

Evolution 61

Chapter 61: Hail Mary.

Fortunately, Instructor Seraphis' contracted nightcrawler was summoned as a weapon while the spectating nightcrawlers had their spiritual vision linked to the boundless expense instead of the spiritual bridge of darkness...

Thus, no one knew of Levi's disability or tried to stop him from climbing the staircase. After arriving at the stage, Levi knew it was either the moment to create a miracle... or beg for one.

Levi wasn't the type to leave things to whim.

Since there were millions of tiny inscriptions, Levi had to read through thousands of incantations to find the legitimate one.

With all the options, he settled on this.

Test thine eye; endure the blaze or go blind. Levi thought. My best chance is this one.

Levi removed his sunglasses and lifted his head to "gaze" at the artificial sun... His thick hair hid his scorched marks perfectly, making it nearly impossible for anyone to see them.

Then, Levi murmured the new incantation under his breath, "Test this flesh... endure the blaze or wither to ash."

He knew it was near impossible to land on the exact required incantation with the short time he had... but he also understood that if an incantation was partially correct and used close enough synonyms, it might still activate partially.

While this would negatively affect his true affinity for reading, Levi couldn't care less. Right now, all he wanted was not to score zero.

After a second that felt like an eternity, the stage began illuminating slowly...

Levi couldn't see the difference, so he focused his ears on everyone's reaction.

That's when he caught Instructor Seraphis murmuring, "Did something happen to the stage's illumination...? Why is it dimmer than usual?"

The instant Levi heard illumination

, he lowered his head with a fake grimace and sneakily murmured the original incantation.

Then, the stage's lights turned off, and Levi walked away with a disappointed expression.

"Levi Larson... three seconds... light affinity grade 'F'... points scored... one."

With a dark expression, Instructor Seraphis announced the readings like he was being punked.

"..."

"..."

"..."

Meanwhile, Melissa, Jojo, Nurah, and the rest of the contract seekers stared at Levi, dumbfounded.

One point? F grade?

Even though Instructor Seraphis was the one announcing it, they felt something wasn't right... Even children could stare at the sun for more than three seconds.

"Brat, did you sign up to mess with me?" Instructor Seraphis chided. "Go up and give it another try."

"There's no need. I'm satisfied with my humble results." Levi smiled politely.

'Is this dude retarded?'

'Here I thought he was a threat after that entrance stunt. Heh...'

'The fabled F grade... I never thought I'd be blessed to witness it in my lifetime.'

Humble results...?

Many thoughts coursed through the seekers' minds as Levi returned to his group.

"Suit yourself. Ahlam Madmon, step forth!"

Instructor Seraphis dropped the matter and continued the trial, wasting no time on what he now saw as a lost cause. In his eyes, Levi was done. No nightcrawler would sign someone who treated the assembly like a joke.

If Levi wasn't joking and had truly scored that poorly, then it was even worse.

As expected, most nightcrawlers just laughed in amusement before shifting their attention... However, a few gave Levi an intrigued look, noticing what others had missed, and kept it to themselves.

Ash'Kral was one of them... His unique crossed-out eye narrowed, tracking Levi until he rejoined his brother.

'Were the rules changed to force him into altering the Luminance Rite's test target...?' he wondered.

He had seen what Levi pulled off but didn't understand the reason behind it. Instructor Seraphis had announced the new rules outside the dimensional void.

If telepathic communication were allowed inside Willow Grove or the Boundless Expense, Levi would have already informed his partner. But any spiritual connection would've been instantly detected.

Meanwhile, this entire area was under Instructor Seraphis' absolute control. He had already banned telepathic exchanges to prevent manipulation from the spectating nightcrawlers.

'While he passed this hurdle... he's bound to be exposed in the next trial,' Ash'Kral thought.

The same worry filled Levi's mind as he chatted casually with his brother and new friends about his disastrous score.

"Levi... did you blink by mistake?" Rayan asked, confused.

"No," Levi replied calmly.

"Did your hair get in the way?"

Melissa pointed at the shaggy bangs covering part of his glasses.

"No."

"Then what the hell happened up there?" Jojo took a deep breath to collect herself... then shifted to her monk mode. "Namaste... will you kindly tell us what went wrong?"

'The real question is, what's wrong with you?' Levi thought dryly.

Arthur and the others were used to her whiplash behavior. Levi, however, was still trying to make sense of it. In the end, he labeled her as bipolar and left it at that.

"That's just my unfortunate natural light affinity," Levi said calmly. "Don't think too much about it... the trial is almost over."

"You heard him. No more questions."

Arthur stepped between his brother and the rest, cutting off their curiosity. He could see they were about to start probing more.

"Fine. It's his funeral."

Melissa and Rayan shrugged, letting the matter drop. They had only just met Levi... If he wanted to throw away his chances, that was on him.

Meanwhile, in Shia's mansion, the three troublemakers were glued to the holographic TV, still silent.

Eventually, they turned toward each other... wearing the same expression of disbelief.

"Does... does he have tiny holes on his scorched marks?" Sergio offered with a straight face.

Before Shia could shut down his dumb joke, a small hologram flashed beside her eye — a call from her father.

She accepted it with a faint grin.

"Hello."

"Mind explaining yourself?" Lord Idriss asked calmly.

Though he already knew what she'd done, this was their first direct conversation about it.

"I had to. It was tied to my perfect evolution."

Shia didn't bother lying. Her father hated being bullshitted when he already knew the truth.

"I see... but why didn't you tell us?" Lord Idriss said quietly. "We would've accepted. Anything for a perfect evolution."

Shia knew he meant it. When it came to perfect evolutions... nothing else mattered.

"It was a one-time deal. I didn't want to risk it."

Bound by contract, Shia couldn't explain further. Her father seemed to understand that revealing the details might void the deal.

"But we will discuss this later," Lord Idriss said. "You can expect your hours in the agency to double."