

Dimensional Descent –

Chapter 2

Leonel's depressed mood didn't last for long. Soon we was smiling as though nothing had happened.

At that moment, an arm wrapped around his shoulders. Considering how easily the culprit had done so, it was obvious that he was even taller than Leonel.

"Another failure, how many is that already? 520?"

"521." Leonel muttered.

"Almost every school day since first-year, huh?"

The culprit laughed, leading Leonel up the stairs.

"There are too many young noble women looking to get into the good books of the 3021st bachelor of the Eligible Minor list. Yet you've been solely focused on one girl for four years, think of all the hearts breaking across the world."

Leonel laughed. "James, when you have to say such a large number, it makes the accomplish ring hollow, don't you think?"

It was quite funny. It was nice to be ranked, but being told that there were 3020 men better than him didn't exactly have a nice ring to it. Plus, this was just the Eligible Minor list, once he turned 18, he might not rank on the true Eligible Bachelor list at all.

More depressing than that was the fact there were several snotty-nosed brats no more than 13 or 14 years old ranked ahead of him.

“Bah, forget that damned list.” James spat. “Who knows what perverted grandma ranked a bunch of minors on their eligibility? Load of nonsense.”

“Must be nice looking down from on high like that, Mr. 1034th.”

James laughed pervertedly, shaking Leonel side to side with his arm. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

[Scanning... Security procedures underway]

[Student Leonel Morales recognized]

[Welcome future Five-Star Quarterback]

Leonel heard the usual mechanical voice ringing in his ears. Though he knew no one else could hear it, he still felt a deep disgust whenever he heard this introduction.

“Think about it this way,” James continued as they entered the grand hallways of Royal Blue Academy, “There are over three billion people on Earth who are under 18. Half of those are men like us. Yet were in the top percent of a percent of a percent of them.

“You gotta stop chasing after this one girl. There are too many who want you.”

“As long as she rejects me, I will leave her alone. But in four years, she’s never said a word after one of my confessions. She always just runs off.” Leonel swiped his finger under his nose a few times.

“It’s obvious she likes me.”

James was stunned for a moment before bursting into another fit of laughter. It seemed the students were used to his boisterousness because no one batted an eye to his ridiculous laugh.

“I don’t know why I waste my words, I know you don’t care about these surface things. I should have known nothing would affect your state of mind for the big game.”

James pulled his arm from Leonel’s shoulder, pounding a fist to the latter’s chest.

“Those preppy boys can just wait patiently for their fourth National Championship loss in a row.”

Leonel grinned, pounding James’ chest in return.

Leonel caught a bit of a complex light in his best friend’s gaze. James was easily three inches taller than him and had been his partner in crime ever since they entered Royal Blue Junior Academy together. Leonel would never miss something like this, he knew him too well. PANDA NOVEL

“I do have something to talk to you about —.”

James’ voice was cut off by the ring.

“— Dammit, there’s a test today!”

Leonel shook his head as James ran away like a madman, likely trying to find someone he could cheat off of. Without thinking much, he pulled out a binder from his backpack to cram for his own test while he walked to class.

Unfortunately, he and James weren’t in the same class. While Leonel ranked third academically across all subjects, James was near the bottom of the barrel. If it wasn’t for the fact his Gene Analysis decided that his fateful career was that of a ‘Five-Star Tight End’, he wouldn’t be allowed to enter this building at all.

Royal Blue Academy took these separations very seriously. Due to this, it was already a miracle that Leonel could make it into Senior Class A to begin with.

When Leonel was young, like every other child at the age of three, he took a mandatory Genetic Analysis Examination. Among other things, this test was meant to decide your optimal career path while weighing your benefit to society. This career path would be graded from one to five stars depending on several factors.

Ultimately, a One Star Professional was average. This person wouldn't cause any waves in their career path, but they would be able to stabilize its foundation, allowing the innovators at higher star evaluations to drive progress.

Five Star Professionals were on another level. These were people that would revolutionize their fields. In a single generation, there wouldn't be more than a hundred children with this level of evaluation, and not every profession was guaranteed to birth one either.

It should have been great that Leonel had such an evaluation. He too was a Five Star Professional.

The trouble was that he had no interest in joining the National American Football League and becoming a Hall of Fame Quarterback.

People like him were categorized as 'entertainers'. He would be rich and live a great life, but he would never be taken seriously outside of his sport. This was part of the reason he was ranked so lowly on the Eligible Minor list. Many ranked above him were only worth three stars to their professions, but they were still more valued.

Of course, this wasn't the full reason or else James wouldn't be ranked so much higher than he was since he too was an 'entertainer'.

Leonel walked into class just on time. He smiled lightly to greet a few people before burying his head back into his binder of notes.

Though many liked to socialize with Leonel, they could only shake their heads when they noticed their school's star quarterback cramming as he usually did. His personality was really too odd. He had just been confessing his undying love to Aina, yet now he sat right behind her in class as though he didn't know who she was.

At the same time, the shy Aina who blushed whenever she saw Leonel on the steps hardly reacted to his entry into the class either. Could this fated couple be bipolar?

Since those in Senior Class A didn't even total 20, they could be considered quite close knit. They had become quite invested in the Leonel-Aina romance. Unfortunately, the two gave them no food for the soul in class.

"Alright, all books away. The test will start now."

The seemingly normal desks surfaces flickered and became screens. They were designed to block light projection in every direction but the test-taker's own perspective. So, cheating was effectively impossible.

Leonel's amiable gaze completely vanished. It was like he entered a battlefield as the class was filled with his suffocating presence.

By now, the others of Senior Class A had become used to it. After all, they had journeyed up with Leonel from Freshman Class A. But it would be a lie to say they didn't still break out into a cold sweat every time.

It was just a test, was there a need to take it so seriously? They really couldn't understand how Leonel was evaluated as a Five-Star Quarterback instead of a Five-Star General. Even if he was evaluated as a Four-Star General like his father, it would have been a much better use of his talents.

As usual, Leonel finished with blazing speed, only taking half an hour to complete a two-hour test. Without a choice, he pushed up from his desk, grabbing his bag and slinging it over his shoulder.

The rest of the class breathed a sigh of relief. Now they could start taking the test on their own.

PANDA-NÓVEL “Sorry, teach. I gotta go.”

“Don’t worry about it, Leo.” Ms. Deen, an amiable lady getting on in years, smiled lightly. She was quite fond of this young one. “I know you athletes have a lot on your plate. Go on now.”

Leonel was about to jog out of the classroom door when he suddenly thought of something and paused. He looked up to the ceiling and muttered something as though he was gathering strength.

With a grit of his teeth, he turned back.

With purposeful steps, he made his way back to Aina who was still focusing on her exam. His finger tapped the metallic watch on her small wrist before she could react. There was a light glow that signaled from his watch to hers.

She sat in a daze for a moment before she looked up and realized it was Leonel. For a moment, she didn’t know how to react.

“I know you probably won’t go, but I thought I would try anyway.” Leonel smiled lightly. His disarming smile seemed to warm the air. “We can celebrate our win tonight together.”

Without another word to Aina, Leonel turned and jogged away. Pressing his hands in apology to Ms. Deen for his disruption, he left with an embarrassed smile.

Leonel sprinted out of the building, hopping onto his bike to cut across campus with blazing speed.

Unfortunately, this was the true reason he could only rank third. He never had the time to listen to lectures. With the Information Restriction Act of 2072, knowledge was restricted the further away from the surface world you were.

The government's reasoning was that policing Floating Paradises was difficult, especially the poorest regions that existed the highest in the sky. So, it was impossible to monitor how this 'sensitive' knowledge was being used. Therefore, the government concluded that it should be restricted.

However, when had the reasons governments gave for doing things ever not been bullshit? Even the official reason they gave was so terrible.

In the end, the only time Leonel had to study was the time he spent on the surface world. Otherwise, this oh-so 'useful' watch on his wrist watch would censor his textbooks.

Still, this wasn't the worst of what Leonel had to deal with. In order to enter one of the top three Academies' main campuses, there were extremely strict requirements. One had to be a Three-Star Professional in what were known as the 'Essential Professions', things like engineers or surgeons, or a Four-Star Professional in an 'Auxiliary Profession', careers such as lawyers or business men.

If one wanted to enter the main campus with an 'Expendable Profession' like Leonel's, Five-Star was the minimum.

What did all of this mean? It meant that Leonel was only allowed to enter the same building as Aina based on his credentials as a star quarterback. He had no choice but to follow the athlete recruit's curriculum which was obviously not academically centered.

James' so-called 'test' this morning was only for the basic knowledge every adult should have. Over 80% of his workload was actually evaluated at Royal Blue Academy's state-of-the-art athletic facilities.

The logic was sound. Since his career path had already been decided as a muscle-brained jock, what did he need physics, maths and literature for?

Leonel sped into a massive glass-panned oval-shaped arena. After entering the locker room, he was greeted by the moans of dozens of grown men.

Pinching the bridge of his nose, he sighed like a disappointed parent.

“Captain!”

“You're all too embarrassing, I don't want to be your captain anymore.”

“Don't be like that, cap. These Four-Star Masseuses have the hands of angels!”

“Come on cap, you gotta try this. They only hire these goddesses for the National Championship game. If you don't take advantage now, you'll have to wait until you get drafted by the NAFL!”

“Well, since you're all so sincerely begging me...”

Soon, Leonel's own moans filled the locker room.

An eruption of boisterous laughter shook the arena's walls. It didn't seem that the biggest game of the year was just a few hours away at all. And why would it? Leonel had led them to victory three times before already, this year would be no different.