

Dimensional Descent

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 1641: Anastasia's Understanding

Leonel blinked and waited for Anastasia to finish another tirade before he could finally start asking the questions he wanted. Luckily, Anastasia was very forthcoming.

"If I research it properly, I'm sure I can come up with some methods, but it will take time, and it's honestly probably best if you think of it yourself. From my understanding, Force should be seen as a living, breathing entity even if it isn't one. How one chooses to manipulate it, even if the path ends up being the same, should be individual.

"For example, think of walking, or running, or throwing, these are things everyone can do and everyone does, but do two people ever do them exactly the same? Even if there are some mechanics that are more efficient than others, even for those that have reached the pinnacle, they wouldn't do it exactly the same, and there would even be some that shatter the mold.

"Force should be the same. Ultimately, the most powerful Force is the one that comes from you or works well with you. If you take guidance from others on how to tap into this, it'll never truly be your own.

"That said, I think that I can give you some guidance.

"From what I understand, Force can be divided into certain grades from their inception and it's difficult for these Forces to break out from their mold, but it isn't easy. Just like the example of running before, even someone who isn't gifted in running can still squeeze out more of their potential given time and effort."

Leonel nodded slowly. This was like the rubber band example again, it seemed that Anastasia agreed with this sentiment.

"However, I would say that Forces have far greater potential for increased strength. Whereas an untalented runner could never outclass a world class

long distance runner or sprinter no matter how hard they trained, a Force can because they ultimately have the same root."

Leonel's brows jumped. Now this was new. He had never heard of Forces having the same root before, but this did make sense. Ultimately, wasn't it all just energy?

Even though the scope of a Third Dimensional world was limited, there were many teachings of Earth that Leonel still held onto even now, and this was one of them.

Energy could be transferred and changed, but it couldn't be destroyed. This should be true of Force as well.

There was a reason there were Force Crystals and Pure Force Crystals. The natural state of Force was to be together.

And then there was Neutral Force which was inherently an amalgamation of all Force.

Everything had the same root.

"If I'm correct, when Forces break past certain limits, this should be the Force Manipulation you're talking about. And upon breaking those limits, Forces begin to display strengths that they didn't originally have, even capable of crushing Forces above them in strength.

"Theoretically, this kind of Force, or a Force that has broken its limits, should be the true root of the separation of Dimensions. When a Force that has broken through more limits meets one that hasn't broken through any, or even one that has fewer limits broken, it can directly suppress it.

"This will manifest as a higher Dimensional being meeting a lower Dimensional one and crushing them."

Leonel nodded slowly. He had experienced this personally. Whether it was his speed of thought, his Dream Force, or his Scarlet Star Force, all things that he had supreme confidence in, they had all been crushed in the face of Thaela and the cobra demon.

The cobra demon was an especially good example because their Water Force was relatively weak in its most basic form. And yet, it had easily been able to block and crush Leonel's Scarlet Star Force with relative ease.

If not for it making the mistake of eating Leonel, or if it had a method of sensing and attacking Leonel's soul directly, Leonel would have most definitely lost that battle.

But luckily, the awakening of his soul allowed him to break free of the suppression his mind had been under and his Dream Force finally began to work normally once again.

But even then, Leonel's Scarlet Star Force had been useless against the cobra demon until Leonel took advantage of an opening to deal it an even more severe injury.

The gap between a Force that had broken its limits and one that hadn't was simply far too large.

Leonel fell into his own thoughts for a moment before he nodded.

"Alright. Anastasia, can you still start working on the generic method. I have tons of Force Mantras here," Leonel waved a hand and caused the dozens of Basic Force Mantras he had taken to appear, "and I think that they could be of some help to you.

"I'll forge my own path, but it will still be good to have a generic method that others can use, it'll help my faction to grow stronger. Also, if the feeling isn't obvious, I'd also like to know when I have a breakthrough so I know if I'm headed in the right direction or not."

Anastasia's eyes lit up when she saw the booklets and quickly caused them to shoot up from the ground and hover around her. She didn't even bother to respond to Leonel, she was already entirely focused on what was before her, even oo'ing and ah'ing from time to time.

Leonel chuckled and didn't mind it. Soon, he had re-entered a state of absolute focus.

'My Spatial Force comprehension is well beyond that of my others, but I haven't taken the time to understand Emulation Spatial Force in specific. The kind of understanding I have about Spatial Force right now is heavily biased

toward movement type Spatial Forces with a hint about storage type which might potentially be applicable.

'Anastasia is right. Emulation Spatial Force is more about stacking space, giving it form, using it to attack and to defend, movement is at the bottom of its list of capabilities. And, if I want to use it like Thaela did, I'll have to invest time into researching Spatial Force in this sort of lane.

'But for now, there are more important things. Once I finish reconstructing my Metal Body and my Divine Armors, we will walk down that road.'

Leonel smiled.

"It's been too long since we've Crafted together, hm buddy?"

Bloop

Little Tolly rushed around Leonel's fingers and armors like a flashy silver snake. The little guy's excitement was at an all time high.

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Chapter 1642: Settled

Leonel restarted from the very beginning, using Urbe Ore to build up his foundation just like he had from the very beginning. However, the Urbe Ore he used this time couldn't be compared to the last in the slightest, and that was because he tempered this Urbe Ore with Cleansing Waters first.

Much like with Force Crystals, the Essence of Urbe Ore, or Ores in general for that matter, could be segregated into pure and impure. Leonel hadn't been aware of this the first time he began his journey in cultivating Metal Body, but after seeing the effects the Cleansing Waters had on his new Innate Node, he easily extrapolated these matters toward other potential applications.

He found that after using Cleansing Waters, the amount of Essence one needed for an Ore to be considered "whole" dropped by as much as half. This meant that an Ore tempered by Cleansing Waters could produce the same effects with less volume used.

This was a huge discovery. If Leonel had known this ahead of time, of the billions he had spent purely on resources in the exchange, he could have put much of it toward other resources.

It was already too late to change this, but all was not hopeless. After all, if Leonel looked at things from a glass half full perspective, then this meant that about half the resources he had were suddenly freed up. He could still use these to exchange for more wealth, or better yet, put them toward more Crafts.

Now that Leonel had returned to the Human Domain, he was extremely wealthy. It had to be remembered that his mother had left billions worth of Urbe Ore for him. His wealth was comparable to most Seventh Dimensional individuals, and even dwarfed a good majority of them if he really thought about it.

But when building a faction, one couldn't have too much money. There was simply no such thing.

As Leonel absorbed the cleansed Urbe Ore, his body was filled with a unique feeling. It felt almost as though energies were softly massaging every inch of him, gently caressing the contours of his figure. It was an elevating sort of experience.

The energies flowed smoother and Leonel's pores seemed to sing.

He already would face no bottlenecks up to the Sixth Dimension, but he suddenly realized that he would hardly face them in general if he always used cleansed Ores like this.

It wasn't long before Leonel's body reached absolute perfection in the Third Dimension.

Despite the fact he had used Pure Urbe Ore, Leonel actually absorbed much more now than he had in the past. In fact, the gap wasn't just a few kilograms. The amount he needed was truly astronomical.

In the past, due to his Metal Body barely breaking into the Fourth Dimension, Leonel had been able to battle well above his Dimension. Of course, his enemies back then had also been mediocre talents, but the sentiment was still true.

Now, his current Metal Body's foundation was even more exaggerated and there was a difference of at least a hundred times. With such a gap, even if he was facing the premiere talents of the Human Domain back then, his battle prowess would be just as impressive.

Leonel smoothly entered the Fourth Dimension, the smooth edges of his body becoming rougher and more defined. However, even with this being the case, he maintained his flexibility and he didn't feel that his body had gotten heavier.

Metal Synergy was considered to be the best defensive Lineage of the Human Domain being it lacked the usual weaknesses. That said, it was more accurate to say that these weaknesses were instead less prevalent rather than being eliminated entirely.

Leonel had still experienced his body becoming exceptionally heavy in the past and he had to practice flexibility techniques to ensure that he didn't become too stiff in his movements.

But now, these problems seem like a thing of the past. The pliability of his body didn't change in the slightest. In fact, because he had just reconstructed his body after being eaten alive, he had the range of movements and flexibility of a newborn, there was no tension in his body whatsoever.

As for his weight, he felt like his Gravity Domain had become so much more refined. Rather than applying it to his surroundings, he could apply it to individual portions of his body, making his punches as heavy as a moon if he so wished it.

The Gravity Domain of his Lineage Factor was one that Leonel used rarely, honestly because he had too many abilities to choose from. It wasn't often powerful enough that the use was worthwhile, especially since Leonel spent so much of his time fighting individuals so much more powerful than himself.

Now, however, he felt that it had the potential to become far more of a staple to his battle prowess. His control had reached the point where he could even apply it individually, making his spear as heavy as a mountain or his arrows more piercing than an enemy could contend with.

After Leonel was finished calmly analyzing the changes to himself, he waved a hand and caused the next stage of tempered ores to rise out from the river.

The Ores formed into two even piles and would be the foundation of his Fourth Dimensional Metal Body. As expected, they fell into two piles, one for Water Force and the other for Life Force.

There were two kinds of Water Force Ores that Leonel had chosen. One emphasized the defenses of Water Force and the other emphasized the heaviness of Water Force.

Void Star Force was a Water Force known for its defenses, but the method by which it did so was also important.

There was a reason it was named Void Star Force, and that was because when manifested, the Force was akin to a blackhole. Not only did it have a huge amount of density, nothing could make it past it, swallowing everything in its vicinity whole.

Thus, Leonel wanted high affinities for Water Forces with high absorption capabilities and density, thus he settled on these two categories.

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Chapter 1643: More than Enough

Leonel took a similar approach for Vital Star Force.

Vital Star Force could be considered to be a type of Life Force, but it was also very strict and defined in its usage. It focused mainly on vitality. In this way, it was very similar to Blood Force, but it had its differences as well.

For example, Vital Star Force was also very heavy as it was primarily a Star Force as opposed to a Life Force. These sort of subtle differences seemed unimportant, but it was exactly what separated those who could fully grasp their Forces between those who were both lost and weak.

Leonel felt that if he had to grasp Vital Star Force in the future, it would be incredibly important for him to understand these small differences.

In his current understanding, Blood Force was a vessel for another power source while Vital Star Force was the power source. The latter was like a nuclear reactor, bursting with potential and producing a constant, large stream of power, while the former, Blood Force, was a gentle stream and focused on longevity.

Leonel understood that this understanding was incredibly limited and could only be considered to be rudimentary, but it was more than enough to lay a foundation for where he would go in the future.

As such, he likewise chose two categories of Life Force. One focused on burst energy, giving one a second wind one the brink of death. The other a constant power source, pumping one full of energy over a long and continuous time.

For Leonel's Water Forces, he chose Mud Ore to stand in as his heavy Water Force and Wave Ore to be his defensive Water Force.

Mud Ore didn't sound very appetizing, but Leonel didn't care about this, he only chose it for its abilities.

Mud Ore was known to be sticky, persistent and resilient. It was actually a rare Domain Type Ore which could cause changes even to the environment itself.

Wave Ore was one known to be the core of many top tier Black Grade Water Force defensive treasures. It was able to face an attack and erode it in continuous waves. Although it wasn't initially powerful, it was likewise persistent. By the time it reached the person the attack had targeted, the attack might not even have 10% of its original strength.

Once again, this was also a Domain Type Ore.

As for his Life Forces, Leonel chose two Vein Type Ores.

The first embodied bursting Life Force. This Ore was known as Second Wind Ore. It was usually designed to be the vein pattern of a pendant type treasure.

According to usual Crafting practices, this Ore would be surrounded by another Ore of a specific Element. Once the pendant was activated, the treasure would shatter and immediately convert the whole of the element that surrounded it into power for the user. This was essentially like storing a second body of Force within yourself.

However, Leonel obviously wouldn't be able to use this ability when he absorbed the Ore. What he wanted was the underlying mechanism of this ability.

In order to work, this Ore had to be able to quickly turn any kind of Force into usable energy for a battle without a long process of adaptation. What this essentially meant was that it was a catalyst, a catalyst that was compatible when any body that it was attached to.

This ability was the purest kind of Life Force there was.

The words Anastasia had spoken had truly resonated with Leonel. She had equated comprehending a Force to being like running. The way Leonel interpreted that was to mean that the action of using Force was no different from any physical action you might take.

Leonel had always seen Force to be a separate part of himself, something that he pulled from the environment to use temporarily.

But Second Wind Ore was able to use its Life Force characteristics to take any Force and make it a part of you immediately.

What did this mean? It meant that it could very well be that the foundation of Life Force itself was this ability to make Force a part of a person. And maybe, Life Force, since it represented Life itself, was precisely the Force that connected humans like Leonel to all other Forces as well.

When Leonel looked at things like this, he felt like he grasped exactly what the core of Vital Star Force was.

Maybe, Vital Star Force was just able to take the most vibrant energy source there was in the whole of existence, the Star, and catalyze it into power usable directly by the body.

When Leonel grasped this, there were already changes to his Stars. In fact, right this moment, his three Vital Stars formed their complete Third and Fourth Dimensional Star Runes in one go.

Leonel smiled, feeling that he was on the right track.

So, rightfully, his second Life Force Ore was one that didn't convert energies, but rather provided a large amount of energy. This Ore was known as Longevity Jade Ore.

Longevity Jade Ore was considered to be both a Vein Type and Domain Type Ore. In addition, it was a lot like Urbe Ore in that there were multiple stages of

this Ore all the way up the Dimensions. Leonel planned to fill himself to the brim with this Ore at every single stage.

He would follow this formula for every step of the way. Longevity Jade Ore would stay the very same and the others would change, but the balance he would have would be unmatched.

The end result would be a body that was both almost impossible to injure, and one in which, even if it were to be injured, had a healing factor that would reach an incomprehensible level.

Leonel quickly made his way through the Fourth Dimension, his body radiating a delicate glow with every step forward he took.

He also required much more than he had in the past to reach saturation at these stages as well, but he had long since been prepared for this, trading for more than enough.

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Chapter 1644: Condense

Leonel absorbed a final bit of Mercury Ore, heavy waves of silvery light wafting off from him. His presence alone seemed to make the surrounding air heavier.

He opened his eyes, exhaling a breath.

He had just reached the very limits of his Tier 1 Sixth Dimensional Metal Body. Of course, in doing so he had opened the next set of Gates in his Metal Synergy Lineage Factor and had, as such, stepped into the Sixth Dimension with his body, allowing his strength to undergo a qualitative change.

Leonel didn't bask in his own glory for much longer. Although he felt that he was particularly powerful left, he was still focused on other things.

With his Metal Body complete, he now needed to create three sets of Divine Armors. The first two would replace the two that he had lost, and the final one would become his Sixth Dimensional Armor.

Leonel had already decided to sink his Metal Body and Divine Armor. This would bring out the most of his strength, and this also meant that he had to

lean upon the same path he had chosen to take, which meant Water Force and Life Force.

Leonel believed that his path of Water Force was just fine. In fact, he even planned on using the exact same Ores he had used to form his Metal Body on it. However, he wanted to do something different with his Life Force.

Ultimately, his Divine Armor was meant to be a tool of battle. Leonel didn't want it to be too focused on support and not have enough attacking prowess. So Leonel wanted an armor that could maximize defenses, yes, but he wanted the Life Force aspects to boost his strength rather than just his vitality.

Luckily, he had the perfect framework to make this work, and that was to rely on Star Fusion.

He wanted his armor to be able to accumulate and use a huge burst of energy all at once, qualitatively boosting all of his other abilities at once. This meant that he needed a Life Force not just capable of allowing its user to make use of and connect to other Forces, but a Life Force also capable of reversing this connection and allowing such Forces to flourish by virtue of its connection to it.

Vital Star Force was one of the best examples of this, but Vital Star Force was a fusion of Forces that worked on just one kind of Force: Star Force. In addition, Vital Star Force was far too high level of a Force to be found and used in Divine Armors at lower Dimensions.

Although Leonel's Metal Body was now in the Sixth Dimension, his Divine Armor technique worked exactly the same as his Metal Body technique. Although they could synergize, one had to build it from the ground up.

That said, Leonel already had a solution for this.

For the Fourth Dimension, he picked an Ore called Surging Tide Ore. For the Fifth Dimension, he picked an Ore called Instant Resonance Ore. And for the Sixth Dimension, he chose an Ore known as Central Pillar Ore.

All of these Ores had different names, but they all had one main ability, and that was to bolster other Forces, albeit to varying degrees. In addition, they all used Life Force as a basis, working beautifully with other Ore.

Each and every one of them was a Foundational Type Ore just like Urbe Ore and they functioned as such.

In the past, Leonel could only pick one central ore to build his Divine Armors around. However, now, his scope was on a completely different level.

He planned to forge all of his armors to the Life Grade. When they were complete, they would be considered to be one whole. As such, the Evolution Ore would thus be effective on the entire armor instead of just a portion of it.

This meant that Leonel's Fourth Dimensional Divine Armor wouldn't just be quasi Fifth Dimensional, it would truly be Fifth Dimensional. And this likewise meant that his Sixth Dimensional Divine Armor would be truly Seventh Dimensional!

Leonel got to work immediately, delicately refining each one of his blueprints. Before he even began on the first one, he formed all three blueprints first.

Leonel's aspirations were actually beyond just forming Life Grade Divine Armors. He wanted his armors to resonate with each other, borrowing strength from each predecessor.

Leonel had realized that after he formed his second Divine Armor, because they didn't follow the exact same path, their resonance wasn't perfect and they couldn't borrow strength from one another. The result of this was his first Divine Armor becoming almost meaningless.

After making a mistake once, Leonel definitely wouldn't make it again. If he did this properly, all three Divine Armors would practically become like one entity, exuding far greater strength.

When Leonel was finished with the blueprints, he got to work immediately.

Maybe in the history of the Human Domain, there had never been a mere Fourth Dimensional, or Black Grade treasure, constructed with so many parts.

Leonel remembered that his first Divine Armor was barely a few dozen parts, but now this one was easily into the hundreds and it would only grow more complex. However, his state of focus was so deep that he didn't even seem to notice.

His movements only became faster and faster with every passing moment, a dense Auspicious Air hanging over him.

His Force Quill danced in one hand, his other hand dancing with an impossible speed in the air.

He formed each individual part with conviction. If there was even the slightest mistake, he threw it away and restarted. In the end, he even finally deployed his Starry Spirit Domain, blanketing the region with his Dream World.

His connection with Little Tolly grew even stronger, and his pace touched upon a greater level.

A smile graced his features. It had been too long since he felt this feeling. Crafting truly made him feel at home. Nothing would escape his control.

"Condense."

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Chapter 1645: "Mastered"?

Leonel punched out, his action being followed by a sharp whistling sound. He could feel the wind stacking up against knuckles, his punching speed too fast for the particles to get out of the way any faster. If he pushed just a measure faster, he was certain that he'd be able to shatter the sound barrier, a feat that would be shocking considering the fact that this was an Eighth Dimensional world.

With a thought, a clone of Leonel appeared, however the original Leonel didn't use it immediately. Instead, he continued filling it to the brim with solid Spatial Force, making it harder and more robust.

Then, without moving an inch, Leonel allowed the clone punch him with all the force it could muster.

BANG!

The sound reached Leonel long after the punch landed on his chest. Vicious winds kicked up and his hair was sent flying backward with such force that it even looked as though it wanted to rip away from his scalp.

As usual, Leonel's hair grew a great deal after practicing his Metal Body, but even so, he had long since cut it down to size once more. Even still, the effects were so exaggerated.

However, Leonel didn't move a single inch.

His skin seemed to ripple with a formless energy and with a BANG!, the clone he had taken so long to form shattered into pieces before his eyes, unable to withstand the strike at all.

Leonel nodded lightly to himself.

When he took so much time and effort to build a clone, its strength wasn't something that could be casually dealt with. In fact, it was probably much stronger than his previous self. And yet, it couldn't even withstand hitting Leonel with a full powered blow.

The current Leonel's defenses could not only be defensive, but they had a certain offensive quality to them as well, taking Candle's ability as inspiration.

Candle had the ability to form mirrors that could both reflect and multiply attacks she faced. She was a terrible headache to face and Leonel had only defeated her originally by outsmarting her. Considering how many decades of training she had under Anastasia and Wise Star Order, it was doubtful that he would be able to replicate this feat without quite some effort on his part.

Of course, Leonel's abilities weren't so exaggerated. He could only reflect a portion of an enemy's strike relying solely on the abilities of his body, but this was where the beauty of his Tier 4 Control Ability Index came into play.

Using the flexibility of his newly constructed body and his absolute control over every aspect himself, even does to the individual cells.

Using this control, Leonel could take advantage of his Metal Body's innately water-like characteristics to redirect the flow of energy that collided with him and use it to empower him. In homage to Candle, he called this ability Dream Mirror.

Essentially, Dream Mirror used his Bronze Runes, or what might more accurately be called his Bronze Aura, to redirect the force he experienced. Like this, he was able to replicate Candle's ability within range of his Bronze Aura almost perfectly.

Unfortunately, the key word was "almost".

While Candle could accomplish this feat with almost any Force or attack, Leonel could only do so with physical attacks. In addition, said physical attacks had to be blunt as his effectiveness against piercing attacks lessened drastically.

Of course, there was good news as well. With Leonel's current bodily defenses, even attacks that could technically be classified as piercing would still be ultimately blunt in his eyes. If one didn't have the strength to pierce through his defenses, there was really no difference between a sword blade and a punch, they were all the same.

In addition, although he could redirect and multiply the strength of Forces like he could physical attacks, he could still convert whatever impact they had against him into a physical output so long as they also couldn't break his defenses.

After reaching this state, Leonel returned to his calm.

By now, his naked body exuded a perpetual bronzed glow. It made others feel as though he was wreathed in a halo constantly, like he was separate from the normal world of humans.

When matched with his vascular physique and his hair which also seemed to exude its own pale violet light, he looked to be far more like a Spiritual than a human.

Leonel flipped his palm over and a familiar gorgeous spear appeared. It had a bright golden, harpoon-like single sided blade, and a radiant white body covered in hexagonal scales. No matter how one looked at it, it looked far more like a work of art than a weapon of war.

The faint sound of dancing and sharpening blades resounded around Leonel as closed his eyes, focusing on the movements of his spear.

Due to his time in the Zone, Leonel had had an opportunity to learn a lot more about Resonance and its potential applications. As that experience accumulated, there was a subtle feeling tugging him toward a certain direction.

Listening to and feeling the resonance of Spear Force had become a method to increasing his strength by leaps and bounds.

Even though Leonel hadn't stepped into the Sixth Dimension with his Spear Force, after mastering poetry and calligraphy, his Spear Force had strength by huge leaps. So, wouldn't the same happen if he applied music and painting as well?

However... Had he truly "mastered" it? He felt like could always create more powerful lines, more powerful words to give wings to the feelings in his heart.

It didn't even feel like these words had to be particularly tyrannical, or that they had to continuously one up each other. That feeling in his chest, those emotions he wanted to embody... They all felt like they were the most important.

What was that image his uncle had been trying to draw before he ran out of energy and stopped in dissatisfaction? Wasn't it just a simple spear? There was nothing grandiose or oppressive about it... The difference was in what his uncle wanted that spear to embody... That was where the strength lay.

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Chapter 1646: Weightless

By this point, Leonel's Life Force affinity had reached an unprecedented level, at least in comparison to his former self. This allowed him to see through things he hadn't been able to in the past, and he had even come to understand just where Aina's "instincts" came from.

Life Force was the core of it all, the root from which the connection to all things was formed.

Leonel wasn't the kind of person who liked to rely on instincts. He wanted to truly understand something before he could apply it. This was the way he liked to work and it was also part of the reason that he was so powerful now.

While one might say that he could be more powerful if he simply entirely relied on his talent, was this really the case?

If not for his analytical breakdown of calligraphy and poetry, would he have mastered it in as little as a year? If not for his structural understanding of Bow

Force and its applications, would it naturally progress so far? If not for his analytical mind, would he be half the Force Crafter he was today?

One might say that it was precisely because of his talent that he was able to progress so far and so quickly in things like Bow Force, but was that true? He didn't have a Bow Force Lineage Factor, but he definitely did have a Spear Force Lineage Factor, so why was the latter lagging behind the former?

The Bow just worked better with Leonel's personality and way of viewing things. Certain weapons had their own methods of interacting with the world, some of which Leonel understood, and some he didn't.

The bow, the sniper rifle, or throwing weapons, were all weapons of skill, patience and calculation.

The spear, however, wasn't necessarily like this. In fact, the spear was probably the most primitive weapon in all of existence. From its inception, it was barbaric and unrestrained. This simply wasn't a weapon that fit well with Leonel's personality.

As Leonel continued to move in silence, his heart calm and his thoughts flowing like the waters of a gentle stream, he thought back to Old Man Hutch.

Hutch had always wanted Leonel to listen to his weapon, to feel its presence, to let it talk to him...

Leonel had always found these things to be worthless. No matter how obstinate the old man was, he couldn't be bothered. He didn't like doing things he couldn't understand. In fact, that stubbornness even led him to not even asking the dictionary about Spear Force, he didn't want anything to influence his path forward.

It wasn't actually quite accurate to say that Leonel didn't like the idea itself, what he didn't like was the lack of logic behind it.

If there was logic behind the training method that required him to run around a city naked, Leonel might think about doing it. It wasn't the actual process that was the problem, it was the lack of reason behind it.

These were weapons. They didn't have hearts and souls, nor did they have consciousnesses of their own. Talking about "listening" to them was asinine.

However, this felt different.

What Leonel was "listening" to right now wasn't the weapon, he was "listening" to its resonance with his Life Force. How it interacted, how they fused, how they repelled one another.

The so-called "life" of a weapon didn't come from the weapon itself, it always came from the wielder. This was why Leonel could say a word like "Die" and yet have it wield so much more power than a poetry verse a hundred times more complicated.

This was the true root of calligraphy and poetry, and for that matter, it was the true root of music and painting as well.

Leonel's spear swished through the air.

Golden streams of Spear Force flourished, the delicate sounds of chimes ringing. However, astonishingly enough, if one closed their eyes and Internal Sight off to Leonel's existence, this delicate music would vanish.

The instant one focused on Leonel once more, though, the music would return, its gentle cadence soothing the heart and soul.

The melody changed and it became voluminous and oppressive. Just observing one would feel as though they had been trapped in a maelstrom, every pierce, every sweep and every chop feeling like another piece of their life had been severed away.

But then everything changed once more.

Leonel's Absolute Domain faded, the swishing sounds of sharpening blades fading into the background and a gorgeous scene was painted by them instead, delicate flecks of golden Spear Force dancing through the air, adding to the beauty with every stroke.

Leonel switched between countless stances. Each and every one painted a new picture and exuded a different kind of aura.

Towering mountain made his spear towering and heavy. Streams of rivers made his spear swift and winding. Starry skies made his spear vast and endless, its blade capable of reaching any point with just a single pierce.

But even these images began to slowly fade.

As time passed, the melodies became quiet, lacking even the whistling of the wind.

Soon after it, the vast images created by strokes of golden Spear Force also vanished, shrinking further and further until there was nothing left but the slightest radiance of a white-gold spear.

Everything became deathly silent but Leonel's movements had never stopped and his eyes had never opened.

After a certain point, he couldn't even feel the grass beneath his feet or the wind against his body. He felt as though he was gliding through a voice, the only feeling he could experience being the weight of the spear in his hand, he couldn't even feel the special characteristics of the spear in question.

It was as though everything had faded but the embodiment of a spear... Not the spear or a particular spear, but just a spear, an amorphous construct without form or presence.

And eventually, even the weight of that spear vanished.

In the real world, the white-gold spear in Leonel's hand seamlessly vanished to be replaced by a jet black rod, radiating a dense black fog.

And then, Leonel pierced forward.

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Chapter 1647: Understanding Himself

Leonel woke up with Aina on his chest.

After finishing his training, he didn't hurry to do things with the Tentacle Womb or other faction building things because after a while, he suddenly felt the need to just spend time with Aina.

When his Spear Force perfected its fusion with the final stage of his grandfather's path of the spear, Leonel mind entered an odd state of relaxation where he suddenly understood that understanding himself was even more important than understanding individual Forces.

Anastasia's words, when taken to the logical extreme, precisely meant these things.

Ultimately, just like with his Spear Force, the "life" of his Forces didn't come from them, but rather himself. While they all had their own preferences and leanings, they were ultimately in his control.

Running was always designed to be faster than running. By the same token, throwing was always designed to move things from your hand into a further distance. The same assignments could be made for walking, swimming, talking...

Any one of these activities were things everyone and almost everything did naturally. They all also had the same exact purposes, regardless of who was executing them. However, did any two individuals do them the exact same way?

Leonel had come to understand that he should treat Force in this way as well.

When he used Force, he actively did something that was the equivalent of running, or walking, or swimming, or even talking. However, he had always treated it as an external thing, not putting enough time and attention into them, much the same way that anyone could run, walk, swim or talk, but not everyone could do these things as effectively as another.

And the root to reaching prominence in these facets was to first understand oneself.

When it came to walking, you learned through trial and error as a child. When it came to running, you did the same thing. For swimming, it was the same once again, and it was even the same for talking.

All of these things were forgotten by most as they happened so early on in life, but Leonel could remember those memories clearly. He could remember every failed attempt and reattempt. He could remember how he had to learn to shift his balance to adjust to his own body, not the other way around.

Likewise, if he wanted to understand these Forces, he would have to learn about himself as he learned about these Forces.

When he came to that conclusion, Leonel chose to relax.

He awoke Aina from her meditation and brought her to leisurely stroll around the Segmented Cube. Aina was confused at first and didn't quite understand what the point of this was, but she realized it was rare for her to spend this kind of leisurely time with Leonel, at least not without someone or something wanting them to die.

As time passed, she completely forgot that she didn't understand what was going on and why Leonel did this and simply smiled, enjoying her time with him.

The relationship between Leonel and Aina had always been one of fiery passion and emotion. They danced between life and death, and even when they weren't, they were completely immersed in their training.

There was nothing to see in the Segmented Cube aside from the beautiful ambience of nature, and yet it was so novel to them to casually view such sights that it was endlessly fascinating.

The two talked endlessly, saying and talking about anything for days that quickly turned into over a week. And when they ran out of things to talk about, they simply felt silent. They didn't feel the need to fill the quiet air, the soft sounds of their breathing was enough.

This was the closest moment to normal the two had received since the Metamorphosis descended. It was hard to fathom but since that last day of high school, the two of them had never had even a single moment of rest.

It was always battle after battle, war after war, death threat after death threat.

Very soon, they would likely have to return to such a life, but at least for now, they felt at peace.

Leonel reached down from Aina's waist and pinched her ass, causing her to stir awake.

She slapped Leonel's hand away and adjusted herself on his chest before falling asleep again.

Leonel laughed to himself. Alright, one more day wasn't too bad.

Although the two of them hadn't crossed that final step yet, he had definitely made this little vixen pay for her earlier arrogance.

Leonel wasn't very disappointed about this fact. Every time he and Aina seemed about to cross that line, it was always due to a state of fiery passion. The first time it was because Aina didn't want to lose Leonel, the second time the two of them were made at one another's approach to dealing with danger, and the third and most recent time, Aina had had a large amount of Leonel's blood in her system.

After these days of calm and leisure, while that passion wasn't as fiery, it burned a lot more like an eternal fire, one that would last a lifetime.

When that flame did finally boil over, he was sure that it would be worth the wait.

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After one more day, as promised, Leonel and Aina finally left the Segmented Cube, crossing over the Void Battlefield as they made their way toward the Void Palace.

With the speed of the Segmented Cube, they crossed over large distances without much issue, shuttling through vast amounts of Anarchic Force as though it wasn't there at all.

Half a month later, they made it to large gates once again, facing a vast mountain range that was several planets' widths wide.

However, the state of the Void Palace wasn't like what Leonel remembered at all. Matched with its imposingness, a bloody scent hung in the air. In fact, what once were majestic gates that no one had to care about guarding because the prestige of the Void Palace was impregnable now had permanently stationed troops.

As a result, the arrival of Leonel and Aina didn't go unnoticed.

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Chapter 1648: Shocking News

Leonel stepped out from the Segmented Cube holding Aina's hand. He allowed it to shrink, becoming a finger band once again as he stared forward.

At that time, a large number of auras pressed down, causing him to frown.

This place actually couldn't truly be considered the Void Palace. In reality, it was one of the cities that formed the last line of defense on the Void Battlefield.

Leonel and Aina had been to this city before. It was the very same city they had come to after leaving the Rapax Nest. Right this moment, it was even larger and more imposing than before, even having troops stationed on the outside and along the walls.

Leonel couldn't imagine why you would need a vanguard stationed outside of the city when the defenses were so great to begin with. But since he knew so little about the situation after being gone for so long, he didn't question it too much. Instead, he waited for the small squadron that was approaching to finish their approach.

However, by this point, Leonel had already recognized the individual leading this small squad. He was Rowan Cancer, the very same young man who had tried to take advantage of Leonel's injury after he led them all out of the Rapax Nest in order to target Aina for her Token.

Back then, Aina had ended up killing a large number of Rowan's followers, but Rowan himself had managed to escape. It had been a long time since then, just over a year to Leonel and likely much longer than that to Rowan.

Now, the rookie from back then who had entered along with Leonel was already strong enough to lead a squad here. So in all likelihood, Rowan neared the top tiers of Galaxy Ranked disciples already, or might even be a Sector Ranked disciple by now. It would mostly depend on what sort of talent he was.

Rowan, of course, recognized Leonel and Aina as well although his gaze was just as placid and emotionless as usual. However, that didn't change the fact he had some waves rising and falling in his heart.

Leonel and Aina had just come back and clearly didn't understand the usual protocols. And, just about a month ago, the spatial phenomena that had had the Human Domain in its grips also came to an end. These two things were highly unlikely to be a coincidence.

Although there were others who came very recently as well, given the odds, Leonel was definitely the top three most likely to have been the reason they could return.

Of course, this was only to the general public. To the elders paying attention to these matters, they had already confirmed it with 100% accuracy.

While Rowan was considered to be the most likely to inherit the Cancer family in the future, he didn't have that sort of cache just yet, and as such, he could only make his own guesses. But the fact that this guess of his was so accurate already spoke volumes.

"Please display your disciple badges."

Despite recognizing Leonel and Aina, Rowan still asked this. In fact, he also pretended as though the trio of them had no prior history and that he hadn't tried to kill Leonel not just once, but twice.

Leonel calmly looked toward Rowan and flipped his palm over to reveal his badge. However, to his surprise, rather than just casually looking over it, both his and Aina's badges underwent several layers of inspection before they were finally allowed to take them back.

Although his first reaction was to believe that Rowan was purposely making things difficult for him, Leonel didn't act on this, mostly because it made little sense. Delaying them by an extra few minutes for the sake of something so petty made little sense. In addition, these guards seemed to have specially created devices purely for the sake of inspecting his badge, something that made little sense unless there was a good reason.

"You two can enter the city now."

Leonel put his badge away and scanned the squad again.

"Is there a case of people impersonating Void Palace disciples?" Leonel asked.

Rowan's eyes flashed before he nodded slowly.

"Yes. The Cloud Race has encroached onto our territory in recent decades and has become more brazen. In addition, areas we used to hold firm control over have weakened drastically. Now that Earth has entered the Seventh Dimension faster than was expected, our enemies have re upped their efforts and are pressing us.

"It's also the case that during the spatial phenomena that just ended, the region was incredibly unstable, making it difficult for us to safely maintain a defensive line, but simultaneously very easy for enemies to cross large distances into our territory via teleportation.

"So this is the situation now."

Leonel's brows jumped in surprise, but the squadron which followed Rowan was equally as shocked.

Rowan was a man of very few words and they had never heard him speak so much all at one time like this. But he had done so for this individual? Who was this, exactly?

The number of people that could recognize Leonel by his face were simply too few in number. He had only spent a short time in the Void Palace and hadn't interacted with enough people to truly build fame.

While the event of him clearing dozens of floors in his first attempt at the Void Tower was circulated, that was also more than two decades ago and the amount of things that happened since then were too many.

Seeing this now, though, Rowan's squadron seemed to understand that Leonel must have been a prominent figure before the cataclysm.

Leonel, though, was shocked by something else entirely.

It seemed that in his absence, Earth had become a name even the geniuses of the Void Palace was very familiar with. Not only that, but in just a short 20 or so years, it had actually become a Seventh Dimensional world already and a vicious storm was brewing around this matter.

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Chapter 1649: Asks

Leonel calmed himself and nodded.

"Is there anywhere I'm supposed to go after this?" Leonel asked.

"Yes. All those who have just returned from the Zone must report to the Void Senate. As for the details, they'll inform you about them."

Leonel nodded and took Aina's hand again as they entered the city to use a teleportation platform to the core of the Void Palace. As for his thoughts, they were much less calm than the rhythmic cadence of his heart.

The Cloud Race.

He knew about them as well. They were a Race of people adept at mimicry. They could freely change their forms and embody whatever their eyes could see.

When Leonel first learned about this race from the Void Library, he was quite confused. After all, Wise Star Order had told him that humans were the weakest of the races because they couldn't focus their attention down one path. Then how, exactly, was the Cloud Race so powerful? Shouldn't they be even weaker than humans following this logic?

Well, the truth was, the Cloud Race was near the bottom of the barrel along with humans and the Dwarven Race, but they were still considered to be stronger than the both. This was because the mimicry of the Cloud Race was all focused on one thing: countering.

The Cloud Race were experts in defense and using your weaknesses against you. This style of battle made them exceptionally powerful, and while they couldn't be considered to be at the pinnacle of the most powerful races, they were still well known to be superior to the humans.

Ironically, though, it was precisely because of this that the humans fared so well against the Cloud Race. Because humans weren't as homogenous as the other races, countering them took time and effort, and true human geniuses might be able to defeat Cloud Race geniuses before said genius could get a grasp on their abilities.

Still, the fact that the Void Palace had suddenly become so cautious against the Cloud Race must mean that by the time Leonel was gone, they must have made great headway into grasping the secrets of the Human Domain.

If the Cloud Race wanted to wage war against the humans, they didn't need to understand all of them, they just needed to understand the weaknesses of the greatest powerful among them.

The Morales family, the Suiard family, the Constellation Alliances, Shield Cross Stars, the Crafting Guilds, the Constellation families...

So long as these few powers were grasped, who cared about the weaker humans? They weren't good enough to match up against even normal Cloud Race members to begin with. The less complex the talent, the easier it was to counter on a whim.

...

It wasn't long before Leonel stood at the base of a mountain, looking up. He knew that the Void Senate was up there, but this was actually the first time he had been to his place.

At the bottom, there were people present to escort them up and they were soon brought to an office.

When Leonel and Aina entered, they found a black haired man sitting across from them behind a desk. He didn't look up even after the door closed, but this aura did seem to grow heavier.

Just from a glance, Leonel could see that this man was missing an arm, one of his robe sleeves behind decidedly looser than the other.

By the time an entire minute passed, Leonel's eyes had narrowed into slits.

While Rowan wouldn't know that he was the reason everyone could return, how could someone who could sit at the top of the Void Senate not understand? And even if they assumed that it was Aina and not him, wasn't Aina right by his side anyway?

And yet, this man hadn't said a single word since they entered.

Looking back at the man's missing arm, Leonel's furrowed brows loosened and his expression became calm. There was a better than 70% likelihood that this was the man his father took the arm of, and likely also the catalyst for what put the sword and spear factions at each other's throat.

Leonel didn't know what was going on with that situation now, or if the two factions had set aside their differences to face a greater threat, but judging by Rosen's reaction, that much was unlikely.

Rosen seemed to sense that Leonel's demeanor had entirely relaxed and he suddenly looked up, his gaze piercing. It truly felt as though a pair of swords were hidden within the depths of his gaze.

An invisible aura shot forward, as sharp as a blade, but when it entered an unknown radius of Leonel, it dissipated into the wind, leaving Rosen with narrowed eyes. Leonel didn't even seem to have moved a single inch or down anything. But in reality, neither did he.

"The procedure is simple," Rosen said emotionlessly. "Here are the documents. Write down everything you've experienced in the Zone, catalogue all of the events by day for all exactly 63 days that were inside. Do not miss a single day.

"Also, document all treasures that you've received from the Zone. The Void Palace will not take any of them, but will inspect them, categorize them, and then return them to you in a timely fashion. This is only for the benefit of knowledge and the progress of humanity into the future, we will not steal from our students.

"If you've understood, take these documents and leave."

Leonel's gaze flashed.

As expected, it was highly unlikely that he would be the only one to benefit from the Zone.

Still, there was one question that left him baffled until this point. He had forgotten about it because he had met Aina and she seemed to be just fine. But... Why was it that his cousin and the others couldn't use Force or their Ability Indexes while he could?

Could it be that there were others who were able to use their Force like he and Aina, and as such had managed to gain treasures of their own?

Leonel reached a hand forward and took the documents for both himself and Aina, ready to leave.

"There's also one more matter," Rosen said lightly as Leonel was about to depart. "For you, especially, the Void Palace would like to thoroughly understand the method you used to break the cardinal rule of Zones. Please don't miss out on any details."

Leonel remained silent and didn't respond, but his thoughts were already racing.

How should he handle this matter, exactly?

There was absolutely nothing wrong with either Rosen's words or the Void Palaces asks of him. But his instincts were pulling him in a different sort of direction.

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Chapter 1650: Second Method, Same Problem

Leonel sat in a hall of the Void Senate in silence. Aina sat by his side, looking at the documents as well. Though, when she sensed Leonel's odd mood, she looked over as well.

Leonel's gaze was a bit unfocused, but his pupils continued to flicker as though he was calculating something.

The decision wasn't a simple one. Logically, there shouldn't be a problem with helping the Void Palace, but there were too many potential issues with doing so, especially since there were still signs of traitors in their midst.

The only people he could trust aside from himself were Aina and his parents.

The ask of the Void Palace was very reasonable. Wanting to document the treasures of that Zone made perfect sense, and they would also return it. In addition, wanting to know how Leonel had escaped also made sense. Who knew how useful such information could be in the future? If they could patent an ability to escape Zones, there would be many Zones that they didn't dare to easily enter previously that they could finally start exploring with full effort.

For example, now that Earth had entered the Seventh Dimension, for the first time, the Human Domain had to contend with Eighth Dimensional Zones. But the number of characters who wielded such a level of power were far too few, and they were so important to the backbone of the Human Domain that they couldn't possibly enter to risk their lives so easily.

The resulted in a situation where there were many Zones with potentially excellent resources inside that no one dared to make use of.

But if these Zones were allowed to linger for too long, then the territory of Earth would end up swallowed and destroyed. If that happened, what was the worth of everything else?

Earth had suddenly become integral to the prosperity of the Dimensional Verse, and it was very likely that everyone had been waiting precisely for Leonel to return so that they could understand how he did it.

Leonel obviously understood all of this, but what would happen when he revealed that this was only possible because of the unique characteristics of the Segmented Cube? Unless someone could create a treasure of equivalent stature, it would be a fool's dream to attempt an escape from a Zone.

In order to force the bubbles of the Human Domain and a Zone to connect, and thus expel all outsiders from within the latter, it required the travel of a spatial item between the two. Said spatial item had to have enough structural integrity to survive the journey as well, or else it would all be useless.

Essentially, you needed a treasure on a level close to the Ninth Dimension, or at least at the very cutting edge of the Eighth.

In this regard, the Segmented Cube was practically one of a kind.

In the past, Leonel had simply assumed that every family in the Human Domain would have a treasure of this caliber. But the more he learned, the more he came to understand just how ridiculous such a thought was. In fact, he was certain that the existence of the Segmented Cube had a grand backstory Anastasia would probably refuse to tell him about...

And in such a case, where there only existed one solution, just what would happen?

He had just learned that the Cloud Race was making efforts to infiltrate the Human Domain and impersonate their kind. And he had already deduced that there were likely traitors at the highest echelon of the Void Palace, or else certain things just could not have happened that way.

If these individuals suddenly learned that there was only one item in the Human Domain capable of breaking the rules of the Zone, and said item was in the hands of a Morales family member...

What kind of situation would that put the Morales family in?

However, if Leonel lied about how he had done it, the moment they attempted to use his method and realized that it didn't work, not only would the Human

Domain lose whoever had entered the Zone, he would also gain the ire of the Human Domain and things would end up terribly regardless.

'If I had known Earth was already in the Seventh Dimension, I wouldn't have returned so easily...'

Leonel closed his eyes and sighed.

Leonel suddenly felt a soft hand slip into his and he smiled lightly without opening his eyes.

He had already known that there would be trouble like this when they returned, the only surprise was that it had actually come so quickly. But since he had already chosen Aina over the world, was there even a need to regret it?

Leonel's heart shuddered and his thoughts flashed.

When his eyes snapped open, they had a blazing light within them, but they quickly dimmed.

'Even if I've thought of another method to escape Zones, it still doesn't change the facts of the matter...'

Leonel flipped a palm over and whispered, "[Valiant Seal]..."

A miniature trio of revolving pillars forms.

This was another one of Leonel's self-created techniques. He had formed it using the Valiant Pillars of Valiant Heart Mountain and Camelot's magic system as a foundation. That treasure was designed to take control of Zones.

Theoretically, Leonel believed that if the power to control Zones was harnessed and then forced into vessels like the Segmented Cube, then it should be possible to use them like the Segmented Cube's world to escape Zones.

If Leonel refined this method over a few weeks, he could easily hand this method over to the Void Palace and solve the potential issue of having the Morales family become everyone's target.

But if he did so, this method would fall into the hands of the Human Domain's enemies as well.

'The problem is still the same...' Leonel thought to himself, squeezing Aina's hand lightly.

To think that he would be clever enough to think of such things, only to be faced with the dilemma of whether to share them or not.

As Leonel was lost in thought, the clicking of heels echoed through the Void Senate's halls. When he looked up, he found a woman with vibrant green hair walking. He didn't think too much of it, until, that is, the woman's eyes emitted a coldness upon meeting his gaze.