

Evolution 55

Chapter 55: Professional Upstairs Neighbor.

The next morning...

Shia called Arthur and informed him she was waiting downstairs. Arthur had already packed his suits and was sitting beside his brother, waiting for the call.

"She's here," Levi smiled, his enhanced hearing easily picking up Shia's voice through Arthur's earpiece.

Arthur wasn't bothered. Levi had already told him his main evolutionary trait was related to sound. If he hadn't seen what his brother could do with echolocation, he wouldn't have felt at peace, leaving him alone for two whole months.

They had been together ever since their parents were murdered... and this would be the first time they'd be apart for so long.

"Go already. You know how thin Shia's patience is," Levi said as he gave Arthur a small shove toward the door, luggage in hand, after sensing the shift in his heartbeat.

"Fine, fine, I'm going."

Arthur grabbed his bag and opened the door. Before stepping out, he turned around with a solemn expression.

"I'm going to work my ass off these next two months. I don't know about you, but my goal hasn't changed... I'm aiming for the number one rank in the Contract Ritual Assembly."

"How surprising. I'm aiming for it too," Levi chuckled.

Though already a Daywalker, Levi wasn't joining the Assembly just to disguise his awakening.

The Contract Ritual Assembly was one of the most anticipated events of the year. Beyond being a stage for the chosen to shine, the top five contestants would receive rewards capable of drastically accelerating their evolutionary path.

The bottom two rewards were modest... just a few hundred Solar Aegis coins and a minor discount at the Grand Training Center. But the top three were truly valuable.

Third place received a thousand coins and a 10% discount for six months. Second place got two thousand coins and a 15% discount.

But first place...

The first ranker would earn five thousand Solar Aegis coins and a 30% discount for an entire year.

To put it in perspective... Levi nearly lost his life in the Harrowing Forest and barely walked out with materials worth a thousand coins. The 30% discount alone could save more than that in the long run... and every major agency knew it. That's why they pushed their candidates to aim for the top prize... it was worth more than gold.

"Then I'll see you at the top," Arthur grinned, holding out a fist.

"Not if you fail the intelligence trials," Levi smirked, bumping his fist.

"At least I won't get beat up on national TV," Arthur shot back with a grin, dragging his suitcase behind him as he walked away.

Levi watched from the door, smiling faintly. Though they constantly roasted each other, there was nothing he wished more than success for his younger brother.

He knew Arthur was full of potential... potential that only someone like Lord Idriss could truly unlock. That's why he insisted Arthur go... knowing he'd come back ten times stronger after two months apart.

Levi stepped to the window and watched his brother's figure enter the car. Then they were off... heading for the capital.

As the sound of the vehicle faded from his auditory field, Levi murmured to himself with a smirk, "We'll see who ends up doing the beating."

Time flowed like a rich river pouring into the sea... steady, unstoppable. Before anyone realized it, the Contract Ritual Assembly was just a day away.

In those two months... or slightly less... Levi had been dragged through hell and back under Ash'Kral and Shia's relentless training.

He spent nearly five hours a day mastering the basics of staff combat under Shia's sharp eye. The rest of his time was devoted to cultivating his power and honing his weapon.

Because summoning his staff outside risked exposure, Ash'Kral had taught him a trick... how to keep the Ancestral Rooted Grounds open by not unlocking the next innate ability.

After reaching the second stage of his Nine Senses seed evolution, Levi deliberately ignored the blooming nonagon flower above his head... brimming with glowing abilities... and remained on the still ocean under Ash'Kral's mentorship.

The seed didn't care whether he claimed his reward or not... but Ash'Kral had warned him.

He could perfectly erase his spiritual aura only while remaining in the second stage or lower. If he advanced further, he'd risk being sensed by perceptive beings... like the Willow Grove.

Since the Assembly was taking place in the Solar Aegis Sanctuary, surrounded by powerful entities, it was better to play it safe.

Though he halted cultivation, Levi used his free moments to try sensing the dark energy flowing through the Bridge of Darkness.

So far, it remained elusive.

On the upside, his combat abilities had skyrocketed under Ash'Kral's brutal training. Even when his mentor was at his most insufferable, the results spoke for themselves.

Now, Levi stood at the center of his apartment, clad only in his boxers, rehearsing a flowing combat form with a sleek black training staff.

He had cleared out the furniture, turning the living room into his personal dojo.

Ting!

The staff tapped gently against the floor... but the sound shot through the room like a sonar pulse.

Levi used the wave like a second set of eyes, sweeping the floor with a leg before launching into a spinning airborne kick.

As he landed, he fired off another echolocation pulse to map out the space and continued his fluid motion.

He knew echolocation consumed solar energy from his Nine Senses Seed. Just like everyone else, he had to pay for each use.

The difference? His tank was enormous.

The Nine Senses Seed was both a ravenous glutton and a monstrous reservoir... giving Levi room to burn energy like no one else in his rank.

Even so, he knew the Assembly would stretch across several days. He couldn't afford to waste power. He needed to learn how to use his energy wisely... to be precise.

Without echolocation, he'd be fighting blind. Literally.

Ha! Ting! Ho! Ting!...

Levi spun and moved with sharp, graceful power, his messy brown hair falling over his eyes. Under the morning rays of the Holy Light, his skin glistened with sweat.

He looked almost like a Superb Bird-of-Paradise performing a mating ritual... if that bird had abs and a battle staff.

Too bad the only thing he attracted was the wrath of the neighbors one floor below.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

"You noisy f*cker, stop jumping around!"

"It's five in the morning, for god's sake!"

Levi paused mid-form, ears twitching at the muffled curses and the dull thud of a broomstick smacking the floor from the apartment below.

"I guess I've been a bit annoying this past month."

He smiled apologetically as he sat down on the wooden floor, acknowledging the patience his neighbors had shown. By all accounts, he'd been a model nuisance... regularly practicing combat forms every night for weeks... yet they'd rarely complained until now.

Still, Levi suspected their silence came less from tolerance and more from fear. A blind man in their world was a ticking time bomb... one step away from becoming a Sleepwalker. If it weren't for that stigma, they would've either complained in person or called the cops long ago.

That was the quiet power of wearing an ankle monitor in this new society... a warning label people took very seriously.

After a short rest, Levi headed to the shower. When he finished, he dressed in his usual clothes and emptied half his closet into a single large suitcase.

He slid it to the side and moved on to breakfast, his motions smooth and ordinary... eerily so. No hesitation. No fumbling. No wasted movement.

To a stranger watching, he didn't look blind at all. His head always turned toward what he was doing, like he could see it clearly.

But this wasn't about pretending to be normal. Levi didn't care about blending in for vanity's sake... he simply wanted to avoid drawing attention during the upcoming recruitment phase. Faking sight was a survival tactic.

He cooked a simple breakfast... omelet, buttered crispy toast, and a cup of minted tea... then stepped out onto the balcony with his plate and settled beside a small table.

As he ate, a faint smile touched his lips. Above him, hundreds of monstrous creatures soared through the skies over the vibrant, wavy sprawl of the city.

The noise... the scent of morning dew and steam... the sharp warmth of his tea... the chaotic skyline...

It was all perfectly imperfect.

"I'm gonna miss this peacefulness," Levi murmured, taking a small sip and savoring the view for just a while longer.