

Evolution 98

Chapter 98: Second Beating.

Meanwhile, Rayan and the rest of Arthur's friends kept grilling him for answers about his powers, wanting to know how he could be this strong with just one ability unlocked.

Arthur was neither lazy nor humble, as he started bragging about how his contracted nightcrawler's main source of strength was his uniquely crystallized skin that could absorb kinetic energy and store it for later use.

His shield was crafted to do the same by channeling all the damage to the black gemstone and storing it. Then he could use this energy in whichever way he wanted.

In this case, he used his first unlocked innate ability, Rebound Engine, which channeled all the absorbed energy into his body, enhancing his physical capabilities to various degrees depending on the amount absorbed.

"That's so powerful!" Rayan exclaimed. "I can't imagine what those abilities will be like if this is the lowest-graded one."

"It's expected, to be honest," Melissa said sweetly. "His partner is a tier 5 nightcrawler, after all."

Everyone nodded, understanding that tier 5 nightcrawlers were considered at the same stage as Solarbound. Having contracted one was the same as having a Governor-rank Daywalker as a partner.

"No wonder he chose you... His powers could never shine without a shield to absorb the kinetic energy efficiently and a physically enduring man to survive it," Jojo said. "A Gorilla and a Rhino...you two are a match made in heaven."

Arthur's eyelids twitched, but he decided not to engage with her this time to avoid ruining his good mood.

"Jojo, Selene... get onto the arena."

Hearing Instructor Seraphis's order, both girls stepped into the arena and stood a wide distance from each other.

Selene summoned her thin, needle-like rapier and got into a fencing stance, her body sideways, while her blade aimed straight at Jojo's heart.

"You defeated me before, but it's going to be different this time," Selene uttered coldly.

"The only difference is place and time... the outcome will remain the same." Jojo clasped her palms and bowed. "My apologies for what is about to happen next."

"Fight!"

Selene immediately activated her innate ability, Piercing Dash, causing her body to blur into a mirage as she closed on Jojo.

Jojo closed her eyes and made a two-finger gesture next to her chest. Then, she murmured, "Silent Bead Arts: Bead Bullet."

Out of nowhere, a single prayer bead separated from the giant necklace and vanished.

Before anyone could react, a loud thud rang out, followed by an agonizing groan. Everyone turned to see Selene kneeling at the center of the arena, clutching her stomach.

Her eyes bulged and her mouth foamed as if a wrecking ball had struck her mid-step.

Under everyone's stunned gaze, Jojo made the same two-finger gesture, and a wooden bead floated back to her from beneath Selene.

The prayer-bead necklace opened just enough space for it, reconnecting in perfect harmony.

"Namaste." Jojo bowed again and then walked up the arena steps.

"Spiritual weapons are truly the greatest..." Rayan said enviously.

Everyone nodded, sharing the sentiment. Jojo hadn't used more than 10 percent of her strength, yet it was enough to shut down Selene. The worst part? Most of them doubted they could have evaded that bead in time.

"Ahhh, this just makes me more annoyed with you." Rayan turned to Levi, biting his shirt in agitation. "How could you choose a physical weapon? Isn't your Nightcrawler a psychic-type?"

Everyone wanted Levi to succeed, knowing his cultivation disadvantage needed to be covered by his other talents. To them, Levi's spiritual aptitude seemed otherworldly...too vast to be contained in a mere physical weapon.

"I appreciate your concerns, but I know what I'm doing," Levi smiled peacefully.

Before his friends could interject, Instructor Seraphis called Demetris and Levi to the stage. He'd already tended to Selene with a recovery totem.

Demetris glanced at Levi as he walked up, giving him no attention. Just as irritation flared, Demetris remembered Levi was blind...and couldn't see him even if he tried.

A pleased smile flickered across Demetris's face, thinking that, despite everything, Levi was still disabled.

This was enough to fill his heart with twisted joy.

'I can't afford to lose to him twice,' Demetris thought as he summoned his flowery sword and took an offensive stance. 'Although there are no cameras, I'll beat him here and leak the footage. It's the only way for me to return to the spotlight.'

Levi immediately sensed his malicious intent in his heartbeat. He didn't know exactly what Demetris planned, but he knew it wouldn't be good.

Levi manifested his staff from a cloud of crimson petals. He placed it on the ground like a pillar and leaned against it, gesturing with a finger for Demetris to come get his second round of tough love.

Seeing the taunt, Demetris's expression flickered cruelly before he rushed Levi with no intention of holding back... better to face Instructor Seraphis's wrath than show mercy to Levi.

Whoosh!

As he charged, Demetris activated his ability: "Petal Mirage Arts: Fading Steps!"

Under everyone's astonished gaze, Demetris left illusionary clones with each stride, until it seemed like Levi was under assault by an army of Demetries.

"The mirages mimic sight and sound... Shit, Levi's device and ears can't tell real from fake!" Rayan exclaimed.

Aside from Arthur and Nurah, the rest watched worriedly, fearing Levi's lone ability might not counter this.

"Poor thing."

Instructor Seraphis facepalmed, knowing Demetris's attempt was futile...spiritual vision cannot be fooled unless challenged mentally.

As expected, Levi's spiritual vision revealed Demetris's weak aura clearly. The flowery mirages were nothing but a brief show.

Levi waited until one mirage was five meters away, then kicked the bottom of the staff, releasing the chains like a coiled serpent.

The bottom piece shot out a foot above the arena floor, slamming onto Demetris's right leg.

Before Demetris could react, the chains wrapped around his leg so tightly his face turned blue with pain.

"What the hell is this! Chains inside a staff?!" he shouted, panicking as he tried, and failed, to break free. His strikes left no mark; his leg was trapped like in a bear trap.

"I doubt you'd understand even if I explained... Now, where were we? Oh yes...your second lesson."

Levi snapped the chains inward, dragging Demetris across the ground toward him!

Panic and terror contorted Demetris's face as memories of their first duel flooded back.

His body convulsed, and his mouth opened.

"I... Yei..."

Levi would allow no excuse. Before Demetris could finish, he locked the chain length at one meter, swung the staff around, and flung Demetris into the air, smashing him against the hardened floor!

BOOOM!

Levi didn't wait to see if Demetris was conscious. He lifted him into the air again under his classmates' horrified glares.

The impact's echo told them Demetris was badly hurt... and Levi was still coming for more.

The gentle, peaceful Levi was gone, replaced by a merciless glare that warned none to disturb his peace.

"Enough, Levi."

Instructor Seraphis appeared under Demetris and caught him midair, forcing Levi's staff against an immovable wall.

"My apologies, I got carried away."

Levi shattered the staff into crimson petals and bowed respectfully.

"Save this energy for battles against real enemies," Instructor Seraphis advised. "You may dislike each other, but you're on the same side. We can't afford infighting when we're already low in numbers."

"I will keep it in mind, Sir."

Levi nodded and walked away, knowing Seraphis spoke from experience...he'd seen horrors that made petty squabbles seem childish.

But Levi didn't care. Anyone who threatened his peace would be met with the same merciless resolve.

"So, who's next?"

As Levi returned to his friends with his usual serene smile, they suddenly felt the creeps... until Arthur broke the silence.

"Haha, good smacking, big bro...you rebooted his personality!"

Arthur grinned and fist-pumped Levi. Levi felt his friends' heartbeats skip, realizing their image of him was shifting.

Still, he showed no reaction. In his mind, he'd never paint a false portrait just to be liked.