

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2261: A Name

Anastasia watched everything, speechless. She didn't know what to say. That language had frozen even her for a moment. It held the weight of command, and an undeniable majesty. Coming from Leonel, even without his King's Might Lineage Factor activated, it felt as though the shadow of a True King had appeared, albeit it for just a moment.

But after a moment, seeing the sneaky smile on Leonel's face, she couldn't help but ask.

"You... What did you say?"

"Oh, that?" Leonel grinned. "I said that little boy's name."

Anastasia froze. "You... you said a name?"

"Well, yeah. I can't actually speak that language, and if I copied anything else they said, wouldn't it be embarrassing if I said a word like "and" or "the", they'd laugh me out of the ship. Plus, I assume that whatever his parents named him meant something bold and powerful."

It was impossible for even Leonel to learn an entire language just based off of a short conversation. But, picking out a repeatable series of sounds within that conversation was all too obvious. When El'Rion was leaving, they had all saluted him with that sound plus a prefix that he assumed meant something like "young master" or "young ruler". By process of elimination, picking out El'Rion's name was as easy as breathing.

"You... are unbelievable," Anastasia muttered.

"I know, right? I'm pretty gre-"

Anastasia slapped the back of his head. "Not in that way!"

The Void Race servants who had been kicked off of the ship quickly felt the suppression of the world around them. They quickly took out several items to fight back against the suppression, and unlike the individuals who had come down from the Four Great Families, the black chains didn't appear around them. Clearly, whatever items they had taken out to protect themselves were far beyond what the Four Great Families had had.

They looked around in fear, but seeing that no one came for them, they took out other treasures and began to escape quickly one after another.

Leonel rubbed the back of his head. "I don't know how a race like that can be so cowardly. I don't know what you're so angry about, when have I ever been wrong?"

"Would you like me to list them one by one? In alphabetical or chronological order?"

Leonel was stunned. This was very much not the response he had expected. But, just as quickly, his one mind began to subconsciously form the list and he had to shake his head to get it to stop. By then, he was already one longer than he cared to admit.

"... Never mind."

After a while, Anastasia burst out with laughter. She laughed so hard that twinkling crystals of blue came from her eyes. She felt like she was even dying of laughter. A name, they had been scared off by a name, it was cracking her up. The funniest part was that they probably had no idea.

She knew a little bit about the Pluto Race, mostly due to the Minerva Race, and she knew that their language wasn't understood by many outside of their races, and definitely couldn't be spoken by anyone so casually. They had probably run because they thought they had mistaken Leonel's identity. After all, Leonel had been expelled from El'Rion's body, who knew if he was closer to the Pluto Race than he seemed?

Just imagining someone screaming "LEONEL" in English and then scaring off a Race of Gods was killing her.

Leonel smiled. "When you're done, we should probably get going in case one of them realizes they've been duped."

Anastasia wiped her tears, though they had already long since floated away.

"This was a nice idea by you and all, but moving this corpse in isn't exactly easy either, you know. It won't be as difficult as The Hourglass because the difficulty is set and won't just infinitely increase, but it's beyond the current you for sure."

"Isn't that why I asked you if you could process it first?" Leonel smiled.

Anastasia looked down with a hint of hesitation. Could she? Maybe if she had a few months, probably a few years, actually.

"That's okay, my favorite water boy is finally here," Leonel perked up.

El'Rion rushed in from the distance. He was still quite heavily injured and he hadn't fully recovered, but when he heard his name called, he rushed forward with all the speed his could muster.

Plutos were the God of Gods, so long as their name was spoken in its truest form, no matter the distance, they would hear it. But what El'Rion didn't expect was that the person who called out would actually be... Leonel?

"Hey, you're finally here, good. Do me a favor, use that little hourglass thingy to help Anastasia put this corpse inside."

El'Rion froze and his lip twitched. Hourglass... thingy...? He had only just learned this language recently but he was pretty sure Leonel was being absolutely ridiculous again.

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Wise Star Order streaked across the skies with great speed. This timeline was already long after Leonel would have left this Zone, but it had taken him quite a long time to finally revive.

It was unknown whether all God Childes would definitely revive, but it was also obvious why. Those that were dead couldn't exactly tell tales, now could they? But Wise Star Order theorized that so long as a God Childe died with an intact Ethereal Glabella, and around enough Force, they would most definitely come back.

Every time he died and Leonel did something dangerous, it was becoming more and more difficult to make sure his Ethereal Glabella remained protected, but this was a master's duty to his disciple.

"Ah, finally back."

Wise Star Order looked down toward the devastation of Planet Luxnix, Viola, and Montex. He remembered how heart wrenching it had been the first time he saw it, but now he was simply numb.

On the bright side, his wife survived in this timeline. On the unfortunate side, how would he sleep around now?

He descended, his mind swirling with thoughts.

Chapter 2262: Put Me Down!

Wise Star Order chuckled to himself. He didn't know why he was thinking about that woman. Which life was it that he learned how she betrayed him?

He was a Wise Star Order, and that sounded great. But compared to a Northern Star Order, it was worth next to nothing. The reality was that the truth of namesakes of the Luxnix family was much deeper than others knew, and it was something that Wise Star Order had allowed to be buried.

Wise Star Orders were the bookkeepers and zoo keepers of the God Beasts of Creation. It was their job to document all of the races, worlds, and natural phenomena of Existence, not to mention taking care of all species. There was a time where the God Beasts of Creation had at least one pairing of every plant and animal to ever exist.

Of course, that catalog had long since been destroyed, but the ultimate purpose of Wise Star Orders was their mental capacity to remember a lot of things... that was all. So, one could imagine why it was Wise Star Order's wife who was the Matriarch and de facto leader of the family, and not himself.

Northern Star Orders were the true warriors. They were existences that, so long as they came into contact with an adequate well of Light and Star Force, would be guaranteed to touch upon the Golden Tablet and claim the truest Lineage Factor of the Infinity Beasts.

Of course, in this Incomplete World, you would be more likely to enter the Ninth Dimension without the Regulator striking you down than you would be to find a strong enough well of Force. Even in Complete Worlds they were nigh unheard of, mostly destroyed by the God Beasts of Creation.

Not that Wise Star Order would ever allow a Northern Star Order to take such a step even if they had such a thing available... that would be nothing short of suicide. If the other Races knew that humans still had this capability, the small quarter that they had been given to continue to live as a race would be crushed. It could be said that this was the most foolish thing a human could do in this day and age.

And then there was Snow Star Order... This was actually the fault of the English language, the translation wasn't nearly bold or sharp enough. Snow referred now to one of ice water, but rather one of soot and ash. Snow Star Orders were the executioners and messengers of the Infinity Beasts, and they were meant to remain as Snowy Star Owls.

Compared to other humans, they could exhibit much more of the Snowy Star Owl's real strength and they too could cross a galaxy with a single flap of their wings.

Unfortunately, none of the techniques that Wise Star Order had left behind had allowed the Snow Star Order of Leonel's time to display any of that power, which led to her dying at the hand of Velasco.

Then again, Wise Star Order thought to himself, knowing that man, he probably had enough strength to deal with the situation regardless. It was a shame that such a monster was born in this Incomplete World.

Of course, he too was born here. But unlike Velasco, his Luxnix family didn't originate in this world and he also knew how to get out. And with the project abandoned and the Shadow Tails gone, he could leave with his own methods whenever he wanted.

But first... he had a treasure vault to leave behind in the Spirituals Domain.

Was it smart to give this kind of strength to the very disciple he would have to kick the ass of in a few millennia? No. Definitely was not. But he would do it anyway because this was how the first timeline had gone.

Originally, he had left that treasure vault behind in the Spirituals Domain out of sentiment. He knew what was coming and he had a fondness for the human race. Plus, he was leaving behind some of his Luxnix family, so he hoped that they would be able to benefit from his teachings.

As for why he had left it in the Spirituals Domain and not the Human Domain, it was a test. If the people of this Incomplete World wanted any chance of crossing the coming trial, they had to at least dominate this Incomplete World, or else they wouldn't stand a chance against the others.

Very soon, the Vast Bubble would run out of time and they would have to cash in on the bet that the Fawkes had made. In a final push, they would pit the juniors of the Incomplete Worlds against one another, taking advantage of the time dilation for one final spurt of accelerated growth.

Incomplete Worlds were like rolls of the dice. There would be many that evolved down a path far weaker than the Dimensional Verse, but there would be some that had evolved in special niche ways that placed them on par with even some Complete Worlds despite lacking the ability to take the final step into the Ninth Dimension.

These latter worlds were what the Vast Bubble were banking on. They wanted warriors that would be useful and the Dimensional Verse was far too weak. And then, once they gave them a path to the Ninth Dimension, they would have these warriors in the palm of their hands forever.

Velasco was supposed to become one of these warriors, but he had grown too powerful on his own. As for whether they would allow the son of such a man to live... Well...

Wise Star Order laughed into the skies as he landed in the courtyard of his and his "wife's" abode. That brat was harder to kill than a roach, he'd find a way, probably. The only question was how many would die before he did find that path. The answer to that question was more important than anything else.

"XXX? You're here?"

Wise Star Order's mind seemed to filter out his name naturally, at this point he felt that he did it on purpose.

Seeing the face of the woman he knew would betray him, and just how gorgeous, and equally annoying she was, he felt an amused thought bubble up as a bulge in his pants shifted.

The Matriarch of the family looked as though she was about to launch into a lecture. She had only married Wise Star Order because he was the most eligible bachelor, but she usually took out the stress of her position on him. Wise Star Order had never been a push over, but he couldn't defeat this wife of his in the past either so it was useless.

Now, though...

Wise Star Order took a step forward and grabbed her by the waist, haling her over his shoulder and storming into their bedroom.

"XXX!! YOU! PUT ME DOWN!!"

The protests were soon drowned out by dense cries for mercy filled with a lustful undertone.

Wise Star Order had an excellent time subduing this wife of his. It wouldn't change much about the future, but he didn't care for it to. It would be even more interesting later. His life was just getting started.

Chapter 2263: Creation Tablet

Wise Star Order stood with a stretch, sliding his robes on. Ah, it was good to be young. Last time he had gone so hard, his back had ached for days.

He ignored the limpid words of his wives. She was hardly intelligible, her speech slurring and her eyes half closed. She was probably saying something about why he wasn't staying in bed, but it was more funny than anything to him.

Before this day, he had bedded this woman a single time, and she hadn't even let him finish. She only did it out of a sense of duty and to officially consummate their marriage. Of course, the most important reason was because of her Ability Index. She had been trying to take on his Wise Star Order abilities for herself.

As much as he would like to play with this heartless woman some more, he had some work to do.

"Right, Valiant Heart..."

Wise Star Order took a step as his wife's gargled mess of words were becoming sharper and louder. He luckily didn't get to listen to whatever nonsense she was definitely trying to spew. Instead, he had appeared deep within the catacombs of the Luxnix.

These catacombs were built by the Envoys of the God Beast of Destruction. There hadn't been an active Void Beast in countless generations, but that didn't stop the creature's lessers from doing their best to stir up trouble.

Despite their usual brazenness, they were somewhat cautious in this world. That was because of the appearance of the Pluto Race and its relation to the existence of these Incomplete Worlds was something worthy of being wary of.

The Void Bubble was far too weak to even have a single Incomplete World for this sort of experiment, let alone dozens, it could only be done by the God Races. But at the same time, this world was too valuable precisely because of its variability and potential for evolution, it was the perfect place to experiment with a new Force.

Since the experiment was a failure, and a youth of the Pluto Race had appeared, they chose to abandon it. The place had already been stripped bare by Leonel, but why would they care so much about failures? No, it was probably more accurate to say that they couldn't spare the risk and the failures weren't valuable enough to put themselves on the line.

Wise Star Order appeared in the temple once more. Now, all that remained was a Bronze Tablet, and he didn't seem surprised. He had allowed Leonel to take the Silver and Golden Tablets. It would be a long while before Leonel could use the latter, so he wasn't worried. Of course, he didn't expect that foolish disciple of his to understand propriety and not use the tablet even when he could, not in this state anyway.

That was Leonel's fault. He would be under a lot of pressure soon, and he might take power from anywhere he could. But if he took it from this source, he would only die sooner.

Wise Star Order stepped forward and toward the Bronze Tablet. He looked as though he was about to crash right through, but the moment his shin looked as though it would crash into the alter, a ripple of space flashed and he disappeared. The Luxnix would probably rush in soon enough, but find nothing at all.

The space Wise Star Order appeared in was a vast darkness. There was only one thing floating in silence, a single tablet... a single silver tablet.

He reached forward and grabbed.

The Creation Tablets.

As a Wise Star Order, he had a duty to these tablets. Bronze, Silver, Golden and...

He waved the hand with the Silver Tablet in it and its body rippled, the words on its surface forming into a Force Art that rolled and foamed with light until it became a blinding crystal color. Star Crystal. The crystallization of the purest, attributeless Star Force. It was the energy that was the very foundation of Existence itself.

He might be a glorified librarian, but the books he oversaw were far beyond the imagination of most individuals. In Incomplete World, even a Silver Tablet like this one had infinite power, it could bend and twist reality as it pleased and had very few restrictions.

To the God Beasts of Creation, though, this was simply a simulator. It was used to document experiments, it was these Creation Tablets that were the center that allowed the God Beasts of Creation to succeed in passing down their bloodlines to humans, and all the while, they killed not a single person thanks to it.

'It's a decent gift,' Wise Star Order thought to himself. 'He'll be pretty aimless in his life because of the influence of his future self, why chase anything when you feel like you have already achieved everything? This should help him get a taste of what it means to have drive and purpose, it'll make the moment his future self vanishes more manageable as he'll have his own sense of self.'

'But this isn't quite enough.'

Wise Star Order stroked his chin.

Leonel had no idea that his master, a master he didn't even know he had and wouldn't acknowledge until years later, was diligently laying out a plan for his improvement step by step. However, that wouldn't stop Wise Star Order from being as diligent as he could.

"Right, I'll use this to influence a few Zones, then."

He shook the Silver Tablet again and it went back to normal as he vanished. Streaking across the skies, he felt leisurely, a smile on his face. He guessed that he owed his disciple a small bit of advantage. He had made it so far without any, so Wise Star Order wanted to see what he would accomplish now.

Wise Star Order appeared above Earth, prepared to make some alterations to the timeline. Enough time had passed that the Plutos had long since gone and Earth was slowly building up its own civilizations. Interestingly enough, the true history of Earth seemed to be completely wrong, not that that mattered.

"Ah, right, I need a name, I can't exactly use Wise Star Order, too on the nose. Hm..."

He looked at the tablet. "Ah, what was it that that stupid woman kept calling me? Nilrem, right? Alright, let's go with Merlin, then."

Chapter 2264: Maze Ore

Leonel appeared back in his timeline. His gains this time were quite great. He had gained the odd beast that fused with Little Tolly, he had gained a Void Beast's corpse, and his Vital Star Force had taken a half-step into the Impetus State. Beyond that, he had been informed about a great many things and even gained the Silver and Golden Tablets.

He wasn't too eager to pass down those two tablets to the Luxnix. They had had them for so long back then and accomplished nothing, giving it to them now wouldn't magically change anything except... for his grandmother.

Even so, he was hesitant to give it to her either. He had too many questions for that grandfather of his, and his grandmother was practically wrapped around his finger. He was very good at reading people, and he could tell that his grandmother was entirely googly eyes for the Ascension Empire's Emperor. She would stand on his side almost no matter what.

In a situation like that, he wasn't sure what to think. Did he hate his grandfather? No. Did he distrust him? Not exactly, though it was close enough to that. Did he want to take unnecessary risks? Also no.

So he kept it to himself. Instead, rather than returning to the Morales family, he was far more interested in two things. First Anastasia's second search, and the second, and also the reason they returned home so easily... he wanted to fully understand Little Tolly, or at least understand him to the greatest extent he could.

He stood in a familiar location of the Lab Setting. It was the first room that had ever formed. His simple workbench ahead, the walls were lined with Snowglobes and simple shelves. This was the room that he had learned to Craft in, the room he had started the first of his father's lessons and gained an understanding toward how he should treat his Spirit partner.

He sat at the bench and pointed out a hand. Little Tolly stretched out, peeling off of his skin and forming a perfect ball. Silver was still the little guy's main color, but the dense runes of white gold that made his head dizzy to look at.

Little Tolly rolled on the table between Leonel's fingers, making booping sounds that made it seem like it was having a great deal of fun.

'Interesting. Spirits usually choose a favored form and even a gender after entering the Sixth Dimension, but Little Tolly has done neither, choosing to stay like this. Is this because of the way I evolved him? Is it because of the best he assimilated? Or is there another reason?'

Tolliver should have a perfect fusion of all paths. There was a ore refinement path, a creation path, a Universal Force Path, and of course the jack of all trades.

The first allowed the ease of processing of ores, but not just this alone. This seemed to sound like a Spirit would just clear an Ore of impurities for you, but it was deeper than that.

When one had entered the Life Grade, you began to appreciate the intricacies of each and every ore. Even when they shared the same name, they weren't exactly equal, and you had to account for all of these little changes when you wanted to create something whole and new, something that had a life of its own.

This path was like a cheat code to the Life Grade. Rather than relying on your personal skill to learn and adapt, you could rely on your Spirit instead to force the Ores into a predictable path. This lowered the bar to forge Life Grade Crafts considerably, you only had to worry about the blueprint and not the whims of nature.

This was the first thing Leonel tested. He took out an ore that went by Maze Ore. It was a Light Domain Type Ore that could project a large amount of illusions as it refracted the light around it. It was an interesting ore he had been playing around with as he thought it would be interesting to form a troop around this kind of armor.

However, it was very difficult to work with despite being a Sixth Dimensional Ore. This was because even the slightest deviation in a cut to the ore could drastically change how it warped light around it, and it could trick the eyes of even its Crafter and their Spirit, so getting precise cuts in the first place was a nightmare.

It was a problem ore that most completely ignored. Only those with exceptionally high Light Force Affinity could hope to deal with it, and it was rare enough to have an affinity of such a rare Force to begin with, let alone having the skill in Crafting to match it. Unless, of course, you had a Dream World like Leonel.

This Ore could fool even Internal Sight, but what it couldn't fool was Leonel's Dream World.

Even so, there were other problems aside from trying to get perfect cuts, and that was related to the actual and slight differences between the Force densities of the ores themselves. Even if he cut them perfectly, these small differences would throw him for a loop.

He held out two Maze Ores and handed them to Little Tolly with a simple command: make them identical in every way.

To Leonel's surprise, Little Tolly only tapped each one of them once then went back to rolling around and having fun.

Leonel's brows shot up before he deployed his Dream World.

He sat in silence for a long time. He scanned everything about the ore, the cuts, the Force balance, the size, the weight, he didn't miss a single detail, even down to its chemical structure...

'It shouldn't have been anywhere near that fast...'

Chapter 2265: Lighthouse Ore

Little Tolly was supposed to be a jack of all trades but master of none. However, this speed was even faster than a true master of this purification path should have found possible. He didn't have much of a reference outside of what he had read in the Void Library, but he was certain of this. It wouldn't have been a surprise even if it took days, and the Spirit in question should have had to swallow the Ores first, process them, and then expel them... not just tap them once.

Leonel knew that the beast would cause some great changes in Little Tolly, and he even expected that the little guy would be more of a master than he knew. But this was greatly exaggerated.

Of course, the ores weren't perfect. He only commanded Little Tolly to make them identical, but he didn't specify how, or what parameters he wanted. So, he assumed that the little Metal Spirit had chosen the easiest path, and not the path best for his army, but he didn't care very much.

He took another ore. This one was another Sixth Dimensional Ore and it was a Vein Type Ore that directly Light Force. It could be used to dampen and expand the Maze Force of the Maze Ore, shrouding a much larger area than that of the troop with the Maze Armors, or it could be used to do the opposite and shrink the illusions to contend against a small number of enemies or even one powerful enemy.

This Vein Type Ore was known as Lighthouse Ore, it was the best ore in this category at controlling Light Force. The reason for its necessity was quite obvious. Maze Ore, once its cuts were set, could be confusing to look at, but not much about it would change over time, and it lacked flexibility. This would fix all of that.

However... Leonel felt it would be better if they were the same ore, containing the characteristics of control and confusion. Of course, that was easier said than done. Leonel had never bothered because considering all the effort it would take, he might as well just forge the both of them into a Life Grade armor, it would be the same thing, mostly. Unless.

The second path of the Spirits allowed one to fuse Ores into one, creating all new effects and combining abilities. This was yet another cheat code of the Life Grade, making the ores perfect for Crafting into a holistic and whole form.

"Ah, I haven't studied these two enough, I need a third Maze Ore-

Leonel mumbled to himself prepared to take out a third, but then he froze.

Little Tolly's white gold runes lit up and a Maze Ore suddenly spit out from thin air. There was only the slightest fluctuation of Force in the surroundings as though the little one was pulling on something and then it appeared, just like that, in a flash of light.

Leonel reached forward, slowly picking the ore up. It was a Maze Ore, perfect and whole. He squeezed it and it was crushed between his palms. Everything about it was exactly the same, even the resistance. It wasn't an illusion at all, or else he would have sensed the Dream Force by now.

He looked toward Little Tolly. "I need another."

Little Tolly didn't think much, making a cute bloop sound and forming another. Leonel picked it up and he was completely shaken. This one was slightly different from the last one, and the last one was slightly different from the two that he had originally given Little Tolly.

"I need a Lighthouse Ore."

Little Tolly sat in silence for a while, confused. Then, suddenly being enlightened, it reached forward and touched the Lighthouse Ore in Leonel's hand quickly, then pulled back, acting innocent before it flashed with light.

A perfectly whole Lighthouse Ore appeared, slightly different from the one in Leonel's hands. Little Tolly didn't even seem to be struggling at all.

Leonel immediately put the little Metal Spirit through a countless series of tests, pushing the little one to the limits... or so he tried. Nothing he did seemed to tire Little Tolly out at all. He assumed that it was because he didn't go far enough, but this alone was shocking.

Little Tolly could perfectly replicate ore at the Sixth Dimension and below without much effort at all. It was completely stonewalled when it came to higher Ores, and it more so seemed like a "yes or no" switch rather than an effort switch.

Each time he created one, he pulled from the Force in the surroundings, causing each one to be just a little bit different, just like real ores you would find in a mine.

What was more shocking than that was that after creating the new ore, a fusion of Maze Ore and Lighthouse Ore, Little Tolly became like a database, remembering the new ore and being able to create it even without the two base ores any longer.

There wasn't even a point in testing the third path, that of using Universal Force to supplement Crafting, because Leonel could already feel it passively when Tolliver stuck to his arm. But he chose to do so anyway, just to cover all of his bases, and this was maybe the most shocking of them all.

When he used Universal Force through Tolliver, he could sense something beyond, or maybe it was on par... he wasn't entirely sure. It was like he could touch upon the veil of the world and he discovered something absolutely shocking...

He could sense the Constellations of the Dimensional Verse. Those of the Human Domain, those beyond the Human Domain, it didn't seem to matter in the slightest.

Not only could he sense them, but he could use Little Tolly as a bridge, connecting to them, and using these Constellations to directly power his creations.

The implications of such a thing were beyond what Leonel could even fathom currently, especially once he stepped outside of this Verse.

As he was thinking, Anastasia's voice drifted to his ear.

"I'm sorry Leonel, there is no such Innate Node in this time either."

Chapter 2266: A Suit

Leonel fell into silence for a moment before he closed his eyes and exhaled a slow breath. When he opened them again, there was a resolute look within. The plan remained the same. Crush this Dimensional Verse into his fists as quickly as possible, open a path to the outside world, and if he was lucky enough to enter the Impetus State before then, then he would forget about this matter. If he wasn't, then he didn't believe in the whole of wider Existence there wasn't at least one such person. He didn't care how powerful they were, what their background was, if it would save Aina, he would do it.

"With me, Tolliver. We'll finish this within a day with your help."

The sound of popping bubbles and bubbling water echoed. It sounded much more complex than the noises Little Tolly usually made, and Leonel even felt that he could even somewhat understand the little Metal Spirit far better. While it hadn't seemed to mature exactly as he had expected, it had definitely still matured. Confidence and excitement radiated from Tolliver, and Leonel even felt like the Metal Spirit was a miniature version of himself, at least somewhat.

"Good."

Leonel got to work.

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A day later, he stepped out from the Lab Setting, sharp-eyed and radiating a suppressive aura. The first thing he did was go and speak to his mother. After confirming that she had already formed the Golden Tiger Lineage Factor, he asked her to follow him. It was about time they returned to the Morales family and saw what the situation was. Not much time had passed. The time allocated for the mission within the Zone should have taken years to finish, and the time dilation was, as a result, quite forgiving. Due to this, Leonel and his mother had only been inside for a few minutes. Overall, it was only a single day if his time spent Crafting was.

On that day, not only had he completed the final sets of armor for his demon troops, but he had also reformed his Divine Armors, again.

"If you want to return to the Morales family, you can't wear that," Alienor suddenly said as Anastasia set off.

"Hm?" Leonel looked down at himself. His robes were decent enough, though not as elaborate as the ones he had worn to match Aina as they entered The Heir Wars. But, they were still decent enough. He had wanted to wear his sweatpants, but he felt that he should be a bit more mindful of his image. That said, he wasn't exactly in tune with the fashion sense of the wider Dimensional Verse, he just randomly picked something out. Now that he thought about it, it was Aina who had decided on their matching robes as well. He was much better at designing cool uniforms, but now wasn't the time for that.

Alienor shook her head and patted Leonel's cheeks. "I didn't want to overstep my bounds before, but I won't let anyone stop me from being a mom now, not even you."

She waved a hand, and a white robe appeared.

Leonel's expression became a bit weird. Why white? It wasn't that he hated the color, but he would prefer something bolder. What about black and gold? A nice grey and blue also sounded nice.

"Don't doubt your mother, Little Lion. Now come, strip."

Leonel's face became weirder.

"What are you doing? Hurry up now, I haven't got all day."

Leonel coughed and stripped off his outer robes. He wasn't a shy person, and had gotten into his fair share of wild battles that had practically left him entirely naked. But for some reason he felt a little uncomfortable standing in front of his mother in his boxers. Alienor looked at his body and nodded, patting her own shoulder as though she had done a great job. Leonel's physique had already been exceptional ever since he entered the Fourth Dimension. He had gone from an elite athlete to a man that seemed more like a fitness model than anything else. But now, whether it was in vascularity, leanness, or definition, he was levels above.

She threw a pair of white pants and robes at Leonel. When Leonel caught them, he felt that the material was incomparably soft, almost like silk and clouds had a baby. On top of that, looking a bit closer at more than just the color, there were faint patterns of a grey so subtle that it almost looked white as well. But together, the subtle embroidery made it look quite noble and elegant. When he put them on, he was actually quite satisfied. The material even made his Force flow with a smoother cadence. He made a mental note to study up on fabrics and how he could incorporate them into his Crafts. His father's teachings had had sewing lessons, but he hadn't applied them anywhere but the beast skin armors he had made for his companions during the Void Palace True Selection.

However, his mom didn't seem to be finished. She had yet to help him accessorize.

By the time Leonel was done, he was wearing a golden chain around his neck and wrist, the latter of which was just barely hidden beneath his robe sleeve, and the former of which was just as subtle beneath his collar. His hair was slicked back in a formless gel that he couldn't even feel, and he actually wore shoes for a change. His white suit with faint grey embroidery reminded him of an Indian style suit, a jodhpuri if his memory hadn't failed him. As for his mother's nods of satisfaction, they were even more exaggerated.

"Now, your father's glasses," Alienor commanded.

Leonel froze, but his mother's tone didn't seem to leave room for negotiation. With a deep breath, he slipped them on, and Alienor beamed.

"There's my Little Lion. Go on now."

Leonel shifted the crystal-framed glasses on his face and then stepped out, a vibrant violet color in his eyes. When he stepped out, he found the Morales family in chaos.

Chapter 2267: Gifts

The Morales family wasn't under attack, at least not officially. Rather, the ships of several powers were in the surroundings, each one had come with "gifts", these gifts being Leonel's demands of them in exchange for the lives of their juniors.

Due to the matters that had happened the moment the Heir Wars ended, they hadn't had time to gather up these materials. But, Leonel's ability to read the intentions of people, and further these powers, only got sharper the stronger his mind became. He could see the difference between those that had come with the intention of actually paying up, and those that expected the gesture alone to be enough.

The Morales family elders had simply said that Leonel wasn't here, but how could these people believe that? So, they had started pressing, leaving their warships up in the air around the Morales capital. Of course, if it was aggressive enough for a war declaration, the Morales would have never come this far, but the intention was obvious enough.

However, as bold as the threat was, Leonel's lip curled. He could sense the hesitation, the fear, and why shouldn't they have such reservations? The momentum of the Morales was unlike anything they had ever seen. If not for his father's death, maybe they wouldn't even dare to do this much.

This was a test. They wanted to see how much they could push the Morales.

As Leonel walked toward the capital, his mother a half step behind him with a doting and caring expression on her face, his presence seemed to loom, becoming taller and taller until the world fell into its own sort of silence.

The engines of the warships still blared, the raging winds caused by their presences, and the distortions in gravity were still heavy, however in the end it still felt as though there was only one person that could be focused on.

The members of the Morales who were just passively observing this situation from the outside, not quite knowing of the internal conflict between Leonel and their own elders, felt a sense of pride well up in their hearts.

This was the champion of the Heir Wars. Not just any Heir War, but an unprecedented Heir War that would be remembered for generations, a man that stood atop the strongest collection the Human Domain had seen since its inception.

And he was a Morales. He was their Patriarch.

The will of the Morales seemed to solidify and the flickers of their Constellation in the sky dimmed the momentum of the surrounding families considerably. The faces of their

messengers fell. Never did they expect that the appearance of just one person would have such a profound effect on the situation, but they steeled their hearts.

They had already expected much of this, though not all of it. It was the reason for their partial caution in the first place. But even so, they still represented the whole of the Human Domain, and even the Suiard family and the Spirituals Religion had suffered at the hands of Leonel, not to mention the Omann family.

Three organizations and families, all on the same level as the Morales, had come for compensation. No matter what the future of the Morales looked like, it was still the future and not the present. It was impossible for them to have taken full benefit from their Constellation and new Lineage Factor already. This was their best chance to suppress them.

The so-called "messengers" were all among the strongest these families could call forward without sending their Ancestors. If they sent their Ancestors, it would have a much different connotation, and they didn't want to take that step just yet. Instead, they sent the very strongest of their Seventh Dimensional elites.

The Constellation families, the Constellation Bow Alliance, the Suiard, the Omann, the Spirituals Religion... but they were just the beginning. Once again, the smaller families became a pawn in the game of the big wigs, countless smaller Seventh Dimensional families, and even a minority of Sixth Dimensional families, appearing as well.

They all had the intention of stepping off their ships and questioning Leonel directly, but the latter waved a hand.

All of a sudden, the strength of the world trembled and their ships were locked in place, all of the Force Arts no longer responding to their call as though they were cut off from the laws of the world.

"Guests should wait to be invited in. You wouldn't want to be rude, right?" Leonel asked lightly.

The messengers froze as Leonel strolled into the planet-swallowing palace of the Morales. Within, the elders were in heated discussion. They hadn't even gotten time to implement many of Leonel's changes before this happened.

They all realized they hadn't improved nearly enough yet. While their pride wanted to fight it out with the rest of the Human Domain immediately, the cost of this was heavy, especially since they had already sent much of the evacuees back to their homes due to Leonel's orders.

If not for Leonel's almost blinding presence, they wouldn't have even noticed someone enter, something that was a hint embarrassing.

Some found themselves subconsciously exhaling when Leonel appeared before catching themselves. Since when had they trusted this brat so much? He hadn't proven anything but how rude he was.

Leonel scanned the region, but the Overlord was nowhere to be seen. Ancestor Issa and Ancestor Alvaro seemed to have taken over the proceedings, but because the other families hadn't sent any Ancestors, it would be a sign of weakness if they took direct action so they were trying to find some workarounds.

Seeing Leonel, the two had their own complicated set of reactions, but in the end, they exhaled.

"Patriarch." They greeted at the same time.

Of course, they weren't unduly respectful. The word Patriarch coming from them sounded no different than had they said Leonel's name directly.

They noticed Alienor as well, but they chose not to say anything. For one, they were quite familiar with Leonel's temper by now and he might do something ridiculous if they really said something, and secondly... well, she carried the Morales name too.

"Is there really all that much to talk about? Let them come and bring us great gifts."

The expressions of the Ancestors and elders changed.

Chapter 2268: Junior Ancestors

The elders were truly stunned by Leonel's words. Their first assumption was that Leonel didn't understand what he was talking about, lacking in too much experience to see what the problem was.

Take, for example, two individuals of vastly different standings, one of which was a man of average class and fit well amongst the common people, and the second of which was a noble existence, an Emperor or King, even.

Would the man of average class be able to make a deal of equal with the King? According to the rules of society, they would be, by their very nature, two existences of vastly different worths. Making a deal of equals first necessitated being equals in the first place.

A King could order a man of average class to do as he pleased, the vice versa would ever be true.

How this applied to the current situation was obvious. The Morales might be a King if it was dealing with any one family, but the problem was that it wasn't dealing with one family or even one organization, it was dealing with the entire Human Domain. How could they match up?

What did it mean to make a deal of equals? It meant that if one party should default on their word, the consequences the opposing party could force them to pay would be too great for them to ignore. This would force both parties into upholding their word.

What could a man of average class do to a King? And in this situation, in an exchange of life for treasure, if these families defaulted on their words, they would lose one genius, true enough. But they would also be able to gain a reason to retaliate in kind.

But what about the Morales? If Leonel didn't follow through, then he would bring down the wrath of the entire Human Domain on the Morales.

This was fundamentally not a deal of equals. So when Leonel spoke of just "accepting" the gifts, it sounded like a joke, like a peasant trying to force the hand of a King to give him treasures for doing something easily within his power.

However, Leonel didn't seem to notice their reactions at all. He walked forward, taking his seat at the helm, his mother standing to his back, though only for a moment. At an unknown time, a flash of green surrounded Alienor and she vanished into thin air as though she had never been there. It was impossible to tell if she was still behind Leonel, or if she had gone off to some other place.

Leonel smiled. "Ancestor Issa, Ancestor Alvaro, I'll have to ask you two to leave. Our guests have only brought forward Seventh Dimensional experts, it would be beneath your station to appear here, no? Leave this matter for a junior like me."

The eyes of the two Ancestors flickered. Leonel's words just now was probably the nicest thing he had ever said to them. Well, it was at the very least not as rude as the usual. But it was clear what his intentions were. If they really left, then what happened from here on would be dictated entirely by Leonel's temper, and they didn't know if they could trust such a thing.

However, what they didn't expect was that they wouldn't get a chance. Leonel tapped a finger subtly after he spoke, and the world's power descended. In the eyes of others, it looked as though the two had disappeared under their own power.

The other Ancestors looked toward one another and one by one, they too vanished.

Leonel radiated a confidence that left the remaining elders a bit stunned. In the end, they too took deep breaths and found their positions, taking a seat.

"Elder Kriss."

A middle-aged woman with a stern face and short cut hair stood immediately. "Yes, Patriarch."

Leonel tapped his armrest for a moment, in thought. "Do we have any promising youths in this coming generation?"

Elder Kriss was one of the Head Commanders of the Divine Guards and also one of the strongest among the Peak Seventh Dimensional Morales. For those like this, the Morales had their own unique names for them, and they called this group of elders the Junior Ancestors, though there was nothing junior about them at all.

She would be among the best in knowing what promising youths there were, at least in combat. The Morales had yet to get used to the fact that the Spear Domain Lineage Factor and the Metal Synergy Lineage Factor had now become one.

"Among the Post-Nova Generation, there are indeed a few good seedlings," she nodded in affirmation.

"Pick one, call them here," Leonel said.

Her gaze flickered, but Leonel had already moved on.

"Elder Aria."

Yet another older woman stood, straight and tall. She didn't look nearly as stern, but there was still a hint of authority between her brows. Her hair was long and tinged with deep hints of silver that alternated with the usual deep brown of the Morales, and from her neck hung a pair of glasses.

She was one of the Head Crafters and led the Crafters of the family in many things. She wasn't a Junior Ancestor in raw strength, but rather in the power of her Divine Armor and how cleverly she implemented her Crafts. In this way, she was a lot like the Radix family, but on a completely different level.

Unlike Elder Kriss, though, she didn't call out to him as Patriarch, not that there was a rule for this.

"Do the same as Elder Kriss, call one here."

She frowned. "P.. Patriarch," she said slowly, "this matter is quite delicate, it isn't very appropriate for..."

Leonel looked over and met her eyes. Elder Aria could see an almost indifferent sort of gentleness within, but it still froze her. The weight of the world bore down.

"Inappropriate? I think it will be fine," Leonel said with a smile. "We just need a few flower girls and ring boys."

The hearts of the elders skipped a beat, but everything was quickly put into motion. Soon, the doors of the Morales Palace were opened wide, and at the forefront, two teenagers, one young man and one young woman, stood forward, their pride beaming and the arrogance of the Morales blooming out from deep within them.

"The Morales family welcomes you!" They roared.

Chapter 2269: Guest

Tommie Morales. A bright spark of the Spear Faction and a young man of 15 years old with a pair of eyebrows that looked like a flare of fire. His face was just as stern as his instructor's but the hints of immaturity on his face were clear, but it carried a vibrancy of youth.

Nora Morales. A bright light of the Crafting Faction, she too was 15 years old, and she had an interesting style herself. Her Metal Spirit held her hair up into two ponytails. It couldn't help but remind Leonel of a certain Faction Leader from Valiant Heart Mountain; she too used her Fire Spirit to hold her hair up. It exhibited quite a level of control.

But, Leonel only smiled when he saw this. Though it was well hidden, he could see a special fabric and clip separate Nora's hair from her Metal Spirit. It was clear that Leonel was still one of the very few, if not the only one, in the Human Domain that dared to touch his Metal Spirit directly. Even so, it still took quite a bit of control to stop her Metal Spirit from eating through the metal and getting at her hair, which was worthy of a great deal of praise.

Together, they were two of the brightest stars of the next generation. Considering their age, it wouldn't even be much more than five years before they were meant to participate in the Heir Wars, but the timeline wasn't on their side this time around.

The two held up their spears and slammed their butts into the ground, a soaring Spear Force coming from them.

It was quite weak. You couldn't expect much from Fifth Dimensional existences like them, and yet...

The Constellation in the skies appeared once again. Their strength soared, from the Fifth Dimension, to the Sixth, and from the Sixth, the Seventh, but by the time their Spear Force reached the height of the surrounding battleships, they sang like a pair of dragons and phoenixes.

Shaken, the various family messengers entered the hall one by one. Their edge had been filed down to a dull tip and the hesitation in their steps was clear. The only ones that seemed to carry the same sort of confidence were those of the strongest families, with the standouts being that of the Suiard family, the Spirituals Religion, the Omann family, and a special, unexpected visitor...

The Void Palace.

Leonel didn't react much to this. The loss of the Void Elders, or at least most of the Void Elders, wouldn't be enough to crumble them entirely. An organization like this would have its trump cards, but even more importantly than that, the Void Palace was the symbol of humanity, even if it fell it would be held up by the various families of the Human Domain.

Of course, whether or not the mission of the Palace would stay the same after this... that was a different story entirely. If they were anything more than a puppet, it would be an amusing surprise.

The leader of the Void Palace, obviously here to play the role of "mediator", was actually quite a young man. Leonel recognized him almost immediately, and he found it even more amusing.

This young man was a member of the Unfettered Blade Party, Micarth. The last time Leonel met him, he was a Galaxy Ranked Disciple just a couple weeks away from the Sector Rank. Now, he was nearly a Domain Ranked disciple.

For the Void Palace to not even send a Domain Ranked disciple to mediate the situation was funny enough, but even more importantly than all these other identities...

His last name was Suiard.

Micarth had a deep hatred for Leonel. He first found trouble for the latter after his father severed Rosen Suiard's arm, Micarth's uncle. And it only became personal after Leonel personally defeated him in battle.

Honestly, Leonel had to say that Micarth was the perfect choice.

He was the absolute most talented among the Suiard family, that was a title that went to Amery. He wasn't a step below that, as there were three others who would have been part of the Suiard family's "Heir Wars" that were passed up for Amery. He was just a step below that.

He was a great talent, for sure. But he wasn't prominent enough to be said to be a representation of the Suiard family, and he was just talented enough to have a great position in the Unfettered Blade Party and the Void Palace.

It would be "geniuses" like him who likely held up the foundation of the Void Palace now, and in the future, the Void Palace of the past would be no more, controlled like a puppet behind the scenes by these powerful families.

In fact, that future might be here already, or else the likes of Micarth would have never been sent first.

Micarth cleared his throat, a slightly prideful expression on his face with the comfort of his family's backing to support him, but before he could speak-

"Patriarch Morales has yet to ask you to speak. Please be mindful of your position and only speak when spoken to!" Tommie spoke with a crisp voice. While it was slightly immature, it carried the same hints of sternness Head Commander Kriss had.

Much like his mentor, he was a stickler for rules and etiquette. He would never allow a guest to speak before his Patriarch, nor would he allow his Patriarch to have to be the one to correct this guest.

He and Nora stood to Leonel's back, one to each side, arms clasped behind their backs. As a pair of youths, they did surprisingly well in this atmosphere, and it was clear that much of their confidence came from the man on the throne before them.

The older generation might be hesitant about Leonel, but the feelings of the youth were quite clear when it came to him.

He was their idol.

Micarth's face flushed red. Never did he expect to be reprimanded by a child like this, but he also wasn't in a position to argue with one either, especially when said child was in the right.

Leonel smiled lightly and slowly opened his mouth. Some thought he might say some fake words to "reprimand" Tommie, but he did no such thing.

"Welcome, dear guests. I assume that you've come with the offerings?"

Chapter 2270: What Cost?

Leonel's words were grating on the ears. Offerings? It was like he was implying that he was a King and they were his servants come to pay the taxes for a year out of a faint hope that he might give them enlightenment.

They had seen Leonel battle, his schemes, his intelligence, there was a next to 0% chance that he had misspoken. He picked this word on purpose. Every step of the way, he was showing his indomitable will. He wouldn't take a step back before these families.

Micarth's expression darkened, but he reined in his distaste. He was already in a partially compromised position, although the Suiard family had sent him here precisely as a show of strength and power. They now had the greatest influence in the Void Palace and the future generations of the Human Domain's protectors, and no one else could do anything about it.

The momentum of the Morales was something they had to cut down at all cost. Although the Omann and Spirituals Religion was seen to be on the same level, the reality didn't exactly play out like that.

For one, the most powerful families and organization was six, not four. There was still the Void Palace and Shield Cross Stars. Everyone knew that though they were "neutral," they could tip the scales whenever they so chose.

Secondly, the Omann family had the shield of being a Crafters family and normally stayed out of most conflicts, the Heir Wars was a rare instance of their participation and it was fairly well acknowledged that this was a combination of both extenuating circumstances-Leonel taking control of both Earth and the Morales-in addition to the Scorned Queen Beauty's more... personal feelings.

Then there was the Spirituals Religion. Their reputation had taken quite some hit after the Emperor of the Spirituals was defeated by Velasco even while having the aid of so many experts, not to mention the fact that Velasco had very clearly been injured by some mysterious force. This could even be why they had chosen to come despite the fact their Heiress hadn't died at Aina's hands, she had only lost her body.

But the truth was still the fact that the Spirituals Religion was almost always neutral in all matters and the Heir Wars was yet another exception.

Due to all of this, the families most used to butting heads for supremacy over the Human Domain was the Morales and Suiard families. If one surpassed the other, the other obviously wouldn't be able to tolerate it. This was why the Suiard family had pulled so many strings to place Micarth in this position, and he had to represent them well.

Micarth had matured a great deal in the last over 20 years, and his control over his temper was more fit for a middle aged man although he did still look not much older than Leonel. So, he spoke with far more calm than what his heart was experiencing.

"Your words are a bit inappropriate, Morales Patriarch. These are not offerings, they are not gifts either, they are payment in exchange for the lives you've ripped from the Human Domain."

"Oh?" Leonel's brows shot up. "Indeed, I guess that is the case. I seem to remember that I gave quite a fair warning, though. And some people overestimated themselves and chose to ignore it."

Leonel's smile was just the same, and everyone remembered exactly what he was talking about, and yet as though to drive home the point, he waved a hand.

The words he had spoken that day rung again. As many as he saw was as many as he would kill.

"As I see it," Leonel continued, "it's an act of kindness on my part to provide this opportunity. So, before I take it away, I would advise that you curb the edge in your tone. I use the word offerings because that is exactly what they are. The lives of your lost geniuses aren't worth even a single hair on my head, and yet they all entered with only two purposes."

"The first was to trample the dignity of the Morales by proving that the geniuses of your families were superior, and the second was to kill me."

Leonel's smile was just the same, but his words were cutting. Inwardly, Micarth was flustered, Leonel continued to be far more direct and scathing than he expected. He had come here with the thought that the sharpest words spoken would be under cloak and dagger, hidden in trap-laced sentences and paragraphs of subterfuge.

But that wasn't what he received at all. Leonel was coming right at them, and his words and expression might be coated in a thin layer of politeness, but it was exactly that... thin.

"These offerings are to appease my anger, to allow your families and organizations a chance to raise your heads and attempt to compete with me again, as ill-fated as your geniuses will be if they should choose to do so. But don't misunderstand the situation."

"The power to return their lives to you lies in my hands and my hands alone. The choice to use said power lies in my hands and my hands alone. Do you understand?"

Leonel's Emperor's Charm was so imposing that Micarth almost cracked, involuntarily mouthing the word "yes". But luckily, in the last moment, he managed to stifle his throat, choking down the sounds of the coming word and instead entering a fit of coughing as though food had gone down the wrong pipe.

"Now, I'll repeat myself for the only time today," Leonel's smile beamed. "Dear guests, I assume you've come with the offerings?"

A silence fell.

The elders of the Morales had mixed reactions, though they were sharp enough not to show it on their faces. Many felt a bone deep satisfaction, many more felt that the end of the world was coming, and even those that did feel satisfied began to tremble inwardly afterward, experiencing what one might after an extremely greasy meal.

It was delicious... but at what cost?

Chapter 2271: A Proud Suiard

Micarth no longer knew what to say. All of this preparation flew out the window and his experience, or lack thereof, was showing plainly. To make matters worse, his cough still hadn't disappeared and the more he tried to stop it, the worse it became. Every time he held the cough back, there would be a slight few seconds of silence before the fit began again. He was making his own situation worse and worse by not allowing it to see itself through to the end.

It was when the situation seemed unsalvageable and his face was as ripe as a tomato that a young man stepped forward.

This young man was handsome, almost too handsome, it reminded Leonel a lot of Wise Star Order in that regard. His hair was a flickering bluish grey that shone more like light than filaments of hair and his eyes were a dreamy sort of violet, not pale like Leonel's, but rather cool in hue and deep in resonance. It was easy to get lost in them, and it was only made more potent by the fact this violet faded to sky blue near the edges of his irises.

It was clear with a single look that this man was a Spiritual, or at least half of one. He was the representation of the Spirituals Religion, Ivan, a powerful Junior Ancestor himself and the backup plan in case Micarth fell flat on his face.

However, before Ivan could even speak, Leonel held up a hand, a law of sorts seemed to bind Ivan's mouth. He could still move freely, but even when he moved to clear his throat no sounds came out. It was as though he had been made a functional mute.

"Forgive me, but I'm still in the middle of grieving. If a Spiritual speaks in my presence right now... I can't promise I won't kill them," Leonel said lightly.

His tone was far more somber and light than it had been previously. The edge of cheeriness and carefreeness had vanished, and even without saying it in so many words, the position of the Spirituals Religion became precarious.

They were supposedly the neutral party, but the Race they worshiped had acted against the Human Domain. This was an undeniable fact. Velasco was clearly a man that could

hold up the skies, and yet the Spiritual Emperor had come to attack maybe their greatest hope... at least that was how the smaller families saw it.

The situation was going from bad to worse, and even the Morales elders were beginning to fidget in their seats. The only ones who seemed emboldened and prideful were the two youths to Leonel's back. They were beaming, feeling intoxicated by the prowess of their Patriarch.

And that was exactly why they were here. All of these messengers were so focused on Leonel and the two youths that had humiliated them that they couldn't catch on the micro slips in the expressions of the Morales elders.

However, the situation was only becoming more and more tense. Leonel didn't seem like he had a plan, it looked as though he was just venting his frustration. But even if it made him feel good for now, what would they do afterward?

A man cleared his throat. This was of the Suiard family, dressed in silver robes that radiated a swordlight when reflecting the sun in just the right way.

"Excuse me, Morales Patriarch, but I believe that the Spirituals Race is the only one that didn't take advantage of our situation to attack. It's a bit inappropriate to treat them like this, no? Also, the Spiritual Religion is quite misunderstood, they do not worship Spirituals, but rather their way of life, their oneness with nature, their balance with the elements. It is not the same as worshipping the race."

"And even if they did worship the race, I do not believe it is as big of an issue as the Patriarch makes it out to be. There are many Half Spirituals in our lands, but have you ever seen any Half Nomads? Or Half Dwarves? Or Half Rapax? The Spirituals are the one race that do not treat us as lessers, but rather as equals enough to be life partners and mates."

"I cannot speak to why that Spiritual chose to attack Hero Velasco, I do not wield that kind of power, nor do I claim to understand the thoughts of Ancestors. What I can say is that during the day of that battle, it wasn't any one person that killed Hero Velasco, but rather the workings of the Heaven themselves."

"Hero Velasco was a loner, a man who completed a great deal of experiments that he never shared with anyone, maybe other than you, his son. It is impossible to tell how he might have enraged the Heavens, but I hope that you can put your personal biases to think about... why else a noble Spiritual might have chosen to attack your father."

That was it. Those words were finally spoken and everything would be over.

The elders of the Morales were quite sharp people, they could see the willingness to die in the man's eyes. He was old, and wrinkled, even more so than the Overlord had been

when he first appeared before Leonel. He might not live for more than a few more months or a couple of years even if he was able to walk out of here.

But speaking these words alone was what he had needed to do. Leonel would lose his temper, maybe even kill all those here using the power of the Morales.

Once he had spoken out this sentiment, it would boil and fester, and soon the title of "Hero Velasco" he had used to soften Leonel's position so that the latter would allow him to finish would become nothing more than a joke.

Locke Suiard could already sense it, the shifting tide, the skepticism of the smaller families he had brought with him, and even the faint anger radiating from the elders of the Morales. His mission was complete and he could finally close his eyes, a proud Suiard.

And that he did. He closed his eyes and waited for Leonel's strike, a smile of pride on his face no weaker than that of the children to Leonel's back.

He was a Suiard, a Suiard of the Sword, he would die with his back straight, a smile on his face, and... a hand on his sword.

His hand slowly reached up, gently descending toward the hilt he had known all his life.

Chapter 2272: No?

Locke's hand missed, swinging at the air. He was inwardly stunned, so much so that he opened his eyes. His sword had always been there, it was the one thing that never failed him, and even with access to all the spatial treasures he could ever hope to use in a single lifetime, he still chose to hang it by his waist. He was so used to this sword that he could find it blindfolded in the depths of a blackhole if he had to, so how could he have...

The sword wasn't there. Locke's eyes snapped open and he looked at his waist. It was all gone, his trusted sword wasn't there.

The blade of that sword had changed over the years, but the hilt was always the exact same. He asked every swordsmith he had ever worked with to transfer it over. It was the blade hilt his father had passed down to him, and a blade hilt his grandfather had passed on to his father before him.

This was tradition of most of the Suiard. They didn't believe in keeping the same blade all your life, that wasn't being a swordsman, that was being stupid. No one could deny the strength of a weapon and how much it aided your combat prowess. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that this sword hilt was as important as his entire lineage to him.

The only reason why he had even brought it when he expected to die was one, because it gave him courage, and two because he believed that the protective measures Micarth had with him would allow him to bring the sword out. But now...

Locke looked up to find that the sword was in Leonel's hands, being lightly swung with a grace he didn't think should have been possible for a spear master, and that Leonel was. There was no denying that his spearmanship had surpassed even more of the elder generation, but the sword didn't look out of place in his hands at all.

"I've always found swords to be interesting. If it wasn't for the fact the weapon of a man I killed when the Metamorphosis first descended upon Earth was a spear, I might have actually picked up a sword first. Though..." Leonel swung the sword again. "... Maybe not, I was also quite a prudent and calculated fighter back then, I would have probably concluded that a layman like myself would do better with a longer stick. Better chance of not dying, and all."

Leonel looked up with a smile. The sword rang and the echo of Sword Force manifested with almost too much ease. It was sharp and powerful, though silvery white unlike his Spear Force and his Bow Force. However... It was Seventh Dimensional.

"That's the kind of person I am," Leonel continued. "I like to be prudent, cautious, I like to calculate out every step, and while that wasn't the case in the past, I no longer hesitate to kill. I find that doing so is a waste of my effort, trying to figure out the worth of a life, who deserves to live, who deserves to die... it's all very tiresome.

"And not to be rude, but if I can't figure it out, all of you most certainly can't. Your plan is filled with far too many loopholes.

"Send the bushy-eyed youth forward first, let him stumble. Then "attempt" a save with a person you were quite certain I'd never let speak, before you follow through with your real plan. And it's even better for the Suiard, isn't it? After all, it would be your real representation and not this pseudo representative doing the speaking, right?

"And then what? You would use the rage I showed as an excuse to attack? Maybe if try to rope me and my Morales family in with the demons like you did the Silver Empire and find an excuse for Shield Cross Stars and the Void Palace to act too, is that it?"

The silence was palpable, but Leonel didn't seem to need to bounce his ideas off of anyone.

"At the same time, you'd have something to tell the masses. Hero Velasco was just a joke of a man who experimented with what he shouldn't and brought down upon himself the ire of the gods. The Spirituals and the other races weren't attacking the Human Domain at all, rather they were just doing their best to stop Velasco from bringing down the wrath of the gods upon you all, right?

"They weren't cowardly scum at all, in fact they were trying to save everyone! And the cherry on top was that maybe if "Hero" Velasco had shared his research, and spread the truth of how he had grown so powerful so quickly, and how his wife and son seemed to do the exact same, then none of this would have ever happened.

"Everyone could have resisted the gods together and rather than striking down Hero Velasco, you could have worked together to fight against the oppression and lead the Human Domain to a brighter future."

Leonel tapped the sword with his other hand, running his finger along its blade toward its hilt. With every inch that he passed, the blade crumbled. It looked as though it was being burnt to ash, and yet there was no heat in the air at all... it was like Leonel had simply commanded it to crumble, and it heeded.

Locke's chest constricted as his treasured sword was suddenly left with nothing more than its hilt. Leonel spun it in his hands, letting it land on the tip of his finger as it continued to spin.

"Is that all about right? It's a pretty stupid scheme if you ask me, it lacks any sort of cleverness or flair, it relies entirely on the ignorance of the people to the truth of the situation, and even relies on your own ignorance as well- not that you care very much to correct whatever those misconceptions were."

Leonel caught the hilt in the air and his smile vanished. He didn't do anything, but those messengers that were present suddenly wanted to fall to their knees and plead for mercy, the weight on their souls nearly crushing them.

"You've all miscalculated, though, unfortunately. You can all return, I think the purpose of this meeting is over. When you go back, tell your people that the Morales will be coming, to clear the name of both their Hero, and the stain you tried to place upon us."

Leonel crushed the hilt in his hands, letting it burn to ash.

Leonel's smile returned as he looked toward Locke. He didn't speak, but a voice echoed in Locke's hands. 'Kill you? You value yourself too much. I would much rather kill whoever told you to speak those words. It would be much more interesting if you were alive to see your treasured Suiard family burned to the ground, no?'

Chapter 2273: Much Better

The silence was palpable, no one knew what to say.

How correct were Leonel's words? 100%. How much did saying it aloud change? Practically next to nothing. In fact, they could take their chances by using the fact that

Leonel had "exposed" them as a method he was trying to use to absolve himself and his father of wrongdoing.

But something about Leonel's smile made them feel uneasy, uncomfortable and shaken. And it only became worse when his smile vanished.

Tommie suddenly stepped forward and his glare looked down on them all. "Didn't you hear what Patriarch Morales said?-SCRAM!"

His words, as though they carried mysterious powers of their own, blew the envoys out of the large double doors. They rolled along the ground, their clothing being wrinkled and dust kicking up in their wakes.

Interesting enough, the smaller families were spared the same fate. However, they got the message well enough as they rushed out, not wanting to be implicated in the same way.

Micarth's expression was black as a pot as he rose to his feet as quickly as he could while pretending not to be in a sorry state, but even this wouldn't last for very long as he looked up into the skies.

Their ships. They were gone!

He wanted to roar out and demand an explanation, but he noticed that no matter how he strained his voice, no sound seemed to come out at all. It was as though the laws of the world were restricting him, suffocating his voice and muting him for all to see.

It was just them. The Sixth Dimensional families still had their warships very much intact and they rushed away.

Inwardly, they understood that this was Leonel giving them a chance to turn to his side, and they even had the "offerings" prepared for their youth, but now they didn't dare to complete the exchange. The implications were very much different now and soon they might be forced to pick a side... but they preferred to sit on the fence for as long as possible.

As for the loss of their youths... the honest truth was that if it gave their families a chance to survive this coming storm, the cost of a single genius or even many was a worthy price for these small families to pay.

That was the harsh reality. A single genius would have never changed their fates. Their best couldn't compare to the likes of Amery, or Simona, or Armand, or any number of the other members of the Cataclysm Zone. It wasn't worth it to risk the whole family for them...

At least not without the consent of their own upper echelon.

The Seventh Dimensional families that had come to pressure Leonel grit their teeth. They had been robbed in broad daylight and they couldn't even voice their complaints. They tried to send messages to their families, but they realized that even this was blocked. It seemed that without Morales territory, there would be absolutely nothing they could do.

They could only go the long way, leaving by foot and through air under their own power.

The laughter and jeers of the Morales citizens echoed through the skies as they rushed away. Their faces burned and their anger was palpable, but they didn't dare to attack. Even if they had the balls to, they felt like an all-seeing eye was bearing down on them from above, observing each and every one of their actions. And even if it wasn't there, what chance did the small handful of them stand against so many Morales? The elders wouldn't even have to take action, they would be drowned by Sixth Dimensional experts.

This seemed like a great victory, but after the doors of the Morales Palace closed, the elders seemed to boil over with all of the emotions that they had kept bottled up, the leader of which was Elder Aria. Leonel could already read her impression of him from a mile away, and right now she couldn't seem to control herself at all as she exploded.

"Patriarch! This was highly inappropriate! You've put the entire family on the brink of destruction!"

Tommie and Nora Morales, who had just been in exceptionally high spirits, looked around in confusion. Wasn't this a great thing? What was happening?

Elder Aria realized that there were still third parties here and that she had exploded too soon. She made a move to dismiss the two children, but before she could Leonel held up a hand. His smile had returned and she met her eyes.

"What would you suggest we do?"

Aria took a breath and regained her composure, her eyes becoming more piercing.

"They were just messengers. Since things have come this far, we'll catch them, detain them, accuse them of disrespecting the Morales family name and jail them. We'll send a message to their families and organizations, demanding compensation. This compensation will be less than what you asked for their geniuses.

"When they come forward with this compensation, we will return both their messenger and their genius as a sign of good will. To the public we will appear both strong and magnanimous, while politically, we will sow more relationships than enemies. It will fix all of this."

The elders fell into silence and Leonel even saw many of them visibly relax. This was an excellent plan, and a win in all directions. It was the kind of plan their Patriarch should have been the one to come up with, but there was a reason they were a council. Their Patriarchs were often young and needed guidance, their help would fix everything.

Even Leonel's brows rose up, and in the end, he happily laughed and even clapped.

"That is very much not the response I expected," Leonel said cheerily. "I thought that your solution would be to have me step down and give the excuse of grieving to deal with this situation, but I must admit that I was wrong. I apologize, Elder Aria."

Elder Aria snorted. What a joke. Even if she wanted to do that, it would make the Morales look weak to have their Patriarch step down due to the pressure of other families. She would never allow that.

"However, I still like my plan better."

Chapter 2274: You Don't Believe Me?

Elder Aria was stunned silent, and then her expression twisted. "You-!"

Leonel held up a hand. "Do not misunderstand. I respect my elders and your experience. I am not casually dismissing your plans out of malice or anger, nor am I acting out of emotion."

'Though, even if I was, it really wouldn't make much of a difference,' Leonel thought to himself with a smile. Whether he was being emotional or not, he didn't believe there were many, if any, who could outmaneuver him in this world. Victory would be certain one way or another, but since he had his wits about him, he might as well be calm and calculated, taking the best and most perfect course of action.

Aria grit her teeth, but since Leonel had spoken so clearly, it was her duty to calm down and listen to him. She really wanted to hear what he could possibly say that was better than her plan.

"First, you all need to understand something. If we cannot get on the same page, we will never be in harmony, and if we lack harmony, you all will fight me every step of the way.

"You need to understand that these choices I'm making aren't only because they will benefit the Morales family the most, but also because there is no other choice."

Leonel looked through them one by one. "I know you heard my words, I know you feel that they are reasonable, and I know that in your thoughts, you believe that the only

thing we can do against such allegations is to stall. But do you know what these families fear the most right now?"

Aria's jaw tightened.

"That's right. You're all very experienced. What they fear the most is us having time; they fear us unearthing the potential of our new Lineage Factor, of birthing more talents that have acclimated to it from birth, of me potentially sharing whatever illusory and mysterious plan my father has to help others improve greatly in a short period of time.

"This month or so they've given us since the death of my father wasn't out of courtesy; it was the time they needed to prepare, to line all their ducks in a row, to make sure that they were ready for war at any given time-'Second Nova,'" Leonel suddenly called out.

A subtle portal of Spatial Force opened up, and Auran appeared. He was slightly confused at first, but he quickly focused and bowed to the elders around.

Leonel grinned. "Your information networks are some of the best in the Human Domain, no?"

"The best," Auran corrected out of habit. He hesitated afterward, but then he felt that being humble right now wouldn't suit him. If anything, it would just annoy him. He had his own pride as a Morales and a demon, for that matter.

"And what would you say the odds the Seventh Dimensional families are preparing for war?"

Auran blinked in confusion. "Well... 100%, but isn't that obvious considering the sudden invasion by the other Domains? Of course they're..."

Auran trailed off, and his heart jumped several beats.

Having information was one thing. Interpreting it properly was a completely different matter. If information was enough to understand every and all things, then who would ever fail to answer a mathematics problem? Who would ever mistakenly answer a reading comprehension question? It was all too easy to get lost in the weeds of unimportant information.

And Auran, too, had made that mistake.

He had gathered quite a bit of intel on the movements of the families and how much preparation they were doing for war, and to him, and the rest of the Morales for that matter, it was just a matter of simple logic.

The Human Domain had just suffered a devastating attack, why wouldn't the most powerful families be preparing?

What he had neglected was the fact that this was also the perfect shroud, the perfect wool over their eyes, the perfect misdirection.

Were these families really preparing for another invasion? How had the Morales prepared? They called all their citizens, huddling them up in their capital solar system and deployed sentries to scout and make sure that no one encroached on their territory. This was how you might best prepare for a coming invasion.

But what had those families done? Nothing of the sort... they gathered resources, called back their warriors, tightened control over various Human Domain organizations, and then... they sent out envoys to pressure the Morales family? A family that would be one of their biggest allies during an invasion?

When it was put like this, even a fool could see it, Auran almost felt like an idiot for not seeing it sooner. Looking at Leonel, he felt that he understood why he had lost so handily. Of course, he had never entered the Heir Wars for victory, his only goal was to deal with Third Nova. But even so, something told him it wouldn't have mattered even if he had intentions for victory.

Auran took a deep breath. "They want to strike us a blow."

Leonel smiled, and Aria and the other elders remained silent. They understood even without it being said in so many words. There was never room to compromise, and there was never room to stall; war was already on their front porch, and Leonel seemed to be the only one who had noticed.

Then, Leonel suddenly spoke.

"The second thing you need to understand is that even if this wasn't the case, I would still attack. Why? Because we are in an undefeatable position."

The elders frowned.

"No? You don't believe me?"

Leonel waved a hand, and countless Runes appeared in the air. The elders suddenly felt light as air, as though they could run at double the speed. But then they suddenly felt as heavy as boulders, their arms and legs not moving like they wanted them to. And then their Force surged, rushing through their Nodal Pathways like raging rivers, but then the reverse almost buried them into their seats and an instant later.

"Controlling their abilities to speak or not wasn't a parlor trick," Leonel beamed. "It's an ability that requires fundamental control over this world's very laws. If they step within our borders, they die."

This was already shocking enough, but this wasn't what Leonel was banking on at all because he felt they still didn't understand exactly what this meant. Instead, he had something they would understand with far greater clarity.

Chapter 2275: Undefeatable Position

Leonel looked at them, and he could see that they didn't understand. Or, maybe they did, and they just didn't understand how far it could go. Sure, Seventh Dimensional existences would be the backbone of any powerful army, but how many of them could Leonel use it on at once? And let's say that he could use it on an infinite number and practically cripple their battle strength, what good was it against Ancestors?

Even if the Morales wiped the floor with every Seventh Dimensional expert the others could throw at them, when their Ancestors were all defeated beneath the sheer numbers they would be forced to face, what good would it do?

Once all the Morales Ancestors were dead, the Ancestors of the opposing families would just turn their attention toward them, and then what? They would all be massacred to the last man. No amount of advantages and help would close the gap between the Seventh and Eighth Dimensions.

"Your worries aren't warranted. You know as well as anyone that the Ancestors didn't want me to become Patriarch, at least not so easily, and yet what happened?"

The elders froze. Indeed, Alvaro and Issa weren't happy at all; an Overlord had even appeared. They had forgotten about this matter because they just chalked it up to the Overlord taking favor upon Leonel, but was that really what happened?

"It doesn't really matter whether you believe me or not, though, at least not for now. Because you've understood the first point well enough. There is no taking a step back; there is only forward now, and we can only walk that path together."

Leonel grinned. "What I can help you with, though, is all that worry."

He snapped his finger, and a soul appeared. It took shape and quickly formed a vibrant violet armor. It was a behemoth of a man, and they immediately recognized him as the genius of the Taur family, Armand. But now...

Armand took a knee before Leonel, his gaze filled with subservience. "Greetings, KING!"

"Tell me, Armand. What is the structure of the Taur family armies."

"Yes, King! The Taur family has a total of 200,000 Tier 9 God Path Seventh Dimensional experts. They're led by the General of Earth, the General of Love, the General of War, and the General of Strength, each one a Junior Ancestor with exceptional combat prowess. We have six Ancestors. Ancestor Orion, Ancestor Pleiades...

"... The greatest trump card of our Taur family, at least as far as I know, King, is the Constellation Formation, as it is for all Constellation families. Gathering together all six Ancestors, and the pride of our family, the Constellation can enter a sort of berserk state that allows the Ancestors to tap into greater power. This trump card can only be used while within our territory, but it is exceptionally powerful. The time of use should vary from family to family, but it lasts about three hours for us.

"Some other trump cards include the First Ancestor's Battle Axe. It is a Life Grade weapon and it has a Life Steal ability. It is said that our First Ancestor was a Blood Sovereign and had exceptional Earth Affinity. He was able to forge this weapon despite not being a Crafter, and when used in the hands of an Ancestor, their stamina is as unlimited as their number of kills. So long as the blade tastes blood, the Ancestor will never falter.

"Another trump card..."

Armand continued to talk, holding nothing back and filling the hall with so much information that even the elders felt overwhelmed. Was there such a thing as too much information? How would they even take advantage of all of this, but seeing Leonel's laughter, and remembering what he had done during the Heir Wars, they felt a unique weight being lifted up and off their shoulders.

Leonel didn't even wait for Armand to finish; this was all a farce. He had already documented and stored all this information, both physically and in his mind. The plans he had for each and every family were on a completely different level, but what was more amusing than this was what he would do first.

With a thought, Leonel brought out a powerful ore that exuded a great amount of pressure. It was an Eighth Dimensional Ore, one that had only been produced in Morales lands, and of course he had taken it without asking. But very soon, they would understand why.

With a smile, he spoke. "[Breathe]."

Armand shuddered with excitement, and his soul was suddenly absorbed into the orb.

This ore was known as Blood Diamond Ore. It was one born in the depths of thick combat and blood, and it carried aspects of Blood Force and Earth Force, ironically an ore that was a perfect match for the First Ancestor Taur's weapon.

The ore boomed and expanded, and soon a fully armored, and more importantly, flesh-covered Armand appeared.

This was the true use of Breathe. With an adequate sacrifice, a soul he forced to Arise would gain permanence beyond the 24-hour period. The more talented the soul, the more powerful it was, the higher the required sacrifice.

This Blood Diamond Ore was actually far more than what Armand needed, but Leonel could also use Breathe as a proxy to strengthen his souls as well.

When the process was complete, he could decide the new construction's level of autonomy. If he wanted its growth potential, he would have to give it more autonomy. If he wanted its immediate strength and complete loyalty far more, then he would restrict its autonomy. Though, he could change these matters later so long as he did it within a certain time frame.

And of course, he had chosen to restrict Armand's autonomy.

Leonel grinned. "Return to your family."

"Yes, King!"

Armand rushed away without even glancing toward the Morales Ancestors.

Leonel beamed, raising up the Silver Tablet.

"I can resurrect people with this tablet and they'll be complete and whole. Or, I can resurrect people with a sacrifice and my strength, in which case they'll be completely under my control.

"I think you've all forgotten. I meant it when I said we are in an undefeatable position.

"No matter how many below Ancestor-level brothers and sisters die, so long as they are a Morales, I can bring them back."

The Morales Elders were beyond shaken for the final time that day.

Chapter 2276: Goal?

"There's no time to wait. The attacks will begin within the day. And by attacks... I mean our own."

Leonel stood to his feet, the shock of the elders not moving him.

"But, the others-" Elder Aria tried to speak, but she was far more hesitant and unsure. Nora had never seen her mentor like this, and it made her respect for Leonel skyrocket. Her eyes sparkled as she looked toward Leonel's back, but her discipline was strong as her expression remained professional, imitating her mentor.

"I only retained Armand to show you all. Before I even came here, I had already sent the other geniuses back and I also noted down all of the information that I needed to as well. I have a perfect battleplan in place for each and every Seventh Dimensional family. We will attack in one sweep and I will lead every charge."

"You will...?"

Leonel's figure flickered and clones of himself manifested one after another. However, these clones didn't seem... normal. Instead, they were like a cross of soul constructs and something beyond... Were they Crafts? How was that possible?

Elder Aria's heart skipped a beat. As a Crafter a step from the Life Grade herself, her experience was great and untold, but she felt wholly inferior just seeing this scene. She couldn't even begin to tell just how Leonel had done it, nothing she thought of made sense.

And of course she couldn't. This "Craft" was a combination of Little Tolly's help, his King's Might Lineage Factor, and his Crafting expertise. It was impossible for a Crafter alone to accomplish this, at least not at Leonel's current level.

The first thing he did was intimately understand Breathe. He couldn't do this without his enlightened self, but what also made it far easier was the help he received from his Vital Star Force, raising it to a half-step from Impetus State.

Breathe was ultimately a bridge from inanimate to the animate, a connection that gave something "dead," "life."

The second thing he did was create the perfect ore for himself. Compared to the Blood Diamond Ore, it was far more valuable, and it drained his wealth. This ore didn't have a name, so Leonel simply named it the King Ore. It was the perfect representation of him, carrying every aspect of his affinities and skills.

This obviously relied on Little Tolly, but what relied on Little Tolly far more was what happened next.

Leonel had to place a small part of himself within every King Ore, and then use Breathe on himself. He wasn't quite sure how to succeed in this, and everything he tried only harmed himself to no benefit. But then Little Tolly, as he always seemed to do these days, made it impossibly easy.

Little Tolly simply latched on to each piece itself, carrying with it its connection to Leonel. Then, when Leonel used Breathe, each clone gained a small bit of himself, and an aspect of Tolliver.

Originally, he thought that this might harm the little one, so he did just one as a practice run, but to his shock, it was like nothing had happened at all. Before, there was a limit to how much he could split Tolliver and he could only work on a thousand or so Crafts at the same time. But now, Tolliver had completely shed those limitations.

Though Leonel hadn't tested it, it might as well have been infinite to him because it was over the capacity his own mind could even handle. As a result, forming one copy of himself to lead each army was impossibly easy.

"This..."

The Morales Ancestors might have usually already complained. Leonel was the least experienced of them all, but now it seemed that he wanted to take control of everything? Were they going to trust a youth to decide the destiny of a family that had existed for thousands of years?

But none of the elders remaining had the face to do such a thing. They remained silent and let the Ancestors make the choice, their silence speaking for itself.

It was then that a voice echoed. "Littlest Nova will be the Supreme Commander of this war. Listen to his every order."

The elders shuddered. They wouldn't normally recognize this voice, but they had learned who this man was just a day or so ago.

The Overlord of their family.

Leonel had already walked out from the Palace even as the voice sounded. It seemed that he had already expected as much and nothing about this matter could surprise him.

The elders rushed after him, the first to appear being Elder Kriss.

"Please command me, Patriarch!" She spoke in a low shout.

"Build me 12 armies. Each must have a size of 10 million. Seventh Dimensional experts only." All 12 Leonel's spoke in unison. "Within each, there must be an organization of sets of ten, then a hundred, then a thousand. Do not organize beyond that."

Elder Kriss inwardly questioned this kind of order. If the organization stopped at a thousand with an army of that size, it would be a mess. That would mean 10,000 independent minds trying to work on their own, there wouldn't be any forward momentum whatsoever.

The other problem was that 10 million was too small a number for a war on this scale. The numbers should start at billions; what was a scale of millions going to do? There were billions of Morales who had awakened at least one Lineage Factor in the Nova Generation alone, let alone the others.

But her discipline caused her to not even attempt to question it.

"Split the Tier 9 Seventh Dimensional experts evenly, and do not add any Junior Ancestors. You all will anchor the home base. You have exactly six hours to accomplish this, go."

Elder Kriss saluted and then vanished.

"Patriarch... What is our goal?" Elder Aria tried to remain in line, but she wasn't raised in the military like Kriss was, her discipline was nowhere near the same.

"The goal? Within a week, the Constellation Alliance will be brought to their knees."

Chapter 2277: Falling Sky

The location was the territory of the Constellation Bow Alliance, more accurately, that of the Tarius family.

The Constellation Bow Alliance was one of the weaker organizations, at least compared to the Spirituals Religion, the Void Palace, or Shield Cross Stars. Originally, the Tarius family was a powerhouse that stood toe to toe with the Morales and the Suiards, but after losing the Bow Domain Ring, their strength plummeted in the coming generations.

In order to stave off this downfall, they brought together their subordinate families, many of which were branches formed by Tarius family members that had married into other families, and formed a single alliance behind a single Bow Constellation.

The result of this was their influence remaining relatively the same, although far more spread out. It was a sacrifice that allowed them to maintain their power, but it was still a sacrifice. The Tarius family of today could no longer do as they pleased, and the loss of Nazag, the youth meant to carry them back to their true prosperity had caused them to hit rock bottom...

Until he suddenly came back.

This should have been a joyous occasion, but the elders of the Tarius family didn't feel that way at all. In fact, they were very wary.

The timeline matched up, they had just sent an envoy to pressure the Morales family, and an envoy that would have had the backing of all the most powerful families and organizations of the Human Domain as well. They received reports not long afterward that Leonel Morales had been enraged, stolen their warships, and then kicked their people out, which had caused a delay in the message.

But then soon afterward, Nazag returned home...

It all lined up. According to the reports Leonel had acted on his own and the elders of the Morales didn't have a chance to stop him. It made sense for them to take this course of action as a peace offering to buy themselves more time. But...

These old men and women were very experienced, and they hadn't forgotten Leonel's abilities. Namely, they were worried about the Cloud Race infiltrating their ranks.

Exposing a Cloud Race member when you were unaware of their existence was impossible, this was a technology of scope the Human Domain didn't have. However, when you had a suspicion, exposing a Cloud Race member was incredibly easy.

And so, while pretending like they welcomed him back with open arms, the Tarius family had actually trapped Nazag and began to test him ruthlessly. But to their shock... or maybe their relief, it truly was Nazag.

His soul was the same, his body was even stronger than it had been in the past, and he seemed to have even gained a sort of enlightenment, coming back with a more powerful momentum than he had in the past. It seemed that he had taken the loss to heart, but not enough that it would affect his future advancement and it filled the hearts of his father and the elders with pride.

...

Marcello Tarius stood before his son, a beaming smile on his face.

"It's good that you're alright, it's good," his eyes glistened with unshed tears but he held back. Both he and his wife couldn't possibly be bundles of emotion. Even now, Theresa Tarius refused to let go of her son, holding onto her tightly.

It had been hard for the two of them these last few days. They had understood the intentions of the elders, but they also wanted their son back. At the same time, they didn't want to treat a member of the Cloud Race as their own flesh and blood as that would only hurt more. It could only be said that they had been greatly conflicted in recent days, and they couldn't be happier now.

Nazag smiled. "There's no need to worry, mom, dad. I've learned from this, I'll only come back stronger. Leonel Morales released me this time, but next time, I'll make sure he'll regret giving me this opportunity."

Marcello nodded firmly. He wanted to slap his son's shoulders, but his wife was in the way and he could only settle for a hearty laughter instead.

"Nazag," Marcello suddenly said, getting serious. "We'll be going to war soon. Although I don't want to put you in danger so soon after you've returned to us, there's no other choice. The Constellation families and much of the Human Domain have already decided to make a move on the Morales. We must be swift and surgical, you'll get your revenge very soon."

Nazag nodded. "When will we move out?"

Marcello grinned with pride seeing his son's eagerness. If Nazag had shown any hesitation, he would know that his previous bravado about learning from this loss had been nothing but a façade. But now, he was certain his son had come back stronger.

"The war preparations are already finished, however the date of attack hasn't quite been settled yet. We need a sudden and swift attack, one that deals the Morales a devastating blow. Their momentum right now is far too fierce and we need to knock it down several levels before we take any further course of action. Families like the Morales and ours have extremely deep foundations. It's easy to deal a blow, but it's much harder to eliminate them from the roots. If we act, we need to do the latter."

"Understood, father! I'll be ready."

"Good. Now go off, Elder Moody is waiting for you. I and your mother have our own part to play, and as do you. You are in the Seventh Dimension now, you have responsibilities-

BOOM!

Marcello never stopped speaking, but it might as well have been as though he had. The cacophony of sounds was so vicious and violent that all noise aside from it was washed away in a tsunami-like tide.

The expression of the entire family changed and they rushed out onto their large balcony, looking up into the skies to find that it felt like it was falling.

Chapter 2278: My King

Marcello was shocked. This was the capital of the Tarius family, the core of the Constellation Alliance. How could there be an attack here without any further information? How could they not have been alerted? Any family worth their salt would have countless outposts stretching from the edge of their territory to the very core. Even

if dozens failed, there would still be dozens more. It simply didn't make sense for anyone to get this far without their knowledge.

Marcello's expression changed again as he realized something else. The planet's protective formation, a formation that had stood for hundreds of years and was maintained with the full force of the family, had fallen already.

The quaking of the planet was none other than a sign of its collapse, and at this moment, the noblest of the Tarius family were on the chopping block. A single string from a Tier 2 Warship could destroy the entire planet. Even if the Ancestors took action now, it would still be too late. Just how had this happened?

The worst-case scenario that Marcello was expecting didn't happen.

In the skies, half a dozen starships surrounded the planet. They were far smaller than anything Marcello had ever seen before, but the power of their lasers was so precise that they perfectly targeted the weaknesses of their formation.

Each was about the quarter the size of a normal moon, and their swiftness was unlike anything he had ever seen before. They moved with such fluidity out of the way of the retaliation of the Tarius family and then flew to one another's sides, forming a large Force Art between them that repelled another onslaught back toward the planet.

And then they appeared. Armored like a rainbow, battalions and troops of all kinds of solid colors.

Marcello had never seen an army like this one. It was normal for an army to have a single banner they flew under, and a single uniform they all shared. But he had never seen an army that had so many different armors at once, at least not when attacking as one unit. It felt disjointed, unprofessional, even a bit childish...

Until it suddenly wasn't.

A troop of a million wearing shimmering white gold armors flickered, and before Marcello could even understand what was happening, the next volley of attacks to the army passed right through them as though they weren't there. In fact, the volley flew right through the starships to their back as well.

It wasn't until there was suddenly a devastating boom on the ground that Marcello realized what was happening. It was all an illusion, maybe they had never been in the skies in the first place. No, maybe it was that they had been in the skies, but while they were all focused on what was happening above, the battle on the ground had already begun.

...

The retaliation of the Tarius family was swift. There were already several powerhouses of the Constellation Bow Alliance present all focused on planning for the coming war. In addition, like Marcello's family had said, they were very ready for war as well. The moment their enemy didn't choose to destroy their planet with a single laser strike, they were able to recover and begin their counter assault.

However, even as they did so, they found their options being whittled down one by one.

First, their large-scale war machines became useless because they couldn't pinpoint the starships in the skies. On top of that, the army made it to the ground and targeting them with such weapons would mean targeting their own citizens as well.

Second, they realized that their greatest advantages as bowmen suddenly vanished. Their Bow Force couldn't gather at all, and this was the most devastating blow they could have faced. Their most powerful weapons and large-scale Force Arts all relied on Bow Force, without it, they couldn't even communicate with their Constellation.

And that was when it settled in. Where had they seen this ability before?

...

"The Morales are attacking!" A young man far too big and burly to be an archer roared into the hall of elders.

The elders looked toward this messenger, their gazes dark. They already knew this, they had figured it out the moment their Bow Force stopped working. There was only one person that they had ever seen do this.

And they had already decided on a course of action. They would send an Ancestor to kill Leonel, no matter what the cost. And they did exactly that...

Unfortunately, the moment this Ancestor appeared, they were cut down by the starship.

They sent a group afterward, but they were cut down by the starships as well.

By the time the regular populace and the leaders of their armies realized that the Morales were the ones attacking, the Constellation Bow Alliance had already lost four of their Ancestors. In the entire Alliance, they only had nine, four of which were the Ancestors of the Tarius family, and the other five of which came from their allies.

And now, the Tarius family had lost two, while the various families had lost three. This was the most devastating blow they had taken since the loss of the Bow Domain Ring. They almost lashed out at the messenger for bringing them news they already knew, but they didn't even get the chance to.

...

Deep within Tarius territory, even deeper than the elders' meeting room and in a location similar to the Morales Holy Land, the Tarius family had already begun to evacuate their future. Among this number, there was Nazag, and he had been the first on their list of priorities. So long as he lived, everything else could be negotiated.

That was why it was so surprising when Nazag suddenly tapped his forehead and a resonating Force Art suddenly formed. Beneath the astonished gazes of the escaping Constellation Bow Alliance members, Leonel suddenly appeared with a smile on his face by Nazag's side.

"My King!" Nazag said with a resounding voice.

Leonel ignored him, waving the hand that Tolliver wrapped around. In that moment, a woman deep within Tarius territory stirred and the World Spirit of the Tarius family was ripped from her body.

Chapter 2279: Two Choices

The Tarius family members were shocked. The strongest of them were out fighting the Morales army, but that didn't mean that those they had left behind were weak. In fact, it could be said that this was the strongest collection of geniuses that the family had. Even those that were in Tier 9 were among those with the highest chance of one day entering the realm of Ancestors.

They were shocked into almost not reacting, but that only lasted for a brief instant before they all rushed Leonel. Unfortunately, that brief attempt was all they got.

Leonel crushed the World Spirit in his palms and raised it into the air. In that instant, every Tarius in existence felt as though a part of them had been violently ripped away, many of them feeling their eyes tears well up for reasons that were far beyond their control.

An overwhelming pressure descended from the distance as the individual Leonel assumed was the Overlord of the Tarius family reacted. She rushed forward with a great amount of speed, but her expression sank when she understood the situation. No... when she felt it.

The Tarius family territory, even while they were still fighting with everything they had, had been stripped away from them. A new and foreign energy swept in, far weaker than the first had been, and far more subtle as well. Each member of the Tarius felt a small suppression on their abilities. It was minor, but it remained uncomfortable. Almost as though a thin and moist paper towel was placed before their nose and mouth, making breathing just a bit more difficult.

Overlord Tarius saw red. She didn't know how this had happened, or how an outsider had so easily entered their territory, but a scarlet red bow that looked as though it had been carved of rubies took shape in her hands. Even as her wrinkles deepened, her fury rose up, flames sparking in her eyes as she unleashed a roar.

She hadn't spoken in several years, she didn't have to. Her only duty to the family was to cycle her energy, protect the World Spirit, and remain alive for the event that they were placed in an existential crisis. And now, she had already failed in one of these tasks.

Her arrow released in an instant, appearing before Leonel's forehead as though it had teleported there. She didn't hold back in the slightest, not even minding the life and death of their family's future. If there was no World Spirit, there would be no future to be had in the first place!

However, under her astonished gaze, the arrow, even wreathed in flames, vanished. No, it didn't vanish, it crumbled like a moist cake, then it quickly dried out and drifted into the air like fluttering ash.

Leonel turned a gaze toward Overlord Tarius, his expression indifferent. The Overlord had seen this young man before. As an Overlord, her and her many companions across the Human Domain never cared to pay attention to other Heir Wars... except for this one.

They knew the face of this young man well, but never did she think she would come face to face with him so very soon.

"Soon, all of the former strength of the Tarius family will vanish. At that time, you'll have a choice to make. It's either you'll subordinate yourselves to those four powers, or to me. I can tell you that the smart choice is the latter one, but I have a feeling that you're all going to make a decision out of emotion. All I can say to that is that I don't give second chances. If you don't want to live, feel free to choose the wrong side.

"Adios," Leonel gave the Overlord a mock salute and then vanished in a twinkling starlight.

The instant he did, Nazag paled. "He used me!"

His words were full of grief and indignation, his legs buckling beneath him and his wails echoing through the Holy Land of the Tarius family. No one knew what to say, some of them had seen the light come from Nazag, but they found it difficult to blame him. It seemed they didn't know that they didn't know just how intentional it all was.

But they were still children in the Overlord's eyes, and what they would be swayed by wasn't what an Overlord would be swayed by.

"Detain him," she said coldly.

Her teeth clenched and her chest heaved. Without the World Spirit, she was staring down more than just the mortality of the Tarius family, she was also forced to face her own mortality. Without the World Spirit, she would live at most a few more months, and not much more than a year at the very most.

All the while, her strength would decrease day by day. It could be said that the function of the World Spirit aside from keeping her and other Overlords alive, was for the sake of maintaining a constant outpouring of strength. Without it, their power would decline too much with their old age.

Overlord Tarius watched as Nazag was captured and chained, but her reaction didn't change much... other than the biting of her lip. She could sense that Leonel's army was retreating after dealing them a devastating blow and she felt her rage rising up to her.

They had lost their World Spirit. They had lost several Ancestors. Their future seemed to remain intact, but what good were they without a strong backbone to begin with?

The worst part was that she didn't know whether this was all that was happening either. It made sense for Leonel to attack them first, after all he had a decided advantage against them. She hadn't thought that even her own arrows would be useless against him.

And yet here they were.

Overlord Tarius took out an item that looked like a talisman and then burned it with an odd white flame. However, her expression twisted when she realized immediately, even before it completely dissipated, that her message hadn't gone through. Leonel was already using their World Spirit to interfere with the normal function of their world.

She ground her teeth so loudly that the echoes resonated through the Holy Land.

Chapter 2280: Couldn't Believe

Overlord Tarius took a breath and calmed herself. She refused to allow herself to remain flustered over a child. After a moment, she summoned the remaining two Ancestors of the Tarius family and the remaining two from their subordinate families. The fact that the Tarius family still had an Overlord remaining was actually a secret from their subordinates, but now wasn't the time to still retain a trump card.

The appearance of Overlord Tarius immediately settled the growing fissures between the Tarius families and their branch families. However, it also made them realize just how bad the situation was if the death of five Ancestors wasn't enough.

Once they appeared, Overlord Tarius began to speak immediately, taking control of the situation.

"My ability to communicate with the other families has been closed off, and I assume that their ability to contact us has been likewise cut off. I also cannot leave for fear that another attack might be launched, and the Alliance needs a stabilizing force right now.

"I will lay out the situation as plainly as possible. We have lost our World Spirit, Nazag was used as a gateway to enter our Holy Land and locate it, while some method unknown to me was used to capture it. It's safe to say that within a certain range, the Morales family has the ability to steal any and all World Spirits, I did not even have the chance to resist, let alone speak of resisting.

"With the current situation, our Constellation will gradually weaken until our connection with it is lost entirely. Our Lineage Factor will follow it in weakening. As that happens, the hold that the Morales have on our territory will strengthen until this region is no different from any one of their other territories. Within a few years, this location will become an Eighth Dimensional world as well, but this boon will have nothing to do with us as we will be beneath the thumb of the Morales.

"As things stand, there are only two options before us. The first is to kneel to the Morales. The second is to kneel to the Suiard family and the Spirituals Religion.

"A family without a World Spirit has no right to raise their heads high, and I only have a limited time left to affect change and help position us well for the future."

When Overlord Tarius finished speaking, there was nothing but somberness and frailty in the air. The four Ancestors seemed to sink into their positions, realizing that they were almost helpless to do anything.

...

This very same conversation occurred all around the Human Domain. These families found themselves stretched thin, their World Spirits snatched. Some were in an even worse position than others, not having even a single Overlord to rely on and their speaking power being even weaker as a result.

The Cancer family, the Ram family, the Virgo family, the Pisc family, the Cornus family. Of these, only the Ram family surprisingly had an Overlord, a secret they had tightly held to themselves all the while, but in the end, it did them little better than the chance to jockey for position in the future.

Some families were in more complicated straits, though, finding themselves torn in two directions for more than just benefits... but rather emotion as well.... One of which being the Quarius family.

...

Vega Quarius sat in her family's hall, her mind quite blank. Unlike the other families, there was no traitor among the Quarius, but that had only made their fate all the more devastating. Leonel's armies didn't pull back, instead they were led by the true Leonel. He bulldozed through their ranks with sheer force, and a great number of starships descended onto their planet.

Leonel hadn't given the week-long timeline for most families. The families like the Tarius had fallen in just a few hours. In fact, 10 of the 12 Constellation families had fallen within a few hours, without even the chance to retaliate. The Gemin, the Lio, the Libra, the Taur, the Cornus, the Cancer, the Ram, the Virgo, and the Pisc families had all fallen.

Ironically, it was due to her connection with First Nova that Vega's family had ended up among the worst. Well... relatively speaking. Many more of their Seventh Dimensional experts had died, but their Ancestors were intact. Of course... that was relative as well.

Their Ancestors were all bedridden, each one so heavily injured that this meeting could only be led by Vega's great grandmother, and the only Overlord of the Quarius family.

The Quarius, the Gemin, the Libra, the Taur, the Tarius, and the Ram families, the six that all had Overlords among their ranks.

In these past few weeks, Vega had gotten into a habit of blankly staring out into space. After Velasco had died, she had been called back to her family. Truthfully, she hadn't thought much of it. Leonel's mother had spoken out to help her and Adawarth's relationship, but now that Velasco was dead, her words held much less weight. She had had no choice but to return, not wanting to put undue pressure on the Morales. In fact, she had even returned in secret.

What she hadn't expected was that when she returned home, she would hear of a war plan.

She immediately tried to escape, but that had ended in her imprisonment, and imprisonment she had only been "released" from today so that her great grandmother could interrogate her about her involvement and learn of whether she had been aware of this plan or not.

She had been "spared" since she truly had no idea, but her fate in the family was precarious... not that it mattered much since the family's fate as a whole also seemed to be.

BANG!

Overlord Quarius' wrinkled palm slammed into the throne beneath her, nearly shattering it completely.

"The Quarius family will not stand for this. We will storm the capitals of the Morales and wash them over with rivers and oceans."

Her roar thundered.

...

Leonel didn't seem to particularly care about what choice the families would make. At the moment, he strolled through Pyius territory, his armies around him.

In the distance, he could see a furious Simona. She couldn't seem to believe that Leonel would do this to her. Hadn't they been allies?