

## Evolution 69

Chapter 69: Figured Out.

After Instructor Seraphis exited the Boundless Expense, the first thing he did was contact his old pal, Lord Idriss... He hadn't made a scene about Levi's situation earlier, but now... after realizing that the boy might be the real deal... he needed to figure out what was going on.

A couple of rings later, Lord Idriss emerged as a holographic figure in front of Seraphis.

"Will you look at that, Lionheart reaching out on his own? What kind of sorcery is this?" Lord Idriss joked, his tone and demeanor nothing like when Levi met him.

"You old barbarian, you know I retired that name decades ago." Instructor Seraphis smiled, his hand resting on the sun amulet near his belt.

"A shame, truly..."

Lord Idriss sighed, visibly displeased with Instructor Seraphis' decision... but at the same time, he understood the reasons behind it.

"What do you mean, it's a shame? If I hadn't retired, the streets would've been packed with good-for-nothing Daywalkers." Instructor Seraphis chuckled. "I'm doing your region a great favor, you know?"

"Don't say that," Lord Idriss said solemnly. "This is your second home... not my region."

"I wish it were that simple..."

Instructor Seraphis forced a half-smile. But soon, he cut straight to the point.

"Idriss, I called about that young boy..." he said curiously. "Just what the hell happened?"

"It's nothing much. My daughter swindled a recommendation letter for the boy..." Lord Idriss chuckled. "We handed it to her, believing she was going to recruit Arthur, but in reality, they were all in on it to ensure that boy entered the assembly."

"Huh? Why go through all that trouble? Aren't they brothers? Isn't getting one sponsored the same as sponsoring both?" Seraphis asked, confused.

"That's the thing... Levi Larson isn't allowed to join the assembly through normal procedures."

"How come? Does he have a criminal record?"

"No..." Lord Idriss dropped the bomb. "He's blind."

"He's what now?"

Instructor Seraphis tilted his head in disbelief, thinking he must have misheard. Blind? The idea just wouldn't register...

Alas, Lord Idriss doubled down.

"Yes. As shocking as it sounds after witnessing his performance, it's the truth."

"You mean legally blind? Is that why he wears glasses? Are they prescribed?"

"No, he's blind, blind."

"But... he can see some things? Like tunnel vision or a..."

"Seraphis... he has no eyes."

"..."

Well, that did the trick. Silence fell over Instructor Seraphis as tens of Levi's moments replayed in his head. When he now looked at them through the lens of blindness... his behavior suddenly made sense.

The way his head never truly faced forward... The fact that no one had seen his eyes, not even once, as they were always hidden behind sunglasses or thick bangs. Then, he recalled how Levi had scored one point in the Trial of Light Affinity.

"Impossible... If he had no eyes, the Luminous Rite wouldn't have activated."

"Rewatch the tape and you'll understand what he did to pull off that measly one point everyone's mocking."

Seraphis requested Astra AI to replay the footage of Levi standing on the Luminous Rite.

This time, he focused solely on Levi. When he saw the boy mutter something under his breath... and then watched as the Rite's light weakened... his pupils narrowed.

"Don't tell me..."

"Yep," Lord Idriss confirmed. "To avoid instant elimination from your new rule, the boy must've figured out the right incantation to activate the Luminous Rite. Then, he analyzed it and used an incantation that tested his body instead of his eyes."

"No wonder he scored one point and refused to retry... The incantation must've been partial... only activating a portion of the Rite."

Instructor Seraphis was stunned. Everything finally started to make sense... But instead of feeling settled, he was dragged into a storm of new questions.

Why would a blind boy participate in the assembly? How could he move like that with no vision? How did he pull off the switch on the Luminous Rite? That incantation wasn't public knowledge... What was his full story?

Too many questions... and he knew only Levi could answer them.

Not wanting to waste more of Lord Idriss' time, he thanked him for the intel and was about to end the call.

"Before you go, can I add one thing?"

"Sure..."

"Regardless of what you decide to do with him, I hope you still give him a chance," Lord Idriss said calmly. "The boy may have swindled a recommendation letter, but I wholeheartedly support him... and his brother."

"Why's that?" Instructor Seraphis raised an eyebrow, surprised.

He knew his old partner never got involved with new generations of Daywalkers unless they were truly exceptional.

While Levi's physical performance was impressive, Seraphis didn't think it would be enough to convince a nightcrawler to sign him... especially if the truth came out.

"All I can say is... you've yet to see the best of him," Lord Idriss said. "The least you can do is let him finish the assembly. Whether he gets signed or not, you'll lose nothing... But he won't have to look back and regret anything. You know as well as I do...it only ends badly when a child is robbed of their only shot."

Instructor Seraphis went quiet... then nodded. He understood. If Levi's condition came to light and he failed the assembly, it could leave him vulnerable... easy prey for the nightcrawlers.

And Seraphis had vowed... never again. Not under his watch.

"I'll see what I can do..."

\*\*\*

Back in the apartment complex, Levi, Arthur, Jojo, Melissa, and Rayan were all gathered inside Levi's room.

It was spacious and had a bedroom, a toilet, a small kitchen, and an empty central hall. The girls were sitting comfortably on the bed while the boys had no issue chilling on the floor.

They had bottles of soda and some snacks placed at the center.

While it wasn't a five-star hotel suite, it was ten times better than the rooms on the lower floors.

"I'm so envious... You guys have a kitchen stocked with food and a private toilet," Rayan complained as he recalled his cramped, barebones bedroom.

Although he was ranked within the top twenty, his room was nothing like this. The top ten rankers were given these suites, while the rest had standardized one-bedroom units and a stash of bland army rations to get through the day.

"You still did well. You climbed from the middle of the list to the top twenty." Melissa offered support.

"It sounds patronizing while sitting next to a guy who came first after starting three minutes late..." Rayan muttered, his eyelids twitching as he glanced at Levi.

"Don't think too much of it." Levi smiled. "If any of you had a shield or something safe enough to slide on, you would've scored much higher than me."

"That's the thing..." Jojo shook her head. "There were chairs at the top for that kind of slide... and none of us thought of it."

"True... It's really hard to think outside the box during a race," Rayan admitted with a sigh.

After the trial ended, everyone had taken time to review the Gauntlet footage. They realized Instructor Seraphis wasn't lying... The chairs at the top of the slope were clearly set up to be used for something creative, like Levi's slide.

While they had been bolted down, a bit of time and effort could've pried them loose. But how could anyone spare the time or focus to do that in the middle of a high-stakes race?

"Anyway, I'm just glad that Levi and Arthur came first and second in the trial," Rayan smiled, lifting his soda can for a toast. "As long as it's someone from our little squad... a win is a win."

"A win is a win!"

Arthur and the others echoed the cheer, lifting their cans in unison. While everyone took a normal sip, Arthur downed his entire can in one go, then crushed it with one hand and let out a thunderous burp.

Jojo responded by hurling a pillow at him in disgust.

"Ahhhh... That tastes as refreshing as the real deal," Arthur sighed with satisfaction, casually placing the pillow under his butt like a cushion, completely ignoring Jojo's irritated glare.

"The ultimate authority to create whatever... How magical," Levi murmured as he traced the shape of his water bottle with a light touch of his fingers.