

Oracle 589

Chapter 589 - They're Already Here

"Fumdalf, I don't have a good feeling about this floor." Will paused as he donned his spacesuit helmet for the first time.

As soon as they emerged from the tunnel, the freezing wind had disappeared, replaced by a scorching temperature and zero atmosphere. At this point, they couldn't even breathe.

As soon as they stepped into the cave, their lungs were emptied of air and the two Nawai warriors' skin began to blister from the heat and radiation. The creatures Will had tamed were only slightly better off thanks to accepting his invitation to the Myrtharian Nerds.

Fumdalf and Isskhar immediately backtracked into the tunnel to escape the inferno, but not before suffering a few more burns. Their normally muddy skin had turned a disturbing shade of pink, obviously suffering its first sunburn since they became Evolvers.

The veteran warrior Isskhar's turquoise braids were scorching and the surprise burst of heat had made him drop his mace, which was now glowing a little further on the ground. The hand holding the weapon was charred, the smell of cooked meat wafting through their nostrils.

"Flaming hell! What the bloody fuck is this shithole?!" The Warrior cursed, gritting his teeth until the pain passed.

Fortunately for them, as Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers, their Constitution and Vitality were decent or they wouldn't have fared so well. After a few minutes, their skin regained its usual dull color and their blisters were starting to heal.

Noticing that neither Will nor his creatures had been hurt, Fumdalf, who was more composed than his counterpart, asked inquisitively,

"Hey, why are you all okay? We didn't last five seconds in that blazing sun, but you almost seemed to enjoy it. I would get the dragon, but I didn't see any of you cultivating any fire or light magic."

"Because we don't." Will retorted laconically. "It's simply the benefit of our leader's Myrtharian Body, which is also our primary faction skill. If you are still interested, my offer to join the Myrtharian Nerds still stands."

Fumdalf and Isskhar flinched as the merchant extended his invitation again. They were still part of the Shibai Tribe for two reasons. One was out of loyalty, as their minds were not yet fully made up, and the second was because it allowed them to monitor the actions of Bhuzkoc and their other comrades.

Alas, because of the Dungeon walls, the faction chat was not working properly most of the time and the number of remaining members had not changed in several hours, which was highly unlikely given the dangers they had been facing.

Now Will was presenting them with a clear statement that without him they would not be able to go any further. Fumdalf and Isskhar might have their trump cards, but it was clearly not worth sacrificing them to survive a few more instants in this furnace, which promised to be even more dangerous than the third floor.

Fumdalf and Will had tried to take control of these Snowworms, but it hadn't worked the way they had hoped. The intelligence of these monsters was too limited to understand human language, so Charisma Aether's verbal commands were ineffective.

Not that it would have made any difference. These Digestors didn't have the same beauty standards, and these worms had no eyes or ears, not to mention spending most of their time under the snow.

Fumdalf's Spirit Magic had worked a little better, but these spells were not as easy to use as the others. Whether attacking, manipulating, or defending, the caster's mental strength was the fundamental criterion for success and unfortunately the Soul and Spirit Body did not recover as easily as the rest of the body.

Although they had managed to reach the fourth floor, it had been a real struggle and they were all exhausted. If Fumdalf and Isskhar had to use their remaining strength to resist the heat, they might as well stop here.

The thing was that the two Nawais did not want to leave it at that. These Snowworms may have been a pain to fight, but the rewards were worth it. Their Aether stats had all improved and the multicolored snake had even earned an Intermediate Aether Armour, perhaps because of their similar morphology.

After a brief hesitation, Fumdalf and Isskhar settled their dilemma. The steely resolve in the Spirit Mage's eyes told them that he had made his decision and would brook no regrets.

'My tribe... I'm sorry. I need to become stronger if I want to save you.'

[You have received an invitation from Vice-Leader Will Hopkins to join the Myrtharian Nerds. Do you accept? Yes/No.]

Taking a deep breath, Fumdalf clicked on the notification and accepted the invitation. With a complicated expression, the old Nawai warrior did the same. Shortly thereafter, they felt an unfamiliar and radiant energy flow into their cells, promising a myriad of changes.

Will had not explained anything to them, letting them be surprised, and the two Nawais were unable to hide their amazement as they discovered their new Body Stats. The two Evolvers already had beefy bodies, their height exceeding that of the tallest Earthmen by more than a head. With this Myrtharian Body passive, they felt like they were reborn.

Prudently, Fumdalf walked under the sun of the Fourth Floor and tensed up waiting for a pain that never came. The heat was still blistering, but no worse than a forced walk in the desert.

But most interestingly, he could feel how his cells were absorbing a portion of that heat and radiation to produce more energy and oxygen. With his current Constitution, he felt no sensation of suffocation. As long as they kept their stamina up, they could survive here for a while.

"Now, we might have a chance." Fumdalf clenched his fists tightly in excitement as he stared at the fake sun above him,

"Yeah... But you better get into that suit." Will broke his joy by throwing him a spacesuit and an oxygen tank.

Walking alone towards the unknown shaking his head, the two Nawais heard him click his tongue,

"Tsk, tsk, I can't take these overconfident boors anymore. They don't burn in the sun anymore and that's it, they think they are invincible.

While Jake, Kyle, Will and many other survivors struggled to explore the inhospitable fourth floor, elsewhere, other Evolvers of a different breed had other considerations.

In an ocean as black as oil and from which escaped a smell of licorice and hydrocarbon, an old emaciated man wearing a long and plain black robe was moving as best he could in this water reaching his knees. It was pitch black in this abyss but the old man seemed to know exactly where he was going.

His robe was torn in several places and because of its dark hue, the dried black blood belonging to its owner was indiscernible. Wading through this black water, whose viscosity approached that of jam, the old man suddenly straightened his head up when many hooded figures emerged around him.

All of them seemed to have braved hell to get here and most had not escaped unscathed. Not alarmed at all, Nelekai stopped hiking and sneered when he saw that some familiar faces were missing,

"Don't tell me Garow escaped." The necromancer said as he saw them shamefully bow their heads.

"Lost Divinities does not live up to its reputation."

One of the hooded figures, perhaps one of the few whose cloak was intact, took two steps forward and warned him icily,

"Don't criticize what you can't fathom. Lost Divinities is not something a mere undead like you can join. If we didn't have orders, we'd kill you outright."

"But you need me alive to fight the Dungeon Digester's Persona. At the very least, you need my Secret of the Damned. My Death Marks recruited quite a few recruits today. If some stupid orc hadn't messed up, I might have more."

"We're not here to hear your whining. We're only here to inform you of some changes."

"I'm listening." Feeling the atmosphere grow heavy, Nelekai abandoned his haughty air and began to listen seriously to the report.

"As you guessed, we lost track of Garow Nyte on the Fourth Floor. We were well on our way to cornering him, but the Floor Boss intervened. Most of our injuries came from there."

"You're telling me that a Digester on the Fourth Floor managed to get your renegade group in this state? How is that possible?" The old man made no secret of his deep contempt for their poor performance. "If a simple Digester Boss is causing you so much trouble, I doubt you'll be of any use in the fight for the Nexus."

"Don't be arrogant!" The hooded individual scolded. "Most newborn Dungeon Digestors lack samples and practice, but once in a while they manage to create something unexpected. This Floor Boss and all its derivatives are a success. The environment they live in multiplies their strength and makes them almost unkillable. If you haven't met this Digester, count yourself lucky."

"Exceptional men choose their battles. Only a fool would go up against these monsters. I already have my cuties for that." Nelekai chuckled as he suddenly tapped the ground with his black staff.

The slimy water around him began to swirl, forming an obscure siphon leading to an unknown destination.

"Found it." The old man croaked grimly.

Not taking offense at the necromancer's defiant arrogance, the hooded leader calmly finished his report, this time with a hint of sarcasm, mingled with a pinch of pity.

"I forgot to say it, but Garos failed. The Oracle Overseer realized the deception and ordered a purge. The Oracle Guardians dispatched to save us are already here. I guess I don't have to tell you, what fate awaits you if they get the Nexus before you. Lost Divinities, is not a name just for show. Believe me, you don't want to meet them as a loser..."

Hearing this, Nelekai shivered, but he refrained from answering.. Then, he jumped into the hole, coolly letting himself be carried away by the siphon.