

Solar Ascension

#Chapter 31: The Tier 3 Eclipsed - Read Solar Ascension Chapter 31: The Tier 3 Eclipsed

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"Alright then, come at me." Nox said as he took the closest thing to a battle stance he could come up with.

Definitely not related to a comic he got from the scrapyard.

Not needing further invite, the wolf suddenly pounced. It was obviously a lot faster than the tier 2s and Nox's thoughts didn't even get the chance to process.

Though, he didn't need to ask his instincts took over and he teleported away just moments before his head could take a vacation....away from his neck.

He tossed the daggers, which wouldn't have seemed like the smartest of decisions if they weren't Solar tech.

The daggers sped up midair and aimed at the Eclipsed, but the moment they got close enough, the Wolf-like Eclipsed suddenly hopped out of their path, causing the daggers to fly past it.

The Eclipsed didn't stop nor slow down its charge towards him, but Nox didn't panic... well, more like he hoped whatever the daggers were 'telling' him worked, else he'd be screwed.

Mentally, he 'yanked' the daggers back with an open palm and the daggers suddenly froze mid air, flying back like a boomerang.

The wolf's ears twitched but it didn't get the chance to dodge as both daggers dug into its sides as they created a gash on its flesh.

The Tier 3 let out a distorted, guttural shriek as black blood leaked from the wounds, only to be pixelated later. But even with two blades sticking out of its ribs, the damn thing didn't slow down.

If anything, it got faster and a lot angrier,

"Oh come on!" He shouted before teleporting away and avoiding the creature's claws.

When he reappeared, the cuffs on his wrist glowed as he tried retrieveing the daggers, but they refused to budge.

"Damn it," he muttered, teleporting away again as the creature lunged towards him.

He reappeared a distance away from the wolf and tried pulling the daggers back, he could see them tugging but seemed completely stuck.

The wolf suddenly disappeared and the next thing Nox knew, it was right next to him.

"Shi—" he didn't get the chance to even finish his words before its paws slammed into his ribs and sent him flying like a ragdoll.

He smashed into a tree hard enough to splinter the bark, pain shot across his side as the air was knocked out of his lungs.

Before he could reach the ground, the wolf was up on him again and with a swipe of its claws, he was launched into another tree.

Nox, at this point, couldn't even form a proper thought as the Eclipsed continued ragdolling him.

His ears were ringing, vision blurring, but above all, everything hurt.

He focused on the creature...tried to at least, but his vision was quickly fading, the world seemed to narrow and all that filled his vision was the wolf's massive frame and glowing red eyes, slowly walking towards him.

Nox forced himself up, his limbs shaking and his ears were ringing, blood rolled down his face from his head adding to his already blurry vision.

"W-why the hell did I stand and fight?" He let out, breathing heavily.

With the boots, he could've teleported long enough to avoid the Eclipsed, but no, he had gotten a taste of what SE could do and that made him confident.

He could've run, no, he should've run, but he didn't and now, the reality of facing an Eclipsed had hit harder than a freight train.

He weakly raised his hand to try and call back the daggers, but before they could fully be outstretched,

CRUNCH

The wolf's maw had suddenly clamped shut on the extended arm and it only took a second for the pain to hit.

"ARRGH!" He screamed in agony as the Eclipsed started jerking him around and he felt his muscles tear apart.

He was going to lose the arm, no, he was going to die.

Move...!

MOVE!

But his body refused his command.

The wolf jerked its head again, harder, and for a split second he felt the remaining strands holding his arm together begin to give way.

Desperation met fear which met pain and gave birth to an overwhelming amount of primal instincts.

He felt an overwhelming amount of Solar Energy flowing through him and guided by that instincts, he pumped every bit of it into the cuffs on his wrists.

They glowed brighter than before and both the daggers suddenly started responding, but instead of trying to remove them, they suddenly shot deeper into the Eclipsed's

body, coming out on opposite ends.

The bite on his arm loosened as the creature let out a pained howl, but Nox didn't waste the fraction of a second he was given.

Through his blurred vision, he felt, rather than saw, one of the daggers arc back toward him.

He reached out with his good hand and caught it.

His body moved before his mind could.

With every ounce of strength he had left, Nox stabbed forward.

The dagger pierced straight into the Eclipsed's glowing red eye, sinking it straight into its skull.

The Tier 3 staggered backward, thrashing, clawing at the blade buried in its skull.

Nox fell on his back, chest heaving, vision moving in and out of consciousness.

"Come on...please just... fall already..." he croaked.

The Eclipsed continued thrashing before its head suddenly slammed into a tree, forcing the dagger deeper and causing it to collapse.

Its massive body came crashing into the dirt with a ground-shaking thud, black blood pooling underneath its head before it pixelated away.

The watch chimed faintly, barely audible through the ringing in his ears.

[DING!]

Eclipsed Eliminated — Tier 3

+150 Points]

But he couldn't celebrate just yet, after all, everything hurt, so much so that he felt pain even from the slightest of movements.

He turned towards his right arm which, at this point, was just a mangled mess. It was just barely hanging on its socket and he doubted he could use it ever again.

Though, Astra did say that he had healed from being completely burnt so maybe he could also heal from this?

He didn't get the chance to find out as the ground soon started shaking again and whatever trees had remaining standing, swayed.

Though, his consciousness didn't seem too keen to letting him see whatever was coming as he soon succumbed to the pain and blacked out.

The last thing he saw was a pair red glowing orbs before darkness took him.

Chapter 32: Shadow Girl [2]

Ayla reappeared with the two Eclipsed away from Nox as possible, after all, she couldn't focus on taking the two down if she had to make sure that Nox was fine.

He should be able to handle a single tier 3 by himself, right?

The two Eclipsed looked confused at the sudden change in scenery...well, it wasn't that much of a change since they were still surrounded by trees, but at least they were in a large clearing this time.

"I've never fought multiple tier 3 Eclipsed before," Ayla placed a hand on her chin as if thinking before shrugging, "but the headmistress said I should be able to handle this much."

There wasn't the slightest bit of change in her expression even when faced with two tiers 3 primals.

Her eyes were completely devoid of any type of emotion even as she spoke.

"Let's give it a try then."

The Eclipsed, a gorilla like one and one that was vaguely shaped like some type of reptile, let out a roar..

"Too loud," she muttered as the shadows on the forest floor started vibrating.

Whether they were tired of her expressionless face or could feel her getting ready to attack was unknown.

But the Eclipsed soon lunged.

They moved almost simultaneously, the reptilian one darting around her flank while the gorilla-type charged straight on, its massive fists raised to crush her.

Ayla didn't move.

Or rather, she didn't need to move.

The moment the Eclipsed's fist got close enough, shadowy chains shot out from the the ground and completely restricted it.

"I hope Nox is doing well," she said calmly, even as the creature thrashed violently, trying to free itself from the chains. "If he dies, the headmistress will be disappointed."

The shadow chains pulled tighter the more the Eclipsed struggled.

The reptile Eclipsed, didn't waste any time as it continued its dash towards her, but she didn't move a single step.

The reptilian Eclipsed closed the distance in an instant with claws spread wide but before it had the chance to land an attack, a circular pool of darkness expanded from her feet like ink spreading through water.

The reptilian Eclipsed quickly leaped over it, but the shadows rose like spears, forcing it to twist midair and retreat.

She moved her wrist and five shadow-spikes rose and started tracking the Eclipsed like some type of homing missile.

The reptilian Eclipsed twisted in the air with unnerving agility, its body contorting as it narrowly slipped between the first two spikes.

A tendril of shadow shot from the ground like a serpent, coiling around its ankle and forced it to the ground with a boom which shook the forest.

The creature shrieked, jerking violently as it tried to tear itself free, but the shadow only tightened around it, expanding into a net.

Behind her, the gorilla Eclipsed let out a final, desperate roar and tore one arm free, it then immediately aimed the free arm at the standing Ayla, hoping to turn her to a smudge on the floor.

She didn't even bother to turn.

A massive spike erupted from the ground and cleanly pierced its skull, coming out on the other end.

The roar was abruptly cut off and the giant body of the Eclipsed collapsed, pixelating into black particles.

Ayla's expression remained the same as it previously was but that was the closest to disappointment she could show.

It was as though checking whether that was truly all the creature had to offer.

Then she turned her gaze back to the struggling reptilian one, its red eye trembling as she approached.

From it's perspective, the forest seemed to have gotten a lot darker and all the light had been swallowed but instead of rejoicing at the darkness all it felt was fear.

Normally, darkness was a comfort to an Eclipsed, a place to hide and to hunt but this time this one felt like a darkness that would swallow it.

It was like Ayla had become one with that darkness and only her eerily glowing eyes looking directly into the creature was visible.

It trashed around, trying to free itself and escape this approaching monster but all of it was useless, after all, it was still tightly bound.

"You really should..." she sighed, placing her hand on its snout, "just stay still."

The shadows converged around it, originating from her palm and enveloping the Eclipsed completely.

One moment later, the Tier 3 exploded into pixelated fragments, wiped out so cleanly that even its pieces didn't get the chance to touch the forest floor before it disappeared.

Ayla lowered her hand and exhaled softly.

"Nox should be done now too," she muttered, shadows receding into the ground as she looked toward the distant section of forest.

A sudden rumbling caused her expression to change for the first time today and her brows knit.

"...I should check on him."

With a step, she suddenly vanished leaving behind a dispersed shadow.

BOOM!

"U-um A-ascended Dawn, p-please don't destroy the door, it'll take my department a whole month to fix."

Outside the simulation room, the head of the engineering division was practically in tears as he watched yet another dent form in the supposedly Tier-4-proof door.

"Then get this damn door open," Astra answered as she looked back at him with a small frown.

"We, we can't!" the technician squeaked, "the entire simulation is on complete lockdown, we have no override, please, Ascended Dawn, if you break it we'll—"

BOOM!!

Another crater formed beside the first, big enough for someone to comfortably sit inside.

"If he dies,"

BOOM!

"Then I'll wrap you all in whatever metal this door is made of,"

BOOM!!

"And toss you in a rift myself," Astra finished, her voice eerily calm compared which was a huge contrast to the violent craters she was punching into the reinforced metal.

She pulled her arm back , coated it in however much SE she had and slammed it into the door.

BOOM!

Smoke filled the air but as soon as it receded, the engineer's face immediately turned pale.

The door that was capable of withstanding tier 4 attacks without a scratch had completely given way and had fallen completely off their hinges.

Astra shook off the slight cramp that caught her fist before stepping into the virtual room, "let's go save my lab rat."

Chapter 33: Nox?

[WARNING: Simulation level has been increased]

[ALL TIER 2 ECLIPSED HAVE BEEN DELETED]

[SPAWNING ADDITIONAL TIER 3 ECLIPSED]

[ESTIMATED THREAT COUNT: 7... 9... 12...]

[ALL SAFETY PARAMETERS: OFFLINE]

The technicians froze at the new info on their screen, this situation was spiraling from bad to worse.

Wasn't the simulation coded to automatically shut off when the doors were open?

Then why the hell was it still running?

Garron, at this point, had also started panicking. Yes he hated the weak, yes, he wanted the kids to face hardships and grow.

But even he knew this was too much.

"Headmistress —" he started but was soon cut off by her.

"Tell the instructors to get the kids out of the simulation," the headmistress ordered.

"What about those two?" Garron said as he immediately ordered one of the technicians to ping the instructors, "we can safely get the others out, but I don't think we can get there in time before they're completely surrounded by tier 3s."

As if to affirm his point, the technicians looked at the headmistress, then at the monitors.

Each one had multiple glowing red markers which indicated a Tier 3 Eclipsed spawning near Nox's and Ayla's positions.

"They'll remain," the headmistress answered.

"Remain?" Garron frowned, "headmistress, with respect, if they stay in there, they'll—"

"They will not die," she interrupted softly, her voice was completely calm.

The headmistress was a lot of things, strong, mysterious and maybe borderline ominous but she had never been wrong.

"Their threads extend far beyond this test, Radiant Boar." The headmistress added with a smile.

"For now," she continued, "focus on extracting the others. Pull them out the moment an instructor reaches them."

"Alright," he hesitantly nodded.

Garron Boar never expected this year's test to be this much of a headache, but all he could do right now was trust in the headmistress's words.

Meanwhile Ayla stopped with a frown on her face, well, the closest she could come up with.

She was about to teleport back to Nox when she realized something.....she was completely lost and had no idea where he was.

She could use the energy he gave off to try and track him but for some reason it had grown so weak that she could barely feel him.

And to make matters even more annoying,

BOOM!

She was suddenly forced to jump out of the way as the ground beneath her exploded, giving rise to a cloud of dust and rocks.

Ayla landed on the branch of a tree as she looked at the massive hole where she had been.

A second later, a creature of complete darkness crawled out. It was an Eclipsed that was shaped like some kind of mole.

It let its nose sniff the air for a while before retreating back into the hole. But Ayla knew it wasn't gone yet, it was just hiding and waiting for her.

"Annoying," she muttered.

She could just let shadow spikes impale it while it was in the tunnel but the problem with that was, she needed light.

Without light there were no shadows to control, just darkness and that was a whole lot harder to control.

She silently scanned the floor, looking for signs of vibration before she suddenly hopped off the tree just in time for it to completely sink into the floor.

The Mole resurfaced again, sniffing the air but before her shadows could reach it, it quickly retreated into the hole.

"Fine," Ayla muttered before jumping off the tree and to the forest floor.

Her eyes calmly scanned the area around her before the ground beneath her started trembling.

She waited patiently and just moments before a hole appeared in the spot she stood, she disappeared, leaving behind a pool of shadows.

And just as she expected, the mole like Eclipsed resurfaced, "got you."

Before it could go back down, the pooling shadows suddenly moved, completely wrapping around it and yanking it out of hiding.

The tier 3 Eclipsed screeched as it was violently ripped from its tunnel, its claws flailing as it dangled upside-down.

Ayla just calmly looked at it before folding her fist and the shadows holding the Eclipsed blanketed it, swallowing it whole.

The shadow distorted as the Eclipsed continued struggling within, but spikes soon came out from all ends, impaling the Mole like creature causing it to go completely still.

Seconds later, the shadows dispersed, revealing a rapidly pixelating Eclipsed corpse.

Ayla just took a glance at it before turning back towards the direction she thought Nox was supposed to be and disappeared, at least that was a lot faster than walking and trying to figure out where he is.

Astra, on the other hand, had an annoyed look on her face as she went through the simulated forest.

On her way, she could see the Stealth lecturers getting the students out of the simulation.

Some looked terrified, probably because they had faced a tier 3 primal, while others seemed to be a bit injured, but they were all mostly fine.

But the frown was because the blind bat had deliberately delayed the rescue and if she had to guess, she was sure that her lab rat and the girl weren't part of the 'to be rescued' list.

"Tch," Astra clicked her tongue as another tree came crashing down ahead of her, an Eclipsed having thrown it at something in the far distance, "if she let's him get so much as a scratch more than he already has..."

Well, it wasn't like she could actually do anything to the headmistress, but Astra Dawn sure as hell wasn't going to not try.

Astra and Ayla arrived where Nox was at the same time, only for the two to freeze and their eyes completely widened.

"Nox...?" Ayla muttered.

He was dangling limply in the claws of a massive Tier 3 Eclipsed, an ogre-like one with a distended jaw and spiraling bone tusks protruding from the sides of its head, and like all Eclipsed, its form absorbed all light.

His body was beaten, broken, bloodied and one of his arm hung at an unnatural angle. His head lazily lulled forward showing that he was completely unconscious.

Astra's breath hitched.

"Oh you've got to be—"

Time seemed to slow down as the shadows around Ayla's feet moved towards the monster and Astra's boots glowed as she prepared to teleport towards him.

But the monster didn't give them the chance to make their move.

The Eclipsed tilted its head a bit backwards and with a single movement, it swallowed Nox whole.

The two froze in shock as the creature completely swallowed Nox. Even more shocked was Ayla who had been expressionless since Nox met her.

But then suddenly the forest floor started rumbling as more and more tier 3 Eclipsed spawned around them.

Ayla's expression turned a bit darker, so did the forest and the shadows from all around started pooling beneath her feet.

All the Eclipsed felt it, even Astra did and she turned to look at the kid in surprise.

But before anyone could make a move, the ogre-like Eclipsed that swallowed Nox suddenly let out a grunt.

Astra's attention was pulled towards it, only to realize that faint cracks of golden light were forming on its skin.

A light that was really visible.

The cracks got larger and larger by the second and the Eclipsed let out a scream of pain, it gripped its stomach and fell on its knees but the cracks didn't ease up in the least bit.

A second later,

BOOM!

It exploded in a flash of blinding golden light which caused both Astra and Ayla to cover their faces.

The light took away with it a couple of Eclipsed but more just spawned.

Astra squinted as the light slowly cleared up, allowing the silhouette of a person to be formed where the ogre previously was.

The flash further faded, revealing who the silhouette belonged to. The person had bright glowing golden hair and eyes and on their now bare skin was a couple of glowing markings that seemed to be in some type of language.

Ayla's aura receded as she looked at the figure, there was no doubt about it, this person was,

"...Nox?"

Chapter 34: A Being Of Light

Corpses.

Lots and lots of Eclipsed corpses as far as the eye could see, or at least that's what's they looked like, judging by their appearance.

"The hell is this?" Nox said, or rather tried to, but he quickly realized that talking wasn't part of his repertoire anymore, so he opted to look around him.

The sky above him was cracked open like glass, allowing him a view of the endless space beyond..

Which might've been a beautiful sight, if not for what was beneath it.

It looked like some type of Eclipsed battlefield because for as far as Nox could see, only their corpses could be seen.

These ones looked a lot more grotesque than what he was 'accustomed' to, but he could feel it, they definitely were Eclipsed.

The floor beneath him had been filled with so much blood that the ground refused to absorb any more.

But what really caught his attention was the being before him. It was made entirely of golden light and was in a humanoid form, almost like the one in his dreams.

The being looked tired, its light a bit dimmer than the one in Nox's dreams. It sat atop a pile of Eclipsed with what looked like a sword made entirely of light stabbed into the corpse of a primal.

It suddenly raised its head and turned towards him, its 'eyes' resting on him.

If it had a face, Nox would've sworn it wore an expression somewhere between exhaustion and relief...or maybe it was even smiling.

The being quietly stared at him for a long while, before it spoke.

[Not now.]

Rather than a sound being made, its vice was heard directly in his head. But he didn't get enough time to question what the being meant before the ground opened, swallowing him in what seemed like an endless abyss.

"Nox?" Ayla hesitantly asked.

While Nox was stuck in, whatever dream world he was in, endlessly falling, his body was running on autopilot.

His hair had changed from black to a glowing golden which floated as if gravity wasn't acting on them.

The whites in his eyes had also completely disappeared, replaced entirely by a bright golden glow.

On his upper body was a couple of glowing texts which pulsed in sync with his heart beat.

The texts were written in a script neither Astra nor Ayla recognized. But if anyone versed in the Old Tongue looked closely, one word, just below his necklace would stand out:

Unfortunately, the two were only worried about what had happened to him in that Eclipsed's stomach, rather than some text they couldn't understand.

Nox gave no response as he turned towards the approaching Eclipsed wave, made entirely of tier 3 Eclipsed.

Faster than the two could react he suddenly moved, leaving behind what sounded like a sonic boom and a trail of burning ground.

The first Eclipsed barely had time to raise its claws as he approached.

A blade of solid light formed in Nox's hand, shaped in the same style as the one wielded by the being in his dream.

He sped past the Eclipsed, seemingly ignoring the creature, but a second later a clean line of golden energy carved through its chest.

The Eclipsed paused for a second, as if confused, before its entire upper torso disintegrated into pixelated particles.

The second Eclipsed soon closed the distance and lunged above him.

Nox didn't even look up.

Three floating constructs as spears of condensed golden light materialized behind him and shot upward, impaling the creature mid-air. Its scream was only heard for a second before it exploded into golden light.

Nox stopped and looked at the pixelating corpses of the two Eclipsed before what seemed to be a smile graced his lips for only a second before it quickly disappeared.

He took a battle stance, this time a proper one... almost as if he has been holding the sword all his life.

The rest of the Eclipsed froze, reassessing the being before them. They immediately felt some kind of instinctive fear towards it and they immediately started taking cautious steps back, even though they were nothing but simulated Eclipsed.

But Nox wasn't going to let them retreat. Time seemed to slow to a stop as he became a literal beam of light.

One second he was standing before a group of Eclipsed, the next, he was right behind them.

Time resumed its normal flow and all the Eclipsed immediately froze while retreating.

Blinding golden lines appeared across their bodies, thin as razor marks. They staggered, confused, looking down at wounds they hadn't even felt happen.

A second later, every single Tier 3 erupted into pixelated bursts of light.

Astra watched all this happen with wide eyes. Unlike Ayla, who was barely able to follow his movements, she had clearly seen every step Nox took.

She watched him crouch low as the Eclipsed froze in place before moving so fast that she would've had a hard time following if she was even a step below Ascended rank.

When he got close enough to the creatures, he swung his sword with so much preciseness that one would think he was some kind of battle veteran, which was far from the truth.

No movement was wasted as he quickly cut the Eclipsed, making sure a single strike would finish them off.

It all flowed screamed mastery that should have taken centuries to learn.

Light still covered Nox's form as he slowly straightened from his finishing stance. The golden sword of condensed Solar Energy dissolved into countless motes that circled him like fireflies before fading away.

Slowly, he turned around, looked at the two before his hair rested and they started regaining their normal black color, so did his eyes.

"Lab rat?" Astra was the one to call out this time, but Nox didn't reply.

Instead, he looked down at himself before looking back at the two and saying, "why am I nak—"

Before his words could be completed, his golden pupils rolled back into his lids and he passed out completely.

Before his head could touch the ground, Astra teleported to him and caught him. She looked down at the unconscious kid and muttered,

"What the hell are you?"

Chapter 35: Lady Oracle

"Alright," the headmistress gently clapped both hands together before standing up, "that was entertaining."

Every single person in the sky box had their mouths wide open in shock due to what they had just witnessed.

Even Garron Boar was frozen in place after what he just witnessed. The two kids were definitely not using any type of solar tech he had heard of, so how the hell?

Stiffly, he turned towards to standing headmistress and asked, "w-what are those kids?"

Headmistress Aurielle smiled in response slowly walking forward stopping just a step away from him.

Garron and the technicians all had their attention completely on her.

"Curious aren't we?" she said, her face still holding a smile.

Then calmly and gracefully, she reached up and untied the white blindfold wrapped around her eyes, revealing golden ones that had gears in them.

Most or everyone in this room had never seen her without the blindfold so they were completely stuck in a trance, watching the gears slowly spin.

The headmistress's eyes started glowing subtly and so did the eyes of everyone else in the room.

Soon enough, they looked like puppets on strings. Their bodies had completely relaxed and their expressions had gone blank.

"Forget what you saw today."

It sounded like a command, one they couldn't fathom rejecting. In sync, they nodded causing her to smile.

"And most importantly..." Aurielle leaned forward slightly, her golden eyes brightening.

You never saw them use anything unusual, you never questioned why or how. The simulation malfunctioned, nothing more."

Their mouths moved in unison.

"Nothing more."

Satisfied, Aurielle retied her blindfold, concealing the impossible mechanisms within her eyes.

The moment the blindfold was back in place, everyone snapped out of the trance they were placed in.

Garron blinked several times, rubbing his forehead, "Ugh... what were we...?"

Aurielle was already walking toward the exit.

"The simulation overloaded," she said calmly, "run diagnostics and prepare a full report for me by tomorrow."

She paused at the doorway and turned towards a certain technician, "would you mind coming with me?"

The technician immediately broke out in cold sweat, but there was no way he'd deny the request so he said, "Y-yes headmistress."

"What the hell just happened?" Garron Boar muttered, still massaging his forehead.

His instincts told him he was forgetting something important, but what? And why did the headmistress call one of the technicians?

The more he thought about it, the more his head pounded in pain, so he just let go and turned to the remaining technicians.

"Find out what caused the simulation to just abandon every safety parameter," he ordered, "and get me the report before tonight."

The technicians nodded quickly and returned to their stations, none of them noticing the gap in their memories.

Meanwhile, down the hallway, the chosen technician walked three steps behind the headmistress, trembling.

'Does she know?' he thought internally, while he continued behind her, 'no, that's impossible, the master said she cannot peer into any of our futures, thanks to his veil.'

Successfully reassuring himself, he slowly exhaled as they stepped into the elevator.

The doors closed with a ding before they started ascending.

The cool thing about the headmistress's office was that it was accessible from any building within the academy.

The gears in the elevator spun as it continued moving upwards, a sound the technician had suddenly become hyper-aware of.

With a ding, the elevator opened and the two walked towards the headmistress's office door which opened the moment Aurielle got close.

"You're trembling," she said softly the moment they were in the office and she had sat down., "is something the matter?"

"N-no, Headmistress," he nervously swallowed as he answered, "just... shocked from the simulation malfunction. That's all."

Aurielle tilted her head slightly.

"A malfunction... yes," her amusement was evident in her voice, "It must have been a dreadful coincidence."

The technician nodded quickly, "y-yes, a terrible coincidence."

"Take a seat," the headmistress gestured towards an empty chair and as if a robot, the man quickly sat down.

There was silence between the two for a while as the technician continued sweating under the headmistress's 'gaze'.

He believed that his actions and thoughts were still hidden behind his master's veil but he was finding it hard to keep believing with the way the headmistress was 'looking' at him.

"Now then," the headmistress said after a short while, "why don't you tell me what you're doing here?"

"W-what?" The nervous technician asked.

"Not you," Aurielle said and the moment her words were finished, the temperature in the room dropped a couple of degrees... literally.

The technician's head jerked back a bit and the moment it returned to its place, his eyes had changed completely.

They were now pitch black and they seem to hold an endless void within.

But even with the change, Aurielle didn't seem the least bit surprised, it was as if she completely expected all this....which she had.

"I should've known I can't escape your eyes," the technician, no, whatever had taken over his body, spoke in a deeper tone, "Lady Oracle."

Aurielle leaned back, crossing her legs, she placed her hand on her lap and quietly continued looking at the being before her.

It had a smile on its borrowed face as it also quietly looked back at the headmistress.

"What are you doing here?" She finally asked again.

"Would you believe if I said it's because I missed you?" He said with a smile as he leaned forward a bit.

Headmistress Aurielle didn't look the least bit amused at his words so he just sighed and stood back up, "I miss those days when I could easily agitate you."

"..." She didn't say anything...again.

"You see, a little birdie told me," he paused as he approached her desk, "that the little light has awakened, so I came to see for myself."

"So you had your puppet endanger kids?" Aurielle asked in a calm tone.

"Unfortunate casualties," he corrected with a pleasant smile, "necessary sacrifices in the grand scheme of things."

"They were kids," the headmistress said, tapping her desk, "and they could've died."

"You make it sound so malicious," he said with a chuckle, "after all, you're the one who let the game play out, lady Oracle."