

Descent 871

Chapter 871

Heira did not overstay her welcome. She very cleverly didn't push too hard and turned to leave the moment she had said her piece. The only thing she left behind was a method of contacting her and nothing else.

Long after she was gone, a silence weighed over the council room. Even Raymundus didn't say anything.

Elthor sat in a corner, his brow furrowed. He really was being pushed into a position he didn't know how to deal with.

The good news was that while Elthor knew nothing about Heira, what he did know was of the strain between the Milky Way Guild and Leonel. After all, Leonel wouldn't leave him without such a valuable piece of information and most definitely had a way of contacting Elthor.

The issue was that Elthor had tried to contact Leonel, but had failed to do so repeatedly. Leonel had said that this might be a possibility, but that didn't stop it from being a huge problem when it actually did happen.

From then on, there was nothing but problems. Elthor had no idea who Heira was, so he still wasn't sure if he should be cautious of her or not. And, at the same time, he didn't have a rebuttal for the benefits she would potentially be providing.

The most obvious thing to do would be to use the card of distrust... The problem was that there was no real reason to distrust Heira with the exception of one...

She was human.

For obvious reasons, Elthor would be a fool to use this card to try and sway the Oryx. Why? Because in just another few months to a couple years at most, Elthor would definitely have to transfer over whatever strength he gained from the Oryx to Leonel.

If at this moment he tried to stifle their growth by using distrust of humans as an excuse, then what would he do when that time came? When it was exposed that he had been working for a human all along, not only would any trust he had built up crumble, any shot they had at a smooth transition would go up in smoke.

It was already contentious since Leonel had ties with Valiant Heart Mountain which had been oppressing them for so long. They really couldn't afford any more variable to ruins things like this.

Elthor entered a state of calm. Stress wasn't something he was unaccustomed to dealing with. He was the Prince of an Empire after all, and he wanted to be a great General. Since when did such people give up before even trying?

'At this moment, they all believe that I come from an Oryx Empire, and that much is true. It isn't a lie.

'The trouble is that my brothers and the others are still trapped within that silver tablet. And, since my father died, Leonel has no way of resurrecting him in a short time. It's even possible that my father would never be able to come back...'

Elthor closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

'... The pressure of this potential deal will push this Oryx Tribe in two directions. The first is that they will grasp at this opportunity for the sake of taking advantage of their Hyper Evolution. I wouldn't be mad at them for taking this chance, we didn't manage to take advantage of our own very well...' p???(???????)

In Elthor's world, he had heard of the Hyper Evolution state of his people. In fact, his seemingly human-like appearance—with the exception of his horns—along with his battle form were all elements of this.

However, Elthor's people didn't manage to maximize their Hyper Evolution. If they had, they wouldn't have been forced to share their world with Alexandre.

Though Elthor kept referring to things like this, the reality was that the world he had experienced was just one of the many potential branching futures of Planet Valiant. So, he was well aware of just how important the Hyper Evolution state was.

Though he had benefited from it, he would be even more powerful if his Ancestors had made better use of it. So, he really couldn't blame this Tribe for being tempted.

'The second option or path is that their dislike of humans will cause the pressure I face to increase. More and more will want to learn more about my origins. They'll want to know where my people are, what they'd have to do to go... Their urgency will be on another level.'

Elthor exhaled a long breath. 'The only way to fix this is resources. They need resources.'

The Oryx Tribe didn't need things like weapons or treasures. What they needed was nutrition and energy. They needed to stimulate and be able to train their bodies to maximize their potential. They needed training and sparring to push themselves to their limits. Only like this would they be able to maximize their Hyper Evolution state.

The latter could be provided by Heira. Obviously, she would want to send them into countless battles, or else she would have never come here.

However, if they also relied on Heira for the former—ie the food and energy sources—then they wouldn't be just warriors, they would be slaves.

Being warriors was easy enough to extricate themselves out of... But if they became dependents... That was how they'd be controlled.

The truth was that the situation wasn't as bad as it seemed. Just like Leonel didn't know what Heira was up to, neither was Heira aware that Leonel was slowly pulling the Oryx to his side. If Elthor could manage to make it so that the Oryx could use Heira but not be manipulated or abused by her, then this might very well be a good thing.

The ultimate question, though... Was how?

At that moment, just as Elthor was racking his brain, he felt movement within his spatial ring that made his eyes narrow. When he heard the message he received he fell into deep thought before nodding inwardly.

The message wasn't from Leonel, but...

“Little one, what do you think of all of this?”

Raymundus' words interrupted Elthor's thoughts. Right then, numerous gazes shifted over to the overly handsome Oryx Prince.

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Elthor looked up to meet the murky gaze of the head of the tribe. He didn't answer immediately, instead looking around and gauging the reactions of everyone else.

As one might expect, not everyone was happy that Elthor would express his opinion first. Though the men who were on the Oryx Council were much more measured than the ones who would pick fights with him day in and day out, as far as Elthor was concerned, they were just better at hiding it. No amount of maturity would make a man okay with his wife being so attracted to another.

Toward this, Elthor could only shake his head. His smell wasn't even present while he was in his normal form. But, in order to prove that he was an Oryx back then, he had no choice but to enter his battle form which had practically imprinted his scent in the minds of everyone.

Luckily, Leonel had expected this and constructed a few counter plans, but they would still take time to implement, that much couldn't be changed. That said... This was an opportunity to bring up the due date by a few measures.

“I believe that we should accept.”

Let alone the others, even Raymundus was surprised by these words. He wasn't a fool, he could tell that Elthor had been brought over to rope them all in. If anything, Heira's appearance was no different from throwing a wrench in his plans.

The fact that Elthor wanted them to join him wasn't a secret, this wasn't something that he could hide. The only real secret was that he was working at the behest of Leonel rather than some mysterious, unknown Oryx Kingdom. This information was more than enough for them to understand that Elthor may very well be against this.

Raymundus had asked Elthor first precisely because he knew all of this. He didn't want his small Tribe to end up in a power struggle between two entities.

They knew too little about the worlds outside of Planet Valiant. There very well could be an Oryx Kingdom that they had never heard of. But, think for a moment... Why would such a Kingdom go so far out of their way to send a Prince to recruit them?

Even if they were from the same race, one only needs to see the interaction between humans to know that this isn't normally enough to maintain peace. There's no reason for such a Kingdom to care about a group they'd see as no different from a bunch of hillbillies.

Why then would Elthor come? Wasn't it obvious...? He needed their strength. And if that was the case, didn't that mean that this Kingdom was in trouble? It was a very logical conclusion to leap to and one that neither Leonel nor Elthor would blame them for having. In fact, it was almost preferable that they believed this.

It was in the nature of the intelligent to not believe in what was too good to be true. Someone who was wizened and had seen much of the world wouldn't easily accept that some higher power was helping them out of the kindness of their heart.

As long as Raymundus and the others believed that Elthor had a purpose for using them, they could then assess the situation themselves. If things were in the form of a transaction, it would be easier to swallow, especially if the Oryx felt they had some use. ρ??∪??????

Oryx weren't afraid of battle. What they wanted to maintain was their pride and dignity. Beyond that, they wouldn't even mind drowning in a river of blood...

However, it was exactly for all of these reasons that Elthor's words were so baffling. Him saying this made Raymundus raise his guard. It felt almost too good to be true and nearly reset Elthor right back to square one.

Until, that is... Raymundus continued.

“The same way they want to use us, can we not use them as well?” Elthor said.

Raymundus’ murky gaze narrowed. “Continue.”

“Your Tribe is currently in a state of Hyper Evolution. What I failed to tell you all before is that my Kingdom had once been in such a state as well, that is why I have two forms I can enter, one of which is capable of hiding my scent.”

Raymundus looked toward the other elders and they all simultaneously nodded. It seemed that they had reached this conclusion long ago as well. But this was perfect for Elthor, it made him more believable, especially since he was already using large kernels of truth.

“Unfortunately, though I am quite talented as a result of our Hyper Evolution period, we never took full advantage of it. My father always said had we prepared adequately, even the galaxy itself would be in the palm of our hands.”

The temperature of the room seemed to rise, the blood of warriors that ran through their veins surging at faster speeds.

“I myself never wanted to be a King. In my opinion, we Oryx aren’t meant to rule, we are meant to conquer. Whatever means that we can grab at that greater strength with is the path that we should take.

“There is no illusion here, I do want you all to join my Kingdom as warriors beneath our flag. However, I am also keenly aware of my Kingdom’s current weakness and its inability to help you all.

“At the same time, I don’t want to see my fellow Oryx fall into the hands of someone who only wants to use you without understanding you.

“So, I say to use her. Take her as a chance to see the broader universe, to fight on larger battlefields. I will be there to fight by your sides.

“I can also guarantee that my King will do everything in his power to ensure that you aren’t reliant on outsiders. We can use this opportunity to make this Galaxy... No, this universe, fear the name of the Oryx!”

Elthor’s voice boomed. Even if he never wanted to be a King, what General couldn’t rally his soldiers? This burning passion he was seeing reflecting back in their eyes, this was exactly what he wanted. The Oryx would rise again!

Elthor rolled his spatial ring between his fingers, an undisguised determination lighting his eyes.

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Many hours later, Elthor returned to a small home of wood and hay. When he closed the door, he breathed out a long sigh.

He wasn’t sure if he had made the right choice or not, but his instinct told him that this was the best case scenario for the current moment. Whether or not that yellow dressed woman’s intentions were pure or not, he had no idea. He could only do his best to ensure that this Oryx Tribe survived.

Sitting down on a mat of tied together thin strips of wood, Elthor calmed his breathing. It was about time he started his training regimen for the night. But, first...

Elthor pulled out the talisman from within his spatial ring. He didn’t worry about being overheard because Leonel had already left certain fail safes for this.

He replayed the message he received earlier and nodded to himself.

Like he had thought before, this message wasn’t from Leonel. Rather, it was from a person named Allan. He remembered Leonel describing him as a man who wore glasses for the hell of it. If he recalled

correctly, Leonel seemed to have been laughing a bit too hard at that prospect, humor he didn't quite understand.

Of course, he had no way of knowing that Leonel's own father wore glasses for no reason as well. It didn't make sense in the past considering Earth's technology, and it made even less sense now that Leonel knew how powerful his father probably was.

Leonel, for some reason, found it amusing to compare Allan to his father, another thing that Elthor wouldn't understand.

If Elthor knew Allan, though, he'd know why Leonel found it so hilarious. Before Leonel's breakthrough into the Fourth Dimension, it could be said that Allan's physique was the greatest out of all of them. The man was chiseled year-round and never took a break on anything whether it came to his diet or training.

But, at the same time, he didn't chase women, he always wore baggy clothing, and he cosplayed like he was a nerd even to the point of being obsessed with computer programming. If it wasn't because they shared a locker room together, none of them would ever know how ripped Allan was.

Leonel had known Allan for so long that it all seemed normal to him by this point. But, he realized when he was trying to describe him to Elthor that all his teammates were a bunch of weirdos, so he had laughed beside himself.

This aside, Allan had contacted Elthor to let him know that he had managed to establish contact with Kaela and the other former members of the Polished Glass Faction. Very soon, Elthor would be able to accept a shipment that would be a great boon.

Leonel didn't detail his other plans to him, but it seemed that Allan and the Polished Glass Faction would become the backbone of raising funds while Leonel was away. With their help and Leonel's support from the background, they should be able to accumulate enough fairly quickly.

In the past, there used to be many Oryx Tribes but war and attrition had whittled them down to just one. This singular Oryx Tribe contained about 10 000 Oryx, a number that almost made it a shame to consider them as a mere Tribe. It was just unfortunate that their living conditions were so sorely lacking.

The Oryx had emphasized fighting prowess for the sake of survival so much, that they had lagged behind in other aspects from sanitation all the way up to agriculture.

Though there would be too much stress for Leonel to support so many, so early on, it shouldn't be a problem to keep the elites well fed.

As the skill of Allan and the others grew, it would only become easier to accommodate them all.

'We need to hurry...' Elthor thought, putting the talisman away as he took deep breaths. '... The unknown organization led by that woman isn't going to give us the time we need...'

It all depended on how fast Leonel could get back here. ρ??∪???????

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Leonel's spear shot forward again, piercing through yet another spirit. He had already been in this place for three months by this point and if it wasn't for the fact his mind wouldn't let him forget, he would have lost count of the number of battles he had fought.

By now, Leonel was certain of one thing.

The first was that the color of his Stars was indeed reliant on his environment and they didn't seem capable of being changed. Even when he tried to flood blue Star Force toward his white stars, it was purified back into white.

However, this didn't seem to be as big of a problem as he thought because he could evolve his Stars as he pleased... The only issue lay in the fact his Stars were out of wack.

The foundation of the Third Dimension was supposed to be energy. The foundation for the Fourth was meant to be the body. And the foundation for the Fifth was supposed to be the mind.

But, while Leonel's blue Star Force was perfectly tailored for his body, the silver-white Star Force he had absorbed for the Third Dimension worked best for his mind.

His blue Stars weren't as good as his silver-white Stars at replenishing his mind. And, in the vice versa, his silver-white Stars had never been very good at helping his body out.

After a while of panicking about this, Leonel realized that he was overthinking things.

The Star Force that formed his Star Constitution wasn't tied to the [Dimensional Cleanse] technique at all. Whenever Leonel used [Dimensional Cleanse], he didn't have to communicate with his Stars first. It was more accurate to say that his Stars were a byproduct allowed by cultivating the technique and priming the body properly. They could almost be seen as a separate existence!

This was excellent. This meant that even if Leonel had wanted nine Stars to be entirely focused on his mind, or nine entirely focused on his body, it wouldn't be a problem.

This also meant that when he formed his Seventh to Ninth Stars, he could use a Star Force that would be perfectly suited for his energy... And he had a feeling that he had the perfect Star Force to fulfill that role already.

Leonel's lip curled as his senses swept over his kidney. What better choice than his Scarlet Star Force?

In these three months, he had already managed to complete all of his Nodal Pathways. It was only a matter of time before he stepped into the Fifth Dimension.

Unfortunately...

Leonel's upturned smile faded. 'This road hasn't given me any clues about the next part of [Dimensional Cleanse], I have no idea how to continue... How much longer is it...?'

Leonel still had no idea that he hadn't been meant to deduce the next stage of [Dimensional Cleanse] himself at all...

However, what was once a 'peaceful' journey forward was very soon to become something much different.

Leonel looked up, his pupils constricting.

There, just barely peeking over the horizon, Leonel finally caught sight of a second road.

'I'm not alone?'

Chapter 874

Up ahead, what must have been at least a dozen kilometers, Leonel caught sight of the faint luminescence of another road. It was a bit of a jump for him to assume that there must be others due to this alone, but the angle of approach the light road was taking was far too damning.

From what Leonel could tell, both his road and the other were converging toward one another. But, what was particularly interesting about this was that they were converging toward the star.

If this was simply another road for Leonel to take, why would it have the same destination as the road he was already on? There were only two possible explanations for this.

The first was that there were multiple potential starting points of this trial and he just so happened to be given a Memory Ore tied to this road as opposed to that one. In that case, it wasn't necessarily true that there was someone else over there.

The second option, though, was that he was never alone to begin with and the roads were just so far apart that even with his senses, he couldn't spot them until now.

It didn't take long for Leonel to realize that the second was the answer.

By the time he crossed the dozen of kilometers that separated him from the distant road and he could finally see where and how the two roads of light connected, his gaze couldn't help but narrow.

In the distance, a young lady sat cross legged with her back facing him. However, something told Leonel that she had already sensed his presence long ago. Not just that, but the strength she radiated made Leonel's skin tingle. It didn't take Leonel long at all to realize that she was the most powerful individual he had ever met...

Whether or not this was true, even Leonel had to admit he wasn't certain. It might have been more accurate to say that she was the most powerful individual he had ever met... who also had limits he could actually sense. These two statements were very different from one another.

Leonel eventually came to a stop when he was just about a hundred meters from where their roads met. Something told him that there weren't any more spirits to worry about, at least not until he passed her...

At that moment, the young lady placed a hand on her knee and pushed herself up. She had a graceful bearing that made it almost a shame that she wasn't wearing a dress, but rather a tight fitting flexible armor that clung to her curves.

Despite the well defined outline of her silhouette, her clothing didn't seem raunchy or overly sexual in the slightest. One almost couldn't see even a single hint of her skin, it was to the point where her flexible armor rose up from her collarbone to form a half mask that revealed nothing but her eyes and her forehead.

She had deep, warm blue eyes and delicate brown skin that looked smooth even under Leonel's scrutiny. It was almost a shame that the only piece of it available for observation was on her forehead.

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"I don't know if I should thank you or hate you for making me wait two months."

The young woman suddenly spoke, her voice sounding far louder than anything Leonel had expected. Every stereotype he had formulated about this woman seemed to fly out of the window in just that single instant of time alone. He had expected her to not talk at all, or even if he pressed her to, that her voice would either be cold and detached or soft and restrained. And yet, it was none of those things.

Loud really was the best way Leonel could describe it, almost to the point of being grating on the ears. It wasn't that her voice sounded annoying, but rather that it was hard to appreciate it when she put so

much power behind it. It was like Leonel was listening to a speaker with the volume up so high that the sound distorted.

“Two months?” Leonel blinked.

“I guess it makes sense now, though. You actually entered this place at the Fourth Dimension... Who are your elders, exactly? What were they thinking? You know, you only ever get two chances at this.

“Forget it. This is good news for me. I got to rest for so long amidst such revitalizing Star Force and I get an easy ticket out of the first round.”

The young woman blinked innocently. Even though Leonel couldn't see the rest of her face beneath that mask, he still felt that she seemed quite adorable. As for being angry at her words, he really didn't feel bothered at all. If anything, he took it as a joke.

He was much more interested in getting information out of this woman.

“First round?” Leonel asked.

The young woman blinked before shaking her head.

“Oh, you poor poor child. You must be one of those stragglers that stumbled on one of the map pieces, right?” The young woman shook her head before freezing. “Wait, if you're one of them, then how did you solve the puzzle? Are you trying to feign ignorance to get me to lower my guard?”

The young woman looked at Leonel for a moment before bursting into a boisterous laughter even more booming than her voice.

“Never mind, never mind. I guess if you have a strong Soul Force type ability or Lineage Factor, the Peak of the Fourth Dimension might be barely enough to stumble through the puzzle.”

Leonel's lip twitched. Why did it seem like this woman was perfectly content having a conversation all by herself? He could hardly get a word in, but her assumptions were only getting wilder with each passing moment.

“Anyway, I don't mind telling you about it so that you don't waste your second chance. Next time, enter at the Peak of the Fifth Dimension if you can help it. In fact, the Sixth would be even better. Though you'll have to restart from the beginning, [Dimensional Cleanse] is worth it!”

Leonel blinked, feeling more confused than he ever had before.

## Chapter 875

Firstly... You could restart from the beginning? Had Leonel known this, why would he waste all this time being stuck at the Third Dimension? He would have switched to another technique as a placeholder to bolster his strength. By then, would all of the things that had happened in the past months even have a chance at getting off the ground?

Of course, Leonel knew that he was being naïve. When it came to things between he and Aina, they had ignored a lot of the problems that had been creeping up for too long. If it wasn't this, then it would have been something else down the road that separated them. And, that separation, having festered for even longer, might have been even worse than this one.

Leonel shook his head, ignoring these useless thoughts.

“You can restart?” Leonel cut the young woman who was about to go on a rant off. He had to know this.

“Oh, right, you probably don't know this either. [Dimensional Cleanse] is a very special technique, it's very compatible with pretty much everything. You don't necessarily have to 'restart', but you do 're-cultivate' from the beginning. You can then layer [Dimensional Cleanse] and your other technique for a stronger effect.

“Most, though, only practice the first three layers of [Dimensional Cleanse], because even a One Star Constitution is a massive boost to someone's combat prowess. If you're lucky enough to get two or three out of nine, you'll be set for a lifetime.”

Leonel raised his brows. So that was how it was... Should he be layering another technique with [Dimensional Cleanse], then? Or did it matter at all?

“Anyway, like I was saying before, this is the first round. The Third Dimensional layer of [Dimensional Cleanse] is pretty much widely spread, but it’s really too difficult to form Stars from that layer. Most say that it’s easiest to form Stars at the Fifth Dimensional layer of the technique, but still quite difficult. I say you might as well give yourself as many chances as you can...

“Oh, right! The first round. Like I was saying, the trial before is just the first leg, the real test starts now. When I win this round, they’ll give me the Fourth Dimensional layer of the technique. I’ll have to win the next round to earn the Fifth Dimensional layer and so on.”

“I see... And are all the rounds like this?”

The mask the young woman wore moved in a way that made Leonel believe she had to be pouting.

“No. That’s why I don’t know if I should thank you or not. Up ahead, there will more complicated battle structures where three or even four roads come together as one. In those cases, only one will be able to pass by, yet I’ve wasted so much time here.

“Even if I got to rest a bit, the enemies I’ll have to face ahead will have ample time to rest too while I’ll have to hurry up. It’s not fair.”

Leonel shrugged. “Why hurry, then? Take your time since you know they’ll get there before you no matter what.”

“Ah!” The young woman blinked. “That’s not a bad idea, seems you’re not a bad guy after all. What’s your name? I’m Kira Salvatine!”

Leonel smiled lightly. “Leonel Morales.”

“...”

The young woman fell into silence before her brows furrowed in an unhappy frown.

“... You really did trick me. Did you make me explain all of this so that you could rest?!”

Leonel was speechless. He hadn't been tired since the moment he got here, was that not obvious enough? He wasn't even sweating. In this environment, he was practically invincible in terms of stamina, there was so much blue Star Force around that every breath of his was filled with life and vitality.

The young woman's mask moved again. This time, Leonel was certain that her pout had become even more pronounced.

“I didn't know that the Morales family had such a shameless junior now!”

The young woman shot forward, stepping onto Leonel's road without a care. Her palms flipped over to reveal twin sabers with blades that radiated a rose-gold light. Each was as thin as a cicadas wings and seemed to flutter gently along with the young woman's hair.

Leonel shook his head. He could only describe this woman as an adorable airhead.

They had only been talking for a minute or two, was that even enough for anyone to recover in a large capacity? How was he 'tricking' her, then?

Still, Leonel took these trials a measure more seriously now, even more than he did before when he realized his life was on the line. Kira recognized the Morales family's name instantly. On top of that, there was none of the reverence that he had seen from Valiant Heart Mountain.

The conclusion, then, was clear: Those participating in this trial most definitely had backgrounds close, equal, or potentially even surpassing a Seventh Dimensional family. And, to make matters worse, Kira said the Peak of the Fifth Dimension was the minimum...

Leonel sighed. '... Just can't catch a break...'



Leonel's palm flipped over, revealing a familiar crystalline red rod. He didn't dare to underestimate an opponent that had managed to clear the road he just faced so quickly. Without hesitation, he activated his Spear Domain Lineage Factor, lighting his forehead up with the mark of a golden spear.

"You really are from the Morales family! Dammit! To think I helped you!"

In any other situation, Leonel would have chuckled. It was rare to find such an innocent and sweet heart in the Dimensional Verse. At least, he hadn't been able to find one outside of Earth. Everyone seemed enraptured by their own benefits and improvement.

But... Maybe this was just the luxury Kira had due to being from such an outstanding family or organization.

Still... Leonel's emotions were one thing... This battle, however, was another.

Leonel's gaze suddenly gained a biting cold at the same time Kira's did. Both of them no longer said a word as blue Star Force began to rotate about around them.

BANG!

Chapter 876

Leonel blocked the twin sabers with the body of his spear, but his gaze still narrowed. He was so used to his weapons and treasures being far beyond that of his opponent that he was somewhat caught off guard when he was finally on the losing end for once.

According to his calculations, if not for the large swaths of blue Star Force in the surroundings, his spear might have already been cut in two... No, three pieces.

'Those twin sabers... Are both Silver Grade weapons...' Leonel's lip twitched.

Even his best weapon at the moment was a Quasi Silver Spear. Of course, it could be used for more than just its sharpness. But, he had a feeling that Kira's sabers were the same. It was just that he hadn't managed to push her into using them to their full potential.

'Is it normal to give Fifth Dimensional youths Sixth Dimensional weapons like this...?'

Leonel lamented this as though he hadn't been using Fifth Dimensional weapons at the Third Dimension. At the same time, he had no idea that Kira had only been loaned these weapons for the sake of the trial, they would be taken right back after she was done. In fact, if not for her status, even borrowing would have been impossible.

Of course, Leonel could access Silver Spears now as well. It was just that it wasn't worth it. Only the Spear that claimed a Peak would have a Domain to learn and Leonel wasn't quite ready to claim a Quasi Gold Spear just yet. He would have to cross into the Fifth Dimension first for that, and even then it would be difficult.

Leonel had all of these thoughts in an instant, but Kira had already reacted quickly. Realizing that she couldn't slice Leonel's weapon apart like she wanted, she pressed forward, raising her sabers again to maintain her forward momentum.

However, Leonel, who had been standing in place all this time, swept his spear downward toward Kira's legs. The timing was so immaculate that it almost seemed as though Kira was presenting her thigh to be chopped off as she stepped toward him.

Kira's eyes flashed, her wrist twisting as one of her sabers blocked. Though Leonel's actions had stifled her forward momentum, she was still able to brandish her second saber, spiraling it toward his neck with another twist of her wrist.

Leonel's calm gaze didn't falter. He shifted his spear's trajectory slightly, causing Kira's saber to perfectly collide with its blade. Using the downward momentum of Kira's swing, he allowed the upper end of his spear to swing upward, blocking Kira's second, twisting strike.

This wasn't the first time Leonel was battling a dual wielder, but it was most definitely the first time he was battling one with such deft skill.

Neither one of Kira's hands seemed to be dominant. Her attacks were swift, controlled, measured and powerful. Her close combat instinct didn't seem to lose out to Leonel who was both relying on his Spear Domain Lineage Factor and his innate ability. In fact, Leonel found himself constantly being on the defensive.

'Her body is heavier than what it should be. It's either that she also has a defensive Lineage Factor that's been locked away by this place. Or...'

Leonel's brows raised. Was he really so lucky?

"Hey Kira." ρ???(???????)

Kira didn't respond, her sabers becoming swifter and swifter. Her body began to sway in a unique rhythm, her mind becoming lost in a dance of blades.

Every one of her strikes left a trail of blade Force in its wake. The paths it took were etched into Leonel's mind even without conscious effort. But, when he put them together, he felt a slight hint of awe.

It was the most beautiful budding rose he had ever seen.

He watched its progression from start to finish.

First it was small and closed off. Kira's blades in that moment were sharp, compact and sturdy, emphasizing stability and a slow, steady rate of growth.

And then it opened for the first time, blooming into a youthful maturity. Kira's blades grew more wild, unrestrained, filled with a willingness to see the world and to have the world see her. A gorgeous dance of passion, excitement and curiosity.

The flower began to age. Its stem weakened, its beautiful rose petals greyed, and it gave the world the last rays it had left to offer.

It was then that Kira's blades became the most deadly, filled with a death-like energy. The energy itself never truly appeared or manifested, suppressed and disregarded by this world of Star Force. But, Leonel had a feeling that if he ever had to truly meet it in battle, his life wouldn't be in just a small amount of danger...

And yet, even now, Leonel felt as though he was battling with his life on the line. Kira's blades didn't carry the intent to kill, but if they did...

Leonel's jaw clenched.

"I thought I could beat you without using it." Kira suddenly spoke, her voice softer than Leonel had ever heard it before.

At that moment, Leonel could finally hear the intricate layers of her cadence and the delicate softness of a beautiful sound that matched Kira's original elegance perfectly. The only voice Leonel had ever heard that made him swoon more was Aina's, and that was only when she was in her un-cursed form.

"But, you're way too strong for someone in the Fourth Dimension, you learned the true form of Universal Force? I guess I have to use it too..."

Kira suddenly began the dance again. But, this time, the air around it was completely different.

Leonel, who already had cuts all over his body after the first time, had to face the same dance again. This time, however... Kira wouldn't be holding back.

What once was nothing but an illusion suddenly became so corporeal that Leonel felt that he could reach out and touch it.

Universal Force surged all around... Unfortunately, it wasn't at the Four Seasons Realm.

It was at the Heavenly Body Realm.

## Chapter 877

Leonel's eyes narrowed, his body explosively shooting backward without hesitation.

There simply wasn't enough space to maneuver. The road might have seemed quite wide being at least 10 meters in width, but with his speed, this number might as well have been a single meter.

In order to prevent accidents, he had been purposely leaving a meter of buffer space between himself and the edge, so this further cut down his room to just eight meters. This made it all the more difficult to avoid Kira and her thin sabers.

Leonel knew that Kira was in Tier 4 of the Fifth Dimension. It was clear that she hadn't listened to her own advice when coming here or maybe she just believed that she didn't have to be restrained by the same rules Leonel did.

However, Leonel didn't blame her even if the latter was the truth. He could tell that if it wasn't for the Star Force weighing her down, he wouldn't be a match for Kira. In fact, even if the Star Force was weighing her down, as long as she had access to her Lineage Factors and her ability, dealing with Leonel would be child's play.

What Leonel had yet to realize even to this point was the fact that had his own ability not been related to the mind, it too would have been suppressed in this place just like Kira's!

That said, Leonel also didn't feel bad that Kira was at such a disadvantage. What greater disadvantage could there be outside of being an entire Dimension beneath her?

Thanks to all of this, the playing field had been leveled... Until, that is, Kira suddenly began to use her Universal Force. Not only that, but it was also an entire level beyond Leonel—a complete Heavenly Body Realm comprehension.

Leonel smiled bitterly as Kira's energy rose explosively. Her strength increased by more than ten times and whatever heft her steps had been limited by seemed to practically vanish.

She became like a leaf floating in hurricane force winds, and yet her seemingly frail body was unaffected, following the ebbs and flows with a deft skill.

A map of the stars appeared behind Kira. Leonel could see the streaking meteors, the sparkling moons, the vibrant planets and the radiant stars.

All of it revolved around a delicately sculpted rose. It had more petals and layers than a lotus. Its color was as crimson as a drop of blood and more beautiful than a twinkling ruby.

Amidst it all, Kira's figure followed the strokes of the flower, her blade dancing in gorgeous arcs that left Leonel at a loss for words.

The cuts that ran across Leonel's body increased explosively in number. At times, the blade didn't even seem to touch him before a streak of blood was forced out, following the arcs of Kira's Force as though to become one with her saber as well.

Still, amidst all of this, Leonel could tell that the only reason he was still here was because Kira had no real intent to kill. He could see it from the twitch of her muscles to the trembling of her blade that she didn't seem to want to take that final step.

Of course, it wasn't because she was scared to kill, Leonel felt that wasn't it. Rather... It was more like pity, she actually felt bad for him.

"Hey Kira. What do you say about becoming one of my Generals?"

Leonel once again shamelessly asked such a question, his pale violet eyes sparkling as he observed every one of Kira's movement. Compared to Emna, not only was Kira far better in terms of strength, she also had character that Leonel was fond of. Of course, Kira was also a bit of an airhead, so she wasn't as intelligent as Emna was.

Kira was speechless. Couldn't this annoying brat tell that she was holding back? Was he trying to take advantage of her again?

“My family has never participated in the Morales Heir Wars, nor will it ever. Plus, even if I participated under my own name, it would cause some problems if I chose to help you as opposed to that annoying guy... Wait a minute! You’re an Heir?!”

Kira had spoken off handedly at first, just assuming what Leonel meant by General. But, when she thought of the implications, she was left speechless again.

To be an Heir of the Morales family, one had to have both of their Lineage Factors. Now that she thought about it, the Morales family Metal Synergy Lineage Factor would be suppressed here.

“I don’t mean just for the Heir Wars, I mean permanently.” Leonel replied with a smile.

“What the hell is that supposed to mean?” Kira looked toward Leonel through her blades as though he was crazy. “Forget it, you’re too weak to recruit me anyway. Save me some time and just give up, will you? Just jump over the edge of the road and you’ll be teleported back to where you came from.”

Leonel blinked. So that abyss wasn’t an instant death? He felt that he could believe Kira’s words, but he obviously had no intention of giving up.

“So if I can beat you, that’s a yes?”

Kira’s brows furrowed. “No... I mean, no... Wait, I mean you can’t beat me anyway, stop asking stupid questions! You’re trying to take advantage of me again!”

Leonel couldn’t help but chuckled. “You’re so powerful, why are you always worried about people taking advantage of you? Just chop them up with your sabers.” ρ???(???????)

“That’s what my mom said to do too! But I can’t chop everyone up. That annoying cousin of yours is one of them, I really want to chop him up too, but I can’t!”

Leonel’s lip twitched. He didn’t know he had a cousin to begin with... Well, aside from a certain young man from Earth. Did his father have brothers or sisters? Or did she just say cousin because they were loosely related? Leonel wasn’t sure.

“How about this?” Leonel’s lip curled. “If I beat you here, you have to promise to become my General.”

“Ah! That sounds like a terrible deal. Dad always says to not accept one sided deals. What are you giving up if you lose?”

“If I lose, I’ll Craft you a pair of Silver Grade sabers perfectly tailored to you.”

Kira blinked. “You’re a Silver Crafter?”

Leonel’s lip twitched as he avoided Kira’s gaze. He wasn’t one... Yet. But it was only a matter of time, right?

“Soon, I’ll be one soon. Very soon.” Leonel lied shamelessly.

Kira blinked again. But, during all this time, her sabers had never stopped. In fact, they only seemed to be growing more and more powerful.

“Okay! But it’s not like you can beat me anyway!” Kira’s mask moved in a way that could only have been caused by a bright smile.

Leonel laughed heartily. “Remember! You said it. It’s not very good for people to lie.”

Leonel’s body suddenly began to shimmer. Runes were forcefully manifested all over his body, but rather than having the bronze color they usually had, they sparkled like a translucent blue diamond, coating Leonel’s chiseled frame in a beautiful light blue.

Kira’s eyes widened. “That’s impossible! You shouldn’t be able to use that here, you’re cheating!”

Leonel’s grin only widened as his speed increased explosively.



Dense Force began to billow out from his body like solar flares. And yet, despite how much he was giving up, he seemed to swallow even more, an endless supply funneling into him from the surroundings.

All of Leonel's pores seemed to open up at once, steam billowing from his body faster and faster with every breath. In just a split moment, his strength stepped over an unimaginable threshold.

'[Star Fusion].'

Leonel's irises became so bright that they shimmered like two floating balls of amethyst.

He shot forward, breaking through Kira's initial defenses with a shocking ease. The latter was so taken aback that she forgot to hold back, but just when she was panicking at having unleashed her full strength, she found that even that wasn't enough.

'What...?'

Kira was at a loss. Crossing Dimensional barriers to do battle was something you only heard about in Lower Dimensions. Such a thing happening in the highest Seventh or Eighth Dimensions was absolutely unheard of, especially not when the person in question was a genius like her.

Unfortunately... Kira was at too much of a disadvantage. Leonel had formed three Stars with the special blue Star Force in the surroundings, something even the creator could never have predicted. As a result, he was completely immune to the increases to his weight—a privilege Kira obviously didn't have.

To make matters worse, Kira's Lineage Factor and ability were sealed. She couldn't use any of the Elemental Forces she was practiced with. And, as though all of that wasn't bad enough, she was facing an opponent who had an endless supply of energy thanks to the gorgeous blue star that was up ahead.

Before she realized what was happening, she felt the ruby blade of a spear resting on her shoulder, just barely pressing against the skin of her neck.

Leonel stood before her, his hair a stream of radiant blue energy even down to his brows. Diamond blue Runes pulsed about his skin, even forming a crown upon his head. His whole figure radiated a striking

hue that made one believe that he, himself, was a star... He looked as though he was a spirit deity, grinning down at her mischievously.

If there was one place Leonel felt he was almost invincible, it was here.

Chapter 878

“I win.” Leonel grinned, his teeth practically sparkling like shimmering diamonds as the energy continued to billow around him.

“You... I...” Kira was truly speechless this time even to the point she forgot to shout out her words like she normally did. She almost sounded like a little girl who had been wronged at this point, the pout beneath her mask becoming more and more pronounced.

“Remember, you have to keep your word.” Leonel’s grin didn’t fade.

“... Humph, you cheated. How did you use your Metal Synergy Runes, they should be blocked in this place.”

Leonel smiled knowingly but didn’t explain. If he did, he would also have to explain how he had formed three Stars in this place by deducing the Fourth Dimensional layer of [Dimensional Cleanse].

Even if he was unaware before, it was impossible for him to still be ignorant now. Obviously, he hadn’t been meant to deduce anything. In fact, Leonel felt that he understood what was supposed to have happened here now that he had interacted with Kira.

That blue star in the distance radiated a special energy that was quite good at revitalizing the body. It was chosen not for the sake of allowing comprehension of the Fourth Dimensional layer, but rather so that those taking this trial wouldn’t have to worry about sleep or food.

At the same time, though, due to the special properties of the star, it had the side effect of adding to your weight. This did well to allow the star to double as a positive and negative for this trial. On the one

hand, you wouldn't need to worry about fatigue or hunger, but on the other, it made the challenge tougher.

Leonel, though, foolishly thought that he was meant to deduce the next layer from the context clues left behind. However, it seemed that he had really overthought things this time... This, unfortunately, left some lingering worries.

If the test wasn't designed for him to deduce things, then that meant it was very possible that he could have missed something important. Now, he was even more eager to get his hands on the real version so that he could compare and contrast. Luckily he hadn't been able to deduce the next layer, or else things might have been difficult to reverse should he really have made a mistake.

Even with all of this said, there was still something else that Leonel was completely unaware of...

That 'blue star' in the distance was no simple blue star. In fact, to call it as such was doing a disservice to its true ability. Among the top ten Star Forces in existence, the Force that this star produced was among the only two that were made of pure Star Force without the addition of other Elements...

This blue Star Force was known as Vital Star Force. It was among the rarest Star Forces in all of existence and the stars that produced it were even rarer. In fact, it might not be an exaggeration to say that this Vital Star was the only one of its kind left.  $\rho\omega\epsilon\zeta$

The Dyson Sphere that spun around the Vital Star wasn't there to just harness its energy, it was also in place to keep the star living far beyond its normal lifespan.

What did this mean...?

Well... Leonel was probably the only one to be foolish enough to deduce a cultivation method amidst a battle trial... He was also probably the only one foolish enough to not only deduce it, but actually act upon what he deduced... He was further the only one foolish and lucky enough to have the affinity necessary to form not just one star but three simultaneously...

This was all to say that maybe in the entire Dimensional Verse, Leonel was the only one currently living to have formed three Stars of Vital Star Force!

“You’re not going to go back on your word, right?” Leonel blinked innocently.

“You... Shameless! Mother said to avoid shameless men like you!”

Leonel laughed. He had no idea how Kira’s family felt confident in sending such a naïve young lady here to fend for herself.

Then again, considering her strength, maybe they didn’t feel like they had anything to worry about.

“Whatever, I can’t help you with the Heir Wars even if I wanted to. It would cause too many problems and my mom and dad would have to get yelled at again. I don’t want them to get yelled at.”

Leonel sighed. Even though Kira was clearly going back on her word, he had never seriously expected her to accept so easily in the first place. With the plans he had in mind, it would most definitely be powerful families like Kira’s own that stood in his way the most, so he couldn’t very well ask someone who hardly knew him to betray their family, right?

Ironically, though, this all seemed to be tied to that ‘cousin’ of his. Even without really knowing what was happening, Leonel could only think of two explanations.

The first was that this ‘cousin’ had blood ties to Kira’s family. These ties were most likely related to one of their parents or grandparents at the very worst. Since the Heir Wars relied on gathering outside help, families ties were among the most important. So, Leonel wouldn’t be surprised if his competition had strong backing from either their mother or father’s side.

The second possibility was a marriage alliance. In that case, Kira would be betrothed to one of his ‘cousins’. That would make it even more difficult for her to side with Leonel regardless of the situation.

Truth be told, Leonel didn’t really want Kira for the Heir Wars, he was thinking far beyond this. As far as he was concerned, the Heir Wars were just a convenient and seamless way to take over the Morales family—nothing more, nothing less.

“Alright, alright. Fine. I should have known I couldn’t trust you.” Leonel said teasingly. “Go ahead and jump over the side, then.”

Kira stamped her foot. “You cheated! It definitely doesn’t count!”

## Chapter 879

Leonel was speechless. This girl was really an airhead. If it was so easy to ‘cheat’ in this place, why didn’t everyone do it?

“Okay, okay. I cheated. But you still lost.”

Kira glared at Leonel and began muttering to herself. Clearly, she was feeling conflicted. After all, their competition hadn’t said that no such ‘cheating’ was allowed. So, Leonel hadn’t done anything wrong.

Leonel laughed to himself as he could practically see the gears turning in her little head through her radiant blue eyes. He was caught between believing that this young woman was quite attractive and thinking that she was an adorable little girl.

Of course, Kira was at most a year or two younger than he was. But, that was neither here nor there.

“Fine. Fine. Fine. FINE!” Kira stomped her foot.

Before Leonel could react, he found a delicately sculpted vial being pushed into his chest in thanks to Kira’s palm. He felt a slight cold sweat mat his brow because that airhead was actually still holding her saber at the same time. If she was just a little careless, she might have cut him in half.

“This...?” Leonel blinked in confusion, tilting his head.

The vial was filled with a dense red liquid. But, what shocked Leonel was that when he caught it, his hand almost crashed to the ground.

By the time he picked himself up, Kira was already at the edge of the light road, glaring back at him.

“Consider that as compensation. Oh, and remember that you only get to step off the road like this on your first attempt. During your second attempt, you’re only allowed to quit after gaining a fragment of [Dimensional Cleanse]. Quitting at any other moment means death.

“Humph, I don’t know why I’m explaining these things to you. You’re clearly a cheater.”

With that, Kira stepped off the road as though there wasn’t an endless abyss below. Even Leonel couldn’t help but slightly panic for her. But, before he could do anything, she had vanished.

Leonel’s brow furrowed. He found himself hoping that she was okay. Even though she was an airhead, she had clearly helped him more than he could put into words.

And this thing...

Leonel’s frown deepened as he struggled to pick up the vial. Even his fingers themselves struggled to keep their grip around it. If not for him still being in his [Star Force] form, he would have already dropped it with hardly any hope of picking it up.

Now that Leonel thought about it, even Kira hadn’t exactly lifted it. She had pressed her palm against his chest, then took it out of her spatial ring, passing it off to him.

Remembering this, he couldn’t help but chuckle. It seemed she wanted to get one more dig in before she left. At least she had a conscious, though.

“Hey dictionary, what the hell is this thing.”

[ \*Ping\* ]

[ Replying to seed, this is an Ocean Drop Vial ]

Leonel raised a brow. He had meant the liquid within, but he had almost forgotten how specific he needed to be with the dictionary. Now, though, he was curious about this Ocean Drop Vial.

“What does an Ocean Drop Vial do?”

[ \*Ping\* ]

[It can turn an ocean’s worth of liquid into a single drop. It is especially good at preserving the vitality of blood. It can decrease the weight of the liquid within it by a factor of up to ten thousand.] ρ??∫??????

Leonel’s pupils constricted. Ten thousand?! And it was still so heavy?!

Wait, if it could hold an ocean’s worth of liquid... Even a factor of ten thousand wasn’t nearly enough!

“And what is within it?” Leonel asked slowly.

[ \*Ping\* ]

Leonel’s pupils constricted once again, his expression becoming serious.

The lag between the \*ping\* and response was about a millisecond off. The only time this happened was when a recorded message was about to play. And if that was happening... It meant whatever was in this vial was important enough for his father to leave a message behind about it.

As expected, Leonel’s ability never failed him. Soon, a shimmering hologram of his father appeared for the first time in a long while.

The projection of his father blinked, looked around, and finally focused on Leonel who was above it.

“Hey, brat. What’s up? Been a while, huh?”

Leonel's face remained expressionless. Did this old man really expect him to fall for this same prank call bit again? He had already done it once before, he didn't plan on doing it again.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Leonel was no fool, he would just let his father's practical joke play itself out. He was more interested in hearing about just what was in this vial. The curiosity was itching at him.

"Huh? You can't say hello to your own father after so long? After all the years I spent raising you? After birthing you from my Seed?!"

Leonel's lip twitched. The old man was really laying it on thick this time, huh? He really wasn't in the mood. In fact, he was running out of time. With Kira gone, who knows if the spirits would start to appear again?

"Ah, I get it. You think I'm pranking you again. I had my fun already, it's really me this time."

Leonel remained silent, staring back at the hologram without a word. This game of chicken, he had no intention of losing. He could almost see the moment of victory when his father burst into a fit of laughter, saying it was a pre recording, only for him to not have fallen for it at all.

"Fine, fine." Leonel's father shook his head. "I get it, I can see that look in your eye. You're angry about something. What is it? Your little girlfriend dumped you?"

Leonel's eye twitched. His dad always had a way of reading his mind when no else could. After the Metamorphosis, Leonel almost wanted to believe that that was his ability.

"Listen kid, I always told you women were complicated. You spent four years chasing after that little girl, she probably thinks you'll always be there for her whenever it is she wants to come back, so of course she'll leave you. Let alone women, people in general can't appreciate something until they can't have it when they want it.

"Come on, talk to your old man. Us Morales men are better than this."



Leonel froze, his father's words echoing in his mind. "I..."

His eyes glazed over as though he was trying to think of how to respond when a boisterous laughter suddenly shook him awake.

"Fuck! Dammit! I can't breathe! Just imagining the look on your face! My son's a dumbass! You actually fell for it again!"

Leonel was speechless. He really had.

He suddenly felt the need to find where his father was right now and strangle him to death.

Chapter 880

Leonel shook his head. Maybe someone else would have been truly enraged by now. After all, making jokes about such a sensitive subject was enough to trigger a lot of people, especially when it was about themselves. But, Leonel had always been good at compartmentalizing things.

At least he hadn't said too much before his father went off. This old man was really getting more and more annoying with age.

The good news was that this was less likely to be a serious matter. After all, the last time a recording of his father was triggered, it was about the death of his paternal grandfather. Back then, there hadn't been any room for joking at all. In fact, Leonel distinctly remembered his father being on the brink of rage, an emotion Leonel had never seen on him before.

Since his father could joke now, at least that meant that this was a lighter matter...

Unfortunately, Leonel couldn't have been more wrong.

...

Leonel speechlessly looked from the dictionary to the vial and back again after his father's hologram faded. For a long while, or at least what would have felt like it with how many things ran through his mind, he didn't move or say anything.

Void Invalids.

If it could be said that Invalids were the 'failures' of the universe and Variant Invalids were among the greatest threat, then Void Invalids were the creature lurking in the night—not in the sense that they were a bedtime fairy tale, but in that they were an existential threat to all.

Invalids, as 'failures', were often the carbon copy of the races they supposedly failed from. Leonel had never thought about it before because all the Invalids he had ever come across were humans, but what if the Invalid in question was from another race? There had to be Invalid beasts, maybe Invalid Oryx, or Invalids of any myriad of other races... Right?

Void Invalids were Invalids of a particular race, a race that would have ruled over the Dimensional Verse had they still existed. His father called these creatures Void Beasts.

Void Beasts had never had a world to call home. They were birthed from Celestial Bodies and roamed space with the same freedom that birds roamed the skies. They swallowed worlds as snacks and burped out stars for relief. These were the kind of creatures that were simply far too beyond Leonel's understanding to grasp.

The current Leonel couldn't even sustain himself in the depths of space without special equipment. In fact, only Sixth Dimension existence with special abilities and upward could do such a thing. However, from infancy, such Void Beasts took what he would find difficult as a time of leisure.

And yet... They were not only extinct, they had been devoured by the Invalids of their race, creating an all new category of Invalids all to their own...

Void Invalids.

The truth was that this blood wasn't from a Void Invalid. As far as Leonel knew, Invalids didn't really have blood. Or rather, they did, only up until their death wherein their bodies became motes of light and Force.

The blood that Kira had given him was from the corpse of a Void Beast. According to the dictionary, it had less than 1% of its original potency left by the time Kira's Salvatine family had found it.

From analysis, the original Void Beast had been dead for hundreds of thousands of years, likely longer than even that. The dictionary had further deduced that the Void Invalid that killed it likely only snatched away its Ethereal Glabella, swallowing it for its evolution. As for the rest of the Void Beast's body, it was fairly useless to it.

Leonel could imagine a mountain corpse the size of a planet floating about in space, an endless river of red orbiting about it...

It was said that the empty space in the universe was so vast that even if you pointed in a random direction and headed in it without deviating to the left or right, there was an almost 100% chance you would reach the end of it all without touching a single thing.

For a beast as massive as the Void Beast, this was likely still true. Who knew how long its death had been an unknown blight on the world?

Leonel was suddenly reminded of another thought experiment... If a tree fell in a forest with no one to witness it, does it make a sound?

If you die alone in the vastness of space without a friend or family to remember you... Did you really die?

It was quite chilling. The Void Beasts were so powerful, and yet there were so few... They had no parents, no friends... They could hold the fate of the Dimensional Verse in the palms of their hands, but what did that count for?

Leonel clenched the vial tightly. p??ú???????

Just months ago, he was worrying over exactly how to continue to press Little Blackstar's evolution forward, only for such a boon to end up in his hand. Even though the potency was less than a percent what it was originally, Void Beasts were still the rulers of all Shadow Sovereigns.

Even though Little Blackstar's ability placed him at the very pinnacle, he was greatly limited by how ordinary his origins were. The small body of Earth's minks weren't entirely conducive to producing powerful beings. This was why Leonel needed to help Little Blackstar's evolution along with the blood of stronger beasts.

The stronger Little Blackstar's body became, the easier he would be able to accommodate the strength of his ability, and the faster he would grow.

After absorbing the Mimicry Bat's blood, Little Blackstar's talent shone through and he was immediately able to awaken the strongest form of mimicry: ability steal. Right now, this was already one of Leonel's strongest trump cards toward building the ideal world he had in mind.

This alone was enough to prove just how strong Little Blackstar's talent was.

Leonel was curious to see just how much Little Blackstar would progress after fusing with the blood of a Void Beast...

...

Leonel's subsequent pace was just as slow. He took his own advice quite well. Since he would be behind no matter what, why would he ruin his own stamina just to not catch up anyway?

Even though Leonel didn't have to worry about stamina at all in this place, he still chose this route. This was because the time he gained to not only strengthen himself but to reflect and think was invaluable. With every day that passed, Leonel grew by leaps and bounds.

[Star Fusion] was a technique Leonel formed using Camelot's magic system. He was able to further improve upon it by using his Bronze Runes as a medium.

[Star Fusion] could be considered a Knight's technique rather than a Mage technique. It essentially used his body as a core of a star, combusting energy to boost everything from his strength to his speed to even his reaction time.

Leonel calculated that in the real world, he would probably last a few minutes in that state and it would give him the strength of an entire Dimension above himself, something that proved just how fearsome Vital Star Force was. At least this was the case when the gap between the Fourth and Fifth Dimension was the target.

However, in this world, with a Vital Star looming and the location being saturated with it, Leonel could stay in that state for as long as he wanted to. The only real limitation was the stress on his body. But, even that had been fixed thanks to using his Bronze Runes.

When Leonel activated his Bronze Runes, his body became sturdier and more solid. It was essentially like releasing hidden shackles on his Metal Body and allowing him to become even stronger.

The reason this was necessary was quite obvious. Skin would never be as sturdy as Metal and Metal would never be as flexible as Skin. In order to gain advantages of them both, some sacrifices had to be made, sacrifices that were unnecessary once Bronze Runes were activated.

In their activated state, Leonel's body became both as hard as metal and as flexible and spongy as flesh, giving him the best of both worlds.

By using his Bronze Runes as the passageways for his Vital Star Force, Leonel was essentially forcefully awakening his Metal Synergy Lineage Factor without truly activating it. This gave his body added strength the Vital Star Force was able to feed off of in a feedback loop.

Vital Star Force would make his body more explosive and powerful. This would result in his Bronze Runes becoming stronger and make his body more durable and harder. And, due to his body becoming more durable, Vital Star Force could make him even stronger.

It could be said that the formation of Leonel's Vital Stars and his creation of [Star Fusion] was enough to make this trip more than worth it even if he didn't gain a single other thing... And that was ignoring the fact he had found Little Blackstar the perfect path toward evolution.

Of course, the best part that Leonel was happy to find out was that he really had perfectly deduced the Fourth Dimensional Layer of [Dimensional Cleanse].

After defeating Kira, it had appeared in his mind as though it had always been there. The result was Leonel being impressed with even himself.

‘Not bad, if I do say so myself.’ Leonel chuckled. ‘Oh...?’

Leonel’s gaze narrowed slightly. There, up ahead, he realized that he had made it to the next round after another three months. This time, however, there wasn’t just a single road meeting his own... There were two.

The two young men seemed to sense him at the same time, their gazes glowing with a hidden sharpness.

It seems that they weren’t nearly as friendly as Kira.