

Evolution 341

Chapter 341: Using Frequency as a Medium.

As the last echo of Levi's song drifted into silence... for half a second, the viewers said nothing. It was as if the entire place forgot it was supposed to be loud, chaotic, and filled with aggression.

Levi's song hadn't just made everyone more in touch with their emotions; it made them feel a new way, healing small parts of their traumas and showing them that there was more to life than just what they were living.

It gave them a small taste of what it meant to be one with the world, each other, and the universe... through harmony.

Clap... Clap... Clap! Clap! Clap!!...

In return... a wave of applause and cheers rolled across the combat room as people jumped to their feet in their rooms, raising their arms, clapping so hard their palms turned red.

Some even whistled, others shouted words that didn't even form sentences.

They didn't care that the move wasn't an attack.

They didn't care that it didn't damage anyone.

They didn't even care that almost no one understood the point of it.

For the last two minutes, they had been pulled into something extraordinary... a performance that reached them in ways a battle never could.

Voices rose through the noise:

-God... I haven't thought about my childhood in years... That tune... those soft parts... it felt like sitting under that old tree with my cousins again...-

-Why did it make me remember my family's funeral? The part where the strings dropped... it was like hearing the last time I stood over the graves... I bought a ticket to forget, instead, here I am bawling my eyes out... Celestial, you're so beautifully cruel.-

-Damn... It felt like someone took a memory out of my head and turned it into sound. I attended tens of concerts, and this was a first...-

-I swear I saw my home village for a second... Just from a few notes, I got to relive those precious moments again... Thank you, Celestial... You just made me into a fan..-

Even races that normally avoided one another seemed to share the same sentiment... whatever the differences were between them, all of them had paused during those notes and listened the same way.

That's the power of music, of melody... the power to touch everyone's emotions and senses regardless of their origins, differences, or whatnot.

Yet, Levi heard none of their words, applause, or cheers... still, he felt their emotions pushing against him through the fading link he still held from the Melody Aspect.

He felt their warmth... he felt memories that were not his... he felt small bursts of joy, grief, peace, longing... they brushed against him gently and Levi didn't push them away.

Under his mysterious and scary mask, his lips lifted into a gentle smile...

He lowered his head and looked at his violin... he remembered the day he built it and named it... Requiem of Despair and Hope.

This was the reason... it wasn't just a weapon of destruction and abuse... but also, to remind the world that something beautiful could exist even in a field of violence.

To show them, if not for a slight moment... a sliver of hope.

'I knew you could do it,' Ash'Kral said with a faint smile. 'You were always close to unlocking the Melody Aspect... you just needed to understand it.'

The most common and reliable method to unlock Aspects was through bloodlines, innate abilities, and relying on the seeds to unlock them based on these links.

However... before there were bloodlines, there was the period of exploration and understanding of the universe's marvels at an intimate level.

Everyone's ancestors had no path built for them... they had to build it on their own through understanding of a single element, a single affinity, a single aspect of life.

They had to be in tune with the Aspect to the point... the seed would unlock it for them solely due to their closeness to it.

But of course... this was easier said than done. Before one could even attempt to connect with a certain Aspect on a deeper level to unlock it, they needed to have something already connecting them to it.

'Hmm.'

Levi nodded, said nothing back, knowing that Ash'Kral was right.

He always had the pieces... a close connection to sounds due to his disability from childhood, and most importantly, a body wired like an instrument due to the Harmonic Spine's silver threads touching upon every nerve, muscle, tendon, and bone.

The Harmonic Spine was born to communicate with sounds, frequencies, and lastly, vibrations at their quantum foundation.

It was the Instrument of the Universe... all he lacked was emotional understanding and connection with the frequencies... and he finally reached it.

Now the world around him looked different.

Where others saw only air, Levi saw thin threads of frequencies sliding through space... some threads flickered fast, some slow, some moved like fading lines, and some throbbed like tiny hearts.

Every object... every stone, every piece of metal, every living body... had its own natural frequency, like little creatures embedded in existence, and made it exist as it was.

With Melody Aspect awakened, Levi could finally speak to them through the language of Melody.

Levi checked the timer... twenty-nine seconds left before his turn ended. He knew this wasn't the time to explore the Melody Aspect in detail.

He had three attacks left, and he intended to make use of them... Levi raised the violin again. But this time, he didn't prepare a melody. He simply placed the bow on the string and pulled it once.

A single note.

The note spread out across his vision with a beautiful design and color... glowing faintly as it touched the room floor, the walls, the roof, and the platform... every time it touched something, small sparks of reaction flared off with different responses.

The note slid past everything... spiritual and physical, nothing stopping it... until it touched a dark spherical barrier hidden deep inside Light Eater's mind. It didn't care if he was in a black hole form or not; anything with a natural frequency reacted to Levi's note in its own way.

Levi felt it immediately.

Light Eater's subconscious shell was vibrating at a unique frequency to his tune... he knew immediately, this was Light Eater's soul's true natural frequency!

The moment Levi sensed that hidden frequency, everything lined up perfectly in his head.

He slipped Eternal Mirage through an actual sound-based attack, releasing a powerful, giant sound blade with a mere draw of his bow.

"Did you just waste everyone's time for this?! How laughable!"

Light Eater was nervous at first during Levi's performance, but now... he scoffed in ridicule as he watched the massive sound blade getting twisted and devoured by the black hole, too.

Unbeknownst to him, the real spiritual attack had slipped through the note like a fish through clear water... Light Eater's spiritual strength wasn't good enough to pick up on such a hidden spiritual attack that assaulted his soul through its natural frequency.

It was like a bridge was established between them through frequencies acting as the medium.

The moment the spiritual link was created, Levi planted the image Light Eater most wanted to see: Levi at his limit, exhausted, out of attacks, unable to push further. But he added one slight difference... the flow of time was hastened in his vision, but he couldn't notice it!

Then Levi lowered his violin and switched to the Starpiercer in a smooth motion... he dropped to one knee and balanced the rifle on his thigh.

Then, he aimed at the black hole.

"Did the Celestial figure out a way to break Light Eater's defenses, or is he just winging it? There is barely any time left!" Gamemaster Gamble commented on what was in everyone's minds, having no clue what Levi had planned.

All they saw was the rifle's muzzle suddenly displaying a golden glow that was getting brighter by the second.

Seven seconds remained.

Yet, Levi didn't fire his gun... he just kept charging it nonstop until its surface began to glow as well. The viewers remained confused, watching as the time was running out, while Levi still refused to fire his gun.

However, with three seconds remaining on the clock, the watchers' confusion changed to shock after noticing Light Eater's monstrous black hole form twisting rapidly.

"What the..."

Even Gamemaster Gamble was stunned at the sight of Light Eater canceling his black hole form on his own, returning to his humanoid form.

Then, he lifted his long, misty, shadowy hand and pointed in the direction of Levi.

"If I don't erase your existence in our duel, I am not fit to be called a Half-Obli..."

"You were never fit to be called one."

Chapter 342: Pure Dragonic Genetics.

Before Levi's deadpan voice could reach Light Eater, he pulled the trigger.

BOOOOOOM!!!

A golden beam exploded from the rifle with a small line of red burned along its edge, showing how close it was to plasma-level heat!

The beam pierced through the air in an instant and hit Light Eater in the chest.

The illusion shattered a split second before the beam landed since Light Eater's instincts were much sharper than Yanhuan's.

But alas... it was still too late.

Pain and clarity hit Light Eater at the same time, leaving his shadowy eyes widened... he slowly glanced downward, and saw a giant burning hole in the center of his chest.

'How...'

This was the last word he uttered before his entire body got engulfed in wild sunflames, turning him into a crispy, burnt-off corpse.

Before Levi fired his gun, Light Eater's vision showed him Levi finishing all of his attacks. Then, once his turn arrived, he believed he was finally free to drop his black hole form without worry.

Unfortunately, he had no idea that it was all a perfect illusion.

-...-

-...-

-...-

Meanwhile, the viewers were left stunned and speechless, having absolutely no idea what the hell they had just witnessed. It was like they watched an unexplainable suicide attempt.

One moment, Light Eater had a duel locked on his hands... the next moment, he was dead.

Fortunately, they had Gamemaster Gamble to clarify their confusion and doubts... he took advantage of his omnipotence to analyze the situation in detail. In less than a second, he managed to understand what happened as he had witnessed Levi's spiritual attack with his own eyes.

"I can't believe my eyes! The Celestial has managed to put Light Eater inside an illusion in the last seconds!" Gamemaster Gamble shouted excitedly, "He figured out Light Eater's soul natural frequency and used his tune as a medium to launch his invisible spiritual attack!"

"Light Eater had no idea that he was already proclaimed dead the moment he was trapped in the illusion!"

Whoooah!!

Upon hearing this, Levi's fans lost their minds as they cheered at the top of their lungs, not caring for details or anything. Once they figured out their idol wielded Illusion Aspect, they were already on cloud nine.

-Hahaha!! I was right to support the Celestial... he is never boring, always a new Aspect, always a new weapon!-

-I claim it right now! Celestial deserves to become a Boundless Expanse Noble!-

-No wonder it says he has used all five attacks... the illusion must have counted as one.-

Meanwhile, Jasmine was left smiling sweetly in delight as she watched Levi being bestowed with Light Eater's Joker card and the one he used. Though his own was chained up and couldn't be used in the next round.

'That golden beam... your crush seems to have a high resonance access across all three Origin seeds... I thought it was low at first, but it's impossible to create such concentrated sunflame beam without having a minimum of 10% access.' N'ibby commentated, her tone a mixture of astonishment and depression.

Just as Levi always turned a blind eye to Ash'Kral's remarks about Jasmine being his girlfriend... Jasmine, too, always turned a deaf ear whenever N'ibby started teasing her. Both of them ignored it... pretending not to hear what their hearts weren't ready to face.

'Now... he has three Joker cards, the highest in the game.' Jasmine thought inwardly while switching her focus to the other battles.

The moment Levi sat down on the floor in silence, most viewers left to spectate the rest of the battles. Though... only one combat room was absolutely heated: Drayven vs The Wanderer of the Seas.

The Dealer and the Ruiner ended in a stalemate due to their cards choices. As for Madam Future and the Hollow Titan? Both picked low cards and their battle finished with light injuries on both sides.

Hence, Drayven's battle had taken the main screen.

'Good thing Levi didn't take the bait...'

Jasmine knitted her eyebrows solemnly as she watched a replay of Drayven's 'heavy injuries' healing up on their own until he was back to his peak form.

No cards wasted, no abilities used... just pure draconic genetic prowess.

Drayven stood straight, and proud like he was never hurt... the Wanderer of the Seas had used the Joker card to cancel Drayven's defensive card, leaving the King's card at his disposal.

He thought that he was going to finish him off with a low offensive card in his heavily injured state, and without any defenses... alas, he was baited hard.

Drayven merely covered his vitals with his scarlet wings, and then he allowed the Wanderer to attack as he pleased.

After the Wanderer used his attacks, he managed to slice a single wing off Drayven... unfortunately, he came short and Drayven survived the onslaught until his turn arrived.

Now... the viewers held their breath, awaiting Drayven's response.

"I am really pissed... why was it you? I wasted a damn King card on a nobody." Drayven uttered coldly while walking in the direction of the Wanderer.

His sliced-off wing and other injuries were healing at a noticeable speed with each step he took... By the time he was five meters away from the Wanderer, Drayven's injuries were fully healed!

-This is crazy... how is this rejuvenation fair?! As long as he isn't killed with one attack, he will always return to his peak form!-

-It's not all sunshine and rainbow... Scarlet Dragons born with this special trait have to trade bits of their life force to heal their injuries.-

-Still, they live up to thousands of years on average... abusing it a couple of times poses no risks to them.-

Most watchers had no idea about this since Noble Dragon Lineages kept their genetic traits as secretive as possible... and now that they knew, many began to anticipate Drayven emerging as victorious in this game.

They realized that he had a massive advantage on everyone... he could survive their beatings with his tough scales and then recover to normal. Of course, ultimate abilities weren't counted.

Meanwhile, his offensive prowess was utterly staggering.

Drayven was about to display it before all. He planted his clawed feet into the cracked ground, his cold eyes affixed on the Wanderer.

The Wanderer remained silent... watching as Drayven's chest expanded until his stretched ribs were about to snap. The heat poured out of his body in waves and raised the temperature so fast.

Drayven took one final glance at the Wanderer, and then he tilted his head back, showing a faint red glow built deep in his throat.

It was small at first, but then the glow turned into a concentrated scarlet sphere, appearing like a burning coal deep inside his mouth.

Instead of feeling afraid, the Wanderer simply offered a gentle smile... his appearance resembling a prince raised in a palace of mirrors and crystals. He looked human, yet his skin carried a faint reflective sheen, as if it were shaped from polished glass.

It wasn't far-fetched when his upper mask was nothing more than a square mirror, hiding most of his features, but his blue lips.

He waited until Drayven was on the verge of exhaling his attack, and then bowed his head slightly towards the viewers.

Before anyone could react, the Wanderer of the Seas used his precious resignation token the instant Drayven snapped his mouth in front and split the combat room with a vertical beam of scarlet flames!

Alas... his scarlet beam landed on nothing but the wall in front of him, scorching it black. Seeing this, Drayven canceled his ultimate ability mid-launch with a heated expression.

"You motherf*ckers!"

Chapter 343: Four Rounds Later.

He roared into the skies, feeling like he was being punked by his opponents... nothing he planned worked, and now, he wasn't given even the satisfaction of blowing someone off with his ultimate ability.

How could he not be pissed?

Drayven started walking in circles, each step left behind a scorched mark... he was absolutely livid, and the only thought coursing through his mind was:

'Bastards! I am going to kill every one of you and claim all the Joker cards!'

While he was thinking of ways to slay Levi and the rest to offset some of his rage, Gamemaster Gamble concluded the third round and permitted the Rifters to leave their rooms.

Drayven and Levi were the only ones stepping out of their rooms alone... this left the other four to glance in their direction with different looks.

"You sure are a brutal one, Celestial." The Dealer chuckled with his hands resting behind his neck, "Does no one survive against you? I am starting to feel that you have spared my life because you like me."

"..."

Levi's brow twitched behind the mask, but he said nothing back. He went to the platform and stood there like a statue, awaiting the start of the fourth round. Though he did scan everyone's situations.

When he noticed that Drayven left the room without a single wound, he wasn't too surprised... he was just glad that he took a moment to think things thoroughly instead of going with the flow.

However, when he noticed that five remained and all of them looked still in their peak forms, Levi understood that he needed to go turtle mode for the next rounds.

'I have three Joker cards and will be challenged in the next round... probably by Drayven or the Ruiner. I can't give up on my Joker cards, but fortunately... I still have special cards saved. I just need to predict who still has his Joker cards and who doesn't... these predictions will win me the game.'

Levi discerned that his best next move was to let them fight it out amongst each other while he kept the Joker cards protected... he didn't need to fight for the kill, but just survive until the later rounds where their numbers were reduced.

He had already taken two Rifters on his own... it was time for them to start fighting seriously amongst each other instead of playing it safe.

After the remaining six Rifters were sent to their rooms, Levi had their names displayed on the screen again. He started analyzing everyone's cards based on their performance in the previous round.

'The Dealer and the Ruiner emerged with no damages... this assures me both have used Joker cards and defensive cards... which meant, the Ruiner should have no usable Joker card while the Dealer will have one left.'

'If the Ruiner challenges me, special cards will be enough to stop him.'

Next, Levi moved his finger over Drayven.

'He should have at least one Joker card usable after eliminating the Wanderer... I doubt he used his own since it means the fight would have ended in a stalemate.'

Levi was almost certain that the Wanderer must have used his own Joker card against Drayven... he didn't know how he managed to still lose his battle, but this only solidified Drayven's immense prowess in his mind.

'There is also a possibility of Madam Future challenging me... but I am not too scared of her. Those with equal spiritual prowess can handle each other just fine. The other two are the problem.'

Levi was certain that Madam Future would rather challenge the Dealer or Hollow Titan again than risk putting her fate on a die throw.

After all, it was almost certain that Drayven was coming for Levi... if she challenged him too, she might end up fighting the others with cards meant to target Levi... It was an unnecessary risk when there were still plenty of rounds left to recover the Joker cards.

'If it's going to be between these two, then I know the exact cards to get out of the challenge free of injuries.'

Four rounds later...

The game had reached its climax point with five remaining Rifters... The Ruiner, The Dealer, Drayven, Madam Future, and Levi... Hollow Titan was the only one eliminated in the past four rounds.

When Levi chose turtle mode, he managed to come out of all four rounds with barely any injuries... all due to his predictions coming mostly true.

His plan was simple... if he was challenged by someone holding the Joker card, Levi used it as well with a defensive card. This ensured a stalemate and trade of Joker cards, losing nothing for both sides.

He did this against Madam Future and the Dealer, allowing him to survive the later rounds... as for what happened in the fourth round.

His prediction came true as Drayven did challenge him; however, he was forced to bring a Joker card with him after realizing that Levi wasn't a simple opponent to bully.

He killed both Masked Butcher and Light Eater... this was more than enough to establish Levi's insane prowess amongst this circle of monsters.

He earned their respect, and none of them could afford to challenge him without ample preparations.

Too bad, because Levi had access to three Joker cards, he could alternate between them each round without losing any, since he used them only when he was certain that his challenger was going to bring his own.

Because of this, his battle against Drayven ended in a stalemate with both trading their Joker cards.

Though Levi did mess up with his prediction on the sixth round when challenged by the Ruiner. He assumed the Ruiner would come swinging at him, considering that the game was getting closer to a conclusion.

This made Levi utilize a Queen Card to gain immunity from one of his attacks or even an ultimate ability... but the Ruiner bluffed him. Even at such a crucial period, the Ruiner dared to challenge Levi with useless low-numbered cards.

Since Levi went defensive with both cards, he could only mourn the loss of the Queen card. On the bright side, he did come out of the round still holding his triple Joker cards.

So, it wasn't too bad a trade-off.

However, this changed when the Dealer somehow managed to eliminate Hollow Titan and take his Joker card!

This left them possessing an equal number of Joker cards, and only two rounds remained with five Rifters.

At the moment, Levi and the rest of the Rifters were gathered in the plaza, preparing for the shuffle to kickstart the ninth round.

The atmosphere was as tense as it could be... everyone knew the next shuffle was going to decide the fate of the game.

"Five Rifters... two rounds remained." Gamemaster Gamble showed himself above them and said with a smile, "Celestial and the Dealer are currently the closest to the promotion... but, it's not over until it's over... all five of you still have a chance to become a Boundless Noble. All it takes is one battle, one win."

Hearing this, Drayven gave everyone a bloodthirsty glare, making them understand that if he was chosen as a challenger, he was coming for the kill... no questions asked.

He had two Joker cards and badly needed a win in the ninth round to equal Levi and the Dealer's collection.

"Since there are only five of you... The shuffle will also choose one Rifter that will sit this round out."

Gamemaster Gamble chuckled after noticing Drayven and the Ruiner's expressions turning solemn... he knew that it might sound like a favor to sit a round out, but in reality, it wasn't for those still behind. It only meant losing a chance of turning the game in their favor.

Hence, he added, "The Rifter chosen to sit the round has the right to trade his position with any other Rifter as long as there is a mutual agreement."

Drayven's expression soothed a bit... he understood that if he was picked, he could trade his position with the Dealer or the Celestial.

He was certain one of them would agree... after all, they didn't need to take unnecessary fights, but just hold their superior position until the last round.

No further ado, Gamemaster Gamble kicked off the shuffle, and everyone held their breath in anticipation of the results.

A couple of seconds later... the screen before Levi displayed the worst possible outcome.

-Challengee.-

Chapter 344: Cowardly or Smart?

'Shit...' He knitted his brows sternly and glanced at everyone's picks.

Madam Future and Drayven were picked as Challengers.

The Ruiner and Levi were chosen as the challengee.

The Dealer lucked out on the option to sit the round out!

"Luck sure is on my side this game..."

The Dealer chuckled in amusement as he played around with a die in his hand... he took one last glance at Levi and the others, then he flicked the die in their direction and walked towards his room.

"I will be seeing you on the last round."

His playful voice resounded in everyone's ears as they gazed at his back, getting further inside his room... The instant the door was closed, Levi switched his focus to the die lying on the ground.

He couldn't help but show a deep frown at the number the Dealer rolled... a perfect six.

'How can you fight someone with fortune and luck on their side...' Levi murmured inwardly, having a bad feeling about meeting the Dealer on the final round.

Before he could think too far about this, he suddenly heard Drayven's cold voice directed at him.

"I am not going to use my Joker Card... if you have the guts, let's duke it out."

Levi slowly turned his head to face him and then remained quiet... He was weighing the options of accepting his proposal.

'I am sure he isn't going to use it... If he did, it would serve no purpose in his win. For him to mention duking it out means that he has only a Jack card and normal cards...'

Levi couldn't afford to use a Joker card to cancel Drayven's Jack card... after all, he still had the offensive priority.

This meant if he picked a Joker card and a high defensive card... the only positive result would be to survive for the next round. In turn, his Joker card would be transferred to Drayven, which would reduce his chances of winning the game.

On the other hand, if he allowed Drayven to use the Jack card, they would have a duel on their hand, and Levi wasn't too sure if he was going to come out of it in one piece... To make it worse, he had already wasted his Queen card, which killed his chances of a full recovery.

'There is no way out... Drayven will get what he wants no matter what I do.' Levi tapped his finger on the screen thoughtfully, 'It's either giving up on a Joker card or accepting his duel.'

Levi knew that these two options weren't even the worst... the real problem would be if Drayven was bluffing him and said that to bait him.

If Levi didn't use his Joker card and Drayven used his own, it would create a big issue for Levi since Drayven had offensive priority.

All he needed to do was cancel Levi's defensive card, which would leave him unguarded against his attacks.

Since Levi had already used the Queen card, he could no longer use double defensive stance... he would be forced to pick either an offensive card or another special card. Either way, they were useless when he had no offensive priority.

Three options... but the safest one was to use the Joker card. If Drayven wasn't bluffing, he would win it. But Levi would still have a chance to recover it in the final round when he would have the offensive priority.

Meanwhile, the other two options had too much risk involved... a battle to the death before the final round or risk losing his life by trusting Drayven's words.

In the end... Levi turned around and went inside his room without responding to Drayven. He had made up his decision, and he had no plans to share it with any of them.

"Coward."

Seeing his reaction, Drayven scoffed and went back to his room... he could already tell, Levi wasn't taking him on his offer. He wasn't bluffing as he truly planned on duelling Levi. But, regardless of what he said or swore upon, Levi had no intentions of putting his life based on Drayven's word.

Someone who didn't hesitate to wound himself, to bait him into challenging him.

As expected, the moment the battles kicked off, Drayven challenged Levi and Madam Future challenged The Ruiner.

Levi showed his chosen cards, which were the Joker and a low defensive card... meanwhile, Drayven brought an offensive and a defensive card. After Levi used the Joker card to negate his offensive card, their battle ended in a stalemate.

"Idiot... you are willing to give up on a Joker card in such a critical period." Drayven sneered as he held Levi's chained-up Joker card after it was transferred to him.

"Keep it on you... I am coming for it." Levi replied indifferently.

"You don't have the balls."

Drayven gave him a ridiculing look and walked away, having no plans to chit-chat with him. Seeing how their battle ended, many viewers were left disappointed, expecting an epic fight between them.

But, the intellectual ones understood that Levi's move was the smartest one to make... if he was fighting anyway, he might as well fight in the last round and under his own terms.

A duel was happening, but Levi would be the one starting it.

Gamemaster Gamble swiftly switched the focus to Madam Future and The Ruiner... the viewers stopped whining about Levi's cowardly-like decision and glued their eyes on the confrontation before them.

They knew that these two had the lowest number of Joker cards... one each. This meant one of them wasn't making it out of this room if they still desired to have a chance at getting promoted.

As expected... none of them used the Joker card. Madam Future brought the Jack card and a high offensive card... Meanwhile, the Ruiner used the Queen card and a high defensive card.

"What a lineup!" Gamemaster Gamble shouted with a thrilled tone, "Will Madam Future use the Jack card first or the sword card?!"

The priority was important since if she decided to use the sword card first, the Ruiner could use the Queen card to gain immunity and heal his wounds.

However, if she used the Jack card first... the rules of the cards no longer applied. It was a free duel to the death, which negated the Queen card's effect.

With these notes in mind, the choice was easy.

"May the worthiest win."

Madam Future said expressionlessly as she activated the Jack card, freeing them from the system's constraints.

"I am not fond of hitting beautiful ladies... my apologies." The Ruiner showed a gentle smile as he rolled his sleeves, "You're about to witness an unsightly version of me."

Despite the name and his lineage... the Ruiner looked and sounded way different from someone born out of a lineage known for anger issues.

He was a muscular red-skinned man with a well-kept hairstyle... his wavy, long hair was milky white, unlike his skin. His eyes, eyelashes, and lips were white as well. He had long pointy ears, which were pierced with crystals.

If it weren't for the small black curly horns protruding from his forehead, he would be mistaken for a unique human, and not another race.

He was wearing a red suit with silver chains hanging from the jacket and the pants as decoration... his shoes were white and had crystals.

His entire appearance was peculiar, from his outfit choice to his gentle, silent persona. For a race known to wield and master the Wrath Aspect... he looked awfully chill?

Chapter 345: Future Vs Wrath. I

Yet neither Madam Future nor the watchers were surprised... they knew that the Angrath Lineage had achieved such a high mastery of Wrath Aspect, the emotion itself no longer had control of them unless they allowed it.

Hence, the Ruiner might look gentle and chill, but in reality... no one could really tell how mad he was.

"The duel will last until death or if one of you uses a resignation token."

Gamemaster Gamble looked at them for a moment, and when he saw that both were ready, he dropped his arm and shouted, "Battle!"

"No hard feelings, love..."

Suddenly, the Ruiner's white eyes showed a red line splitting them from the middle... his white hair as well had the same line breaking its white flow in half. Then, he started walking in the direction of Madam Future; with each step he took left behind a red misty imprint.

"Angrath Threshold Arts: First Threshold." He murmured gently under his breath as he unbuttoned his jacket, "Ruin Meridian."

The instant the last word was uttered, the Ruiner left behind a fading red mirage and hundreds of glowing imprints as he charged toward Madam Future. His expression remained as soft as an old man reading a newspaper on a bench... yet the veined fist shooting toward her like a comet told a very different story.

Madam Future's pupils dilated as she took a single step forward, looking like she wanted to end this battle early.

However, her movement left behind a pale-blue footprint... just as the punch was about to land on her face, Madam Future's form turned illusory for a split second. Then, she stepped backward into the pale-blue footprint as his fist sliced past her nose... the shockwave blew her misty hair upward.

She avoided the attack with such minimal movement, it seemed lazy... but in reality, it was perfectly timed.

"Interval Invulnerability! Madam Future has gone through many battles, and yet, this technique always ensured her survival!" Gamemaster Gamble commented excitedly, "How can you hit someone who can slip her body and soul in the gap between instances?!"

The Ruiner was familiar with Madam Future's powers, and he didn't care. He understood that she couldn't keep abusing it forever, which meant...

Boom! Boom! Boom!..

He kept swinging left and right with his fists while circling Madam Future, who merely took steps in a small one-meter square, not leaving it.

She had eight blue-pale footsteps in all directions, and each time the Ruiner struck her, she simply took a step backward, to the side, or in front.

With each step taken, her form turned illusory as if it didn't exist before it reappeared a millisecond later!

When the Ruiner increased his tempo, so did she... this made her resemble a flickering ghostly entity that kept jumping between the gaps in instances, each jump considered a mini temporal skip.

It wasn't teleportation, but more so a glimpse of the future, and she simply altered it through her powers, ensuring that she would never reach a future where the Ruiner's attacks hit her!

It was such a complex and powerful technique; it left the viewers astonished at the sight of the Ruiner's overwhelming red barrage failing to touch a piece of her clothes!

'Future Sight... show me everything.'

But, Madam Future wasn't planning to keep on evading forever... her eyes suddenly turned starry as she took a longer glimpse into the future possibilities of each attack she decided to use.

Tens, hundreds, thousands!

Although it might look like she spent a lot of time looking into them, in reality, no less than a split second went by!

She looked into thousands of possibilities and stopped only when she was almost certain about her counter-attack registering... she didn't keep going, understanding that the future could never have a fixed outcome.

The results depended on the information in her hand, and Madam Future was going slow in this game for the sole reason of collecting more information about the Rifters!

While others were seeking to gather as many Joker cards as possible right from the start, Madam Future kept hopping from one challenge to another, ensuring that she met every one of her competitors.

It didn't matter the result of the round... for she always emerged victorious after using Future Sight on them to analyze their fighting styles, combos, techniques, and such!!

Since she was merely taking a glimpse of the future and not acting on it, the system didn't register it as an attack!

Madam Future was like anyone in this game of freaks... everyone had their ways of cheating their victory, and this was hers.

Now... with all the information she collected, she could finally fight for real.

'Spiral of Inevabilities Arts: The Awakening.'

Abruptly, the mist she was releasing from the holes on her temples and jaw increased in pressure until it gave birth to future misty fragments... mirages of what could happen.

Each fragment was a blurry scene of a possible strike, a possible wound, a possible motion... They were possible outcomes that she had anchored to the present and had them surround her in a ring of possibilities!

However, the viewers couldn't see them... in their eyes, it appeared like Madam Future was surrounded by a colorful, misty halo.

But, the Ruiner could... only because Madam Future wanted to trap him inside the Spiral Inevabilities she chose!

The Ruiner felt the tempo of the fight change immediately as quick flashes appeared in his eyes... short visions of his own future mistakes.

A punch he was going to miss... A dodge he would react to too late, or a hit he was going to take in a few seconds from now.

The Ruiner knew that Madam Future wanted to mess with his flow and fighting style, making him doubt his instincts, his moves, his decisions, everything!

Thus, he refused to partake in it or slow down.

'Second Threshold: Ruinburst Punch!'

The Ruiner's eyes displayed two red lines, and so as his hair... but no one looked at them, their eyes were affixed on his fist that was engulfed in an agitated red aura.

His Arts were created and perfected over generations for the sake of keeping their wrath within control... the thresholds were actually somewhat like seals.

The higher the threshold, the less control he had over his Wrath and its effect on his decisions... but simultaneously, the more powerful he became.

Why? Because the Angrath Race's secret to getting the best of their Aspect wasn't by simply thinking of something to make them mad to get powerful... no, no, no... that was too unreliable in combat.

Their true secret was: They were always at their peak of madness; they just chose to seal it.

The Ruiner ignored everything and allowed his rage to guide him... the one emotion that had never let him down in fights.

He faked a knee drop, and the moment Madam Future evaded it, the Ruiner was already waiting there with his fist aiming directly for her head!

Everyone noticed immediately that the punch's speed seemed to have increased immensely as if it was fired by a cannon... alas, the Ruiner didn't realize that he was already trapped in the future within the Spiral!

The punch that he threw... it didn't happen in the present. He threw it in the future, and the Spiral of Inevitabilities forced the future result of the punch to appear early in Madam Future's sight, allowing her to evade it quite easily.

Yet... this wasn't even the shocking part.

The Ruiner's heart suddenly burned with pain as he watched his fist bypass Madam Future's stoic face.

He didn't know it... But, it was the pain of a counter-attack she hadn't even performed yet as the Spiral of Inevitabilities made the future injury happen before the real hit could occur!!

The Ruiner immediately decided to retreat and leave the spiral, realizing that as long as he was trapped near her, he would have absolutely no idea what was going on!

Alas... the moment he tried to step away, Madam Future spoke calmly, "Inside the Spiral of Inevitabilities, the future punishes your errors before I need to."

She lifted her arm and made a slow, sweeping motion.

Every short vision of his upcoming mistakes... every misstep, every failed attack... lined up all at once, like a chain reaction. Then, the effects struck his body in a single burst!

Ten seconds' worth of future errors hit him in one moment!

What's even scarier? Madam Future might have spoken to the Ruiner in the present, but the attack had occurred three seconds into the future!

The Ruiner swiftly stepped away from her, having no idea what she meant by what she said... but three seconds later?

His body and soul were suddenly crushed by the ten seconds of attacks he was "supposed" to perform against Madam Future... but all of them were redirected onto himself instead!

The Spiral of Inevitabilities forced the future to "fix itself" in the simplest way possible: If he was destined to fail those attacks anyway, the Spiral made him receive the results of those failures before they ever happened!

This was the true horror of the Future Aspect and Seernia Lineage from the Chronovari Trueborn Race. Fighting them was the same as fighting the result of your own actions and mistakes!

"Argh..."

The Ruiner staggered in place, appearing like he was being hit by tens of ghosts at the same time... but the color of blood spilling down his nose and mouth was as real as it could get!

Chapter 346: Future vs Wrath. II

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The watchers were left stunned and confused, having no clue what the hell was going on... a few moments earlier, the Ruiner was raining on Madam Future with a barrage of fists and kicks... now, they were watching him holding his bleeding nose from attacks that came out of nowhere.

As for Madam Future? She was still standing in the same spot, her hands resting on each other near her abdomen like a polite Nun.

"We can keep fighting... but the results won't change." Madam Future said calmly with her glittering eyes, "I see every possibility of your future... if you don't use your resignation token, you will die."

'She knows I have the token?' The Ruiner frowned, 'How far can she really see in the future? This isn't normal... wasn't she going all out in her first games? No, was she even fighting for real?'

The Ruiner might have some understanding of her powers, but it was based on what she had shown and known in the network... in reality, no one really knew anything but one's self.

'Spiral of Inevitabilities... for her to be this calm, it means that I don't have to be inside of it to feel its effects.'

Usually, this notion would have made anyone pack up and leave... after all, to know that every attack, action, or decision were already seen by Madam Future was despairing enough. But, to be under the threat of his own attacks that he hadn't even made? That was simply diabolical battle arts.

Yet... the Ruiner wasn't a nobody either.

'Behind the mystic is still a spiritual-based attack grounded on temporal laws... I fell weak to it because her spiritual prowess is more powerful than mine at the moment.'

The Ruiner suddenly cracked a faint cold smile as he removed his jacket and loosened his white shirt, appearing like a salary man about to throw hands.

"I admit... you control the future, which in turn allows you to control the present... but." The Ruiner showed the same gentle smile as he said, "Can you control what we were forced to seal? Can you control an emotion that thrives on destruction and chaos? Can you control... Wrath?"

The moment he finished, Madam Future's grimace changed for the first time... the Spiral of Inevitabilities stopped showing her countless possibilities.

Instead, the ring of colorful mist suddenly reflected nothing but absolute... RED.

From thousands of scenarios to a single scenario... The reason it was shown to her exclusively was because she knew... if it were to occur, she would die.

Hence, there was no need to show any other possibilities when her life in the future was on the line.

"You wouldn't... if you went for it, you might not make it out of here alive too... not even your resignation token will matter when you won't be in your right mind to use it."

Madam Future's smooth forehead showed faint wrinkles... she was thinking really hard if there was any other possibility for her to win this battle.

"The thing is..."

The Ruiner's milky white long hair suddenly started to turn entirely red from the tips as he walked in Madam Future's direction. Even his eyes were showing red lines emerging one after another rapidly until there was more red than white.

"Angrath Lineage take pride in letting our true forms smell some fresh air once in a while when the right moment serves us... you're looking down on me if you think I won't dare go for it."

The Ruiner uttered coldly, his gentle tone and demeanor were slowly dissipating as his transformation continued.

The watchers held their breath in nervous anticipation as they stared at the Ruiner's muscular frame enlarging bit by bit until his clothes were ripped apart... his manicured black nails became long dark sharp claws. His hair turned fully dark red and was fluttering wildly around him like it was under immense pressure.

Even his small curly horns became longer and twisted until the tips pierced through his skull, making it bleed over his wrathful cruel demonic face. Yet, he didn't even care... the Ruiner's vision was already turned pure red while his heart was pumping heated blood like there was no tomorrow.

"I can't believe it! The Ruiner has removed all the seals on his Angrath Incarnate Form!" Gamemaster Gamble shouted excitedly, "Madam Future is in big trouble now... no... the entire combat room is in trou..."

Before Gamemaster Gamble could finish his sentence, the Ruiner roared into the skies and smashed both of his hands on the floor!

Rumble!!

The combat rooms, which were strong enough to handle Levi's defensive nukes, shook for the first time!

As for the Ruiner? He was already hundreds of meters in the sky, falling in Madam Future's direction with a look of utter madness.

Madam Future knew she was strong... but against that thing? She understood that her powers would never work on something that didn't feel anything but wrath and possessed the unfathomable strength to level the entire building.

If they fought... it was a lose-lose situation.

Madam Future looked at him for a moment and then closed her eyes... letting out a long exhale.

The moment she opened her eyes again, the scene changed before her... it was of the Ruiner still walking in her direction while removing his jacket and loosening his shirt!

The entire interaction was viewed from the future before the Ruiner uttered a single word about his form! The only difference was that the future she witnessed was assured to occur regardless of what she did to stop it.

Madam Future could manipulate possibilities in the future to make it go her way... but, when it came to a future that was related to her death, there were no possibilities, only certainty unless she did something to change it in the present.

Like this...

"You win."

Madam Future admitted calmly under the dazed eyes of the viewers, who had no clue what was going on... not explaining anything, Madam Future used a resignation token she earned in her third game and got instantly teleported back to her home.

"Smart choice... but, why am I disappointed?"

The Ruiner showed a wry smile and wore his jacket back on, sounding like he wanted her to commit so he could release his true form... for just a little while.

'I guess no one wants to see the real me...'

He sighed inwardly while holding Madam Future's chained-up Joker card... But outside, he was still showing the same gentle smile like everything was okay.

Meanwhile, Gamemaster Gamble and the watchers had different reactions... the Gamemaster knew exactly what happened due to his omnipotence, but he didn't like it.

He knew that it was a rare occurrence to witness the Ancestral Angrath Incarnate Form, and he wished that it could happen in his game.

Alas... Madam Future knew better than to poke the sealed beast.

Gamemaster Gamble gave a brief explanation to the viewers and swiftly ended the ninth round, allowing the Rifters to group back in the plaza.

"Ohoho? Ruiner, you actually defeated Madam Future? How did you do it?"

The Dealer's big mouth got into it the moment he left his room and saw the missing Madam Future. Even Levi and Drayven were taken aback to see the Ruiner leaving the room with barely any injuries.

If it wasn't for the smear of blood on his mouth and nose, they would actually think that Madam Future was win-trading or something.

"I guess you will find out in the final round." The Ruiner smiled softly.

Chapter 347: The Final Round.

Gamemaster Gamble suddenly showed up above them and asked with a wide grin, "I guess the matchups are already decided?"

Hearing this, Levi, The Dealer, Drayven, and the Ruiner glanced at each other... but then, Levi fixed his head in Drayven's direction, letting everyone know that he was coming for him.

When the Dealer saw this, he couldn't help but chuckle, "Your battle has been brewing ever since the start of the game... it will be a grave sin of mine to deny a fated fight."

He then turned to the Ruiner and asked him what he thought about this... the Ruiner glanced at the three of them for a moment in silence, and then replied with a gentle smile, "So be it... It will simplify the finale."

The Ruiner and Levi were the only ones with the right to challenge since they were challengees in the previous round.

As for the Dealer, he was excluded in the last round and went straight to the final round... hence, he had no right to be a challenger anymore. This was already written in the finer details of the long list of the Game's rules.

"Good, good..." Gamemaster Gamble rubbed his hands in anticipation while announcing out loud, "The Tenth round will start in five minutes! The Battles are: The Celestial vs. Drayven... The Dealer vs. The Ruiner!"

The watchers exploded in excited cheers, understanding that none of them were going to hold back anymore... though some of them did think differently, realizing that the four Rifters held an equal amount of Joker cards.

In simpler terms... the two winners of the final round would hold each five Joker cards. This meant one final death battle between them to decide the final winner.

Levi and the Rifters knew this as well... but none of them said anything as they walked back towards their rooms.

'If I went all out against Drayven, I would have nothing for the final confrontation.' Levi frowned, 'It's going to be a battle to the death, and I have no resignation tokens to ensure my survival. I have to plan my battle against Drayven properly.'

Levi understood that he couldn't use any other card against Drayven but the Jack card... it was the sole card that ensured he possessed the full freedom to defeat him and reclaim his Joker cards.

If Levi went and brought a Joker card with him, and Drayven also used his Joker card, the battle would end in a stalemate... However, if he brought the King card and the Jack card, even if the cunning Drayven used the Joker card, Levi would still have a chance to finish him.

Levi was certain that Drayven had no Queen card or any more special cards besides the Jack... so, he was forced to accept Levi's battle.

Drayven seemed to know this as well... hence, he didn't bother thinking too much. He picked a defensive numbered card for extra safety and a Jack card. Then, he closed his eyes and started meditating to prepare for the fight.

Meanwhile, the Ruiner also picked the Jack card and a defensive card for safety... but, he knew deep down that the Dealer wasn't going to block his Jack card.

No one could afford to play it safe anymore, since the outcome of each battle would decide the winner if they didn't take this round seriously.

He was right as the Dealer had already picked his cards, and they were the Jack and defensive card... No Joker card was used.

He was sitting on the platform's screen with his leg dangling a few inches away from the ground... He had a new spread of Tarot Cards in front of him, showing him a divination that left him tapping his finger on the deck silently.

'How unfortunate...' The Dealer shook his head in disappointment, 'It seems we aren't destined to meet again any time soon.'

As the Dealer started collecting the tarot cards... he paused after reaching the final card. He showed a faint smile and flipped it over... then, he picked it up and stored it inside the deck.

The Tenth and Final Round...

The atmosphere in Drayven's combat room was as tense as it could be... Levi and Drayven were standing on opposite sides, awaiting Gamemaster Gamble to kickstart their duel.

As they were staring at each other in chilling silence, Gamemaster Gamble showed up with a small explosion of blue smoke.

"Are you lads ready?!" Gamemaster Gamble moved his head left and right, checking on them... once he saw them nod their heads, he grinned widely as he shouted, "Fight!"

Levi summoned his violin without hesitation and raised it to his shoulder... Then, he played a short sequence of notes for the sake of finding Drayven's natural frequency. It didn't take him more than a note to find it.

However, instead of casting Eternal Mirage on him right away, Levi began firing invisible aetheric spiritual attacks aimed straight at Drayven's mind, trying to weaken his awareness. He knew that dragons' sense of danger and if something wasn't right were top-notch... even Ash'Kral's perfect Eternal Mirage could still raise their suspicion if Levi made a mistake in crafting the illusionary scene.

A faint wrong smell, difference in lighting, or time sense changed... the smallest mistake would be highlighted in Drayven's mind and break him off the illusion instantly.

With Levi's immense spiritual prowess, Drayven felt every note smashing into his subconsciousness barrier and mind like a sledgehammer.

His grimace twisted as he reinforced his subconscious barrier and mind with his draconic will... he might not be able to cast spiritual attacks like Levi, but he damn well could defend himself.

"That's how you want to play it? Let's see how long you can keep it up!"

Drayven spread his scarlet leathery wings and flew rapidly in Levi's direction with claws coated in orange flames!

His speed was absolutely terrifying as he had arrived in front of Levi in no time and swung his flaming claws in his direction.

Levi dodged the first strike by sliding to the side, then he blocked the second with the frame of his bow... A spark flashed on contact!

Levi instantly released the stored chains connected to the bow and then used combustion leap to jump around Drayven. As he was in midair, Levi threw the bow at Drayven's feet and then pulled the crimson chains, making them tighten up around his nether region with the bow acting as a lock!

Since Levi's weapons were indestructible, even when Drayven tried to free himself... the bow and the chains refused to burn or break!

Not giving him a moment to relax, Levi manifested aetheric fingers on his violin's strings... then, he messed with the strings in a manner that fired sharp overloaded frequencies straight at Drayven's brain!!

It was more or less a similar technique that he used against Evangeline... but, it was much more powerful due to him being more in tune with the frequencies after unlocking Melody Aspect!

"Argh..."

The overloaded frequency was powerful enough it left Drayven knitting his eyebrows in pain, feeling like his brain and internal organs were being stabbed by a million sharp blades.

But... he was no Evangeline.

"GET OFF ME YOU BUG!"

Kaboom!!

He roared as he unleashed a powerful explosion of flames and magma from his wings and scales... Levi was forced to guard his face with both arms after his aetheric barrier got absolutely eradicated!

Whoosh!

Still, the force was too powerful and sent Levi flying away, making him give up on his violin and bow, which were still locking Drayven tightly.

But, Drayven swiftly figured out a way to free himself now that Levi wasn't in contact with the weapon.

The moment he was released, he tried to kick Levi's violin away, but Levi broke it apart into shadowy flowers and summoned it in his hands as he rebalanced himself on the ground.

'You better kill that f*cking lizard!' Ash'Kral growled while staring at Drayven coldly with a single eye on the violin's bridge... not too fond of such disrespect.

'I am working on it.' Levi replied sternly, 'But... it seems it's going to be much harder than I expected.'

Levi's harmonic spine showed him the internal system of Drayven and his subconscious barrier after he figured out its natural frequency.

He was watching live as Drayven's internal injuries from the overloaded frequency and his other spiritual attacks on his mind were being healed at an insane speed.

In less than a second, Drayven was back to his peak like Levi's attacks were nothing but an illusion!

'I guess violin isn't cut for this fight at the moment.'

Levi recollected his thoughts and swiftly switched his weapon to the Judgment's Chainstaff... then, he held it from the center and released the chained-up crowns just a little to separate from the staff.

Then, he murmured under his breath, "Twin Fang Style."

In an instant, the upper crown was engulfed in a concentrated liquified blade of sunflames... it was so concentrated, the watchers felt like Levi was holding an actual solid blade of sunflames!

But, Levi wasn't done... the bottom crown was suddenly encapsulated in a long pitch-black blade that instantly started pulling the light from the Nova blade.

Levi tightened his grip in the center of the staff, and then he started whipping the blades around until golden and black mirages were left in their wake.

"Come." He uttered emotionlessly.

Chapter 348: The Celestial vs Drayven. I

Although Drayven saw Levi's blades were made out of sunflames and void, he wasn't fazed... his confidence in his strength was absolute, unshaken.

"As you wish!"

Drayven launched himself off the ground and flew toward Levi like a bullet... his claws suddenly caught molten lava, and his wide-open jaw showed a concentrated plasma beam forming in his throat.

The instant he was no less than a hundred meters from Levi, he roared in his direction.

"PERISH, VERMIN!"

The beam fired at his command, reaching Levi in an instant... yet Levi blocked it with his rapidly spinning twin fangs. The sunflame blade and the void blade competed to see which one would devour the plasma beam the fastest!

With Harmonic Spine showing him a clear sight of Drayven's internal system behind a transparent scarlet skin, it was nearly impossible to ambush him with such an attack. He could see the beam getting developed and knew exactly what to do.

The viewers watched with widened eyes and hearts beating out of their chests as Levi walked forward while slicing off the scarlet beam left and right, his blades so powerful, they could cut through anything... for they were manifested out of the most aggressive energies in the universe.

"Bastard!!"

Drayven's expression turned nasty as he closed his mouth shut, understanding that he was doing nothing but showing the universe... that he wasn't Him!

In a fit of rage, Drayven swung his lava claws in an X mark the instant he arrived in front of Levi... the claws fired an X-shaped seething lava projectile!

Levi felt the heat assault his face, but he didn't show much reaction... this kind of heat was nothing before what he went through in the aftermath of using the Sun Form.

He clutched the center of the staff and swung aggressively while pulling off a combustion leap, hurling him into the sky... avoiding the lava projectile a mere inch away!

Yet, his swing was already in motion as Levi released the excess chain mechanism, allowing them to run free! With him already in the sky above Drayven, the swing allowed Levi to fake the initial swing and get pulled into the sky behind in a circular motion!

As Drayven glanced above his head, his slits thinned at the sight of Levi's blades spinning five meters above his head and almost instantly appearing at the back of his sight!

"You wish!"

Drayven's heightened draconic instincts were matched with a reaction speed just as potent... when the viewers thought that no one could avoid such a masterful counter-attack, Drayven proved to them why there were levels to this.

Boom! Boom!

Two instant bursts of concentrated flames were released from his wings from the right side... in almost an instant, Drayven was displayed a meter away from the blast zone.

However, the instant the Sunflame blade and Void blade touched in an X mark on the ground, the reaction was nuclear!

BOOOOOOM!!

Drayven was knocked back hundreds of meters, but he wasn't wounded as he managed to cover himself with his wings, allowing them to take the hit for him!

Thud! Thud! Thud!!

After the third roll, Drayven balanced himself with fire pulses and instantly lifted his head in Levi's direction... he opened it as wide as an anaconda's mouth. Then, he took the deepest breath in the shortest amount possible, inflating his lungs to the limit.

"SCARLET BREATH!!"

Whoosh!!!

A hurricane of orange flames rushed in Levi's direction and covered his entire field of view! It left him feeling like his Harmonic Spine was showing him the inside of the sun!

All he saw was... FIRE

!

Yet, Levi was someone who had done thorough research on Drayven and all of his opponents... the scarlet breath technique was within his knowledge, which allowed him to automatically use the prepared countermeasure!

'Ring of Feast!'

He exclaimed inwardly as he tightened his grip on the chains and swiftly spun them rapidly while timing aetheric bursts to propel them ten times their speed in an instant!

The atmosphere and the incoming cloud of fire were sucked in Levi's direction like he was holding two mini-black holes!

It wasn't far-fetched to call it such, as the rings of void and sunflames were spinning so fast, they were no longer visible... in their place, a complete black and a white circle showed with massive rings of orange appearing around them, resembling event horizons!

Jasmine and the watchers could only watch with captivated expressions.

"The Celestial is showing everyone why he is worthy of the nickname!!" Gamemaster Gamble shouted excitedly, "HE IS WIELDING CELESTIAL BODIES!"

Following his thunderous voice, Levi launched himself in Drayven's direction with Sun Jets and dragged behind him the horrific spinning rings!

'Shit!'

Drayven's instincts instantly warned him that he wouldn't be fast enough to evade it in time... this forced him to switch to turtle mode, covering his body with his wings while releasing torrents of burning magma from his system!

A thick magma barrier formed almost instantly, resembling a dragon egg about to crack!

Alas, the barrier stood no chance against a triple-layered attack that included his own flames, insane kinetic force, and the destructive property of these two energies' reaction!

Ka-BOOOOOM!!!

It imploded almost instantly, releasing a powerful flaming mushroom cloud into the roof, forcing Levi to shield himself from the recoil!

Whoosh! Whoosh!!

Both Levi and Drayven were sent flying outside the fire mushroom... the only difference was Drayven being in the impact zone... however, if Levi hadn't let go of his staff at the last second, the recoil would have been enough to blow him into a bloody cloud!

The spectators watched with a stunned expression as Drayven's rolling body smashed into the wall, releasing a thunderous echo!

Thud!

Drayven fell to the ground, leaving behind him a solid cracked imprint... he coughed a mouthful of blood, but he didn't seem to notice it... his vision was disoriented, making him see double images of his shattered bloody arms.

"I... cough... I... am... losing?" Drayven muttered under his breath amidst his bloody coughs... his voice carried a hint of disbelief, like such a scenario was nothing but a funny joke.

But... he wasn't laughing. Not when he felt his entire body melting from within... most of his organs heavily wounded.

Meanwhile, Levi regained his balance swiftly by using Sun Jets on his palms and soles... then, he knitted his brows coldly as he rushed in Drayven's direction, piercing through the air like a ballistic missile!

He knew he couldn't allow Drayven to recover... the moment his genetic miracle was activated, it would devour a chunk of his life force but return him to his peak form!

'Starpiercer!'

He switched to a firing stance, the gleaming Starpiercer manifesting in his hands from mesmerizing, triangle-like golden flowers!

Finger on the trigger.

His grip on the shoulder pad solid.

His arms were steady even during his flight.

The Starpiercer's internal firing system was instantly active through the aetheric combustion on the back of the rifle. All Levi needed to do was aim and utter, "Twin Voidflame Blast."

Two spinning marbles manifested inside an aetheric green bullet-shaped construct inside the muzzle... one was black and the other gold.

The faster they spun around each other, the more distorted the bullet's image got... before it could collapse, Levi released a low-pitched frequency with his mouth like a soundless whistle. It was soundless to the others, but not to its target.

Fire!

Levi pulled the trigger and watched as the agitated aetheric bullet reached hypersonic speed as it headed to Drayven!

Although he was disoriented, Drayven's instincts were as sharp as ever... before Levi fired the bullet, his instincts already tingled and woke him up from his daze!

Immediately, Drayven's vision and thoughts were cleared as he realized that he had no choice but to use his trump card... a trump card no one was able to force him to use... until now!

'So be it... the universe shall be blessed to see a speck of my Ancestor.'

Chapter 349: The Celestial vs Drayven II.

Drayven closed his eyes for less than a millisecond... and when he opened them again, his slits changed to fully dark scarlet.

Accompanying the eyes' change was an instantaneous release of a boiling scarlet steam, hiding him within a thick cloud!

The moment the cloud emerged, the bullet pierced right through it and then... the combat room went deathly silent for an illusory second before the billions of stacked pupils reflected an illuminating projection into the arena.

But no one was blinded or felt any tint of pain... they just stared with an awed expression as the wall was absolutely blown to smithereens by a tiny bullet... a tiny bullet releasing a golden flash of light before it was devoured by a sudden rush of darkness!

Jasmine and Ni'bby stared at this sight in utter daze, feeling like they were staring at a genuine celestial entity joining the platform for fun instead of the gentle and serene Levi.

Sure, they saw his Void Form and what he did to Alzhukar, but still... what Levi was demonstrating before them was his genuine prowess without abusing his divine mutations!

This left Jasmine with a single thought born the instant the darkness faded away: 'he is pulling away from me...'

Jasmine felt her heart skip a beat at the thought, not knowing why, but the idea seemed dreadful... the idea of Levi leaving her behind... Levi, who made her hear twice... Levi, who saved her at the risk of losing himself... Levi, who shared with her his deepest secrets... Levi, the only person she felt normal next to, even when he knew of her true origins.

Just as these feelings were starting to build within her, it reminded her of the horrible feeling she wished no one upon... the feeling of being abandoned by one's own parents as a newborn.

Jasmine dreaded this feeling more than anything else... as it always made her feel unwanted, cast away, a child, unworthy of love.

If it wasn't for her foster father Hicham, she would have been dead...

That's why she preferred spending her time alone in the corners, in silence... she would rather keep everyone away than have them cast her aside after opening up to them.

Levi and his friends were her first step toward healing this part in her heart... this pain she carried within all the time.

'I can't... I can't be left behind again... I can't.'

Her inner voice spoke for the deepest emotions in her heart. But, before these negative thoughts could fester into something deeper and unwind all the healing she had done, her pupils suddenly thinned in dread at the unimaginable sight before her after the dust cloud settled a little.

Drayven wasn't dead... not even close after eating such a powerful nuke directly. Instead, he stood up as a towering thirty-meter bestial scarlet dragon, his silhouette enlarged on the fading dusty cloud.

His injuries, scales, wings, everything was healed, enlarged, and enhanced... it was like Drayven was taken away and was replaced by a genuine gigantic scarlet dragon with fangs bearing down his jaws!

'Nope!'

Whoosh!!

The instant Levi witnessed this sight, he pulled the brakes on his Sun Jets and swiftly retreated into the opposite end like he had seen the boogeyman!

"A...Dragon... AN ANCESTRAL SCARLET DRAGON HAS DESCENDED INTO OUR GAME!" Gamemaster Gamble announced with a thrilled tone, spit flying everywhere.

Following his announcement, the watchers absolutely lost their minds, their roars consuming the entire combat room, akin to a tidal wave!

-Holy shit!!! Celestial is f*cking done for!! It's an actual Ancestral Dragon!-

-Slow your horses now, I admit Drayven's Ancestral Manifestation is a significant power up, but it is still temporary... as long as the Celestial survives until it ends, he will win instantly!-

-Keep dreaming! Ancestral Manifestation is accessible only to Trueborns with an Ancestor that has achieved the Glorious Evolution, and the offspring possess above 90% Solarity Access for a reason! Drayven is no longer the same... he is now in possession of his Ancestor's library of techniques!!-

-This game, man!! What the f*ck is going on!! This is beyond the Abnormal rank, it should be called the Monsters rank!-

When even Levi was freaked out and immediately pulled back to safety, the watchers' reaction was more than understandable... Ancestral Manifestation was no joke; it was one of the infamous power-ups granted to Trueborn Lineages with a Glorious Ascendant.

One of the few beings across the timeline being able to achieve the Glorious Evolution and become an acknowledged Ascendant!

One of the final rewards the Shadowlife seed left behind at the end of its cycle was passing a conditioned and limited access to the Ancestor's library of techniques based on one's Solarity Access... the minimum was 90%.

It was like a gift to the offspring the closest in talent and genetics to the Lineage's Founder... however, with such great power came with it some grave consequences.

As Levi and everyone knew... this power-up was temporary and drained immense life force from the user, as it was considered... under the laws of the universe... an abuse of techniques the user had no business wielding at their level.

In simpler terms... it was a lesser version of Levi or Jasmine abusing their Origin Seeds powers they weren't strong enough to use.

"Why are you running?"

Drayven let out a long steamy huff from his nose as he gazed at the burning dot in the distance... his voice carried a grouchy echo behind it like a mountain speaking.

"Don't you like playing with bullets and nukes?"

Seeing that Levi had no plans to turn around, Drayven's bloodthirsty scarlet slits zoomed at his back until Levi's burning form appeared a mere inch away from him.

"I raise you..."

Then, he opened his mouth widely while tilting his head to the back... next, scarlet particles seemed to rush from the surrounding atmosphere, and into the depth of his mouth.

This process lasted no more than a second... the moment a tiny concentrated scarlet living marble appeared in the back of his throat, Drayven whipped his head in Levi's direction!

The marble was fired like a rail gun bullet, appearing instantaneously behind Levi's back with an insane accuracy!!

And yet... Levi managed to displace only his torso with Sun Jets, making the scarlet bullet graze his clothes and speed in the direction of the roof above him!

Alas, Levi's 360 degree vision and echolocation might help him avoid the bullet, but it wasn't enough to save him from the aftermath.

The instant the bullet made contact with the roof, the explosion was catastrophic... a mini-bright scarlet sun was born, arriving at Levi's direction in an instant.

The only thing he could do under the dreadful massive scarlet sun was use the first survivalist technique that came to his mind.

Before anyone could see it, Levi was fully engulfed... disappearing within the scarlet flash like a defiant ant daring to stand against a beam fired from a magnifying glass.

The flash lasted for a second before it faded away, but in Jasmine and the viewers' eyes... it felt like time was slowed down immensely within their own minds allowing them to appreciate such harrowing level of destruction.

It wasn't a metaphor as Gamemaster Gamble used his omnipotence to enhance their experience to the fullest... while they were watching for entertainment, the battle was nothing but an absolute film of horror after another.

Now... it was Levi's turn to be on the receiving end.

Thud! Thud! Thud...

Jasmine watched in stunned silence as Levi's body was sent rolling across the floor countless times before finally smashing against the wall.

His clothes were ripped out, but not enough to expose his identity... his head was lowered, facing his shattered laid out arms on the floor.

Whatever condition he put Drayven at... Drayven repaid it back, in double.

"The Celestial... The Celestial is heavily injured for the first time!!!" Gamemaster Gamble's voice boomed across the combat room, "Have we just witnessed the descent of the Celestial?!"

Chapter 350: The Celestial Vs Drayven. III

The crowd and Levi's fans went still at Gamemaster Gamble's announcement, their eyes incapable of accepting the view before them... they simply couldn't accept the idea of the Celestial's legacy ending like this... this early.

Jasmine felt her heart stop for a split second as she stared at Levi's miserable condition... her mind fed her with images of reality, but her heart refused to paint it as it was.

Levi, dying? Jasmine found herself incapable of accepting such a thought.

Ka-thump!

Following a single heartbeat, Jasmine's heart, hair, and eyes were inked as black as the night... she had a single thought leading her at the moment: saving Levi at any cost.

'Oh, dear me... children and their emotions.'

However, before she could embark on such an impossible quest, N'ibby took control of Jasmine's body... in an instant, Jasmine was no more, replaced by N'ibby in Jasmine's body.

Then, she affixed her gaze on the cause of her troubles.

'Levi, is this really the end of the Equilibrium of Chaos' heir?' She murmured under her breath... somewhat disappointed?

Meanwhile, Levi wasn't having a picnic... his mind was fading between consciousness and unconsciousness... any moment, he could drop dead.

Drayven's attack left him damaged much worse than anything he went through... he ate an expanding nuke, and even when he had activated the Sun Divine Skin, it absorbed only the heat, helping him avoid getting burnt alive. But the kinetic force? He ate most of it... his aetheric/sound barriers did only so much.

'Shit... I am not having another dead partner under my hands... not him.' Ash'Kral uttered coldly as he reached out with his consciousness towards the Harmonic Spine.

Then, he gained partial control of it due to their souls' connections through the nocturnal contract... immediately, his Harmonic Spine started showing him cloudy images, scenes, anything to stabilize Levi's soul while at the same time recovering his physical condition through the silver threads coursing through his entire system... it was like Ash'Kral was wielding a medical living form assisting its host survive through self-knitting his cuts, wounds, sucking off blood, and such.

The viewers couldn't see it, but Levi's Harmonic Spine was currently moving in a hypnotizing manner, its silver sheen made it resemble nanotech.

However, Levi didn't seem to pay it any attention... his mind barely functional... but it didn't remain like this for long. Thanks to the shown images and scenes, Levi's consciousness was pulled back in, awakening him and feeding him memories of what had just happened.

"Cough... argh..."

Levi coughed a mouthful of blood as he gazed at the messy vision around him... the Harmonic Spine's focus was on rebuilding his body as fast as possible, not painting his world. But not Ash'Kral.

'Levi, damn it! I am not starting over! You hear me! You better get your ass up and eradicate that f*cking lizard!' He shouted in his mind... his tone solemn but furious.

Hearing his scolding, Levi didn't care about Ash'Kral or his goal... he didn't even think of him. But his voice did remind him of his promises... his promise to his murdered parents, his promise to his brother to get strong together and avenge their parents... his promise to the three ancestral trees, who trusted him with their powers... his promise to his friends, and Seraphis... but, most importantly... his promise to himself of seeing again with his own eyes.

'Is this how I am going to let my story end... a blind child who lied to himself that he can do it all...'

Levi's fingers twitched, and then his head was slowly raised.

The stunned viewers watched as the three celestial stars were still orbiting... wobbly, but still orbiting... they could feel it: they were telling them that they would never stop their orbit.

"No..." Levi blurted out, clearing some blood from his mouth... the moment he felt the cold air reaching his damaged lungs, Levi didn't care about anything else; the pain, Drayven, the win, he just focused on one thing... To Live

!

"CORONA TEMPEST!"

His cosmic growl resounded across the combat room as Levi's body was instantly set ablaze... consumed by massive, white tendrils of golden sunflames. He resembled a raging massive flame symbol, but in pure gold!

Levi felt a hellish level of pain course through his body like a normal mortal set in flames... his neuron system was being burned, fried, boiled, melted, and all four at once!

However... as much as the pain was real, the physical damages weren't increasing, but reversing at an insane rate!

His cuts, bruises, imploded organs, broken or shattered bones, everything was being healed like he was being blessed by divinity!!!

In a sense he was, as Levi was being healed due to his Divine Sun Skin recovery aspect... unfortunately, because there was no sunlight available in the boundless expanse, Levi couldn't use his full Sun Form and be blessed with all of its powers.

The Divine Sun Skin absorbed what it could from the intense burning sunflames to help him heal back to his peak as it could feel that his recovery was the most priority.

Hence, it couldn't afford to split the little sense of solar power it was getting from his ultimate ability.

This meant Levi chose to put himself in the most torturous experience one could live to survive... the experience of being burnt alive, flesh and all!

"I can't believe my eyes!! The Celestial is burning himself back to peak form!! What kind of sicko survival technique is this!!"

Gamemaster Gamble shouted passionately, putting a close-up on Levi's burning body inside the blinding golden light.

If he saw it, it meant Drayven also saw it... he narrowed his slits in Levi's direction and murmured under his breath, "I am not letting you steal the show anymore... not in your dying breaths... not when I am using my Ancestor's form and I know this is my final battle."

Instead of finishing Levi off with another concentrated nuke, Drayven wanted to show the universe the true prowess of his ancestor... to make them recall his name and his legend during his times while also having it in connection to his name to build a new legacy on top of it.

He wanted to do this instead of finishing Levi because he knew that after his transformation finished, he would be done for... he could no longer compete against anyone, even if the Dealer or the Ruiner were heavily injured.

The Ancestral Manifestation was powerful, but its side effects were absolutely brutal. But, if he didn't use it, he would have never been able to defeat Levi.

'We were used to being feared... now, we are included as one of... not during my time.'

Drayven's eyes turned scarlet as he opened his mouth wide and started gathering an insane amount of scarlet rays tens of meters above his mouth.

The viewers' attention was instantly stolen back to Drayven just like what he wanted... all of them showed shocked expressions at the sight of a scarlet orb getting bigger and bigger until it was about two hundred meters in diameter!

It was so big, it turned Drayven into a dwarf dragon... the moment it reached such size, Drayven stopped gathering the plasma off and closed his mouth shut.

He turned his focus back to Levi, who was trying to stand up with great difficulty... the surrounding blaze was dying off little by little.

"Against all odds... you were a great rival... but Scarlet Dragons' prowess is unquestionable." Drayven uttered calmly, "Not even a Half-Radian/Half-Oblivar abomination can put us down."

The viewers responded with immense hype, shouting his name as loud as they could, creating a thunderous chant inside the combat room.

The universe's viewers reacted and loved one thing... absolute strength. It didn't matter if a Rifter's personality was dog shit, as long as he could back it up with immense strength, they would worship him.

This was the culture born out of a universe in conflict since the Era of Chaos... this culture of war was only amplified during the Chained Universe Era, where the CRS Platform was initiated.

Now... almost everyone across the whole Chained Universe and its realms were slaves to strength and its pursuit. To be born in a culture of the strong eat the weak... this quest became necessary for all capable.

Meanwhile, the majority of these viewers were the opposite... they didn't have what it took to seek strength and could only tune in to these Death Games and worship those who had what they lacked. As they gazed at Drayven's insanely massive scarlet sun, their eyes were captured instantly.

However, many fans of Levi were diehards... this showed when their cheers exploded across the room after they saw Levi standing back up fully, resembling the heart of the distorted sun.

Celestial!! Celestial!! We believe in you!! Show him what you got!! Drayven!! Ancestral Dragon!!...

As the chants of two groups clashed in the sky, Levi summoned his staff and grasped it tightly... then, he lifted into the heavens and spoke with a grim, pained grimace behind the mask.

"Sun for a Sun? Then, I raise you..."

The viewers couldn't hear the pain behind his cosmic echoey voice... even when he was under intense pain, the image of the Invincible Celestial must be maintained... not for fame, but for survival.

Showing any sort of weakness in the Nocturnal Ring might be one's end as it meant the rest of the Rifters no longer would dread him.

"The Celestial is creating his own SUN!!!"