

Descent 71

Chapter 71

[Bonus chapter for 800 powerstones. Karma will get you all eventually...]

Leonel's grip eventually loosened and he sat silently for a while. Soon, his breathing became steady once more.

To the side, Aina wasn't sure how to console Leonel. Of course, she wasn't aware that Leonel wasn't feeling this way due to the likely death of his father.

Regardless, she had similar experiences of her own. Her own mother was dead and her father had likely followed in her footsteps. But, she had always had problems putting her emotions into words. She was always more likely to either implode or shut down. There didn't seem to be a third option for her.

This time around, she chose to shut down.

Luckily for her, Leonel wasn't actually mourning the death of his father and quickly regained his composure, opening the driver's door and stepping out. It wasn't long before Aina followed behind him.

"How did you know to come here directly? I thought it would take us a few days to find it at least." Aina tried a probing question.

Her words weren't wrong. Paradise Islands follow orbits, so where they fell would be variable. She only picked a mission to clear Perimeter 7 because it was near the general area, but she didn't expect to find the wreckage so quickly.

Leonel took a deep breath.

"I remember the time they fell and I know the orbit like the back of my hand, so calculating where it was wasn't a problem." He explained simply. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The orbits of Paradise Islands weren't public knowledge. Or rather, the majority of their routes weren't. Only their stop points were known, as for the path they followed between them, it could only be left up to conjecture.

For Leonel, who had been illegally traveling to the surface world for so many years already, it was simple to have this taboo knowledge.

Leonel took a step and slid down the side of the crater.

He knew that whatever his father left behind, it wouldn't have a problem surviving the fall. He didn't believe that his old man was dumb enough to not have a method of protecting his things.

A part of Leonel held a small piece of resentment for his father. After all, since he knew this was coming, couldn't he have saved these people?

But in the end, Leonel knew why he hadn't. Had he saved these people and then left, the Empire would definitely have all eyes trained onto Leonel. By then, even leaving the Fort to come to this place would have been impossible.

Leonel found the wreckage he knew must have been his home and began to dig.

His home now had collapsed. Several large slabs of brick and stone folded atop of one another. In comparison to the other structures, this could be considered to be relatively intact.

With him and Aina's work together, it wasn't long before a small path was created and they could duck into the remains of his home's living room' if you could even call it that. PANDA NOVEL

Their movements caused dust to fly into the air. The two covered their mouths but were unable to hold back their ensuing coughs.

“! Le’!”

Aina tried to start her attempt at saying some comforting words, but she backed out at the last moment again.

In her mind, there really was no point in checking this place. The best case scenario was seeing something he didn't want to see. Even if by some miracle his father survived the fall, it's already been more than half a year since then, how could a normal human survive for so long?

However, Leonel pretended not to hear the start of her murmurings.

PANDA-NOVEL He stepped forward, carefully crawling up and through the wreckage. It wasn't long before Aina picked up on the fact that something was wrong. Leonel didn't look like a person looking for the remains of his father's. Instead, he looked like he already had a destination in mind?

Seemingly thinking of a possibility, she quickly followed and soon had her thoughts confirmed.

Leonel appeared above the remains of a staircase that descended. Shockingly enough, though, there wasn't even the slightest crack. Let alone a crack, it seemed completely unaffected by things around it.

At the end of this staircase, a seemingly simple wooden door lay, equally as unaffected. ρ??∪???????

'I guess you're not too useless, old man.' Leonel thought to himself.

By now, Aina was certain that Leonel was hiding something. However, she also didn't dare to speak because she knew why Leonel was going out of his way to not explain anything either. It didn't take a genius to know that they were likely being monitored.

The reason Leonel dared to come here despite this was because he believed his father would account for this as well.

He descended the steps and reached for the door handle, only to find it locked.

Leonel frowned. 'Don't tell me that old man forgot to give me a key? No, there's no keyhole here, there's probably another way to open it!'

After a moment. Leonel suddenly realized that the round door handle was a bit rough. It was a weird feeling because he could have sworn that it looked like smooth brass before. So where was this rough texture coming from?

Leonel pulled his hand back and observed the knob. It really did appear to be smooth! What was the problem?

Reaching forward again, Leonel closed his eyes and touched the knob once more. As expected, it really was rough.

His body jolted as he suddenly thought of a possibility.

Leonel calmed his mind and discarded his useless thoughts. His senses became many times more sensitive in that instant.

The rough texture on his hands became many times more refined. What once was an erratic, seemingly aimless pattern, gained itself a unique organization that projected itself into Leonel's mind.

In those moments, Leonel learned something else about his body. His eyes didn't seem to be as good as his other senses for some reason. He could tell the difference between a loaded and unloaded gun by their weight and now he could feel intricate patterns on his palms that his eyes couldn't see.

For now, Leonel wasn't aware of if this would always be the case or not, but for now, his sense of touch was definitely the highest amongst his original five senses. Or, rather, this was the only conclusion he could come up with based on the information he had.

'It's a Force Art!' Leonel thought. "A complicated lock, but it shouldn't be a problem.'

Leonel's fundamentals in Force Art could be considered to be solid. It was likely no one else on Earth knew as much as he did. Well, aside from his own father, apparently.

However, this lock wasn't meant to be some great test or an obstacle Leonel needed to cross. Opening it was actually incredibly simple.

Leonel took control of his Force and poured it into the knob, slowly tracing across the fine, invisible lines.

For someone else, this task would have bordered on impossible. But for him, his spirit was simply too high for this little test.

Ten minutes later, a light click was heard and the knob finally turned, revealing a dark corridor.

Leonel stepped in, followed by Aina who hadn't said a word during the entire process. The door clicked closed behind them with hardly a sound.

It wasn't long before the two of them found themselves in a small, dimly lit library.

In truth, it was difficult to give it such a moniker. Calling it a library was a bit inaccurate. There were only four bookcases with five shelves each. The books still totaled a few hundred, but compared to a real library, it was still far too small. It was more accurate to call this place a small office.

Aside from those four bookcases, there were several shorter cases with several cubicles. These cubicles were filled to the brim with countless scrolls. These scrolls seemed to number even more than the few hundred books themselves.

Then, there was a plain workbench at the very center. It had several odd wells dipped into its seemingly dark oak surface and Leonel could see deep etchings drawn all across its body. But other than that, there was nothing else that stood out about it.

Rather than this, there were two things that left Aina and Leonel a bit stunned.

For one' ¦ Books? Scrolls? Wasn't the use and creation of paper banned? How could there be so many here?

And secondly' ; There were three pedestals at the end of the office. Each was covered by a small dome of light that seemed to manifest from thin air.

On each of the pedestals, there was a single object.

The first was a bland black ring that seemed unpolished as though its creator couldn't be bothered with its final look. The second was a black cube that seemed put together like a jigsaw puzzle. And the last was a small silver plate not even four inches across, it was uniform in all areas with the exception of a small indent at its very center.

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Leonel stood silently for a moment then took a step forward.

Aina gazed toward his back with a complicated look. Why would he allow her to come here? It can't be that he really trusted her to this extent, right?

But when she thought about it, what other choice did Leonel have? She sprung this sudden mission on him without warning and even plainly said it was in the area his Paradise Island might have fallen.

Let's assume for a moment that he didn't come here? What then? What if he waited until he separated from Aina to come to this place? What would those observing him think of this?

It was obvious. Their first instinct would be to think that he was hiding something.

However, Aina's actions gave him a good opportunity. There was a level of spontaneity that made everything seem natural. He really seemed like a boy who was looking for the remains of his father.

When Aina analyzed things to this point, she found a corner and crossed her legs in meditation.

Of course, she had no idea that this was only part of the truth. There were ultimately still many ways Leonel could have avoided this outcome. He could have made her wait outside under the pretext he wanted to grieve alone, for example.

The ultimate reason he allowed her to come here was because he trusted her. It was as simple as this.

Whether that trust was due to his rosy colored glasses or if she was really worthy of it, maybe even Leonel himself didn't know. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Leonel noticed that Aina had closed her eyes and had stopped paying attention to her surroundings, but he didn't say much about it. He continued forward and eventually stopped at the pedestal furthest to the left.

He reached forward through the barrier of energy. He had thought that it would stop him, but surprisingly, it didn't. His hand passed right through as though it was nothing more than air.

Leonel picked up the unpolished ring. As expected, it had a texture similar to an uneven coat of dry paint.

After observing it for a while, he couldn't find anything special about it. He even got the vague feeling that it wasn't even in front of him despite the fact he was very much aware that it was in his hand.

Suddenly thinking of something, Leonel stopped observing with his eyes and focused all his attention on his hands. Maybe he could find something similar to the Force Art on the door handle?

But, Leonel was soon disappointed. No matter how he looked at it, this really was just a ring with a poor finish quality. Whoever made this thing really must have not cared for his craft very much.

'Wait'!

Just when Leonel was feeling stumped, he thought back to Montez teaching him how to use his spatial bracelet. What if this was a similar item?

”! Take control of my Internal Sight’! Concentrate it’! Imagine opening a door’!’ PANDA NOVEL

The truth was that not everyone could use spatial treasures even if they had one on hand. To the current Earth, those who even had Internal Sight were a rare few. And, those who could control it were even fewer.

If Leonel had been willing to risk it and hid the existence of his spatial bracelet, it was unlikely anyone at Royal Blue Fort would be able to call him out on it.

Just when Leonel was about to succeed, he felt a BOOM resound in his mind.

Pain ravaged his thoughts and blood dripped from his nose.

He fell backward in a daze, crashing to the ground.

To an outside observer, he was staring blankly at the ceiling, not even reacting to his head rebounding off the hard floors. However, if one looked closely, his eyes were completely vacant as though he had already died.

Shocked by the sudden noise, Aina’s eyes flashed open. When she saw Leonel on the ground, she shot up and to his side, but no matter what she did, she couldn’t seem to wake him up.

PANDA-NOVEL While Leonel’s body was being violently shaken by Aina, his mind was in a completely different place. He felt as though he had stepped foot into a hellish world. No, he might not even disagree if one said this was hell itself.

Above, clouds of black-red rolled, the low rumbling of thunder beating against his ears repeatedly.
p???(???????)

In the distance, these clouds formed vertical swirls of cyclones and tornadoes, touching the ground like demonic omens of greed and gluttony.

The ground was covered in sands of grey and black. However, these specks of earth looked more like the world had been covered in a thin layer of dust rather than being an actual part of the world itself.

In the distance, Leonel could see the ground begin to roll into small hills. The further into the distance he looked, these hills gradually grew in size, eventually becoming small mountains. In the end of it all, there was a mountain of black so tall that even the rumbling clouds above were pierced through by it.

Still, this wasn't the end of it.

What caught Leonel's attention the most in this hellish place weren't the tornado clouds, the suffocating atmosphere, or even the impossibly tall mountains. What he couldn't take his eyes off of were the countless polearms pierced into the ground.

Like a densely packed graveyard, countless spears were dotted across the world. Some of them were broken, others were whole, some had dried blood caking their polearms, while yet others were spotless.

Leonel stood in a daze for a long while before he finally licked his dry lips. What the hell was this place?

Leonel tried to take a step forward, but suddenly found that a mountain was weighing on his shoulders.

Sweat fell from his brows as he gritted his teeth, eventually struggling forward by just a single step. However, even though he succeeded, it felt like half of his body's stamina had been drained.

Leonel reached to the side to find something to steady his wobbling knees, eventually catching hold of the shaft of a wooden spear. However, the result was completely outside his expectations.

Another BOOM resounded in his mind.

He suddenly found himself in another world, racing through a jungle.

A single layer of beast skin covered his lower half, his bare torso rippling with muscle as he hopped from tree to tree with nothing but a wooden spear in his hand.

What seemed to be a saber toothed tiger raced toward him from below, roaring as though completely enraged.

A laughter left Leonel's lips, but he somehow felt that it wasn't a laughter that came from him.

Completely unable to control his body, his free hand caught onto a vine and swung downward in a wild but controlled arc.

At the perfect moment, he let go, his spear cocking backward as a savage grin coated his features.

Unable to react, the back of the saber tooth tiger's head was completely pierced through, its last roar being followed by a gurgling of blood.

Leonel found himself sitting on the tiger's massive head. He pulled the spear from the beast's skull, savagely licking the blood that drenched his spear and palm.

A moment later, Leonel jolted awake. He suddenly felt something heavy on his chest, making him think that he might have returned to that hell scape graveyard of spears, but he soon realized that the pressure wasn't heavy enough.

“ ‘! Aina?”

Leonel frowned, realizing the weight on his chest came from a delicate fragrance that made his senses feel incomparably comfortable. When he noticed how soft the weight was, and even sensed that his chest was a bit wet, he realized that this 'weight' was actually a sobbing girl.

“You'!”

Aina looked up from Leonel's chest. Her amber eyes were puffy with tears, giving them a red hue that Leonel felt bad for thinking suited her. There was something about this crying Aina that made his heart stir uncontrollably.

He didn't even think before he hugged her, causing her to fall back into his chest.

"What happened?" Leonel asked, trying to appear soothing.

But, he couldn't have expected what happened next. In fact, he didn't even truly register what happened at all. It was just that he found it weird he was looking up at the ceiling again.

When Leonel landed on the ground again, he only barely registered a pair of slender legs walking by him as he slid across the floor. And, by the time he sat up, Aina was back in her corner with her eyes closed as though nothing had happened.

Leonel couldn't help but laugh.

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[Bonus chapters for 1000 powerstones. THAT'S ENOUGH.]

After Leonel stopped chuckling, a wave of fatigue hit him. He felt as though his mind was completely drained, even his control over his Force was severely weakened.

'My spirit dropped' !'

Leonel looked up toward the ceiling and frowned. He could vaguely feel that it wasn't a permanent drop, but was rather temporary. He could probably recover it after taking a nap as he didn't have a quicker method.

[Dimensional Cleanse] resulted in his spirit growing, this was especially after he formed his First Star. However, Leonel knew that it was more of a byproduct rather than a direct influence.

Practicing [Dimensional Cleanse] strengthened his ability, and his ability seemed to influence his spirit. This was the link between the two occurrences. [Dimensional Cleanse] had no direct impact on his spirit, so the only method he had to deal with this problem was time.

Leonel knew now that his spirit was obscenely high. Aina had formed her seventh Force Node now, yet her spirit wasn't even 10% of his own. The gap was massive.

PANDA-NOVEL In addition, from Leonel's observations, Aina's spirit hadn't improved when moving from six Force Nodes to seven, unlike Leonel's which experienced a leap every time he formed one.

But, this once again proved his conjecture. Forming Force Nodes strengthened his ability which in turn strengthened his spirit. Unless someone else had a similar ability to his own, he likely had the highest spirit stat on Earth currently, and by a large margin, at that.

Leonel was so weak and lost in his thoughts that it took him several moments to realize that there was a spear in his hand, and even a few seconds more to realize that this was the very same spear he had tried to use to steady himself in that hell world. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

'This'! Isn't this too crude'!'

Leonel weakly sat up, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

To call the spear in his hand primitive was an understatement. It was made of wood that had a natural and slight curve to it, completely unlike the perfect straight spears Leonel had become used to. Its blade, if one could even call it that, consisted of a sharpened grey stone wrapped to the tip by twine. And, if all this wasn't enough, it was caked with a dried brownish red substance it took Leonel a while to realize was blood'!

At that moment, Leonel suddenly remembered that Montez had told him he would soon have more spears than he knew what to do with. Is this what that stingy man meant by that? These were the spears he was meant to be bathing in? Where was the joke? He was still waiting.

After observing the spear for a while, Leonel sighed. At this point, might as well just keep using that D-grade spear. It wasn't as though it was treating him wrong. If it came to it, he could just use some Ascension Points for a better spear.

'Damned old man, you really left me something so useless. Is this supposed to be a practical joke? Haha, you got me.' Leonel scolded in his mind and rolled his eyes.

If it was just one spear, it wouldn't be a big deal. The problem was Leonel had been in that world. For the first several hundred meters, there was nothing but wooden and broken spears. As for beyond that, the world was too dark for him to see clearly.

Considering how hard it was to take just one step, who knew how long it would take him to travel far enough to get something decent?

Leonel gingerly stood up, bitterly smiling as he stared at the primitive spear. PANDA NOVEL

'Maybe I'm judging a book by its cover?'

Thinking to this point, Leonel communicated with his spatial bracelet to bring out a familiar spear and raised it up to slash it against the wooden spear. Who knew, maybe he would get a surprise?

Unfortunately, reality was cruel! He did get a surprise! It just wasn't the one he was looking for.

Before the D-grade spear could even make contact, the unpolished ring on Leonel's ring vibrated and emitted a searing heat.

Leonel blinked in shock, not only due to the sudden change, but because he didn't remember putting this ring on his finger. How had it gotten there?

Leonel couldn't even react before his D-grade spear burst into a rain of ash, rendering him speechless.

His spear' ; It was gone just like that' ; And it wasn't due to the fact he had gotten some OP spear' ; but rather because this damned unpolished ring had thrown a tantrum' ;

Where was the justice?

"Pft' ;" ρ??J???????

Aina's light giggling caught Leonel's attention, but when he looked over, her eyes had closed once more. It was as though the sound hadn't come from her at all.

Leonel could only leave her be, trying every method he had to pull the ring from his finger, but it was to no avail.

He could only give up, his teeth grinding away. That old man really did play a prank on him.

'Dammit' ;'

There was nothing he could do. Without another choice, he stepped toward the center pedestal, feeling incomparably aggrieved.

'These other things you left better not be so useless' ;'

Of course, Leonel wasn't foolish enough to think that the ring really was useless. But, he still felt the need to vent his grievances.

Leonel reached forward and grabbed toward the silver plate. However, this time he failed to do so. Or, more accurately, he didn't get the chance to.

The silver plate suddenly vibrated and a hologram projection suddenly manifested itself.

The image was of a handsome man with rich olive skin and a strong jaw. He wore a pair of glasses and he seemed quite scholarly. He was the kind of man who made immature women swoon and mature women choose as their ideal lover.

However, when Leonel saw him, the grinding of his teeth only grew fiercer.

The hologram opened its eyes and seemed to see Leonel before it looked at the spear in his hand and burst out into a fit of laughter. When it saw the pile of ash behind Leonel, its laughter grew fiercer to the point it might have begun to leak tears had it not been a hologram.

The handsome and cool demeanor of the hologram completely vanished as he laughed without restraint. It seemed to be having the time of its life.

“Idiot.” The hologram said. “Normally people go for the middle first, who asked you to start with the left pedestal. I even put it a few steps ahead of the other two.”

“Don’t patronize me, old man. Everyone reads left to right, why wouldn’t I start with the left? Plus, you have to leave the best for last, I just didn’t know that this ‘best’ was you.”

“Don’t blame me for your stupid mistakes, blame yourself.”

“You’re just a cheap sci-fi rip off. A first generation hologram projection, really? Is this the 22nd century?”

Suddenly the hologram began laughing again, leaving Leonel confused.

“You idiot, I can imagine it now, you’re probably talking to me like I have a real consciousness. I’m a recording. Damn, I really have a fool for a son.”

If it was up to Leonel, after hearing these words, he would tackle this hologram to the ground. Though, he’d probably get beaten just like all the other times, he would have definitely taken down the old man with him.

He had really fallen for such a simple trick, dammit. He remembered the old man telling him about prank voicemail messages he used to leave in the past, he also remembered brushing it off saying that only an idiot would fall for such a thing. Yet, here he was.

Aina's light giggling could be heard in the undercurrents, but the hologram didn't react. Clearly, it wasn't lying, this really was a recording.

Leonel really didn't know why his father was obsessed with all this old tech. First paper, now holograms? This sort of technology had been phased out a long time ago. No one wanted to look at a transparent image all day. It was cool in movies, but in practice, it was an annoyance.

“Whew, that was a good laugh. And if you're thinking of pretending you didn't fall for it when you meet me next, don't worry. I've already recorded this moment and saved it well.”

Leonel, seeing that his last spark of hope was gone, could only sigh. He really had thoroughly lost this time. He vowed to get the old man back one day.

“Anyway, we can get down to some more serious stuff now.” Leonel's father's expression grew more serious. Even as a projection, he radiated a unique, suffocating aura.

“The ring on your finger is an heirloom of our Morales Clan. It's simply known as Spear Domain and it is thanks to it that our Morales Clan awakened our Spear Domain Lineage Factor. There are only three other treasures like it, or rather, only three others that have owners.

“With it, all spears are useless before you. Only spears recognized by the Spear Domain ring can survive beneath its presence, all others will become a pile of ash. However, in return, you can only use spears that you have earned the acknowledgment of.

“That said, I hope the Spear Domain Lineage Factor isn't the first you awaken. If it is, I promise you I'll disown you as my son.”

Leonel coughed awkwardly, suddenly thinking back to Montez's uproarious laughter.

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Leonel didn't know what to say to this. His father's expression seemed serious, but Leonel had known for a long time what his father was like. This serious expression was just an act. However, Leonel could still tell that this 'act' came from a place of seriousness.

The sigh he heard come from the hologram a moment later confirmed this much as well.

"Forget it, forget it. It's impossible to tell what kind of mutations might occur. Your birth is a bit of a special case. So, though you're my seed and should have a higher chance of awakening our Ancestral Lineage Factor first, something outside of my calculations might happen.

"Anyway, this recorded message will end now. Think of this silver disk as a dictionary left behind by me, your great and amiable, not to mention handsome, father."

Leonel rolled his eyes again when he saw that his old man was back to his joking ways. How many times did he have to tell this old man to not call him his 'seed'.

But he was grateful nonetheless. What he lacked the most was information. And, for some reason, while Montez couldn't give it to him, his father's projection could.

"Alright then' | What is our Ancestral Lineage Factor?" Leonel probed the hologram.

The hologram had lost the previous animated emotions it had, but Leonel still found it soothing to hear his father's voice, even if it was automated.

[*Ping* The Ancestral Lineage Factor of the Morales Clan is known as Metal Synergy.]

"What is the Metal Synergy Lineage Factor?"

[*Ping* The Metal Synergy Lineage Factor is the Ancestral Lineage Factor of the Morales Clan.]

Leonel thought this was another prank at first, but after a moment, he seemed to understand something.

“What are the abilities of the Metal Synergy Lineage Factor?”

[*Ping* The Metal Synergy Lineage Factor has many abilities. It can most appropriately be described as the envy of all Force Crafters.]PANDA-NOVEL.COM

[*Information Omitted*]

[Scanning Seed.]

Leonel felt a surge of energy course through him.

[Seed has not awakened Metal Synergy Lineage Factor. Information cannot be unlocked.]

”! Please don’t tell me this damn thing is going to call me ‘seed’ from now on’!”

In the end, Leonel could only sigh.

It seemed he had to ask really specific questions to get specific answers. If not, the response would be short and to the point, and maybe miss out on something he needed to know. In addition, some information was barred from him unless he met certain criteria.

After thinking for a moment, Leonel asked another question.

“Why is it that my old man wanted me to awaken Metal Synergy first?”

[*Ping* The Morales Clan is divided into two branches. Velasco Morales was born to the Metal Synergy Branch though he later awakened his Spear Domain Lineage Factor as well.]

[*Information Omitted*]

[Seed is not yet strong enough to return to the Morales Clan. Information cannot be unlocked.]

“Alright, alright. Fine. How does this Spear Domain ring work?” PANDA NOVEL

[*Ping* The Spear Domain ring is entered by the consciousness. The stronger one’s Internal Sight, the further one can travel. Each spear has been acknowledged by the ring and has a thread of Internal Sight attached to it that gives insights toward the Way of the Spear.]

[*Information Omitted*]

[Scanning Seed.]

[Seed has awakened Spear Domain Lineage Factor but has not grasped Spear Force. Information unable to be unlocked.]

‘For the love of God, stop calling me seed!’

Leonel’s eyes narrowed. His father was born into the Metal Synergy branch of the family, but was somehow able to pass down the Spear Domain ring to him? If there wasn’t some story behind this, Leonel wouldn’t believe it.

“What is Spear Force?” Leonel asked.

[*Ping* Spear Force is a Force Strengthening Deviation. It is sharper than normal Force and carries the strength of a Force Technique without the need to use one.]

“What is a Force Strengthening Deviation?” Leonel asked, suddenly thinking of the weird red glow on Aina’s axes.

[*Ping* A Force Strengthening Deviation is a mutation in Force that amplifies its power in a certain path.]

Leonel drowned the silver plate in questions. Though many things were omitted due to his own weakness, he still learned a lot nonetheless. If it wasn’t for the fact he was scared he would attract suspicion by staying here too long, he would have asked more.

“What is this?”

Leonel picked up the last object his father left. A black cube that was put together like a jigsaw puzzle.
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[*Ping* This is an heirloom of the Morales Clan known as the Segmented Cube.]

Leonel’s lip twitched. This old man didn’t give him the heirlooms of both branches of their family, did he? Leonel didn’t need to know the story behind this to know that there were definitely several unhappy individuals.

“What are the abilities of the Segmented Cube?”

[*Ping* The Segmented Cube is a darling treasure of Force Crafters. It is a lab.]

[*Information Omitted*]

[Scanning Seed.]

[Seed has not awakened Metal Synergy Lineage Factor. Information cannot be unlocked.]

Leonel sighed. He had been hoping that this thing would be able to analyze Zones for him. But, it turned out to be a lab. A lab he couldn't even open at that. He wasn't a Force Crafter so he couldn't even make use of this thing.

It seemed he had made a mistake by not using one of his rewards on a Zone Analysis Device.

'Hold on'!

"What is this thing called and what are its abilities?"

Leonel brought out a familiar cube with the very same childish silver glob. However, even in comparison to the past, it was even more hyper than usual. It continually rammed against the side of the cube as though trying to get to the Segmented Cube.

PANDA-NOVEL [*Ping* Species of Metal Spirit detected. Metal Spirit in its infant stages. The Metal Spirit is the favorite Familiar of Force Crafters.]

[*Information Partially Omitted*]

[Abilities]

[Metal Refinement: Able to process and remove impurities from ores.]

[Metal Formation: Able to fuse into the structure of metals and change its form, perfect for crafting intricate parts.]

[']

[Metal Spirit in infant stages. Abilities limited.]

[Metal Spirit: Unnamed]

[Evolution Stage: Tier 1 Black]

Leonel frowned. He thought this was a Tier 7 Black reward, why was this Metal Spirit infant only at the Tier 1 evolution stage?

How could Leonel know that Montez had used a loophole to bend the rules? Let alone a Tier 7 Black reward, a Metal Spirit was worth more than even a Tier 9 Gold reward. In fact, infants were worth more than even mature Metal Spirits.

Still, though he didn't know this truth, his mind was still spinning. Since this Metal Spirit was a living thing and it had evolution stages, it should be possible to help it mature, right?

Just when Leonel was about to ask the silver plate some more questions, a violent tremor suddenly shook the underground space, causing Leonel's eyes to narrow.

This wasn't a normal phenomenon. Someone was attacking them from above.

'Dammit. It's been only half an hour. It can't be that they really came after us for this, right? No, it's definitely something else.'

Just when Leonel was at a loss for what to do, the Segmented Cube suddenly spun in his palm, breaking into its several pieces and engulfing the entire room. Before Leonel realized what had happened, the cube had expanded to the size of a room and back to the size of his palm in the blink of an eye.

But, while it seemed like nothing had changed, Leonel immediately realized that all the bookshelves and cubicles filled with scrolls had vanished, leaving nothing in the small office.

The loud booms continued.

To Leonel's shock, the room that had remained unaffected after a fall from the skies suddenly began to crumble.

“Dammit!”

Leonel placed the Segmented Cube and silver plate into his spatial bracelet before making eye contact with Aina.

He was shocked to find that she was emitting a dangerous aura, a stifling killing intent springing forth from her small body.

‘She knows who these people are?’

There was no time to communicate, the two shot down the crumbling corridor, bursting out to find themselves surrounded.

When Aina saw these people, the violent aura on her body grew by several times, her killing intent piercing into the skies. At this moment, her presence was no weaker than Leonel’s when he focused.

“Aina Atheleys Brazinger. Daughter of traitorous scum Adam Renier Brazinger. You are summoned by the Clan Elders to seek repentance.”

Chapter 75

[Bonus chapter for 1200... I admit defeat... it will be 300 ps a bonus chapter next week... *weeps*]

There were six of them. Every single one had fiery red hair and blazing red eyes. It was the kind of scene that was incredulous to Leonel, a normal youth who grew up on Earth.

Even Aina’s bright, almost golden, amber eyes had a near fantastical element to them. But how could a person with red eyes really exist? For a moment, he thought they were wearing contact lenses before he directly tossed out such an idea. It can’t be that all six of them had such a weird hobby, right?

The man who spoke had a high bridged nose, his arrogance flaring along with his nostrils. He had one hand clasped behind his back, but in the other, there was a very familiar red ax that made Aina's fury soar even higher.

Since they had just been in the jeep, Aina hadn't been able to keep her ax on her back. So, she placed it in the trunk. Normally, she would have taken it out with her in case a battle happened, but she had been absent minded after Leonel stepped out of the car. Due to her worry and her attempts to try to find something to say to console him, she had completely forgotten to bring along her weapon.

Leonel immediately realized this fact. He didn't know what significance the ax had to Aina, but all he needed to know was that it was important to her. And, hearing how this man so blatantly insulted her father in such a way, even he couldn't help but frown.

"Erase this weapon from your memory." The man sneered when he saw Aina's gaze. "This mighty Heirloom of the Brazinger family'! since when was it the right of a bastard child to wield, let alone the fact this bastard is a woman."

Leonel's expression darkened. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Six middle-aged men came to bully a young girl of not even 20 years old. Even if Aina wasn't the woman he liked, he would be enraged.

Leonel palm flicked upward and his dented shield slid onto his left arm which held tightly onto the Metal Spirit. The grip his right hand had on the wooden spear tightened, his expressionless visage acting like a cover for brewing storm.

That day, when those three goons dared to insult Aina, he crossed over his own moral boundaries and slayed them without blinking an eye. Even he wasn't proud of this moment. He wanted to maintain his clarity when he killed. He didn't want to become a slave to his rage.

However, this man had truly touched his bottom line.

"That ax. Return it."

Leonel's voice was like a steady stream. Calm and controlled, he pointed his primitive wooden spear toward the man.

Looking at Leonel's spear, the six men found it difficult to hold back their laughter. PANDA NOVEL

"What kind of monkey tool is this exactly?"

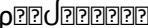
"Kid, if you know what's good for you, you'll take a step back and stay out of these matters."

The cold words of the first man who spoke cut through the jeers. His body seemed to brim with power, making him appear like a beast restrained by chains. However, even still, his words had barely fallen when Leonel had already shot forward.

Leonel knew why these people were here now, and he even caught a faint inkling of why Yuri would chase after Aina like that to stop her from leaving. Originally, he thought that she just didn't want the two of them to continue spending time together, but it seemed he had wronged her with his thoughts.

It was no coincidence that these people didn't appear during the days he, Aina, James and the others were traveling to Royal Blue Fort, yet appeared now.

He remembered Aina's words from that day quite well!

"The only reason I still carry their name is so that I can reject it myself when they most wish for me to keep it." 

The moment they learned that she was a Variant, they came here to flaunt themselves and even took her prized possession. These people were scum.

The man's gaze narrowed as he swung Aina's ax.

However, what neither the man nor Leonel expected was that before they could even trade blows, a small fist would collide with the man's face.

With Leonel's senses having sharpened to the point of near enlightenment, he caught every detail. The break in the tall bridge of his nose, the crack that followed in his teeth, the way his skin and face deformed beneath the weight of the strike'!

The man was sent flying, crashing through several fallen buildings without even the ability to stop himself.

In that moment, Aina had appeared in the midst of the five remaining men. Her bloodthirsty aura reached into the skies, her long hair wildly whipping about as a crimson energy coated them.

Though Leonel could only see her backview from his standpoint, he could feel her fury. If it wasn't for the fact she had already formed her Seventh Node and stabilized her Force, she would have most definitely already entered a berserk state. In fact, even then, it seemed like she might lose her mind again regardless.

Leonel's pupils constricted into pinholes.

It was only now he realized just how much he had underestimated Aina. Her unstable aura hadn't just affected her mental state, but it very clearly negatively influenced her stats.

She hadn't activated her Force just now, so logically, the influence of her Seventh Node shouldn't have been so obvious just yet. However'!

[Aina Brazinger]

[Strength: 1.49; Speed: 1.03 (1.22?); Agility: 1.08; Coordination: 1.10; Stamina: 1.31; Reactions: 1.12; Spirit: 0.06; Force: ???]

In that instant, her burst of speed was most definitely higher than her base stats. Leonel suspected she either used an item she received as a reward, or a technique of some sort that utilized a power outside of Force.

Her instability really had such a large effect on her.

“These six don’t seem to have the same instability. Uncle Montez even said that Clans keep a very tight grip on their Lineage Factor techniques. Could Aina’s instability be due to the fact she doesn’t have their technique to practice?”

“Do you think I need your heirloom?” Aina’s voice carried a biting cold. “If it wasn’t because my father wished for me to keep it, I would have thrown it into the nearest scrapyard. Don’t think of leaving here alive today!”

Leonel’s gaze flickered as the man weakly stood from the pile of rubble. The men around Aina glared at her with trepidation and anger, but also caution. They didn’t dare to move recklessly just yet.

The man’s face was completely distorted. His face was savagely sunken, making it impossible to tell what expression he was trying to convey. But, the sudden roar he shot into the skies made it clear that it was rage.

PANDA-NOVEL His body began to morph, growing more than a foot and springing forward with dense patches of fur.

It wasn’t just him, but the five men also underwent similar transformations.

Leonel’s frown deepened.

The good news was that now they didn’t need to be in the dark about their abilities any longer.

As for the bad news’ | Their stats all increased by more than 20%. Their strength stats especially’ | doubled.

Before, the strongest strength stat was a mere 0.80. But now, the man who now had the face of a wolf, howling into the skies like a madman towering at almost eight feet tall, had crossed 1.60.

“I’ll tear you limb from limb and drag you back to the Clan as a cripple! I’ll be sure you experience even worse dread than your whore mother!”

Chapter 76

[Author’s Note: I think there was a bit of a misunderstanding from the last chapter. The Brazinger Clan isn’t a werewolf clan, though I can see now how that could be the conclusion you guys would make. I won’t say anymore, I prefer to explain via the story’s narrative]

The man’s face distorted. The cracks to his bones and teeth healed as his nose became a snout and his hands gained claws.

The clothes on his back tore to shreds, revealing a tight compression suit that covered much of his fur.

Though all six were weremen, the beasts they morphed into were completely different. While the man who wielded Aina’s ax seemed to be crossbred with a wolf, one seemed more akin to a fox, another looked more like a hyena with gross colored yellow fur. In addition, there was a panther, a cheetah-like man, and finally a ‘| rat?

Of all the men, there was one who instead of growing in size shrank instead. In addition, the boosts to his stats were the most minimal. However, when Leonel’s gaze landed on him, the blaring sounds of warning shot through his mind.

Leonel couldn’t understand where this warning was coming from. He was certain that he didn’t have such an ability. So what was going on?

Unfortunately, there wasn’t time to think about it. The werewolf’s howl had come to an end, fiendish growls and dripping saliva fell from his sharp teeth, a crazed glare piercing toward Aina.

He gripped Aina’s ax, his muscles pushing against his compression clothing like tightened steel cords. The power brimming in his body was simply unimaginable.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

His and Aina's gazes collided in the air before they simultaneously shot forward, fury painting both of their features.

Leonel no longer hung back. He was already not far from the group after his initial charge. In addition, it was in none of their best interests for this battle to drag on.

As though in tacit agreement, none of them used their Force. If they did so and caused an Invalid horde to make their way here' ¦ They wouldn't even know how they died.

Leonel stopped hesitating, his wooden spear piercing toward the werehyena.

He had expected it to be no more than a normal strike. But, the moment he used the spear, he felt a savage aura envelop his body. It was as though he had entered the jungle once more, and this man before him was not a man, but rather a real beast' ¦

Leonel's eyes reddened, a savage grin appearing on his face.

His sudden change caused the werehyena to be at a loss. Before the latter could react, the stone blade had already appeared at his neck. In that moment, he really felt he would lose his life. The bloodthirsty pressure emitting from Leonel was no different than one of a predator stalking his prey. PANDA NOVEL

A claw suddenly appeared before the werehyena's throat. The werepanther had reacted quickly, his blackened paw leaving silver streaks in the air to bat Leonel's spear away.

It should have been a simple task. His claws were no weaker than a C-grade blade. The sight of him dicing up the stone blade of Leonel's monkey weapon had already played in his mind countless times.

But reality was cruel.

Leonel's savage grin didn't fade as his wrist twisted. With impossible coordination, the werepanther's claw, which had been aimed at the flat of the blade, was suddenly aimed at its edge.

Leonel's arm swept upward as though this was the strike he wanted to levy from the very beginning.

PANDA-NOVEL The agonizing roars of the werepanther sounded as three of his bestial fingers had been lost.

Leonel didn't give him time to retreat. His hips swung, his legs flexed, his toes almost dug through his treasure shoes to leave ten indents on the broken concrete beneath their feet. p??J??????

His body was like a well oiled engine. Each action was perfectly supported by a supplementary muscle. The tiniest fibers, the weakest ligaments, each was put into motion, squeezing out their greatest potential.

If Leonel was truly conscious at this moment, he would realize that his coordination stat had touched upon an eye popping number.

His speed exploded, reaching the chest of the roaring werepanther in a flash. He had lost the werehyena due to his interruption, so shouldn't he pay a price?

The actions were too sudden. The head of a man turned panther flew into the skies, a fountain of blood raining down and coating Leonel.

Droplets of crimson fell onto Leonel's face. Though the sounds of Aina and the werewolf acted as a backdrop, to the four remaining beastmen around him, it felt like the world had fallen silent.

Leonel turned his head back toward the four. Maybe by coincidence, a tear of blood fell to the corner of his lips.

His tongue snaked out, licking it away as though he was savoring the last drop of a meal.

The Spear Domain ring glowed and vibrated excitedly on his finger. It released a searing heat that poured into the primitive spear.

The four beastmen inadvertently took a step back.

They could see it clearly. It felt like the temperature was steadily rising, but there was clearly no fire ability attached to Leonel's state. It was as though his blood was boiling with excitement instead. He was so excited to kill them that steam was emitting from his body, covering the air around him in a faint white mist.

At that moment, the sound of bones being cracked and blood curdling screams resounded through the battlefield.

The four beastmen looked over to find Aina savagely stomping and grinding into the werewolf's digitigrade legs.

Her ax had already been flung to the side, the crimson aura coating her body radiating out with a fierce momentum.

The sight of a small woman of barely 5'7" torturing a beastman who stood at over seven feet made others feel the need to wipe their eyes clean. But, there was no mistake about it.

The current Leonel didn't seem to care for these changes. In fact, he hadn't even looked over to where Aina was. The moment he saw that his prey had actually looked away from him, he sensed opportunity. It was a gripping feeling that surged through his heart, an instinct ingrained into his very being.

The werefox only managed to react after his next attempt at speech came out like the gargles of a baby. His last sight was that of a spear jetting out from his throat.

Leonel wanted to take advantage of the situation to lop off another head, but before he could, a surging tide of Force shot into the skies.

Leonel's expression changed, the crimson in his eyes fading away as he regained clarity. He didn't even have time to wonder just what had happened to his state of mind just now. His head whipped back toward Aina and the werewolf's body, only to find that the situation had changed once more.

Aina had created some distance between herself and the werewolf. Her expression was a mixture of disdain and a small bit of helplessness. She knew she had made a mistake. Her actions were emotional and rage fueled. Had she simply killed the werewolf instead of giving him a chance to activate his Force, this wouldn't have happened.

Obviously, she hadn't been overwhelmed by the Force of this werewolf. Rather, she had chosen not to use her Force, not much unlike all the others. However, this fool actually used his without regard for the situation.

They were in the middle of nowhere. The nearest Fort was at least a three hour's drive away. Yet, this idiot released his Force like this.

Leonel's expression turned serious. He could already sense several Invalids who had turned their attention toward this place.

Chapter 77

Leonel's expression continually flickered.

He quickly sent a glance toward where he had left their jeep, but what he saw left his expression twisted.

Before, he hadn't dared to take his eyes off of the enemy, so aside from observing the six men, he had done nothing else. However, when he saw that Aina's ax had been taken by that man, he had a bad premonition. It turned out that that bad premonition had been correct.

The vehicle was too well armored to be completely destroyed from the outside, but judging by the fact its hood was currently opened, it didn't take a genius to know that there was no chance of it starting up.

Just like that, one of Leonel's escape routes was dashed.

'Not all hope is lost. I don't believe that they were able to get here so quickly using their legs.'

Leonel was going to continue scanning the edge of the large crater to find what exactly the six had used to get here, but he suddenly felt his spine tingle. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Without hesitation, he ducked and rolled, barely managing to dodge a claw whipping toward the back of his neck.

The dust from the ground had hardly clung to his rolling body when a powerful kick swept from the werecheetah.

Leonel could only contort his body, barely blocking with his dented shield.

The kick sent him tumbling, skidding across the ground filled with rubble almost like a tumbleweed.

The exchange was quick, but the eyes of the weremen lit up. Before, Leonel was like an insurmountable mountain to them, but he had suddenly become 'human? How could they not take advantage of this?

"Quickly, before those damned Invalids get here. His ability must have a timer that ran out, this is our best chance!" PANDA NOVEL

The werehyena's speech sounded like cobbled growls and was hardly discernible. But, the werecheetah seemed to understand him, his power legs vibrating with power before he crouched and shot forward. Only the wererat stayed behind, his beady eyes narrowed.

Leonel launched himself up, but quickly found himself on the back foot. Even the weakest of his senses, his eyes, was still far more powerful than the normal person. Not to mention realizing the trajectory of the attacks being launched at him, they even seemed slow in Leonel's eyes.

But every time, his body would be too slow to react. Like this, the spear that had once carried a foreboding of murder and blood became a normal stick that could only be used to block. In fact, if it wasn't for Leonel's dented shield, his spear would have been snapped in half a long time ago.

Leonel felt exasperated. Hadn't he just killed two of them with absolute ease? Why was it suddenly so difficult?

”! I thought I had great battle experience, but that’s no more than a joke.’

Leonel was continually pushed backward, his heart growing a bit anxious. He couldn’t even remember the last time he launched an attack. ρ??∫???????

In the distance, the wererat’s gaze turned toward the battle between Aina and the werewolf. Before, it had been one of incomparable ease for Aina, but now that her opponent was using Force while she was repressing her own, even she was forced to take him more seriously.

Their fists collided in dull booms, the savage aura coating Aina’s body not dispelling even in the slightest. Even though blood slowly dripped from her hands, her ferocity only seemed to increase.

Though the werewolf used his Force, Aina still didn’t dare to do so. The man had only formed a single Force Node. Though it was possible to control Force output, that was only for those with high spirit. In comparison to her Force, Aina’s own spirit could be considered as wholly lacking. She had no confidence in restraining her Force properly.

The kind of Invalids that would come for a person who had formed one Force Node and the kinds that would come for someone who had formed seven could be imagined.

A powerful Invalid might come here if they were close for this werewolf, but if they were a distance away, they wouldn’t bother. However, for Aina, even if it meant transferring to the ends of the earth and crossing the rivers of hell, they would make their way here without pause or rest.

Like this, Aina had no choice. Her ability gave her great control over the state of her body, but when it came to Force’! she was at a loss.

Suddenly, Aina’s eyes dulled and her movements turned sluggish. She didn’t even realize what was happening when a fist had collided with her torso. It was so large in comparison to her body that her hips and ribs felt the impact all at once.

Spittle flew from her mouth as all the air in her lungs was forcefully ejected. Glittering stars flew across her vision, dotting her sight in flashing lights and blurry hues.

Even when she cratered into the remains of a home right by Leonel's former residence, she still had no idea what happened.

Leonel's eyes widened. He wanted to rush over, but he simply couldn't break free out of the combined attacks of the werehyena and werecheetah. If he tried to force his way through, the result would likely be a serious injury on his part.

He grit his teeth. He thought he had reached some elevated status by clearing an S-grade Zone, but he failed to remember that most of the enemies he had faced were just normal humans. Their stats didn't even touch 0.50. Compared to Leonel, they were like infants waiting for slaughter.

The worst part was that even then, they had still almost done him in. If it wasn't for him grasping Joan's weakness at a critical point, he would have died that day in Paris and never returned.

However, these opponents before him now might have had weaker stats than him, but they were still superhuman to the point he couldn't simply rely on his stronger body to defeat them.

'What the hell happened? There's no way that werewolf is stronger than Aina.'

PANDA-NOVEL Leonel's head whipped back, his eyes landing on a wererat barely a meter and a half in height. Its gaze, too, had been moving away from Aina's battle and just so happened to meet Leonel's. Though his face seemed expressionless, the long whiskers on his ratlike face seemed to curl into a sneer along with his snout.

At those very same moments, the first Invalids had made their way to the crater. They swarmed from all directions. In the blink of an eye, there were three to four dozen of them.

Seeing that he had heavily injured Aina, the werewolf immediately stopped using his Force and charged toward the collapsed building she had fallen into. But, while his efforts would stop more Invalids from converging, those that already had still far outnumbered them.

On Leonel's side of the battle, the wererat's gaze suddenly flashed with a blinding light that seemed to want to envelop Leonel completely just when the latter was about to turn his head away and go all out to stop the werewolf.

'Your mind is too strong for me to influence normally, but to think you would actually dare meet my gaze. Die!'

The wererat snickered in his thoughts, an incorporeal sharp blade piercing toward Leonel. Unlike other fools, he had no intention of saying such words out loud. If Leonel wanted to understand his true ability' | He could go ahead and ask those who preceded him in hell!

Chapter 78

.[Will be changing DD's cover soon, keep that in mind]

A familiar feeling of danger overwhelmed Leonel. It was as though this instinct had been subconsciously repressed by him but was bubbling forth, clawing its way out of the hidden depths of his mind.

However, it was too late.

Leonel couldn't see what it was that hit him. It was completely invisible. Yet, it felt as though a strong blast of air had assaulted his face.

His eyes watered, his head whipped back, and eventually, his gaze dulled like he was reminiscing on memories long since passed.

Seeing Leonel's dazed expression, the werehyena and werecheetah didn't hesitate for even a moment. The former roared and opened his jaws wide, biting at Leonel's neck. The latter's right thigh bulged in size and grew by a fold, striking forward like a vicious whip that left whistling sounds hanging in the air.

BANG! BANG!

The werecheetah's kick and the werehyena's bite landed as one. By all rights, Leonel's neck should have been bitten through while his lower body was sent flying. With the strength of the two weremen, his decapitation was almost guaranteed. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

But, neither of them could have expected that a seemingly flimsy ray of blue light would stop them both.

Leonel's body was sent flying, but the ones howling in pain wasn't him who was lost in a daze, but rather the werecheetah who had shattered his leg and the werehyena whose row of teeth were now broken.

The wererat's pupils constricted. 'Just what kind of treasure is that?'

Leonel could have never expected that the treasure he picked out for the sake of self grooming would have such powerful defensive capabilities. But this was only natural. How could a Quasi Tier 1 Bronze treasure be so simple?

Suddenly, the wererat felt an overwhelming sense of danger.

His beady eyes widened to find Leonel slowly standing up. However, this wasn't the shocking part. He had already expected this much after seeing the states of the two weremen.

What truly shook him with fear was that'; Leonel's savage expression had returned. The sight of him climbing back out of the rubble was akin to watching a devil climb up from the depths of hell. PANDA NOVEL

While Leonel had underestimated the defensive abilities of his self-grooming treasure, the wererat could have never imagined that knocking Leonel unconscious was the worst mistake he could have made'; Because it allowed that demonic persona to come back.

Leonel cackled as he dashed forward. One would have expected his laughter to sound like the devilish howls of a forsaken soul, but it didn't sound like this at all. Rather, he was like a child who had found a fun toy to play with, a little boy whose mental age couldn't have been more than five or six years old.

However, despite this, his spear which had just been a flaccid, useless tool a moment ago, became a venomous viper.

The heads of the two whimpering beast men shot into the skies, completely separated from their bodies. In their pain, the last thing they could have expected was for Leonel to react so quickly and even counterattack them. No matter how you looked at it, it seemed like they weren't experienced in true combat.

PANDA-NOVEL The wererat panicked. With his guards gone, he suddenly had to face Leonel alone?

That strike he sent just now wasn't something he could send continuously. It would take at least another minute before he recovered enough normally. He had only been able to attack Aina and Leonel in quick succession like that because Aina's spirit was far weaker in comparison to him, so he hadn't needed to go all out.

To make matters worse, he somehow felt that even if he could launch another full powered strike toward Leonel, it wouldn't make a single bit of difference. ρ??∪??????

“Baruke! Get your ass over here!”

The shrill cry of the wererat caused the werewolf who had been completely focused on digging up the pile of rubble to get to Aina to stop. He turned back to find the small wererat being dangled by his neck, his little feet swinging back and forth wildly.

Leonel held the wererat's gaze up to his own. He seemed to be curiously staring into the wererat's beady eyes, as though trying to find the secret to something like a curious child.

Baruke's eyes widened with shock and struggle. He couldn't decide whether to find and restrain Aina, or if he should hurry and save the wererat.

In the end, he grit his teeth and dashed forward. That weakling was the favorite test subject of that person, if he really dared to let him die here, only death would await him.

From the moment Leonel fell into a daze, to the moment he clutched the wererat's neck, it could be said that not even ten seconds had passed. And, unfortunately, those ten seconds were more than enough time for the first Invalids to make their way down from the crater's edge.

Their dull, white eyes seemed to hold the depths of the universe.

Many of them looked no different from normal humans. Those with low grade abilities tended to have small boosts to their speed or strength. As such. Low grade Invalids didn't normally have weird mutations amongst them.

However, there were still three A-grade Invalids amongst the several dozen. If Leonel was conscious, he would have recognized these three as a part of the twelve A-grade Invalids listed to be here in Perimeter 7.

One had the slithery tongue and green scales of a poisonous snake. Another had skin that radiated a bright golden light that made the air around her sizzle. And the last had a head a fold in size larger than it should have been. This last one's head was completely bald, but had veins of blue crazily pumping across his forehead and head. Even its eyes were a size bigger than it should have been.

Baruke seemed to think that it wouldn't be a problem to run from these Invalids, or maybe he was still too overconfident in his strength. If not for this, why would he so blatantly enrage a Variant? He must have really believed that he was invincible.

He wanted to rush toward Leonel, quickly deal with him, and run away with the wererat. However' ;

CRACK.

As though bored and disappointed with a toy, Leonel tossed the wererat aside. The latter had widened its beady eyes as far as it could, and blood even dripped from their sockets, but it was to no avail.

"NO!" Baruke roared, his swift yet massive figure appeared above Leonel with a leap.

He was finished. He really was finished. If he wanted a chance to live, how many more of those cruel experiments would he have to suffer through?

It was his fault. It was all his fault.

“DIE!”

Baruke’s claws extended another several inches, slashing down toward Leonel.

With a playful smile, Leonel dropped the Metal Spirit’s cube to the ground and slid his dented shield to his hand.

He gripped its edge tightly before sending it flying forward like a frisbee. Baruke could hardly react before the hard metallic edge smashed between his brows, leaving him dizzy and disoriented.

The last thing he felt before the light faded from his eyes was a sharp pain in his throat. His spine was cleanly severed and everything fell to darkness.

Leonel crossed over Baruke’s body like it wasn’t worth much, he didn’t even bother to pick up the fallen Metal Spirit. He had found much more interesting prey.

He licked his lips with excitement, watching on as the Invalids converged toward him.

His heart was budding with happiness. So many toys to play with.

Chapter 79

[Seems like everything’s fixed now, so here’s the bonus chapter for 300 powerstones, next at 600 :)]

Leonel’s body was akin to an unleashed beast. Without the chains of morality or the burden of inexperience, he was like a well oiled machine, reaping the lives of one Invalid after another.

The large-headed A-grade Invalid seemed to be sending rays of mental attacks toward him, but they seemed to roll off of Leonel without the slightest hint of success. Without the ability to attack, this invalid was the first to fall.

Compared to the large armies Leonel had faced, the Invalids were a loose pack of sand. They didn't work together and their intelligence seemed to be several levels lower than that of humans. With the level of Leonel's current battle sense, it was too easy.

The truth was that at this point, Leonel had already regained his senses. It was just that he was in a state of limbo. He felt like his body was a mech suit and his eyes were its windows. He was currently watching this mech suit being controlled by someone else, but through the lens of his own gaze.

It was a feeling that made him somewhat sick and lightheaded. The dizziness made him feel like he just might vomit any moment now, but due to the fact he wasn't controlling his body, he couldn't even if he wanted to.

Of course, this wasn't to say that this was a forceful possession. In fact, Leonel knew that with a single thought, there would be no issue with him taking back control of his body. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

It was this feeling that made him realize that this experience wasn't him being in danger; rather, it was an opportunity.

Still, the more Leonel observed, the more incredulous it became. He could tell that the consciousness of this primitive man couldn't use power beyond the means of his body. But, he couldn't help but think; was this really his strength?

Laughter left Leonel's lips as his head tilted to one side.

A sharp tongue dripping in violet poison whizzed by his head, only to be caught in a hand of his covered by a thin blue light.

His arm bulged as he pulled with all his might, his spear wielding hand snaking forward.

As though feeling this wasn't enough, Leonel appeared above them, grinning savagely as his foot stomped down onto their heads repeatedly. He was a complete madman, his laughter ringing out and echoing over the sunken walls of the large crater.

At that moment, the sound of shifting rubble caught Leonel's attention. He looked over to find Aina weakly pulling herself out from the collapsed home.

Aina too got her fair share of treasures, so of course she wouldn't lack a defensive treasure. The reason she had been out for such a long time was because the whiplash from suffering such a heavy blow had knocked her unconscious.

In order to match Baruke's 1.60 strength without activating her Force, she had been making use of several techniques and her battle sense, but how could she use either of those after the wererat sent her into a trance?

“Good' | mate' |”

Leonel spoke in a language Aina couldn't understand. In fact, even Leonel himself didn't understand the language, he could only vaguely sense that this primitive consciousness had some good feelings toward Aina, or else he could have stopped what happened next.

As though a man controlled by nothing but his love of fighting and his lust, Leonel pulled down his pants, revealing a rod that was quickly hardening.

Let alone Aina, even the inner consciousness of Leonel himself could only stare blankly at what was happening. It was true that he could regain control of his body whenever he wanted, but the sudden change made all his thoughts go white.

How would he face Aina in the future like this?

Aina's gaze flickered from Leonel's proud face to a certain thing that was now standing at full mast. She still hadn't reacted by the time Leonel was standing before her akimbo as though waiting for her to reciprocate his actions.

PANDA-NOVEL After a while, Aina seemed to realize something.

“ ‘! How do I wake him up’!?” She mumbled to herself. “‘! I didn’t expect to see that damned thing again so quickly’!”

Leonel’s consciousness went blank again. What the hell did she mean ‘again’? And what was so ‘damned’ and ‘thing-like’ about his pride and joy?

Wait a minute, what did she mean by so quickly? Could it be that she would be alright with it if he was more patient?

Leonel’s mind wandered a bit more before he realized how ridiculous his thoughts were. There was a far more pressing concern here! How was he going to get out of this?

Chapter 80

Leonel cleared his throat, taking back control of his body.

Pretending as though nothing had happened, he turned back and walked to his pants, put them on and looked into the distance.

“! Nice weather we’re having today, right?”

“!”

‘He didn’t hear what I said’! right?’ Aina thought to herself.

Aina looked around and found where her ax had landed, trying to find something to distract herself from the awkward atmosphere. But, when she went to take a step forward, she suddenly stumbled and almost fell.

Hearing the sound of her tripping, Leonel quickly turned back and didn't hesitate to rush to her side.

"Are you alright?"

Leonel caught her arm, trying to make sure she stayed upright and didn't fall over.

"I think I have a concussion." Aina said after a moment, bringing a hand to her forehead. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Though she said it like this, she was already certain. Not to mention her ability, even if she hadn't awakened one, her Five Star Profession was more than enough for her to tell.

"How about the rest of your body, is it okay?"

"I'm fine."

Leonel frowned. She was most definitely not fine.

Taking a strike that powerful without putting up any defense would have been lethal for any normal human. It was already a miracle that she came out in one piece. A strength stat of 1.60, especially behind such a large fist, was more than enough to shatter every bone in her body. Had Baruke coordinated with the wererat and used his claws instead? Leonel didn't even want to think of the possibility.

"You don't have to lie to me, we're a team right now, aren't we?" Leonel said.

"We were a team in the France Zone too, but you still hid what that Force Art did to you, right?"

Aina's glare made Leonel smile bitterly. He let go of her arm and scratched his nose, a bit of guilt welling up in his chest.

However, this didn't change anything. Leonel could see by how gingerly she was moving that her effective stats were barely 70% of what they were meant to be. She might be able to hide her injuries from someone else, but Leonel's senses were too sharp. Even if by some miracle she didn't break any bones, she most definitely suffered from some internal bleeding. PANDA NOVEL

"Alright, alright. I was wrong. But everything is okay now, right? I even got something out of it."

It was only now Leonel realized they never really resolved those matters. He never apologized to her and just kind of ignored the topic. It really did make him a bit of a hypocrite.

"Is it really fine?"

"Yes, yes." Leonel crossed a hand over his chest as though swearing an oath. "Even the scar has faded. It seems that whoever made the Force Art designed it to be used in the Third Dimension, so it lost its effects here."

In truth, this left Leonel feeling a bit disappointed. This Force Art was a double edged sword. The duller the danger, the less benefits he would receive.

The good news was that he could be considered to have solid fundamentals in Force Art now. The bad news was that all the Force Arts he knew, even if he drew them now, would have minimal effect at best and no effect at worst.

This was simply the laws of the universe. A Force Art designed to be used in a Fifth Dimensional World could likely destroy Earth in a single breath. But, one designed for a Third Dimensional one would have less of an impact than an ant.

Those fireballs Leonel created to decimate the English would barely be enough to start a campfire here.

'Well' ; At least I can use them in Zones? Not that I'll be able to enter one any time soon' ;' Leonel thought to himself. PANDA NOVEL

Shaking his head, he came to once more. When he saw how Aina was still struggling to stand, he felt a pang in his heart.

That werewolf and wererat really got off easy.

PANDA-NOVEL "Let's return as quickly as possible." Leonel said firmly. "You're in no state to continue staying in this place. And, there's no telling if they'll send another batch of them. I think they must have had a vehicle of their own to get here, we can see if we can use it to go back."

Aina frowned at Leonel's words, but she found it hard to refute.

"I'm sorry, I thought Yuri was exaggerating. I didn't really expect them to come and be so brazen' !"

Leonel smiled and shook his head. "Just find a place to sit and don't move around too much. I'm sure the keys are on one of them."

Though Leonel said this casually, his mind was still churning.

To the Empire, characters like Aina and him were incredibly important. Yet, those six men brazenly tried to kill him. They didn't even hide their intentions.

This meant one of a few things, or potentially a combination of them.

The first was that Leonel had vastly overestimated the Empire's ability to monitor him. Maybe they still had technology, but not on a large enough scale to have no loopholes. In that case, the Brazinger family wouldn't be worried about their actions.

The second was that the Brazinger Clan didn't fear the Empire to begin with. This possibility made Leonel's blood run cold.

The third possibility was that the Brazinger family and the Empire were two halves of the same coin. It was possible that they moved forward and stepped back as one. In that case, the Empire might allow leeway to this family they didn't allow others.

No matter what the true reason was, the two of them were in danger. Somehow, those six were able to pinpoint their location and there was no guarantee that another group wouldn't be able to do it again.

Leonel scanned the battlefield and eventually found the vehicle he was looking for. But, instead of leaving him with relief, it left him with a headache. Unlike the natural gas jeep they rode here, this vehicle was worthy of their 25th century.

It was a sleek shuttle that almost looked like a pod if not for its two fins. Leonel had no confidence in driving it.

He had been able to observe the Tier 3 Officials, so he had been somewhat eager to drive the jeep. But, who was he going to observe now?

Though Leonel was a bit hesitant, he took out the dictionary his father left him. For now, their lives were more important. If he was questioned about its existence later, there were several excuses he could come up with.

“How do you fly this thing?” Leonel asked.

Thankfully, by some miracle, the dictionary had an answer. However, the method by which he found an answer left his eyes burning with passion.

Not unlike how it scanned Leonel previously, it also began to scan the shuttle. Only then did it output an answer.

[*Ping* Vehicle recognized as Air Shuttle Model X290. It is advised that Seed make use of autopilot feature.]

‘It can scan things like this’ ¦ I don’t think dad would have filed in information like this, which means it analyzed and drew conclusions. It probably found the shuttle’s name after scanning its operating software’ ¦ Does that mean that this is the Zone Analysis treasure I thought that old man didn’t leave me?’

Thinking to this point, Leonel sighed a breath of relief.

Not even allowing Aina to resist, he picked up his things and swept her into his arms after finding the shuttle key on the wererat’s body.

He seemed to be rushing without cause, but in a hidden place on Earth, an event was playing out that proved his actions to be the most logical.

A young man sat before several monitors with a monocle over his left eye. Actually, one would be hard pressed to call it a monocle at all. It had eight lenses that seemed to hover in space in a circular formation. Countless bits of information flew by, causing his left eye to flicker from time to time. Yet, his right remained trained on the monitors before him.

‘The life signatures of rat 006 flatlined as well’ ¦’

The young man’s eyes narrowed.