

Evolution 76

Chapter 76: The Wyvern's Puzzle. I

A moment later, the totem was pulled into the platform and replaced with another, taking the shape of a different rune... Even the whispers changed, leaving Demetris to stare at the now-shut door with quivering, half-opened lips.

It was like he wanted to object, to take back what he had done, but the words refused to leave his throat.

He struck out, and the fact that he did it under national TV made his unsettled heart sink to the bottom of his stomach.

While he wasn't used to this vile, shameful experience, Demetris still managed to recollect his emotions with a deep breath.

'Forget about him... forget about the spotlight... forget about everything.' He narrowed his eyes coldly. 'I will deal with him later. For now, I must pass this section and contest the Wyvern. No one deserves that Nightmount more than me. No one!'

While Demetris was in his own world, Levi was seen walking around the giant Wyvern wooden totem, using the same technique to scan its surface. It was filled with runic inscriptions and symbols, making it resemble a work of art.

Unlike most totems, the Sealing Type was known to have unique, customized incantations for each one.

While assault, protection, recovery, and such totems usually had a fixed, known incantation, the sealing totem was used mostly to seal nightcrawlers.

Some used those nightcrawlers as mounts, in farms, as security guards, or even pets. Thus, a uniquely personal and hidden incantation was used for each totem to ensure that no one would steal them.

That's because sealing totems were destroyed after each activation, forcing the owner to seal the nightcrawler in another.

If the incantation was known to another person, they could easily steal the nightcrawler by sealing it using their own totem.

In simpler terms, incantations were used as passwords, and one must protect their password at all times to keep their assets in place.

In Levi's case, he needed to find the personalized incantation, which had no relation to history, origin, or anything... The only clues he had were the millions of inscriptions on its body.

'Instructor Seraphis knows that it's impossible to find the real incantation from scouring the millions of inscriptions in less than twenty minutes.' Levi kept walking around the giant totem while deep in his thoughts. 'Twenty minutes was in my case. In reality, Nurah and Demetris won't be able to find the answer in less than ten minutes. This leaves us with just ten minutes or less... which isn't nearly enough for even the most intelligent being in the world.'

If it were any other totem, Levi wouldn't have made such a bold claim. But when it came to sealing totems, he understood that the incantation could range from something utterly stupid to a brilliant piece of poetry.

All due to the incantation being used purely as a password and having no relation to the effect within the totem.

The divine chains holding the nightcrawlers were the true seal and were under the Solar Aegis Sanctuary's jurisdiction, not the totem... The totem was nothing more than a container with the ability to shrink and enlarge.

'If he truly wants us to obtain his gift, then he must have placed the incantation in an easy-to-find spot... a spot that anyone too smart for their own good won't bother considering.'

Levi understood that Instructor Seraphis relished doing the opposite of what was expected. He believed that after giving the candidates such a difficult puzzle in the fourth section, they would be too overstimulated to consider basic solutions.

After all, the Wyvern totem was the last piece of the puzzle, and after getting a gradual increase in difficulty, it would drive anyone to assume that it would be the most difficult puzzle in the trial. But Levi kept his head level and looked around for anything he might have missed.

'Maybe the clues are hidden in the past solved incantations?' Levi shook his head. 'No... it won't work when we have three different puzzles in the first three sections.'

Once the activation incantation was inscribed on a totem, it couldn't be changed unless a Totem Carver was involved.

Levi knew those kinds of people would never waste their time on such events, even if the government ordered them to join. They were considered part of the Solar Aegis Sanctuary, and only its authority could move them.

'Will he solve it?' Instructor Seraphis' pupils thinned. 'While the fourth section design worked in his favor due to his sensitive ears, the last puzzle requires sight primarily.'

When Instructor Seraphis was designing the trials, he had no clue that a blind kid would join and make it this far... If he knew, he would have done some things differently.

But what's done is done... He could only wish good luck to Levi.

'If it's not the previous incantations, then it might be related to the structure of the trial.' Levi used a soundwave to redraw the eleven halls in his mind.

He believed that the peculiar structure of the straight eleven halls might be important since there wasn't really any reason for it to be like this.

Instructor Seraphis could have sat everyone down in private rooms and given them one puzzle after another until the trial concluded.

He didn't strike Levi as the type to care about the artistic design of his trials... more about its content.

When Levi's thought process went down this rabbit hole, he soon found himself standing near the open door of his cleared hall.

As he touched it with his palm, his finger slipped inside the central keyhole and touched the totem affixed inside it. He tilted his head in intrigue as he pulled the totem out of the keyhole.

'Why is there a keyhole on this door while the others can be unlocked automatically?' he thought. 'If we assume that everything has a reason, then what's the reason for it to be here? Dramatic exit? Doubtful.'

Levi played with the shimmering totem in his hand for a few moments and then walked to the giant Wyvern totem. Then, he started putting the small hole of the rune (P) on the inscriptions, like he was a TSA agent scanning airport travelers.

He wanted to check if the totem might highlight the real incantation.

After he did this for a few minutes, he stopped and requested Astra AI to scan the totem and tell him if there were any changes. Astra AI answered with a negative.

'This isn't it.' Levi placed the totem to the side, knowing that his assumption was wrong. If Astra AI failed to detect changes, then he could have felt the incantation's faint heat if it lit up.

Levi wasn't too bothered, as he had a feeling that it was a long shot. He turned around and walked back to the door, wanting to check his next theory.

'If the hole is the main clue, then maybe, looking through it will give me a pinpoint accurate location of the incantation. But...'

Levi was more inclined to believe that the truth might be related to this theory. The singular central keyhole, the long hall leading to the Wyvern, and its placement were perfectly aligned with the height of the keyhole.

All the clues led to one answer.

However, Levi wasn't convinced of it since each hall would show something different. The central halls were linked to the Wyvern, while the rest of the halls were lined up against the wall behind it.

'Maybe there is more than a single incantation to activate the totem? It's possible, but Instructor Seraphis wouldn't go through this much hassle. Plus, the keyhole peeks at the wall behind it, and there is no incantation or mirror. There has to be something I am miss...'

Creeek...

As Levi was thinking carefully about ideas, his thoughts were interrupted by a soft creak of the door he was holding. Then, it finally dawned on him.

'How could I miss such an obvious solution?' Levi chuckled in derision as he moved the door to face the Wyvern.

When he combined his echolocation and Astra's intel, he found that the keyhole was pointing exactly at the central chest area of the Wyvern!

It wasn't like he moved the door to face it precisely... the door stopped immediately after the keyhole faced the central chest!

This made Levi understand that the door... no, all the doors...were rigged to face the central chest area if pushed to their specific limit.

'Except for one.'

Levi's serene smile turned eerie as he walked towards the central hall, where Demetris was fighting for his life to solve the fourth puzzle.

After arriving, he pulled his black staff and placed it on the ground, affixing it to Demetris' door.

When Demetris' ears picked up on Levi's movement on the other side, he opened his eyes and glanced at the central keyhole.

What he saw made him feel the creeps in his stomach... It was Levi's creepy smile. Then, he heard his voice pierce the hall.

"I will be using your keyhole for a moment since you won't be needing it any time soon."

When Demetris blinked in a daze, Levi was gone... and the keyhole was sealed shut.