Chapter 86: Answers

“The best place to start is to ask the question Baas asked. Why are you fighting this war?”

That was not expected. After traveling some way, the group stopped to listen to what Diabblo had to say. They were on the edge of a forest. Diablo sat in the shade under a tree. The rest sat in the open grass. In front from Diablo’s right was Atsuma and Baas. Apparently, the answers would primarily involve them. Next was Koroko, Pandora and Henry. In the last row was Vatti, Sheina and Keely.

“I’ll ask you again, why do you fight in this war?” Diablo repeated.

The group pondered, thinking that the question was so easy, it must’ve been a trick. Finally, Atsuma answered.

“We fight for our countries. So that we can gain control of the land and have everyone live correctly.”

“That is what you believe? You disagree with the ways the other countries treat their people?”

“Yes.”

“Well...” Baas started. “I don’t disagree with the countries. The Golds are pretty strict, but their ways are organized and progressive. The Blues are more loose, but they’re more peaceful. I wouldn’t say that I disagree with these ways, only that they’re not for everyone. But if I had joined one of those countries, I would’ve agreed with their ways too.”

“Then why Baas?” Diablo asked. “Why do you fight in this war?”

Baas was nervous. Unintentionally, he had shifted the attention toward him. He had also established himself as separated from the group. It made him feel somewhat of an outcast. But still, the question was asked, and he would answer it.

“I guess...” he said thinking. “I fight because... because I was told to.”

“Exactly.” Diablo said.

“The answers lie where they generally do, at the beginning. Whether you choose to believe me is up to you, but this story is true. As you know, this war was started long ago before anyone can possibly remember. The reasons behind the start have been lost over time, but it happened. The war was bigger than any war that had come before it, with battles and strategies that would make the things you do today seem like a child’s game. The battles were fought by all countries of the land, some becoming allies with others, others betraying. Eventually, all the countries united into four major factions. These factions used colors to show which side a fighter was on. Green, gold, blue and orange. Over time, the factions were forgotten, and were just seen as four countries. Fighters from these four factions fought for what seemed like an endless time.

The four factions started the fighting, but what kept the war going was another group of individuals. These skilled set of fighters trained separately from the four factions in their own ways away from the rest of the world.”

“Sounds like the Discretes.” Koroko whispered jokingly.

“That’s exactly who they were Koroko. These were the Discretes of old. Though they share name as the Discretes we know today, these Discretes are nothing like them. In a world full of people who needed their enemies taken care of, the professional killers made their lifestyle by killing for hire. There was no life that held more value than their profits, save their own. As long as it wasn’t harmful to their organization, the Discretes would get the job done, and kill whomever they needed.

The Discretes were not only superior in fighting, but in other areas as well. They built weaponry to help countries get an upper hand on their enemies. Of course, they sold the weapons to all sides of the war, meaning no side had an actual advantage over the other. The war continued, bringing about more death and destruction, as well as more weapons. Finally, the Discretes unleashed their most powerful and profitable weapon. It was also the most revolutionary weapon in the history of Wig-Or-Log.

Diablo’s head moved around, as though he were examining the group.

“Do you all understand the concept of skill?”

“It’s what you’re good at?” Pandora answered.

“Basically, yes. However, it can be explained in more detail than that.” Diablo continued. “Skill is the combination of talent and practice. How much practice you have is up to you to determine during your life. How much talent you have is built into your genes and established at birth.”

“Built into our pants?” Baas asked.

“Genes is short for genetics. It’s a code in your body that defines who you are. Your genes determine many things about your body, from your gender to your hair color. Half of your genetic code comes from your father, the other half from your mother. It is here that your talent for activities lie.

Both practice and talent play an important role when it comes to skill, but sometimes you don’t need one to obtain good enough skill. The greatest weapon that came from the Discretes was a drug, or something that alters the body. The drug had a more specific name, but what was important was the change it made the body go through. This particular drug contained the power to alter one’s genes. Essentially what it did was make the person who took it more talented in certain areas. Those who know this, call this change in the body the ‘Wig-Gene’”

Diablo paused to let the information sink into the group. Then he pressed forward.

“Originally it was thought that in order to get the Wig Gene, one needed to take the drug. The Discretes exploited this. Selling more and more of the drug, their organization became more powerful than the four factions put together. Essentially, that was the whole world. And they would’ve continued to grow if the drug didn’t have a side effect. A person with the Wig-Gene would not be affected by the drug that caused it. Genetics are passed down from generation to generation. Eventually, people started being born with the Wig-Gene. Usually with genetics, there are times when they remained dormant, skipping a generation or several generations. Not this time, however. Since its first arrival, the Wig-Gene has been active in every descendent before their death. All the descendants of a person who have a Wig-Gene would also have a noticeable Wig-Gene. Eventually, it became impossible to be born without one... as it is now. Today, everyone has the Wig-Gene inside of them.

Once the full effect of the Wig-Gene was realized, the four factions started using it to their advantage. The Wig-Gene existed in everyone, but didn’t affect everyone the same way. It came in types. Originally, it consisted of three types. The first type altered your muscles, making it easier for a person to use strength and/or speed. The fighters in the war saw this essential to improving close combat skills. This became known as the Near-Gene. The second gene enhanced one’s sight. Other senses may also be enhanced too, but the sight was always increased beyond that of normal. People of war used this to their advantage when attacking enemies from a distance. They called this the Far-Gene. And the third gene was an increase of intellect. The individual with this gene had his or her problems solving talents increased. Naturally, for the cases of war, it made it easier to come up with complicated battle plans and lead people into battles. This one was called the Leader-Gene.”

The listeners all began looking at each other, all pondering similar things.

“As I’m sure you all have guessed,” Diablo explained. “though your positions in as a fighter are supposed to be random, they are actually determined by this gene. This is what the Discretes use to determine how you will be trained.”

“Wait a second.” Atsuma stopped. “What you’re saying is, we all have something inside us that determines whether or not we can... shoot a bow... or make a good plan?”

“Not at all. The Wig-Gene only ensures certain talents are at a high level within the individual, it does not decrease other talents. If you were born with those other talents, you would have those plus the talent the Wig-Gene gave you. There is also the fact that skill is not required by talent alone. With enough practice, you would be able to become greatly skilled even without having any talents at all.”

“Well that’s just not fair!” Koroko said. “All this time the Discretes told us they chose us at random!”

Diablo continued, ignoring Koroko’s complaints. “Quite some time after the three Wig genes spread throughout the world and became the norm, something happened that no one predicted. A fourth gene emerged, also creating a fourth category of warrior. One that would established as the greatest fighters in Wig-Or-Log”

“The Discrete’s Gene.” Baas said.

“That’s exactly what they called it.” Diablo nodded. “The Discrete-Gene. The Gene that every Discrete today has flowing in them.”

The group settled down, and allowed Diablo to continue.

“The Discrete-Gene is the most powerful of the Wig-Genes, but also the rarest. Despite that, the first Discrete-Genes all emerged in four different people all at the same time, all serving in different color factions. If that hadn’t happened, I’m sure this war never would’ve continued. Though they weren’t part of the Discretes at the time, these four are considered the first real Discretes. The Firsts were such powerful warriors, and such brilliant tacticians that they were not only the first Discretes, but each became the first Officials of their factions. And as it is said they do today, the Officials met to discuss the conditions of their factions and the conditions of the war. They had the power to end the war right then... but they didn’t.”

Diablo let out a sigh.

“The Firsts had lived so long in war, and had seen so much death, that it influenced them. Deciding on peace would’ve been easy, but it didn’t seem right to them. The Firsts concluded that man was violent by nature. They realized that if left unchecked, man would destroy itself. Ending this war meant nothing. Eventually, another war would come, and the cycle of death would begin again, something each of them knew all too well. They deduced that in due time, we would all kill each other to quench our thirst for violence. It was then the Firsts decided rather than halting man’s desire for violence, they would control it. They would make man fight, but do it so that it would still survive.

To this, they would need to have absolute control over their factions. They could already tell their people what to do, but if enough people saw it just, eventually their authority would be overridden. They needed a force that would ensure their reign would not be questioned. A group of people who would instill fear, should anyone decide to rebel against the rules they would establish. There was only one force powerful enough to accomplish that, at the same time, it was the only force that posed a threat to their plan. The Discretes. In order for the Firsts to gain complete controls over the world, they would have to take down and take over the entire organization of Discretes. And they did.”

“Wait. Hold up again.” Atsuma interrupted. “Four guys? You’re telling me four guys took out a country more powerful than the rest of the world?”

“As impossible as it sounds, it was even moreso. They were not only outnumbered a country to four, but the Discretes had the most advanced weapons and fighters at the time. But the Firsts did it. That’s how powerful the Discrete-Gene is. When used correctly, it can cause great chaos, or instill great order. At the end of their battle, when the dust had settled, the surviving Discretes acknowledged the Firsts as their leaders. Once under their control, the Firsts turned the Discretes from a mercenary force to a policing force and began the war that Wig-Or-Log knows today.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me.” Koroko bursted out. “You’re story is total bologna. Four people could not take out a whole country.”

“You took the words right out of my mouth Koroko.” Atsuma mocked. “This sounds like a made up tale?”

“It doesn’t seem right” Pandora pondered. “The first four Discretes wanted to stop the violence so they did it by making sure it never ended? That makes no sense whatsoever.”

“It makes sense to me.” Vatti said. “The Discretes wanted control and they got it. Only they could think of something so stupid like that.”

Diablo was quiet for a moment. He then turned to Baas.

“What do you think of all this?”

Baas quickly turned his head away from whatever it was he was looking at and looked at Diablo.

“Huh?”

“Pay attention Baas.” Koroko said, hitting him upside the head. “Do you believe Diablo’s story?”

“Well...” Baas pondered. “I don’t really have any reason to not believe him. I don’t really know Wig-Or-Log’s history. Everything I know about Wig-Or-Log was either told to me by the Discretes, or I learned on the fly from you guys.”

The others stopped to ponder at this. They too realized that they had no previous knowledge of anything Diablo had said. History was just something they hadn’t really cared for.

“I said this before, whether you believe me or not, it’s true. The evidence is all around you.”

“Excuse me?” Atsuma asked

“The so called ‘Rules of Wig’ are the biggest pieces of evidence.”

“The rules were made to ensure the war is fought fairly.”

“You say that now Atsuma, but there was once a time where all was considered fair in war. On the outside, the rules of Wig indeed make it so that no country receives an unfair advantage, but their true purpose is to prolong the war as long as possible.”

“That’s not...”

“Think about it. Your country can outweigh another’s a hundred to one, yet the rules prevent you from attacking in unfair numbers. You could gather information, weaknesses from a country by interrogating its captives, yet the rules prevent you from torturing. Fars and Nears have limited weapons, decreasing the diversity of soldiers in over half the world. Increasing population through reproduction would lead to outnumbering another, yet unless you’re a Grey, you’re never allowed to see your child again. And these are just the rules that exist today. Overtime, there have been more obvious examples. The Rules represent humanity’s way of living. The Discretes allow killing so long as it’s done accordingly. Anyone who breaks those rules are seen in the public as evil. Hence why black bands exist. The Discretes have made you believe that anyone who thinks about totally isolating themselves from this war, is thinking like a criminal”

“But... what about the Grey bands?” Sheina asked. “The rule of Wig say we don’t half to participate in the war if we don’t want to.”

“Being a Grey does not excuse you from the war, it only excuses you from fighting. Greys are mandated to help out any country that asks for their aid. Should they refuse, they are black banded. The concept of being neutral only exists to allow you to believe that you have a choice in the matter. But you are not truly free. Greys, like all other members of Wig-Or-Log, are under the mercy of the Discretes.”

“But what if we all wanted to become Greys?” Atsuma asked, hoping to outsmart the man in black.

“Than that would be it, you will have proven the Discretes wrong.” Diablo paused again before continuing. “This war is not only a way of control, but a test for the human race. The Discretes think themselves higher than humans, and have decided on making them prove themselves. Though it may seem odd, the Discretes are heavy believers in fate and destiny. If humanity can see the wrong in killing one another and all decide to become Greys, the Discretes will acknowledge defeat.”

“Right.” Henry said sarcastically. “Like that’s gonna happen. Colored bands are too caught up in their war to even consider that.”

Everyone looked at Henry. He realized that it was the first time he had spoken and remembered that he was the outsider in this group. His head sank as though trying to hide away from the attention.

“What if a country wins the war?” Atsuma asked. “Then what?”

“That won’t happen. The rules of Wig have been made explicitly so that it won’t.”

“If we keep fighting, someone’s got to win eventually.” Koroko blurted.

“And how’s that been going so far? This war has lasted longer than any of you, longer than any of your parents and longer than any of their parents. The Golds are winning now, but there was a time when they were losing and the Blues were dominating. The war changes, it shifts, but it continues, so long as the Discretes are policing.”

Everyone became quiet for a moment. Believe Diablo or not? It was like Baas said, they really didn’t have any proof against him. Plus, what he was saying was making sense... in a ‘kind of’ way.

“Okay, so for the sake of argument, let’s say we believe you.” Atsuma finally spoke up. “What does that have to do with us?”

Diablo was silent again. He looked around at the group once more. His head then faced down.

“The Discretes want this war to last as long as possible to prevent humanity from killing itself. They have separated themselves from humanity and placed themselves above it by secretly controlling it. This plan won’t succeed, however, if this war comes to an end. That nearly happened when the Firsts rose to power. That nearly happened when the Firsts rose to power. Your group poses that threat.

“Our group?” Atsuma asked.

Should any Discrete enter the war, whatever country they were apart of would surely win. Thus, the Discretes have taken measure to make sure that never happens.

As I said, despite that four of them appeared at once, the Discrete Gene is incredibly rare. A Discrete is born every five to fifty years. At an early age, it’s easy to tell exactly what gene a person will have, but after three years it becomes more difficult.”

“That’s why every child is sent to the Center!” Keely spoke suddenly. “Even Greys! So they can check their Wig-Gene!”

“Indeed. As I said, the Discretes use your Wig Gene to determine your status as a fighter. But the most important part of this step is determining whether or not you have the Discrete Gene. If they do, rather than put them in training with the rest of the kids, or sending them back to the Grey territory, the child is given special training. However, as perfect as they think they are, the Discretes have their flaws.”

“I’ll say.” Vatti retorted.

“The chance of it happening are more rare than you can comprehend, but every once in a while, the Discretes miss one of their own during examination. This mistake happened recently. About sixteen years ago, a child with a Discrete Gene was brought to the Center, but was passed off as a Leader. Rather than being trained to think like a Discrete, which would ensure the safety of the unending war, this child grew up in the Center, with the mentality of a normal kid. He was released into Wig-Or-Log, not knowing the power his body possessed, and went onto join the Orange country.”

Everyone was now staring toward Baas, all except Baas himself who was starring to his right out in the distance. Suddenly, he realized that the attention was now on him. He thought maybe Diablo had asked him something and everyone was waiting for a response.

“I’m sorry, what’d you say?” he asked.

“You, Baas, are a Discrete.”

Chapter 86 End

Chapter 87 The Reason

“You’re kidding right?” Koroko asked. “You mean this little punk is a Discrete? This is one of the ultimate warriors of Wig-Or-Log? This kid couldn’t beat me, let alone do the things a Discrete can do.”

Sheina and Keely glanced at each other. They knew something the others didn’t.

“Koroko’s right.” Atsuma agreed. “First you say that the Discretes aren’t specially trained to be better, they’re just born with something in them that makes them better. Fine, I can maybe buy that. But now you’re saying Baas is one of these ultimate fighters? I’ve fought Baas, he’s no Discrete.”

“How do you even know that he is a Discrete?” Pandora asked. “Didn’t you say you couldn’t tell after someone turns three years old?”

“If you recall,” Diablo answered “I said that it was more difficult to tell; I never said it was impossible. The way Discretes can find each other is their blood. The blood of a Discrete behaves differently than everyone else’s, particularly at the early ages of life. After three years of age, the activity in the blood is much more difficult to spot, but its still there. However, in Baas’ case, you don’t need blood to tell.”

Diablo reached in his pocket and pulled out a knife. It was the knife he had thrown at Vanessa. The same knife Baas and Atsuma had been carrying around. Atsuma Koroko and Pandora braced themselves for a sudden attack. However, it wasn’t necessary because Diablo didn’t attack. He held up the knife so that it pointed to his right.

“Atsuma, what is this?”

Atsuma was quiet for a second before answering.

“It’s some kind of knife.”

“How about you Koroko, what do you think it is?”

“It’s like Atsuma said, it’s a knife.”

“Does everyone agree with their observation?”

Everyone who was paying attention nodded... all except Baas.

“What about you Baas?” Diablo asked.

“Hmm?” Baas answered.

“What do you think this is?”

Baas looked at the knife. At first his gaze was that of a normal one, but then his eyelids grew dimmer. His look changed from that of wonder, to that of intense curiosity, He stared and stared and stared at the weapon.

“Baas!” Atsuma called out. Baas blinked several times, as though awakening from a trance. What’s wrong with you? It’s not that hard of a question.”

“Perhaps if I rephrase the question.” Diablo said. His arm did not seem to be bother from being held up. “What conclusions can you deduce about what this is?”

“You just asked him the same...”

“Let him answer.”

Atsuma, though impatient, grew quiet and allowed Baas to speak.

“The most sure thing I can say about it is that it’s a blade. There’s the possibility that it isn’t a weapon, but considering how sharp the blade is, as well as the length of the actual blade itself, I’d still assume it to be a weapon. The blade is sharp from four angles allowing one to swing it in any direction effectively. Both the handle and blade are extended passed the normal length, or atleast passed what I would consider normal consider on a knife. It seems that it could be used for...”

“Oh my goodness, Baas is all that really necessary!?” Vatti shouted. She made an attempt to stand up and approach him, but her body failed on her and she sat back down.

“Vatti don’t strain yourself. After what you’ve been through, the last thing we need is for you to collapse” Sheina warned.

“I’m about to collapse from stupidity.” Vatti retorted, her teeth not moving as she spoke “It’s a knife, why do you feel you have to add all those details?”

“To put it in terms you can understand, he can’t help it.” Diablo answered. “Baas is exhibiting one of the symptoms of being a Discrete.”

“Talking too much?” Koroko joked.

“You’re eyes are constantly taking in data about everything they see. This data is then stored in your brain, so that you may revisit it when needed. However, the human brain has limits to how much data it can store easily at once. If too much is stored, it can cause serious damage to the brain. Thus, your brain has the capability to immediately dispose of data it does not see as vitally important, which is most data. That is why it takes multiple observations to memorize something. Discretes, however, have the ability to store more data than others. When you all saw the knife, you’re brain immediately focused on what was important to you about it, because that is the natural instinct your bodies pose. But Baas’ body does not have such instinct. He must therefore observe all the information, and sort through manually what is relevant. That is why he’s taking account every detail about this weapon, even the unnecessary ones. It’s the same reason you’re having trouble focusing on the conversation at hand. Every new subject brings up new details and you begin pondering”

“That doesn’t make Baas a Discrete, that just makes him…”

“That is just but one of the signs. A Discrete’s mind is always observing details. Baas has been zoning out, asking questions about irrelevant subjects. A Discrete’s intelligence is of great capacity. Baas has been solving problems to an impressive capacity. Tell me that Baas has shown the signs of an ordinary white band.”

Atsuma was silent for a moment before responding.

“Okay, the kid’s got talent, I’ll give him that. But I still don’t see it. Discretes move faster than people can follow. They can kill anybody… multiple people, without breaking a sweat. I’ve beaten Baas in a fight.

“Actually I...” Baas started.

“And I’ve seen him struggle with lots of other things. Just because he’s a decent fighter does not make him a Discrete.”

Diablo was quiet for a moment.

“Sheina, Keely, you have been quiet for a while.”

Sheina and Keely tried to avoid looking anyone in the eye.

“You two saw it, didn’t you?”

“Saw what?” Baas said.

“Do you recall how you escaped the Gold territory?”

Baas though to himself, he had forgotten about even trying to remember that detail.

“No.” He said struggling. “I... I can’t. I... The only thing I remember is seeing... up to the part where Vatti fell. Then... nothing.”

“I can fill in the rest of the gaps for you.” Diablo said.