

Dimensional Descent

- Chapter 1727: Ridiculous |

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Chapter 1727: Ridiculous

BANG!

Two palms hit a desk so hard that a trembling impact surged throughout the city. The fury behind it was clear and even that floor to ceiling windows behind the individual shattered to pieces, sprinkling down to the streets behind him. However, by some miracle, the desk itself was perfectly intact, outside of some light trembling, it maintained its frame, even the floor beneath it not experiencing even the slightest tremor.

The two individuals standing before the infuriated man didn't so much as flinch. It was clear that they were very much used to this scene, and maybe that was why such an investment had been made into this furious man's desk to begin with.

This furious man, though, wasn't a simple individual at all. In fact, he was one of the very few above Tier 1 Star Officers of Shield Cross Stars, one of only eight.

To put this matter into perspective, the title of Tier 1 Star Rank was so rare that despite the fact they were always looking for more officers, they could simply not find anyone both worthy and willing to dedicate their lives to being a policeman.

As for those above Tier 1 Star Officer, they were veterans no lesser in stature than Void Elders. They were known as the Cross Elders and their position was designed to have nine members taking up the rank at any given time. But much like the ranks of Tier 1 Star Officer, there simply weren't enough worthy individuals. As such, a position designed for nine could only have eight.

This man was none other than Cross Elder Avan, a man both known for his valiant service to the human race and just as well known for his fiery temper.

The two individuals across from Cross Elder Avan were two Tier 1 Star Rank Officers. However, other than not showing fear in the face of his outburst, the two didn't dare to show the slightest disrespect. Although there seemed to be just a single rank between themselves and Cross Elder, the gap might as well have been insurmountable.

The difference was akin to a member of the Void Senate of the Void Palace, or even a Domain Rank disciple, and a Void Elder. It simply wasn't meant to be compared.

"Incompetent. Incompetent! INCOMPETENT!"

Cross Elder Avan spoke so furiously that the words were almost entirely incoherent. The louder he got, the less sense he seemed to make so they could only assume he was repeating the same word over and over again.

The two Star Rank Officers before him, one man and one woman, could only continue to clasp their hands behind their backs, standing tall.

"I want them found, now! Vishna, Cordan, get it done, I don't care how you do it, I just want results."

Vishna, the brown-skinned beauty between the two, and Cordan, a bulky man with a round but steel-like gut, looked toward one another. Even without saying a word, they knew well what "I don't care how you do it" meant in this context.

On the one hand, it meant exactly what it stated. But on the other hand, it was also a scapegoat flag. Sure, they could do whatever they wanted, but if they were caught, then they'd become the next DiVincenzo.

"Sir... What do we do about Earth?" Vishna finally asked after a moment of listening to Avan's heated breathing.

Upon hearing "Earth" Avan's forehead gained a new vein moonlighting as a slithering crimson python. It really looked as though his head might burst like a watermelon any moment now.

Avan had, of course, heard the news that Alienor Morales was actually the Princess of the Ascension Empire. However, this shocking news had been overwhelmed by all the matters that came afterward. He had only just now remembered that he had even more to be infuriated about.

The 24-hour period that Alienor had given was quickly approaching and no orders had been sent just yet. Between the Cloud Race matter and the escape of their prisoners to this moment right here, everything had happened so quickly that it was difficult to deal with.

Earth was a troublesome matter to begin with because the Shield Cross Stars branches in its vicinity were weak. This was because the Milky Way Galaxy was fairly classified as a more primitive galaxy in comparison to the others. They had by far the most number of Third and Fourth Dimensional worlds in the whole of the Human Domain.

However, since then, Earth had expanded far outside the range of their original galaxy and had even quickly swallowed up several Sectors. This led to an odd situation where the core of Earth's territory had the weakest Shield Cross Stars influence while the outer reaches of its territory had the strongest.

Even Shield Cross Stars hadn't expected Earth to progress so rapidly. Usually it took thousands upon tens of thousands of years just to improve through a single Dimension even if you had far greater potential. However, Earth had somehow made it from the Third Dimension to the Seventh in less than half a century.

This threw many of the original plans Shield Cross Stars had had out of the window and it left them in an awkward position. Now, they were suddenly being kicked out of the territory before they could even establish themselves.

"Ridiculous. Ridiculous! RIDICULOUS!"

Spittle flew from Cross Elder Avan's mouth and some even somehow ended up on his balding, wrinkled head. However, so much heat was coming off of him that it evaporated into nothingness in just a few moments.

After a moment, Cross Elder Avan calmed and sat down in what remained of his chair, the wind from the shattered windows fluttering what remained of his hair.

Then, he sneered.

"The Morales want to play games, huh? We'll see how long that lasts. As for the Ascension Empire, they want to be free of us? Sure, fine, let them be free, I can't wait to see how long it'll take for them to come crawling back.

"Order your subordinates to keep an eye out for that brat, the fugitives of the human race can't run around just because of who their mommy and daddy are.

"Forget the other matters, go do as you're told." Avan waved a hand and time seemed to reverse as the shattered window shards flew back into place and melted back into place.

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Chapter 1728: Rupture

Leonel gasped for breath, something he had suddenly become very used to doing. He didn't think that he would enter such a state for a long while thanks to how much vitality he had pumped into himself using his Metal Body, but here he was, suffering.

After a while, Leonel stopped being pissed off and even became a bit languid. Emotion could only really get you so far, eventually you would tire of it. Being enraged all the time was exhausting, people weren't designed to be that way.

The lows only hurt because they were the lows, not the baseline. And highs were only so satisfying because they were such a change from the norm, not a constant.

By the same token, drudging up will power just because you were angry wasn't good enough. Even the most vindictive person couldn't be angry forever, there would always be a time where it faded into the background and you were forced to feel different emotions.

But that was also precisely why Leonel never wanted to rely on emotion.

Leonel rose up again.

By now the gap between the stairs was far too large to rely on nothing other than his physical prowess, it simply wasn't enough. But Leonel had already realized that this wasn't a trial of his body, so obviously the solution to jumping across these enormous barriers was in his mind.

He would either have to force these stairs to come closer or he would have to get more powerful and larger.

Leonel roared, his height increasing by an entire foot.

This was nothing more than a projection of himself, a representation of his body in the form of Dream Force. In that case, he would just make himself larger. But in doing so...

Leonel leapt forward again, his body practically undergoing a shuddering seizure as he leapt through the air.

He landed and rolled across the platform, his body spasming.

It was about what he expected. The larger he made his body here, the more Dream Force he would have to flood in, and the more Dream Force he flooded in, the deeper the hooks of this tablet would be able to sink into his real body, and the deeper those hooks entered, the more real and terrible the backlash would be.

It was getting to the point where the fear was becoming crippling. In the beginning, he only had to shake his head to recover, but as he climbed, he was beginning to take several seconds, but the time he crossed the thousandth step, it took him several minutes.

The real world effects were becoming more devastating as well.

Having his body enter a constant state of fight or flight didn't seem like a big deal at first, but it was frying his neurons and pushing his body to the limit.

His heart rate was constantly above an allowable threshold even given his body, the less "immediately important" functions of his body like digestion and the like. More and more stores of energy were being flooded directly into his muscles and the amount of calories he was burning a second just maintaining the obscene heat he was giving off, not to mention his constantly shivering body, would very quickly put him at the brink of death.

The truth was that time was dilated between the tablet and the real world. It was all too easy to fool the mind.

Leonel felt that he had been climbing for months, years even, but his real body had only experienced a few hours.

Even so, because his mind was going through so many terrible effects again and again, he was quickly losing muscle mass and the walls of his heart were growing thinner as his body started to eat itself to maintain.

The brain simply had too much power of the body, even illusions when taken to an extreme could cause real and deadly consequences.

However, disregarding this entirely, Leonel continued forward.

Aina could only watch as Leonel's skin became more sunken, his muscles deflating and his skin beginning to stick to his body. It wasn't long before his breathing became nothing more than his ribcage moving up and down while his bronzed skin lost all color and became an unhealthy and pasty greenish grey color.

Within the tablet world, Leonel could still not see the end of the staircase. When he looked back, he could no longer even see where he had started, and that was despite now being over 10 meters tall.

He was relentless in his pursuit and his mind had stopped thinking. Everything outside of calculating how hard he needed to jump to reach the next platform was already thrown out of his mind.

Again and again, he would jump, stumble, fall and roll, only to pick himself up several minutes later after he was finished foaming at the mouth to do it again.

The worry on Aina's face grew with every passing mind but she could only continue to dab at his forehead, her golden irises flickering with a somewhat fearful light. It really looked as though Leonel would push himself too far and die.

Leonel, however, had no intention of stopping. He didn't know it consciously, but he had already reached a state where he would rather die than give in. Maybe had he known this consciously, he would have snapped out of it and thought it to be ridiculous. This matter wasn't worth dying over, he had too many things to do now.

But in that moment, with his mind focused on one thing and one thing only, he was relentless in his pursuit.

Leonel jumped again, his body reaching over a hundred meters as he landed on the ten thousandth step.

Just like always, he slipped and fell, his body beginning to convulse once again.

But this time was different. In the real world, the walls of his heart had become far too thin. This time when it tried to pump too fast beyond its limits, it ruptured and a spray of blood came from Leonel's mouth.

Aina went pale but she suddenly felt a hand on her wrist. Despite the state of his body, his hand seemed to have a great amount of strength.

Within the platform world, Leonel slowly stood to his feet again, his projection rippling like an image cast on water.

'Again.'

...

At that moment, while Leonel was pushing himself beyond normal bounds of reason, a fleet of ships had come to a stop near the borders of Earth's territory. But for some odd reason, the flagship that they were waiting on to pass through this area was nowhere to be seen.

Of course, this flagship they were waiting on was none other than the very one Leonel had stolen.

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Chapter 1729: Running Out

BANG!

ROAR!

A hand clasped onto the side of a platform; Its fingernails bent and twisted; its tendons and ligaments rising like roaring veins that just might pop out at any moment;

Leonel pushed with all his might, the fear coming in waves; He had already reached his limits, the size of his body having been pushed beyond even the realms of reason; He stood several kilometers tall and even this was only just barely enough to catch the ledge of the platform;

Withstanding the barrage of thoughts of inadequacy, of giving up, of being unworthy, all while trying to climb to the very peak was difficult, too difficult even to put into words;

Even though he could feel the ledge. even though he knew well that he was just a single great push away from climbing to its peak. it still felt like he was falling into an abyss. the clutches of devils and demons waiting for him below. fully prepared to swallow him up whole;

His fingernails snapped and tore, rivers of blood flowing out;

His pinky's ligament gave out first. snapping like a steel cord and ripping his finger back at an awkward angle. The backlash was so great that it felt as though something had taken his finger and peeled it back to his wrist. wanting him to suffer the most unimaginable pain.

Another snap rang out and this time it was his ring finger that was peeled back almost like the skin of an onion; The strength of his body was playing sticks against him; Each one of his muscle fibers was like tempered steel. intertwined into a cord that layered the muscles and organs of his body; But because of this. when they gave out. the effects were resounding and devastating;

Every time one gave up, a bang would resound through his body as though a clap of thunder had resonated within his skeleton.

Leonel's head just barely managed to peek over the ledge;

He slammed his down on it, using it as leverage in an attempt to pull himself over.

His expression was ghastly, his face pulsing with veins and his teeth shattering one by one under the pressure like fragile porcelain dolls;

He pushed with all his might;

ROAR!

The shot came out muddled and gargled; He didn't have the strength to open his jaw with so much weight pressing up on it. however he managed to gain some momentum in an attempt to swing his foot up and onto the ledge;

Just as his heel was about to snag a piece of the ledge, another snap rang out;

Leonel's body shuddered and his middle finger's ligament snapped; By this point; he only had one arm left; While it seemed like only the ligaments of one hand were being snapped; that was because the tendons that connected his other arm had snapped during the last climb;

Before this; Leonel could just use his Dream Force to repair the projection of this body; but by this point; things had been going on so long that he truly had nothing left; Even his overwhelming Dream Force stamina was running thin; This was the last body he had; he simply couldn't repair it; and if he fell here; he would truly fall to his death;

With the state of his body in the real world. it couldn't handle true damage to his soul; In fact. the only thing keeping him from dying currently was the independence of his soul; He couldn't fall here. he refused to fall here;

Another one of Leonel's teeth shattered beneath the pressure, cracks running through it like fissures in concrete beneath the wrath of an earthquake.

He held on with his jaw on one side, and with his remaining forefinger on the other; These were the last two anchor points he had, the last barriers holding him up from a fall to an inevitable death;

Leonel's gaze was entirely crimson, there wasn't a hint of the pale violet remaining. He gazed upward with the look of a madman.

By this point, he had forgotten what he was fighting so hard against, he didn't even know if he ever really had been fighting for something at all. All he knew was that he wanted to take another step forward, and then another.

This matter had started off without much thought. He wasn't in any rush to suddenly become many times stronger and he had already become content with the strength he had. It was the same cycle he always went through.

For a moment he would feel a burst of motivation caused by an existential threat to his life or someone he loved, he would then raise his battle strength quickly in a short time, and then he would crush his adversaries only to come out the other end ... bored.

But this time it was different. He had just claimed a resounding victory, and yet here he was, struggling on the border of life and death.

Maybe at some point during this journey, he had felt a chance, even if it was a small one, to take a step in the right direction... and to take that step before he faced something that even he couldn't quickly think his way out of...

Maybe that was why he was so unwilling to give up.

Maybe...

Something was telling him that he was running out of time.

ROAR!

The whites of Leonel's eyes turned entirely crimson, a blinding and bloody light illuminating them.

SNAP!

His forefinger gave way, but he quickly swung his arm up. This time when he roared, he had just barely been able to open his mouth, which pushed his body up just far enough for him to swing his shoulder over the ledge.

Leonel's mouth opened up for just a moment before his mouth came clamping down again.

The sound of shattering teeth resounded, but Leonel had already used the leverage his shoulder gave him to swing his feet up. This time, he aimed even higher.

Even as his teeth shattered, his heel hit the platform and he rolled his shoulder forward.

With a final furious push, Leonel swung his head down with all his might, slamming his forehead against the top of the platform and using the violent momentum to push the rest of his body over the ledge.

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Chapter 1730: Next

Leonel felt his head spinning; That final blow was so powerful that he had most definitely shattered his skull; Blood flew from his nose and ears; shared of his own bone sticking into the most important frontal networks of his brain;

However, even while feeling so dizzy, he struggled to prop himself up, his mind repeating the very same action he had every other time as he rose through this world;

The platform he had started on was barely enough for two of him to stand on, but this one was tens of kilometers wide and long;

Even so, after making himself several kilometers tall, it would only take a few rolls for him to reach the end of it;

Realizing that he didn't have the strength to stand; Leonel could only do that; He didn't want to stop his momentum; He felt like if he wavered even once; he paused even once; he would no longer have the strength or courage to continue; He had to keep going; The moment the fear response cleared; he had to keep moving; no matter what;

He grit his teeth. ignoring the pain of rolling over his injured hands and arms as he made it to the edge of the platform; Just one more roll and he would fall off to his death; Only then did Leonel come to a stop. blinking several times and trying to see the distance between this platform and the next one so that he could judge exactly how much strength he had to gather to reach it;

However; at first glance; Leonel didn't see anything; His vision was quite blurry; so he blinked again; even weakly wiping at his eyes with his forearm before he could look again; But even then; he couldn't see it;

Leonel's heart froze over; Could it be that the next platform was so far away that he couldn't see it despite its surely overwhelming size? Just by a rudimentary calculation, it would take being a few thousand miles away at the very least; He was already several kilometers tall and the pain was unbearable;

He had already pushed his Dream Force to the max and couldn't get any larger. Even if he could get larger. could he really withstand what would

happen to his body if the fear response suddenly became a thousand times more potent?

Leonel jaw steeled, the shards of broken teeth in his mouth digging into his gums as he used the more acute pain to pain him up;

He slowly rolled to his knees; standing up; It took him several minutes; but he finally managed to get to his feet and look right up into the vast and endless skies; He took a deep breath; glaring upward as though he was looking at his worst enemy;

But at that moment. the platform began to shimmer and shine.

Leonel. who was still thinking about how he would reach the next staircase. suddenly felt his body enveloped by a caressing sort of light; The injuries to his projection were quickly being healed; His tendons and ligaments snapped back into place. his grotesquely curled fingers were pulled back. and even his teeth and fractured jaw began to mend themselves;

Leonel looked down with a hint of surprise, not understanding for a moment until it hit him.

It wasn't that the next platform was so far away. it was that he had already reached the last platform;

He had already lost count of the number of platforms he had climbed, but he had stopped keeping track because doing so was only attacking his psyche; Having to worry about how far he had gone and trying to guess how far he had left to go would have only worn down his mind and made him more likely to give up; He had shunned all such thoughts, so much so that he hadn't even considered the fact that he had truly reached the end;

Leonel stood in silence for a moment, thinking back to everything he had gone through. He probably should have felt happy or relieved, but he didn't feel that way at all. All that pain, all that horror, he just felt like if he juxtaposed it to his usual methods, the latter was far too inferior.

If he was honest with himself, he had never worked so hard before. Compared to Aina, he was far inferior in this respect.

Leonel took a breath.

In the outside world, his body had truly become little different from a skeleton wearing a bit of skin. But for the first time in a long while, his condition didn't deteriorate and even seemed to become a bit better. Although he didn't suddenly recover immediately, he at least seemed to stabilize somewhat.

Leonel didn't even need to personally observe the current state of his body to know that Instant Recovery wouldn't work on him. He had pushed himself so far that he would need true time and rest.

Back when the cobra demon had eaten him alive, it was only by snatching strength from the demon that he had been able to recover. This proved that there was a certain point of no return even for Instant Recovery unless it gained outside support with the help of the Healing Branch of the Dark Force side of the Lineage Factor.

Regardless, this wasn't a problem that Leonel was too bothered by. Although his body was a bit weak, it wasn't as though he was helpless. And right now, he was more concerned with what exactly reaching the final platform meant. It couldn't be that it would just recover his Dream Force, right?

In truth, even if this was the case, Leonel found himself not minding as much as he thought it was. This may be one of the few times where he felt he had gotten more out of the hardship than the reward waiting on the other end of it.

However, it was a guarantee that things wouldn't be so simple. It was potentially time to truly learn what the Emperor Might Lineage Factor could do.

Leonel's projection was enveloped by a light and brought to a new place.

When he appeared, he stood in another world of green and blue. There were bubbles all around him, some of which were delicate and pale green color, and others of which were radiant and blinding royal blue colors.