive card, the Dealer would be forced to do the same.

After all, both of them had two Joker cards... if they used them in the same round, they would be merely trading them and surviving the round with most of their strong cards intact.

It was the best move to make in the second round... for the Dealer, that is.

'If he wants to play it safe, he has to challenge me...' Levi scoffed, 'I will be doing him a favor if I did this...'

Levi wasn't stupid... the Dealer was a challengee, which put him in a bad spot... however, if they match-fixed the next round, he would be in the clear until the next shuffle.

Although Levi would be getting similar results, he would be wasting his offensive priority to deal actual damage to someone... someone like Drayven.

"I know what you're thinking..." The Dealer chuckled with crossed arms, "Alas... you can't run from fate, no one can."

"..."

Levi kept gazing at him calmly, still not responding to him... he didn't know if he said that to get into his head, but he still had no plan to go for it.

A couple of minutes later... Gamemaster Gamble returned with the microphone already near his mouth.

"Let the second round begin!"

Following his shout, Levi and the rest of the Rifiers returned to their rooms to pick up their challengers and cards.

The screen before Levi showed him the challengee names listed in a row with no further details... Levi reached out with his finger and hovered it above Drayven. But, before he pressed it, he recalled the Dealer's last statement.

'You can't run from fate...' Levi murmured it inwardly.

If it came from someone else, Levi wouldn't pay it much attention... but the Dealer was a special case.

'I know I keep telling you don't rest your life on fate and destiny, but these Fortunari snobs mostly know what they are talking about.' Ash'Kral said calmly, 'He might have said it to get in your head, or...'

'Or, he knows that I am going to end up against him no matter what I did...'

Levi didn't even believe himself saying it... but he wasn't going to take any chances.

'Let's see if he is truly a good fortune-teller or just another bullshit artist.'

Levi pressed a button and locked his decision on the cards he would play... then, he waited for the others to finish.

The moment everyone locked their cards, the gates opened up before the countdown finished... then, they returned to their platforms and waited for Gamemaster Gamble to show the results.

"Will you look at that... you guys are really gunning for Drayven's head. I hope you can afford your decision." Gamemaster Gamble acted surprised as he showed the results before all.

All four challengers picked Drayven!

"Motherf*ckers... daring to look down on me." Drayven cursed under his breath, but he ended up coughing a mouthful of blood.

This sight made it easier to understand why everyone aimed for him... though, now everyone had to throw a die to switch their priority pick without the option of changing their cards!

This was the major problem with targeting weak Rifiers... it made it easier to screw up the card pick since their target might change to someone else... thus, ruining their chances of implementing their prepared strategy.

"Good luck everyone."

The Dealer cheered on them, but everyone ignored him, leaving him to sulk in silence. Levi brought out his own dice and rolled it in his hands a couple of times while his gaze was affixed on the Dealer.

Then, he threw it on the floor with the other die... a moment later, all the dice were affixed on different numbers.

"First Priority to Madam Future for rolling six... second priority for the Celestial for rolling four... the remaining two, you both landed on one... roll again."

'Well shit... this is creepy.'

Levi couldn't help but knit his brows, feeling a slight chill course down his spine... he wasn't a true believer of fate and destiny, but it didn't matter if he believed in them or not.

The Dealer was wielding them... and he just showed him a small demonstration as he didn't even seem surprised with Levi being a second priority pick.

Both of them knew that Levi being in second priority was the sole way to ensure them landing in the same room... after all, Madam Future was going to challenge Drayven and leave Levi to pick from the Dealer, The Ruiner, and The Wanderer of The Seas.

The other two weren't much of an option for the cards he picked... for he might not be a firm believer of fate, but he decided to test out the Dealer.

As much as he hated how it ended, he wasn't losing anything... or that's what he thought.

"Follow me... we are going to have so much fun." The Dealer laughed in amusement while walking inside his room.

Levi glanced at his back for a moment and then at his name on the screen... he sneered coldly and picked his name. 'I can't wait.'

After they entered the room, both stood on opposite sides of the platforms... before Levi could say anything, the Dealer leaned closer and shared.

"I picked a Joker card and a low defensive card... I know you did the same, so let's end this round quickly and spend our time playing a real game."

By the time he was done talking, he had already placed the Tarot deck in the center of the table... his grin so wide, it looked like a nightcrawler excited to sign a Sleepwalker contract with a victim.

"..."

Levi remained silent... but unfortunately, the Dealer wasn't going to let him keep his peace.

"You better play with me... Three-Body... Problem." He uttered, putting a heavy emphasis on the 'Problem'.

Chapter 335: The Dealer's Divination.

Noticing the heavy emphasis on "Problem", Levi kept his emotions and heartbeat in control, not allowing himself to give off any hint. In this cycle of freaks, he knew nothing escaped their senses.

"Does he know about my situation? How?" Levi frowned.

"Don't overthink it... he can't know about the Equilibrium of Chaos, don't even mention the Three-Body Problem... this theory is as old as the universe, and only ancient deities and a few upper echelons heard about it," Ash'Kral assured calmly.

If Ash'Kral weren't sure that Levi's situation would remain hidden, he wouldn't have allowed him to pick the Three-Body Problem nickname.

This made Levi understand that the Dealer might have figured out something weird about him, but he had no clue what it was... hence, why he wanted him to play a Tarot game.

"Still not talking?" The Dealer smiled, not giving up.

He waited for the countdown to finish and then revealed both his cards to Levi. As he had said, he had picked the Joker and an Ace defensive card.

Levi wasn't fazed... he showed his cards as well, and since he had the offensive priority, he used the Joker card to cancel the Ace defensive card.

Joker cards couldn't cancel each other.

The Dealer did the same to Levi's offensive card... which was the Three of Swords.

"Oh... smart, you picked an average offensive card and a Joker in case you won the priority and chose Drayven... you can still finish him off with those two-card combo." The Dealer soon shook his head.
"Though... you can't avoid our fated meeting."

"I wish I did... You talk too much," Levi responded emotionlessly.

"How mean..."

The Dealer merely chuckled, not taking it to heart... the fact Levi talked to him was already a win in his eyes.

"Unfortunately... we have ten minutes of free time if others didn't finish early... so, how about I give you a free Divination since you aren't interested in a game?"

The Dealer's smile widened, tapping his lean, stellar gray fingers on the Tarot deck like an ASMR creator.

-A Divination from a Fortunari for free?! Lucky bastard! I had to wait two days in a queue during their bi-annual Blessed Fortune Festival!-

-Fortunaris' Divinations are known to be the most accurate... It's like a free insight into one's future.-

-My idol will never accept it!-

Levi didn't bother to respond... he just kept standing in silence; his answer was clear to all.

He might not be too familiar with how amazing this opportunity was, but he didn't care. There was no way in hell he would do such a thing in public, which meant exposing his identity.

"Well... I'm doing it anyway." The Dealer chuckled playfully. "What can you do? Attack me?"

"...."

Levi's brow twitched... but he kept his words to himself, understanding that the Dealer could only work with what he had as accurate information. He could deviate all he wanted; nothing precise would show.

The Dealer shuffled the deck with a deliberate intention of creating chaos amidst them... then, he closed his eyes and pulled the card on top, placing it on the table.

Five of Wands.

The Dealer felt his heart skip a beat after seeing this card show up again... the exact card that was linked to Levi from the deck before.

It was of five figures holding long brown sticks in a chaotic setting... they were pushing and swinging at each other with no real aim, like each one had the right vision to build something with those sticks, and they were stubborn in choosing their way.

'Five of Wands... this card shouldn't connect to the Celestial logically... it shows at the start only if it affected five distinct individuals heavily, having their fates entangled chaotically... if the Celestial is one, and his Nightcrawler is another, what about the other three?'

The Dealer had gone through plenty of Divinations, and this card never showed itself right from the start.

"This is inside you..." The Dealer said calmly. "Five forces fighting. Five wills that can't agree... I don't know if it means anything to you."

Levi didn't react on the outside... however, he was taken aback on the inside, not expecting the Dealer's Divination to be this good.

He could tell that the card considered him, Ash'Kral, and the Three Origin Seeds as individuals since each one had its own will. But he refrained from actively participating and kept watching in silence.

The Dealer took a deep breath and pulled a second card, placing it on the table.

The Hermit.

It showed an old man with a white beard and a gray robe holding a lantern.

The Dealer nodded to himself.

"This means you're searching for answers... you're trying to understand who you are or figure out the solution to escape from the other wills."

The Dealer drew another.

Strength.

It showed a woman patting a lion-like beast.

The Dealer tapped the card with his finger. "Something inside you is trying hard to keep everything under control... to stop the conflict from tearing you apart."

'He is good...' Levi praised inwardly.

Next card.

The Moon.

The Dealer's eyes narrowed. "You're hiding things. Or... no. Things are hiding themselves inside you. Shadows, secrets, instincts, thoughts, you don't fully know..."

Levi remained as still as stone... giving him no confirmation or denial, like the Dealer was talking to himself.

Seeing this, the Dealer sighed and reached for the last card in the spread... the card meant to show the future or the final outcome.

He flipped it.

The Tower.

It presented a harrowing scene of a broken tower set in flames with people jumping out of it... a lightning bolt hitting its top, and the ground looked uneven.

The moment the card was placed, a very subtle vibration moved across the screen, making the rest of the cards shift faintly. The Dealer stiffened for a moment and then glanced at Levi.

"This card means collapse," he said faintly, "a sudden fall... everything breaking at once."

Levi was left slightly stunned behind the mask... he might not believe in fate, deviation, and such to a reverent extent, but still... to hear that collapse awaited him in the future, he wasn't too fond of such news.

"Maybe I'm wrong... let me go for it again."

The Dealer reshuffled and tried again... he wanted to see if the reading could shift or stay the same.

He laid down new cards:

However... even when he shuffled them, the first card showing was the Five of Wands again. The Dealer ignored it and placed three more cards:

These were different: Temperance, The Sun, and Judgment.

The Dealer showed a faint smile after telling Levi that those cards almost always lead to a good future.

Levi could feel it too. The line looked brighter, almost reassuring.

But then... he drew the last card.

The Tower.

Again.

The Dealer's face tightened... he shook his head, gathered the cards, and reshuffled fast. He set down another spread:

High Priestess... The Chariot... The Lovers...

But the final card...

The Tower.

He swallowed hard, and Levi swallowed harder as he watched him try again and again... four spreads, five spreads, six spreads... different positions, different intentions, different card lines.

And yet... every single time, without fail, the last card was always the same:

The Tower.

Chapter 336: Follow Your Heart.

It didn't matter if the rest of the cards were gentle, harsh, confusing, or hopeful... the first and final card never changed.

The Dealer's hands were now shaking a little... he looked at the Five of Wands and the pile of Towers spread across the table.

He uttered the first thought.

"Internal chaos..." he said slowly, pointing at the Five of Wands. "Five separate wills fighting inside you..."

Then, he pointed at the Tower cards next.

"And this..." He took a breath. "This means the fight inside you doesn't stay inside... It spreads... It turns into something outside you."

"Something big... Something destructive."

He looked up at Levi, his tone and gaze were no longer playful... he was as stern and as solemn as a wise man, who spent centuries of his life sharpening his craft.

Hence... these results, he believed in them with all of his heart.

"No matter how I read the cards, your path always ends the same way... The chaos inside you will create chaos outside you. Something is going to break, and when it does, it won't be small."

Levi still didn't speak, but the surrounding atmosphere grew tense and ominous... even Jasmine, N'ibby, and the rest of the viewers felt slightly suffocated by what he said.

The Dealer pushed the Tower card across the table toward him.

"Destruction. Upheaval... A fall so violent it shakes everything around you."

Levi listened silently, but even he... couldn't help but feel his heart beating rapidly at such dreadful reading of his future.

"And the terrifying part? It won't come from enemies... or destiny... or even the universe."

The Dealer's stellar eyes locked with the orbiting three celestial stars and said solemnly.

"It will come from you..."

Levi had no idea if the Dealer was telling him this to mess with his mind since they were still opponents, but he had a feeling that he wasn't lying to him.

"If you want a full Divination with details, add me after the game ends." The Dealer collected the cards as he whispered inwardly, 'His existence is such an enigma to me... I don't know why, but I am getting interested in him more than I would like to admit.'

Levi had no idea that the Dealer kept some details to himself... details, he wasn't comfortable sharing in public about Levi. Although he seemed playful, annoying, and casual, when it came to such serious matters related to his Lineage's Legacy, he respected the rules.

One of the main rules was full Divinations must be held in private like a doctor or a lawyer session... clients of the Fortunari had nothing to fear when it came to their privacy as they took a heavenly vow to not spill crucial information even if their lives were at risk.

The Fortunari managed to keep their legacy afloat outside the eternal conflict because of this... all sides considered them as a true neutral force like Nocturn, trusting them with their secrets and futures if they were willing to know.

What the Dealer had offered Levi was just that... a chance to let him in on his secrets so he could get a clearer Divination and help him avoid that ominous future.

And yet... Levi didn't respond.

He knew, responding meant affirming his Divination in public... which meant, he was indeed hiding something within him that could cause upheaval.

The last thing Levi needed was the upper echelon's attention... he already was going to have plenty considering his access to Void/Sunflame Aspects.

It seemed like the Dealer was smart enough to realize this too... hence, he didn't take Levi's silence as a full-on rejection. But, a chance to rekindle their meeting offline.

After the Divination concluded, Levi didn't stick next to the Dealer for long... he went to the door and sat there, awaiting the end of the round. He was left deep in thought about the Divination's results.

'Ash... I know you aren't the best fan of Fate and Destiny... but, what are the odds of eight Divinations ending with the same future? Destruction and Upheaval?' Levi wondered.

'I don't believe you should allow fate or destiny to decide your path.' Ash'Kral replied calmly, 'This stands for your situation... the cards can show the same future a hundred times, and it shouldn't change anything about how you tread on your path.'

'Follow your heart and never allow this result to make you second-question your decisions... that's how you make it true... always.'

Hearing this, Levi found that he was given more questions than answers... he pulled the chained-up Joker Card, which he got from the Dealer, and then, he started bending it over and over again with his fingers.

His Harmonic Spine was painting the chained Joker card with bright colors... and yet, it merely highlighted its frightening appearance and grin... that foolish, but creepy grin... like everything was a game to it.

That's when Levi recalled the last sentence written on the death game's interface.

'Only fools laugh last...' Levi murmured inwardly, 'Indeed... only fools laugh last as they are the only ones able to maintain their ignorance... I was fine a few minutes before, and now... I am not.'

As much as Levi tried his best to avoid thinking about the Divination, he simply couldn't escape it... if it was some random fortune-teller doing it, he wouldn't pay it much attention.

But, the Dealer was able to touch the Fate Aspect through lesser Aspects connected to it... he might not master it yet, but having a connection was enough to solidify his Deviations.

For he, tapped into unknown forces... not even Ash'Kral seemed to understand fully.

Although Levi had just calmed down the Three Origin seeds... their existence was still a massive threat to his life.

This Divination just solidified his future to be filled with destruction and pain because of his inability to unify their wills as one.

'Am I destined to fail at solving the Three-Body Problem?'

Before this question could take root in Levi's mind and have it poison all the hard work he put down, he shook his head and erased it.

'Whether the Dealer is right or not... I am not going to accept it.' Levi uttered coldly, 'I still have a debt to my parents to uphold justice for their murder and a promise to keep with the Three Ancestral Trees... whether I succeed or fail, I won't allow anyone to look back and say that I didn't give it my best.'

'Never.'

The Third Round...

After the second round concluded, the Dealer didn't bother Levi anymore... he went to irritate the rest of the Rifters like nothing occurred within his combat room.

Meanwhile, Levi refocused on winning the game, leaving what happened in the second round in the past where it belonged.

'Drayven somehow survived against Madam Future... but his condition looks even worse.' Levi thought as he gazed at Drayven, who was sitting on the floor... his body bleeding all over from sharp thin wounds. His muddled eyes made it seem like he was phasing in between conscious and unconscious.

From all the Rifiers, he was the sole one this heavily injured... The Hollow Titan, and Madam Future were the only ones still unscathed. The rest did suffer from some light injuries, but nothing too serious.

This meant... everyone was going to aim at Drayven again, believing that he was almost out of special cards while in such a bad state.

"Let the reshuffle begin!" Gamemaster Gamble announced.

Levi lowered his head to face the screen, and after a short delay, it displayed a word that elevated his mood.

-Challenger.-

'This is good... I have another shot at getting Drayven's Joker card if he hasn't already used it against Madam Future.'

Levi glanced in the direction of Madam Future, who resembled a silent doll wearing a flowery blue dress... her appearance was otherworldly and unique, like she was born in a different universe.

Her face was blue and covered in dark openings near the jaw and the temples... from those dark holes, a mysterious, illuminating blue essence was being released constantly. She had no hair, but this mist made it seem like she had one that was alive.

Suddenly, she turned her head in Levi's direction and gave him a slight head nod in a polite greeting... then, she refocused on the screen, not saying a word.

'This game... I have a feeling I have to come at it from a different angle if I want to win.' Levi murmured inwardly, believing that he might lose this game even when he was clearly doing great.

His competition was simply too strong and bizarre...

Chapter 337: Trueborn/Falseborn Races.

After the challengers were chosen, everyone returned to their rooms to prepare for the third round... Levi's choices for the challenge were: Drayven, The Ruiner, The Light Eater, and Madam Future.

'The obvious choice is Drayven... everyone will take advantage of his challengee status to finish him off once and for all.' Levi pondered, his index finger tapping on the screen that was showing the Rifiers' names.

'But... this is the angle used against common enemies... not Drayven, not these monsters.' Levi knitted his brows, having a tingling feeling that something wasn't right with Drayven's situation.

He was just like the rest, blinded by Drayven's heavily wounded status to think about anything else... but, after his session with the Dealer, he realised that such a thought process was too naive against these monsters.

Every one of them deserved his fullest attention.

'What if... just, what if Drayven's wounds are intentional?'

A shocking theory... but Levi didn't dismiss it right away. He had watched and studied Drayven's prowess in his previous two games. He knew that he wasn't so weak that he would be left heavily wounded in both rounds.

It just didn't add up... he could understand the first round since there was a possibility of Drayven being too arrogant and not taking any special cards with him, but what about the second round?

If he played it smart, he would choose the Joker card and a defensive card besides the Queen... this would allow him to survive Madam Future's challenge without any additional wounds. Instead, he came out much worse than in the first round.

This made Levi realise that either Drayven didn't pick a Joker card or... he did use it and survived Madam Future's round. In his free time, he wounded himself behind closed doors to attract him, the Dealer, or anyone with a high number of Joker cards!

Although this theory implied having Drayven waste a Joker card... if he succeeded, he would be getting two from them while saving his other special cards!

Since everyone was enemies... Madam Future or Hollow Titan wouldn't snitch on him, wishing that his plan succeeded, and he took down another Rifter.

Whether he succeeded or not, they knew that the battle was going to leave them both heavily wounded... this time for real, and they could reap the rewards later.

'If I am right... Then, Drayven is more shrewd than I thought...' Levi frowned, 'He isn't playing the game like us... he decided to be a wolf in a sheep disguise to lower our guards and pick average cards to finish him off... no one will risk wasting special cards on a wounded opponent. Since he is heavily injured, this puts a false sense of security when fighting him... but, the moment I challenge him or the Dealer, he will bare his fangs at us.'

Levi didn't know if Drayven had a powerful recovery technique that could heal him passively without wasting the Queen card... but, if he did, then... his current state shouldn't be taken as an advantage.

Of course, all of this was mere speculation, and Levi had no clue if he was overthinking it or not... but he had no plans to be the scapegoat.

'I will challenge someone else... if Drayven really was putting on an act, then he is bound to bare his fangs in this round whether he liked it or not.'

Levi understood that Drayven couldn't keep up the act beyond the third round... after all, he couldn't afford to remain weakened for too long since it forced him to waste special cards or at least high-numbered cards to ensure his survival.

'If I am right... Then, he must still be holding onto the King Card or the Jack Card... that's all he will need to finish the job if his challenger wasn't suspecting anything weird.'

'I can only wait until the third round's end to see the truth...'

For now... Levi left Drayven's situation in the back of his head and focused on his next target... he scanned the remaining names and couldn't help but tighten his lips.

All three Rifiers were powerful and difficult to deal with... which made him understand that if he didn't play this right, he might end up leaving the combat room heavily injured.

'Madam Future's spiritual prowess is as freakish as mine... with her ability to see the future, challenging her will result in nothing good to show for.'

'The Ruiner, on the other hand, is quite terrifying... he is from the Angrath Trueborn Race, which has only one Highborn Lineage... Angrath Lineage... his race might not be as ancient as Radians, Oblivars, and other Celestial Races, but they are still quite old and have already established a strong presence in the Boundless Expanse and the Chained Universe.'

Levi knew that the Angrath Lineage were the master of the Wrath Aspect... the Hound might be wielding the Pride Aspect, but in reality, his utilisation was nowhere near its full potential. Yet, he showed great prowess using it.

Now, imagine a Trueborn Lineage that was developing the Wrath Aspect generation after generation while still following the path of their ancestor?

It didn't matter if they wielded only a single Aspect... if one was capable of bringing its true potential to light, it was more dangerous than owning multiple Aspects.

After Levi saw the Ruiner's most famous clip of blowing off the entire battlefield with one ability, he needed to double-check his decision to challenge him.

'Light Eater... He is quite dangerous as well, but... his spiritual defences are lacking a bit.' Levi switched to the last option, 'He is part of the D'knari Lineage... A loyal Falseborn race that follows Oblivars and is considered one of their loyal servants... though, he isn't a Half-Oblivar.'

Gamemaster Gamble and the watchers didn't make a big deal of Levi's situation just because... being able to wield Sunflames meant a Rifter was a True Half-Radian, who shared genuine genetics from Radians.

The same went for Half-Oblivar... they needed to wield Void Aspect, which was much rarer, considering that Oblivars were kept to themselves in the shadows.

Still, they did have plenty of Falseborn Races under them, which were bestowed with some of their qualities, allowing them to harness their lesser Aspects.

Falseborn Races were different from Trueborn Races in the way they created their evolutionary paths.

Trueborn Races were born of ancient ancestors, who reached Tier 8 or Tier 9, allowing them an automatic bestowal of their Shadowlife Seeds' copies to their children during birth.

Their Shadowlife seeds were equipped with the necessary knowledge to help their children reach a similar stage to them if they had what it took.

Meanwhile, Falseborn Races were created from Hollow Races that were bestowed with Shadowlife seeds that had an already prepared evolutionary path.

The Oblivars chose a specific Hollow Race with the right potential to wield the prepared evolutionary path... then, they help them integrate the Shadowlife seeds and push them to Tier 7 minimum, which was the Fruition Stage of the Shadowlife tree.

The moment their trees could bear fruit and their seeds... it gave them the ability to keep passing their seeds to their people without needing the Oblivars' help anymore.

However... the only downside of this path was their inability to pass the Shadowlife seeds to their children through birth.

After all, their evolutionary path wasn't earned through natural genetic progression like Trueborn Races... it was already created, perfected, and handed over.

Just like it was handed over, they could only do the same... hence, the name: Falseborn.

'He doesn't have access to Void Aspect, but his race was gifted with evolutionary paths linked to Darkness and Gravity Aspects.' Levi held his chin thoughtfully, 'If I played my cards right... There is a possibility of eliminating him.'

A couple of minutes later...

Levi and the rest emerged from their rooms and stood in front of the platforms again... just like before, Drayven looked like absolute shit. Still, he kept glaring at everyone coldly, trying his best to look unhurt or weak.

"Challengers! Mark your targets!"

Hearing Gamemaster Gamble's announcement, Levi reached out and picked Light Eater... meanwhile, Hollow Titan and Wanderer of the Seas chose Drayven.

As for the Dealer, he selected no one... he didn't skip the challenge, but he did give up on the priority pick, which meant he would fight whoever was left unchallenged.

"Ohoho! We have two surprises this round!" Gamemaster Gamble commented with a surprised tone, "Don't tell me both of them figured out Drayven's scheme?!"

His commentary was targeted at the watchers, who were also left puzzled by Levi and the Dealer's decision to give up on such a 'freebie' on paper.

-How did they know? Did we miss anything from their meeting in the second round?-

-God damn it... Drayven's plan is f*cked now... he wounded himself for nothing!-

-As expected of my beloved Celestial! Such a petty attempt to bait him will never work!-

The watchers had a mixed reaction at this development... unlike Levi and the rest of the Rifiers, they could spectate all the combat rooms at once if they desired.

They saw how Drayven allowed himself to get hit by Hollow Titan even though he had a defensive card in hand... they also watched him wound himself like a madman inside Madam Future's combat room.

It was like the moment he realised that he wasn't going to take down either of them, he switched to playing the victim to lure in his real targets. But now? Some watchers mocked him, and others showed sympathetic looks as they eyed his stunned expression.

'How... how did they find out?!'

Drayven tightened his knuckles until his claws pierced through his skin... yet, he felt nothing.

The same went for his injuries, which he was faking to be in pain... they were real alright, but he felt nothing... Not many knew this, but a few special Scarlet Dragons were born with the ability to switch on and off their pain receptors.

Accompanying this innate ability was an insane rejuvenation the moment the Dragon decided to turn his pain receptors on... It was a life-or-death genetic mechanism.

'Damn it! All that trouble for nothing!'

Drayven was royally pissed, but he made sure to keep the act right... Although he ended up being challenged by the Wanderer of the Seas, he still had to keep the disguise alive.

'Whatever... I will finish them off in the next rounds.'

Drayven narrowed his slitted pupils at Levi and the Dealer... then, he walked behind the Wanderer inside his room.

The moment their door was closed, the Dealer turned to Levi and chuckled... it was like he already knew what Drayven was scheming before the second round concluded, and kept it to himself to see if Levi was going to catch on.

Then, he went inside the Ruiner's combat room while playing with the Tarot cards. Levi didn't know if he was that confident in handling the Ruiner or if he simply was never afraid of death.

'Is he this carefree because he knows exactly when he will die in the future?' Levi murmured inwardly, watching them disappear behind the closing gate.

Soon, he switched his focus to Madam Future and Hollow Titan, who went together inside another room, leaving him and Light Eater alone in the central plaza.

"Follow me... Radian's waste." Light Eater uttered coldly without bothering to glance in Levi's direction.

His appearance alone was enough to scare anyone straight, as he was extremely tall and shaped like a person, but his body looked like smoke and darkness mixed together.

His whole form shifted as if he was made of shadows instead of solid flesh... His head was a smooth, round sphere with no face, resembling a miniature blackhole.

He had a glowing ring of purple light circling it, like a small eclipse... Parts of his body looked torn or stretched, with long pieces of shadow trailing behind him.

His limbs were long and ended in misty claw-like fingers... as for his lower torso? It kept fading into purple mist, almost like he had no legs and was floating instead.

Although his race was considered Falseborn, it didn't mean that he was any weaker than Trueborn races or such... in fact, Falseborns created by Ancient races were powerful than many Trueborn races since they were created to be the best subordinates.

D'knari Lineage were believed to be created from a Hollow Race that was found living on a planet so close to a blackhole, it was constantly drifting to its event horizon.

The Oblivars were the ones saving them from their eventual damnation and turned them into a powerful Falseborn race... because of this, the D'knari worshipped the Oblivars and treated them above anything else, willing to throw their lives away for any order given to them.

Hence, it wasn't strange for Light Eater to hate Levi's guts, considering that he was a Half-Radian.

'I wonder what his reaction will be when he finds out Levi is a Half-Oblivar too.' The Titan chuckled.

'His world is going to flip upside down.' Ash'Kral snickered.

Chapter 338: Natural Form.

The Light Eater stood in front of Levi, his shadowy face showing nothing but coldness... his misty eyes moved over Levi's face for a long moment before he finally spoke.

"I don't know what kind of Half-Radian you are... but you ain't making it out of this combat room alive..." He flipped one of his two cards around, showing the Jack card and a high-numbered defensive card. "Half-Oblivars and Half-Radians are destined to fight to the death each time they meet for our deities' honors. If you have any, you will accept my duel to death, no turns, no restrictions."

The watchers didn't know how to react to this... on one hand, they supported The Light Eater's claim, as it was known that Half-Bloods were born with eternal hatred of the other side, or had it imprinted on them later on.

They couldn't co-exist with the other side... like a stray dog and a cat, a fight almost always broke out between them.

At the same time, they had watched Levi utilize Void-based powers... so this whole concept was thrown out the window.

As expected... Levi's response proved it.

"I do what I want... Always."

He lifted his hand and revealed his cards... they were the Joker and five numbered offensive cards.

Before The Light Eater could react to Levi's betrayal of his divinities, Levi used the Joker card to kill off the eight-numbered defensive card.

"If you want a duel from me, you have to earn it." Levi concluded emotionlessly.

The moment he said it, the watchers gasped, realizing that Levi had full offensive priority on an unguarded target!

The Light Eater couldn't use the Jack card without the priority... he had to survive Levi's onslaught and use it on his turn. By then, even if he survived, he would be too wounded to fight on equal grounds against Levi!

Yet, The Light Eater was unfazed... in fact, he looked more pissed off about Levi rejecting his proposal than being afraid of his attacks.

"Tsk, of course, a Half-Radian will use whatever means possible to win against us, uncaring about their divinities' honor..." The Light Eater spat in front of Levi's feet. "You're a disgrace to all Half-Bloods..."

Not waiting for him to respond, The Light Eater exhaled and let his humanoid shape fall apart under the startled eyes of the viewers... his body sank inward while his head kept enlarging until he resembled a small black hole copy.

A perfect sphere of darkness that warped everything around it.

"I don't need defensive cards... never did." The Light Eater's cosmic voice echoed from within the black hole. "This is my natural form."

While Levi was left confused at the sight before him, Gamemaster Gamble shouted excitedly, "I can't believe it!! Light Eater is one of the rare prodigies who has achieved 90% Solarity Access!! He can shapeshift his form at will to the closest phenomenon, matter, object, or even elemental energy with the highest affinity to his Aspect!!"

Whooooaaah!! This is crazy!! 90%?! So impressive!! He achieved it while as a Falseborn! Let that sink in!

The viewers were left astonished at the sight, understanding just how difficult it was to hit such high Solarity Access while still at the lower evolutionary stages.

To reach 90% this early could only imply that Light Eater was born with an evolutionary genetic code that was so compatible with his Shadowlife Seed's knowledge, it accepted him as a perfect host to help it achieve its cycle.

Although Solarity Access wasn't of the same quality as Resonance Access, the Shadowlife Seeds didn't give their full access to just anyone.

They had to be extremely compatible with the evolutionary path they had chosen, since it meant that the host had higher chances of actually achieving the cycle.

Since the Shadowlife Seeds' main goal was to finish the cycle and die, they refused to keep themselves embedded in waste by empowering them with high Solarity Access.

Instead, they increased their Solarity Access the higher the host grew, allowing it to see its evolutionary path clearly, and whether it was actually compatible all the way or not.

This was the reason it was almost impossible to find Daywalkers with high Solarity Access right from the start... the chosen evolutionary path was new and untested.

Meanwhile, Trueborn and Falseborn had evolutionary paths already tested... since Trueborn had the seeds passed from generation to generation naturally, they were almost always born with a decent Solarity Access.

The same went for some rare cases of Falseborns... just like The Light Eater, who was more than just a rare case.

After Levi thought about it for a moment, the confusion died out and was replaced with a solemn expression.

'You gotta be kidding me... no one is normal here.'

He realized that it was going to be extremely challenging to take down The Light Eater with his original plan.

'In this form... he is a black hole's clone... he can keep it active since he has shifted to another form, not used an ability.' Ash'Kral shared sternly. 'He must be keeping his gravitational pull off to not get penalized.'

Levi's nuke-like defensive ability activated its offensive properties only after it was struck... hence, it still counted as a defensive action. Meanwhile, if The Light Eater kept his gravitational pull active and assaulted Levi, it would count as an attack.

But if he activated it only during Levi's attacks, it wouldn't count as either defensive or offensive ability, but just an order.

It was like the system saw his black hole form as natural, and so was anything it produced as long as it wasn't used offensively.

'I know... I can see my Harmonic Spine's vision distorted around him...' Levi nodded, his world of darkness showing everything painted in color but a pitch-dark hole. He could tell the moment The Light Eater turned on his gravitational pull, he would need to fight for his life to remain in place.

'I have five attacks... I need to make them count before my turn ends.'

Still, Levi didn't allow this situation to mess with his confidence... he came here for the kill, and he wasn't leaving without it.

He summoned his Judgment's Staff... then he manifested a giant multi-layered hammer of aetheric energy, which was connected to the top crown, making the staff look like the hilt. The hammer was about six meters in height, visible to all watchers.

Next, he infused it with Void and Sunflames... pushing each other through their own layer, turning the green hammer into a dark hammer with a golden coating!

The moment The Light Eater felt the presence of the Void spilled within the green hammer, his mind froze for a second. 'Is that... no, impossible...'

His senses told him that he was watching Void and Sunflames combined into a single attack, but his heart and mind refused to accept it.

Who could blame him? For Ancient Half-Blood wannabees like The Light Eater, this was his dream... to become a true Half-Oblivar with access to the Void Aspect, or, if he dared to dream of the impossible, evolve to become a perfect Oblivar through the Glorious Evolution.

Yet... here he was, watching his lifelong dream... the main drive behind joining the Nocturnal Ring and desiring to grow stronger... being merged with Sunflames.

"YOU BLASPHEMOUS BASTARD!! HOW DARE YOU!" His heated scream boomed across the combat room.

Chapter 339: Pure Hatred.

Everyone could tell he was absolutely livid... yet, no one anticipated any different reaction. Half-Bloods of opposite factions hated and fought against each other more than Oblivars and Radians did.

That's why the most powerful Half-Oblivars were considered the Elite Conquerors sent to corrupt planets with the highest Life force Potential... who went against them? The Best of Saviors, which were mostly Half-Radians.

Hence, they saw each other as water and fire... a Half-Radian would share the same reaction if he saw Levi right now.

'Impressive... your little boyfriend has managed to piss off both Half-Bloods with his exposure.' N'ibby said lazily, 'He is really asking for it.'

'It's fine as long as he keeps this persona limited to the Boundless Expanse.' Jasmine supported Levi regardless, 'I know him... If he wasn't confident in maintaining his anonymity, he wouldn't have dared to be this brazen.'

'It's not hard to figure out what he did for entities like us.' N'ibby added depressively, 'He must have signed under a single Origin serial code... this gives him total anonymity. However, if the Radians and Oblivars wanted him found, he must ensure that his serial code is literally linked to nothing else but the Nocturnal Ring... the moment he uses it to sign another contract, they can scour the universe for the contract's serial number and read its details if it was a public contract.'

'Levi isn't stupid enough to do that.' Jasmine shook her head, 'He has three seeds... he must be using each one for a certain area.'

'It's not about now... It's about how long he can keep it up.'

With that last statement from N'ibby, they returned to watching the game... while The Light Eater was absolutely losing his marbles and cursing off Levi left and right for disrespecting his divinities like this, Levi turned a deaf ear to his cries.

He manifested one aetheric arm that was connected to his back... it went through his clothes and then Levi increased its concentration until its presence appeared almost physical... the slender fingers, the clean nails, the wrinkles... it was a perfected design of Levi's hand.

Levi took a deep breath and concentrated on it... he controlled it to reach his Harmonic Spine that resembled a silver metallic spine. Then, he used a finger and gently ran it over the silver threads.

A beautiful low-pitched note was released, but the viewers couldn't enjoy it thoroughly due to The Light Eater's loud voice.

It didn't matter if they heard it or not... as long as Levi did, and most importantly, the aetheric energy.

As Levi kept playing the exact tone on his spine, he tightened his grip on the staff and bent his legs slightly... then, he increased the speed of his playing, causing the aetheric layers to start vibrating nonstop, barely keeping the containment alive.

Seeing this, The Light Eater stopped his barrage of insults and focused on Levi's dangerous stance... as someone living amongst Half-Oblivars, he heard stories and saw recordings of battles between Half-Oblivars and Half-Radians.

As he watched the agitated aetheric containment about to shatter, he knew that their contact wasn't going to be pretty.

"Bring it on, you impious bastard!"

The moment his curse echoed once across the combat room, everyone was startled to see Levi already swinging the massive, agitated hammer with both arms from above!

Whoosh!!

The instant The Light Eater saw it, he unleashed his natural gravitational pull, throwing Levi off balance a little... but he had already experienced the gravitational pull of the Hungering Dark.

Although The Light Eater's pull was powerful, it wasn't enough to catch Levi off guard... and yet, the same couldn't be said about Levi's hammer.

The aetheric energy reached a certain concentration, making it easier for it to be affected by gravity... the hammer's shape twisted the moment it was about to strike it, making it orbit the black hole as a long string of green-infused energies... the Void and Sunflames also fell under the same fate, their activation negated by the intense gravitational pressure.

As for Levi? He found himself getting pulled into the black hole... since he had attacked him, if he were to die by the black hole, it would be on him... just like what he did to The Masked Butcher.

Thus, he extended his arms and feet in the direction of the black hole... then, he used Sun Jets on his feet and palms, resembling Iron Man!

With such intense force, Levi managed to push himself away from the gravitational pull and land some distance away. Only then did The Light Eater deactivate the gravitational pull, awaiting the next attack.

"Two strikes... three more, and you're mine." The Light Eater uttered murderously... genuinely hating Levi with such great passion like he had killed his parents.

That's how much respect he had for Oblivars... what Levi represented was more sinister and damaging than having his parents killed.

'I guess I am in the same scenario as The Masked Butcher... I can't use such destructive attacks without the risk of failure or getting killed.' Levi thought inwardly, 'Black hole form... nothing physical or energy-based will work against it... unless I used an attack so powerful, so fast, it manages to shatter his form before its gravitational pull can stop it.'

Levi thought deeply and hard about his arsenal of techniques... unfortunately, he found nothing that could help him brute force his form.

'I just need to cast Eternal Mirage... but it's extremely difficult to hit his soul with it when he is in this form... I need to find his subconscious barrier and assault it.'

If he had access to the use of ultimates, he could have summoned the False Sun... it was such a powerful spiritual ability, it didn't give a shit if The Light Eater was in a black hole form or a squirrel form... as long as his soul was around it, it was going to try to pull it out no matter what. But now... Levi was clueless about how he could locate his subconscious barrier in such form.

'Ash'Kral... what do you think?' Levi phoned for help.

As a Daywalker... they were considered one entity in the Death Games, so he could ask him about anything, and it wouldn't count as breaking the rules. On the other hand, it was different for the Titan. Hence, he didn't converse that much with Levi to avoid causing him any trouble.

'Think really hard... what can you do to locate his subconscious barrier... You already have the answer.' Ash'Kral replied, not giving him the answer directly.

He knew that Levi would grow better if he figured out the solutions on his own in such situations than being spoon-fed... though the hint he gave him was more than enough for someone like Levi to figure out the solution.

'You're right... I have the method, but do I have enough time to succeed?' Levi murmured as he checked the time: Three minutes remained.

'You have the greatest auditory organ in the universe... You are the only one who can do it in such a short period.' Ash'Kral encouraged sternly.

'Three minutes... if I fail, I will have to duel him.' Levi knitted his eyebrows coldly as he switched his weapon to the Requiem of Hope and Despair. 'After all that shit he said... I will never give him the honor to fight back.'

Although he summoned it, he left the aetheric arm near his spine... instead, he added more aetheric arms around his body, each one focusing on a specific segment of his spine, like it was an instrument.

Then, he lifted his head and gazed at The Light Eater... saying nothing, Levi drew the bow across the violin and was accompanied by different heavenly tunes played by his spine...

Chapter 340: The World's Spine.

Levi could only play, using his own body and weapon as instruments... his ears, his flesh, his mind, and even his soul... everything was vibrating at a quantum level, leaving him to experience the world no longer through frequencies alone... but delighted frequencies, appearing like they were mini bright colorful suns dancing to his beautiful tunes.

Levi ignored literally everything around him... the clock, Light Eater, the combat room, even his own situation... he just knew, if he wanted to win this battle, he must find out Light Eater's hidden Subconscious Barrier's natural frequency!

Usually, when Levi needed a natural frequency of something, he asked Ash'Kral about it as he was the true master of the Nine Senses Seed... however, when Levi tried to learn how to detect natural frequencies on his own through sounds, he realized just how challenging and precise it was.

He practiced it with his violin and Harmonic Spine, but unlike the rest of his techniques, he failed to achieve it... the perfection it needed kept eluding him.

Now... Levi was put in a situation that demanded his success... no giving up, no delays, no second chances. Either he succeeded or he would have a nasty battle on his hands.

'Ash'Kral said I have not just to feel the frequencies, I have to be them... I have to put a symphony of my own that's so good it will make the world dance.'

Levi recalled Ash'Kral's teachings, knowing that he needed to do more, to become one with the world. Only then would it allow him to detect the natural frequency of anything he desired. He must not order the frequencies; he must tune his own body and soul to the frequency of the world to create... Harmony.

Thus... he played like nothing before... he played with such genuine emotions, the viewers could only listen to the intensity within his improvised song... silenced, captivated, their eyes stunned, but their ears... blessed.

For they were witnessing a mortal's attempt to break his limits... his doubts... his fears... and seek a hand to the world's natural frequency.

For he knew... to align his soul and body's frequencies to the world, it was the start of unlocking the Melody Aspect.

Whoosh!

With a dramatic motion, Levi drew the bow slowly from one side to the other, releasing a steady, high note that made many viewers feel goosebumps coursing through their skin.

Even Jasmine... who lived in a world of absolute silence... felt the vibrations moving through her body the moment Levi held that steady, high note.

She heard nothing... no song, no echo, not even a hint of sound. But the vibrations? They hit her like a wave; she couldn't help but allow herself to be splashed.

Her breath stopped briefly as she slowly lifted her hand and touched her forearm... The instant her slender finger brushed her skin, her pores opened and a sharp, tingling shiver raced across her arm, then up her neck, then down her back.

Her eyes widened in disbelief.

'How...? Levi...'

She couldn't hear the melody, yet she felt every rise and dip of it without needing her ears... for he had made her enjoy the song through her eyes, her bones, her nerves, and her entire body.

Neither Levi nor Jasmine knew this... but he had connected her senses cross-dimensionally through Nocturn's contract that created a spatial bridge between her and the death game's map.

Usually... this was something impossible, for a song to affect frequencies dimensionally this intimately, but it wasn't to the Harmonic Spine.

Levi's Harmonic Spine wasn't just an organ... It wasn't just an instrument.

If Levi knew anything about this, he would understand immediately why it was called the best audible organ in the universe.

It was the one instrument in the universe capable of crossing dimensions, bypassing silence itself, and sinking directly into the body for even a deaf person!

At the moment, Jasmine didn't need ears or sound... Levi had made her feel the music anyway.

For Jasmine, who believed she would never hear another song from Levi unless she fell into another Reality Limbo, this was the closest she had ever come to hearing anything without pain.

'Levi...'

Jasmine's eyes reddened slightly, getting emotional the more she felt the beautiful vibrations coursing through her body. Yet, she didn't cry... for she wanted to enjoy his music to the fullest.

Yet... Jasmine wasn't the only one moved... she was just one of hundreds of millions watching the game.

'What the... did he cast a spell on them?'

Gamemaster Gamble was left stunned as he saw everyone's emotions fully displayed in their spectating eyes... they tuned in to watch battles, death, excitement, and forgot about their harsh reality if just for a moment.

But Levi's song dragged them back to their reality and made them confront it... Some cried, some recalled the death of a loved one, some celebrated, and some laughed with tears pouring down their faces.

Levi wasn't playing a tune anymore... he was in control of everyone's emotions through frequency.

But Levi didn't even think about their existence... he put his entire focus on his Harmonic Spine, which responded immediately. It let out a faint internal vibration that matched the note... It wasn't loud. It wasn't flashy. It simply aligned, and then Levi captured it back with his violin and released it in the direction of Light Eater.

The emotional viewers saw nothing but Levi playing the violin, and so as the confused Light Eater... Meanwhile, Levi's vision was so alien, it would make anyone feel like they were trapped in a colorful, hallucinatory trip.

It was like the stable and detailed frequencies aligned with Levi's notes so perfectly, they wanted to be part of it; they wanted to be in it.

And so... They did.

'Huh... musical notes... I can see them... is this what Ash said that time...'

Levi continued playing, adding one more note, then another... but his Harmonic Spine showed him more than the environment around him... it showed him colorful musical notes making contact with each other... merging, or splitting... all based on Levi's chosen tunes.

He didn't see just the ones inside his Harmonic Spine... no, his vision captured all the musical notes heading everywhere, even the ones connecting with the watchers' frequencies.

The moment the notes touched their eyes... Levi was stunned to witness his sky of pitch-darkness getting filled with colorful, glittering eyes, resembling a mesmerizing starry night.

'So beautiful...'

Levi murmured inwardly as he dragged the bow, releasing another longer note... this time, he was able to watch the note's trajectory break into millions of paths, each note carried a different meaning, a different emotion, to the billions of viewers watching. Some hated it, some blocked it, but the majority responded to it in kind.

The moment Levi felt this intimate closeness with the people's emotions and the world's, he suddenly felt a shift within him.

His breath synced with the sound, then his muscles, then his bones, and then his nerves... every silver thread connected with the Harmonic Spine and coursing through Levi's body was linked to the world's natural frequency... into one rhythm, into one Harmony.

The Harmonic Spine had become... The World's Spine.

Levi achieved this state without forcing anything or summoning any power; he just genuinely wanted to feel the world, and it responded to him at last.

In this state... everything changed around Levi. His Harmonic Spine's tunes were no longer an add-on... it was part of the sound itself, and so was he.

'Melody Aspect... I get it now,' he whispered. 'Melody isn't about the song... It's about the alignment behind the song... It's about the world, the universe, the people, and the emotions behind life... it is the orchestra of existence.'

A gentle note echoed from his back as Levi released one final tune with a faint smile behind the mask.

Levi Larson has unlocked the Melody Aspect through the hardest and natural method in the universe... through unlocking its affinity naturally.

And now... he no longer needed to ask Ash'Kral about the frequency of anything, for he possessed the key to exploring them on his own!!