

Descent 1081

Chapter 1081 Blazing

"This doesn't have to be the end if you don't want it to be." Leonel suddenly said. "You also don't have to rebuild everything from scratch."

Augustus' gaze narrowed. "What do you mean by this?"

"Well, that would depend on how much your daughter hates me and how much you value that hatred." Leonel responded with another hypothetical.

Augustus' frown deepened, but he didn't immediately look toward his daughter. He knew well that his daughter's feelings for her late fiancée weren't fake. And, he knew his daughter's temperament well. Bending wasn't something she took too kindly to. Even if she bent now, there was a good chance she would snap back in the future.

However, before he could think anymore, Heira suddenly spoke.

"Rie and Syl. Where are they?"

Leonel didn't need to think long to remember who these two were. Syl was Anared's younger sister and would have been Heira's sister-in-law. As for Rie, she was apparently Syl's best friend, but there was a bit of a scandal behind this.

According to what Leonel had learned, Rie was actually the child between City Lord White—who Aina had killed in her berserk state—and City Lord Kaefir, Syl and Anared's father. She was thus treated very well by the family as she was technically a part of them. But, Rie herself along with Syl seemed to have no idea about this.

Regardless, this was a story that Leonel had thrown to the back of his mind because, truthfully, he simply didn't care. It didn't seem relevant.

"They are currently both on Earth." Leonel replied lightly.

"And my father-in-law?"

"Executed."

Heira fell into silence. She should have already guessed this long ago. There was no way that Earth would let the main leaders of the attack live. However, the population of people itself was a different story entirely. They could be slowly integrated and fix Earth's current greatest problem: population.

Augustus finally looked toward his daughter, but she was still looking toward Leonel.

"Earth isn't worried about the two of them seeking revenge for their father?"

Leonel raised an eyebrow. "What would you prefer?"

Leonel had no way of knowing his grandfather's true intentions. But, if he knew anything about that man, he was prideful to a point and immensely logical when it came to weighing positives and negatives.

Emperor Fawkes had chosen to allow the Paradise Islands to fall from the sky, effectively killing billions of Invalids before they could even take form. However, just think about the method he used.

The Paradise Islands had been staples of Earth for several decades already. It was so well integrated that it didn't even look like a plot. He was a man who had essentially gotten away with murdering 99% of his people and it didn't even spark a rebellion.

This was to say that Emperor Fawkes knew how to be cruel to meet his ends, but he was also intelligent in the way he went about it.

Killing the City Lords was justified. But, if he went as far as to execute two little girls, he would come off as not only a coward, but it would be even more difficult to rein in the people of Terrain to become one with Earth. The risk wasn't worth the reward.

Heira fell into silence. Soon, it was clear that she had already gotten everything she wanted out of this exchange.

"You want me to join Earth?" Augustus asked.

Leonel's armor began to slowly vanish, revealing his real form. At the moment, he was drenched and sweat from head to toe and blood clung to bits and pieces of his body. Yet, when he ran his hand through his wet hair, he seemed oddly dignified and in control.

"No, I want you to join me."

Augustus was stunned into silence when he heard this. Was this brat rebelling... On Earth? Wasn't he a Prince? What was going on here, exactly?

Leonel smiled. "I'm the only noble in the Empire without a legion of my own. All I have are eight brothers and sometimes they're not too reliable."

"What the fuck!"

"Cap, don't lie to the people!"

Leonel grinned but kept looking toward Augustus.

Augustus was baffled at the audacity of this child. He was a Sixth Dimensional expert. In fact, he was a genius in his own right. Making it so far in the backwater dregs of this Sector was something to boast about without a doubt.

Now, a young man who was effectively a child in his eyes, was actually asking him to follow him. If you told Augustus an hour ago that this was how this event would play out, he would have probably killed whoever spoke with a wave of his hand.

"Do you understand what you're asking right now? Why wouldn't I just leave the Milky Way? And go to parts unknown. Why should I wait on you?"

"I wonder. Have you heard of the Morales family?" Leonel asked.

He gauged Augustus' reaction.

Leonel had already deduced that for Shield Cross Stars to act the way it did, it had to be wary of him having a backer. It was possible that the backers it was worried about were those that supported Earth, but if that was the case, why would they have dared to mess with Earth's Sub-Dimensional Zones? If not for Leonel, the true treasure of Camelot would have ended up in an outsider's hands.

That meant that what they were worried about weren't the people backing Earth, but rather people that might be backing Leonel himself in particular... And since Heira was most definitely responsible for Leonel being framed, it was likely that she had been the one to reach this conclusion first.

Simply put, there was a good chance Augustus might be aware.

As expected, Augustus' pupils constricted into pinholes, his muscles tightening. It was just for a brief moment, but it would never escape Leonel's notice.

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Augustus said with a straight face.

Leonel's smile didn't fade. "Oh? Me too, honestly. It's just a random thing I heard people throw out there. But, what about this?"

Leonel's Force suddenly surged, two pairs of white gold wings spreading out for tens of meters appearing upon his back. Above them, an owl's gaze lingered between reality and illusion, bearing down on the world with an undeniable momentum.

The call of a bird rang through the stars, a single flap of its wings bringing one tens of light years away.

At that instant, the people of the Radix, Midas, Florer, and Umbra families froze in place, their knees trembling.

"L... Lu... Luxnix..."

It was impossible to know who said it first, but they all covered at once. Not a single one of the Invaders didn't recognize the symbol of this Sector's rulers. The Snowy Star Owl was a symbol of dominion, of rulership, and of wisdom.

Though Aina was currently on the Luxnix's main planet, the Luxnix territory spread far beyond that and it could be said that they had dozens of strongholds across the strongest galaxies of this Sector. There was no way a mid-tier Sixth Dimension family like those here wouldn't recognize them.

Augustus gripped his fists tight, his gaze blazing with fire.

Chapter 1082 Nest

The reaction was only as one might expect.

The truth was that Leonel hadn't tried to lean on this advantage because he truly felt that it wouldn't matter much to begin with. His ties with the Luxnix and Morales families were... loose to say the least. Not only that, but Leonel was a bit stubborn about it all at the same time.

He wanted to use his Luxnix and Morales blood for the sake of taking over said families. But, as far as relying on them? He never really had any intention of doing so.

As far as he saw things, he would be the one in position to elevate them, not the other way around. And, he also wasn't fond of the idea of having to rely on others as well. This wasn't just a matter of pride, it was also a matter of practicality.

Just seeing how Aina's family had treated her, Leonel felt it would be a fool's dream to hope that his own families would welcome him with open arms. If he really went into the world with that kind of thought process, he would end up chewed up and spit out before he realized what happened.

Leonel had always subconsciously known that his own power and strength would always be the most important. But, seeing how things ended up for Augustus today, and how many times he had been forced to change and alter his plans before he could even take the first step on his journey, he realized it even more now.

If he didn't wield enough power and strength himself, it would all be meaningless. There would be a day where no amount of scheming could get him out of a situation and he would be forced to face it head on. If when that time came he was still trying to play chess when the situation demanded checkers, all his dreams and aspirations would be for naught.

'Maybe I've been going about this all wrong...'

Leonel forgot that he was supposed to be waiting for an answer from Augustus for a moment as he lost himself in a trail of thoughts.

'I'm trying to build a Kingdom, but before it's even gotten off its feet it's already pulling me in so many directions. I'm worrying about recruiting, about loyalty, about resources and money... It's diverting my attention so much at just this scale, what would happen on a larger scale?'

Leonel shook his head.

It was difficult to make a choice.

In truth, he needed somewhat of a Kingdom just to fight for position during the Morales Heir Wars. Those individuals probably had far better connections than Leonel could even dream of right this moment.

But, if he focused too much on this, his own power would be lacking when the time came.

Ultimately, Leonel realized that he once again knew too little.

When would the Heir Wars take place? What were the rules? Who was allowed to participate at his call and who wasn't?

If Leonel could just bring his mother and father with him to the Heir Wars, would he even need to worry about victory? If he could do something like that, why was he wasting so much time recruiting people?

In that case, wouldn't it be better to just focus on himself and a small group of elites? Then, when the time came, he could sic his dad's foul mouth on all his enemies and lay back and relax.

Though Leonel wasn't exactly sure how powerful his parents were, he assumed they were pretty good. And, even though his dad would be against helping him at first, from what Leonel remembered of his mother in his memories, he only needed to ask her once and he would fall in line.

Leonel might be against using the Morales and Luxnix family, but he had no qualms about relying on his own parents, even if he had to be a bit shameless about it.

These sorts of thoughts were exactly what left Leonel at a bit of a loss. He realized that he was still too overeager and impatient. A dream like uniting the entire Dimensional Verse was maddening enough, and yet he was actually trying to speed run it at the same time.

He needed to take a breath and calm down. There were more important things to consider.

When Leonel reached this conclusion, he finally looked upward again, only to find Augustus looking back toward him with clenched fists and a gaze that was just a little bit too fiery.

It was hard to tell if he wanted to tear Leonel limb from limb or kiss him passionately. The oddity was so striking that even Leonel's own expression couldn't help but turn weird. This Augustus was an... interesting character?

"I will follow you." Augustus suddenly said.

Leonel blinked. It's that easy?

Leonel was stunned. He was used to things going wrong one way or another. Even his own organizations had turned on him more times than he could count by now. It was baffling that anyone would be so straightforward with him.

In the end, though, he grinned.

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An unknown amount of time later, Leonel appeared within the Segmented Cube, gasping for breath. His body was aching all over. Truthfully, he felt as though he had just ran ten marathons back to back to back. He really didn't know what he would do without his Vital Star Force.

'There's definitely even more potential in Camelot's Magic System than just this too...' Leonel's mind wandered as he moved through the Cube.

He eventually made his way to a large training field, just one of several. But, at this moment, it was a complete mess.

Craters littered the ground, large amounts of Force hung in the air, making it difficult to breathe, and there were even the dull sounds of struggle still lingering in the air.

Leonel stopped looking around to find the Head of the Umbra family pincerred by Vice and Candle. He was on his knees, his hand raised up to his sides as though they had been nailed down, when in reality there was nothing there at all.

However, the most intriguing part wasn't any of this, but rather the little mink who took the Umbra Head's hair as a nest to rest in.

Chapter 1083 How?!

"Yip! Yip!"

Little Blackstar suddenly shot up, springing off of Silam's head and into Leonel's arms.

Leonel smiled lightly, chuckling at the little guy's antics. Even after absorbing all of that blood, Little Blackstar appeared to be the exact same with no change to his size or his demeanor. But, Leonel had a feeling that this was all due to the Silver Tablet.

A few days ago, Leonel realized that if the root of the Silver Tablet's abilities was to break convention, then didn't that mean it could also shorten the 13 months Little Blackstar needed down as well?

But, Leonel realized then that he had underestimated the Silver Tablet a bit too much. Not only was it able to cut down the time to a mere fraction of a fraction of the original 13 month period, but it was also able to help Little Blackstar reach a state of perfect integration.

What did this mean? It meant that the current Little Blackstar wasn't a mutated beast. Even if the foremost experts of the Dimensional Verse examined the little guy now, they would conclude that he had been born with all the talent he currently had now. This sort of integration was far beyond what even the Segmented Cube could accomplish with its original 13 month span.

This also made Leonel realize another important thing: If the Silver Tablet could do this for Little Blackstar, it meant that it could also do so for himself. His path toward upgrading his Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor wasn't as far away as he thought it was initially.

Of course, it took Leonel giving up a lot of the resources he traded to the Eight Eye Branch to accomplish this, but it was more than worth it. Not only would Little Blackstar's future be far brighter, but the little guy was now the bane of the Umbra family's existence.

The suppression Silam faced was twofold. Not only was his Shadow Fox Bloodline suppressed in the face of a stronger beast, but his Darkness affinity was practically useless.

Then, on top of that, he actually had to face two Savants at the same time, one which could reflect all of his clearly weakened attacks and another that could lock him in place or make it near impossible to move with any sort of freedom.

Just like that, maybe the most powerful Head after Belize fell.

The most baffling part was that Leonel hardly raised a hand and ended up killing them both with ease. Even now, Silam could only shake his head.

They knew from the beginning that Earth had a high chance of producing Savants, but their reports showed that there weren't any. A high chance didn't mean a guarantee, so they had moved forward with that reassurance.

Little did they know that Earth had simply hidden it too well.

When Terrain attack Dark Cloud Prison, they hadn't done it with Savants in mind, they had only wanted to release talented people with a vendetta against Earth. They were even more clueless about it all than the Umbra and the other families were.

The simple truth was that they had underestimated and looked down on Earth too much. Even to the final moment, he had actually jumped head first into a trap and delivered himself directly to Leonel. Toward such a thing, he could only feel embarrassed.

"I don't have anything to tell you, just kill me."

Leonel almost couldn't refrain from rolling his eyes.

"Is this some sort of third rate movie? Can't you say something more original than that?"

Silam's brow furrowed. Movie? What the hell was that? And why did he feel the sudden need to punch Leonel in the nose?

"Killing you would probably give me the least trouble, but I have a small friendship with Radlis so I thought I would at least try to speak with you first."

"We have nothing to speak about." Silam said coldly.

"Oh? Nothing? So you don't care about this little mink in my arms that could probably eradicate your entire family on his own just by virtue of his suppressive effect on you all?"

Silam's brow furrowed.

"I think I would be fairly justified in going to your Umbra Galaxy and wreaking some havoc. After all, your people saw it fit to do that with Earth, right?"

Silam remained silent, there was simply nothing to say. The two of them simply had vastly different perspectives on things and Silam didn't feel that any one of them was wrong. He would just have to trust those who remained to find a way to survive.

"Well, I could do that. Or, I could release you."

Silam's expression warped.

If he could survive, he would very much like to. Who wouldn't? But right now he just felt like Leonel was just playing with him.

"Don't be so quick to think I'm lying. In truth, I have dreams that are quite big and I'm trying to look into the future. A family like your Umbra family, already well versed in the art of assassination, would be greatly useful to me."

"My Umbra family doesn't work for others."

"Mm, I know you don't work for others. Ever since your split from the Three Finger Cult, right?"

Silam's expression changed violently, his gaze snapping up to meet Leonel's.

"How the hell do you know that?!"

"Well, I didn't. Until just now, anyway," Leonel smiled and shook his head. "Now look, your cliché lines are rubbing off on me."

"You..."

Silam wasn't a fool. He couldn't be goaded into admitting such a thing. The issue was that there shouldn't be anyone who could even take a guess at this to begin with. It was similar to someone being so shockingly and overly specific that it couldn't possibly be that they weren't already certain of the

answer. The mere fact that Leonel had asked such a thing meant that he was already at least 90% sure of its possibility.

The issue was obvious, though... How the hell did Leonel know something like this?!

Chapter 1084 Read

Silam was stunned silent, but Leonel only continued to smile lightly.

"How... How do you know this?"

"It's quite interesting actually, I was just flipping through the record of the Radix—"

"That's impossible. There's no way they would know something so sensitive or else they would have long since used it. With how precarious their situation against the Florer family has been, it's impossible that they wouldn't have used us to help clear them of their enemy."

Silam was originally a man of few words, but for some reason he found himself spilling in Leonel's presence. He ended up overcorrecting himself and speaking even more than he would have to usually. But, that didn't change the fact that he was correct.

The Florer family was too powerful and only seemed to steadily grow with every generation. Even with just half of the inheritance of the Silver Empire, the strength they displayed only grew more astounding with every successive generation. In fact, Silam had reason to believe that the strength they displayed now was just the tip of the iceberg. For whatever reason, the Florer family was very concerned with keeping a low profile.

Yet, contrary to that, the Florer family also seemed to be in constant war with the Radix and Midas families. Just on the surface, one could see that there was some sort of secret grudge the two families shared. But, as for the details, neither the Umbra, Rain or any of the other surrounding families had been able to find the truth.

This aside, Leonel's stats were perfectly correct. Not only had the Florer won more than half the battles they fought with the Radix, even among the rest, the Radix and Midas still ended up losing all participants in 19% of cases. This was all to say that the Florer were slowly but surely winning the war.

With the Radix and Midas slowly losing ground, if they had such a trump card, wouldn't they have used it? It simply didn't make much sense.

"I couldn't help but notice that you didn't react much when I said the name Radlis." Leonel said lightly.

Silam narrowed his gaze, but didn't respond.

"I found your response to be quite interesting, because make no mistake, I was watching intently. I thought that if I mentioned Radlis, there would at least be something. I wouldn't call myself perfect, but if there's one thing I have, it's senses that are quite sharp.

"However, when I mentioned Radlis, there was absolutely nothing. Your heartbeat was extraordinarily steady, your gaze was placid, and your temperature remained unchanged. It wasn't until a split moment later when I mentioned potentially sparing you that you shifted and became cold, outright rejecting my proposal.

"I found that reaction to be quite fascinating.

"The odds of a family Head like yourself knowing a small figure like Radlis should probably be small. The exception would be if he was a member of your family, maybe your son or your grandson, or maybe if he was a great enough genius.

"I thought that maybe since the like of Radlis, Libli and the others were sent as the vanguard, that they had quite high standings amongst your families. Yet, not once did any of your Heads ask for their wellbeing during our battle or any time before. It made me realize that to you all, these youths were probably a dime a dozen.

"Reaching that conclusion, it should be quite obvious then why you didn't react. After all, you don't really know Radlis, isn't it normal? But the answer to that question would actually be no.

"The normal human reaction to hearing a name they weren't quite familiar with would be inquisition, a bit of processing, memory retrieval... Things of that sort. But your reaction was so benign that it was abnormal, don't you think?"

Silam's gaze narrowed further. Even now, he was kneeling on the ground, his arms spread outward and nailed seemingly in thin air.

"I found it odd, until I remembered the techniques of your Umbra family. From your records, you're not only adept in the Dark Elemental Force, you're excellent at concealment, you prefer short weapons or throwing weapons, your minds are resistant to mental probing and you're immune to poisons.

"Paint me a man who's quite fond of his cliches, but isn't that just the perfect character build of an assassin?"

"Your lack of a reaction was a trained response you've honed over the years, correct? It probably makes you impossible to read for most people."

"It seems you're not most people." Silam said coldly.

Leonel chuckled. "Maybe not. But, I'm starting to think that I'm not quite normal to begin with. I scare myself sometimes. I wonder just how much of me is a façade I put up to protect myself... And how much of that façade is there to protect others."

Silam's pupils constricted. He felt an odd pressure coming from Leonel that made him feel suffocating.

A deep fear welled up in his heart, sweat involuntarily pouring down his brows and spine. It felt for a moment that he was before a wild beast.

Many people thought that the scariest thing about animals was their strength. Compared to humans, their teeth were sharper, their strikes were stronger, and their propensity for violence was far greater. But, as an assassin, Silam knew what truly scared most about animals...

In a day, humans might interact with dozens to hundreds of their peers. In each one of these reactions, there are clearly learned and easily observable behaviors one can detect. We can sense when someone is uncomfortable, when they're happy, when they're sad, and when they might grow violent...

Knowing these things is what helps humans survive. Only by being able to read the intentions of those around you could you maneuver about the world properly...

However, many humans couldn't read animals. A normal man could never tell when a snake is happy, or sad... or ready to lash out. Their faces were unreadable to the average person, and that was what was so fearsome about them.

And right this moment... Despite his years of experience...

Silam couldn't read Leonel at all.

Chapter 1085 Perfect?

"Anyway," Leonel continued with a smile, "it's obvious to me now that you clearly know of Radlis. Your trained lack of a response likely means that not only do you know him, but that he's also important to you. It's either that he's related to you or that you sent him here to do something important. The answer is more than likely both.

"What I've been baffled about for the longest time, though, is the fact that Radlis would come here and join Valiant Heart Mountain of all places. It never really made much sense to me. The only logical reason I could come up with was maybe that your Umbra family had taken a fancy to the Valiant Heart Mountain's Valiant Pillars? That seemed to be an adequate enough reason. But, it simply came with too many holes.

"With your family's concealment abilities, wouldn't it just be easier to sneak in and snatch the treasure for yourself? What would be the point in sending a young man like Radlis who, at the time, was merely in the Fourth Dimension? It seems quite counter intuitive and like a grand waste of time.

"Then there was the fact that Radlis' actions were quite odd in and of themselves.

"During the first trial for new entries, his performance was good, but it wasn't top tier. He didn't manage to climb very high and was actually outclassed by a few others. Knowing his true talent now, he had clearly been holding back to quite a large extent.

"After Radlis entered the organization, he seemed to be quite aimless as well, doing nothing much other than chasing girls. There was even a point he joined a Crafter's Guild despite the fact he wasn't a Crafter in the slightest.

"By all measures, it seemed like he wasn't doing much at all. Or, maybe that he was rather waiting for something...

"And that was when the selections rolled around. I missed Radlis' performance due to some... reasons..."

Leonel almost couldn't stop himself from smiling as he remember the 'reason' he missed Radlis' battle was because he was having his own 'battle' with Aina. But, that was neither here nor there.

"... But to my surprise, he actually managed to gain one of the slots to enter the Valiant Heart Zone. To think, he had gone from not even being the best among the freshmen recruits, to suddenly claiming a place among the seniors. Quite baffling, don't you think?

"However, you could say that I didn't really have the mind to care about such things. His purpose had nothing to do with me and I was still busy chasing skirts. But, that didn't change the fact that he surprised me once again by actually being among the few to survive the entire two year period.

"At this point, though, I didn't really have much of anything," Leonel shrugged. "I had a suspicious person, but nothing to show for it."

Of course, Leonel was lying through his teeth. Even back then, he had already connected Radlis' appearance to the odd ring he had found that day in the mining tunnels and his eventual run-in with the Silver Tablet in the Valiant Zone.

The issue was that he had no real proof. There was no way of him confirming or denying such a thing and it merely seemed like two coincidences coinciding with one another.

However, Leonel had already decided that he would be releasing Silam after today. Once he did, too many things would be out of his control. So, the less Silam knew, the better. In that case, it was in Leonel's best interest to manipulate the truth behind his deductions a bit and mix in some lies with the truth. Even before a veteran assassin like Silam, Leonel had no fear about blatantly lying to his face, nor did such a proposition make him nervous.

"At least, I had nothing to show for it until I read a curious report the Radix had gathered on this galaxy's Valynore family."

Silam's jaw clenched. But even if he wanted to move, he couldn't do so.

"The Valynore family is quite interesting. According to the people of the Milky Way, they are one of the three most powerful families of Planet Crars. I've met one of their members before, actually. In fact, she insulted a woman that I quite like the first time she met her. Her name is Balthorn Valynore.

"Interestingly enough, when Radlis met her, he was quite enamoured by this Balthorn character as well. Of course, Radlis is quite the pervert, he reminds me a lot of my brother Gil, so it seemed to be quite in character for him. After all, Balthorn was quite voluptuous and she wasn't shy about showing off her assets.

"But, finding a report on the Valynore family within the Radix family's records triggered another memory for me.

"During the freshman trial, there was a battle for golden tags, in which I participated. At one point in that battle, dozens of individuals managed to sneak up on me without a single sound, not even alerting me.

"You may not understand how shocking this is, but I certainly did. Back then, I had already awakened the Wisdom Branch of my Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor, so my mind was in the Fifth Dimension. A Fourth Dimensional existence being capable of dodging my detection was quite baffling.

"Back then, I brushed it off quite easily. I was ignorant and felt it would be ridiculous if there was absolutely nothing that could make me falter. But, as I learned more about the Dimensional Verse and where I stood within it, I realized more and more how baffling the situation from back then had been."

Silam's brow furrowed. Leonel mentioned the Snowy Owl was shocking enough for him, but the rest of this...?

"Patience, patience. I know you don't quite understand what the point of me telling you all this is, but I promise it all ties in together.

"When that group surrounded me and my then partner, I noticed that there was one individual among them that I recognized. In fact, despite her inconspicuous appearance among them, my intuition told me that she was the impetus behind it all.

"Do you know who she was?

"Her name was Henorin. And she happened to be the little maid servant by Balthorn's side, the very same Balthorn your Radlis was enamoured with...

"Such a powerful concealment type ability, one capable of fooling a Fifth Dimensional mind while in the Fourth Dimension...

"Sounds quite perfect for an assassin, now isn't it?"

Chapter 1086 Three Finger Cult

Silam's breathing became uneven and his pupils couldn't seem to constrict any more. Each and every one of Leonel's words seemed perfectly measured and dialed in, every syllable controlling the beating of his heart. He couldn't seem to control his body anywhere near as easily as he had done in the past.

"It all felt quite disconnected and disjointed to me.

"The Crars, as you can see by how easily Earth handled them in this war, are quite weak. Despite being a 'powerhouse' of this quadrant, the only advantage they really have are numbers. But, many of their territorial planets are still within the Fourth Dimension while their Fifth Dimensional existences simply didn't have the talent to match up to us.

"But, I couldn't help but notice that despite the fact Balthorn and her elder brother were among the greatest talents Crars had to offer, I didn't catch even a glimpse of them during this war. In fact, there wasn't a hint of the Valynore family, at least not on a scale that would make sense for one of the supposed three most powerful families of Crars. So... I became intrigued.

"That was when the Radix family's records fell onto my lap. I guess I really have to thank your five Heads for trying to deal with us like you had, or else I would have never gotten the information I needed to end all of this so quickly.

"You might not understand where I'm coming from, so I can explain it.

"When the Radix began their preparation for storming the Milky Way Galaxy, they did multiple risk assessments. They were quite well aware that there were many supremely powerful entities eyeing Earth and they were also aware that it was impossible that these supreme powers wouldn't have made any moves yet.

"It was easier to believe that those powers were simply still lying low, waiting for an opportune time to strike. In that case, they had probably sunk their roots deep into well established families. In fact, it

might be possible that the reason some of these families and organizations grew powerful in the first place was due to the puppet strings of these hidden powers.

"So, the Radix did a risk assessment. They began an analysis of all the powers of the Milky Way, big and small, all for the sake of drawing lines around which toes they shouldn't step on.

"But once again, much like your reaction to Radlis, the Crars passed with flying colors and were designated as no risk at all. Quite baffling, don't you think? I thought it was baffling too, until one of Earth's geniuses with a mind reading ability tried to look into the memories of two Prince's we had captured, Dee and Dre."

Silam froze, but Leonel's next words made him shudder. No, it was more accurate to say that his laughter did exactly that. He felt like he was being toyed with.

"Once again there was nothing. Their memories were frighteningly clean. Everything about them was completely orderly, not a thing out of place, not a step out of line.

"At this point, my theories were running on fumes. I have no information on anything, no proof of anything, I only have a few anecdotal experiences. But that was when something interesting happened to me."

Leonel smiled lightly, scratching the back of Little Blackstar's ear. The little one seemed to like that very much, yawning and sticking out his little pink tongue as though he might fall asleep at any point now.

"You can probably tell by my demeanor that I don't really like leaving loose ends and that I might be meticulous to a fault.

"Well, a few weeks back, I had a battle with the Evergreen Religion. They were among the first to set foot on Earth, but we made quick work of them. Unfortunately, one of them managed to escape and this escape had been nagging at me for a very long time already.

"Luckily, thanks to the Radix family's risk assessment analysis, the Evergreen Religion's main Shrine had been marked as a warning zone. Now, I finally knew where this last enemy had likely escaped to so I went to scout out the situation and hopefully snub any subsequent planned attack before it could even take form.

"But you'd be surprised to know that not only did I find not a single soul at the shrine, all that was left was a pungent smell of roses and blood. It was the kind of strong scent that could make one either pass out or throw up, but there was a very select few that could bask in it without worries, wearing it as a light fragrance."

Silam trembled fiercely. Even Vice's spatial lock couldn't seem to stop the innate physiological reaction.

"Ah, it seems that you're getting it now, hm? You're better than I was back then, because I was baffled. No matter how ignorant I was, I could tell that something very bad happened to this Shrine, but I had no way of knowing exactly what that was... Until I cheated a little bit."

Leonel flipped his palm over to reveal a small silver disk.

"I have to say that my father rarely gets serious about anything. He's the kind of man that can turn even his own son's heartbreak into a joke. However, the moment I set the analysis of the little silver disk on that scene just a few days ago, I saw my father get serious for just the third time in my life."

A recording flickered and it replayed the image of Leonel's father staring off into the distance in somewhat of a daze. It was clear that when this original clip played, he would have been staring into the Shrine of the Evergreen Goddess.

<< "... You ran into this sooner than I thought you would, brat. Remember this scene well, but remember this name even more... The Three Finger Cult... It's they who are responsible for your grandfather's death..." >>

Chapter 1087 What Do You Think?

Leonel's palm flipped and the rest of the message was cut short.

"You see, I'm not a very sentimental person. It's very easy for me to not care about things, even if I once cared for them in the past. There are very few things in life that can weigh me without very concrete stipulations being met... However..."

Leonel's expression darkened, the aura around him growing several levels heavier. It felt to Silam as though he was within a whirlwind of murderous intent, his heart threatening to leap out from his throat.

"... My father is a man who exists beyond those stipulations for me. His rage, is my rage. His sadness, is my sadness. His love, is my love.

"To dare to touch my grandfather, a man my father so clearly cares so deeply for... I sentenced this Three Finger Cult to death the moment I heard its name."

Silam's gaze rolled back, his consciousness almost passing out completely. However, before his mind could go completely blank, Leonel's rage receded like a tide, leaving Silam like a small boat swaying in the wind.

"... With this new information my father brought me, finding the traces of the Three Finger Cult was far easier than it was before and it wasn't long before I realized that as clean as the Valynore family was, they weren't nearly clean enough to escape my deduction.

"The trouble was I had all these loose ends that had yet to be tied together. I had ultimately lucked out in stumbling upon the conclusion, but the road leading to it was still fuzzy and couldn't be quite pieced together... Until, that is, I learned that the Three Finger Cult had a Shadow Fox Bloodline within its ranks... Sorry, I mean the Shadow Tail Bloodline, right?"

Silam couldn't even meet Leonel's gaze any longer.

Yes, it was true that they had changed the name of their Bloodline from Shadow Tail to Shadow Fox. The truth was that their Lineage Factor had nothing to do with foxes at all. As for the true nature, even Silam didn't know. This was a truth kept stored away so that the Umbra family would be able to continue hiding away.

Of course, Silam didn't know that Leonel was lying through his teeth.

What truly connected all of this for Leonel was actually Senior Lu, the very same poor sap Aina had killed and Leonel had ultimately gotten the ring that led him to the Silver Tablet from.

When Leonel originally investigated Senior Lu, he didn't find anything special. He was a normal youth and didn't have anything special about him. The only thing of slightest interest was that...

He was from Crars!

Just like this, everything was pieced together. Why would the Three Finger Cult infiltrate the Crars Empire of all powers they could have chosen if not for this reason?

Everything began to tie in one after another once this was understood.

After managing to hide away from the Three Finger Cult for so long, the Umbra family definitely had their methods of detecting and avoiding their capture. However, it would also be the case that the Umbra would likely feel that they couldn't simply hide away forever.

In this way, the Umbra family was a lot like the Florer family. They were more powerful than they showed on the surface, but they had to continue to maintain a low profile. And, in the case of the Umbra, the only way they could guarantee their survival was by rising up to one day matching the strength of the Cult they left behind.

Doing so by normal means was impossible. Leonel didn't quite know just how powerful the Three Finger Cult was, but if it could kill his grandfather and make his father so serious, there was no doubt that he needed to treat it with the utmost respect as well.

It was likely, then, that before separating from this Cult for whatever reason, the Umbra family caught wind of some of its plans and chose to get a step ahead of them. With how powerful the Silver Tablet was, Leonel had no doubt that in the hands of a powerful family, it could cause a qualitative change in their strength given just a single generation.

Putting this into perspective, it was no wonder the Umbra would be willing to take this risk. Unfortunately for both parties, the ring landed in Leonel's hand and not theirs.

If things were reverse engineered from Leonel's perspective, he was able to deduce the connection between the Umbra and the Cult by virtue of Radlis' reactions.

Radlis' appearance couldn't have been a coincidence, that was the first flag. Him being so interested in Balthorn was a second flag, it smelled of keeping friends close and enemies closer. Then him finding a way to enter the Valiant Zone despite it exposing his true talent was the third.

In the end, there were only two conclusions: either the Umbra family was a rival of the Cult, aiming for the same goal, or they were a piece that had broken off from them that just happened to share the same knowledge on this particular mission.

Considering how weak the Umbra family was on the surface, the first option was highly unlikely considering this was a Cult Leonel's own father took seriously. In the end, that just left the second deduction.

However, Silam didn't need to know the truth behind how Leonel made these deductions. Any 'holes' in this new chain of reasoning Leonel was presenting could be explained away by saying 'the silver disk told him'...

"... So now, as you can see, Head Umbra, we share the same goal. You need to grow stronger to face the inevitable day the Cult finds you, while I want to burn them all to ash. We stand on the same side, don't you think?"

Leonel's smile remained, but all Silam could seem to see was a devil in sheep's clothing.

"With all of that out of the way, I'll ask you again. What do you think about me releasing you now?"

Chapter 1088 A Chance

Time passed and it wasn't long before Leonel was all alone within the Segmented Cube. Well, alone if Vice, Candle and Little Blackstar were ignored. As for Silam, he had left after recollecting himself, realizing that he and his family didn't quite have much of a choice in the matter.

Life worked in quite mysterious ways, honestly. Leonel had initially wanted to target the Radix and Midas families in order to complete the Silver Empire's legacy, but he actually ended up gaining the Umbra family instead.

Of course, it was a chess piece that he couldn't use quite yet, but it was one nonetheless. Having them would make things... Interesting.

As of right this moment, though, Leonel wasn't really concerned about such matters. Even now, with how real everything had suddenly gotten, it felt like a distant future. Instead, he was spending some time with Little Blackstar, trying to figure out exactly how the little guy had changed.

Raising the little mink by his arm pits, Leonel looked into Blackstar's deep black eyes. The little mink's long whiskers twitched as though to show his dissatisfaction toward being treated like a baby. Toward this, Leonel could only laugh.

"You're only three or four years old this year, right? You are a baby."

"Yip!!" Little Blackstar protested. "Yip! Yip!"

Leonel, who could feel Blackstar's meaning through their connection, almost choked on air. Did he gain another little pervert for his group? Why was this little guy saying such vulgar things.

"Look at you, being so boastful. What are you so proud about? The both of us are virgins."

"YIP!" Blackstar tried to claw at Leonel's face, but he only burst into a fit of laughter.

Leonel was quite surprised at the little guy's strength, though. It was only a casual swipe of the paw yet the wind pressure made Leonel's face sting a little bit.

For Leonel to even feel anything he didn't want to feel was a tall task considering his body had been forcefully raised to Tier 9 recently, let alone for him to feel pain. Yet, not only had Little Blackstar done exactly that, the little mink hadn't even tried very hard.

With a single look, Leonel could tell that Little Blackstar's Dimensional grade hadn't budged a single inch. The little guy was still in the first tier of the Fifth Dimension. And yet, his power had actually undergone such a qualitative change.

Leonel's smile beamed. He would have to remember to thank Kira when they met again. He had a feeling that they most definitely would at some point.

Little Blackstar hopped up to his favorite perch atop Leonel's head as Leonel himself turned toward Vice and Candle.

"Thank you two for helping me out."

Candle immediately turned flustered. Someone without context might think she was a girl in love, but Leonel knew enough to understand that Candle's mind hadn't even matured enough to give breath to such emotion. She was functionally still a child, as was Vice.

In truth, the more time he spent with them, the more guilty he felt treating them like he did.

Ultimately, no matter what predispositions the two had, they were still human. Locking them away and rearing them like cattle while only releasing them when they were useful to him... It truly didn't sit well with Leonel.

Leonel sighed.

If he released the reins on them, their power would grow far too quickly.

Leonel took a deep breath and looked up into the skies. Finally, he made a decision.

"I've treated the two of you poorly. You may not understand enough about the world to understand this, but the fact that I know it is enough. I hope to treat you both the same as I do my brothers. I will trust you two so long as you don't give me a reason to doubt you."

Candle and Vice both blinked, clearly not quite understanding Leonel's words. Even concepts like freedom and free will were foreign to them, let alone terms like family and 'brother'.

However, Leonel had expected as much and chose to take things slowly.

He realized at that moment... If he wanted to unite the Dimensional Verse, was he just going to avoid all the Savants to ever be born? There were most definitely powers out there that used Savants like their own hidden trump cards, would he just have to leave those powers alone?

Of course not.

Was he willing to give up his dream then? After all, how could a normal human possibly defeat a Savant...?

But the answer was the same: Of course not.

In that case, why was he so scared of the two Savants by his side? If he couldn't out pace their growth, if he couldn't subdue them with his own strength, what right did he even have to think of conquering the Dimensional Verse?

Having made such a decision, Leonel suddenly felt lighter. His King's Might involuntarily wafted out from him, growing thicker as the color of his pale violet irises deepened before cooling back down to their original shade.

Without much hesitation, Leonel reached out into thin air, causing a snowglobe to appear in his hands. With a thought, Monkey's body appeared in the training arena, blood beginning to ceaselessly pool out from his wounds.

The expressions of Candle and Vice changed. They both remembered this man, though his face was greatly disfigured at the moment. However, before they could understand what it was Leonel was trying to do, Monkey's vocal cords finally healed back into place.

The moment they did, an enraged roar shook the Segmented Cube, causing Leonel to shake his head and sigh. He had wanted to give Monkey a chance at the same deal Vice and Candle gained as well, but it seemed that this wouldn't be possible.

'I will still give it a shot.'

Leonel's oppressive aura bore down, locking onto Monkey's every action, however the latter had seemingly grown feral. Before Leonel could understand what was happening, his expression warped.

Chapter 1089 Hm?

Monkey began to wither away, his roars growing fainter.

Leonel was stunned as he reached forward, but everything happened too quickly. Soon, what was left of Monkey became nothing more than a pile of ash, leaving Leonel absolutely baffled.

'What the hell just happen here?'

Little Blackstar jumped into action without waiting for Leonel's command, snagging a shadow out of the air before returning. However, Leonel hardly registered the little guy's actions.

Leonel's brow furrowed tightly, his emotions whirling about and his mind in a fog. He had truly wanted to give Monkey a chance and it was most definitely not his own action that caused the latter to end up like that.

Leonel hadn't been shocked that Monkey was roaring in rage, it made sense. The last time they met, he was battling Leonel. If Leonel blamed him for this, it wouldn't have been fair, that was why Leonel was still willing to try and calm him down first.

But reality was both cruel and unexpected. Leonel had no idea what could have happened to cause this, but he was left completely in shock, unable to speak a single word for a long while.

The reason for this was simple... For the first time in his life, he had no explanation for what was before him. There was no spark in his Dreamscape, no small clue he could grasp on, no immaculate, god level deduction to make...

There was simply nothing.

The snowglobe should have preserved Monkey in an absolutely perfect state. The only plausible explanation seemed to be that Monkey had run to the end of his ability and didn't have anymore strength to duplicate his cells and heal himself anymore, but the snowglobe should have frozen that process entirely.

That left only one possibility: Whatever caused this had to have happened before Leonel put Monkey in the snowglobe. But, this possibility seemed even more impossible than the first.

After several minutes, Leonel couldn't find a reason nor could he find any clues. Without a choice, he closed his eyes, sighing deeply.

Someone was toying with him. And he didn't like it one bit.

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"This is it, Leo? This thing is disgusting."

Allan, aside from being obsessed with a physique he hid beneath baggy clothes, was also the well known clean freak of the group. Seeing the disgusting tentacle womb before him, despite the fact it was behind a thick wall of glass, he still couldn't help but gag as though he could smell it from here.

Leonel chuckled. "It's pretty useless the way it is now, but it has potential."

"You're thinking of using that hell spore on it, huh?"

"I actually don't know quite yet. Remember Little Blackstar's ability? I have something much better for it to absorb now..."

Allan blinked before he nodded in understanding.

"Then you want me to...?"

"You're probably the only one who's smart enough to manage this. If I leave it to the others, I'll probably find this thing dead by the time I return."

"Are you calling me dumb, Cap? Where's the worker's union? I want to propose a strike!" Franco yelled out in indignation.

Allan, however, seemed to hear something completely different.

"You're leaving?"

"Nope." Leonel shook his head. "I actually plan on managing the tentacle womb myself. It's just that I've realized that I've left you all in the dark about too many things until now. In fact, you all don't even know what my goal is, even though you likely know me well enough to have guessed by now."

Leonel suddenly felt a strong arm envelop his shoulder. He looked to the side and up to find Raj's big faced grin looking back at him.

"Tell us, Cap. How much of it are we conquering?"

Leonel saw eight pairs of eyes looking back at him, each one with their own level of fervor. He couldn't help but grin himself. As expected, it seemed like he didn't have to say a single word.

"All of it."

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Leonel strolled through the Imperial Capital, his steps not very hurried as he looked around. This was probably the first time he came while also having the time to leisurely stroll around.

The war couldn't technically be considered over as there were still several skirmishes still ongoing on the border of Earth's territory. But, from what it looked like, it didn't seem that they would be ending any time soon. Those individuals wouldn't stop until Earth simply grew too powerful for them to even dare. But, with the current state of things, it would definitely take some time before they got there.

Leonel eventually made it to the Imperial Palace and the guards were still as stiff as they always were. But, Leonel just ignored them as he usually did. The difference was that this time, none of them reached out to stop him.

At the large, arching doorways, Leonel's uncle Galaeron already stood waiting, still wearing his spectacles as always. This man always seemed to be quite rigid.

"You're on time." Galaeron spoke.

Though his voice was quite even, he seemed to have been trying to convey surprise. Clearly he didn't expect this out of Leonel.

Leonel raised an eyebrow. "Punctuality is the foundation of any man."

Galaeron's brows shot up this time. He looked toward Leonel deeply, a hint of something else in his eye.

"I heard that you're on better terms with my son?"

Leonel grinned. "Are you scared I'll steal him away from the Empire?"

"Cheeky..." Galaeron stopped himself, realizing he was sinking into Leonel's rhythm. This was something that usually only happened to him when he spoke with his father or... When he spoke with his brother-in-law. To think...

Galaeron shook his head. "Come with me."

Soon, the pair had entered a familiar garden and Leonel laid eyes on a man who was now much younger than he remembered him. But, he didn't think much of it. There were probably odd twists and turns around this that he wasn't quite aware of and didn't quite matter for now.

Emperor Fawkes opened his eyes and looked Leonel up and down. The two remained in silence for a long while before he spoke.

"Not bad."

"You're not bad either." Leonel replied. "Too bad you're a mass murderer."

Galaeron's brow furrowed, but Emperor Fawkes just laughed.

"I have a feeling that the blood on your hands will be much denser than mine when all is said and done. That is the difference between a King and an Emperor. You can't escape that reality."

Leonel's gaze narrowed, but he remained silent.

"This aside, your mother has contacted me."

"Hm?"

"She's waiting for you and Noah on Planet Luxnix. Feel free to go over whenever. I have to say, I'm quite eager to watch this play out."

Chapter 1090 Satisfaction

Leonel didn't react immediately to this news. On the inside, he was quite excited to see his mother. But, on the other hand, he had several questions he wanted to know the answer of first.

The first and most obvious was why his mother had left him in the first place. There were too many things about his family dynamics that he couldn't quite grasp.

First there was the oddity of the fact he hadn't even known Emperor Fawkes was his grandfather until just a few years ago. Of course, Leonel knew that that was somewhat related to his status as someone who should have been imprisoned in Dark Cloud Prison, but that only made things more confusing to him.

Was he really such a menace to society? Just how accurate was that test if it could only possibly read a fraction of his real DNA?

But then there was the question of just how Earth's Empire had become tied to one of the three leading families of this Sector. How had his grandfather even met his grandmother to begin with? How had their relationship even taken root?

His grandfather was maybe the greatest mystery of all of this.

On first inspection, he seemed to be weak. After all, he had gotten old.

From what Leonel knew, there had only ever been one Emperor of the Ascension Empire, and that was this man before him. Thanks to Earth's technology, or what seemed like it, he had been able to live for more than 200 years, making it to the 25th century.

However, things didn't really add up. He had enough strength to slap a Fifth Dimensional existence like Scithe to death years ago, yet he couldn't maintain his youth?

Several small inconsistencies like these made Leonel shake his head. Practically, a weak man would never be able to win over a woman from a Sixth Dimensional family. Unless...

Leonel looked his grandfather up and down.

"Are you a drafted son-in-law?"

Galaeron choked on air. He bent over, gasping and wheezing.

A drafted son-in-law was probably the most humiliating position a man could be in. It was a situation where instead of a wife marrying into her husband's family and sharing his family name, the vice versa occurred. In this case, the man would take on the wife's family name and become a part of her family.

Traditionally speaking, it was always the son's duty to carry on the family name while it was the daughters duty to birth the lineage of the man she married. Even with how progressive 25th century Earth had become, this was still the default order of things.

To insinuate the Emperor of Earth was a drafted son-in-law was an insult probably only short of saying the Ascension Empire would fall. Even the guards hidden in the surroundings, tasked with protecting Emperor Fawkes' safety couldn't help but falter.

Leonel, though, felt that it was plausible.

Maybe the Luxnix wanted a piece of Earth but couldn't get it through normal means due to various reasons. This could have been a compromise between them and Emperor Fawkes. Who knows, maybe it's because of the secret help of the Luxnix that his grandfather was able to rise to power.

On top of this, the help of the Luxnix would become very important, very soon. As quickly as Earth had managed to enter the Fifth Dimension, they would likely speed run into the Sixth as well. In that sort of situation, without the backing of a well established and powerful Sixth Dimensional power, Earth's luck would finally run out.

The higher the Dimension, the harder it was for 'talent' to bridge the gap. If his grandfather made such a 'sacrifice', it would seem like truly the most logical decision.

For the first time, Emperor Fawkes was truly speechless. He gazed at Leonel as though trying to gauge something, but in the end he just shook his head.

"I would teach you a lesson for that mouth of yours, but then your mother would start nagging me again." Emperor Fawkes continued to shake his head. "I planned to tell you some things, but since you want to be so cheeky, how about you go find out for yourself?"

Leonel's placid expression spread into a smile.

"Sure, but where are my rewards?"

"Rewards?" Emperor Fawkes smoothed out his immaculately sculpted beard. "For what, exactly?"

Now it was Leonel's turn to be speechless. Did one have to be thick skinned to be an Emperor?

"Hey, uncle. Are you hearing this?"

Galaeron, who was still choking on his own air, coughed lightly, straightening out his back. His eyes flickered as he remembered Leonel's teasing words from earlier.

"Hear what?" He asked with as straight a face as possible.

"Ah, I see how is. I guess I'll just have to tell the whole of Earth just how ungrateful Emperor Fawkes is. I'm currently a hero of heroes, I'm sure there'll be plenty of people willing to heed my call."

Leonel cleared his voice as though he would truly begin to opine on his hardships.

Both Emperor Fawkes and Galaeron remained silent, light smiles tugging at their lips. It was clear that they weren't afraid of Leonel in the slightest. Plus, it wasn't as if anyone would hear anything even if he began shouting here. This was the Emperor's private garden, as if sound could casually travel outward.

Seeing their lack of a reaction, Leonel realized that his tactic wouldn't work, at least not as presently constructed.

"Oh, I see, I see. Got it." Leonel's smile became thinner. "I guess when I see my mother for the first time in over a decade, and her heart is overflowing with warmth and the motherly instinct to protect, I'll just have to let her know that her father and her brother have taken advantage of her son.

"While her precious baby was on the frontlines, putting his life on the line. They were resting in a cozy palace, doing—"

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Moments later, Leonel walked out of the Palace with a wide grin on his face, tossing a 12 sided star pendant up and down, his visage the picture of satisfaction.