

Descent 231

Chapter 231

CRACK!

Leonel hurriedly retracted his hand, but it was already too late.

A massive fissure snaked across the crystal, expelling with it a hardly noticeable fog.

The moment Leonel retracted his hand, the blinding lights lingered for a moment before quickly receding. Soon, his figure was clearly seen once more, allowing several pairs of eyes to fall on his body.

Lionus, especially, was speechless. Everything happened too fast for the others to get a clear understanding of what had happened, but he had been able to catch a faint inkling.

The reality was that having just a single affinity was impossible. Most people had many different affinities. The only difference was in how those affinities compared. In fact, the truth of the matter was that much of the reason affinities were so low among the majority of the population was because these differing affinities would clash with one another, making it more difficult to excel in one.

What set Childe apart was their ability to filter out the noise. Ironically, their affinities for secondary or tertiary elements was much lower than their counterparts, but in return, they gained great affinity in just one aspect.

However, Lionus was certain that what he had seen was correct. In that brief moment, Leonel formed a blinding dark gold halo. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

This should have all been fine. After all, the formation of a halo was the marker of a Childe. To be both a Holy Son and a Childe... Leonel would be the only one in their entire Kingdom! Even Lionus' own father wasn't considered a Childe of the Light Element when he first started. It was only after years of meditation and practice that he reached this standard.

But... The issue was that dark gold wasn't the symbolic marker for the Light Element... It was the marker for the Earth Element!

Lionus' brows involuntarily trembled.

Leonel's affinity for the Earth Element was actually obscene to the point of directly suppressing his Light Element. Not only that, but its affinity was so far beyond the standard of a Childe that it would have shattered the crystal had Leonel not reacted so quickly.

'The color for the Earth Element should have been a dirty yellowish brown color. But that was most definitely a bright bronze or dark gold color... That means that Leonel's not only an Earth Elemental Childe, but also one with a variant affinity...'

Lionus exhaled a long breath.

"... Sorry..." PANDA NOVEL

Leonel's voice finally broke the silence. But the word he spoke caused Lionus to be speechless. Eventually, the Crown Prince laughed bitterly and shook his head.

"It's nothing to worry about, this crystal is easily replaceable. We have mines filled with it and even have higher grade ones used exclusively by Magi."

Hearing this, Leonel sighed a breath of relief.

However, after a moment, he sunk into his own thoughts. He too had senses sharp enough to notice that his halo was actually dark gold and not gold. From what Lionus explained to him, it seemed his affinity for the Earth Element was even higher than his affinity for the Light Element.

At the same time, he could tell that his Light Element wasn't any weaker than that of a Childe either. The issue was that this crystal was only able to show a single affinity at a time and tended toward the more powerful one.

'I see...'

Leonel had come here expecting to just pour his heart and soul into studying Light Elemental Magic Arts. But, if things were like this, he couldn't neglect his Earth Element either. p??∫???????

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While Leonel was taking every advantage he could from the Mage Academy, it couldn't be forgotten that there was 11 others who had entered this Zone with him. And, in a lot of ways, their methods were far better than his own. Maybe this wasn't the case in the ultimate result, but it was most definitely the case in baseline success.

Rather than coming with their own identity, the others took advantage of the fact this was a land without technology to take on the identities of those who already called Camelot home. As a result, unlike the unlucky Leonel, they didn't have to worry about being called traitors.

Of course, it wasn't that Leonel hadn't thought of this... It was just that he was unwilling to commit the cruel acts necessary to take such an identity for himself.

That said... This wasn't the only method either.

At that moment, Supreme Monet sat in silent meditation on a large bed. She wore a silk lace gown, defining her curves. Despite the faint wrinkles on her face, she still had a stifling, captivating beauty that could cause the hearts of men to boil.

The deep ravine of her chest revealed the not so subtle mounds of soft flesh and the mesh of lace that covered them showed just a hint of her rounded pink nipples.

It could only be said that the sight was simply too enticing. If not for the fact she was sitting down in meditation, her lower half might just very well be another sight to behold.

At that moment, the doors to her room opened. But, the one who entered wasn't what one would expect at all.

A familiar woman wearing a deep black dress sauntered into the room. Her countenance was exceptionally pale, yet somehow had a healthy glow to it. It felt as though she had been carved of ice and had not a drop of blood within her body.

The woman walked to Monet who slowly opened her eyes. Monet could only lift her chin as the black dressed woman pulled it up with a slender finger that soon traced her jaw.

Seeing the enticing view of Monet's body, the woman breath hitched ever so slightly, her face finally gaining just the slightest red hue.

"I usually like younger women." The black dressed woman said softly, her voice as smooth as silk. "But it seems that I've missed out on the allure of maturity. You are to my liking, you'll serve me tonight."

The black dress that followed the woman's curves slowly fell, revealing a perfectly sculpted body. In fact, her figure held a hidden power within it, carrying the faint carved muscles of a man while maintaining the soft curves of a woman.

Her breasts stood erect and proud as she lifted a long slender leg, placing it on the bed Monet sat upon. A fragrant bush graced her most sacred region, just barely revealing two pink lips hidden beneath.

The woman stood like this for a moment, one leg planted on the soft carpets of the room and the other lifted up to the silk sheets of the bed. She allowed Monet who sat before her to take in her alluring body without the slightest hint of shame or bashfulness as she continued to stroke the latter's jawline.

Monet's expression was calm as she met the woman's gaze, carrying a hint of the lofty air the latter carried. But, this only seemed to make the woman want her more.

Then, as though she couldn't wait any longer, her slender fingers stopped tracing Monet's chin and grasped it gently. A soft moan escaped the woman's cherry lips as she pulled Monet's head between her legs.

The woman placed a hand on the back of Monet's head, sinking into pleasure. Her eyes closed and her head angled upward, soft rhythmic breaths heaving her chest up and down.

One could have never expected that the woman Monet was currently servicing with her tongue was the lofty Demon Lord, Modred.

Chapter 232

[Schedule will be changing. Updates will be at 10pm EST from now on.]

Leonel, of course, had no idea what was happening across this mythological land. If he did, he might have had many questions to ask. But, at this point, all he cared about were the Magic Arts before him.

Lionus, Theybul and Mary had long since climbed the tower. But, since he was still a One Star Apprentice mage, he would obviously stay on the first floor.

This was not as bad as it sounded, either. Since the only ones who could enter the Mage Art Tower at this time of year were Childes or youths with military exploits, there were very few in the tower to begin with. And, of those that could enter, just how many of them would still need Arts from the first floor?

Because of this, Leonel was completely alone. In fact, he would probably be completely alone even if he climbed to the fifth floor.

The floor itself was split into nine regions. A region for Wind, Water, Fire, Earth, Lightning, Wood, Light, Auxiliary and Mental Magic Arts.

Aside from the four main elements, lightning and wood were unique variations that had appeared in Camelot's long history. They were quite rare, even compared to others. Only the Light Element was rarer.
PANDA-NOVEL.COM

As for the Mental Magic Arts, they could be used by anyone. There were also some mages who had exceptionally high Spirit Pressure talent, but had no strong affinities. These mages were excellent at these sort of Mental Magics.

In fact, Leonel had thought that Theybul and Mary were Mental Magic Mages. That would explain why their robes didn't have any embroidery on them.

The auxiliary section could be learned by anyone. They were the fundamental magic all mages should have under their belts.

For example, both Elys and Aliard had been able to meet the swords of knights with their wands alone. This wasn't because their wands — or what the people of Camelot called Spiritual Wood — were so sturdy or because their strengths were so great, it was because of auxiliary magic like [Repel] or [Strengthen] or [Harden].

Of course, the auxiliary magic on the first floor was so weak that they couldn't possibly help the current Leonel. But, that didn't mean this would always be true.

Within the nine regions, there were various podiums. Each podium held a crystal ball. These crystal balls were the mediums that held the Magic Arts. However, reaching them wasn't so simple. PANDA NOVEL

Just in order to enter a region, one needed a certain level of affinity or else one would only find a barrier that was impossible to cross.

Of course... Leonel had nothing to worry about on the first floor.

He directly walked into the Light Region, feeling very curious. Even though the first floor should have the most Arts of any floor due to their low difficulty, the Light Region still had the smallest number of podiums at around 40 or so.

Leonel picked up the closest one. There was no pressure on him at all, so he felt he could take his time.

His Spirit Pressure easily shattered the barrier around the podium. Soon, his Internal Sight had entered the world of the crystal and a Magic Art was reflected in his mind.

'[Shine]...' p??J??????

Leonel almost couldn't help but chuckle. This Magic Art was exactly what it sounded like. It was used for nothing else than lighting a path. Who would have thought that the mighty Light Element would have such a day too.

'Dream Sculpt...'

Leonel's aura surged, his spirit draining as he etched the Magic Art into his mind.

' 47 seconds...'

Leonel nodded. It took him less than a minute to perfectly etch a Magic Art into his Dreamscape.

His mind left the crystal ball. With a thought, his Spirit Pressure surged once more, congealing onto the palm of his hand.

In the blink of an eye, a surge of wind swirled. After it settled down, a radiant halo formed on Leonel's palm, causing him to smile.

If another person had been here, they would have been shocked to the point of fitting a baseball into their mouths. In total, it took Leonel not much longer than a minute to learn and conjure his first Magic Art. Such speed was obscene to the point of being beyond monstrous.

One had to know that a mage would usually meditate on a single Magic Art for days before attempting to conjure it. And, even then, they would need Spiritual Wood to concentrate their Spirit Pressure. As if all of this wasn't bad enough, it would take several seconds to complete on the first try. Only after continuous practice would it slowly take less and less time, but even then, it most definitely shouldn't have been as fast as Leonel.

However... Leonel's ability was just too perfect for the world of mages.

With his Dream Sculpt ability, he could memorize a Magic Art in minutes. And, since it was a perfect, immutable memory in his mind, he would never make a mistake in conjuring it. As a result, he didn't

need Spiritual Wood to keep his Spirit Pressure focused. If he had a wand of his own, it would be like adding wings to a tiger.

But, Leonel had no intention of wielding a wand. He wanted the ability to cast while he used his spear, he didn't have hands to spare for a wand.

This advantage of Leonel's would only grow. For higher grade Magic Arts, it would sometimes take mages years, even decades of meditation to perfectly master them. For Leonel... It just might be a matter of a few days.

'These One Star Apprentice Arts won't be very useful to me. They're too weak. Maybe only high level Official Arts can start boosting my combat prowess. But, it's best I Dream Sculpt all of these into my Dreamscape, maybe I'll be able to draw some useful conclusions if I do...'

Leonel picked up another crystal ball and bitterly smiled.

'[Multi-Shine]...'

Leonel was speechless. It can't be that all these Magic Arts wanted to turn him into a glorified light bulb, right?

Chapter 233

[Schedule will be changing. Updates will be at 10pm EST from now on.]

A swirl of wind surged toward Leonel once again. This time, his body was surrounded by several halos of light. Instead of appearing in a concentrated form, they flew around his body like fireflies.

Leonel shook his head. He chose to reserve his judgment for now. After all, he didn't have an accurate gauge of what One Star Apprentice Arts were meant to be capable of. Assuming the worst of the Light Element just for two spells was a bit silly.

Plus, these Arts weren't exactly useless. Had he had them in the Mayan Tomb, some things might have been easier. Since he had already learned that his Internal Sight wasn't perfect, he knew that there would always be some things he could only rely on his eyes for..

After Leonel was finished, he moved toward the third crystal ball, shattering its protective barrier with just as much ease.

"..."

Leonel looked at the Magic Art in his hand for a good long while before sighing once again.

[Shining Eyes] ... It was a Magic Art capable of attracting the Light Element to one's eyes, thus granting them night vision.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

At this point, Leonel really didn't know what to say. It couldn't be that all the Light Element Magic Arts were related to seeing through darkness... right?

Leonel Dream Sculpted the Dream Art and moved on to a fourth, and fifth and sixth... Eventually, he had gone through over 30.

At this point, he felt the situation was too ridiculous. If he saw one more Magic Art with 'Shine' in its title, he just might go insane.

No matter what Light Magic Art he looked at, they were all related to shining. Creating halos of light, giving himself night vision, adding luminescence to objects for extended periods of time, there was even a spell for attaching two objects with 'shine'. When these two objects were close, they wouldn't shine, but, if they grew too far apart, they would begin to glow, allowing you to find the other.

Leonel put the crystal ball down, a helpless expression on his face.

'This is basically a spell to find lost keys... unbelievable...'

Leonel walked toward the last four Magic Arts while he readjusted his mind state. This was just the first level. He didn't believe that the Light Element would be so worshipped in Camelot if this was all there was to it. PANDA NOVEL

Plus, there was something curious about these Magic Arts. Though they all had similar functions, they all accomplished it in novel ways. There was definitely a lesson to be learned here, it made Leonel more eager to see what the others had to offer.

'Oh?'

Leonel's brows arched in pleasant surprise.

Now that he thought about it, the pressure on his Spirit increased the further he walked into this region. And, though the change was small, the protective coverings were also growing in strength.

Logically, that meant that what remained of this region were the most powerful Light Magic Arts of this first floor. And, they didn't disappoint.

'[Flash]...'

Once again, this was a shine type Light Magic Art, however, it was different in comparison to the others. If it was applied in battle, it could actually work. p??J??????

'So that's how it is... If an Apprentice works and eventually makes their way here after going through all the others, it lays a perfect foundation for this...'

[Flash] concentrated the Light Element into a small flash, temporarily blinding an opponent. Even at his current strength, Leonel wouldn't mind using this in battle.

Leonel moved to the next.

'[Light Screen]...'

Leonel smiled. Now he felt a bit bad thinking that all of these Arts would be useless. In order to get into this Zone, he had to fight his way through that little girl's ability. But, back then, he wasted a lot of Force just emitting as much Light Elemental Force as he could.

However, if he had had [Light Screen] back then, the consumption on his Force would have been near negligible.

The last two Magic Arts were [Flash Bang] and [Flash Arrow]. The former could concentrate light and explode it on a timer. It used concepts from the lost key detector Art Leonel was just making fun of. As for the latter, [Flash Arrow], it was the first real offensive Art Leonel had found.

[Flash Arrow]'s offensive output was near negligible. It quite literally had the strength of a mosquito bite. But, according to the description, if aimed into an enemy's eyes, the blinding effect could last for several minutes depending on the situation.

Unsurprisingly, its effects pulled on concepts from [Shining Eyes].

Leonel stood for a long time within the Light Region, his state of mind going into a sort of enlightenment.

Arcs of lightning surged across his Dreamscape as a light smile crossed his face.

'Even if this magic system is only useful to me within the Third Dimension, it's really taught me something valuable...'

Leonel took a deep breath and calmed his beating heart.

Everything complex was built upon the simple. Even the most intricate of Magic Arts would pull on concepts from these seemingly pitiful One Star Apprentice Arts. This was a concept that stretched past just Magic Arts, couldn't anything be described in this way?

Leonel's current Earth could be considered to have reached the pinnacle technology the Third Dimension could, but it was all built on the back of heroes of the past. Some of the things he was learning as a high school student were concepts some of the most intelligent men and women of the past spent their lives to grasp.

To him, those concepts seemed pitifully weak and simple, just like these 'shine' Magic Arts. However, to them, it represented a life of trials and tribulations, just to make it easier for kids like him to take for granted.

Leonel opened his eyes once again, a hint of understanding and wisdom lighting them.

'I hear you loud and clear.'

Leonel began to rearrange his Dreamscape. Like a pyramid, he arranged things of least complexity at the bottom, building a solid foundation. Then, he placed things with increasing complexity on top.

After his was finished, he felt that his Dreamscape flowed more smoothly, even the random synapses occurred more frequently and even the average number of branches formed increased along with it.

Leonel's eyes shone with anticipation. There was no limit to the floors he could climb in this tower like there was for knowledge in the libraries. This was likely because of the Spirit Pressure he needed to resist. But, how could this pressure stop Leonel?

He would climb to the top of this tower. And, even if it took several weeks, he would save all the Magic Arts it had into his Dreamscape.

Chapter 234

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel's enigmatic steps sent him fluttering across the training room. Three puppets wearing wooden armor pressed him from all sides, conjuring spells of all kinds to bombard him.

Leonel's eyes remained closed, his Internal Sight remaining concentrated on this small region.

Thoughts of how Lamorak had toyed with him played in his head again and again. The memories were so vivid that he could almost feel the same pain coursing through his body once more.

Leonel was suddenly cornered by all three puppets. It seemed for a moment that he would be pinched from all sides.

An arrow of earth, fire and water assaulted him from different directions, aiming to take his life.

The puppets of this room were all entirely made of Spiritual Wood. As a result, their ability to cast spells was even beyond that of their human counterparts. This made up for their stiff actions with overwhelming power.

That said, to humans, more Spiritual Wood wasn't necessarily better. After all, if one's wand was too large, it would be like trying to use a sledgehammer to staple two sheets of paper together. And even that wasn't necessarily a good analogy considering in this case, the mages might not even have enough strength to 'lift' the sledgehammer.

However, these puppets were different. Their Spiritual Pressure was provided by crystals. In that case, they were much less limited in this regard.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Just when it seemed Leonel would be struck, he arched his head forward, narrowly dodging the arrow of earth. His hips twisted, ducking past the arrow of fire.

The two arrows swept by his body, crashing into the opposing puppets and sending them flying.

The final arrow of water took advantage of the situation, zipping through the air and appearing between Leonel's brows in a flash.

Leonel's eyes suddenly snapped open, an overwhelming Spirit Pressure sweeping forth that seemed to freeze the arrow in air for a split moment.

'[Deconstruct].'

A sweep of wind swirled around Leonel. In that moment, a Magic Art appeared before him in the path of the arrow.

The water arrow regained its momentum, crashing into the Art before it without pause.

However, the collision one would have expected never occurred. The water arrow seemed to pass through without issue. But it was at that moment that something astonishing happened. PANDA NOVEL

The arrow began to lose its structure. Starting at the tip — the first point to enter Leonel's Art — it collapsed, becoming no different from normal droplets of water. In fact, Leonel felt a refreshing spray shower his face at that moment, causing him to smile.

Leonel crossed the remaining distance between him and the water mage puppet, sending a punch out to its chest.

PENG!

The form of Leonel's boxing had still been steadily increasing. All his power shot up from his pivot foot, through his hips, and into his fists, crumpling the wooden armor of the puppet.

The lights of the room dimmed, signaling that all the puppets had been taken down.

'Still not enough...' Leonel muttered.

He had been able to force two of the puppets into a corner without lifting a finger, but still failed to do so with a third.

'I might need to go to the Knight Academy and read the books within their library to understand what this General Star really is. Walking around blindly on my own will take too long. I have a feeling that even the primitive woman I learned this ability from only faintly touched on the topic.' PANDA NOVEL

Leonel felt that it was about time he chose a new spear. He knew he had completely mastered the technique of the primitive woman. He had just been a bit distracted by Magic Arts in recent weeks.

For example, [Deconstruct]. It was an auxiliary type spell of the Three Star Official Art level. But, Leonel felt that this rating was inaccurate, because it could technically work on any Magic Art.

Of course, others knew this as well. The trouble was that this Art had many moving parts and changing forms. It was necessary to analyze the spell coming toward you and make the appropriate changes to its form. So, for most mages, it was only useful against mages of lesser skill than themselves, making it only about as good as a typical parlor trick.

‘It’s too bad this arena doesn’t have Magus level puppets. I wonder if [Deconstruct] would work on higher level spells...’

As Leonel was lost in his thoughts, he walked out from the training room, his body dripping in sweat.

“Leonel!”

Leonel looked up in surprise, pleasantly surprised to find Lionus waiting for him. He smiled in greeting.

“Lionus.”

“I hear you already became a One Star Official Mage? Don’t you think this speed is a bit too fast?”

Leonel laughed. In truth, he probably reached the standard of Three Star Magus already, at least in terms of the Magic Arts he knew and his ability to cast them. As for the Crystallization of his Spirit Pressure, he was lagging behind in his aspect, making his Arts less potent than they should be.

However, progressing beyond the One Star Official Mage rank required more than just knowledge and ability, it was also necessary to gain certain merits. In addition, even if he could rush up to the Three Star Magus rank immediately, Leonel felt it was inappropriate to do so.

For one, his standing as a traitor might still be being looked into by others. Though his status as a Holy Son was enough to blind the common people and maybe some of the more religious upper echelon, there were of course those who wouldn't take this too seriously.

Of course, Leonel still wanted to reach the Three Star Official Mage standard. This was the only way for him to finish reading all the information in the library.

Though he found it a bit odd he could look through all their techniques, but not read all their knowledge, Leonel felt it made sense in the end. Often times, it was impossible to learn Magic Arts without the proper knowledge foundation. And, even if you had the knowledge, breaking through the barrier protecting them was another matter entirely.

Leonel was probably the only freak in their history that could completely ignore these barriers with impunity.

Leonel and Lionus chatted for a while about miscellaneous things before Leonel finally asked the question.

“Did you come here to ask something of me?” He inquired.

“Ah, yes. I completely forgot. The Church has been asking about your status for a while. Before those old fogies go too crazy, it's best you go take a look. I'll take you.”

“Oh?” Leonel's brows arched up. “Is there anything I need to do?”

Lionus came to a realization. It was true that Leonel might not be aware of these things.

“The four major powers of our Kingdom center around the Royal family, the two Academies, and The Church. Holy Sons have a special status within the Church as their protectors. The Church has warriors they call Paladins, but the truth is that the only true Paladin of this Kingdom is my father.”

A hint of unrestrained pride glowed in Lionus' eyes. Leonel could tell that Lionus wasn't a haughty individual. The fact he had shown this kind of face just showed how much he loved and admired his dad.

Leonel smiled lightly. His old man would probably kill to see him have such an expression, then he would laugh him to oblivion.

'Tch, in your dreams, old man.'

Lionus shook his head, realizing that his actions had been a bit inappropriate. But, Leonel didn't seem to mind so he continued with a smile.

"This is good timing, honestly." Lionus finally said after a moment. "You need to gain some merits whether it's for The Church or for your next Ascension and I have a mission I happen to be looking for help with. Are you interested?"

Leonel's eyes shone. "Sure."

With that, Lionus led Leonel toward The Church.

Chapter 235

The Church was located within the core of Camelot, some distance away from the Castle. They stood on two opposing sides of the city like two pillars holding up the world. Regardless of which it was, Leonel could feel an oppressive aura weighing down on him as though neither would be satisfied unless he bowed his head.

It was true that Leonel didn't grow up in a world that emphasized the importance of bowing, but what he didn't like was being forced to do anything. He subconsciously straightened his back beneath this pressure, his shoulders standing broad and wide.

Lionus blinked slightly when he saw Leonel's reactions. But, aside from a small smile, he didn't say anything else.

Due to the oppression he felt at the gates, Leonel had subconsciously expected to walk into a warzone of sorts, but what he had never expected was that even after an hour, no one had come to receive him and Lionus.

Leonel wasn't sure how to react to such a thing. Wasn't he a Holy Son? Wasn't he one of the only four in this Kingdom with this title? Why was it that he was suddenly being treated like this?

Leonel sent a gaze toward Lionus who sat to his side, but the latter only had his eyes slightly closed and didn't seem to have much of a reaction.. This left Leonel stunned. He didn't feel uncomfortable about this even as the Crown Prince?PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The waiting room the two Holy Sons sat in could hardly be called as such. The walls were decorated with polished stone in neat arrangements, the wooden furniture radiated a pleasant fragrance that carried hints of nature, and the tea placed before them — although cold by now — was quite good.

Of course, these were just Leonel's speculations. He knew nothing about tea at all. He could probably count the number of times he had drunk tea on his two hands without much issue. He only knew that it felt quite smooth running down his throat and had a faint sweetness to it even though he hadn't used sugar.

In the end, since Lionus didn't say anything, Leonel didn't say anything either. But within his heart, he already felt discontent.

For him, it wasn't about whether he was a Holy Son or not. He just felt that this was a lack of respect.

Since his youth, his father had ingrained those two concepts — Respect and Persistence — into his very soul. He always had a particularly bad reaction when someone was lacking in them. Though it was a bit difficult to call out someone who lacked in persistence, someone lacking in the former was too easy to identify. PANDA NOVEL

Wasting a person's time was probably one of the most blatant shows of disrespect there could be. It was one thing if there were sudden matters to attend to or if their visit was sudden. However, not only had they not sent anyone to inform them of any sudden changes, but they were also the ones who had called Leonel here to visit in the first place.

Leonel took a deep breath and sunk into his Dream World. If it wasn't for the fact Lionus was here waiting with him and that he couldn't afford to make enemies of The Church within this Zone, he would have already left after the first 20 minutes. Since there was nothing to do, he might as well continue practicing.

The second hour came and went. Then the third. It wasn't until a few minutes into the fourth that there was finally movement at the doors they entered to come to this waiting room.

A knight wearing silver armor with gold engravings pushed the door open. A large shield in the shape of a triangle with curved edges was attached to his back and a proud halo hung about his forehead. He was one of the special knights The Church gave the title of paladin to.

The necklace-like halo that hung from the paladin's forehead reminded Leonel of the mental type treasure Aina used during their escape from the Fort. It radiated a strong Light Elemental Force that was likely the source of much of their strength. ρ??U??????

'Where did they get something like that...?' Leonel wondered.

With his improved knowledge base, Leonel understood many things now his Soul Force couldn't grasp in the past.

For one, he could tell that this knight had a special affinity. Or rather, lack thereof. Meaning, if he was a mage, his robes would be without embroidery.

Secondly, it was because he was without an affinity and had decent Spirit Pressure that he could make use of that Light Elemental treasure.

Leonel guessed that most paladins probably had no affinities so they could continue using this child of the light facade.

"Pope Margrave will see you now."

The haughty air of the paladin was practically palpable. Leonel kept his eyes closed for a moment as he was close to grasping something. It wasn't until a few seconds later he registered the words of the paladin and opened his eyes.

Yet, it seemed those few seconds were already enough for this paladin to be close to blowing his top.

Leonel frowned lightly seeing the paladin's reaction. They had been forced to wait over three hours, yet a few seconds was enough to get this paladin up in arms?

In the end, Leonel pretended not to notice the dissatisfaction.

Lionus smiled. "Please lead the way, Sir paladin."

Lionus' words seemed to ease the tension. No matter how haughty these paladins were, they did still feel a hint of something when a mighty Crown Prince was so respectful to them.

"Hmph."

The paladin harrumphed once and turned down the hallway, leading the two young men up a winding set of stone stairs.

From beginning to end, Lionus didn't say anything to Leonel. It was as though he wanted Leonel to experience all of this on his own first. Or, maybe he was just curious about Leonel's reactions without guidance.

'It seems it becomes more difficult for him to hide that ingrained haughtiness when he feels a lack of respect.' Lionus smiled to himself. 'It's truly odd. If he really was an orphan, he should have seen the cruelty of the world long ago. Had he, his true disposition would have shone through already.'

'But, the way he acts it's as if he's lived in a cocoon his whole life, like he's never had to fight for anything... Such a disposition makes it much more likely that his identity isn't what he says it is, but it's equally unlikely that he was sent by Modred. There's no way he would be so sheltered in a place like the Demon Army...'

‘Just who is this Leonel really...?’

Chapter 236

The paladin took a final step forward, pressing his hands against two large wooden doors and pushing.

A flood of light assaulted Leonel’s vision, forcing him to squint. By the time his vision cleared, he could only shake his head.

The room was far too bright. Unlike the room he had woken up in after his battle with Lamorak, he found it difficult even open his eyes without a stinging pain assaulting them.

Embroidery of gold and silver raced across the room, forming up into a wide set of stairs that ended in a tall throne with a backrest that reached up to the ceiling.

On the throne, there sat a handsome middle aged man. In fact, Leonel found that just handsome didn’t do him much justice. Even the movie stars of Earth women swooned over would look like piles of cowdung before this man. If Leonel placed great emphasis on his own looks, it was likely that even he would start to feel a bit inferior.

The man had a head of bright white hair. And, though his eyes were partially closed, Leonel could see that his irises held a deep silver color to them. The only thing that impeded his handsome disposition somewhat was the large headdress on his head.

Seeing this man, Leonel understood a bit of why The Church didn’t take him as a Holy Son very seriously. The Spirit Pressure coming from this man was at the standard of a Three Star Magus.

Everything made sense now. This man was the fourth Holy Son of Camelot, a Three Star Magus of the Light Element, Pope Margrave.

However, what happened next truly left Leonel speechless.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The paladin respectfully crossed the bright room, climbed the first few steps leading to the Pope's throne, then respectfully knelt and kissed his feet. It was only then Leonel realized that the Pope wasn't wearing any footwear to speak of, his feet shone like gems at the base of his throne as though expecting to be worshipped.

"...?"

No matter what era Leonel was born in, something like kissing another's feet crossed his own bottomline.

The paladin retreated to the side, taking up his post among the guards that lined the walls of the room. He stood at attention and became like a statue in the blink of an eye. It was as though what had just happened had nothing to do with him.

"Greet His Holiness!"

The sudden roar shook Leonel out of his shock.

The paladins that lined the walls spoke as one, their voices rolling like rumbling thunder.

By now, Leonel had recollected his thoughts. He realized that kissing a pope's feet was actually quite historically accurate. It seemed that even though this was a Mythological Zone, it still touched on things that were rooted in real life. PANDA NOVEL

However, at the end of the day, Leonel was still a teenage boy. He had already buried his discontent for so long. If he also had to kiss this man's feet, he just might lose his cool entirely.

Leonel was a person who didn't get angry very easily. Even now, he wasn't necessarily enraged. But, he wasn't a pushover either.

Lionus curiously observed Leonel for a while, seemingly curious. Seeing the latter step forward, he smiled and followed suit.

“Greetings.”

Leonel gave the most medieval salute he could think of, greeting the Pope. But, he didn't climb the stairs, nor did he kneel. In his mind, setting down his pride to greet this Pope first was already asking enough of him.

“This Prince greets His Holiness.” Lionus' smile widened, his actions mirroring Leonel's.

As the Crown Prince, he of course had no need to kneel or kiss feet. However, he still had to show this Pope due respect, whether it be as a magus or the leader of The Church.

At that moment, a surge of killing intent swirled around the room. It seemed to want to completely crush Leonel where he stood. ρ???(???????)

Leonel raised his head, but he noticed that the Pope's eyes were still half closed. The killing intent wasn't coming from him. Rather, it was coming from the paladins who stood against the walls of the room. It seemed they were completely infuriated by Leonel's actions.

‘Hm?’

Leonel didn't show much of a reaction to the killing intent. His eyes weren't on the Pope anymore, either.

Leonel hadn't noticed it before because the room and Pope Margrave was too bright, but behind the throne, there were two young girls standing completely still. Their little feet stood on the cold marbled floors, their bodies adorned with a white gown. Each of them held a flower basket in their hands that held white petals.

Even from here, Leonel could smell the fragrance coming from the two baskets. It seemed that they were the reason this room seemed to have such an air to it.

However, this wasn't the reason Leonel was caught off guard like this. The main reason was because he recognized one of the girls. In fact, the little girl was also looking toward Leonel with a hint of shock within her large watery eyes.

This little girl was the very same little girl who almost caused Leonel to miss out on the Zone entirely. Seeing her familiar blue hair and large blue eyes, Leonel couldn't help but smile. This adorable little girl always seemed to be able to make him smile. Even though she had played the role of obstacle to him, he couldn't bring himself to be mad at such a cute little girl. Maybe this was the advantage of woman.

The little girl of the Adurna family blushed seeing Leonel's gaze and her eyes darted around as though looking for somewhere to hide.

Leonel couldn't help but chuckle, causing the paladins around the room to be shocked. Laughing in such a situation? Did he not want his life anymore? Even the Pope couldn't help but open his eyes just that slight bit more.

After his initial reaction, Leonel realized that this situation might not be too good. If this little girl exposed him, it could be troublesome. Although she couldn't do so directly without exposing herself, there were other ways for her to make insinuations.

He wasn't that naive. Though he had taken a liking to this little girl due to her innocence, it wasn't like he didn't realize the danger she posed.

In the end, Leonel chose not to worry about it. It was already too late to do much. He could only stay on his guard.

"Leonel, correct? Do you know the duties of a Holy Son?"

The Pope finally spoke. To now, the paladins hadn't said a single word out of turn. It was as though they knew their place and would never take a single step out of it.

"I do not, Your Holiness. Please advise."

Leonel refocused on the situation at hand.

“As the only Holy Son remaining not of the Royal Family, you have a duty to The Church. However, as a commoner, you haven’t been taught the schools of religion or of thought. You will enter the Convent as a Canon of The Church.

“After serving for 12 years, you will be allowed to earn your way through the rankings of clergymen. Should your performance meet a certain standard, the role of Pope can be handed to you in the future.”

Leonel’s lip twitched.

Canon? The Convent? Wasn’t this Pope asking him to become a nun?

And serve 12 years? That meant 12 years of fasting and observing religious rituals. And, even after all of that, he would still need to keep his chastity and observe strict rules.

If it was just a role he would take in the Zone, it would be fine. After all, Leonel didn’t mind acting for a period of time. This Zone was just a fleeting existence, it’s not like he would have to remain a virgin for life.

However, it was clear this Pope wanted to lock him away for 12 years. How could Leonel waste so much time? He was already on a time crunch to begin with. If he was locked away like this, he wouldn’t be able to accomplish much of anything.

So, without hesitation, Leonel shook his head.

“I’m sorry, Your Holiness. I have no ambition to become a clergymen.”

The atmosphere went cold once more.

Chapter 237

[Schedule will be changing. Updates will be at 10pm EST from now on.]

Pope Margrave opened his eyes fully, peering down toward Leonel from on high.

The killing intent locked on Leonel seemed to grow with each passing second of silence. However, once again, it didn't come from the Pope himself, but rather his paladins. Leonel could tell that if it wasn't for their rules of decorum, they would have definitely stepped forward with weapons drawn.

Leonel's mind spun with several thoughts. It was impossible for him to accept Margrave's request of him. But, at the same time, he couldn't afford to be at odds with The Church either.

'Lionus described Camelot as having four pillars of power, but I somehow feel that things aren't so simple. It's more likely that there are four powers on the surface, but the knight and mage academy are probably just pawns of the Royal Family and The Church... It might even be possible that both are pawns of the Royal Family to resist The Church...'

Leonel's eyes narrowed when he had this thought. This was because this wasn't a thought he would originally have. It was the result of a synapse in his Dreamscape.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

After a while, Leonel understood why he had come to this conclusion.

First there was Lionus' reaction when he mentioned paladins. It wasn't just his pride in his father Leonel sensed back then. That pride masked a disdain he felt for other paladins.

Secondly, the Pope's words seemed to imply that Leonel's current circumstances were unacceptable. Though he didn't directly say Leonel had to leave the Mage Academy, Leonel had a faint inkling that it was meant to be tacitly understood.

Thirdly, despite the fact the Pope was a Three Star Magus, even after so many weeks within the Mage Academy, Leonel couldn't sense even the slightest influence of The Church. He had lost count of the number of books he had read in the library to now, yet not a single one even alluded to religion, the Pope, or The Church.

'I see...' PANDA NOVEL

Leonel smiled bitterly. It seemed that Lionus had dragged Leonel right into the middle of a power struggle.

As things stood now, there was still a bit of balance. Though two of Camelot's three Holy Sons sided with the Royal Family, it was still acceptable. After all, Lionus was King Arthur's son. It was only right that a son would follow after his father's footsteps.

But, what about Leonel? What would happen if a fourth Holy Son appeared and still chose not to join the side of The Church?

This would put The Church in a weird position. The capital would have four Holy Sons, yet three of them would have nothing to do with them. After so much indoctrination about the importance and superiority of Holy Sons... wouldn't The Church lose much of its influence with the people if so many Holy Sons chose against joining them?

Leonel suddenly realized that maybe the reason Lamorak had no choice but to let him live wasn't just because he was a Holy Son, but because of the political importance he represented. p??J??????

Though it seemed to take Leonel a long time to reach this conclusion, with his Dreamscape and ability, it really took him no more than a split second to grasp everything.

'In that case...'

"Your Holiness, the situation might not be as you expect." Leonel spoke slowly.

Toward such words, Pope Margrave finally had the first change in his expression. In fact, even Lionus rose an eyebrow, clearly intrigued.

"The truth is that I'm not a Holy Son."

Pope Margrave's eyebrow rose. In fact, a hint of a smile played his lips. If Leonel was a woman or liked men, it was definitely the kind of smile that would make his heart skip a bit no matter how slight of a smile it was.

"I'm not sure what happened, but Magus Aliard might have made a mistake. I had my affinity tested recently and the result was that I'm an Earth Elemental Child."

Margrave's expression changed once again.

"Oh?" He said softly.

Leonel understood then that the information hadn't spread just yet. But, this made sense. Anyone who could have been in the Magic Art Tower at the time Leonel entered was definitely of exceptionally high standing. Not only would they understand the importance of Leonel's position, they were also less likely to gossip to begin with. It made sense that they would choose to remain silent until things settled down.

Leonel smiled lightly and released his Spirit Pressure.

A rushing wind swept through the throne room. For a moment, it felt as though Leonel was the center of the world, standing in the eye of a raging storm.

At this point, both Lionus and the Pope, and even the paladins to the side, had a change in expression. How was Leonel's Spirit Pressure so powerful?

Toward this, Leonel couldn't do much. He was already holding back. He had already been diligently Crystallizing his Spirit Pressure for a couple weeks already. This was already the result of him holding back. His Spirit Pressure was simply far more than those of this world to begin with. The only thing holding him back was his low grade Force.

In the blink of an eye, a simple earthen arrow formed before Leonel. It was just a Two Star Apprentice Art. Leonel could form several dozen of these in an instant if he wanted to. However, the two magi in the room were still shocked by the speed.

A step further, the speed might have still been acceptable. But, what they found difficult to accept was the metallic sheen on Leonel's [Earthen Arrow]. It was very clear that not only was he an Earth Child... he was a variant! And a very powerful variant at that!

However, Leonel hadn't done this just to show off. He had a very clear purpose.

"As you can see, Your Holiness, I believe there was some kind of mistake. I tried learning Light Elemental Arts, but I wasn't very good at it. In fact, it takes me several minutes to form a One Star Apprentice Light Art. It would be impossible for me to use in battle."

The Pope's eyes narrowed and the room turned still once more.

Chapter 238

The silence was suffocating. Even the paladins no longer had the presence of mind to continue pressing Leonel. They could all only wait for Pope Margrave's response.

"... You're a very intelligent boy." Pope Margrave finally said.

Margrave's face practically read like 'I know you're spewing bullshit, but I like it'.

When Spirit Pressure reaches a certain level, it becomes capable of forming many elements. Of course, the efficiency to which it's done is far less than one's main element, but this is true nonetheless.

How could Margrave believe that Leonel took a minute to form a mere One Star Apprentice Art? That was nothing but bullshit.

But, despite the fact it was bullshit, it was bullshit the Pope happened to like.. As long as Leonel continued to be this 'intelligent', there wouldn't have to be any problems between them.

“Camelot is truly blessed to have another Childe, and such a powerful one at that. This Seat just wanted to see the future generation today. Now that I’ve seen, it’s truly as the old say. The young will eventually surpass us all.”

Pope Margrave gave Leonel a deep look. Then, he waved a hand, his eyes returning to their half closed position.

A familiar paladin separated from his position against the wall, leading Leonel and Lionus out.

Leonel’s eyes narrowed when the large double doors closed behind, blocking out those blinding lights.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

‘What a cunning man...’

Let alone sighing a breath of relief, Leonel was several levels more cautious.

Though he had held back, he hadn’t exposed his Spirit Pressure without cause. In this world, Leonel had learned that sometimes logic wasn’t more important than one’s strength. It wasn’t until Leonel exposed his power that Margrave’s treatment of him truly changed. If he wasn’t as strong as he was now, there was no telling whether Pope Margrave would have accepted his reasonings.

Leonel made a note in his heart. Mordred might not be his only enemy in this place.

...

“You know him?”

Not long after Leonel left, Margrave suddenly spoke to seemingly empty air. The paladins didn’t react at all, but Little Nana felt somewhat flustered by this line of questioning.

“No, no!” Nana quickly answered.

She wasn't worried her flustered appearance would give away anything. After all, this was her normal state. Plus, Leonel looked toward her first before she reacted, so it could be said that she was just shocked by the sudden attention Leonel gave her. PANDA NOVEL

"Hm, is that so...?"

Margrave didn't say anything for a long while before he continued to speak.

"It seems that this boy is quite lustful. This could be used..."

Nana flushed red with embarrassment.

Margrave chuckled. "Don't worry, you are among my precious Holy Daughters and God has bestowed upon you a heaven sent ability. How could I pass down such a debasing job to you? You must remain pure beneath the scrutiny of God. There will of course be others to take on this task..."

After he finished saying this, Margrave didn't speak again.

If Leonel was here, maybe he wouldn't be able to hold back his rage any longer.

It might be normal for a young girl like Nana to marry and even birth children in this world, but Leonel had no such thoughts about the little girl.

** ρ??∫??????

"So the mission sets off in at dusk, will you be ready?"

After leaving The Church, Lionus pretended as though nothing had happened and began to speak with Leonel about the mission once again.

Leonel gave him a sidelong look.

This prince had brought up this trip to The Church as though it was any other day. In fact, the way he spoke about it initially, he made it sound like this had something to do with the mission he had taken up. Not only that, but he had even made it seem like he had some involvement with The Church.

If Leonel remembered correctly, Lionus spoke about this visit as though it was something every Holy Son did, when this very clearly wasn't the case.

Lionus smiled shamelessly beneath Leonel's gaze. He was clearly saying that he took no responsibility for his previous actions.

"You're pretty good, Your Highness." Leonel said with a tinge of sarcasm.

Lionus chuckled. "I'm not sure what you mean, Leonel."

"Mm." Leonel mumbled but didn't say much else.

It was true that it wouldn't have helped even if the prince had said something. Though it would have been nice to know, it would have also been akin to the prince making a decision for Leonel.

By keeping his hands off the sequence entirely, not only was Lionus able to gain an understanding of where Leonel's loyalties lied, he was also able to test Leonel.

However, never had he expected Leonel to be so capable. Even he couldn't have thought of a better solution to the situation.

Leonel shook his head and decided to forget it.

"What is this mission about?"

Hearing this question, Lionus finally grew serious.

“It’s a border mission.”

Seeing that Leonel didn’t have a particular reaction, Lionus almost smacked his own forehead. He had forgotten that Leonel had never been on a mission before, so how could he know just how damning the two words ‘border mission’ were?

Lionus sighed and began to explain.

“Camelot has a ‘Ring of Safety’ system. The safest place is the core of the Kingdom. This encompasses Camelot and the surround hundred or so mile radius. Beyond that is the Yellow Mission Ring. This encompasses between a hundred to five hundred miles.

“Normally, those missions are taken up by Apprentice Mages. They deal with small beast hordes, bandits, small rebellions and the like.

“Beyond the Yellow Mission Ring is the Red Mission Ring. This is between 500 miles and 600 miles away from the core of the Kingdom. These missions can only be touched by Official Mages. The rebellions that happen here are much fiercer and the bandits form Clans and small fiefs of their own, making them much more dangerous.

“Beyond the Red Mission Ring is the Black Mission Ring. This is between 600 and 800 miles away from the core of the Kingdom. Only elite Official Mages and weaker Magi can take missions in this region.

“The Black Mission Ring are where the first instances of Demons and black magic can be found. Some of the worst criminals of Camelot are hiding away in this region. The death toll is high enough to surpass 20%.”

Leonel frowned. It was this serious?

“Beyond the Black Mission Ring... is the Border Mission Ring. It goes by another name... The Demon Mission Ring. It’s between 800 to 1000 miles from the core of the Kingdom. This region is the no man’s

land between Camelot and the Demon Kingdom. There are constant clashes between us and Mordred's Demon Army there.

“That is where our mission lies.”

Leonel sucked in a cold breath. But, he knew he had to go.

He knew that the side missions weren't meaningless. This was a Zone, not a video game. Since side missions existed, they served a purpose. They acted like a guiding light to how to complete the main mission.

Since he was going to the Demon Mission Ring, it was a good chance to see whether or not he could kill Mordred in one sweep.

Chapter 239

Leonel touched his sore bottom again. He had already lost count of the number of times he had done so, but the discomfort hadn't disappeared.

Seeing Leonel do this again, Lionus couldn't help but snicker. Though he quickly tried to hide it, Leonel wouldn't miss such a thing with how sharp his senses were. He could only send a glare toward the Crown Prince.

Unfortunately, this glare only made Lionus' withheld laughter burst forth like a torrential tide.

“If others knew the great Earthen Childe Leonel couldn't handle riding a horse for a few hours, just how would they react?”

Lionus' laughter continued as though he couldn't sense Leonel's piercing glare.

It had already been a few days since Leonel, Lionus and the rest of the expedition squad had set out to the Border Region.

Leonel still remembered his shock when he saw the teleportation arrays Camelot had built.. But, after a moment, it was relatively easy to accept. After all, if a Tier 9 Black treasure could provide a talisman capable of taking Aina to a new world, it wasn't too shocking that a world with several Magi could find methods to teleport within a world.pANDA-nOVEL.COM

After his initial shock settled down, Leonel laughed at himself. He had seen all of the Mage Arts within the Magic Art Tower. Some of them had abilities he couldn't have even fathomed back when he was a normal human. Something like teleportation shouldn't have been so surprising.

Unfortunately, despite the existence of teleportation channels, Leonel had still had to ride a horse in the last few days.

For safety, the teleportation channels to Camelot and from Camelot stopped appearing frequently after the Red Mission Ring and there were sparingly few within the Black Mission Ring. As for the Border Region, there were none. So, after reaching the last channel, Leonel, Lionus and the rest of the group had to travel by horse.

But... Leonel hadn't even touched a horse in his lifetime before. In fact, he couldn't remember ever being close to one, let alone having to ride it uncomfortably for hours.

In truth, Leonel could just use a simple healing spell to stop the soreness, but after his conversation with the Pope, he didn't dare to use Light Elemental magic in public anymore. And, it seemed Lionus was too busy laughing at him to help out.

The rest of the squad seemed to be taking this quite well as well. It was rare to get some laughs during a Border Region Mission, so they felt a bit relaxed after making Leonel the butt of the joke. pANDA nOVEL

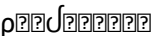
Lionus smiled inwardly. 'What an interesting guy... I know he's not a person who gets embarrassed so easily. The only explanation is that he's becoming the butt of the joke on purpose to ease the tension...'

Lionus found Leonel to be an interesting character to analyze. Whenever he thought he understood him, things would turn out to be much different from what he had expected. Leonel had layers to him that were exceptionally difficult to peel back.

The team this time was formed by five members including Lionus and Leonel. Aside from them, there were three Leonel recognized — Mary, Theybul, and finally, Elys.

It was only after seeing them all that Leonel understood the true reason behind their robes lacking embroidery. Mages and Magi who frequented battlefields wouldn't give more information about themselves to the enemy than was necessary. In fact, Leonel realized that their robes might not even necessarily reflect their true levels.

Due to this reason, Leonel also wore plain blue robes without any embroidery and he understood just a bit more about the world he was in.

Suddenly, the laughing atmosphere grew serious. Lionus, the leader of this squad, didn't need to say anything. They could see by the land that stretched out before them that they were here. 

The line of separation was so stark that it almost seemed surreal. On one side, there were blades of green grass. Though these blades lacked in health and were even browning in several spots, they were ultimately still blades of grass.

However, on the other side, there was nothing but grey, cracked lands. Every so often, there would be what seemed like patches of vegetation, but they all resembled weeds and were colored such a deep black that it was impossible to call them plants of any sort.

The world across this clear line was covered by a thin veil of fog. In the distance, sharp mountain ranges towered, piercing through the black clouds above. A light drizzle perpetually fell over the grey lands, yet its soil remained just as dry. In fact, the rain held an odd sent to it that made Leonel's nose twitch.

'It's acidic...' Leonel's frown deepened.

"Leonel, you take the vanguard. Mary, Theybul, protect his sides and flank our formation. Elys, take up the rear."

Leonel nodded. His arrangement made the most sense.

Since Leonel was an Earth Mage, it made sense for him to take the vanguard. His defenses and crowd controlling abilities were the highest. In addition, his Spirit Pressure was also the highest, so could scout ahead as well.

Lionus was their main healer, so he should be protected in the middle.

Elys was a Mental Mage, so her attack strength was the least. Taking up the rear allowed her to use her sharper senses to ensure they didn't get pincered while also allowing her the time needed to launch her assaults of the mind, just like her mentor Magus Aliard.

Mary was a Wood Mage while Theybul was a Wind Mage. Though their abilities didn't allow for a special allocation, this was the best place to put them.

Leonel took a deep breath and entered a focused state. The expressions of his teammates changed sensing the shift in his aura. They felt that it was slightly difficult to breathe, but they also sighed in relief when they realized the aura wasn't pointed toward them.

Lionus' eyes narrowed slightly, watching Leonel's back.

'He... isn't doing it on purpose... Just how many secrets do you have?'

Leonel took a step forward, crossing into the grey lands that bordered the two behemoths of this world.

An uncomfortable feeling seeped into his body immediately. It was similar to a muscle ache or a minor cold. Though it was nothing too severe, it still made Leonel all the more serious.

The light drizzle of rain rebounded across his body and robes as though trying to ebb away at his psyche.

Without a choice, he continued to walk forward.

What he didn't know was that there was a subtle change to his Segmented Cube.

All the while, sitting within Leonel's spatial bracelet, it passively absorbed energy. Even after Leonel stepped into this no-man's land, it never stopped. However, this energy was different.

It carried a tinge of blackness to it, seeping into the Lab Setting, toward the snowglobes, and into the resting place of the little mink...

Chapter 240

[Black Rhino]

[Power: 7 Stars (Black)]

[Strength: 8 Stars (Black); Speed: 5 Stars (Black); Agility: 4 Stars (Black); Coordination: 7 Stars (Black); Stamina: 8 Stars (Black); Reactions: 6 Stars (Black); Defense: Quasi 9 Star (Black); Spirit: 1 Stars (Black); Force: 1 Stars (Black)]

[Power Scale Accuracy: 97%]

Leonel's gaze flashed. Even with a beast standing at three meters tall before him, he hardly react.

"[Mud Pit]."

Leonel stretched out a hand. The land quaked and shook as the black rhino charged over. In the blink of an eye, it had already entered a 100 meter radius.

Just when it was about to press its front feet down, it suddenly felt its footing disappear. Instead of hitting solid ground, it sank into a quagmire, causing its body to flip forward..

"[Harden]."
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Just as the rhino's body was about to flip out of the mud pit entirely, the pit hardened. The sudden change caused the rhino, who was in the process of rolling off, to come to a sudden stop.

At that moment, the sickening sound of shattering bones rang out, only to be completely overshadowed by the pained roar of the black rhino.

The black rhino heavily landed on its back, its front legs snapped in two. In fact, a portion of its legs were still stuck in the hardened mud pit.

However, Leonel hardly reacted, a familiar swirl of wind had already surged around his body once again.

A strong Earth Element swirled in the air above the rhino, quickly coalescing into a bronze, angled blade that radiated a beautiful light.

"[Heavy Guillotine]."

SHUUUU!

The blade descended into the rhino's open mouth. It was too busy roaring in pain to even sense the danger. PANDA NOVEL

An instant later, its mouth was pierced through to the back of its skull, leaving it impaled into the ground.

By this point, Leonel's teammates were looking at his back as though he was some kind of monster. This wasn't the first Demon Leonel had taken down. In fact, it wasn't even the tenth. Yet, every time they saw him do it, they would feel just as shocked as the first time.

That beast was at least as powerful as a One Star Magus. Wasn't Leonel just an Official Mage? They should have been working together to take it down, so what the hell was happening?

'Hm, this power scaling system is alright. But, still not perfect. It's too broad now... It needs some tweaks...'

Leonel calmly analyzed.

'That battle was at most 72% efficient. It would have been much easier to finish that battle had I taken a different approach.

'If I had used [Gravity Warp] just after the rhino flipped due to [Mud Pit], I could have used [Earthen Spike] to impale it beneath its own weight... [Earthen Spike] is only a Two Star Official Art, it would take much less to cast than the One Star Magus Art [Heavy Guillotine], even if I have to take into account the Three Star Official Art [Gravity Warp]...'

Leonel wasn't really worried about his stamina usage. Even compared to true Three Star Magi, his stamina was far beyond what they could imagine. After all, he technically had the reserves of a Fifth Dimensional mage. The only shame was that he had to use more of his spirit to form Magic Arts since he hadn't crystallized his Spirit Pressure as thoroughly as the true elites of this world. ρ??∪???

But, even then, his starting point was still so much higher that it hardly mattered.

Leonel was seriously refining his Dreamscape bit by bit. He wanted to reach a point where he could understand the best way to defeat an enemy the moment he laid eyes on it. Unfortunately, it was clear that he was still very far from this result.

72% efficiency might sound impressive, but Leonel knew that this was pitifully low. For one, the more efficiency he wanted to eek out, the more difficult it would be. But, this wasn't even the biggest point...

The truth was that the rhino was much weaker than Leonel. Not only was it much weaker, but it was much less intelligent than Leonel. The petty tricks Leonel used might work on it, but on a True Demon or another Magus, it would be nothing more than parlor tricks.

Leonel believed that had the black rhino been just any other One Star Magus, Leonel would at best be able to wring out a measely 30-40% efficiency, 50% if he was lucky and could counter his enemy's ability. It would be even worse the closer to his strength the enemy was.

Suddenly thinking of this, another light bulb went off in Leonel's mind as a branching arc of lightning surged through his Dream World.

'Counters... It might not be possible to perfectly counter every enemy I come across... An Earth Mage would be the bane of a Wind Mage, but might not necessarily do well against others... Hm...'

Leonel thought that there was merit to this idea. However, he didn't have a perfect way to act on it currently. Though he could technically cast all Elemental spells thanks to his talent, he knew that this wasn't a viable solution.

The power system of Camelot would only be useful to him in the Third Dimension. It would lose its use the moment he crossed into the Fourth. So, that solution would only be short lived. He needed to think of something better.

"Leonel, you're a monster. Do you know that?" Theybul suddenly spoke in a somewhat exasperated tone.

They all thought after the first beast Leonel took down that he would soon realize he couldn't expend his stamina so wildly. But, the current Leonel looked like he was still on his first battle. It was too ridiculous.

Originally, they had been accepting of Leonel joining this expedition for two reasons. Firstly, Lionus recommended him. And, secondly, they heard rumors that he had battled a Knight of the Round Table and came out alive.

In their minds, even if Leonel's magic wasn't up to standard, he could make up for it in other ways. But, they had never expected for him to be such a monster even when only using Magic Arts.

"Uh —." Leonel didn't know how to respond to this.

Lionus and the others chuckled seeing his response. They had expected the atmosphere to become heavy after entering these lands, but Leonel's prowess took a burden off their hearts.

It wasn't that they couldn't defeat the beasts Leonel could as well. They all knew that these 'Demons' were easy pickings. The True Demons were far more powerful and were humanoids. But, Leonel let them all save up their stamina and remain in peak condition. This was more than they could ever hope for.

"It seems like we've arrived at our destination."

Lionus said in a somewhat surprised tone. He had expected it to take about a week, but this was only the third day.

He sent another deep look toward Leonel's back. He had realized that Leonel sometimes swerved their formation in certain directions, but he didn't think much of it. But, it seemed that Leonel was avoiding danger for them at the same time as taking the vanguard.

'A monster indeed...'

Up ahead, a small, makeshift fort stood. The gates were made of black wood and stood about three meters tall. Peeking over the wooden walls one could see several tall tents from the distance.

Several patrol units stood between them and the small fort. They had already passed through several lookout checkpoints, so the Commander of this fort should already be prepared for their arrival.

As expected, before they could even approach, the gates opened and a small troop of knights riding war horses galloped forward.

Leonel winced. 'Damn horses again...'

As Leonel was remembering his past trauma, he didn't notice that Lionus had begun to frown behind him.

'Something's wrong...'

