

Dimensional Descent

- Chapter 1873: Single Tear |

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Chapter 1873: Single Tear

Leonel exhaled a breath. His body was covered in cuts and bruises, blood coating some of his white furred armor.

On the ground before him, Alerina laid at the end of her rope. It was clear that even after Leonel had given her a chance, the ultimate victory still remained in his hands. At this point, Alerina didn't feel like she had any more excuses to give.

Even so, Leonel didn't seem to be proud of his achievement. In fact, he was a hint unhappy. Even with his advantage in strength and speed, the battle had been a tough one. After Alerina copied his movements, she seemed to know everything he would do ahead of time, one would think that rather than copying, the ability of the Cloud Race was to see the future.

Compared to the first Cloud Race individual Leonel had fought, Alerina was definitely on an entirely different level, and Leonel felt that if their strengths were equal the one on the ground now would probably be him. But that was precisely why he had taken this chance to begin with, he wouldn't risk a loss here, especially after he had already confirmed victory, that would be nothing more than hubris.

Leonel reached down and took Alerina's spear, he had gotten enough from her.

"Who are you?" Alerina asked weakly.

"Leonel Morales," Leonel replied blandly.

Alerina fell into silence. She didn't recognize the name at all. Not only had she lost to a human, but he didn't even seem to be a place she recognized, or maybe he was, but was from a weaker family... but then how did he get his

hands on a Spear Domain Ring? There was no way the stronger families would allow the weak to monopolize such a treasure.

Unfortunately, Leonel didn't have the answers she was looking for.

Alerina's body shimmered out of existence, leaving behind nothing but her armor. Leonel looked at the armor for a moment before shaking his head. Truthfully, although his own armor had less functionality, he preferred it.

Reaching down, he picked up the armor and thought for a moment. Although he didn't want the armor, it still felt foolish to just leave it. He thought about modifying it, but the main problem was that without Little Tolly by his side, manipulating metal was too difficult.

"Hm?"

An idea flashed in Leonel's mind.

Obviously since this armor had been left behind, he could use it. Though Alerina was a member of the Cloud Race and not a human, she still had the more petite body of a human woman, meaning her and Leonel's sizes couldn't be compared.

This meant one thing: the armor had shape and size changing functionality.

"I can... take advantage of that."

Leonel began to take the armor apart quickly, finding the Force Arts responsible for the shape changing. After making sure to preserve them, he began to restructure the other Force Arts, piecing together what he had while throwing away much of it.

"Good... good."

About an hour later, Leonel finished. What was left of the robust armor were just a few wrist, elbow, knee, ankle and neck bands. Every time Leonel snapped one piece on, a radiant aura would echo outward and seamlessly fuse with his hermit-like armor.

Soon, it became exceptionally subtle. It was hard to tell he had changed anything at all, but the aura his armor exuded alone seemed far more powerful.

Grabbing Alerina's spear, he allowed it to fuse with his original spear. With a WHOOSH, his spear broke through the Bronze Grade and entered the Silver Grade.

Leonel waved the spear around for a moment and then looked at the lance spear. He decided to keep using the latter since it came with the added functionality of Knight's Charge.

After exhaling a breath, Leonel's gaze sharpened.

'Bring it on.'

With a thought, Leonel's territories fused and the roar of beasts began to echo. The powerful evolved beasts spawned one after, their furious roars echoing with greater and greater vitality with every passing moment.

Leonel took a step and vanished. His white fur coat fluttered, with a spear strapped to his back and one in his hands, he dove into another blood thirsty battle.

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The commotion that gripped Earth seemed to have overturned everything. There was chaos, and yet in some regions everything was quiet, too quiet. It was as though pockets of different worlds were forming along the planet's surface one after another.

Hacker Hutch stood in the midst of the commotion, stunned. He didn't quite know how to react to this situation. His blade, which had always lusted for battle, seemed to have gone dull.

Inwardly, he sighed. Despite the fact his improvements had allowed him to keep living, he had always felt old at heart. This era had come far too late and his prime had long since passed. He didn't have the raging will he once had as a youth, and that was simply something he had no choice but to accept.

Seeing everything he had worked all his life for come crumbling down, he simply didn't have the heart for it. During the war with Terrain he had sensed something amiss, as though a shadow was slowly circling his Slayer Legion and waiting for an opportunity to pounce, but it had already been two decades since then so he had hoped that he was wrong.

He had poured everything he had into this Slayer Legion, he had bled real blood. Back then, it was he who stood at the front lines and fought against so many City Lords all on his own just to protect the budding youth of the Slayer Legion...

And yet now what? Was he supposed to raise the same blade that had protected them to cut them down now?

Hutch's heart trembled as his head slowly turned.

In the distance, through the burning fires that threatened to raze the palace to the ground, a young man wearing a white tracksuit walked forward seemingly quite slowly, and yet whenever his afterimages snapped back together, he would have already moved countless kilometers.

Hutch's lip quivered and he closed his eyes, a single tear falling down his cheek.

[Dimensional Descent](#)

Chapter 1874: Why

Hutch only closed his eyes for only a moment, but it felt like an eternity. Everything about his life seemed to flash by, and yet it hardly seemed to have anything to do with him at all.

No matter what memory he recalled, they always seemed to revolve around the very same little boy, his pride and joy... his grandson.

Hutch didn't know when it was he had completely lost his grip on Elorin. Maybe he was too focused on the Slayer Legion, maybe it was because he placed too much emphasis on his loyalty, neglecting the needs of the child, maybe he hadn't shown the little one enough love, enough care... enough affection.

He had always closed one eye to such events. Even back then when his grandson had held a blade to his neck, seemingly thinking that Hutch was unconscious, Hutch had been aware of his surroundings the whole time, he had even been naively happy when his grandson chose not to kill him, as though this was something a person should get extra points for.

When Hutch opened his eyes again, though it had only been a moment, his grandson was already just five meters from him. Even amidst the chaos, there seemed to be a moment of silence.

The tear that streamed down Hutch's cheek fell to the ground and seemed to quickly vanish. Hutch couldn't remember the last time he had cried, it hadn't happened even when his daughter and son-in-law passed away, not when his wife had passed away, not when brothers and sisters left this world before him...

However, seeing his grandson stand before him like this broke something within him.

As he looked toward Elorin, he thought about the conversation he had with Leonel back when he brought Emna to train with him. Although Leonel hadn't come out and said it directly, everything about his words seemed to drop hints for the inevitability of the current decision.

Leonel was simply too good at coddling the feelings of others. He didn't even waste his time trying to convince a grandfather that a grandson would stab him in the back. Even so, how much experience did Hutch have? Didn't he already know that this was inevitable.

Hutch's grip on his machete loosened. He couldn't seem to gather up the strength to hold onto it tightly.

"Why."

This was all Hutch could say. In truth, he didn't even expect an answer. He knew his grandson too well, he wasn't a man who liked to speak much and was often in his own world.

When he was much younger, Hutch used to think that it was because his grandson was a bit anti-social and lazy, but as time passed, he realized that whenever his grandson lounged around, he would come back even stronger than before... and it wasn't that he was anti-social... it was more accurate to say that he couldn't be bothered to deal with the people around him.

However, to his surprise, Elorin actually answered. It was a short and succinct answer, but it was an answer nonetheless.

"The Ascension Empire killed my parents. The Ascension Empire deserves death."

There didn't seem to be any rage or fury in Elorin's words, he simply stated them with the ease of talking about the weather. His gaze didn't fluctuate, his radiance didn't dim, his expression didn't even flicker.

Hutch tried to open his mouth to respond, but everything felt empty.

Elorin's parents didn't have the necessary talent, this was something their Gene Assessment made very clear. They lived very normal lives and didn't even interact with Hutch very much due to his own duties. Hutch was just lucky that he was privy to the truth of the Slayer Legion, and as such, was able to allow some members of his family the freedom to be normal. Others were much less lucky, completely unaware that the rebellion of the Slayer Legion was a facade, they embroiled their entire lives in that fight...

It was likely due to this dissatisfaction that so many had turned on the Empire now...

One could easily imagine, then, how Elorin's parents had died. As two completely normal individuals, they were almost guaranteed to become Invalids. When the Metamorphosis Descended, they were among the first to fall from the skies, being crushed to death even before the awakening of their Ability Index could fail.

Elorin was far too intelligent, it was easy to put two and two together, even without having all of the information, it was obvious that the Ascension Empire had chosen to sacrifice his parents, to kill them along with the other Invalids, just to ensure that their evolution path was smoother.

Even if there was just a 1% chance that his parents succeeded in awakening, it was still not a 0% chance. But in order to play to the odds, the Ascension Empire hadn't hesitated to sacrifice tens of billions of people.

1% or even 0.1% was a small number. But of such a large number, how many tens of millions were unjustly slaughtered? And what if his parents were among that number?

"And so you'll stand in opposition to the only family you have left because of this?" Hutch asked with a hoarse voice.

"I think you should be asking yourself that question," Elorin replied, reaching toward his back.

At that moment, a rusted machete arched through the air, seemingly zipping through time to land in Elorin's palm. By the time Elorin lowered his arm, it felt as though the machete had always been there, as though he had stitched together different causalities until he found the one that granted him this weapon.

Hutch looked toward the machete. He recognized it all too well. By now, it was decades old, forged of Earth's Third Dimensional technologies. It was the very same machete he had gifted his daughter for her 13th birthday. Although she never had the talent for it, she swung it around everyday with a childish enthusiasm.

Hutch could still remember that look of excitement on her little face and years of pain and agony came flooding forward all at once.

Hutch howled into the skies with a hint of madness in his eyes as he and his grandson attacked at the same time.

[Dimensional Descent](#)

Chapter 1875: Smile

Hutch's skin reddened, his eyes glazing over with a furious intent. When he swung his machete, it looked as though a crimson wave followed his every action. Those near him on the battlefield fell to their knees, unable to withstand the world shaking pressure.

Elorin calmly stepped forward, his own blade moving quite slowly, and yet it reached his grandfather just in time.

The two seemed to glide by one another, barely touching. All noise vanished and the world seemed to freeze before all hell broke loose.

CLANG! BOOM!

The glancing blow caused a booming wind to slice in all directions. Elorin's pristinely white tracksuit rustled wildly within the wind, almost as though it was trying to rip a path off of his body. At the same, Hutch's shirt was shredded to

pieces, revealing a bronzed and powerful figure that didn't seem to match the old features of his face in the slightest.

The two only paused for a moment before their strengths erupted. Their figures danced around the battlefield, every clash leaving a crater in their wake, and yet their creation seemed to lag behind, taking three collisions before the earth seemed to catch up to what was happening and finally collapse.

Hutch's enraged howls echoed all across the Earth, the pain and fury within them causing the hearts of all those who heard it to race uncontrollably.

He fought like an absolute madman. None of his strikes seemed to have any sort of reason to them. He sliced from all angles, gathering momentum from impossible positions and erupting from irreparable positions.

Elorin calmly countered. Anyone with the eyesight to keep up with what was happening felt as though three of Elorin were fighting just one of Hutch. Due to this, his slow movements always seemed to counter his grandfather's fast and erratic ones with ease.

However, on the other side, Hutch didn't seem to be struggling very much at all either. His stamina felt endless and the bloody ocean wave that was his blade was relentless and all encompassing.

This was the first time in a long while those of Earth had seen Hutch battle, and for some, this was the first time period. The old glory of the Hacker Hutch name seemed to have been entirely forgotten, but on this day it was revitalized.

No one felt that it was too weak that Hutch hadn't won yet. Rather, they were only more shocked by Elorin's strength.

A pair of grandson and grandfather, one furious, another calm, one bound by duty, the other bound by piety...

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Blade Force rippled out in all directions, bringing with it a suffocating sort of presence. A cyclone of the sharp Force twirled around the two of them, shredding apart everything in its path and suffocating all opposition. It reached the point where it was almost impossible to hold any other battles in the

vicinity as the pair completely went all out without a hint of their familial ties holding them back.

Hutch's blade pierced forward, shredding forth like a torrential storm. Rather than a blade, it looked far more like a meat grinder. Blade Force stuck out in all directions, rotating akin a drill, and yet having no form or shape at the same time.

The more the battle went on, the more violent Hutch's Blade Force seemed to become, and yet it was this very violence that he somehow also seemed to have absolute perfect control over.

Elorin gilded back, his arm shifting forward to parry with his own blade just once, and yet the after images of over ten blades formed at once, causing ten echoes to resound as he glided back another step.

Despite his clever dispersal, Hutch's blade was relentless. The ten strikes seemed to disperse some of the circulation patterns on the rotating Force, but the total number were far too numerous.

For the first time, Elorin's expression changed somewhat and his gaze narrowed as his grandfather's blade continued forward unimpeded.

The blade appeared before him, ready to pierce through his head, but at that moment Elorin's figure seemed to ripple. The blade that should have taken his head passed right through him as though striking a puddle of water and piercing a reflective image instead of the target.

The momentum of Hutch's blade died and Elorin's own blade danced. At that moment, the rust on the blade seemed to flake off one peel of gruesome brown-red at a time, falling to the ground like the fall of an ashen snow.

The strike was perfect, so perfect that the wind sang and the stars shimmered, the Force of the world guiding his blade toward Hutch's neck.

Hutch reacted quickly, Blade Force rippling out of his body like a sharp nail, radiating in all directions. It only paused Elorin's machete for a moment, but it was enough time for him to pull back his own blade.

He raised the hilt to his neck, separating his ring ring and middle finger to allow Elorin's blade to perfectly land in the space between all while deflecting his blow.

Elorin reacted nonchalantly, twisting his wrist slightly in an attempt to sever his grandfather's fingers, however Hutch's battle experience was high. He clamped his fingers down first and pushed down, changing the direction of Elorin's blade and countering his twist.

He released the blade a moment later, stepping forward with a made look in his eye.

There was nothing between him and his grandson anymore, no fictitious barriers, no heavy tolls, no blade...

Hutch's free hand pierced forward, covered by Blade Force as he thrust toward Elorin's chest with a vicious light in his eye.

His life flashed before his eyes once again. The day he was assessed to have talent and shipped away from his own parent... the day he made his first friends... the day he picked out the weapon that called to him... the day he met the love of his life... the day they had their first child... the day he carried his grandson in his arms for the first time, only to be forced to put him down and escape into the night so that his daughter wouldn't be forced to feel his separation again... the day he appeared in their lives again to whisk their son away...

The furious light in Hutch's gaze blurred, flooding over with tears. However, his speed didn't lessen and his striking power didn't weaken.

Even so... just before his fingers pierced a hole through his grandson's chest, a mind flooding pain coursed through his own body.

PCHU!

Hutch's actions came to a stop.

He looked up, only to find that his grandson's figure was becoming blurry for more reasons than just the tears in his eyes.

Soon, Elorin's figure vanished entirely.

Hutch looked down, his gaze landing on a blade as its last hints of rust fell away and drifted into the wind.

Silence echoed through the battlefield. It was palpable, an almost harsh sort of silence, suffocating, even. It wrapped his hands around their throats and squeezed even as they turned purple and blue.

Hutch looked up from the blade, looking into the skies. Maybe only he knew what he was looking for... but he did suddenly smile, a smile of endless relief.

He slowly fell from the blade, sinking into endless darkness.

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 1876: When?

Elorin watched as his grandfather slid off of his blade. He seemed to frown slightly before his brows smoothed out.

By now, the way he and Hutch saw the world was simply far too different. Hutch was still bound by his duty even now, but Elorin had no loyalty to anyone outside of himself. There were many things that he couldn't be bothered to explain even to his grandfather, but now he felt lighter.

Even so, Elorin was aware that his grandfather had gone easy on him. Not once did Hutch use his spatial affinity, of which he potentially had the highest on the entirety of Earth. There was a reason Hutch was probably one of the most talented raw combatants Earth had.

However, in the end, he didn't have the ability to go all out against his own grandson. In fact, he chose death. Rather than being forced to choose between what he felt was right and his own flesh and blood, this felt like the much easier path.

Elorin was aware of this as well, but he wasn't moved. Of course, this wasn't to say that he didn't care about his grandfather. Rather, he felt that he could defeat his grandfather whether he went all out or not. In fact, as things stood right now...

He believed that he was the strongest warrior in Earth's territory.

Elorin sheathed his blade, kneeling to give grandfather's side.

Carefully, he turned his grandfather over. He didn't seem to care about what was happening in the surroundings at all as he looked at the peaceful smile on Hutch's face.

Elorin remained silent for a long while. The blood that pooled from the wound coated his palms, sinking into the sleeves of his white tracksuit, but he didn't seem to notice.

After what must have been at least five minutes, he reached forward and closed his grandfather's eyes and then picked him up.

No one on the battlefield seemed to have the courage to stop him. They could only watch as Elorin made his way to the front of the Ascension Palace.

A surge of Blade Force pulsed once, then twice, cutting out a perfect piece of land with edges as smooth as a mirror's surface. If one looked into it and had a keen eye, it would be possible to tell that it was exactly six feet deep, not a single centimeter deeper or shallower.

Elorin allowed his grandfather's body to fall, but it didn't seem to follow the laws of gravity. Hutch's body fluttered like a falling snowflake, gently descending to the bottom.

Elorin paused for only a moment before the hole was perfectly covered up.

Unsheathing his blade, he carved out a large slab of the pearly white and gold three-quarters of his height before piercing it into the ground. With a flicker of his wrist, several beams of Blade Force surged forward, carving into the slab.

'Here Lies a Loyal Warrior.'

The words were simple and unadorned, almost casual, but encompassed Hutch's life perfectly without the slightest hint of exaggeration. The location of the grave spoke all the words that needed to be spoken. Right beneath the first step of the Ascension Palace, at the very center of this war, the very center of Earth itself.

It was both a sign of respect and disrespect, both a sign of closure and a furious opening.

The doors to the palace opened wide as Elorin walked around his grandfather's grave and began to walk up the steps. With the first missing, he

was forced to stretch his foot out far further before he could begin to walk up slowly and steadily. He didn't even look up to meet the gaze of Noah Fawkes, still looking at the ground with a calm gaze as the Blade Force on his machete hummed.

Noah stood at the tallest height of the stares with a serious expression, his veins pulsing. His expression was just as even as Elorin's, but comparatively speaking, his blood was boiling.

He had reacted as quickly as possible, and yet it felt as though the entirety of Earth was thrown into an upheaval.

Elorin finally looked up and Noah felt his heart skip a beat. At that moment, the calm Elorin had a gaze that was surprisingly fiendish. His expression hadn't moved, but his eyes seemed to hold a concentrated, abyssal hell, pulsing with a furious red. Noah almost felt the need to step out of his way.

Instinctually, Noah swung down his blue saber, allowing it to grow to over ten meters long under the power of his Ability Index, it was as though he had seen a monster that needed to be destroyed as quickly as possible.

"... All those with the Fawkes name... deserve death," Elorin said lightly.

Noah could hardly react. His blade passed through Elorin as though he wasn't there at all.

CLANG!

A machete blade rebounded against Noah's neck, leaving a white streak around what should have been a severed head.

Noah's heart lurched. If it wasn't because he had sensed a threat and used his Ability Index to change the density and weight of his skin, that singular strike would have killed him. In fact, if it wasn't because Elorin had underestimated him and had been too lazy to use his Blade Force, that one strike would have taken his life.

Noah's gaze narrowed as he changed the density of his body again and allowed himself to flutter away like a leaf in the wind.

Inwardly, he was more than a little shaken. When had Earth gained such a powerful Seventh Dimensional existence? This should be Hutch's grandson,

he knew this much. But he hadn't displayed any outstanding abilities ever since the invasion of Terrain, just what was going on here?

Just as Noah was thinking, he inexplicably found himself standing in the same place he had been before, as though he had never fluttered away to begin with.

His heart leapt into his throat. How had this happened?!

Before he could think, Elorin's blade was already descending with no intention of clanging against his neck again. A bright Blade Force swung forth with it.

[Dimensional Descent](#)

Chapter 1877: Patience

Aina sat in silent meditation, her aura in perfect balance. She took deep breaths, controlling her inhale and exhale in cycles that lasted sometimes up to several minutes.

Suddenly, she opened her eyes just as there was a light knock to her and Leonel's room.

"Yes, you can enter."

Savahn came in with a worried expression on her face, one that actually caused Aina to laugh slightly.

"What is it?"

Savahn was speechless. "Why are you laughing, this is serious."

"I don't know, this is just the first time in a while I've seen anything but a smile on your face, I found it interesting."

Savahn blushed, seemingly understanding what Aina was getting at. But then she remembered that she wasn't entirely without ammo in this conversation.

"You're one to talk, I can still smell it in the air."

Aina suddenly panicked. "Smell? What smell?!"

Aina's head snapped around before she froze. This time, it was her turn to blush. There was no smell, clearly Savahn was just making fun of her and had won this round.

Savahn's laughter echoed like a silver bell. She was very used to Aina's shyness and she used to have all sorts of fun making fun of her. After the Metamorphosis, she had thought that maybe all their previous interactions had all been an act, but by now, she knew that it wasn't that the Aina she had known was fake, it was only that it was just one dimension of who she was. That Aina was just as real as this one.

Aina rolled her eyes and coughed slightly, trying to clear her embarrassment.

"Didn't you come here for something important? Look at you making fun of me, I'm innocent."

"Yeah, sure," Savahn laughed, "about as innocent as a death row inmate."

Seeing that Aina was too flustered to respond, Savahn graciously took her victory and remembered that she had indeed come for something quite serious.

"They've attacked and according to the news... Hutch has died already by... the hands of his grandson."

Aina fell into silence. She knew that Hutch was quite important to Leonel although she had never interacted much with the man personally. Even so, it was impossible for her not to feel anything simply for the fact that Leonel had always seen him as a mentor.

That said, before he had left, Leonel had known that this was a distinct possibility. No parent wanted to end their child's life, and there was definitely no grandparent who wanted their grandchild's life. However, Hutch had been unlucky in two ways, he had not only outlived his children, but he was faced with trouble of standing in opposition to his grandson.

It was simply impossible for him to survive both, so even without being there, Leonel knew that Hutch would choose to die rather than make such a voice. It didn't matter to him that Leonel had warned him, it didn't matter to him that there was a path to survive...

Hutch had always felt that this era had passed him by. Despite his talent, he never really felt the same passion he had in his youth, and maybe that was because he had simply lost too much...

Even so, regardless of whether this was his choice or not, Aina knew that Leonel would take it quite hard.

"What should we do?" Savahn asked.

Aina took a deep breath and exhaled. "Nothing. Now isn't the time yet."

Savahn's gaze flickered. "Even with the capital being burned down?"

Aina shook her head and smiled bitterly. She couldn't repeat what Leonel had said before he left. Her thoughts flashed and she remembered that annoying smirk on his face.

Let that old man sweat a bit... is what he had said. That man was really too much. This was an existential crisis, but he could only see his beef with his own grandfather.

Of course, Aina knew the real Leonel. More likely than not, it was something that he was too lazy to explain. If he could stop the unnecessary deaths, he would, but he wasn't some sort of God. There was a limit to what he could predict and prepare for.

At the same time, there was definitely something tying Emperor Fawkes' hands, likely the same thing tying down the four Great Families. It didn't make sense if only one side faced restrictions while the other side didn't.

If Emperor Fawkes could wave a hand and deal with everything, he would have. As such, there was a certain delicate approach that was necessary.

"Alright, in that case, we'll be on standby," Savahn nodded. She turned to leave but hesitated for a moment. "If you need anything, I'm here to talk."

Savahn didn't say anything else as she left. She knew quite well that of them all, the one having the most trouble waiting patiently for the right time was Aina herself. There was nothing she wanted more than to unleash unholy hell on the Brazingers and their allies, but right now, she had to exercise patience. In that case, this was the only option.

Aina smiled lightly as Savahn left. Though she didn't say anything more either, the appreciation was clear in her eyes.

Soon... Soon she would make that family pay in blood for what they had done to her family... her mother.

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Leonel clashed against an enemy spear, and slipped to the side. He activated Knight's Charge and slid past the enemy's left.

With a twirl of his spear, the heavy butt of the lance spear smashed into the Rapax's shoulder blade, throwing it off balance and causing its tail swing to miss and soar over Leonel's head.

"Swift..." Leonel said softly.

His feet pivoted and the tip of his lance spear trembled, not feeling nearly as heavy as it once did.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

He pierced through space through three locations. At the same time, time layered as well, staking three strikes at each one of the three locations and piercing right through the Rapax's vital points.

The enemy Rapax slowly fell to the ground, unable to battle even as Leonel snatched away his spear, exhaling a slow breath.

[Dimensional Descent](#)

Chapter 1878: Aerial

Battle The number of territories that Leonel had had already soared over 400 and the gap between him and others seemed to only be growing. These days, when he came across others, it would be lucky if they had 20 territories to their name, let alone hundreds like he did.

But there was an unfortunate drawback to having so much more territory than anyone else, and that was that he was often forced into battles before he had time to rest or even choose his own targets. With the size of his territory, he was connected across far too many locations. Even if one wasn't targeting him

on purpose, accidentally strolling into his region was far too easy. If it wasn't for the fact that a territory couldn't be targeted by more than one person at once, he would have definitely suffered greatly by now.

Leonel was about to take a step out of his territory when the forcefield solidified. He shook his head and knew that someone else had stepped forward to challenge him.

With a sign, he turned and burst toward a particular direction, wanting to deal with this person as quickly as possible.

Enul, the Nomad Race young man with two arms and six hands, walked around with a hint of frown on his face. He felt that something was off about his surroundings but he couldn't quite understand what it was. It was like the territories were being suffocated by something, but it wasn't immediately obvious what it was.

His first assumption was that it was Edrym.

Usually, the tribulation would do certain things to force battle and force the geniuses to face off against one another. For example, the fact that you couldn't absorb the strength of a defeated enemy was a conscious choice rather than a bug. This was to force the geniuses to battle as much as possible, as often as possible, or else you'd lag far behind your peers by the time you came across one of them, and even if by some miracle, you managed to defeat them, that strength would vanish forever.

This wasn't the only thing in this vein either. Sometimes treasure territories where there would be the reward of a spear or armor or technique at the end would appear in between two territories to incentivize battle. Or, sometimes a powerful beast territory would appear, and by claiming it, one could spawn new beasts ahead of time without having to cross into a new Grade.

However, the occurrences of such things were suspiciously low during this round, almost as though the tribulation was content with the level of activity... but why was it that Enul felt that this was all nonsense? He had hardly run into any challenge at all, and he had only run into a single treasure territory whereas by now he should have run into at least three.

Enul shook his head.

At the same time, several other geniuses were feeling the same exact way. Among them, there was Pririna of the Dwarven Race, or more specifically, since she was a woman, she was a Pixie.

Just like the members of the other races, she had her own advantages. Namely, thanks to her wings, she was able to get a landscape of the surroundings that everyone else couldn't and she could find her targets far quicker than most. As such, much like Leonel, she cleared Zone much faster than most others and by now, she had already crossed the Silver Grade.

As a genius of the Dwarven Race, she had felt the same problem Enul had. Compared to the descriptions of her family's record, this was much different than what she had expected, too different. Something felt off, but she couldn't quite put her finger on it.

Suddenly, her gaze sharpened and her gaze landed on a figure shuttling through the forest below with great speed. Her wings fluttered once and she rose higher into the air, choosing caution first. Although she was an absolute genius of her race, her first instinct was still caution. The Dwarven Race was one of the weaker races right there with humans, they just used their ingenuity to make up for it. Long before she was a genius, she was a Pixie.

However, despite her caution, the young man below snapped his gaze upward, seeing her instantly.

'His gaze is that sharp? How is that possible? Is he a special demon race?'

Pririna was caught off guard. She thought she was high enough and far enough away to not be spotted instantly.

Down below, Leonel's gaze narrowed. He had defeated several Dwarven Race members by now, but none of them could fly that high.

Flight wasn't a simple thing, especially in a world of Force like this one. Even if you had wings, there were limitations. Even in a Third Dimensional world, a bird could soar into the skies indefinitely. The fact that this woman could fly so high definitely meant that she was a genius.

'That should mean she has a lot of territories...'

Leonel's gaze flashed and he suddenly tilted his lance spear upward.

Knight's charge.

Under Pririna's astonished gaze, Leonel suddenly drew a line through the skies, "charging" straight through the air and appearing level with her in the blink of an eye.

Leonel thrust his lance spear out, a vicious momentum being carried behind its devastating weight.

Although she was caught off guard, Pririna still reacted quickly, flapping her wings just once and angling her body to the side. At the same time, she pierced out with her own spear, aiming for the side of Leonel's in a parrying action.

She had seen through Leonel's weakness in an instant. Jumping into the skies like this made him a sitting duck, she only had to dodge once and then he would become nothing more than her plaything.

However, to Pririna's astonishment, Leonel only muttered under his breath once and a barrier radiated out from him, rippling out and slowing her spear by half. But what was maybe even more shocking was that her movement in the air also slowed a measure.

A parry required precise timing. With it thrown off like this, she missed, her spear hitting nothing but air.

Leonel used the lingering momentum of Knight's Charge to glide by Pririna and enter the air space just above her.

With a pivot of his hips and a swing of his spear, just as his upward momentum came to an end, he viciously attacked her back, swinging with all his might.

BANG!

Pririna froze for a moment as though the time frame of the blade connecting with her was extended into infinity. Instantly she knew that one of her wings had been crippled.

BOOM!

The sound barrier shattered as she sped toward the ground like a streaking bullet.

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 1879: Freely

Leonel began to rapidly descend from the air, his speed picking up with every passing moment. The harsh winds blew against his white fur coat, threatening to blow his hood bad entirely. And yet, he aimed his lance spear forward toward the still growing crater in the ground and did something even more insane.

Knight's Charge.

Leonel drew a line diagonally and down through the skies, accelerating his downward momentum and appearing above the crater in the blink of an eye. He moved so fast that the crater below hadn't even begun to settle by the time he swung again with a fierce momentum.

Pririna was still in a daze, having suffered a crippled wing just an instant later all while having her ribs shattered and all the air knocked out from her lungs. If not for a protective treasure she had protecting her, that single strike might have very well ended her life.

Even in comparison to humans, the bones of the Dwarven Race were incredibly fragile and most hollow. This was why they could fly with such small and weak wings to begin with, and also why their bodies were so much shorter than that of other races. If they grew too large, they would collapse under their own weight.

That kind of harsh blunt damage was the kind Pririna feared most, and yet another barrage was already coming.

Pririna grit her teeth watching Leonel descend like a blazing meteor. Her green irises flickered once as though to memorize his face before her one good wing flapped as hard as it good.

Her body was flung up and out toward her left, just barely streaking by as Leonel collided with the ground.

BOOM!

Pririna hoped that Leonel had bit off more than he could chew. Falling to the ground with that kind of speed without something to break his fall should have at least jarred him. Until now, Pririna hadn't even realized that Leonel was a human because she didn't have the time to pay attention to such things. To her, he must have been from a sturdy race which was why he dared to do such a thing. But so long as he missed her, he would have to deal with the impact all on his own.

To her shock, though, that weird blue ripple formed again, slowing Leonel's fall just when it seemed that he would cause himself devastating injury.

Even so, half of that impact's strength should have been enough to harm him severely... or so Pririna thought.

Unfortunately for her, she was measuring Leonel by the standards of her current body and upscaling it to a race with stronger bones than her own. This seemed logical to her because she didn't think anyone could clear territories faster than she could.

But she was wrong. Not only had Leonel cleared far more, his body was far sturdier as a result. He had consumed easily what amounted to be at least 50% more Beast Crystals than the person in second place currently.

Comparing her current body to his own was asking to be humiliated.

Pririna spiraled into the ground with a somewhat helpless expression as she watched Leonel spring up as though nothing had happened, shooting toward her direction with yet another Knight's Charge.

Inwardly, she was exasperated. Who had allowed this human to gain a weapon with such an ability attached to it.

Wait, human?!

Pririna's eyes widened as Leonel's spear descended.

"Wait! Wait! I have something useful for you! Don't kill me!"

The Dwarven Race didn't have the same culture of valiance that the other races did. They place survival first and foremost, and they sought it at any cost. Another genius might have felt too prideful to beg, but Pririna felt that in

the face of someone obviously stronger than you, such pride was only useful in getting you killed faster.

Leonel didn't originally have the intention of killing Pririna to begin with. He had killed a few geniuses during these tribulations, but those were either people who had pissed him off or didn't know how to give in. He didn't have the time to coddle everyone.

His spear came to a stop just above Pririna's head.

Pririna, who had closed her eyes, slowly opened them again and sighed a breath of relief. However, she panicked again when she saw that Leonel was reaching for her spear.

"Wait!"

Leonel frowned, looking to raise his spear again. What was this woman trying to pull here, exactly? He didn't have the patience for this. Also, he could tell that her power wasn't bad, and given her flight advantage, she should have cleared quite a number of territories. Leonel didn't understand why he should spare such a person.

Plus, if he spared her, how would they deal with this? The territory barriers wouldn't open up again until one of them was dealt with, Leonel had already tested this. If it could, he might not have backtracked to deal with her first.

By now, Leonel was getting a bit antsy. He didn't know that everyone was experiencing a shortage of treasure territories due to his actions, so he felt the fact that he only had two silver grade treasures would come back to bite him eventually.

All this time, aside from his stronger power and speed, his greatest advantage was that his weapon was better than everyone else's. But now the best he ran into all had silver grade spears. If he wanted to maintain his advantage, he needed something better, which was why he was pushing so hard to leave his territory.

But his territory was so large and had so many entry points that he couldn't even do that without receiving challenge after challenge, so he was already frustrated. If Pririna tested his patience, she would just have to join the short list of those he had killed in this tribulation.

"Don't! I have a treasure that can allow one of us to exit a territory unimpeded, it's useful to you, no? If I stay here, no one can enter your territory because it will be in an active state, but you can move freely!"

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 1880: Even So..

Leonel paused, his gaze flickering.

This sounded like a top class treasure, but even without his usual thinking speed, he could already see several drawbacks to it.

For one, even if you can leave your territory, just like Pririna said, it would still be in an active state. As such, there would be a lot of things you couldn't do, like fusing new territories into it or beginning to spawn newer and more powerful beasts.

This treasure was probably best used as an escape measure to leave the territories of others if you accidentally ran into an opponent far more powerful than yourself. If you used it to escape your own territory, you would always have to come back to it eventually and deal with the enemy you left behind. So, unless you found a powerful treasure on the outside, the end result would be the same. However, considering how rare those were, Leonel wouldn't hold his breath.

This was the main problem. If Leonel used Pririna to block off entry to his territory, it would only be useful for so long. By the time he got to the Gold Grade, not only would he not be able to fuse his territories, but he would also be caught up to by the others due to an inability to spawn beasts.

"I'm not interested," Leonel said coldly. "You have two choices. Obediently hand over your spear and you keep your life, or don't and I kill you and take your spear anyway."

Pririna sighed when she heard this, she had tried. But at least she wouldn't lose her life. She was hoping to hit the Gold Grade, but Silver wasn't terrible either. It was a slight disappointment, but not devastating.

With a flick of her wrist, she sent her spear over to Leonel, but even as she faded away, nursing her injuries, she burned Leonel's face into her mind.

Leonel's gaze narrowed slightly. He could tell that while Pririna's outward showing was demure and flexible, her heart burned with a similar fire as all the others. She was an interesting character. Clearly she could lay down her pride, but she had values she wouldn't compromise.

When she vanished, an orb and a hidden armor was left behind. Leonel stripped down and placed the hidden armor under everything and then took the orb, tossing it in his palm. This should be the treasure that Pririna was talking about.

Leonel didn't care much for it, though, he didn't really have any intention of running from a battle, and he didn't think there was anyone who could make him do it either. But there was no need to throw away decent enough treasure.

Suddenly, Leonel's gaze flickered. 'She lied.'

Pririna probably didn't expect Leonel to have the skill to tell. Outside of the person who had claimed the treasure, the true function of a treasure wouldn't magically download its uses into your mind. When Leonel had taken Alerina's armor, he had to learn how to use it himself, and the same was the case for this orb.

After looking at it and checking into his Force Arts, Leonel realized that this orb's ability wasn't as simple as Pririna made it out to be. In fact, it was of the gold grade and it allowed you to freely change the state of your territory.

Leonel realized that if he had taken Pririna up on her offer and left, she could have used this orb to claim his territory for herself and then rushed away to a new territory while he was away. By the time he came back, he would find himself locked out of his own territory.

Of course, to pull that off, Pririna would have to give up the orb and let Leonel control, but who knew what other tricks she had to deal with that.

Leonel looked down at the flexible armor he had put on without thinking much and realized that it too had an ability.

"What a tricky little woman... I actually thought about accepting her offer too, there were just too many drawbacks.'

The flexible armor's defense wasn't great, but its ability was very useful. It allowed you to tether a home location onto an object and have it appear there with a thought. Usually, this would be most useful in helping yourself to avoid danger, but if Pririna had tethered it to the orb instead, she wouldn't have to risk ever losing it to Leonel.

She would get the territory, keep her life, and be a large way to the Gold Grade.

Leonel smiled and shook his head. He had a feeling that he would meet this tricky woman again. But next time, he would have his Ability Index. He really wanted to see what tricks she would have for him then.

Leonel tossed the orb and caught it. 'With these two treasures, the rest of this will be even easier. I should hit Gold Grade by the end of the day.'

With a thought, Leonel turned his territory into an active one, barring anyone from entering as he rushed out. Finally, he could pick his own target.

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The turmoil in Earth's territory only seemed to be growing. The dichotomy between regions of chaos and regions of absolute silence was palpable. From space above, it almost looked like different worlds were colliding. On one side there was lush greenery and endless expanses of nature, and on the other there were acres of raging fire and plumes of smoke that fought against the white clouds in the sky.

But oddly enough, after the initial huge swing in the favor of the rebels and the four Great Family geniuses, nothing happened. Well, maybe this wasn't entirely accurate as a descriptor, it was more appropriate to say that things entered a stalemate.

Prince Noah Fawkes was beaten back by Elorin, almost losing his life several times. However, after realizing that he was no match for Hutch's grandson, Jessica Scarlet and the young heir of the Dove family appeared to support him, causing the battle to become a three versus one with no clear victor in sight.

However, what was especially odd was that Elorin didn't seem to be pushing for victory.

It was then that the geniuses of the four Great Families descended onto the capital and everything seemed to change.

In the skies, King Arthur stood across from Adrin. He had just failed to stop the others from returning to Earth and now he was forced to face off against a tough enemy.

He shook his head inwardly, looking toward Earth. He felt that his decision was correct, but even so...

He didn't feel that Earth had anything capable of withstanding those monsters, at least not without Leonel here.