

Evolution 361

Chapter 361: Building a Network.

The top ten win three extra coins while the top three win five extra coins... as for the first? They win ten coins!

This translated to ten wins in the Nocturnal Ring, which was much harder to achieve... meanwhile, all they had to do was spin the wheel and bet on their chances to not get killed.

"To hit such scores, they must be hitting every single randomization even if it had a high number of trap cards."

Levi shook his head, having no idea how they do it...but he could feel that something wasn't natural about it.

Ting...Ting...

A moment later, the wheel had new randomized prizes on board... when Levi saw that the board had no trap card, he didn't know why, but he felt a tingle of disappointment deep within him.

All because the shown rewards weren't as of higher quality than the ones in the fortune wheels he saw in the network.

"I saw a short clip of a Rifter hitting the Jackpot on an S-grade Artifact... Yet, I am getting common tokens, 10% discounts, or dozens of map fragments."

Levi murmured under his breath, but he soon caught himself getting drawn to the mind of a gambler... he shook his head and spun the wheel, ignoring the creepy grin on the Joker's face.

Ting...Ting... Ting.

The wheel slowed down bit by bit until a green colored segment was stopped by the Joker's extended leg.

-Congratulation... you won fifty desolate fragments!-

A dimensional message appeared before him with a small explosion of fireworks, seeking to touch Levi's dopamine receptors and get him hooked.

"Not bad."

Yet, Levi remained grateful and added the fragments to his collection... then, he spent another coin to randomize the wheel and waited with held breaths.

Ting...Ting... Ting!

The newly randomized wheel halted and shimmered brighter in Levi's face, leaving him quite stunned as he gazed at the ludicrous latest collection.

"95% discount rate in the Infinity Shop for one item? 20 Citadel-graded fragments? A-ten token package... and lastly..." Levi sucked a cold breath before uttering in disbelief, "An SS-Grade Recovery Totem... what the..."

"Well, here's your jackpot." Ash'Kral snickered under his breath, "I dare you to spin the wheel."

Hearing his snarky voice, Levi returned to reality... his vision now displayed six trap cards stacked up next to each jackpot!

The entire wheel had only ten sections... to have 60% of it covered in traps, Levi's excitement chilled out rapidly as he leaned back a little.

"You think Nocturn's Administration is that generous?" Ash'Kral sneered, "The entire wheel is a trap even with its rewards... because your wins will make you keep coming back until the day they get what they wanted from you."

"Ash is right... it's called the Wheel of Fortune and Madness for a reason." The Titan nodded, "You have to be mad to spin such wheels of death."

"..."

Levi went silent... he steadied his breathing while staring deeply at the glittering prizes, their light was so bright, it made the wheel appear flawless... but in reality, there were six pits of deaths hidden in clear sight.

Although Levi wasn't a gambler, he also wasn't a quitter... he waved off the wheel to the side, knowing that the displayed rewards would remain there until the day he decided to spin it or spend another coin to randomize it.

"The moment I play a game of chance, I have already lost." Levi tapped a finger on his chin, "But... the universe's laws aren't unreachable... even luck and fate can be predicted and controlled to one's favor."

The first person that came in Levi's mind in relation to such subject left him with a twitching lip... But, then he smiled wryly in acceptance, understanding that he was the sole contact in his possession that had the highest chance of helping him with this.

He opened his contact list and saw a sea of blocked requests that kept on going and going forever... this was the list of everyone sought to befriend the Celestial.

Absolute Rejection.

However, Levi wasn't dumb to block everyone... he ensured to keep the requests from high profile individuals like his ex-opponents, nobles, or such.

They were already situated on top of the list with different colors, separating their connection to him... purple was for death game's opponents.

The moment he filtered out the rest and left only purple... three names popped up at the front: Madam Future, The Ruiner, and The Dealer.

Levi ignored the Ruiner and glanced at Madam Future and The Dealer... one was capable of viewing the future and the other wielded the Aspect of Probabilities. Two broken powers when dealing with such matters related to gambles.

"I didn't really talk that much with Madam Future... still, I prefer her much more than him." Levi glanced at the Dealer's name... his annoying chuckle and attitude got on his nerves even when he wasn't around him. Especially, when he realized later on that the Dealer was responsible over exhausting the Ruiner before the final battle against him.

Levi could tell that the Dealer did it to help him and make him feel like he owed him one... as much as he annoyed Levi, he had to admit that if it wasn't for the Dealer's assistance, he would have struggled much more against the Ruiner.

In fact, he might not even make it out alive... after all, he might have tamed him through his Melody Aspect, but if the Ruiner wasn't exhausted and weakened, there was a much higher chance of him catching Levi before he could play it out.

"I don't like owing anything to anyone." Levi rubbed his brows, "But, I already owe him one... might as well ask for another and see what he wants from me."

"You're a Baron now. You need to start building connections, not just climbing the ladder and expecting to be welcomed into high-profile circles," Ash'Kral advised. "The Dealer, Madam Future, the Ruiner... anyone who holds even a hint of goodwill toward you... you should stay in contact with them. You never know when you'll need their help, whether it's tied to their bloodlines or powers... like right now."

"I know... but that also means I have to be there for them when they need me." Levi sighed.

He didn't need Ash'Kral to tell him how important it was to build relationships in the Boundless Expanse... but, he also knew that his Celestial persona had nothing to its name but its participation in the games.

If he wanted to be part of a network, he had to be useful too... yet he lacked the resources and influence their backgrounds granted them.

This meant, if he wanted to keep his persona legit... he needed to be resourceful and reliable... otherwise, it wasn't hard to guess his identity to be someone from a weak lineage or race.

"Still... as you said, I am a Baron now, and I should act like it."

Levi dropped his doubts and accepted the Dealer and Madam Future friendship requests... the moment they got logged in as part of his friends list, their status showed up offline for a second... and then instantly, both became online.

-Celestiaa! I knew fate won't keep us apart for too long.-

-Hello...Mr. Celestial.-

It didn't take a genius to guess which greeting belonged to which person.

Chapter 362: For You.

-I want help with the Wheel of Fortune and Madness. Not now. Soon. I'll pay for your service.-

Levi sent a straightforward request for his needs, understanding that the Dealer was quite a chatty person, and he didn't want to get sucked into his web.

-Pay? Paaaay? Celestial, do you want to hurt my feelings this early in the morning?- The Dealer replied, adding a sad emoji.

-I see... congratulations on obtaining access to the wheel, I had a feeling the title was going to be related to it... Though my apologies, but I don't offer such services.- Madam Future responded.

Levi could tell the Dealer would help him, but he also didn't want to miss out on Madam Future's assistance... he knew her powers would be quite vital in minimizing his chances of landing on the trap card.

-What do you want in return?- Levi sent to the Dealer.

-Is this your final decision?- Levi responded to Madam Future.

-Not much, just a cup of coffee... Your presence itself is the repayment.- The Dealer sent a chuckling emoji.

Levi's brows twitched, starting to feel that the Dealer might be swinging in the other direction... or he had no issues with hiding his obsession with Levi's mysterious identity, finding his existence puzzling... the Dealer was clearly someone who loved solving puzzles.

-Then I'll accept it as a favor between us... I will contact you later when I decide on the time.- Levi swiftly closed the Dealer's chat tab and switched his focus to Madam Future's reply.

-I don't sell my services, but I don't mind lending a hand to a friend.-

'I like her already.' Levi smiled.

Madam Future's intentions were in full display... she wanted to add Levi to her network, so they could benefit from each other. Meanwhile, the Dealer's intentions still eluded him as he didn't want to get too close to someone who sought to figure out his identity.

The last thing he needed was for the Celestial's persona to be linked to his real persona... not after using both Void and Sunflame Aspects under billions of viewers.

Radians and Oblivars might not care that much as long as he kept his head low, but the same couldn't be said about their goons... they wouldn't hesitate to raid his entire planet to get a piece of him and deliver it to their deities to win their favor.

-Then... don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything... I will send you the details later.-

After sending a confirmation to Madam Future, she replied with a thumbs-up emoji and went back offline...

'I have to tread carefully with everyone, not just him.' Levi thought as he ignored the red notifications from the Dealer's chat tab and closed the whole dimensional screen.

'For now... It's best to leave spinning the wheel until I am properly prepared in case of a worst-case scenario.'

Levi understood that even with both Madam Future and The Dealer's assistance, the result wasn't guaranteed... they would help him minimize his misfortune, but not erase it.

Sometime later...

Inside the Conference's cafeteria, Levi, Arthur, and the girls were seated around a table that was packed with delicious dishes... the moment Levi informed them of his return to the World Tree, they decided to have dinner together to check on him.

"You really can't tell us about this classified mission?" Nurah pouted while rolling a fork on a plate of spaghetti made with tomato sauce.

"It won't be classified if I told you now. Don't worry... a time will come when I will include you in."

Levi replied with a smile, but his auditory vision was affixed on Jasmine, who had been staring at him with a strange look the moment he sat down with them. He didn't know why, but her look gave him a feeling of relief mixed with concern.

'What's up with her?' Levi's heart skipped a beat, 'Don't tell me she has figured out already my other identity? I was gone for a while, and she had all the information she needed.'

Levi turned to Arthur, the only other person at the table with the same clues as Jasmine... instead of seeing the same look, he saw him bickering with Jojo over food, even slapping each other's hands as they reached out to each other's favorite dishes.

'Little prick... has he already found someone to replace me?' Levi showed an amused smile, noticing that his relationship with Jojo was starting to stick out from the group.

They always bickered and fought, but this time... he didn't know; it felt like they were using it as an excuse to keep interacting with each other.

"Big Bro, as long as... cough... you're safe... I don't really care about the details." Arthur suddenly showed Levi a thumbs-up, rejoining the discussion after stuffing his mouth with Jojo's food. He almost choked out twice, yet he still refused to let it go.

Meanwhile, Jojo stopped fighting him and started praying under her breath with clasped hands.

"I wish him a tape worm from the bottom of my heart... Namaste."

Levi chuckled at Jojo's prayer as he was the only one who could hear it... But then, he was pulled back into a different subject after everyone realized that Levi had no plans on sharing what he had done in the past week with them.

"What about your evolutionary path? Any progress during your 'mission'?"

Shia asked while biting through a piece of steak without an ounce of feminine or royal elegance... the more freedom and distance she earned from her family's etiquette and mother's criticism, the less she cared about how others perceived her.

"Not so bad. I believe I should be ready to evolve in less than two weeks." Levi smiled and then asked, "What about you guys?"

"I have it planned for tomorrow." Nurah shared.

"In about three days for me?" Jojo added.

"Tonight for me," Shia said.

"Three days give or take?" Arthur scratched his cheek, "Pushing through Pathfinder rank proved to need more Growth totems than I anticipated... I am waiting on another shipment."

Levi nodded in understanding... he wasn't too surprised by their growth results for the past week. With the treasures he gave them from Alzhukar's wallet and what they found in the treasury, it should be more than enough to push them straight to Tier 6 if they had the evolutionary formulas already prepared.

Even if they had money now, buying Growth Totems still hurt their wallets and souls alike... after all, they were ordering them from the dimensional network, not from their home region.

Their home region had a limited supply of Growth Totems sold, depending on their global regional ranking... as for the conference's store? It accepted only private currency that was earned through missions, raids, tasks, and such.

Still, thanks to what they went through in the Ancient Distorted Site, Dominic had shown them favor and rewarded them with a decent amount of currency to speed up their preparations for the upcoming Faction War.

"I guess then I will be the last... as usual." Levi smiled and then turned to Jasmine... sending a dimensional message, 'What's up with you?'

He was used to her introvert silence in their gatherings, as she was always quiet and smiling sweetly, like she was just happy to be involved. But now? He could tell that something was up.

'Let's talk privately after dinner.' Jasmine responded.

'...ok.'

Levi approved and returned to his friends' discussion about their upcoming mutations and power-ups... while Arthur wished for Jojo's horn to grow bigger, and she wished for his muscles to shrink, Levi kept pondering deeply over what had happened.

But, no matter how hard he thought about it, he always arrived at the same conclusion.

'She knows.'

Sometime later...

Levi and Jasmine walked down a staircase of vines that led to a small, cozy oval balcony hidden inside the World Tree's exterior trunk... the night air felt chilly, and the branches above them carried dim lights from the southern aurora lights.

The view was absolutely breathtaking, making anyone feel like they had stepped into a scene from a fantasy.

-When did you find this spot?- Levi asked in wonder.

-I like to find hidden gems for my drawings.- Jasmine smiled as she gazed at the mesmerizing view before them.

She didn't confirm it, but Levi could tell that she must have already drawn the view in front of them... unfortunately, he couldn't really enjoy its beauty to its fullest extent with his limited vision.

When Jasmine spotted the tiny drop of his smile as he gazed in front of him, she knew exactly what went through his mind... as she was also someone who couldn't fully appreciate the beauty of nature as it was.

She reached into her wallet and manifested a framed painting of the view with an insane level of detail.

Usually, Jasmine only drew using black ink. But for this one... she used colors too, capturing the entire essence of the scenery before them from A to Z.

An immense amount of work had gone into this painting, and it was clear to all. Yet, she handed it to Levi with both hands and a soft smile tugging on her lips.

-For you...-

-Me?-

Levi was left dazed for a moment... mostly from Jasmine's gesture, but also from the painted scenery before him. It wasn't just a landscape on a frame... he could feel the solitude, the cold air, the soft lights of the aurora captured like someone had frozen time.

His Harmonic Spine couldn't paint outside its range, but it still showed him Jasmine's work with clear precision, highlighting every careful brushstroke, the layering of colors, and the way she blended the lights like they were alive.

The moment the scene settled in his mind, all Levi needed to do was imagine it standing in front of him, and the Harmonic Spine formed a minimized version of it in his field of vision. Dimmer, simpler, missing some depth... yet accurate enough for him to appreciate it.

It might not be like the real thing... but it was still something no one else had ever thought to do before. Except his brother, who tried to describe the world for him with honest effort, even if he always fumbled with details.

-You helped me hear twice... I know this isn't the same... but it's my humble effort to help you see, if just for a little.- Jasmine signed with the same soft smile after handing him the gift.

Chapter 363: Jasmine's Evolutionary Path.

Hearing this, Levi didn't know whether to smile in appreciation or feel concerned... he noticed that Jasmine mentioned that he helped her hear twice. Levi never played the violin in the real world after Alzhukar's battle.

-Thank you...- he signed.

Jasmine showed a soft, delighted smile after seeing Levi store her gift in his wallet... then, she nodded in response and offered him to take a seat at the small table next to them.

After Levi took his seat, he asked calmly, 'Did you bring me to discuss my Boundless identity?'

'Yes.' Jasmine nodded, 'I have spectated your last game...'

'I see.' Levi scratched his cheek lightly, 'And?'

'It was a mixed watch...' Jasmine curled her lips, 'I was worried at first, but your strength, your resourceful utilization of your entangled powers, and resolve to win at all costs have inspired me to join the Nocturnal Ring as well... I realized that people of Origin Seeds like us can't grow or keep up without putting our lives on the line... I always wondered what your secret was, but now I know... It's not the powers themselves; it's your willingness to push beyond your limits and boundaries across all realms.'

Jasmine paused and then looked deeply into Levi's face.

'If I want to know the truth about my origins and retrieve my hearing back, I can't be lax, I can't be comfortable in my peace... I have to be like you.'

Levi listened in silence until she finished... then, he started tapping his finger on the table while facing her. He wanted to tell her badly just how risky a decision to make... his experiences in the Nocturnal Ring were rewarding, but they were not pleasant in the slightest.

He fought against the Grim Reaper in each game, putting himself at the jaws of an abyss, just to pull out stronger than ever... but first, he did put himself in the abyss, and he really didn't wish this kind of life upon anyone, not to mention his friends.

It was the same situation for Lord Idriss... Levi and his friends had found out that he had gone inside the Boundless Expanse to get stronger and evolve to a Blazewarden Daywalker. Although it wasn't mentioned, they all knew that the Nocturnal Ring was implied.

It had been quite a while since they heard news from him, understanding that he was in a deep preparation zone for his first death game as a returnee.

If the Nocturnal Ring could put this much horror on the hardcore Lord Idriss, it was clear that it wasn't meant for anyone.

However... Levi buried those thoughts in his heart and nodded in the direction of Jasmine.

'I care for you... I really do, but I won't be a hypocrite and tell you not to do it because it's dangerous.' Levi said solemnly, 'So, all I can do is give you a hand with anything you need to start your journey... whatever you need; training territory, resources, and tips... never hesitate.'

'Thank you... But your concern and willingness to help me are enough for me.'

Jasmine showed a sweet smile as she rejected his offer, not wanting to put her weight on him... She understood that he already had too much on his plate when dealing with his evolutionary paths.

'Are you sure?'

'Yes.' Jasmine nodded, 'I already have my own territory for training, and I don't really need any resources when I am stuck at the Warden rank's evolution stage... but, I could use some tips.'

'Wait... how do you have your own territory without being part of the Nocturnal Ring?' Levi was confused by this.

He knew that it shouldn't be possible for anyone to own a territory unless they were at least Teraowner ranked in the Ring... otherwise, they could rent.

'I also don't know why.' Jasmine shook her head, 'When I reached age twelve and signed my first nocturnal contract, I received another contract out of nowhere that was signed with my name and had all of my details... the contract was related to the ownership of a quite large territory in the Ninth Province. I still don't know what to do with it, so I use it for training once in a while.'

'...' Levi went silent and then asked with a faint chuckle, 'You're kidding, right?'

Jasmine tilted her head cutely, then showed him pictures and videos of the territory, leaving Levi's smile frozen in place.

'This...'

Levi instantly gulped a mouthful after noticing that the territory spanned thousands of kilometers across a vast mixed geographical area... it had pinkish mountains with cherry-like blossom trees filling the hills.

Massive running rivers... some peaceful and blue, common... while some had different types of liquids streaming along them.

The fields, as well, came in all sorts of colors and plant types... although everything wasn't really considered a natural treasure, but they did make the territory into a pleasant habitable place... it resembled a piece sliced off heaven, and Jasmine owned it all under her name.

'How? Maybe your biological parents left it for you?'

Levi couldn't help but ask, feeling happy for her, but gutted for himself... he could tell someone must have left it for her as an inheritance, considering her royal status.

The heir of the Primordial Tree of Creation and Erasure was someone of immense importance... higher in degree than even Radians and Oblivars due to the Inkrit's race's full-on disappearance.

'Maybe... I did my research and found that such a large territory can't be left as an inheritance unless to those with close blood relations.' Jasmine said softly, 'I have spent years pulling this lead, hoping to know more about my origins and what happened in the past, but it led nowhere.'

'It can't be?' Levi frowned, 'I think your omnipotence access is just too low, or you didn't reach out to the right kind of people... everything that is happening is being registered and documented in the Boundless Expanse, each second by the Gerbilia Clan.'

The Gerbilia Clan had direct contact with Nocturn himself as they didn't concern themselves too much with anything going on in the Boundless Expanse... their job was to use their omnipotence to document everything and anything... all the time.

'I know... but as you said, my access and networking are too low to seek the right people.' Jasmine said, her expression determined, 'Which is another reason why I have to do this... I have been ignoring the Nocturnal Ring since I already have a territory and I don't need formulas for my evolutions, but I was wrong... the Ring is the key to many of my pro...'

'Wait... back up a second.' Levi suddenly interrupted her, 'What do you mean you don't need formulas for your evolutions?'

'Oh... didn't I mention this before?' Jasmine tilted her head in confusion.

'No?'

'Are you sure? I still remember telling you all about it before our first raid.' Jasmine mentioned, 'You asked me if you want to ask the Genie for a hint related to my evolutionary formula... and I shook my head, telling you I don't need them.'

Hearing this, the memory hit Levi's mind in a flash, leaving him staring at Jasmine speechlessly.

'Jasmine... I thought you meant you don't need wishes, not the formulas...'

'Ah... sorry, I guess I misread it?' Jasmine showed an embarrassed smile.

'Don't worry about that.' Levi swiftly returned her to the main subject, 'What do you mean by not needing formulas? How is that possible? Do you evolve through alchemy potions or other witchcraft arts?'

Jasmine paused... She looked down at her hands for a moment, then spoke honestly.

'My path isn't like everyone else's. N'ibby told me that I am a pure blood heir of the Primordial Tree of Creation and Erasure... I don't follow formulas. My entire evolution from tier 1 to tier 9 is already planned by the Seed itself... I don't make my evolution, but I do need to earn it from the Seed.'

'This is the first time I hear this.' Levi raised an eyebrow as he checked with Ash'Kral, 'Ash... is that possible?'