

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2421: All Roads

Leonel could feel what they were trying to do. Noah was right about their attempts to find a method of isolating the variables that made them a Sovereign and then duplicating it. But the method in which they chose to do so was quite sinister.

Ultimately, they understood that the truth was located within the soul, and they wanted to grasp this. The trouble was that the soul was almost impossible to observe for a human, namely because it was fused with the body.

They were using a method that separated the two, and they even told Leonel not to resist it. The problem was that if this method was perfectly safe, they would have used it on themselves already. Unfortunately, their methods had a fatal flaw, and that was that it completely separated the soul from the body.

This sounded like it was a positive thing. After all, wasn't that the goal?

The trouble was that that was only true when Leonel or anyone else was explaining the matter casually. In reality, completely separating the body from the soul meant only one thing: death.

After Leonel had completely succeeded in separating his soul, there was always a lingering connection remaining. It was this lingering connection that gave him life.

The method of the Godlens would have him walking around like a zombie.

Still, these were matters that Leonel had already guessed before he came here. After all, Noah's existence was an obvious red flag. The fact they pretended like he was normal told him everything he needed to know.

No, what was truly shocking to him was something entirely different. If he had to describe it, it was like they were concentrating the vileness of the human race's plans into a single foul action instead of a genocidal one.

Leonel couldn't help but chuckle to himself. Was this what his grandfather had meant by they had the greater good in mind?

They were trying to isolate his soul and turn it into a rune not too dissimilar from a portion of the Force Arts that Ryu had seen so many times in the Silver Tablet.

The trouble was that it didn't seem like the Godlens had a tablet, so for all intents and purposes they were using all of this machinery to replace its function, and they were going to try and turn Leonel into the core of it all.

Essentially, he was just becoming a different kind of farm animal, one they used to study and observe the path of Sovereignty, so that they could hopefully replicate it.

'Okay, I gotcha...'

Leonel turned his attention away from what was happening around him to pay attention to the serum they had injected him with. It wasn't necessarily what they said it was either.

It was too late for regret, not that regret would matter much. Liana definitely wouldn't have allowed him to reject the serum.

In that case, the best option was to let them assume that they were close to succeeding, when in reality they were quite far away. Then they would try to tweak the setup rather than getting rid of him entirely.

Leonel smiled bitterly. The life of the weak was truly hell.

He didn't know why they had suddenly tried to take the final step with him like this. According to his guesses, it would have been at least a month or two before they went so far.

But he didn't have to think long to understand. Who else could have put her finger on the scale if not Simona?

Leonel slowly "drifted" off to sleep. According to the reading Liana was getting, he had entered quite a deep sleep as well.

After a few minutes, she nodded to herself and began another round.

The instrumentation shuddered and a soft light began to glow. It grew larger and larger until it began to pulse and vibrate.

Liana frowned. Even now, it was actually struggling so much? How could the mind of a Fifth Dimensional existence be so powerful?

Unbeknownst to her, Leonel was perfectly conscious. He had sensed the strength of the instruments before when he broke through them the first time. This time, from 10%, he lowered his inhibitions further until just about 0.13% was still active. If he was correct, this should be just enough to make it a struggle that he barely won in the end.

Of course, he didn't believe himself to be infallible, so he was constantly paying attention, not wanting to completely fall through the cracks.

...

In a separate space, there was a gathering of just two, both of whom Leonel would recognize. One was Vivak, and the other was Matriarch Pyius, Simona's mother.

Vivak had a slight frown on his expression. Leonel should have been the perfect specimen, but he had ended up listening to his daughter's words and trying to limit the potential variables by getting things over with as swiftly as possible.

Seeing things now, he felt that he had been correct to do so. Why were they still unable to corral the mind of a Fifth Dimensional brat?

BANG!

The sound reverberated, and though Vivak's expression didn't change, he knew what happened. They had failed.

Vivak stood in silence as he watched Liana duck for cover.

"I've said that I don't believe he's the best tool to use for this job," Matriarch Pyius spoke lightly. "His soul is tainted with Destruction Sovereignty. It's hard enough to isolate one variable without having to worry about others."

"I understand. I mostly pressed forward because of Simona's warning."

"You believe him to be a danger as well?"

"I believe that in these moments, any variables can ruin everything. Something that can't be controlled isn't worth having around. Since we can't take his soul, it's best to just directly kill him and store what remains."

Matriarch Pyius fell into silence for a long while before she replied.

"How do you want to do it?"

Vivak's eyes narrowed.

"I want to see what this child is hiding first. I feel that the more I think about Simona's words, the odder he is..."

After some thought, he spoke again.

"Use him as a sparring partner for the young. They don't need to hold back. When someone is forced into a corner, they'll reveal their true colors."

"And then what?"

"If his true colors are as Simona says, then we'll kill him. If they're not, we'll see if Liana can improve her methods and then try this again. If she cannot, then we'll kill him."

The Matriarch's gaze flickered. It seemed that her husband had decided. One way or another, all paths led to death.

Chapter 2422: He's Dead

Leonel found himself sitting in a room. Though, this sort of description was far too neutral, and maybe even positive, for where it really was.

It might as well have been a dungeon. There were no chains around his wrists and ankles, but it was effectively the same.

He had simply been told to wait here, in this dingy room, while something was prepared for him. He was also told that he would have to be here for a few weeks depending on his performance. As for what his task was, he was apparently meant to be a sparring partner for the youths of the Godlen family.

Well, honestly, this was just Leonel's translation. In reality, this was introduced to him as a training opportunity. He was also told that he would have to do his best to protect his life, or he might lose it.

Toward this explanation, Leonel could only chuckle.

Well, it seemed that Simona had brought him more trouble than he gave her credit for. What should have been a few weeks buffer became a steaming hot pan of frying oil.

The more the situation was like this, though, Leonel found himself becoming calmer and calmer. If it wasn't because he was still worried about his cousin and Jessica, he might have already entered a perfect state of tranquility.

Why a sparring arena instead of just directly trying to kill him? Wasn't it obvious? They wanted to see the real Leonel.

They had even sent him here with the serum still running through his veins. They were clearly hoping that it would lower his inhibitions enough that he would display his true feelings outwardly.

Leonel took note of all of this silently as the doors to the dungeon, that wasn't a dungeon, that was definitely a dungeon finally opened.

He stood without a word and stepped out.

The arena was quite empty, as one might expect from one set aside for a sparring session. The only individuals present were Simona, the young man that always followed her around, and three others that Leonel didn't recognize.

"Primrose, you'll go first," the young man by Simona said. "Remember that this is supposed to simulate real-life combat."

Primrose's figure flickered and vanished, appearing 20 or so meters away from Leonel. The sand and dirt in the arena kicked up before settling down slowly.

Primrose's head tilted to the side, observing Leonel.

"He looked a bit slow," she mumbled.

Primrose looked like a little girl in a woman's body. It wasn't that this was the case literally, but rather that her face was far too overly innocent. It was like a fairy tale princess had come to life.

Her personality, though, wasn't quite the same. At the very least, she didn't flinch at the scent of blood and sweat that hung in the air, nor did she seem squeamish about battling Leonel.

Leonel looked up and met her gaze. At the moment, he seemed to have just rolled out of bed. He wasn't wearing a shirt and his pants were loose-fitting, barely hanging from his waist.

His mind, however, was as sharp as it could be.

What to do in this situation?

'Seventh Dimension. Tier 6? Ah, does it matter? She's strong. Probably stronger than any of the Ancestors of a Dimensional Verse by a decent margin. What a farce.'

He didn't know who thought of this "brilliant" plan, but what did they think they were going to get out of sending a Seventh Dimensional genius after someone in the Fifth Dimension like him?

"Begin," the young man said coldly.

Primrose pouted, but at that moment, a beast seemed to manifest from nowhere. It lunged forward, attacking viciously.

Leonel barely had time to register that it was some sort of panther beast before he sighed.

BANG!

Leonel went flying. His chest exploded into a rain of blood and gore, and his bones were all shattered.

When he collided with the wall of the arena, the back of his skull was violently ripped apart in an even worse mess.

Primrose froze, as did all the other geniuses.

What the hell just happened? He was dead? Just like that?

...

In a separate space, Vivak's frown deepened.

That was it? His gaze was sharp, he had the strength of a Ninth Dimension behemoth, and he wasn't the kind of person that could be fooled easily.

It made perfect sense. Leonel was in the Fifth Dimension. What else could possibly happen when he fought someone in the Seventh?

Everything, even down to that helpless sigh Leonel released in that final moment, sounded like someone that had resigned to his fate.

...

"Unbelievable. You two had us all come down here for this? Those Incomplete World pieces of trash couldn't handle even a single strike before, even that cunt who called himself an Alpha was almost ripped to shreds. What was someone in the Fifth Dimension going to do?"

A young man named Oryan was completely disgusted by the situation; he felt that he had lost valuable training time on this.

Primrose, down below, called her beast back. Despite her cute appearance, she didn't even blink when Leonel went down.

Shaking her head, she agreed with the young man above. This really was a waste of their time.

...

A long while later, Liana came forward with a team of three men.

"Be careful. Don't miss a single drop of his blood. If it's soaked into the sand, I want it all. Put it in a separate container if you can. Try to keep him together as much as you can, I'll do the dissecting later."

Leonel's remains were brought to a new lab, one different from the original one he was brought to in the first place, before he was placed in a special container with all of his remains carefully shelved around him.

'Well,' Leonel thought, 'at least this is better than being eaten alive. Right? Right? Right.'

Leonel groaned inwardly. This pain sucked.

'Focus. Now, how do I get out of here? And what do I do about Noah?'

...

As Leonel was having these thoughts, a meeting of the higher-ups was called once again. Vivak and Mo"Lexi were caught off guard because it was about a young man they were both quite familiar with.

Imperatress Anselma appeared before them, her face somewhat pale. It was clear her injuries were still quite severe, even her makeup could do nothing to hide it.

"I'm contacting you all about a young man who calls himself Leonel Morales. I would have informed you all about this ahead of time, but I didn't believe that he would actually participate."

Anselma and many of the others familiar with Leonel thought that he might do everything in his power to avoid taking part in the selection, they even had contingencies to deal with it. They never thought that he would actually just jump headfirst into the fiery pits, and that was surprisingly what saved him... potentially.

As for why it was just potentially, that was because despite their efforts, they couldn't seem to find a pathway into the Dimensional Verse any longer.

"This is a matter of utmost importance. According to our intelligence, he snatched the Emperor's Might Golden Tablet during a trial that we held. Even to this day, we aren't sure of how he did it, but we need that tablet back."

"Mo"Lexi, I've heard that he was taken under your wind. Where is he?"

Anselma had entirely changed the true reason the Four Great Families were looking for Leonel, but it didn't matter to her. As far as she was concerned, this question was good enough.

"He's dead."

Mo"Lexi and Vivak spoke simultaneously.

Chapter 2423: See it

The two powerhouses looked toward one another. Of them, Mo"Lexi was the only one confused as to why the other would speak for her, and Vivak was already prepared to explain. What Vivak didn't expect, though, was that Mo"Lexi's gaze would turn almost fiery when he spoke.

"Sent him into the in-between world? I mean, I did do that, but he had already exited by the time the incident was triggered. He was actually quite close to the center of the explosions, so when I didn't find him afterward, I thought he had died."

Vivak's gaze narrowed. That was definitely not how Leonel had described it. Leonel had said he had been in the in-between world at the time and was lucky enough to escape. But if what Mo"Lexi said was true, didn't that mean that Leonel had lied to him?

It wasn't that Leonel hadn't thought of the possibility of Mo"Lexi and Vivak exchanging information, but he had chosen to lie anyway for a couple of reasons.

First, Vivak knew that he was Mo"Lexi's subordinate and still chose to take him in. That means he was already fine with lying to her and the odds that this would slip out was slim to none as a result. After all, Vivak would be doing his best to gloss over the matter so that Mo"Lexi couldn't demand to have him back.

Second, it was impossible for him to tell the truth anyway. Even if he cut out the part where he broke through Mo"Lexi's restrictions and made it into the portal, just surviving those spatial tears would be unbelievable.

It had to be understood that the spatial tears resulting from the Bubble Worlds fusing and the stable spatial portal that connected them to the in-between world were two completely different things.

If a normal person entered the latter they would be fine. However, if a normal person tried to enter a spatial tear they would be shredded to pieces, the sections of their body

being flung across space and time. The only exception would be if you were powerful enough.

This was to say that if Leonel admitted he hadn't been in the in-between world at the time, he would be admitting to one of two things. Either he would be admitting that he had been able to decipher Mo"Lexi's restrictions, or he would be admitting that he could survive in a spatial tear.

The latter was obviously not true, but either one would put far more eyes on him. In fact, the latter would be so unbelievable that most intelligent people would assume the first even though it was highly unlikely as well.

This sort of attention was something Leonel didn't want, so he had obviously lied. But even he couldn't imagine that he would be exposed in this way.

Not that it mattered, though. Hadn't Simona's words caused Vivak to take action to kill him?

Mo"Lexi suddenly laughed her familiar, hearty laughter.

"That little brat."

Her grin was as wide as it was savage, but then she remembered Vivak's words and her thoughts of torturing Leonel went out the window.

"What do you mean he's dead? If he made it to you, what happened?"

Vivak realized then that he had been too eager to speak. If he had just remained silent and let Mo"Lexi speak, the end result would have been the same. After all, one way or another, Leonel was dead. But now he had to admit to what he had done.

Vivak sighed. "He managed to come out of our own portal, and I caught him while he was trying to survive in the carnage. I couldn't save him as I was focused on trying to keep as much of the formation's original foundation as possible."

Vivak left out the fact he had recruited Leonel and mixed fact with fiction. There was no need to let Mo"Lexi get a leg up on him, and lying completely to a Dream Force master was almost imp-

"You're lying," Mo"Lexi growled. "What really happened."

Vivak almost rolled his eyes. Whatever, was he scared of this old woman?

"I wanted to save you some face, but since you exist. I recruited him for a time, my daughter said he was dangerous, so I took her advice to see what his bottom line was. He ended up being pushed too far and was killed during the sparring session."

"You dared to steal my people from me?" Mo"Lexi looked like her eyes might spit out fire.

"Your people? Have some shame, you act like you wanted to take him in as your grandson."

"Don't try to twist my words. I gave up recruiting anyone else just so I could have that boy. Even his corpse and his Ethereal Glabella belong to me. Do you think that the Cult is a push over? Hand what's left of him over! NOW!"

Mo"Lexi's booming words carried the weight of her Peak Impetus State Dream Force. It looked like she might drown everyone in rivers of blood if Vivak didn't comply.

At the moment, Vivak himself was quite troubled. His slip of the tongue had caused all of this.

Unfortunately, he wasn't some innate, high level, cognitive genius. Not everyone had minds as sharp as Leonel, and when most everyone's minds were more than half taken up by protecting themselves against poking and prodding from the Dream Plane, they didn't have the normal advantage they should have in terms of thinking speed either.

Now, he really only had two choices. Either he could double down or he could try to compensate Mo"Lexi. Regardless, after all of this, how could he possibly give Leonel's corpse back so casually? At the very least, he couldn't do so until Liana had finished the autopsy, and even then there would definitely be some parts they wanted to keep.

"I can compensate-"

"I don't want your damn compensation. I already gave up-"

"Enough." Anselma said coldly. "His corpse, where is it? I want to see it."

Chapter 2424: Pressure

Vivak frowned. Pressure from one Mo"Lexi, he could handle. But if he was being pressured by multiple powerhouses now just for this one child, how could this still be an easy situation to deal with? This was far too frustrating. How could this one Leonel cause so many issues for him?

He realized not just how right he was to follow through on his daughter's words.

Honestly, Vivak was very good at fighting, but when it came to all the miscellaneous matters of management, he usually gave it to others to accomplish. This was why Liana was his Head Researcher and practically handled everything on that front. It was why

he had been willing to listen to his daughter's advice because he was quite open to taking advice from others as this was already his style of rule. But it was also why he could make such a stupid slip of the tongue at the same time.

Now he was in a bind, and it was impossible to get himself out of this one unless he wanted to have a falling out with everyone.

What he didn't expect was that yet another person would speak, and this would be the straw that broke the camel's back. If Vivak still had some intention to resist before, it completely collapsed after a third person appeared.

Clarence Emerii. Representative of the Dream Pavilion.

"I would like to take a look at his corpse as well."

Back then, it was Clarence who was the most heartbroken about missing out on Leonel. It was all because Mo"Lexi had taken the initiative back then that he had missed it.

He had a feeling that something was going on here, and his intuition was kicking at him. However, he couldn't grasp what it was so he chose to follow the tide along. Maybe this corpse would come with the answers he needed.

Vivak took a breath and then exhaled. This was a sign that he had already surrendered. There was no fighting against this.

"Fine. I will be expecting your visits tomorrow morning."

Vivak left the call without giving them the opportunity to refute. He thought about extending the time, but he realized that he couldn't. They would definitely show up early just to spite him if he gave a time like "next week" or "next month" like he had wanted to say.

He suddenly raised his hand above his desk like he was about to slam down, but in the end, he clenched it and took a breath.

This time, it was his fault. He had no one to blame but himself.

However, while he wasn't the smartest or sharpest leader out there, he was willing to be the boldest.

He lowered his clenched hand and pressed into a Force Art that lit up with his stream of strength.

"Liana, I know that it will be harsh on you, but start the autopsy as quickly as possible. Also, store the most important parts of his body away and keep them in a separate room."

"-But Patriarch, I don't have the time to-"

"I understand, but this time it's what we must do."

"... Okay. I will start in an hour, that's my fastest speed."

"Understood."

The call ended, and Vivak had already regained his calm. He pressed a finger into another Force Art and the rooms of Noah and Amery appeared before him.

If all else failed, these two specimens were excellent. The blond one was a bit inflexible, but the swordsman... he had helped them make the most progress they had in hundreds of years.

Vivak closed his eyes. If he could become a Sovereign, he would be able to finally enter the Life State. Once that happened, the Human Race would no longer be dregs; they would be able to stand on the world stage again.

Too many Ninth Dimensional experts were stuck at this step. The only one of the humans who had managed to reach that state was King, but he was too busy philandering with the enemy as though they were all too stupid to notice.

But what else could he do? King was a tragedy in and of himself. He had reached that ever unreachable Life State, and yet it was done through Dream Force. Not only was it done through Dream Force, but he was restrained to an Ability Index that disallowed him from projecting it outside his body.

Ironically, King was much like Leonel in this way. The difference was that Leonel was already working on a method to project his, while King had never been able to.

What did that mean?

It meant that King was only able to plot and scheme, but in terms of those that had reached the Life State, he might as well have been the weakest. He could crush the likes of Vivak or the others with a single finger, but on the world stage, he was a pitiful worm.

However, if he, Vivak Godlen, was able to take that step, his halberd would sweep through the enemies with a blade that could rend the skies and the earth in a single stroke.

He had to succeed. He had to reach that step.

Leonel had no idea that a coincidental event had caused several Ninth Dimensional experts to converge toward one location for the sole purpose of meeting him. Had he

known, he would have probably cried real tears. At this point, he felt like the mighty overlords of the world were just monkeys throwing piles of shit at him.

Even so, regardless of the situation, his goal was pretty much the same: escape.

However, he couldn't just do so casually.

Setting aside the fact that leaving such a place was probably more difficult than entering, how could he leave empty-handed?

He was pissed, but he couldn't allow his hatred to cloud his judgment. If his Innate Node was still in control, he worried about what he would do.

Luckily, he was clear-headed.

"Hey, Anastasia. How fast are you?"

Chapter 2425: Soon Enough

Anastasia had two speeds when she entered her flying ship mode. One was where she pulled in ambient Force to propel her, and the second was where she used her own internal Force, or rather, Force Leonel provided, to go instead.

Leonel bet that the first type would be far faster in this situation, and that was because this world was obviously far stronger than the Incomplete Worlds had been. After all, Leonel mostly used Anastasia in her flying form in the depths of space where there was little to no Force around. But in a Bubble World, the entire world was land and an abundance of Force at that. So he was somewhat optimistic.

"Fast," Anastasia said. "It would be impossible for anyone outside of the Life State to catch me, and even if they are in the Life State, they would have to have Wind Force, Spatial Force, Light Force, or something of the sort to bolster their speed for it to matter."

Leonel nodded when he heard this, but he wasn't as giddy with joy as one might expect. He didn't need Anastasia to tell him the limitations.

For one, the Segmented Cube's defenses were limited. Even if he was faster than Vivak, it was a different matter entirely as to whether he would be faster than Vivak's attack speed. Second, top speed and instantaneous speed were two different things. Before Anastasia would need to accumulate Force from the surroundings, there would be a small build-up time until she could hit her top speed. That small time frame, to a Ninth Dimensional expert, might as well have been an eternity.

That meant if he wanted to use Anastasia to escape, he would both need time and space.

'That's doable, I can manage... Now I need to get out of here.'

Leonel couldn't cast Instantaneous recovery for obvious reasons, but truthfully he didn't need to. He had a Third Dimensional Body and yet had Impetus State Vital Star Force at his beck and call. It took all his concentration for him to not heal.

As expected, the moment he unleashed his Vital Star Force, his body began to wiggle about with a vibrant energy and he was made whole in an instant.

He pulled himself out of the box Liana's henchmen had put him in and then pulled out a perfect replica of himself from within the Segmented Cube. Of course, he had had Aina make this.

"Sorry bud, bear with me."

"Leonel" rolled his eyes before he was unceremoniously shattered by his true body.

Leonel's ability to recreate the exact same injuries was absolutely frightening, but this was no time to admire his handiwork as he needed to go.

Blood Clones were very good, but they had their limitations.

For one, they had no Ethereal Glabella. Second, when the Blood Force used to create them ran out of Life Force, they would turn into a lifeless pool of blood again. Third, when the main body was far enough out of range of the Blood Clone, it would begin to act oddly. Without the personality of the main body as a foundation, it could easily become twisted.

That said, the last problem wasn't really a problem. That was because without an Ethereal Glabella, this Blood Clone, after suffering the same blows Leonel had, was already dead.

The only reason Leonel had survived was that his body and soul were perfectly separated. Obviously, this Blood Clone didn't have the same luxury.

Leonel pulled on a pair of sweatpants and glided across the floor barefoot. He narrowed his eyes when he made it.

It seemed that outside there was a pair of guards.

After some thought, Leonel looked up and found an air duct above him. In a clean room like this one, Liana was obsessed with making sure no contaminants or pathogens entered.

This world was so advanced in some ways, and yet so primitive in others. They had all sorts of Force Arts Leonel had never seen before, and yet also used beasts to travel and had used air ducts for air filtration.

'Perfect for me,' Leonel thought. 'I'll have to be cautious, though. There's probably a contaminant detector in there, and if I'm using the air ducts to move, I'll be a contaminant that could be detected myself.'

Leonel found the hidden Force Art soon enough and destabilized it. Then he leapt up and entered swiftly, disappearing.

'Help me monitor everything going on in the Godlens' family compound, Anastasia. Only send me what my mind can handle, of course. I'll have to leave the rest up to you.'

Anastasia snorted.

Seemed like she was back to being mad at him. She and Aina had formed quite a united front. It seemed that even almost dying hadn't saved him.

He could only smile bitterly.

Soon, a stream of information entered his mind. Truthfully, he already had a perfect map of the compound in his head, he was more so asking for this so he could see the movement of people without getting stuck in a dead end himself.

Shockingly, though, Leonel wasn't making his way toward the outside of the compound, but rather toward the center.

He had said he would check out the techniques of the Godlens already, but now that they had gone so far, he might even directly raid the entire library.

He didn't care about the passive information on things they had, but the one thing they couldn't ruin were their techniques.

'The air ducts will come to an end, soon. It's too bad Liana isn't anal enough to fill the entire compound with them. But this is already enough.'

Leonel slipped out of the air ducts, landing in a huge room filled with the loud noises of machinery. There were a couple of furnaces, air conditioners, and a large air filtration system that almost shredded him to pieces.

"Little Blackstar," Leonel suddenly whispered.

"Yip! Yip!"

Leonel chuckled. Not covert at all.

Luckily, the little guy appeared swiftly around Leonel's shoulders, and then they vanished into the Shadow World.

This wasn't infallible, which was why Leonel hadn't used it to get past the guard. Just like the Dream Plane could be countered by non-Dream Force experts, so too could the Shadow World.

However, when he was out of people's sight already, and wasn't trying to pass right in front of their faces, it was perfect.

'I'll need to kill some time until Noah is allowed to exit his room again. Then I'll snatch him up and put him in the Segmented Cube before we make our escape. For now, let's clear out this entire technique room. Consider this as some interest for what you've put me through. I'll come back to have you pay the full debt soon enough.'

Chapter 2426: Who?!

Leonel frowned. 'Why can't anything be easy?'

He had already entered within striking range of the technique room. It was actually part of the library, just in a higher space.

He had scouted it the first time he came here, and that had been enough to know that it wasn't a place that was frequented often.

This made sense. A person might spend years trying to perfect and grow with a technique. Unless you were sprinting through the Dimensions, something only a stupid person or one lacking background would do, a technique would need to stay by your side for at least that long.

Due to this, the technique room of the Godlens was one that was only visited once in a blue moon, and yet the moment Leonel wanted to raid them, he found that Simona and that young man he still didn't know the name of had actually entered.

'Maybe it's not bad luck but just poor timing,' Leonel said with a sigh.

Simona had only just returned from the Dimensional Verse, and her foundation was probably lacking due to the fact she hadn't had her little violet puppy by her side for much of her life.

It wouldn't be a surprise if for the first few weeks, she had been focused on readjusting her foundation, and only now did she think about gathering a few techniques to strengthen herself.

'This isn't necessarily a bad thing either,' Leonel thought, looking at the silver lining.

Under normal circumstances, he would have to break the restrictions on the technique vault in order to enter. There were a million things that could go wrong if he did that, and he knew he was being quite reckless just thinking about doing it.

But now, wouldn't there be a convenient doorman to let him in?

Leonel sneered and flashed forward.

The young man suddenly looked back, but all he saw was empty space, causing him to frown.

Leonel hung from a balcony down below. Although he was in the Shadow World, he still did his best to not allow others the chance to look at him directly, at least not for now.

He flipped himself back up after the two started moving forward again. He landed gently, moving along the balcony's lane as he followed them upward.

He wasn't worried about Little Blackstar's stamina running out at all. Back when Blackstar first met him, he was only able to help Leonel out for a brief instant. Now, however, he could probably spend days like this without issue.

"Elder Varough, I would like to enter the technique room," Simona addressed an old man.

Elder Varough sat behind a desk that was off to the side of a thick vault door that looked as though it had been plucked out of a bank dungeon.

He hummed slightly to Simona's request.

"You know the rules," he said lightly. "Eduardo, are you using your entry on this?"

The young man nodded before Simona could reject.

"You don't have to follow me everywhere," Simona protested, but as usual, Eduardo didn't even respond. He just gave her the same unmoved look.

"Alright, you may both enter. You have one hour. Don't try to force it, not all the techniques in there are meant for you. Protect your mind properly."

Hearing these vague words, Leonel's eyes narrowed. It seemed that this technique room would be more like the Void Library than a real library like the one below them. That might make things more troublesome.

The heavy vault door began to roll to the side and Leonel hesitated. Should he still enter?

His feet moved him. He was agile and quick, hiding behind Eduardo's shadow in a blink.

Elder Varough looked over and raised an eyebrow, but he didn't seem to see anything as the three of them slipped inside.

The vault doors slid shut with a boom and Elder Varough went back to his business.

...

Leonel felt that his gamble had paid off. The technique vault didn't separate them, they appeared in the same space. The difference was that all around them, there were techniques floating in odd balls of light.

Leonel had felt that since Eduardo insisted on following Simona in, it didn't make sense that they would be sent off to different places. If the latter was true, then he wouldn't be just protective, he'd be a bit insane. What would be the point in following her if he couldn't even see her?

Eduardo looked around again, feeling that something was off. It just felt like someone was constantly looking at him, and yet this time, when he turned around and stared right at where Leonel was standing, he couldn't see a single thing.

Was he losing his mind?

'This whole hiding in the Shadow World thing is really not what it's cracked up to be. I've been sensed so many times already and now their senses are on alert. But... that's fine.'

BANG!

Leonel's fist slammed into the back of Simona's head with lightning quick precision. Her eyes rolled back before she could even understand what was happening, and the instant she lost consciousness, he pulled her into the Segmented Cube.

He would have attacked Eduardo first, but he could feel that this young man was exceptionally powerful. Taking control of Simona, who he was clearly tasked to protect, would throw his mind into disarray and help him deal with him quicker.

"WHO?!" Eduardo's voice boomed and his eyes widened as he watched Simona disappear from right next to him.

None of this was part of Leonel's original plan, but he was more than willing to go with the flow.

Since the Godlens had changed their plans for him based on Simone's words, then he was even more certain that her father was likely to be Vivak himself. How could he pass up on such a useful hostage?

Leonel appeared, and Eduardo's eyes opened wide. How else was he supposed to react when a dead man suddenly appeared before him as though everything was fine?

Chapter 2427: Frustration

Leonel's gaze was completely different from the last time Eduardo had seen him.

In the Heir Wars he had been playful. In the arena, he had been somber as though he had lost all hope. But right now, his gaze carried a frightening sharpness to it, as though the depths of hell itself were hidden within him.

His Destruction Sovereignty erupted, plumes of smoke coming from the corner of his eyes and the soles of his feet.

Eduardo barely managed to snap out of his daze when a fist appeared before him.

'Was that a mental attack? What just happened?!'

Eduardo hurried to put up a defense, crossing his arm before him and preparing to summon his lion beast. Just when he formed a connection with his spatial device, it was shredded to pieces. It was like his mind couldn't reach any further forward even if it wanted to.

This feeling made Eduardo's eyes widen. Not having his beast by his side made him feel like he had lost an arm.

It had to be remembered that the beast companions of the Godlen family weren't normal beasts, they had come from the womb of the same mother, they shared life and death, they were closer than even twins would be. To say that they were like an extra limb was an exaggeration in the slightest.

Unfortunately, if his spatial device couldn't sense his intention to take his beast out, then the only other way would be to physically touch it, but Leonel didn't seem to be giving him that sort of leeway.

Leonel's strikes weren't exceptionally powerful, but they cut deep. It disrupted his flow of Force-no, it completely shattered it. It was as though all the Force he wanted to gather was burnt to ash in an instant.

This was impossible. It was all impossible.

How could someone in the Fifth Dimension suffocate his Soul Force?

How could someone in the Fifth Dimension, Destruction Sovereign or not, destroy his Force?

"Enough-!"

Eduardo roared, but Leonel directly turned a deaf ear to it. As quickly as Eduardo pushed Leonel back, Leonel closed the distance once more even faster.

Eduardo found himself being pelted from all sides, his arms, his torso, his head.

He suddenly coughed up a mouthful of blood, the shock in his heart enough to make it turn over.

He could feel that Leonel wasn't powerful; if he was, a single one of his fists would have been enough to shred him to pieces. One punch wasn't nearly enough to cause any damage to him, but Leonel kept hitting the same dozen spots again, and again, and again, relentlessly and without even the slightest hint of fatigue.

The cold look in Leonel's eyes was only becoming sharper and sharper.

"Oof-"

A solid punch collided against liver. All the air was sucked out of his body and he could almost feel the flex of his ribcage.

His vision blurred, everything turning to white but that pair of violet eyes.

He felt that the moment he lost the initiative in the battle, he had been on the back foot. Like an army trying to come back against all odds, or a chess novice being cornered by a grandmaster, he was smothered and suffocated.

What he didn't even realize was that any attempts to make a comeback wouldn't have mattered in the slightest to begin with. That was because this entire time, while Leonel was raining a hail of punches on his body, venting his frustration of several weeks, there was a little mink hiding in the shadows.

Leonel's attacks could only pelt against his body and slowly accumulate damage, but a single surprise strike from this little mink would have ended his life.

BANG!

Eduardo collapsed to a knee, not capable of seeing clearly. He felt something grab onto his hair and suppress his will. Then he was ripped into another space entirely.

Leonel exhaled a breath, the coldness in his gaze taking quite a while to calm down. It seemed that he had suppressed more frustration than he even knew. That liver shot had been open to him for a while, but he purposely wailed on Eduardo for an extra few seconds.

He took another breath and exhaled.

His stamina was too great to actually need these breaths, but at the very least, they helped him calm down and pulled back the dark intentions of his Destruction Sovereignty.

Liver shots were quite effective against Third Dimensional existences, but they were less so against true powerhouses. The real reason that liver shot had shut Eduardo down completely was that he had built a Node there.

Eduardo's Dream Force control, and Dream Force protection methods, weren't nearly strong enough to stop Leonel from prying into all his secrets at this distance. He was practically an open book to Leonel.

Not only did Leonel know where that Node was located, he knew where all of Eduardo's Nodes were.

'That ability is more useful than I thought. While my Destruction Sovereignty is still in this weak state, its strongest benefit is in destroying Force it comes in contact with. If I know where everyone's Nodes are, I can easily crush them like I did him.'

"Yip! Yip!"

Little Blackstar landed on Leonel's shoulder, licking his cheek.

Leonel chuckled. "You're a mink, not a puppy."

"Yip! Yip!"

Little Blackstar licked more vigorously, his sounds of protest sounding something like: "I'm the master here, I can be whatever I want to be!"

Leonel smiled. He bet Blackstar had picked up this habit by secretly watching the interactions between the Godlens and their beasts.

"Alright, now I have an hour to figure out how to rob these bastards blind."

Leonel stood with arms akimbo, staring at the floating techniques. The more he stared, though, the more solemn his expression became.

He only had an hour to figure this out, but it didn't seem like things would be easy.

Although this place wasn't exactly like the Void Library, it was similar enough in that without a certain level of strength, most knowledge wouldn't be available to you.

The problem was that if he wanted to scar the Godlens, leaving a wound they would remember, he had to take their best techniques. But...

Their best techniques could only be touched by those in the Ninth Dimension.

Chapter 2428: Godlen Codex

Leonel stood in silence.

The concept was quite simple. Target a technique with a vibe that matched with your path, then attack it. Once you attacked it, so long as your attack met a certain standard, the technique would break open and the contents would be given to you to rent for a time.

This was far more annoying than what Leonel was expecting. He hoped that he could just pick up and scoop everything into a bag and make out like a bandit. But since when were things in his life ever so simple?

He sighed. Maybe he should just try and find some techniques that were actually compatible with him. If he released Blackstar and Aina as well, maybe they would be strong enough to steal some techniques that would make the Godlens feel the burn.

Leonel shook his head. Not good enough.

"Leonel, Noah was just brought out of his room. I'm a bit worried about what's happening."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know, but that Head Researcher looks stressed about something and like she's in a rush. Amery was brought out as well, it feels like they're doing something big."

Leonel fell into silence and looked toward the vault door behind him. He cursed under his breath. No matter what, he wouldn't be able to leave this place until that elder opened the doors again unless he was willing to be exposed.

He couldn't interact with the world while he was in the Shadow World, that was why things phased through Little Blackstar when he entered this state. So, he obviously couldn't open the door and hide at the same time. But he could slip out of the door mostly undetected if it was opened for him.

Now, however...

Leonel's frown deepened.

He had been waiting for Noah to be taken out of his room because he had a feeling that he had been too reckless the first time he entered it. But now he was in a bit of a predicament.

As strong as Eduardo was, that old man would definitely make him look like a child. There was no way Leonel could escape if he exposed himself like this, and there were no air ducts here to take advantage of.

Trouble came knocking on his door again.

What Leonel didn't know was that Liana was taking Noah and Amery out at this time because of him, or more accurately, because of Vivak's slip of the tongue. This was part of her preparation to dissect his corpse.

"Is there anything you can do?" Leonel asked.

"Nothing," Anastasia replied with a frown. "Nothing that wouldn't make it obvious there was another expert in their midst. You're barely skating by when they don't know they should be looking for you, if they were aware you would be finished. The only reason I didn't stop you from coming here was that I could tell you were frustrated, and Vivak does indeed have a method to look into Noah's room."

Leonel's gaze flashed. It was as he thought.

"You have 17 minutes," Anastasia suddenly said. "You're going to have to figure something out. From what it looks like, they might attempt what failed on you on Noah instead."

Leonel's gaze flashed with a suffocating coldness. Vital Star Force had taken the edge off of his temper, but these human powers were slowly chipping away at that again. He was finding it very hard to not spin out into a rage again.

17 minutes. He didn't ask Anastasia how she came up with the number, but he trusted it.

Somehow, he had to get out of here in that time, but there was still more than 50 minutes until the doors would open.

The more pressure there was, the calmer Leonel seemed to become. The calmer he became, the more tranquil his gaze was.

At that moment, his hair and eyes began to give off a silvery starlight. When he inhaled, the air moved and when he exhaled, a foggy breath would come with it, sparkling with more silvery stars as though the air was frigid.

'I got it.'

Leonel pulled out the silver tablet and approached the first technique.

If these floating orbs were just normal balls of Force, then it wouldn't be able to read and react to the proper style of combat. How could it know the difference between a fist attack, or a spear attack, or a sword attack?

Clearly, they weren't just balls of energy, they were complex, interconnected networks of Force Arts.

Leonel didn't have the time to sit here and analyze every single one, but he had a cheat code now.

The Silver Tablet analyzed and absorbed the essence of each Force Art.

'I was right...'

In order for these Force Arts to have such character, they had to be left behind by an expert. Only someone familiar with the technique and understood its core could put up a proper barrier test for it.

In doing so, the Force Art would have some spirit of its own, almost like a soul. And because of that, the Silver Tablet could latch onto it, analyzing it like it did Ability Indexes and Lineage Factors.

The actual Force Art didn't need to come from a living being, so long as there was some small connection of Dream Force that Leonel, or the tablet, could pull on.

Leonel's gaze flashed like lightning as he memorized every one of the Force Arts. It was as though he was staring at a series of locks and he just needed to pick them.

He grabbed the first Force Art, then grabbed a fist-related Force Art off the shelves. He shed the fist Force Art of much of its properties, leaving behind a tiny sliver that was barely a fraction the size of the lock it was trying to unseal.

Leonel slammed it into the lock Force Art, and as expected, it crumbled at the slightest touch.

Leonel pulled his mind out of the Silver Tablet and flung the small Force Art toward the technique and it shattered into a rain of motes of light.

His speed was fast. He repeated this action again and again and again. Even as the locks became progressively more difficult, he seemed to only become faster, as though he was improving even faster than his mind and hands were moving.

Suddenly, only the last few remained.

Leonel swung out a hand and they were all shattered at the same time.

The entire Godlen compound was lit on fire.

This was a momentous occasion. Someone had unsealed one of the Godlen Codex techniques after so long. No, someone had actually unsealed all three of them!

A fire was lit in their souls.

Chapter 2429: Enough

This was about what Leonel expected. He knew that there had to be techniques in here that the Godlens placed much higher emphasis on than others, and so long as he managed to unlock them, a huge commotion would break out.

He knew nothing about the Godlen Codex, nor did he care at this point. Quite frankly, he had acted mainly out of spite. Only when he knew that Noah was in danger did he begin to unlock these techniques with a real purpose, and it worked.

Not even a few seconds later, Leonel could hear the gears of the vault opening up and he made a move instantly.

He leapt to the top of the huge door, sliding through the narrowest crack he could.

Elder Varough frowned again as he seemed to sense something, but he didn't even look up. The elder wasn't even two meters tall, but the vault doors were over five. With him controlling the mechanisms to open it up, he was so close to it that looking up in an attempt to spot Leonel would literally mean looking straight up, to the point his chin would have to point to the skies. It was an uncomfortable movement to make, especially when nothing in your peripheral vision moved.

So he ignored the feeling once again, allowing Leonel to slip away.

By the time Elder Varough realized there was no one in the vault-especially with how deep the technique room was-Leonel wasn't even in the library any longer.

He stood in shock, looking around in a bit of a daze.

His Godlen family techniques, where had they all gone?

There was only one entrance to this place. Even if you wanted to dig a tunnel in an attempt to create another one, you'd have to dig through hundreds of meters worth of thick Reinforced Urbe Ore.

That simply wasn't possible to do if you were below the Ninth Dimension, but even if you were in the Ninth Dimension, the commotion you caused would make any sort of stealth meaningless.

Of course, the Reinforced Urbe Ore was likewise filled to the brim with protective Force Arts. Even if Blackstar didn't bring Leonel with him, it was impossible for the little mink to phase through it all.

Even if Elder Varough was willing to accept that someone had managed to do it anyway, there were no marks on the wall, no sign of forced entry, no real sign of struggle...

He suddenly thought back to that odd feeling he had had, the one he directly ignored both times after a cursory glance.

Could it be that someone had sneaked right by him? How was that possible? Who could even do that? A Shadow Sovereign? There was no way his senses would miss such a thing, though.

'The young miss and Eduardo!'

The panic hit Varough in waves and he rushed out, his gaze flashing like lightning as he scanned everything, everywhere. His Soul Force descended like a tide, and yet he couldn't find a single thing that was out of place.

To make matters worse, everyone, from young to old, were rushing toward the library because news that the Godlen Codex had been unsealed had caused chimes to spread throughout the compound.

'Dammit!' Varough roared in his mind.

...

'Hm?' Liana frowned as she looked up. The chimes reached her as well, and as a Godlen, how could she not understand what this meant?

"The last person to unseal the codex was... Aunry, no? That was... thirty years ago? He should be on the verge of the Ninth Dimension now... Is there another?"

Her eyes flashed with someone's face. If her mind was being peered into right now, it would definitely be with Eduardo's face.

"A shame..." she said under her breath. "... that would be the second branch family member in a row to awaken the Codex before a main branch family member. And it's the same branch at that. If this continues, I'm afraid that the main branch will be replaced. Just what is that big brother of mine thinking..."

Simona was the next generation of their family, and the only child of her brother. But that madman had actually sent her to an Incomplete World in her most important formative years.

Now, a second branch family member had unsealed the Codex, and the pressure the main family was facing would only increase now.

To make matters worse, because Simona's foundation lagged behind others, she was still playing catch up. If not for the fact Eduardo followed her around all the time, those branch family kids might have humiliated her a million and one ways by now.

Liana shook her head. She didn't want to go and watch her main family take yet another blow. The more this sort of thing happened, the more focused she had to be.

She looked down at Amery's unconscious form. She had to succeed.

...

The Godlen family compound was huge, and this was even given the fact a Bubble World that existed on this sort of scale was enormous in and of itself. It wasn't enough to call it a city; it was almost like its own country, if this country spanned an entire planet, controlling the skies and the sea on a whim.

It was toward this enormous compound that a crimson bird with a tail of feathers that stretched kilometers headed toward. On its back, there was a pale red-haired and red-eyed woman and an old man with his hands clasped behind his back.

They were none other than Imperatress Anselma and one of her most trusted subordinates, Butler Halvar.

"Miss, this is inadvisable."

This was the third time he had said this, yet Anselma had yet to kill him for it. Considering her temper, this was enough to show how much value she placed on him.

"Appearing uninvited, and an entire day before we are meant to, will only strain relations between the powers. We of the Great Families are not liked very much to begin with; this will only make things-

"Enough. We are here," Anselma said coldly.

Chapter 2430: Someone...

"Aina, we're going to need a change of plans. How far away can you control the Blood Clones from?"

"If I'm outside with you, probably a few kilometers without issue."

"Oh, someone's finally talking to me again."

Leonel grinned.

Aina rolled her eyes. He was currently running for his life, but he still had the time to tease her. Plus, the only reason she answered was that she knew that this wasn't the time to be petty.

"You should be careful," Anastasia suddenly said. "There's at least one person who knows that there's a problem right now, and that number will only increase as a factor of time. Even if Aina can control them from miles away, there's no way an expert wouldn't sense the connection. You'll be exposed."

Leonel nodded. That one person was obviously Varough, and he didn't believe that that man would give up after just a single scan.

As for why Varough couldn't see through Little Blackstar's Shadow World, that was in one part due to Blackstar's overwhelming improvement and another part due to Leonel's help.

Blackstar's Dark Force had entered the Impetus State firmly. In fact, Leonel believed that his Dark Force was no weaker than Leonel's Dream Force at this point.

To match that, Leonel's Dream Sovereignty matched with the King's Might technique made it difficult for others to use their minds to lock onto him. It didn't help Varough at all that he was a Soul Force user and not a Dream Force user. He couldn't match up to Leonel at all even if his Soul Force was at a higher State. Soul Force was simply the inferior Force type.

However, regardless of all this, if Aina used her Blood Force on such a large scale, there was no shot that they didn't get exposed. He had no choice but to close in on the original location of his body, but that would make his original plan more difficult to execute.

The wave of people kept coming toward Leonel's location, but he had acted fast, returning to the furnace room that he had originally left the air duct from. He slipped into the air ducts once again without a word, zipping through on his elbows and belly.

Suddenly, his ears twitched. 'Dammit.'

Leonel cursed, feeling that the flow of Force here was different. He understood immediately. It was likely that Liana was about to begin her experiments and had turned the air filtration system on.

Leonel hadn't really paid attention to it before, but it seemed that the air flow now was far stronger, and there were likely blades of energy he would need to deal with.

Almost the moment he thought of it, an illusory fan of greenish-blue appeared in the distance, rushing toward him.

'This is karma.'

Leonel would have laughed at himself if not for the situation. He had accused the air ducts of being too primitive, only for this to happen.

Not only had a sharp, spinning fan appeared, but it moved linearly as well, rushing toward Leonel.

Looking behind him, Leonel realized another fan had formed, and it was rushing away from his feet.

It seemed that this air duct formed a conveyor belt of fans that both spun and moved, speeding up the movement of airflow out and keeping the air clean.

They weren't exactly powerful weapons. Someone in the Seventh Dimension could probably destroy them with a snap of a finger. After all, they weren't designed to attack people; they were just here to move air.

However, not only was Leonel not in that state any longer, if he destroyed these fans, he would almost certainly be exposed.

He weighed his options.

Be exposed by Liana or by Varough. Or, he could try to make his way through the compound using another method, but the odds he could manage to do so without being caught was slim to none.

Leonel's mind raced at a mile a minute, and then his eyes suddenly sharpened.

He understood now why he hadn't noticed the more complex Force Arts of this air duct before. They weren't located in the air duct at all. Instead...

Leonel slid backward at his fastest speed, the spinning fan threatening to slice at his nose just before he jumped out the end he had come from.

He looked around and found the source. It was one of the machines, and it controlled everything, even pulling in the impure air, purifying it, and then sending it back through a different mechanism.

With a thought, Leonel brought out Aina and entered a state of meditation.

Seeing him sit before her cross-legged, Aina was a bit confused. But then Leonel's words echoed out.

"I'm like this so that I can expand the lockdown of my Dream Plane to include you as well. That way, you're unlikely to be noticed if someone's Soul Force sweeps by-"

Leonel had only just said this when a Soul Force did, indeed, pass through. But nothing happened.

"-The furnace here is connected to the room my 'corpse' is in."

Leonel pressed a hand to it, his eyes still closed as he took deep breaths. After a few seconds, he nodded to himself.

He didn't do much. He just reversed the flow of the fans. The spinning green-blue fans began to appear from his side and rushed toward the cleanroom instead.

Liana would definitely have to come here to check what was happening, and in addition to that, he could do something else.

"Use this furnace as a conduit. Do you think you can control the Blood Clone through it?" Leonel asked.

Aina thought for a while, seemingly calculating something. Then, she eventually nodded.

"Good."

Aina took action as Leonel remained in a state of meditation. Liana had definitely already noticed the problem; they didn't have much time.

And, if things went like this, this was probably the last time he'd be able to use the air ducts as too much attention would be brought to it. But you couldn't make gains without taking losses.

"What do you want me to do?" Aina asked.

"Heal my Blood Clone so that it can try to make its own escape," Leonel opened his eyes with a grin.

Aina smiled and did as she was told.

After a while, Leonel put Aina back into the Segmented Cube and then timed his jump back into the air duct.

He had only left for a few seconds when Liana came rushing into the furnace room, a tight frown on her brows.

'Hm? Someone...'

Chapter 2431: Spinning

Leonel deviated from his original path, heading toward the room Amery and Noah were in. At the same time, his Blood Clone opened its eyes.

The Blood Clone was still in a mostly sorry state. Leonel hadn't let Aina heal it completely, but pain wasn't a restriction that would hinder the Blood Clone anyway. Though, thanks to Dream Sense, pain didn't hinder Leonel all that much either.

After opening its eyes, it looked around and seemed to receive signals from Leonel himself. It understood immediately and pushed itself up. Then, ignoring the door as there were guards, it too leapt into the air duct, moving in a completely different direction than Leonel.

Leonel jumped down, landing in the room with Amery and Noah. He wasn't surprised to not see Jessica as Anastasia had already informed him about those things.

Without much hesitation, he scanned the region, checked to see if there was anything untoward attached to Noah and Amery, and then he placed them both inside the Segmented Cube.

He wasn't the biggest fan of Amery, but he also wasn't the biggest fan of Hutch's grandson either. Since he was here and it was convenient, not to mention the fact it would ruin the plans of the Godlens as well, why not take it?

Leonel didn't do much thinking about what it meant to ruin the plans of the humans. He knew quite well that whatever they were trying to create was an attempt to fight back against demons, and every plot he destroyed would just be another notch toward the demons, but quite frankly... he didn't really care.

For one, he wasn't some race fanatic. Just because everyone else in Existence was obsessed with race didn't mean that he was.

Those that harmed him were his enemies. Those that didn't harm were neutral. Those that helped him were his friends.

Simple.

Since the human powers wanted to step on his toes, they would pay for it.

When the demons came knocking, he would make them pay as well.

Leonel slipped out of the door without a word. This room didn't have any guards before it, likely because Liana was here and this was a top-secret operation of the Godlen family. Having guards here would only complicate the matter.

With the help of Little Blackstar, he slipped back into the Shadow World, and with Anastasia's help, he ducked and avoided the direct line of sight of many people.

Due to the fact so many had swarmed toward the technique library, though, the halls were far less populated, mostly filled with workers and lesser agents of the family who didn't have the right to suddenly leave their posts to partake in the fun.

The technique library was lively, and no one seemed to notice that there was a storm cloud over Elder Varough's face.

Even with the pressure he was under, Vivak had no choice but to appear as well. The weight of such a matter was great, and he had had the same thoughts as his sister when he heard those chimes.

The main family of the Godlens had been taking some hits recently, mostly due to his choices. He acknowledged that himself. But he felt that when they came out the other side, they would be better off for it.

Even so, the growing pains were there. The Godlens had three quite powerful branch families within them, and each one had at least one expert just shy of Vivak's strength. However, their younger generation was blowing Vivak out of the water.

Only Vivak and a few others knew why he would choose to send his only heir and even his wife to an Incomplete World, but right now he seemed to be suffering for it.

As he made his way over, he sensed the movement of Branch Head Raimondo.

The man looked to be about 10 to 20 years older than Vivak, but he was all smiles. He was Eduardo's grandfather, and his deductions were about the same as everyone

else's. He believed that the only one in the family in a position to unlock the Godlen Codex techniques was his grandson.

He found it all to be very amusing. Vivak thought he was clever, sending his grandson to that godforsaken Incomplete World. But in the end, had it mattered?

Of course, these were just Raimondo's own thoughts. Eduardo hadn't been sent into the Incomplete World until he had already laid his foundation in the family, and he only remained there for a few months. It could be said that Raimondo was just trying to rub salt into a gaping wound.

"Haha, Vivak! It's good to see you brother."

Vivak smiled politely and nodded. Nothing in his expression seemed to give anything away as though he had no idea what was happening.

The two strolled into the library together and the sea of people, rightfully, parted. But very soon, they were greeted with two other Branch Heads and an ashen-faced Varough.

"What's going on?" Vivak asked with a frown.

Varough took a breath and explained what happened.

Raimondo's smile slowly faded away, and his expression even became several measures more firm. His grandson had just disappeared into thin air? Along with that useless little girl? Was that a joke?

His gaze landed on Vivak like a flash of lightning. When he saw the confusion and worry in Vivak's expression, he sneered inwardly.

'What a good family Patriarch. Your acting is excellent.'

It felt like acid was rolling around in Raimondo's gut. How could he not assume that Vivak had finally had enough of the rise of the branch families and took action to take them out? He was practically seething.

"What other information do you have?" Vivak asked.

"The only explanation I can think of is that this person slipped right by me. I had the odd feeling that someone was watching me, but I couldn't see anything and my Soul Force also didn't-"

"The Codex, where is it?" Raimondo asked coldly, cutting him off.

Varough's expression twisted, but he still grit his teeth and answered.

"The Codex, all of the techniques, they're gone-

Before Vivak could even respond or comprehend what that meant, he felt someone trying to contact him.

"Patriarch! Anselma of the Brazinger family is here to visit!"

Vivak's expression changed, but the tsunami of information didn't seem like it was going to end any time soon.

"Brother! The corpse, it's gone!"

Vivak felt his head spinning.

Chapter 2432: Death Flag

Vivak felt his head spinning. Too much information was coming at him at once. First, his daughter was missing; second, the Brazinger family had suddenly appeared out of the blue, and now Leonel, who was supposed to be dead, was gone?

Wait, did that mean he was never dead in the first place? No, that was impossible. He had used his Soul Force to check personally. How could a Fifth Dimensional existence possibly escape his senses?

So did that mean that someone else had stolen his corpse? This was very possible. He had many issues to deal with as the Patriarch, and the problem of his branch family members was only one aspect. Given the... less than perfect relationship between the human powers, and given the sheer size of the Godlen family, there were without a doubt several spies.

He had done his best to hide the true intention of the Godlens from the world, and he only trusted a very small few-mostly his little sister-to deal with these matters. However, it wasn't impossible that something might leak.

The more Vivak thought, the darker his expression became. Even as someone in the Ninth Dimension, he was quickly feeling overwhelmed. But he eventually took a breath and pulled himself together.

He might not be the most intelligent Patriarch there ever was, but he knew how to lead, and he knew how to delegate tasks.

His gaze sharpened as it landed on Raimondo.

"Raimondo, I don't care if you believe me or not, but I did nothing to your grandson. The Godlen family is in a crisis situation right now, and if you dare to step out of line at such a crucial moment, I will personally slaughter you and every member of your immediate family. Do you understand me?!"

Vivak's voice boomed, his Halberd Force spiraling within his eyes.

Despite the loudness of his voice, only the four before him could hear him at all. Even so, the somberness of the atmosphere caused the other excited members of the Godlen family to fall into silence, their energy murmurs fading.

Raimondo felt that he had been struck by lightning. He didn't know that Vivak had such words in him, and he felt a fear take hold of his heart. He only seemed to remember now that Vivak was the Patriarch for a reason.

Vivak turned away and looked at Elder Varough.

"Elder Varough, you will lead the search for the traitor. Raimondo, Aizen, Butrid, you three will come with me to welcome the Imperatress.

"Everyone else," the Patriarch's voice boomed, "go about your business. Keep the matters that happened here to yourselves. The family has eyes and ears everywhere; don't test my bottom line."

Vivak turned and flashed. "Come."

...

Liana stared into the distance in a daze, not believing what she was seeing. She had only just managed to fix the situation with the rotating fans, and she was certain that someone had tampered with it. So instead of returning to Amery and Noah, she came here first, only to find that the worst had truly happened.

Someone had lured her away on purpose.

"Liana, retreat and find somewhere safe. Elder Varough will take over this situation. If you get involved, you could lose your life. Whoever dares to do this is likely a great enemy of the Godlen family; they can't be underestimated."

Liana trembled after hearing her brother's message. She grit her teeth, wanting to argue back, but she knew she couldn't say anything. There was really nothing that she could do.

...

Leonel snuck into a familiar hallway and found Jessica. She was currently being hauled over the shoulder of a man, and it wasn't hard to guess what he was about to do.

However, the man soon seemed to realize that something was wrong long after Leonel had. The number of people in the hallways was slowly starting to increase, and it was difficult to hide his dirty deeds.

After Vivak gave everyone the order to return, this was inevitable. Clearly, the man hadn't expected this outcome.

Panicking somewhat, he looked for a room to enter.

Leonel shook his head, feeling that this man was truly too useless in all aspects. There were at least three nearby supply closets. He should be more familiar with this compound than Leonel was, and yet he was like a headless chicken right now.

Without a choice, and not wanting the situation to get more complicated, Leonel took the risk and bore down on the man from the Dream Plane, pulling at his thoughts and reminding him of where the nearest supply closet was.

The man finally burst into action, not realizing that Leonel was right behind him, and they both swept into the closet just in time.

However, relief couldn't come to the man in time as he found a sharp blade severing his neck in two.

Leonel didn't have much sympathy for men like this, so he didn't even think twice though his Scarlet Star Force was no longer dictating his actions. However, he didn't just leave the corpse here either. He had a better place to plant it.

He quickly put Jessica and the headless corpse into the Segmented Cube, then stepped out of the closet when the coast was clear.

He slipped into the shadows once again and moved agilely through the halls. Then, when he was ready, he took out the corpse of the man and planted it before leaving in the other direction.

"How many escape routes have you seen?" Leonel asked.

"There are many, but there's only four gates and only one real path to get to each one of them. Unfortunately, the Godlens follow more conventional defensive methods, so there is no one straight path from the gates to the core of the compound, where you are now. Unless, of course, you take off in the skies, but that's inadvisable. You should do your best to not be discovered until after you leave the territory, or else the Godlens could put up their formation and trap you on the inside..."

"Don't say that," Leonel mumbled. "You're trying to give me a death flag, and I don't like it."

Chapter 2433: Got You

The location was quite a grand hall. Compared to the places of the Godlen family compound that Leonel had been in, this looked much more like the location of a truly powerful family. The rest of the Godlen family compound looked more like a school, with plain tile, walls, and even long, blinking lights. It felt like Leonel had been transported back to 21st Century Earth.

Leonel guessed that this was because Liana had taken over the region and had co-opted much of the compound for the sake of her research. This seemed stupid considering Vivak was doing his best to keep these matters a secret, but Leonel didn't agree with this. He actually felt it was quite smart. Keeping everything a secret was almost impossible, but pretending your secret was part of the norm could make others easily overlook it all.

Regardless, this grand hall wasn't like what Leonel had seen previously and looked much more regal and ancient. It had tall pillars, floors of heavy, polished stone, each ten meters wide, tall, and thick, and seemed to be capable of fitting the ambiance of a throne room or a dining hall depending on the situation.

In this case, the grand hall wasn't prepared at all due to Anselma's abrupt arrival, but it wasn't untidy either. Instead, the large and mostly empty room gave it an imposing feeling, making it easy for one to feel small and insignificant.

It was in this room that Anselma and Vivak met, both the former and the latter looking exceptionally serious.

"What is the meaning of this, Anselma?" Vivak asked calmly. "Are the Brazingers fond of being uninvited guests?"

"I was in the area," Anselma responded calmly.

"Were you?" Vivak sneered. "Six Bubble Worlds are in the process of fusing right now. In order to cross from the Vast Bubble to my Codex Bubble, you would have had to surf through at least two cataclysmic-level regions. But you were 'in the area', huh?"

Anselma seemed unmoved by Vivak's words.

"It's a simple matter. I just want to see the corpse. Just allow me this and we can leave on good terms."

Vivak's sneer deepened. "You must think that my Godlen family is just here to be at your beck and call. I said tomorrow, so you will wait until tomorrow. If you don't like that, then you can scram."

Anselma fell into silence.

In truth, what she had done was more than a little rude. It wasn't smart to try and antagonize an important member of their alliance in this critical situation. She was also surprised that the three Branch Heads of the Godlen family had actually come forward as well; it made her feel like the Godlens were more united than she had initially thought.

However, she also couldn't put down her worries.

That man, Velasco, had put a shadow in her heart. Despite the rumors that they had spread after the fact, she knew that she, nor the other three, never had a chance at harming Velasco. He was toying with them. If not for his insatiable desire to kill King, he would have come out entirely unscathed.

Who would have known the consequences if he actually came out?

And now his son, despite having had a path to avoid them, purposely chose to appear right in their territories? How could she not feel uneasy? She simply didn't believe that Velasco would leave nothing behind for Leonel. In truth, she even had a hard time believing that that man was dead at all.

Anselma took a deep breath and didn't explode like Vivak had thought. In truth, he had been hoping she would. That way, he would have an excuse to kick her out by force, something that would be relatively easy considering she was clearly injured and he had three more Ninth Dimensional on his side, not to mention the entire Godlen family at his beck and call.

"This matter is very important, Vivak. This could decide the life and death of the alliance. Things are already spiraling out of control, and as crazy as it sounds, my gut tells me that it's related to that kid. I have to make sure that he is truly dead."

Vivak hesitated.

Imperatress Anselma was known for her arrogance; she killed without blinking and didn't put anyone in her eyes at all. The idea that she would speak so softly was unheard of. She probably didn't speak this softly even to her own children.

However, how could Vivak admit that she was right to be so worried? That Leonel's corpse had suddenly and inexplicably disappeared?

Suddenly, he felt that maybe he had jumped to some conclusions. Could Leonel really be alive?

Just as he was hesitating about what to say, a new message came from his talisman.

"Patriarch! We've found a corpse in the family halls, no one knows who did it!"

Vivak's eyes widened. "A corpse? Who?!"

His heart leapt into his throat.

"I'm not sure of his name, but he was a regular security guard and one of Head Researcher's henchmen."

Vivak sighed a breath of relief, but then he immediately frowned.

Whoever had snuck into the Godlens had to be a top-level expert, no? After so long of not being caught, and even sneaking into their treasure room, avoiding detection by several Eighth Dimensional existences, and a Ninth Dimensional Existence like Elder Varough, how could he only now slip up and leave behind the corpse of a mere Seventh Dimensional guard?

Unless... could it really be Leonel?

But then the techniques...

Vivak's eyes darkened, his gaze landing on Raimondo. Who else could it be? Maybe all this time, Raimondo was pretending and the real person who stole the techniques was his grandson, Eduardo, all along?

Could Elder Varough be in on it? Had he been betrayed?

...

Leonel ran, blood soaked and panting. He dove around a corner, met the eyes of a few people, and reeled back immediately, rushing in another direction.

Not far away, Elder Varough had already gathered his task force and was delegating tasks. All the while, he was constantly sweeping with his Soul Force until he finally picked up on something.

"Got you," he growled.

Chapter 2434: So Close

Elder Varough moved like the wind. His task force looked toward one another and gathered at once, following after his swift steps. Although they lost him almost immediately, they followed after his aura, moving at their fastest speeds as well.

"Shit..." Leonel mumbled beneath his breath. He didn't manage to make it far, but he was forced to slip back into the furnace room, dodging behind the large pieces of machinery.

With the most speed he himself could muster, he appeared beside a familiar furnace, the very same one he had made changes to previously. The blood that covered him and the irregular shape of his chest made it clear he was nearing the end of his rope, but his gaze was still sharp.

BANG! The door to the furnace room was ripped open so forcefully it flew off its hinges. Varough rushed in like a wild beast. When he saw Leonel, he couldn't believe it. Had he really been tricked by a mere Fifth Dimensional existence? How could he not see red?

However, seeing that Leonel was cornered, he took a breath to calm himself. He knew that he couldn't kill Leonel now; at the very least, he needed to bring him back to be studied.

"Stay back."

The sudden command from Leonel left Varough without words. Was this brat stupid? Why did he have to do as he said?

Varough shook his head, feeling that this previous rage was really too silly. How could he allow a brat like this to threaten his baseline?

He thought that Leonel was clever to be able to make it so far, but maybe he had overestimated him.

He continued to move forward anyway, not giving a damn about Leonel's words... until he heard what came next.

"Alright, keep moving. I'll be sure to blow this entire place sky-high."

Varough's steps paused. He looked around, seeing the collection of various furnaces, AC systems, and boilers; he was confused. Was something like that possible? He wasn't sure; he wasn't a Crafter. But just theoretically speaking, with all the heat and various systems in this place automated, there was a great deal of energy stored here. If it was disrupted, then...

Varough sneered. "Am I supposed to believe that you can do something to change the equilibrium here? Do you have any idea who designed these-"

"Then call her here and ask her; it's not like I'm going anywhere, right?" Leonel sneered, standing tall and straight despite his injuries. "At the same time, you can ask her who it was pulled her away from her lab and brought her here to fix an issue."

At that moment, the rest of Varough's team caught up. But he raised a hand and stopped them from approaching.

"Go fetch Liana," he said coldly.

The task force looked toward one another, and one of them was eventually tasked with the duty.

The seconds ticked by, and Liana was eventually brought in. When she saw Leonel, her eyes opened wide.

"Impossible..." she mumbled.

Leonel sneered. "It's very possible."

Liana snapped out of her thoughts and frowned. "I just fixed that furnace; it's impossible for you to have had time to do anything. Varough, capture him."

Varough had heard enough and was ready to move, but Leonel laughed.

"Did you? Did you fix it?"

Liana frowned.

"What? You think that I just reversed the flow of the fans?"

Liana stopped Leonel, her delicate brows furrowing. She looked at Leonel, hard, trying to see through him until her expression twisted with horror.

"It seems you finally noticed. I didn't reverse the flow; I mirrored it. A technicality, but a huge difference. Especially if someone came by and tried to fix it based on the mirrored image."

"You..."

Leonel smiled. "Yes, me. If you didn't notice until now, that means..."

"The new Force Art is two transformations away from what it's meant to be, if it becomes a third..."

Liana's heart trembled.

Transformations could be considered to be an exceptionally high-level concept, one that only those with an intimate understanding of the Life Grade could grasp.

All Force Arts were formed of shapes, not just in the 2D, but the 3D as well, and sometimes a fourth if you were sharp enough to comprehend it.

At the level of Liana and Leonel, to keep a complex matter simple, you couldn't just draw a triangle shape randomly when a Force Art called for it. You had to be careful about which form of the triangle shape you were using, especially if it was an irregular triangle.

The further away from its proper form the triangle came, the further from the perfection of the Life Grade you got, and the more stable the overall formation would become.

Leonel had mirrored one of the runes of the Force Art, causing the system to act as though it had been reversed. But rather than mirroring it again to take it back to its original position, Liana had reversed it, causing a core part of the formation to be two transformations away from its most ideal state.

The formation was already highly unstable. Leonel didn't have the strength to force a third transformation. In fact, he hadn't had the strength to force the second one either; he had to rely on tricking Liana for that.

However, in this unstable state, if he gave the formation a little nudge, it really would all explode.

Varough sneered. "So what? This level of explosion couldn't even guarantee the death of an Eight Star existence, let alone the true powerhouses of the family. Do you think this is enough to threaten us?"

"And what if I have your Patriarch's lovely daughter in my hands?"

Liana's eyes widened, and Varough's brows twitched.

"Also, you can fool me," Leonel sneered. "Whatever this whole operation is, it's clear that it's highly important to your people. If I blow it up, all your hard work will go up in a puff of smoke."

Liana paled considerably. Not only her niece but her research? This was too much.

"What are your demands?" Varough finally said. "You can't plan to stand here forever, right?"

"It's simple. Build me a formation out of Godlen family territory. I'm sure Miss Liana can tell you that my Crafting skill is high enough that it's impossible to fool my eyes, so be diligent about it. Once you do so, I will leave this ring holding your little heiress here."

"The Codex. Where is it?"

Leonel sneered. "One step at a time, old man. If you want that, you'll need to pay up some more."

Varough gripped his fists, hard. Was his Godlen family really about to be toyed around with by this boy?

At that moment, five powerful auras descended, and Varough's expression changed. In an instant, five more powerhouses stood at the edge of the furnace room. If not for the fact Leonel's eyes sharpened when they appeared, they might have directly attacked to subdue him. Somehow, this boy could react even to their speed.

"Boy!" Vivak's rage was towering. His eyes had actually been fooled by this brat?!

"Pipe down," Leonel said coldly. "My eardrums aren't as reinforced as yours. If I'm suddenly deaf and can't hear what's going on around me anymore, my hand just might slip."

Vivak's eyes bulged.

Anselma frowned. "This isn't a real person; this is a Blood Clone."

Leonel froze.

'Son of a bitch. So fucking close.'

Vivak's heart skipped a beat, and he seemed to put something together.

"ACTIVATE THE FORMATION!"

Chapter 2435: Not Easy

Vivak felt his heart beating out of his chest when he looked at this young man. He had listened to his daughter, and yet he had still almost suffered such a terrible loss. No, was he even out of the woods yet?

The playfulness on the Blood Clone's expression vanished, and for the first time, Vivak saw what he was looking for. He wanted to see Leonel's true face, and he had finally been granted his wish.

"Capture him!" Vivak barked out an order. But in response, Leonel just sneered.

"What's the point of that? Plus, have you forgotten that I still hold some cards here?"

"Stop!" Liana called out. "Brother, if he triggers an explosion, all of our hard work will go up in smoke."

Vivak grit his teeth.

The Blood Clone didn't seem to be surprised by this result. This was a stalemate. The difference was that there was a slight imbalance. His main body had already escaped the main compound. The trouble was that the formation had gone up now, trapping him inside Godlen territory.

But this wasn't the only issue he was facing.

Soon, the distance between him and this Blood Clone would be so far that he wouldn't be able to control its every action. Once that happened, he would not only lose control over this situation, but his threat would become empty.

Before he could even decide what to do about this, though, Anselma spoke again.

"This Blood Clone still has intelligence, he must still be within a few kilometers. Your Godlen family territory spans hundreds of kilometers, he's still close."

The Blood Clone's gaze turned dark as he looked at this woman again. If not for her, he would have been able to stall for more than long enough to make it out. They might not even realize that his Blood Clone became a bit dull.

The Godlens obviously didn't have any Blood Sovereigns in their ranks, and this wasn't necessarily to say that Anselma was also a Blood Sovereign-though she might be. Rather, it seemed that she had a deeper understanding of Blood Force than anyone Leonel had ever met other than Aina.

It could only be said that his luck was truly poor this time around.

Anselma sneered when she felt the Blood Clone's gaze, but her gaze was also filled with an insipid venom. She seemed to have transferred all her hatred for Velasco onto Leonel.

"It's quite easy to deal with this situation. It's impossible to create a Blood Clone without using a large amount of our own blood. This Blood Clone might as well be a beacon that'll lead right to his real body. Just kill it and commandeer the blood that's left over and I can easily make a tracking Force Art. Whatever method he's using to hide would be useless at that point."

Vivak's eyes glowed when he heard this.

"Stupid," the Blood Clone suddenly said.

Anselma's eyes narrowed. She barely allowed Vivak to talk to her like this, and that was only because she was invested in making sure that Leonel was dead. Who did this boy think he was to talk to her like this?!

The coldness in the Blood Clone's gaze deepened.

"Are you mad? But aren't you a stupid woman? You think you're being so clever, but exposing yourself like this, detailing your plans in front of everyone just for some cheap thrill of satisfaction... for what? Because you were never a match for my father?"

"Well, let me tell you. You aren't a match for me either. You can wait patiently for the day that me and my wife come to raze your Brazinger family to the ground."

The Blood Clone snapped its fingers just a moment before its gaze went dull.

"NO!" Liana called out.

BOOM.

Everything went up in flames, and as the person closest to the explosion, the Blood Clone, the weakest of them all, formed by mere Third Dimensional blood, was shredded to pieces.

What blood were they going to use to track him, exactly?

...

'Dammit,' the real Leonel cursed under his breath. He had indeed been only a few kilometers away. Though, since then he had exploded with speed.

It was much easier to rush through an open city than a compound. He could cover several kilometers quite quickly and he was already dozens away. The problem was that as fast as he was, the Ninth Dimensional existences would be even faster, and he also didn't have a method of dealing with the huge fort he was suddenly trapped in the middle of.

In addition, although he had painted the illusion that he had already dealt with the blood problem, he had left blood in too many places not knowing that this would be a problem. He could only hope that the explosion was enough to deal with all the blood he had left in the morgue.

The problem was that Liana had been too diligent. She had carefully stored everything, and they were in containers much more robust than his Third Dimensional body. So long as a drop survived, he would be in trouble.

There was only one silver lining to this.

According to Aina, the smaller the amount of blood, the shorter the distance he could be tracked from. In addition, his weakness was also a benefit.

If he was in the Ninth Dimension, his Blood Force would have far more power and even a drop could allow him to be tracked a great distance. But because he was in the Third Dimension, he had lucked out... somewhat.

Although his body was in the Third Dimension, his Vital Star Force was exceptional. It was just a good thing that his Blood Clone didn't have full access to this and as such, its Blood Force was far weaker than his own.

"Anything, Anastasia?" Leonel asked.

"There's only really two ways of dealing with this. Either going to the core of the formation or an important root of it, and destroying it. Or finding a flaw to slip through. Both aren't exactly easy...."

Chapter 2436: Increasing

"The core of the formation is back in the direction you came from, deep underground. There were twelve large kernels that stabilize the formation, and probably a dozen times that in smaller scale nexuses. Every single one of them is heavily guarded."

Leonel shook his head. What paranoid pricks. But it made sense. Even in a time of peace, they wouldn't allow anyone to casually approach such important areas, let alone now that they were about to enter a full-scale war with the demons.

The other problem was that these nodes and nexuses would be obvious points. They'll know that with him being trapped inside their territory like this, the only thing he could do was try to break the formation. That meant that very soon, all of these places with already robust security would likely become even more difficult to deal with.

The other path was finding a flaw in the formation, but...

This wasn't the Dimensional Verse anymore. Leonel was no longer head and shoulders above every other Crafter he came across, and if he wanted to find a flaw, especially one that he could fit through or take advantage of, it would take hours of study, and that was in the best-case scenario. More likely than that, it would take days.

In fact, for the people of the Godlens, they probably wouldn't even consider this. Even a seasoned Crafter wouldn't dare to hand out such short timelines. It could only be said that Leonel was either far too arrogant or very confident in himself.

As for creating a flaw like he had done with the surface, that was even more impossible. That formation had been much smaller, not to mention one with far fewer checks and balances. And yet, it had still taken almost everything he had to cause some small changes to a minor part of it.

Once again, this wasn't the Dimensional Verse. He couldn't just casually change things because he felt like it anymore.

There was a possibility of holing up and creating a large-scale teleportation formation he could use to leave the protective formation in an instant, but that thought was also a joke.

He could already sense how solid space was here. How could such an important formation not have contingencies against Spatial Force masters?

"What about going underground?" Leonel asked.

Maybe if he found a home to commandeer, he could build an underground path out of the city right from under their noses.

"The ground is far too solid. In addition, part of the formation is designed to defend against underground operations as well. There's a net solidifying the ground, and it's even more powerful than the formation exposed to the air.

"You can only see a hemisphere now, but it's more like if a bowl had a lid placed on it and then was flipped. Imagine the city being trapped within it."

Leonel shook his head.

Unfortunately, Anastasia was a World Spirit, not a Crafter. She might surpass Leonel in sensory abilities, but his Crafting skill was far beyond hers. He couldn't make use of her to find the flaw he needed.

"Well, now this is a predicament, isn't it?" Leonel chuckled. "Do you two regret being mad at me now? How about some apologies from everyone?"

In response, Leonel got two snorts, causing him to laugh.

Who knew how the Godlens would react if they knew he was laughing rather than panicking. But as far as Leonel was concerned, he hadn't run out of cards to play just yet.

For one, Simona was still in his hands.

Of course, because of the variable of Anselma, he couldn't hope to use this alone to escape. He doubted that Vivak would let him get away with it even without her pressure either.

In truth, even Leonel felt that Simona's life was useless in this situation, but it was still a nice reminder that he hadn't completely run into a dead end just yet.

In this huge city, he still had a chance. For now...

"Anastasia, start feeding me the bits and pieces of the formation. I'm going to find that flaw."

...

The compound's situation was odd.

In the middle, there was a flaming ball of fire that was slowly being suppressed. The walls and hallways were still in decent shape, having been forged of materials that were too excellent to completely collapse under this level of attack. In addition, everyone in the furnace room had also survived, although some of them were in far sorrier states than others.

The Blood Clone, however, was completely gone. In addition, Liana knew with how much fragile equipment was connected to the air ducts that spread out from this room... there was no chance all of her research had survived.

Her expression was completely ashen, drained of all color.

She wanted to roar with rage, to stamp her feet and throw a tantrum. She knew that Leonel's last words had been true. Had Anselma not pressured him so hard, there might have been some room for negotiation. But because she hadn't had any propriety, Leonel chose to deal with this situation in the only way he could.

Vivak's expression wasn't good either. It wasn't just a matter of the research, but that young man had his daughter. If he continued to let this woman do as she pleased, would Leonel suddenly kill his only heir too?

His jaw set.

Anselma and the elder she had brought could feel the shift in the atmosphere immediately.

The Imperatress herself had already been suppressing her displeasure. From the moment she came, Vivak had disrespected her, and now they seemed to be trying to blame her for this as well.

"What are you-"

Butler Halvar quickly cut Anselma off before the situation got worse.

"This is the territory of the Godlens; we'll take a step back. If you need our help, please feel free to approach us."

It was only after hearing this that Vivak's brows relaxed slightly.

...

"Never do that to me again, Halvar!" Anselma growled, her red hair whipping in the air.

"Miss, please," Halvar dabbed at his forehead. "We've already pushed things too far; if we push any more, it will be that child that benefits."

"He did this on purpose. He wants to drive a wedge between us!"

Halvar frowned. He didn't understand why Anselma was so fearful of this boy. It was more likely a coincidence than anything else; how could a child have such deep schemes? It was fine if he was a bit clever, but manipulating the thoughts and emotions of Ninth Dimensional existences was a bridge too far. However, he had learned long ago not to refute his Miss.

"Then we should do our best to not have his plans work any better. If you snap now, then it will only strain relations further. It's better if we take a step back. The Miss is the best counter to the boy now, but if we offend the Godlens now, they might not even let us help."

Hearing these words, Anselma slowly calmed down, taking a deep breath.

She knew that her butler was right. She had been on edge these days and she wasn't thinking clearly.

...

Leonel clicked his tongue when Anastasia's relayed these images to him.

"How annoying..."

The difficulty of his escape just seemed to keep increasing.

Chapter 2437: Droplets

"Anastasia, lead to the node nearest second nearest from the walls."

"There are several that are equidistant."

"Show me the landscape around them."

Leonel's mind began to be flooded with images.

"Alright, show me the path to the second one."

After some thought, Leonel picked and then slipped into the shadows once again.

He knew quite well that being near any formation nodes right now was highly dangerous. But so long as he picked his spot well, it would be a simple matter for him to hide, in his opinion. As the saying went, the safest place was often the most dangerous place.

Plus, he didn't particularly have a choice. He had to study the nodes one way or another, and without proper comprehension of the path of Crafting, there were some details that he would need to see that Anastasia might miss. After all, it had to be remembered that Anastasia was doing her best to scan the region while also hiding her scan from the Ninth Dimensional experts. Although she could do so, there would inevitably be some gaps caused as a result.

As Leonel moved, he could already sense the shift in the atmosphere. Like he had thought previously, it was war time. The Godlens already had several guards on high alert, and it was child's play to activate them for a situation like this one. The Godlens didn't need to create a net to surround him because the net already existed.

Luckily, the scope of their territory was so large that it was likewise easier for Leonel to hide. But after three close calls in a row, he realized that it might not be so easy to continue doing so.

While Little Blackstar could bring him into the Shadow World with much greater ease now, that didn't mean he could do so indefinitely. Leonel could sense that the little guy would reach his limit in another few hours. It could be said that the only reason he had lasted so long was that Leonel was just in the Third Dimension; any stronger, and he would at best be able to help for a handful of minutes.

'At least there's some benefit to being weak,' Leonel thought to himself.

Though he thought this, there was a fire burning in Leonel's gut.

Everything always came easy to him, and he never really had a burning desire to get stronger. Sure, he had a vague goal in his mind, but that grit and fiery determination one

might have when they came from the bottom wasn't something he ever really resonated with.

But the more things happened to him, the more people he lost, the more these strong overlords stepped on his head and pressed him down, the more he felt like the first time he met King Arthur...

In the past, Leonel had never cared much about kneeling. It was in the culture of the Ascension Empire to do so, and it was only natural considering they had just a single Emperor. There would, of course, be days where they would give Emperor Gervaise Fawkes his due respect.

However, something shifted in him when he kneeled before Arthur. He could feel that the King was using it as some sort of power play, even to the point of expecting Leonel to continue kneeling even long after the natural time had passed.

That boiling sort of distaste appeared within him, and that same thing was happening now... just on a much larger scale.

He lost his father. He lost his woman. He lost his brothers again and again. His family was all but destroyed and ruthlessly humiliated. The Cult saw him as a useful puppet. The Godlens saw him as a valuable lab rat.

He had never felt such clear rage before.

It wasn't a rage tainted by his Scarlet Star Force; it was true rage, true fury, a true anger that came purely from Leonel Morales the man...

And it smoldered within him.

With another step, he entered the range of his destination, and he slipped into a building.

This building looked reminiscent of an apartment building of Earth from the 21st Century. Leonel was starting to realize that much of the things that shaped the Ascension Empire came from these human powers. But that made sense; after all, it was under the control of his grandfather who likewise came from these places. It was natural that there would be some or even a ton of overlap.

Another matter that was reminiscent was the fact that this building was entirely devoid of citizens. While it looked like a normal apartment building from the outside, this was just a front.

This was a common matter on olden Earth as well. Often, these fronts would be centers for power line companies or things of the like to provide their services without ruining the ambiance of the residential area.

In this case, this building was a facade that hid the winding underground tunnels that connected the nexuses of the large-scale formation.

The empty halls of the apartment building were patrolled, but most casually. It was more heavily guarded near the actual entrance of the tunnels themselves.

In the Shadow World, it was a simple matter for Leonel to leap into an apartment he chose at random and slip into a closet.

"Rest up, Blackstar. I don't need you for now."

Leonel took a breath and appeared back in the real world. It wasn't exactly safe to allow Blackstar to take a rest now, but it was about the best chance he was going to get.

After taking a breath, he reached down with his Internal Sight, using his Dream Sovereignty to once again mask his own presence.

According to Anastasia, there was at least one Ninth Dimensional expert overseeing each nexus node, making it difficult on him. But none of them were Dream Force experts and this matter was still firmly under his control.

"Leonel, it's as you feared. They managed to find a few droplets of your blood."

Leonel cursed under his breath.

Chapter 2438: Go Now

"If Aina is right, they'll probably be able to sense you anywhere within 50 or so meters with that amount. If they find another drop, it could be upwards of a hundred meters. But Aina also does say that those are to her standards..."

Leonel's gaze flashed when he heard this.

"Send me an image when the Force Art is in the process of being completed. I'll double-check."

After saying this, Leonel seemed to close himself off to the rest of the world. He was entirely focused on what he was seeing below.

The nexus node was quite large, or so it seemed. Much of it was bluster as it required a large amount of energy and cooling to function properly.

Much of the outer structure, as a result, were Force Arts designed to control the flow of energy and also to send excess heat outward. If he wanted to see the true formation, it would require him going in deeper.

This was why he had to come in person. The Force Art was quite complicated, but Anastasia had no idea what parts were important to what he needed and what parts weren't.

Leonel sucked in a cold breath when he saw the true depths of the Force Art. It was far more complicated than anything he had ever seen before, and just looking at it, while not as bad as taking a look at Goggles' Ability Index, still made him feel like his Dream Force was being sucked down an endless vat of darkness.

What Leonel didn't know was that most of the large-scale formations of the human alliance were set up by King personally. The Godlens were willing to pay an exorbitant price for this former overlord of the Dream Pavilion to help them out, and now it was Leonel's problem to deal with.

The gap between the Impetus State and the Life State was too enormous to put into words. Even if King was casual with his attempts and didn't put in his full effort, it was incredibly far beyond Leonel's means to deal with.

It could be said that Leonel was lucky he was able to recognize the portions that were used for energy control and cooling at all, as for the rest of it...

"Do I really have no choice but to try and destroy it?"

Leonel grit his teeth. It had only been a few seconds, but he knew it was helpless. His Crafting simply wasn't on this level yet. He had been too arrogant in assuming that he would definitely be able to do something about it.

Leonel took a breath and forced himself to calm down. In truth, "forced" might be too heavy-handed. He seemed to be able to pull himself out of the pits of despair quite smoothly, returning to that sweet lull of tranquility again.

"There are at least fifty warriors down there. The weakest is in the Eighth Dimension, and there's one Ninth Dimensional general overseeing them. This doesn't really matter much, honestly. Even if they were only Seventh Dimensional, I'm not sure I could easily handle so many, especially not without exposing myself.

"At the entrance to the tunnel, there are four Eighth Dimensional existences with their full attention placed on it, and there's only one entrance in..."

Leonel's mind quickened, then he asked a question.

"Aina, how many Blood Clones can you make?"

"Making Blood Clones is easy. It's the collecting blood part that's difficult."

Leonel nodded, that's about what he expected.

Since they were going to try and track him, he might as well make it a living nightmare for them.

"Is there an easy way to tell the difference between a Blood Clone and the real thing? Using that detection device, I mean."

"Not if it's a 50% clone or better. Almost impossible if it was a 90% clone."

"Alright."

"The other thing you have to consider is how much your mind can handle. If you're overloaded, even if you're close enough to them, they'll become lifeless puppets."

"That's not an issue. I only need a small sub-section of them to actually do anything. The rest will be decoys."

Leonel took out the very same vial that Kira had given him, the one that once held an ocean's worth of Void Beast blood. These days, it was the home of the golden-scaled koi fish, but he displaced it for the sake of this. Then, he cut his wrist open, gritting his teeth.

It was about time he found out how far his Vital Star Force could take him.

...

"Leave it to me," Anselma said, taking the droplets of blood.

With one hand, the air under her palm seemed to solidify. Under the other, she shattered the vial and sent the droplets of blood in.

Soon, a Force Art began to take shape, and the blood fused into it slowly.

"I need something solid. Preferably at least Eighth Star level."

Vivak nodded and gave some orders. Soon, Anselma had a piece of Reinforced Urbe Ore she imprinted the Force Art into.

"This should work. Within 30 to 40 meters, it will be able to lock onto his aura."

"30 to 40 meters?" Vivak asked with a frown.

"The blood is too little. This is already an excellent result. Your city is large, but that's only a consideration for the weak. Even if you sent something of the Eighth Star out, it'll only take an hour at most to scan the entire city."

"And what if he moves?"

"Does it matter? Would he be faster than someone you sent out? And even if he could manage the same speed, so long as you pick your search pattern properly, you can force him into a corner."

Vivak nodded and agreed. Then he barked out some orders.

"Keep searching the rubble, salvage what you can. Inform us immediately if you find any more droplets of blood."

The workers continued their task, and Vivak called his sister over. Quite frankly, he wanted to do this personally, but the optics of a Patriarch scouring the city for a Fifth Dimensional brat just didn't look good. It was impossible for Leonel to escape, and he just needed to set someone he trusted on the task, especially since his daughter was involved.

"Liana, you will be the head of this matter. Go now."

Chapter 2439: Pay it Forward

"We've found him!"

The voice came suddenly and with far more speed than anything could have expected. Liana was caught off guard and immediately made a move.

They made a move to circle around the apartment. At the same time, feeling that there was something odd about this occurrence, Liana contacted her brother as well.

Vivak frowned when he received the message. Found him already? What were the odds of that? He shook his head. No, it should make sense. He had been monitoring Leonel all the while, which meant that there was no way he had swapped a Blood Clone in before the arena battle. The only time he should have had to do so was when everyone thought he was dead and the security was more lax as a result. That should mean that the real Leonel was likely heavily injured. It made sense that he wouldn't be able to make it far.

After some thought, he got up and made a move as well, giving Anselma and her butler a glance.

...

The building was yet another apartment building, but this one was full of residents. When they saw so many covert ops surrounding their building, they were immediately on edge.

Liana swiftly controlled the situation.

"Clear out the building!"

Liana wasn't very worried about the situation here. No one had seen Leonel's real strength, and in her opinion, he was currently just a heavily injured Fifth Dimensional existence. Even children of the Godlen family were stronger than that, and that wasn't even taken into account of the fact that just being born in a Complete World made you far stronger as well.

Back when Leonel was in the Fifth Dimension and he first stepped foot into what he had called the Cataclysm Zone all this time, he had come across villagers that didn't seem to have a Dimensional level at all, they should have technically been in the Third Dimension. And yet, they were so powerful that he didn't dare to meet them head on and could only observe them from afar as he accustomed himself.

Liana was logically correct to assume that the situation would be about the same here. As such, worry of casualties was quite far in the back of her mind. She didn't think that Leonel could harm people, at least not on a large scale.

Of course, she had also been informed about the disappearance of Simona and Eduardo. However, she had her own theories about how that matter had gone down.

During the acceptance of a technique, one would be fully focused on the task at hand and their mind would be completely co-opted by a flood of information. Usually, the technique room was a completely safe environment, so they obviously wouldn't hesitate to be completely at ease.

She believed that Leonel had hid and waited until that moment before kidnapping them both. This was very possible.

The only reason she was leading an evacuation in the first place was out of an abundance of caution. There was no reason to not take this extra step and cover all her bases.

Soon, large streams of people were being escorted out. With the Blood Compass in hand, none of them were worried about Leonel slipping through the cracks amongst this stream of people. If he tried to do so, then he would be too foolish.

Just minutes later, the task was complete and Liana commanded the team to close in.

They swiftly did their jobs. They had already located the exact room that Leonel was hiding in, but none of them were surprised that Leonel hadn't made an attempt to escape. He probably thought that they might accidentally pass him by.

A man kicked out with a strong black boot, shattering the door into countless little pieces of wood.

They stormed inside, only to find Leonel calmly sitting in a corner.

The wood fragmented pelted against him, tearing into his skin and even breaking his bone in some places. But even so, he didn't react.

The man, a certain Sergeant Moe as his brothers liked to call him, frowned. He had come ready for a battle, but he got this in return.

He walked forward and roughly picked Leonel up, but the latter was practically a limp doll, moving around without resistance.

Moe's frown deepened and after some hesitation, he chose to carry Leonel out.

"Head Researcher, this is him?"

Liana frowned as well when she saw the situation. She didn't understand the intricacies of Blood Clones, so she once again sent a report to her brother.

...

"It's another Blood Clone," Anselma said, her gaze flashing with a hint of killing intent.

Vivak had returned soon after and had no choice but to ask for Anselma's opinion. The answer, however, was the last thing he wanted to hear.

"Are you telling me that he can make more than one of these? How is that possible?"

They were so lifelike and real. In fact, he had thoughts of letting Leonel live so long as he could gain the method. Of course, that was only if he was under lock and key for the rest of his life as well.

"Blood Clones only need two things. Blood and someone with the skill to forge them. Technically speaking, the only limiter is how much blood a person can produce."

"Is it a small amount? Is that how he made two?"

Anselma's frown deepened. "No. The amount needed depends on the skill of the person. To make one Blood Clone that's realistic enough to fool your senses or the

Compasses, it would need to be at least a 70% clone. That would likewise require 70% of your blood.

"For a normal person without Blood Force affinity or at least high vitality, this would kill them."

"Then how is he alive at all?"

Anselma fell into silence.

There were only two explanations. Either Leonel somehow had better vitality than most of the people Anselma knew, or he had a far higher skill in creating Blood Clones than she did.

What she didn't know was that the answer was both.

Vivak cursed under his breath. He hadn't really begun to feel it until now, but he was starting to understand it. Mo'Lexi, his daughter, Anselma, each one was obsessed with this boy that he had only really casually wanted to take advantage of himself. And yet, his entire world for the past few days in one way or another, was revolving around this boy.

"This isn't necessarily a bad thing. He's giving us so much of his blood. Now, let alone 30 to 40 meters, it's possible for me to create a compass that can sense him within hundreds of kilometers."

Vivak nodded slowly. This should... be a good thing. It wasn't.

Soon, the situation only got worse.

The reports started to come back again and again. After creating a compass that could easily scan 10% of the Godlen city at once, Vivak found his eyes going red.

There were hundreds, no, thousands of Leonel's, each one dotted across the city, and each one registering as the real him.

The compass that should have been an easy cheat code in helping them find Leonel had quickly become a headache instead.

Vivak was even beginning to feel that Anselma was lying to him. According to everything she said, this should be impossible. By now, Leonel should have died ten times over!

His distrust in her was reaching the point that he didn't even bother to report matters back to her at all, a fact that only raised Anselma's frustration.

...

"Miss, this still isn't our territory. The situation isn't as bad as it could be. Tomorrow, the other powerhouses will arrive and it will balance it out somewhat. You can use their opinions for more leverage and control when the time comes, Vivak won't be able to do as he pleases by then."

Hearing these words, Anselma took a breath and slowly nodded. This made sense. It was impossible for Leonel to vanish in a day, he was already a fish in a barrel. Once the others arrived, she would be able to exert more pressure.

...

Anastasia passed information about this conversation to Leonel.

At first, he was annoyed by the old man calming Anselma down yet again, but when he paid attention to the contents of the conversation, he couldn't help but frown.

'Why is my luck so bad...' he shook his head. 'This... could be an opportunity, though.'

If there were people scheduled to come in tomorrow, didn't that mean that they had to open up the formation?

Of course, he wasn't naive enough to believe that they would shut down the whole thing. A formation of this level definitely had a method of opening up a small area.

The question was whether he could take advantage of it or not...

Leonel's gaze flickered.

It would be impossible for him to get out of this situation without taking some risks.

'In that case, let's move forward some of my plans a bit.'

...

In the far off distance, Leonel's Blood Clones began to set their own formations.

Soon, they would realize that it wasn't just Simona and Eduardo that were his hostages, but rather the whole city.

Leonel no longer felt himself to be some moral arbitrator of justice, nor was he the fiend that could genocide entire races.

He wouldn't go out of his way to kill, but he also wouldn't just turn a blind eye to all the useful pawns around him.

The Godlens treated the people of the Incomplete Worlds like sheep to the slaughter.
It was time to pay some of that forward.

Chapter 2440: The Best Scheme

BOOM.

The situation had just reached a lull. The task force under Liana had entered a rhythm, slowly and systematically taking down one Blood Clone after another, hoping that the next one would have Leonel without.

In the end, Liana realized that it was far too slow, so she separated the group and expanded the task force, even giving them the right to act on their own. The swifter they were, the better, because something told her that Leonel had actually not stopped creating Blood Clones yet. If he created two for every one they found, would this ever end?

However, no one could have expected the first explosion.

Liana stood in a daze, watching an apartment building go up in flames.

It was a brief instant, practically a flash bang that appeared and vanished in the next second.

But as fast as it was, what it left behind was even more devastating...

That being nothing at all.

It was nothing more than a pit in the ground, a well of nothingness, empty air and fluttering strands of dust and debris.

Dead? They were all dead? Just like that?

Sergeant Moe, the task force member that had been about to clear this building, stood in stunned silence. Everyone looked toward the direction of the explosion with solemn faces.

They knew what this meant immediately. Leonel was fighting back again; they just didn't know how he was doing it.

Anyone trusted enough by Liana to work on this task force was in the know about Leonel's origins. They were all still working under the assumption that he was a Fifth

Dimensional brat from an Incomplete World that just happened to have some more difficult to deal with abilities.

It should be hard for Leonel to leave a scratch even on normal dirt and clay, let alone their structured buildings.

It should be even more difficult for him to harm their citizens. Even the weakest here should be able to kill Leonel with a well-timed sneeze. If it wasn't for the fact they didn't want to alert the population and publicize their incompetence, they could have already released wanted posters and felt confident in letting their people hunt him down.

The fact they hadn't done this was part of the reason Leonel was able to move through the city so freely, but now they felt that it was almost good that they chose against this.

Just what would happen to their people if they were so careless?

Sergeant Moe's gaze went red. Just how many women and children had been in there? And yet their existences had been snuffed out? Just like that?

BOOM.

He had only barely managed to register what happened here, when it happened elsewhere again.

BOOM.

The series of explosions continued. Each one was perfectly controlled, eviscerating just the building being targeted alone, and only activating when the task force member entered range.

It was predictable. It was repeatable. It was a weight on their conscience that sought to pull them into a fiery abyss.

The message was clear.

Keep looking for me and your people will die.

Liana had no choice but to call back the task force, her eyes red. So many innocent people were dying all for this one boy's life, was it even worth it?

...

BANG!

Vivak threw his desk against a wall, its body shattering into countless pieces. By this point, his rage had bubbled over into an endless tide. His blood itself practically boiled beneath the surface of his skin, his fury towering and endless.

He had retreated to his office in order to display his true emotions. He couldn't handle the looks of confusion and doubt being pointed his way again and again.

He had endured silently for so many years and never expected that things would ever reach this point.

"I want him dead!" He roared, the entire compound quaking despite the fact his voice was isolated.

...

Leonel took a glance at his Segmented Cube. Within, large groups of unconscious people lay.

Those flashes had actually been mostly a facade for a forced teleportation.

While he couldn't teleport out of this barrier, it was possible to use Anastasia as an anchor to teleport people within this city so long as he had strong enough material to withstand it.

After gathering so many of those high-level ores the Godlens were using to create those farming Zones of theirs, Leonel had a lot of such stabilizing material in hand. More than he could even use.

He didn't really do this out of the kindness of his heart, though. These people were useful for many reasons.

One, and most obvious, their disappearance would enrage the Godlens further and potentially open up a path for mistakes to be made.

Two, their Ability Indexes would help to bolster his contribution points and he might be able to find something useful within to help his brothers and the others.

Three, and most importantly to this task at hand, he could use their blood.

Of course, if he had wanted, he could have just kidnapped these people the normal way, but how would he piss off Vivak that way?

"These people aren't you, I can probably only make one or two clones with each of them. Because you don't want them to be controlled by their original selves, I'll need more blood than usual."

"I only really need one each. And I don't even need all of them at that. After all, if they all appear at once, then it'll actually ruin my plans. I just need a handful."

...

And then it began. A storm of cries and pleas for justice, for explanations and reassurance.

Dozens of people who had just lost their families appeared one after another, raising hell, and why wouldn't they?

Their families had just inexplicably been wiped off the face of the world and the Godlens main family was actually trying to stay quiet about it?

Worse than that was that Vivak, who was too infuriated even to speak to Anselma, had no idea that they were Blood Clones.

The worst part, though, was that even if he had known... it wouldn't have mattered.

The best scheme was the kind everyone knew was right in front of them, and yet had no choice but to step into anyway.