

Evolution 56

Chapter 56: Heliodor's Capital.

A couple of hours later...

Levi was sitting on a train with Shia, heading toward the capital city. Sergio and Jamal couldn't stay with him every day... they still had their duties as agency combatants.

Shia, on the other hand, was the daughter of the leader and the second-in-command. She operated under a different kind of privilege.

After a short while, the train arrived at the station, where a personal chauffeur was already waiting. Levi wasn't surprised... Shia clearly enjoyed taking the train, even though she could've easily had someone drive her straight to the capital.

"You're still planning on staying alone?" Shia asked as they got into the luxurious car.

"Yes."

"Hmmm... okay."

Shia didn't pry. There was something in his expression that told her not to. She simply sent the address to the chauffeur, who merged into the sea of never-ending cars.

Heliodor's capital was a pulsating heart of life... people, vehicles, towering buildings, Agencies, Daywalkers... everything. Overcrowded, yes, but held together by impressive infrastructure that maintained a fragile balance... unlike the chaos of the outer settlements.

Glass skyscrapers stretched in every direction, built for corporations, lineage families, and private agency headquarters. But instead of heading deeper into the capital, the chauffeur took a detour toward the outskirts... to the suburban zones.

Here, space was precious. There were no slums... no cheap homes. If someone couldn't afford to live in the capital, they settled outside it. Simple as that.

Soon, the car pulled up in front of a gated residential block... about a hundred modest apartments arranged in square buildings. Compared to uptown villas and southern housing complexes, this was considered bottom-tier housing for the capital... and still five times more expensive than anywhere outside it.

"We've arrived at the gate," the chauffeur said.

"Thanks for the lift."

Levi gave a respectful nod and moved to step out. Shia gently caught his arm.

"Want me to walk you to the apartment?"

Levi shook his head, wearing a polite smile.

"I've already stolen enough of your time... I don't dare ask for more."

He knew Shia had more important things to do than spend five hours a day training him over the last two months. That she had done it anyway said a lot about her character.

"Don't see it that way. It wasn't a waste. I had fun training you," Shia said with a grin. "I never imagined I'd train someone blind to be a Daywalker... and not be disappointed by the results."

"I'm glad," Levi chuckled.

"If you really want to repay me... kick some ass in the assembly." Her eyes narrowed slightly. "Especially Mantis' little brother, Demetris. I heard he's signing up."

"What did Mantis do to you?" Levi raised an eyebrow.

"It's a long story... but I can't stand that prick," Shia clicked her tongue. "His little brother's supposed to be one of the top rising talents in Sunstrike Agency. I doubt he's any better."

"Well... I'll see what I can do. No promises."

Levi smiled wryly. He wasn't planning to carry out Shia's vendetta, but if Demetris crossed his path... he wouldn't hesitate either.

"Take care. We'll be cheering you on tomorrow," Shia said with a playful smile, blowing him a soft kiss as she drove off... knowing full well he couldn't see it.

Unbeknownst to her, Levi's sensitive ears picked up on the subtle gesture... and he couldn't help but chuckle as he walked into the residential complex.

At the gate, his Neuralens device was scanned. As a previous resident, he was granted access without question.

A few minutes later, Levi stood in front of his uncle Rob's old apartment and knocked twice.

No answer.

He focused his hearing inside... nothing.

He pulled out a spare key and unlocked the door.

Click.

The second he opened it, a foul stench of alcohol and rotting trash assaulted his senses, forcing him to pinch his nose shut.

"What a mess... I should've come earlier to clean this up," Levi muttered, using his voice to send out a mapping pulse.

In an instant, the apartment appeared in his mind... small, tight, filled with bags of trash and debris. But what made his expression sharpen was the sight of broken furniture.

"Sigh... I wish it had ended differently," he murmured as he stepped inside the wreckage and shut the door behind him.

Levi rolled up his sleeves and got to work.

This wasn't his uncle's place... not really. It had belonged to his late parents... just like Tamara's apartment. Both were part of the modest inheritance he and Arthur received after their deaths.

If Uncle Rob hadn't been such a gambling addict, their parents might've left him something, too. But they knew it would vanish in a casino faster than a heartbeat.

Unfortunately, they hadn't anticipated dying early... leaving Rob as guardian of the children and trustee of their estate until Levi came of age... sixteen years old, in the new society.

To his credit, Rob had tried. Their deaths sobered him up... at least for a while. He cleaned himself up, took care of the boys, and spared no expense on Levi's eye surgeries. They had failed... but no one could say he didn't try.

Still... the dildo of consequences rarely arrived lubed.

Rob's gambling addiction came roaring back. The debts piled up. These weren't friendly loans or bank agreements... they were from sharks. And when they heard he had access to an inheritance, they came knocking.

Rob turned to the boys, asking permission to sell some properties. Legally, he couldn't do it without their consent and court involvement.

Levi was only eleven... and naive. All he wanted was to save his uncle. So, he said yes.

Properties were sold. Debts were paid. Everyone was happy.

Wrong.

Rob relapsed harder than ever. He started eyeing Levi's welfare checks.

In this age, beating addiction was nearly impossible. Nightcrawlers were always around... always waiting to drag your guilt into your dreams. Levi didn't know if Rob had been manipulated... or if he'd just fallen apart on his own.

He didn't care.

At fifteen, Levi moved out with Arthur and relocated to Tamara's apartment.

They knew staying would destroy them... and neither of their futures could afford that.

Since then, they hadn't spoken to Rob or helped him financially... not until he truly cleaned up. He was a screw-up, but he was still family. They had a soft spot for him... especially after all he did in their darkest times.

Sadly, when Levi tried to check up on him, Rob had already vanished. Calls went unanswered. No leads. No sightings.

In this society, disappearing was easier than dying.

Levi hoped it was the former... he didn't want to lose anyone else. But, there wasn't much he could do to search for him.

After a few grueling hours and the help of Astra AI, the apartment was clean. The trash was gone. The ruined furniture was removed.

Levi clapped his hands once... twice... and used the sound waves to scan the space.

Empty. Clean.

"This'll do for now," he said quietly.

Levi took a quick shower for the second time that day, and as he stepped out, he was greeted by the sight of a gigantic humanoid rhino heading straight toward him.

The creature's body was covered in shimmering, crystallized rock... making him look like an armored statue sculpted from gemstones. His singular horn was long and curved inward... almost as if trying to pierce his own skull.

His spiritual aura was so well-contained, it leaked almost nothing. Levi narrowed his eyes, preparing himself for what he assumed would be more trouble.

To his dumbfounded surprise...

"Hello there, child," the rhino greeted with a polite smile.

"Hello..." Levi replied, waving awkwardly.

"Would you be so kind as to direct me to this region's Contract Ritual Assembly?" the rhino asked with a sheepish grin. "I'm truly terrible with directions."

Levi pointed behind him in silence.

"Ah... looks like I was on the right path. Greatly appreciated."

The rhino gave a respectful nod and continued walking until he vanished from Levi's spiritual field of sight.

"..." Levi lowered his head in mild confusion. "Doesn't he know he can use the contract serial number to access the assembly? Also... were nightcrawlers always this polite?"

Recalling the torment he had endured at the hands of others like Ash'Kral, he couldn't help but chuckle dryly.

"Well, would you look at that... I met a unicorn," Levi muttered, sighing. "Someone's going to be lucky to have him as a partner. Unlike me."

"I think I heard someone b*tching?"