

Dimensional Descent - Chapter 12

Leonel awoke with his body on fire, the slight whiff of something catching his attention. The smell made his stomach growl furiously, his mouth almost dripping with water despite how dry it felt.

PANDA-NOVEL Leonel didn't know how his friends were being sustained, but he did know that he hadn't felt the need for water until he woke up. And, now that it had been over four days since the last time he ate, he finally couldn't suppress his hunger anymore.

It was only then that Leonel realized that the Spaniards had been roasting a full pig when he initially entered. He must have not smelt anything before because it had just started to cook.

Leonel struggled to pull himself up, peeling all the heavy armor he wore from his body. He hadn't felt this light in a very long time.

Luckily, since there was no one to tend to the fire, the embers had died off while Leonel slept, sparing the pig from being overcooked.

It was inevitable that it was still burnt in some places, especially since no one had been there to turn it, but Leonel could hardly bother to care. He ripped off a leg, devouring the meat madly.

Initially, he had believed that a leg or two would be enough. But before he realized what was happening, he had already cleaned away half of the pig. Leonel had always been a big eater, but it was always within reason. Something like eating half of a 20 kilogram pig was far beyond his means.

"I want you to find that damned entrance! There's no way that barbarian entered from the front, there must be a hidden entrance! Look at how many of our people those savages have killed!"

Words Leonel couldn't understand drifted from the hidden entrance. It became obvious quickly that he didn't have much time. All those who saw him come out of the hidden staircase were already dead. But, it was only a matter of time before they started looking for false walls.

Because Leonel had knocked down the false wall on this side without replacing it, it was much easier to hear things than it had been in the past.

Moving quickly, Leonel replaced his armor with that of the dead leader's. He was going to pour some more alcohol on his wounds first, but he was shocked to find that many of them had faded. In fact, the aches in his body from his torn muscles had become quite dull as well.

'... Food. It must be food.'

Leonel bit his lip. Where else would he get food so easily? There was no point in carrying this pig with him because it would go bad in at most a few more days. Plus, considering the pace at which he ate it, it wouldn't last that long either.

'The only option is to continue to steal food or to leave this temple...'

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Leonel couldn't come up with the perfect choice now. He had to hurry.

'I came here for... there it is, the atlatl.'

Atlatl's were essentially sling shots for throwing spears. They were a wooden attachment one could slot a spear or 'long dart' into to gain more leverage. Then, using the same throwing motion one was used to, it was possible to throw more than double the distance and with much more speed and force.

To think such a thing was invented over 20 000 years ago, even before the era of the Mayans.

Leonel abandoned his hand axes, using the belt he had stolen from a Spaniard to slip in a few atlatl's. Considering they were reusable, it was unnecessary to have more than one. However, Leonel had learned to plan for the unexpected.

He kept four atlatls with him on one hip and strapped a short sword on the other. He would have taken the leader's long sword, but he had his reasons for not.

Along the walls, countless barrels of throwing spears fitted for the atlatls. Well, to call them spears was a bit inappropriate. They looked like sturdy arrows one might fire from an large-scaled crossbow.

However, Leonel obviously couldn't carry them all. He realized after carrying around his 30 lb silver rod for so long that his body's limits were far higher than they had been previously. However, it wasn't to an exaggerated extent.

Thinking to this point, Leonel chose a square backpack shaped of wood. It was about a meter and a half in length and by Leonel's estimations could hold about 50 atlatls darts or spears.

He filled it quickly. His initial instinct was to try and overfill it, but he knew this would be foolish. If he failed to pull out a spear at a critical time, it would be too late to regret it.

'Let's test it.'

Leonel took out one of his atlatls, fitting an extra spear to it, he held its handle like a javelin.

The spear sat atop the atlatls. As for the atlatls itself, it attached to the end of the spear, allowing it to sit upon it. The body of the atlatls, which Leonel held, curved back around like an 'S' drawn much too tall and lanky. PANDA NOVEL

Flexing his arm, Leonel bowed his body and launched the spear. But the results left him stunned
silent.

The metal tip of the spear stuck into the stone wall, vibrating back and forth wildly.

'It covered a 20 meter distance in 0.4 seconds. That's an average velocity of 50 meters per second or 180 kilometers an hour. It was even still accelerating when it hit the wall, so it still had more left.

The effective range is easily anything within 200 meters...'

Leonel sucked in a cold breath. First he was surprised at his sharp calculations, but he was even more surprised at just how much the atlats improved his throwing ability. Such a simple technology,
yet so effective.

Snapping out of his stupor, Leonel ripped the meter and a half long dart from the wall and hid it within the barrels of spears. In case the Spaniards made it to this room again, he didn't want them to
be able to figure out his limits.

After that, he dug deep and lifted the stone that covered the hidden entrance back up and into its place. This way they wouldn't be able to tell which path he came from. Of course, he only did this
after retrieving the last third of his silver rod.

That was right, Leonel had already found another hidden entrance in this very room. In fact, he counted a total of five. It could only be said that the Spanish were too negligent. Either that, or his
senses were simply too sharp.

Following this, Leonel left through the hidden pathway with the least activity on the other side,
slipping away to unleash hell on the Spaniards.

In the following weeks, he mapped every floor of the temple with the exception of the lowest which
he believed must have housed the Sacrificial Room.

As time passed, Leonel's senses grew sharper. He could hear footsteps from further away, and from those footsteps he could tell everything from the height of the soldier in question to their weight. At the same time, his control over his body reached great heights. He no longer threw with his full power every time, only using just enough to maintain his stamina and slay his opponent.

About two days after he left the weaponry, he did manage to find a path outside. Once he had mapped out the hidden pathways he could use to reach it, he exited frequently, hunting for his own meals before returning.

He realized that he simply had no chance fighting the Spaniards from the outside. Without the ability to take advantage of guerrilla tactics, it was a futile effort.

Unfortunately, as time passed, the Spaniards grew more and more wary, making it difficult for Leonel to find small groups to attack. As a result, he had no choice but to begin assaults on groups of four, five, eventually even groups of ten were the smallest he could find. .p.d.f.□□□□□

However, at the same time, his skill grew more pronounced. His throwing ability was already at a near unconscious level, but it was his combat ability that took the greatest leap forward. He learned to keep his movements reserved, yet firm. Simple, yet potent.

He had never been formally taught in any martial arts, but as his mind spun and his deductive abilities deepened with his growing senses, he felt as though it didn't matter.

With every encounter, a new possibility was stored in his memory. With this additional data point, he would adjust his fighting style ever so slightly to account for it. Months later, Leonel no longer had to rely on his throwing prowess to gain victory against large groups. Even when battling a group of ten Spaniards, the combination of his inhuman senses and battle experience was enough to take them on.

By this point, Leonel was certain that his wrist watch's assessment of him bordered on fraudulent. He wasn't entirely sure how the grading system worked, but if others had higher grade abilities than what he was already able to accomplish, it would be far too exaggerated.

Leonel reached a point where with a single glance, he was able to categorize his opponent by giving them an athleticism score. He broke down his categories into Strength, Speed, Agility, Coordination and Stamina.

Strength was simple, just how much power a person could generate. However, with how many different ways strength could be applied, it became incredibly complex. Leonel chose to weigh this category by how much power a person could generate by swinging, throwing or using their best attack. In this case, it would be how hard a Spaniard could swing their sword or stab their pike.

Speed was something Leonel categorized as straight line running velocity.

Agility encompassed both acceleration, speed in changing direction, and how quickly a person could use their weapon — how fast a sword swung, etc.

Coordination was mostly hand-eye coordination. How precise a person was in using their strength, speed and agility. How accurate were the swings of their weapons. So on, and so forth.

Finally, stamina was the most straight forward. How long could you maintain your optimal fighting strength?

Leonel ranked all of these from a scale of 0 to 1, where 0 was having this ability completely crippled and 1 represented the pinnacle of the human race. This pinnacle was something Leonel used the limits of his own body to extrapolate and estimate.

By Leonel's estimates, an Olympic athlete of Earth would have a 0.5 in the category they needed the most for their event.

As for the Spaniards, they averaged about 0.4 in every category. And Leonel...

[Strength: 0.67; Speed: 0.51; Agility: 0.55; Coordination: 0.82; Stamina: 0.63]

After a few more weeks passed, Leonel felt it was necessary to add a sixth category: Reactions.

Unexpectedly, it ended up being his highest 'stat', sitting at 0.91. This category not only encompassed reaction speed, but also factored in the instinctual movements battle experience gave you. Of course, most of the reason Leonel's Reaction was so high wasn't due to his experience, but because of his inhuman senses.

Leonel found that when he broke down his opponents systematically with his self-created method, taking them down became even easier. He shamelessly targeted their weaknesses without remorse.

For those with great speed and agility, he overwhelmed them with strength. For those with great strength, he overwhelmed them with speed and agility. For those with great stamina, he left them to last, allowing them to tire themselves out first before he dealt the finishing blow.

Before Leonel realized it, he had grown numb to the slaughter. After breaking down their lives to mere numbers floating in his mind, it suddenly became easier to do what needed to be done. At the very least, it became easier to use the excuse that the Spanish committed terrible atrocities in this era to bury his guilt.

Emboldened by his growing strength, Leonel began to assault the Spanish from within the temple and in the camps outside under the cover of dark.

Their numbers continued to fall quickly. Leonel had no idea how much time he had spent in this Sub-Dimensional Zone, but it was enough for the Spaniards to start calling him 'El Diablo'.

He might not have known much if any Spanish, but he definitely knew what that meant. It was a name that let his actions over the last months truly set in.

His numbness turned to cold.

On yet another seemingly monotonous day, a drastic change finally occurred. With the number of Spaniards drastically lowered, the Mayans holed up within the Sacrificial Room burst out, leading a mighty counter attack of their own.

Leonel watched the battle play out from one of the few small windows he had found in the temple.

He felt a wave of relief overcome him. Maybe he would be able to head home soon...

But, that was when another question struck him. Did he have a home to return to now?

Sighing, Leonel made his way through the network of hidden tunnels. A few had been found by the Spaniards in this time, but many of them were still intact.

Slowly but surely, he finally entered the only floor he hadn't. Victory seemed close at hand, but Leonel knew that the Chief Priest was currently in the greatest danger now. He had led enough football comebacks to know that people were the most vulnerable when they believed victory was at hand. So, Leonel chose to watch silently behind a false wall.

He had found this tunnel long ago but had never exited it. There was no point. He couldn't communicate with the Mayans since he couldn't speak their language, so it was better if he helped from the shadows.

But, who knew that the first things Leonel would see was an old man with wrinkled brown skin, standing over the body of a youthful beauty who seemed to be trying her best not to cry.

Her nude form could just barely be seen by Leonel, as could the knife the Chief Priest held high in the air as he chanted something he couldn't understand.

Leonel was so stunned that his face drained of all color. That girl was about to die, and the reason she would was in part his fault. Had he not...

No, that didn't make sense. Wouldn't her fate at the hands of the Spaniards be even worse? Just forget it, they're not real people anyway. Just finish the quest.

Protect the Chief Priest... Just protect the Chief Priest...

Before Leonel knew what he was doing, he had kicked down the false wall in a maddened rage. Guilt he had suppressed in his heart for months came spilling over in a bloody killing intent built from the deaths of hundreds of Spaniards.

His left arm reached into the container of long darts, his right gripping his atlatls as he hooked in his first attack.

"Die!"

This was the first time in Leonel's life he truly wanted to kill. Even with Conrad, his intent hadn't truly been there.

But the result was far beyond his expectations. The chanting Priest turned toward him with a stunned expression, but reacted quickly, a barrier of something Leonel couldn't see appearing to block the piercing spear.

Leonel stood frozen.

[Chief Priest]

[Strength: 0.12; Speed: 0.13; Agility: 0.15; Coordination: 0.42; Stamina: 0.33; Reactions: 0.73]

Not only was the Priest's reaction the highest Leonel had ever seen aside from his own, it was the highest score Leonel had ever given, period. On top of this... Leonel suddenly felt that he was missing a seventh category...

Just what was that wall of energy?