

Descent 511

Chapter 511

Leonel's voice came out with an undeniable edge to it.

Those glasses, with his skill as a Force Crafter, he could easily see through their abilities. Even if this young man wasn't necessarily using it in a perverted manner, Leonel had no intention on relying on his 'good nature'.

The young man slowly placed his glasses down on the table before them, wiping away the small shards of glass that hadn't managed to pierce his skin. Judging by his expression, one would have never guessed that he had just been humiliated.

His treasure could indeed see through more than what the human eye was capable of. As for whether he was truly planning on using his glasses like this, maybe only he was aware of the answer to that.

The young man looked up from his broken glasses to Leonel, his gaze remaining even. Leonel matched his gaze, not a hint of remorse in his eyes.

"My name is Noah Fawkes, I'm here on behalf of The Empire as the representative of the Fawkes Royal Family.

"This is Jessica Scarlet, she is the representative of the Scarlet Grand Prime Minister family.pANDA-NOVEL.COM

"This is Tyrron Dove, he is the representative of the Dove Grand Prime Minister family."

Noah didn't address the small scuffle between Leonel and Tyrron in the slightest, he made his way forward with introductions without a care.

Leonel turned his gaze from Tyrron, focusing it on his cousin. He had to admit that Noah had perfected the air of a Prince. In this regard, he was far beyond Lionus despite being a few years younger.

“The proposal is simple.” Noah spoke with a royal air, his presence seeming several times larger than his actual stature would dictate. “Camelot and the Demon Empire will be annexed to become the second moon of Earth. Your status will be that of probationary citizens. Jessica.”

Jessica nodded hearing her name called.

“Probationary citizenship allows you two-thirds the rights of official citizens of Earth. You will be protected by the same laws, however your voting rights are reduced by a third and your punishments are increased by the same measure. PANDA NOVEL

“This status will last until the end of the war wherein you will be instated as official citizens of The Empire. Depending on your performance, you may be conferred a Chief Earl title under the Pendragon name.”

Jessica brought out several drafted documents. They piled up onto the table, totaling at least a few dozen pages.

King Arthur frowned at these words. He didn't like these terms very much at all.

He was essentially tasked with defending what amounted to half a large continent of Earth in return for an ... Earl Title?

He might not know what the titles of Earth were and how they compared to Camelot's, but Earl was an easily identifiable title for him. That was enough to tell him that he would have next to no speaking power.

However, instead of lashing out like he wanted to, he remained silent, leaving these matters in Leonel's hands. Since he had already resigned himself to this life, it hardly made a difference. Whether he was an Earl or a Duke, who cared if he was no longer King? p??c[??????]

Leonel didn't respond to Noah or Jessica. Instead, he reached for the papers.

Under the confused gazes of everyone present, he flipped through them one by one, not remaining on a single page for more than a second.

Jessica's brow wrinkled slightly. Was he planning on reading it? But if he really was planning on reading it, why was he flipping through the pages so quickly?

What Jessica didn't know was that Leonel had already slowed himself down considerably. Let alone a second a page, all he would have to do is spread these pages out and he could read all more than 50 sheets in that same time frame.

After a while, Leonel placed the documents down and closed his eyes.

Leonel quickly organized all the information, jumped through the legal talk and reached the core of the documents.

Ultimately, this document was mostly created to familiarize Camelot with the laws of Earth. Only a small portion of it actually detailed the agreement between the two 'nations'. But, this was good for Leonel as well. Though he knew the main tenants of Earth's laws, when it came to the details, he was severely lacking.

The document was unlikely to list all of Earth's laws. After all, it was only a few dozen sheets while Earth had long since moved passed the usage of paper. Clearly, they had only gone back due to the completion of the Metamorphosis making technology all but useless. But this was enough.

Leonel opened his eyes. The simple action made Jessica shudder. But, the feeling of oppression soon vanished as they regained their focus.

“Accept them as official citizens of The Empire, remove the guaranteed Chief Earl title, and document Camelot as a Probationary Province.”

Noah's expression finally shifted from something other than indifference. His head tilted slightly, a hint of questioning in his gaze.

“If we do things like this, the Pendragon family will not be guaranteed any title. It is very possible that they will become commoners. Under these conditions, the people of Camelot are no longer of Camelot. As such, their merits are their own and won't count for the Pendragon family.”

Though The Empire's initial offer sounded bad, after reading the document, Leonel felt they were surprisingly fair. 'Probationary Citizen' sounded like a bad title, but it essentially allowed Camelot autonomy to continue functioning as its own nation until the war ended. As such, the merits of Camelot's armies would count toward Camelot and allow it to earn up to an Earl title in the end.

But, Leonel was essentially asking to remove this failsafe. By allowing Camelot to become official citizens of Earth right this moment, they were all starting as commoners. How could commoners lead people? Obviously, they didn't have the right to do so. So, any merits 'Camelot' accomplished would be equally spread to its millions of citizens rather than concentrating into Arthur's or Mordred's hands.

Though this method would allow the Pendragons a chance to achieve a royal title higher than Earl, it also meant that they could effectively end up with nothing unless they had astounding single person feats.

Though the Code Black of The Empire seemed to throw the nobles to the wolves, the truth was that they still had many advantages commoners didn't have. As nobles, they had subordinates that were recognized by law. Those subordinates could funnel their merits toward these nobles, making it easier for them to retain their titles.

However, if Arthur and Mordred became official citizens now... They wouldn't have this luxury any longer.

“I'm certain.” Leonel replied. “After all, as a Prince, I can allocate my merits however I please.”

Noah's pupils constricted into pinholes.

That was right. There was one family that didn't have to worry about democracy on Earth, and that was the Fawkes family. But how could Leonel alone amass more merits than those royal families with tens to hundreds of thousands of subordinates?

Just as Noah wanted to open his mouth to say something, a talisman on Jessica's person suddenly glowed.. At first, she listened to the message passed to her in silence, but after a while, her cold expression furrowed into a frown.

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Jessica's expression only seemed to become worse with each passing moment. When the message finally came to a close, she began to whisper into Noah's ear. Clearly, the matter was too urgent for her to even consider leaving this place first. But, it was precisely because of this that Leonel learned exactly what happened.

With his senses, how could he not make out a whisper? In fact, even Aina was capable of doing the same thing. Though her mind wasn't on the same level as Leonel's, her five senses were greatly heightened.

'Dream Cloud Prison'?' Leonel's gaze narrowed.

Dream Cloud Prison, compared to Prisons from ancient times, could be considered a paradise. The Empire put a lot of effort into rehabilitation, more than what could be said for most Nations of the past.

However, even with this being the case, there were many who would never step foot outside of the Prison. And, many of those who never would' had never even committed crimes before.

This sounded like a shocking matter, but considering the history of The Empire, maybe it wasn't so after a moment of thought.

The Gene Analysis Exam wasn't just a prerequisite for finding future talents' It was also a test for finding future criminals.

Those that had a high potential to commit petty crimes in the future were mostly ignored. These individuals were allowed to live out their lives and would only be escorted to Dark Cloud Prison upon committing the crimes in question. PANDA-N0VEL.COM

However' ¦ There were those who were born with more sinister tastes, those who had a high potential for violence and murder. Those people were classified as A-grade Prisoners and were introduced into Dark Cloud Prison in their infancy.

They received visitation from their family. But, other than this, they would spend their lives within the walls of the Dark Cloud Prison' ¦

But, this was only the beginning. While there were those with potential for horrid acts of violence and murder, there were others who not only had such desires, but also had tools to commit them that far surpassed the normal person' ¦

These people were geniuses who were born to be Five Star Professionals, prodigies that had impossible levels of intelligence to match their twisted nature.

They were known as Dark Prisoners and received the highest level of security Dark Cloud Prison had to offer.

As for whether it was ethical to punish people before they committed the crimes they were supposedly destined to, Leonel wasn't sure. If he was honest with himself, he never really thought about it before. Dark Cloud Prison was so far and away out of his mind in his day to day life that like most privileged people, he just never thought about it.

But now, it seemed that Dark Cloud Prison had no intention of staying away from his life any longer.
PANDA N0VEL

That said' ¦ judging by Jessica's words, this seemed like a good opportunity.

When Jessica finished whispering to Noah, his expression, too, became serious.

Leonel smiled and looked toward Aina. “Want to go to Dark Cloud Province?”

Jessica’s lip twitched when she heard these words. He didn’t even bother asking them first how they felt about it? And, couldn’t he have at least pretended as though he hadn’t heard anything? After all, this was technically top secret information.

But, when Jessica remembered that Leonel was also technically a Prince, she realized that he really could do whatever he wanted. Unless her father or Tyrron’s father was here, there would be no way to command him to do anything.

And, even in that case, Jessica somehow believed it wouldn’t matter. After all, it really didn’t seem like Leonel was relying on the Prince title at all. He would have done whatever he wanted to do from the very beginning.

Aina nodded at Leonel’s suggestion. ρ??∫??????

At this point, both of their goals were in sync. Aina wanted to grow stronger and so did Leonel. If he didn’t grow stronger, how could he possibly upgrade the Segmented Cube to cure Aina?

“It’s settled then.” Leonel smiled and looked back toward Noah, Jessica and Tyrron. “I think my proposal was in line with The Empire’s bottom line, correct?”

Noah gazed at Leonel for a moment before nodding.

“Good.”

Not long later, Noah, Jessica and Tyrron got up to leave. Tyrron left behind a slight smile, but didn’t say anything from the start of the meeting to the end. It was difficult to tell if this was just his personality or if there was something else.

“So what hole did you throw me into, kid?”

Finally, Arthur couldn't hold back any longer. He had heard the negotiations, but without understanding Earth's laws, it was tough for him to follow everything that was said. In the end, he could only trust in Leonel, something that left him feeling somewhat uncomfortable.

Leonel chuckled. "It's a good thing, I promise'!"

After Leonel finished his explanation, Mordred and Arthur fell into their own thoughts.

"So we have to rely on you?" Arthur sighed.

"Well, not necessarily." Leonel said with a grin.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, what do you think I was doing before I came to this battlefield?"

"Wait, but according to your reasoning, anything we did before becoming official citizens is void. And, even if our fight against White City was counted, it would be split even across every soldier that participated in the war. That wouldn't be enough merits to even trade for a Tier 4 Official title, let alone a noble title."

Arthur pressed his brows together.

"Yes, you weren't official citizens. But, what about me?" Leonel's grin widened.

"Ah'!"

Arthur and Mordred suddenly came to a realization. That was right. While their merits would be mitigated, Leonel wasn't in the same boat. And'! Hadn't he just wiped out 10 White Knights and over half of White City's elite forces practically on his own?

“ ‘| Not only did a ‘Prince’ take out half of the army, but this ‘Prince’s’ girlfriend also killed their City Lord.”

Aina blushed slightly beneath her mask and looked away. But, she didn’t make any attempts to refute.

Seeing such a scene, Mordred grinned and winked at Leonel only for him to put two big thumbs up.

“Aina can be considered a person under my wing, so you can say, effectively, all the merits for clearing out White City falls to us. Giving those merits over to the Pendragon family is well within my rights.

“Though I’m not sure how many merits the other nobles have, I read over the method of calculation. If my simulations are correct, there should already be no problem to trade for a Secretary Marquise title.”

Leonel smiled lightly, his cheeriness being seen in a new light by the father-daughter pair.

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“Do you want us to come with you?” Mordred asked.

Leonel shook his head. He was less interested about the state of Earth and more interested about his own personal strength growing. After witnessing Noah’s comprehension of Winter, he felt like he had finally come to understand something, so he wanted to test those waters.

And, even if he hadn’t, it was better for Mordred and Arthur to stay here.

“I don’t believe that they’ll give up on Camelot so easily. Depending on how the wars on other Provinces go, they might send another group here. It’s best if you remain in this place.”

Arthur and Mordred nodded.

“But, defending isn’t all you should do.” Leonel suddenly thought of something. “Put some effort into organizing your people. With all of them slowly awakening to their abilities, there’s definitely a lot of untapped potential. It’s hard to tell how long this war will go on for, but Camelot could play a bigger role than it seems’ |

“I didn’t say this before, but even if I can give you merits as a Prince, there’s still a limit to how much. For example, I can’t just give you enough for a Grand Prime Minister title. If you wanted such a position, you’ll have to fight for it yourself.”

Arthur’s gaze narrowed, but in the end, he nodded.pANDA-N0VEL.COM

After saying this, Leonel grabbed onto Aina’s small hand and walked out of the military tent. He quite enjoyed the feeling, so he most definitely wouldn’t let an opportunity to do so slip by.

But, while he was in his own world, he almost didn’t notice that Noah and Jessica were actually still waiting for him outside, stationed before their troop.

Noah looked between Leonel and Aina. Truthfully, he didn’t know how a Prince of the Empire ended up with a woman of the hidden families. Even when he brought this up to his grandfather, Emperor Fawkes brushed it off without a care in the world as though it wasn’t a big deal. In fact, his Imperial Grandfather even said that he should try to be more proactive in love too.

Though his grandfather always seemed to have a warm air about him, Noah could feel the underlying oppression in his every action. Making such a joke in the past would have been impossible for the Emperor. Yet, he had this time.

“Imperial Grandfather has said that we can lead this expedition together.” Noah said calmly. “You can receive the same Tier 7 General title I hold and you can choose half of my men to be under your command.”

Normally, when such a thing happened, the person suffering the most would be infuriated. Noah was effectively losing half his fighting strength and warriors he had carefully nurtured for the past more than year would be poached right beneath his eyes.

But, Noah didn't seem to care in the slightest. There weren't any fluctuations in his emotions and he relayed his grandfather's orders without the smallest sign of reluctance. PANDA NOVEL

The various youths to Noah's back remained silent at these words. It was hard to tell if there was no uproar because it didn't matter to them one way or if they were simply just this well trained.

The number Noah led now was about half of what it once was, leaving it numbering at about 500. The remainder had been stationed at White City and it seemed the Tyrron had gone to manage the situation over there.

Leonel raised an eyebrow and looked toward the youths.

They had all been there when he lost his temper, flying into a rage. So, there was no need to question his strength. But, commanding a group of men and women went beyond just strength. It required judgement and intellect.

Leonel wondered 'Should he take his 'grandfather' up on his offer? Or, should he go with Aina alone'?

After a while, Leonel made a decision. No, rather 'It felt more like an instinct, as though he couldn't pick another way even if he tried.

"Alright." Leonel said with a nod.

Then, he drew a line down the middle of Noah's troop and took half.

**

Dark Cloud Province was an oddly peaceful place. Along with the Capital, it was among the only two Provinces of Earth that seemed completely unaffected by the Metamorphosis.

It was a place lush with nature. Green forests, tall mountains, and gently rushing rivers. It was almost a utopia.

However, everyone knew that all of this terrain was purposely left here to make it even more difficult for prisoners to escape, not that they'd ever step foot out of the perimeter of Dark Cloud Prison, that is.

The idea of an entire Province being cornered off for a Prison sounded insane. But, to summarize it not so many words: it was.

Dark Cloud Prison was a massive hexagonal structure with a hollowed out center. The rooms ringed the outside and though they seemed to be open concept with plenty of windows, everyone knew that even a missile wouldn't be capable of penetrating that glass.

However, this was just the part of Dark Cloud Prison others could see. What many didn't know was that the hexagonal ring structure of Dark Cloud Prison dug deep underground for almost a kilometer, housing many more criminals than what met the eye.

On one of these deepest floors, there was no sunlight to be seen, no open concept to marvel at, no nature to be in awe of.

It was in this darkness that two guards walked, their steps uniform.

"Whose turn is it?" One of them spoke.

"It should be time for Prisoner #D1109."

"D, huh'!"

This guard was quite aware of how dangerous prisoners with the D prefix were. The only prisoners worthy of such a thing were Dark Prisoners.

"Yes. Since this is your first time, be cautious. Don't give him even a quarter of breathing space. Remember your training, this is not a joke. Do not be naïve."

The rookie guard nodded seriously. If he was one to take such matters lightly, he would have never been allowed this level of access.

The two reached a dark cell door without so much as a small opening on it.

After several procedures, they finally clicked open the heavy door as though it was a bank safe rather than a prison cell.

The moment they did, an eerie chuckle reached their ears.

“#D1109? How inhumane’! Why don’t you call me by the name my mother gave me?”

“Say it with me now’! Leo-nel Mo-ra-les. Quite easy to say, don’t you think?”

At that moment, Dark Cloud Prison suddenly quaked.. It felt as though the world was collapsing.

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Leonel took a look at the more than 200 men and women before him. The eldest was no more than 25 while the youngest might have been 16 or 17. But, all of them carried the experience of several battles. It was very clear that this wouldn’t be their first stint.

Though Leonel had the ability to do so, he didn’t pick them based on their strength. He decided to choose randomly, not only to leave some face for Noah, but because he didn’t particularly care how strong they were.

Honestly, he didn’t know why he agreed to Noah’s proposal. It was more of an impulse than anything else. But, now that he had made his decision, there was no use in lamenting it. There was even something about it that filled him with a hint of excitement.

His back stood just a bit straighter, his chest becoming just that small bit wider. The aura the surrounded his body caused them to fall in line, their expressions serious.

“Who are the leaders amongst you?” Leonel finally spoke. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The youths looked toward one another before a few stepped out. Among them, Leonel actually recognized one.

Nile stood with a face even paler than Noah’s had been. His arm was bandaged and wrapped. But, truthfully, there was no amount of bandages that could make up for a hole being blasted through your collarbone.

It seemed as though someone had gone out of their way to secure his arm. As for whatever else was done, Leonel wasn’t sure. After all, he wasn’t trained in such things.

All in all, there were 10 individuals including Nile who stepped out. Many of them had tired expressions. It was clear that it hadn’t been too long since they conquered White City, but now, just when they thought they could finally go home, they were thrust into another matter. PANDA NOVEL

According to reports, Dark Cloud Prison had been attacked and at least 20% of the prison had been compromised, resulting in the sudden release of 23 329 C-grade prisoners, 12 802 B-grade prisoners, 2 023 A-grade prisoners and 103 Dark Prisoners.

Though the complex terrain around Dark Cloud Prison was marketed as a method of making it tougher for prisoners to escape, if this was really the goal, then the area around the prison would be nothing but flat land.

It would be next to impossible to escape if there was no cover to hide behind.

The truth of it was that with the wrist watched The Empire gave every newborn, there was no need to worry too much about escape. PANDA NOVEL

The terrain actually functioned twofold. The first was maintaining at least somewhat of an eco friendly environment on Earth that didn’t involve the oceans. As for the second reason’ it was so that the public would forget such a place existed to begin with.

Not only were there no Paradise Islands that traveled over Dark Cloud Province, but it was practically untouched by human hands with the exception of the massive prison at its very center.

But now, this terrain had become a massive obstacle for them to overcome' ;

None of this even mentioned the fact that whoever had attacked the prison had done so with the expressed purpose of releasing these prisoners. If this was the case, then that definitely meant that there was a high likelihood that these prisoners were being funneled into whatever armies Terrain was building.

Though the C and B-grade prisoners weren't guaranteed to have high combat prowess, it was a different story for A and Dark Prisoners. The Empire had already found a strong correlation between how well one performed on their Gene Analysis Exams and the strength of the abilities they could awaken.

Dark Prisoners had a better than 50% chance to be Variants or stronger by this point. This was most definitely not something to be taken lightly.

While weak worlds like Terrain mostly relied on their Force cultivation to display strength, talented worlds like Earth could get away with having weaker foundations in such areas as long as their abilities were up to a certain standard. If it wasn't for the fact Noah had purposely chosen to hold back and Arthur had yet to learn how to control his ability, there was no way that City Lord White would have had such an easy time.

However, with all of this said, the actions of Terrain were most definitely a double edged sword. Taking advantage of the strength of these men and women would be one matter' ; But whether they would truly be able to control them was a different matter entirely.

Leonel scanned the ten before him. Other than Nile, there were six other young men and three young women. The weapons among them also varied greatly. While some chose to wield cold weapons, some had more modern weapons as well. These modern weapons were enhanced, but also didn't rely on advanced technology.

After some inspection, Leonel realized that these 'modern' weapons were actually treasures. Though they appeared to be of Earth's technology, they were much more like Leonel's first creations, the long-nozzle pistols.

'Interesting' !'

Leonel wondered if this was because other worlds had been observing Earth's technology to make these or if maybe Earth's technology wasn't as unique as he once believed. Of course, there was another possibility' ! and that was that Earth had Force Crafters of its own that he was unaware of.

If this last point was true, then it seemed that that mysterious grandfather of his had more hidden cards than it seemed. But, at the same time, a hidden card wouldn't be so hidden if it was out for all to see like this. So, Leonel dismissed the idea. It was more than likely a combination of the first two possibilities.

"23 speed types. 19 defensive types. 21 attack types. 7 healing types. 48 body enhancement types. 39 Force Strengthening Deviation types. 13 sensory types. 10 all rounders. 74 unique, unclassifiable abilities."

Leonel summarized quickly.

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The 10 all rounders were, of course, the 10 who stood before him. Their abilities separated from the unclassifiable abilities in that they had several strong points rather than one odd strong point.

For example, among the 74, there was a young woman with an ability similar to King Arthur's. Except, rather than become streams of light, she became an odd liquid thicker than water. She could also coat her skin and her surroundings with this liquid to form a pseudo-domain of sorts that worked well for her.

But, in a team battle, her uses were minimal. The defensive nature of her ability was only useful for her and couldn't truly be extended to others. At the same time, she wasn't a very good attacker either. In fact, she was weak in this regard.

That said, if her ability was applied well, she would be among the strongest single combatants. Just trying to deal with her domain without slipping about wildly would be a headache even for Leonel. If he was in such a situation, he would be forced to use his surfboard and bombard her with arrows from above. He would stand little chance in normal hand to hand combat.

However, the 10 youths that stood before Leonel were much different in this regard.

Take Nile, for example.

Nile seemed to have a short ranged teleportation ability. If not for this, how could he have possibly intercepted Leonel on his way to Noah back then? But, his ability was actually more complex than this. It could be used not only to enhance his speed, but also in defense and attacking.

He was able to displace not only himself in space, but also his spear and attacks aimed toward him.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Of course, his manipulation of the extremely rare Space Force Strengthening Deviation was limited. But it was still among the reasons he was one of the most powerful combatants here. If it wasn't because he had faced Leonel, he wouldn't have lost so swiftly.

With his ability alone, Nile could easily take responsibility for the safety of a ten man party without hindering the abilities of those who were a part of his squad. This was the fundamental difference between him and the young girl.

"Since things are like this, I'll organize you as follows.

"The speed types will form eight squads of two to three. Your roles will be to maintain a perimeter around our troops in eight directions and disrupting any forward momentum of any enemies you might run across. As for communication and the method of disruption, leave that to me.

"The remaining 200 or so of you, not including sensory types, healing types, or all rounders, will form into squads of 10. The make up of these squads will be three shield warriors, formed of either a defensive type or a body enhancement type, three assault units, formed of attack types and Force Strengthening Deviation types, and finally four unique ability types.

“You ten all rounders, you will take the lead of two of these ten man squads each.

“The remaining 20 of you, 7 healers and 13 sensory types will be responsible for both relaying my orders and maintaining the peak condition of the troop. Communication will be key.” PANDA NOVEL

Leonel spoke all of these matters out in a single breath, not wasting any time. However, the youths before him couldn't help but wonder if Noah had given him information about them before...

But, when they thought about how Leonel had randomly chosen them and how he hadn't seemed to be aware of the fact he would be gaining such troops to command before hand, they couldn't help but be astonished.

Could this be his ability? Or was it a treasure of some kind?

What they didn't know was that it could technically be both for Leonel. He could use the dictionary to learn of their abilities. But, after the upgrade to his own, he found that making accurate guesses of the abilities of others had become much easier.

Though he couldn't claim to comprehend as much detail as the dictionary had, it was definitely far less hazy than the past.

Of course, he also saw that the more powerful the ability wielded by a person, the harder it was for him to see through it. But, this much was already far better than what most could accomplish. Leonel was definitely in a league of his own in this regard.

Soon, Leonel had finished organizing the army and he walked up to Nile. ρ??√???????

“How much of your strength can you display right now?”

Pale faced, Nile still stood at attention. There wasn't a hint of hatred for Leonel in his eye. In fact, it now held the same respect it had for Noah. However, it was hard to tell if this was because Leonel had defeated him so easily, or if it was because he now knew that Leonel was a Prince.

It could only be said that if it was the latter... the brainwashing of The Empire was truly something to behold.

“I can display about 20% of my strength, Your Highness.” Nile replied seriously.

Leonel’s eyes sparkled. He hadn’t asked this question because he wanted to know, but rather because he wanted to probe Nile’s attitude. Seeing it, even he couldn’t help but feel somewhat guilty.

Golden lights surged around Leonel and descended upon Nile. The accumulation of Light Elemental Force was so strong that it practically became blinding.

Very quickly, Nile’s face became more ruddy, his shallow breathing becoming deep and full once again.

Under the shocked gazes of those spectating, Nile’s state continuously became better.

When Leonel lowered his hand, though Nile wasn’t back to peak condition, he was clearly much better. It wouldn’t be an issue for him to display 80% of his strength.

Nile’s eyes widened. “Thank you, Your Highness!”

Leonel smiled and waved a hand.

“I won’t apologize for what I did because that would be hypocritical. Truthfully, if you stood in my way again, I would treat you the same way.”

Nile paled somewhat hearing these words but he inwardly felt more respect for Leonel after hearing them. He didn’t want to be treated like a dog who could be coddled with a carrot and a stick. He wasn’t a person that a bad guy, good guy routine could work on. Such a thing would only be effective for those who were weak of mind.

“But, those are matters of the past. We all have the same goal right now, and that’s to repel these invaders.”

Nile nodded seriously, his back standing somewhat straighter.

“From now on, don’t call me Your Highness or Prince, call me Captain. What I value most are two things: Respect and Persistence.

“Respect for your fellow man and woman. Give everything you have to them and prepare to receive everything they have in return.

“Persist for your fellow warriors. Give everything you have and expect nothing.”

Leonel scanned the organized group of youths before him, his aura towering. He looked more like a sturdy pillar, prepared to hold up even the skies rather than a simple young man.

The blood of the youths involuntarily boiled. From indifference, their faces somewhat reddened, their hearts beating a step faster.

Respect with your all and expect everything. Persist with your all and expect nothing.

Respect was a mindset. Persistence was an action. The meaning of it all was simple.

If you gave your heart and bled on the battlefield, it was only right that you expect the same.

If you gave your soul and died on the battlefield, it was only right you expect nothing.

These words were suddenly engraved onto their souls.

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Dark Cloud Prison descended into mania. One of the six sections completely collapsed, leaving a scene one thought should have been a catastrophe. But, while some did indeed die, the resulting explosion was rather controlled. It was obvious to any third party observer that this was all planned, down to the final dotted 'i' and crossed 't'.

"Hohoho." Lionel chuckled.

[Author's Note: from now on, whenever referring to 'Leonel', I will write it as Lionel. They are pronounced the same so it should help with the flow of the story. But, do keep in mind that this 'Leonel' has a name spelled and said the exact same way as our favorite MC]

Lionel sat on the damp cell floor, his arms wrapped around his body. Of course, this wasn't by choice. The straitjacket they forced him to stay in was made of materials far tougher than Kevlar. As though that wasn't enough, it was reinforced with several locks and chains. Even if he wanted to unwind his arms, he didn't have the luxury.

One would think that they would at least let him out to take a shower, but he didn't have this luxury either. Rather, every time the stink got to be too much, they'd bathe him in UV type light and send him on his way.

The result of this treatment for almost two decades now was a man who smelt somewhat like one part vegetable left to dry beneath the sun for too long and another part cured meat.

In the darkness, it was hard to see his face at all. Or, rather, he had a habit of speaking with his head lowered, his messy hair covering much of his face. However, if the guards had a choice, they'd prefer him to keep his head lowered just like this.

"So close." Lionel continued to chuckle. "If that blast was 2% stronger I would be free. What a shame, what a shame."

The rookie guard felt a cold chill at the back of his neck, the ground still trembling beneath their feet.
PANDA-NOVEL.COM

“What...?”

The rookie guard began to speak, but his next words were caught in his throat when he saw the unsightly expression on his partner’s face.

“W... what is it?”

The rookie suddenly entered high alert, his hand hovering over his weapon.

The veteran guard took deep breaths, trying to calm himself, his gaze never leaving Lionel.

If others saw his actions, they would think that he was insane. Why he was so focused on a man who couldn’t move an inch... maybe only those of Dream Cloud Prison would know.

“Listen, rookie. Back away slowly. Stay on high alert. If needed, don’t hold back.”

The rookie guards pupils constricted. PANDA NOVEL

“You mean...?”

“Yes. Do whatever is necessary.”

A cold shiver traveled up the rookie’s spine, his muscles tensing.

The first thing any new guards of Dark Cloud Prison were taught was the importance of information. This wasn’t a lesson about learning as much as you could. No, it was a lesson in keeping as much of it away from these prisoners as possible.

Dark Prisoners were incarcerated from the time they were toddlers to the day of their deaths. Most couldn’t even remember a world outside of these walls. In fact, their only interactions with the world should have been at these moments where food was brought to them.

Any understanding of language these prisoners had should have been from their short time as members of society... in fact, that went for all their understandings.

With all this said, there was one matter in particular that they wanted to keep from these prisoners... the Metamorphosis.

Those prisoners that became Invalids were silently killed. There weren't any Paradise Islands above Dark Cloud Province. Even guards were diligently trained in combat without their abilities. From day one of training, they were drilled in the fact that use of one's abilities should be a final resort. $\rho\text{??}\int\text{??????}$

Yet now, the veteran guard was saying to use any means necessary...

The rookie's breathing couldn't help but grow shallow, a cold sweat slowly trickling down his forehead.

"Tsk, tsk. Is there a need for such caution? Didn't I already say it was a shame?"

The veteran's jaw steeled.

"How did you learn about percentages, #D1109?"

Lionel paused for a moment before his laughter returned, stronger than before. His hair dangled across his face, vibrating to his cadence.

The veteran guard's countenance became more chilly, still taking slow steps back.

"Oops, my tongue must have slipped. Aiya, what else can you expect from me? My street smarts are still a bit lacking, I've seen too little of the world."

"... Where did you hear the name Leonel Morales from?" The guard continued coldly, trying to buy time for the rookie to inch away and report this matter to the Warden.

Lionel froze. But this time, his laughter didn't come. An eerie silence hung over the cell as the ground continued to rumble.

“Where did I hear it? From the lips of my own mother before you ripped me away from her and threw me into this place.”

The voice didn't carry any sort of emotion to the point it sounded somewhat mechanical, as though it was a automated message rather than the words of a human.

The veteran and rookie froze. Fear the likes of which they had never experienced in their lifetimes took hold of their hearts, clenching it tightly.

Blood flew, splashing against the walls.

The crimson sparkled in the darkness, looking like the wings of a fallen angel.

**

“Warden! Warden!”

The rumbling of the prison's framework couldn't stop the booming of this voice. A mixture of panic, shock and horror laced it, coloring the roar with emotion.

Within an office on the lowest floor of Dark Cloud Prison, one could find the Warden.

He was a man of average height but broad presence. His graying mustache hung over his lip with the thickness of a forest's bush.

His every breath was deep and unfathomable. If one paid attention, it would be easy to notice that every cycle of inhaling and exhaling took a full minute to complete. Yet, this Warden completed it with absolute ease.

At that moment, the Warden was shirtless. Despite his old age, his body rippled with strength, his torso having a level of tone that left men half his age in shame. A healthy bronze sheen glistened across his skin, making him look more like a fitness model rather than the Warden of a Prison.

This man was none other than Governor Duke Escobar Owen.

Before the shouting guard could even reach the office, Escobar put on his black military uniform, hiding his toned body and opened the door, his demeanor steely and indifferent.

“Warden! #D1109 has escaped!”

If Leonel had been there, he would have immediately recognized this “warden”.

He was none other than Coach Owen, a man Leonel respected almost as much as his own father.

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Coach Owen’s expression solidified.

“Of all of them, why did it have to be him’!”

The words the Warden spoke were hardly audible. In fact, in his panic, the guard across from him didn’t seem to pick up on the oddity either.

Seeing the sorry performance of the person that was supposed to be his right hand man, Escobar snorted, his thick mustache rustling.

“Get yourself together!”

The low shout snapped the lead guard into attention, his heels slamming together as his back arched as though a string had been pulled from the top of his head.

“Gather the men.” Escobar said coldly. “We’re going hunting.”

“Yessir!” PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The lead guard spun and jetted off, his speed beyond normal human limits.

Escobar watched this with narrowed eyes, inwardly lamenting the state the Metamorphosis had put his best man in. Though the ability awakened by his lead guard, Garwin, was especially powerful, it left his personality somewhat warped.

Garwin was able to control the balance of hormones and neurotransmitters in his body. The good news was that much like Aina, he could very easily train his body to surpass its limits even without outside influences. In fact, he was better than even Aina in some ways because while Aina was limited in simply making her body stronger, Garwin could strengthen his mind and thinking speed as well.

However, there were major downsides to Garwin’s ability as well. Often times, the more powerful an ability, the more complex it was and the more difficult it was to control. On top of this, in order to maximize his ability, Garwin had to come up with many unique use cases for it much like Leonel had to or like Simeon with his gene manipulation ability.

The more difficult an ability was to control, the more potential pitfalls there were. Though Leonel had yet to run into any on his own, Garwin hadn’t been so lucky. Because of how sensitive his abilities were, his hormones could easily be set out of wack, causing him to react inappropriately to many situations.

In the past, he had been a man no less stoic than Governor Duke Owen. But, after the Metamorphosis, his emotions were more varied and unpredictable.

However, he was simply too important to Dark Cloud Prison. His fighting capabilities were even beyond Governor Duke Owen's now. This was something the Warden had no choice but to admit. If they wanted to place these criminals back where they belonged, Garwin would have to be a key cog' | PANDA NOVEL

The Warden walked back into his office, finding a particular cabinet of files and opening it. His expression became more somber the more he flipped, but his pace didn't accelerate, only remaining even from start to finish.

Finally, he landed on a particular file by the title of #D1109.

The first picture he saw in the file was of a baby with large pale green eyes. The small boy had a small button nose and messy dirty blond hair. All in all, he was an adorable child. But, there was something off about the photo.

The longer one stared at it, the more uncomfortable you would feel. The longer one looked, the less this baby boy appeared to be a baby boy at all.

The Warden had lost count of how many times he had stared at this photo, but it wasn't until recently that he realized what was so off about it all.

It was the eyes. This baby's eyes didn't have the innocent light of a child nor the curious nature of a newborn' | Rather, its gaze was vacant, continuously staring back at you as though it already had everything figured out.

Coach Owen sighed. ρ???)???)???)

The rest of the document was filled with redactions. Place of birth, parenthood, even the date of birth was crossed. There was nothing but this picture and the prisoner's code. Nothing more, nothing else.

“| So similar' |”

The Warden couldn't help but feel that his life's work was nothing but garbage. Only he and a few select people knew the truth of these matters, but what he did know left him feeling cold.

‘Your resentment, I understand it. However, I cannot allow you to do as you please. It seems that I will need to kill you with my own hands.’

The Warden put the file away, locking the cabinet as Dark Cloud Prison continued to tremble.

Then, he turned and walked out of his office, his mustache bristling.

**

“Scouting units, move out.” Leonel commanded.

The speed types jetted out in eight different directions, each of them leaving blazing trails of wind in their wake.

To the back of the troop, there was a large, lingering mountain range. Since Earth had long since mastered terraforming technology, allowing the continents to come together to form a single super continent, it also took advantage of this technology to make Dark Cloud Province as inaccessible as possible.

As a result, there were only two paths to enter this province that didn’t include the sky. The Northern Passage and the Southern Passage.

Noah and Leonel had split into two groups, each manning one of the passages. Leonel was tasked with bringing support from the South.

According to what Leonel understood, Dark Cloud Province already had its own forces, obviously. They were simply bringing support. In addition, it would be their job to capture any escapees once the situation was settled. Aside from this, they would have to worry about the forces of Terrain that had been sent to this location, which should include the forces of Hargrove City.

Leonel took the vanguard of the army with Aina by his side. She held onto her great sword, a serious light hidden behind the slits of her mask.

The forest was quite dense. Moving in such a large group would make things difficult, so Leonel took advantage of the ten-man squads he had formed and had them fan out. It would be difficult to fight any large scale battles in this place, but that also went for the enemy as well. With the makeup of the squads, it would be much easier for them to deal with issues.

At that moment, Leonel's gaze suddenly sharpened.

'As expected.'

Just a few seconds after Leonel had the thought, a communication talisman lit up by his side and entered his ears silently.

"Captain, Squad North West has detected the movement of enemy scouts. They number seven. Standing by for orders."

It was impossible for Terrain to not also be aware that there were only two entry paths to Dark Cloud Province. In that case, how could they not erect their own blockades to stop incoming reinforcements?

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Leonel sent a gaze toward Aina only to find her already looking back toward him. With a light nod, they shot forward as one, their steps light and in sync.

The remainder of the troops continued to advance slowly. Though they exchanged some glances about the oddity of it all, they didn't make any other movements. Something like a commander taking the vanguard was practically unheard of, at least in Earth's modern history.

However, Leonel had made his plan to them clear. A count of 250 wasn't a lot, especially in a war of this scale. Where their benefit lay is in the fact they were all elite warriors, all capable of battling two to three on their own. In such a case, not only was such a forest the best terrain for them, but it also presented a unique opportunity to flip this war on its head.

Leonel's lips moved, but no one seemed to hear what he said at all. However, several hundred meters away, the North West squad had already jumped into action.

'
'

Despite the high sun, the forest was still drenched in shadows. From below the high canopies, it felt more like a cloudy day than anything else. Unfortunately, unlike a cloudy day, the forest floor was quite humid. Any normal human of the Third Dimension would be leaking sweat by this point.

Luckily, though, Earth was still in its infant stages as a new Fourth Dimensional world. As such, the harsher climates of a world at this stage had yet to come to fruition. However, even still, the hot temperatures were slowly creeping upward and breaking records that had withstood the test of centuries, while the cold temperatures were doing the same. It wouldn't be long before Earth began to face extremes it never had before. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

While there was this bad news, though, there was also good news. In this transition period, Zones wouldn't begin to appear just yet. So, Earth had a small level of reprieve. But, it might have been exactly because of this that Terrain chose to attack now' !

At that moment, on the humid forest floor, a group of seven moved forward cautiously along their patrol path, their senses on high alert. They wore red robes accented by bright yellow flexible armor. The design made them look like small boiling suns of their own, but judging by the small beads of sweat falling down their brow, this had little to do with their affinities.

The lead of the seven men suddenly snapped his head in a certain direction, just in time to see a small orb of light land in their midst.

A hint of panic colored his features. But, just when he was frozen in horror, the small globe of light pulsed, sending out a halo that covered a ten meter radius.

Without hesitation, the lead scout pulled out a talisman and ripped it.

The talisman was torn in two, causing a flare of flames to light it quickly. The sparks coalesced, concentrating into a bead and shooting up into the skies. PANDA NOVEL

But, just as it was about to break past, it rammed into the halo of light.

One would have expected a bang, but the reality was much less fantastical. The spark fizzled out, drooping back down to the ground as though it had run out of oxygen to fuel itself.

The lead scout's eyes widen. He opened his mouth and roared at the top of his lungs. His shout was so loud that the six that followed him covered their ears, clenching their jaws.

The lead scout relaxed when he completed this action, his unsettled emotions resting into a sneer. He slowly pulled out twin daggers that rested on his hips.

He felt that everything was over now. Now that they knew that Earth had indeed sent reinforcements, it would be a matter of absolute ease for them to be surrounded and killed one by one.

Earth didn't have technology anymore, so sending in reinforcements through the air was almost impossible. There was no way they had aerial units prepared already. And, even if they did, there was no way they could match the units Terrain had scouting up above. ρ???∫???

So, they would have no choice but to send ground troops. But, in such a thick forest, how many could they really send?

If they were smart, they would send a small unit of elites with a few trump cards. That orb of light was clearly one of Earth's trump cards, but it also displayed Earth's naivete.

There was more to contend with than just tools. If Earth couldn't come up with methods of countering a variety of abilities as well, they would be finished.

This was the perfect example. They were prepared to stop their signal flare, but they had no method of stopping his shout.

The lead scout's sneer deepened. 'What a fledgling world. It's clear you don't deserve these lands, so we'll be happy to take it off your hands.'

It was at that exact moment that Leonel and Aina appeared. They weaved through the trees, one wielding a great sword and the other flipping his palm to take out a pitch black bow.

Aina continued to shoot forward while Leonel leapt up agilely. His feet rebounded off the tough bark of the trees, sending him flying upward. He left a trail of gold in his wake. And, for but a moment, his arms seemed to have unfurled into the wings of a bird.

Behind her beautiful icy blue-white mask, Aina crossed the final barrier into the halo of light, her sword trailing behind her like the tail of a comet.

‘A little girl? Is this a joke?’ The lead scout almost couldn’t rein in his laughter. ‘Fine, I’ll pry that little mask off you and see what kind of beauty it’s hiding.’

Leonel lightly stepped onto a branch over 15 meters above the ground. With swift motions, he nocked 6 arrows at once, a cold, calculating glint in his eye. By the time Aina prepared to swing her sword toward the lead scout, he had already pulled his bowstring back.

Even after reaching the Fourth Dimension in his physique, Leonel could only pull his bowstring back just over 50% of the way, displaying the furious strength of this bow quite clearly. But’! 50% was still almost overkill.

SHUUUUU!

Leonel released six arrows at once just as Aina swung her sword toward the lead scout.

At that moment, the lead scout’s expression finally changed. The difference was too stark, how could he miss it?

In one instant, he couldn’t hear the whistling of Aina’s sword or the shocking charge of Leonel’s arrows. But in the next moment, it barraged his senses as though they wouldn’t allow him to focus on anything else.

‘No’!!’

Unfortunately, it was too late for the lead scout to understand that his first instinct should have been to run.

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Leonel’s arrow pierced six skulls as Aina’s sword split the lead scout in two.

Leonel leapt down to the ground, the soil shifting beneath his heavy fall.

“It worked well.” Aina said. “But, it still has some flaws.”

Leonel nodded in agreement.

“A smarter scout would have realized they couldn’t hear anything much quicker. We got lucky this time because this one is used to having his hearing compromised, but it won’t necessarily happen again.”

With the way he and Aina were charging through the forest, no matter how light their steps were, it was impossible for them to not have made a single sound. A smarter scout would have realized very quickly that the barrier Leonel erected could both block their signal flares and any sound they made.

Once they realized this, their first instinct would have been to run rather than holding their ground. After all, all they had to do was leave the ten meter radius of the halo to send out a signal. Even if they couldn’t survive, it was their role as scouts to send such valuable information back. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

But, luckily, ironically due to his shouting ability, the lead scout’s hearing was compromised along with the six that followed him. So, he didn’t notice the oddity until it was too late.

“Is it possible to make the sound filter one way?” Aina asked.

“It’s possible... but it would double the production time. With the time crunch we’re on, I’m not sure if it’s worth it.”

Leonel was the only one who could make these orbs of light. And, unfortunately, they were one use objects with a very limited lifespan. Which meant that he would have to make a new one for each one of these operations.

The North West squad came out of their hiding places, displaying speed that even surpassed Leonel and Aina. At least, it surpassed the speed they had displayed to this point. It seemed that this squad was quite capable, indeed.

“Captain.” PANDA NOVEL

Leonel nodded. “Right, this region is still your responsibility.”

Leonel raised a hand and caused a surge of Fire Elemental Force to burn the seven corpses before him.

The halo of light pulsed, causing the scent of burning flesh to be purified and dispersed.

With that, Leonel and Aina shot back toward the main group.

The members of North West squad looked at one another with deep meaning in their eyes.

It had been them who threw out the orb on Leonel’s command to begin with, so they were an integral part of the operation. They had to say that they were surprised by the efficiency. If things continued like this... They would have a good chance of performing well. ρ???(?????)

This was enough to tell them that though their styles were different, Leonel’s leadership ability was no less than Noah’s. But, where they separated was in the usefulness of Leonel’s skills. While their leadership abilities didn’t differ by much, Leonel’s skill as a Force Crafter made his plans work out with much more smoothness and ease.

Their lives hadn't even been on the line even once, yet seven enemies had died. It was truly baffling.

With a light nod to one another, the three members of North West squad shot in different directions, their eyes flashing with more determination.

**

At that moment outside of Dark Cloud Prison, an odd scene could be seen.

On one side, there was a hexagonal prison. But, on another, there was a city that seemed to have dropped out of the skies.

Of the six sides of this hexagonal prison, one had completely collapsed. And, this collapsed portion just happened to be the section facing the out of place city.

For any third party observer, it was easy to deduce what happened. This city fell from the skies and caused the damage they were now seeing. But, what was maybe more surprising was that even with such a disastrous event occurring... The Prison only lost a sixth of its integrity!

If Leonel could see this sight, he would be shocked beyond belief before marveling at Earth's ability.

Camelot was almost upturned by the fall of just one city. Yet, despite the city having fallen not even half a kilometer from Dark Cloud Prison, it only suffered the collapse of a single side.

However, at that moment, there was nothing the guards and Warden of Dark Cloud Prison felt happy about. With the prison compromised, a large swath of prisoners found the light of day for the first time in decades.

What they didn't know was that the restrictions of Dark Cloud Prison went beyond just walls and bars. The very materials of the Prison was capable of blocking influxes of Force. This caused even those who successfully managed to awaken their abilities to have little chance at sensing and using them.

This technology went beyond Force Disruption Towers. Even with the Descent of the Fourth Dimension, it was completely unaffected because... It relied on metals from the Fourth Dimension itself!

As for whether or not Terrain was aware of this fact, it was unknown. But, what was certain was that with the collapse of the prison, this system was compromised.

While these special metals were effective in some cases, they also had far more limitations than Force Disruption Towers.

Simply being in their vicinity wasn't enough. One had to be enclosed by them or in contact with them. In addition, just like how Force Disruption Towers were useless in the Fourth Dimension, these metals were useless against abilities in the Fifth Dimension and above.

Due to this, the appearance of the city caused many prisoners who hadn't been aware of their abilities in the past to suddenly become enlightened, causing chaos to reign.

The sound of battle filled the halls of the prison, leaking out through its cracked and falling walls. But, this would soon be the least of their worries...

City Lord Hargrove, a slender man with a drooping grey mustache that swept past his chest stood atop the city wall, eyeing the prison as though he saw prey.

“Prisoners of Dark Cloud!” His voice suddenly boomed, reverberating through the collapsed walls. “Do you want your freedom?! Do you want revenge?! The Empire of Earth has done nothing but take from you, do you want to make them pay! Do you want to see the Capital washed in blood! Do you want to see the head of Emperor Fawkes on a pike?!”

“Join us!”

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“ARCHERS!”

City Lord Hargrove's voice boomed once more. In one moment, there was no one but this singular, seemingly frail, City Lord to be found on the city's walls. But, in the next moment, two rows of over a hundred archers appeared, each with the light of an expert in their eyes.

It became clear very quickly that Hargrove had no intention charging into the prison. Why would he undertake such a thankless task?

No, his goal was simple. Any guards or Wardens that escaped this prison would find an arrow between the eye. As for the prisoners, they would be welcomed with open arms.

The prisoners of Earth provided two opportunities. Not only would they give a large influx of talented individuals, but they would also be able to gain the same number in Fifth Generational persons. This killed two birds with just a single stone.

The only large clearing one could find on Dark Cloud Province was in this very place. About a kilometer around the hexagonal prison was nothing but flat concrete. With the appearance of Hargrove City, this concrete was now filled with spiderweb-like cracks, but it served its purpose to perfection.

Without any place to hide, how could the guards of Dark Cloud Prison possibly protect themselves against the assault of 100 elite archers?PANDA-NOVEL.COM

At that moment, a head peaked out from behind the rubble. Dust and soot covered this person's face, making it difficult to tell if they were male or female at first glance. It seemed that whoever this person was, they had chosen to shave their head bald.

When this prisoner saw the rows of archers in the distance, they panicked and ducked back down. However, they soon calmed.

If Leonel had been there, he would be shocked to realize that he recognized this person. It was none other than the younger brother of the demoted Vice Commander of the Slayer Legion, Damian.

"There's a massive city that appeared out of nowhere." Damian reported to the prisoners that had followed behind him. "They have a hundred archers all primed and ready."

Among them, there were a few who had attacked on that day, including his elder brother, Joseph.

One would think that as members of the most notorious group of rebels, they would have been thrown into a much deeper part of Dark Cloud Prison. But, their allocations showed just how much disregard The Empire had for their efforts as a whole. PANDA NOVEL

Despite having once been a Vice Commander of the Slayer Legion, Joseph, even as the highest rated prisoner among them, was still a mere C-grade Prisoner, just like the rest of them.

In truth, such treatment had hurt more than anything else. They would rather have been treated like the lowliest of scum, been underfed, beaten and abused... But what they actually got was a cushy cell, three meals a day, and a psychiatrist to vent to.

It felt as though they were children put on timeout rather than criminals who had risked their lives everyday for the sake of forging a better future for themselves.

This had been an insult worse than anything they had ever experienced before and that sort of treatment made their hatred of The Empire burn even more fervently... And along with that, their hatred of Leonel increased proportionally.

When Damian's whispers reached their ears, the prisoners panicked somewhat.

The truth was that most of them weren't hardened criminals. Aside from those who were from the Slayer Legion, the rest had only committed petty crimes. Facing such a situation, many of them weren't sure how to react. PANDA NOVEL

Knowing this, there was no wonder those of the Slayer Legion felt so insulted. They were placed in the same cells as men and women whose worst crime might have been trespassing onto the wrong property or shoplifting.

The only difference between them and the Slayer Legion members was that while they would get out, those of the Slayer Legion would be here for life...

Until now.

“This definitely isn’t a decoy.” Joseph spoke, his expressions much less cheery as compared to the past. “Even if The Empire wanted to con us, they wouldn’t destroy the Prison to do so, and they definitely wouldn’t dare to speak ill of Emperor Fawkes toward that end. It’s more than likely that those archers are there to act as our cover.”

“But should we really trust them and go? We have no idea who these people are, they haven’t announced their affiliations.” Damian said slowly.

The only reason Damian and Joseph had been so quick to attempt to escape despite understanding the iron fist that was The Empire was because they thought that maybe the Slayer Legion was finally taking large scale action.

The truth was that before Damian and Joseph chose to take a maddened attempt at conquering Royal Blue Fort, the Slayer Legion was prepping for something. As for what they were planning, the brothers couldn’t be sure. But, they felt as though they would be left behind if they didn’t take a massive leap forward.

Obviously, their attempt failed, but now they were hoping that this matter was related to the Slayer Legion. However, if it truly was, then why wouldn’t they announce this?

From start to finish, Hargrove didn’t mention their origins, something that made the brothers feel antsy about trusting such an unknown entity. No matter what, they weren’t fools.

As the first prisoners to make it to this opening, they had obviously been on the highest floors. As such, the level of torture they had suffered in this prison could be considered to be null. They simply weren’t as desperate as those A and Dark Prisoners. So, they were far more clear minded at this moment...

Joseph hesitated, finding his brothers words to be true. At this point, he no longer held the decisiveness he had in the past. The man bold enough to target a Fort of The Empire as a mere Vice Commander was no longer here.

Damian's gaze flashed with a hint of rage looking at the shell of a man his brother had become, but he didn't say anything else. At this point, maybe the elder brother he once knew would never come back.

At that moment, though, a resonating laughter shook the collapsed halls.

BANG!

A man shot up from a floor below, crashing through the walls and jetting out of the Prison.

“FREEDOM!”

His roar was so loud that even the concrete beneath his feet splintered even more.

The man's gaze locked onto the city in the distance.

“Take down The Empire? The Emperor's head on a pike? I'm not sure what this Empire is or who this Emperor is, but I'll take you up on your offer anyway!”

An uproarious laughter shook Dark Cloud Province.