

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2481: Pants Down

Leonel reclined in a chair, his legs up on the desk before him. Across from him, his father-in-law sat. Compared to Leonel, Miel's posture was ramrod and straight. He looked like a disciplined general as he stared at Leonel. Leonel's brothers sat around him, each one facing another group of elites of the Slayer Legion. The atmosphere was quite stiff and rigid. Well, mostly. Because Leonel himself was still smiling and he felt that the situation wasn't too bad.

What was amusing was that Miel hadn't asked about Aina even once, but when Leonel thought about it, it made sense. In Miel's view, he probably already had a contingency plan in place for his daughter. The main issue was that he had no idea that Aina had died once, throwing his plans for a loop.

As for Leonel, he was content to let him keep thinking that. If Aina was here, who knew whose side she'd be on? She might even try to get back at him for that situation in the Cult; it was best she didn't know for now.

"So, Adam-"

Miel's gaze flashed with rage, causing Leonel's words to pause. Did he get the name wrong? Or was it that he didn't like the fact he was calling him by his first name? Leonel had no idea that Miel had changed his name. The name he remembered was spoken by one of Simeon's werebeasts back when Leonel first found the Domain Ring and the Segmented Cube in his basement. His memory was near infallible, so he was certain that he got the name right, so he thought it was probably the latter. What did this man expect him to call him? Sir?

Leonel wasn't going to do that. He was a pushover for Aina, but that didn't extend toward her father. He'd rather rot.

"Father-in-law?" Leonel changed his words, teasingly.

Miel's temper flared again beneath Leonel's smile.

"You see what I'm saying? I knew this was a bad idea," Raj sighed, rubbing his forehead. "Cap's luck with organizations is truly in the shitter."

Leonel rolled his lips over themselves, not wanting to burst into a fit of laughter. Truthfully, though this situation seemed tense, he was actually far more comfortable here. Since Miel was here, he was even more confident that this Slayer Legion was related to his grandfather.

Leonel didn't know Miel's history, but for him to have a child with a woman of Earth, he had to have some interaction with his grandfather. He might even be a valued subordinate of Emperor Fawkes.

"Watch your words. Don't put hats on my daughter she doesn't want to wear."

"She doesn't?" Leonel blinked in confusion, but to Miel it looked quite mocking. All he could remember was the last time he had seen Leonel, those cruel words he had said to his daughter. It felt like Leonel was trying to slap him in the face.

BANG.

Miel stood to his feet. This time, his palms directly shattered the table, causing Leonel to lose his foot rest. His fist appeared before Leonel's face in an instant, the overbearing might of an Eighth Dimensional expert bearing down on Leonel.

'Fuck...!' Was all Leonel got to think before he was sent flying. He broke out of the windows of the meeting room, flying across the street and into the building across from them.

"Miel!"

Miel didn't seem to hear it at all. He was like an enraged beast as he pursued.

To his surprise, though, he found that Leonel had already stood to his feet.

"Old man, I have a lot of patience for the woman I love, but you're not going to get the same benefit. Don't test my bottom line," Leonel said in a low tone.

Miel saw red.

Another fist came down, this one even more overbearing than the last. Since Leonel could still talk such nonsense, clearly he had held back too much.

Leonel's gaze flashed.

[Domain].

[Universe].

[Finality].

He activated all three at the same time. The pressure of several Impetus State Forces bore down on Miel, slowing him down considerably. Then [Universe] descended and the friction between the air and Miel's fist increased so much that he practically slowed to a crawl.

With a violent whoosh, Leonel's fist bypassed Miel's own and collided right in the nose.

Ciara rushed up to the edge of the shattered glass, looking to stop Miel from doing something foolish, only to find him flying right back toward her.

Her eyes widened as she made a move to catch Miel, but before she could, a dense Force erupted from her, pushing her and everyone else back while nearly blowing the roof off the building.

"Boy!"

"I'm getting really tired of people calling me that," Leonel sneered. "I'm 26 years old. The person who had the right to call me that is already dead."

Miel's crimson hair fluttered, his brows looking as though they had become live flames.

"MIEL!" Cidra roared again.

The words seemed to finally get through and Miel looked over to look at the destruction he had caused. He looked down at his hands and shook his head. He had let his temper get the best of him.

Just when he was about to say something, a loud, blaring warning noise echoed.

The expressions of everyone changed. They knew what those blaring noises meant, someone was attacking the Slayer Legion.

"Report!" Miel roared.

Soon, a talisman that appeared in his hand lit up.

"Commander! The Godlens have sent an army."

Miel frowned, this was nonsense.

The location of the Slayer Legion was a secret, but it wasn't to the point that true powerhouses couldn't find them with enough effort. The real reason they had never

been attacked was that it was far too troublesome to deal with. There were thousands of kilometers worth of underground tunnels here, and their strength wasn't bad. Given they had to deal with the demons, trying to deal with them would have dealt too great a blow to their strength.

Leonel looked up into the skies and information was brought back to him by Anastasia even faster.

100 000 Seventh Dimensional experts led by a thousand Eight Dimensional experts.

It didn't constitute the full power of the Godlens by any means, but they probably didn't want to risk being stabbed in the back.

Plus, this timing seemed ridiculous to Miel, but to Leonel, it was perfect.

This was the moment the Slayer Legion was the most relaxed, the moment where they thought the Godlens would be too occupied by the demons to consider them.

And now they had gotten caught with their pants down.

Chapter 2482: Gotcha

As everyone was ready to panic, Leonel's brothers appeared around him.

"What're we doing, Cap?" Milan grinned. He looked like he was ready to bash some heads in already. The group completely ignored the other leaders around them.

"Well, looks like some killing's in order," Leonel replied with a smile.

"This is Slayer Legion territory, this isn't a place you can do as you please. If you insist, we will detain you right here and now." Miel spoke calmly, having regained his bearings.

This time, the others agreed with Miel. It wasn't that they thought that Leonel might be a spy or someone sent to stab them in the back. If the Godlens really made such an elaborate plan they could only bend over and take, quite frankly. Instead, they didn't want military order to be disrupted.

A squadron of powerful existences who went off to do their own thing would be an annoying thing to deal with, and it could end up costing many their lives. They couldn't allow it.

Leonel sent his father-in-law a smile, and then more experts began to appear around him.

"Anastasia, activate the best of my mask protocols. I'll need one."

"Gotcha..."

Soon, a mask appeared in Leonel's hand. Several of them, in fact.

He passed them out to his brothers and each one was outfitted with a sleek black mask that seemed to absorb all the light that bounced toward it. Other than the two slits they had for eyes, there were no other holes or openings, and those around them found that even using their Internal Sight didn't help in seeing what was underneath.

Truthfully, the masks were a bit shoddy compared to what Leonel's current abilities could create. He had created them for the sake of the Morales. It wasn't just this, but he had allowed Anastasia to scan the making of several potential mass-producible items. It was just that he never got around to actually using them until now.

Elorin appeared out of this air and Leonel tossed him a mask.

"You'll be with me today," Leonel said.

Elorin looked down at the mask in his hands and then silently put it on. He didn't have a word to say, he didn't feel like it was necessary. His life was in Leonel's hands anyway. His white tracksuit was buffeted by the wind and he looked to play every part of the role of assassin... well, if he wasn't so infatuated with such bright colors.

"Goggles," Leonel called out the next guest.

Honestly, he wanted to call out Amery and Noah as well, but those two were still recuperating. The Head Researcher had done quite a number on them and it was best to let them rest some more before throwing them out into such a battle.

Seeing that Leonel had pulled out a Fourth Dimensional boy, the others were even more speechless.

Goggles, though, looked incomparably excited. This was odd for Leonel, especially since he was used to this guy dragging his feet for everything he did. But he could only sigh in the end.

The Goggles of now was different. He wasn't as familiar with Leonel, and given Leonel's understanding of his character, one of Goggles' most important protective mechanisms was in blending in.

He was probably pretending to be eager now just so that Leonel didn't harm him.

Leonel had too many people to juggle, and he felt like he was neglecting some of them one way or another.

However, at this point, Leonel didn't really have another choice. He pointed toward Goggles' forehead and a large stream of information entered the latter's head. With the ability to expel his Dream Force, he had gained a whole host of new abilities, most of which were more minor like this.

Goggles was suddenly overwhelmed with a large amount of information, all of which were related to the armies above.

This was the one limitation of Goggles' Ability Index, Karmic Puppet. In order to make proper predictions about the future, he needed information.

Giving this information to a Fourth Dimensional expert was a potential weak point in Leonel's defenses, but he had already taken this into account. So long as Goggles spent most of his time in the Segmented Cube, his mind should be safe from the obstruction of others. In addition, once he grew stronger, he wouldn't be limited by this matter any longer at all.

Goggles finally absorbed the information and then blinked in confusion.

"What would you like me to do, Sir?"

"What's the main target of the enemy?"

"I don't have enough information."

Leonel saw that Goggles took the fact that he knew about his Ability Index in stride. But once again, this was in line with what Leonel knew about this character.

Leonel nodded. "Let me be more specific, then. Where will they attack first?"

Goggles blinked. "They only have information about two of six main entrances to this underground city. They will focus their attacks from there. It's just that they're also aware that there are likely more, so they're spreading around and pretending as though they have everything in hand before they take swift action at these two entrances. The plan is that by the time you all notice, your forces will be too dispersed to react properly."

Leonel grinned. And this was what Goggles was here for.

After a moment, Goggles pointed out where the two entrances and Leonel immediately made a move, the others following him quickly. As for Goggles, he put him away. This was all Leonel needed for now.

A shadow moved to block Leonel's path. It wasn't just Miel, but a whole host of others of the Slayer Legion. Leonel had treated their words like air, but how could they stand such a thing?

"Wife!" Leonel called out.

Aina appeared by Leonel's side, looking around with one hint of confusion, and another hint of annoyance. Why was this man called her wife again-

Aina's eyes widened when she saw her father.

"Yes, yes. Cute reunion time. People are trying to kill us above. Good, good. Let's go."

Leonel took Aina's hand with one of his own and used the other to slap a mask on her face.

Seeing his daughter not even resist, Miel stood in silence. He didn't even know who to direct his rage at this time.

Chapter 2483: A Single Boy

Leonel shamelessly used Aina as a distraction and blew by the group, flashing into the distance, a small squadron of barely over 10 moving swiftly with him.

"Miel! Why didn't you stop them?"

Truthfully, many had been in a daze. Aina was beautiful, yes. But there was something more to it than that. Her very presence was beyond their understanding. That sort of feeling... it came from the Life State, and it was something that filled them with fear.

But how could someone in the Seventh Dimension possibly grasp the Life State? There had to be something else to it, something hidden deeper that could make their hearts palpitate like it just had.

Miel didn't respond. He didn't understand why his daughter was here either, but he also understood that they couldn't waste any more time here.

"Forget it. The men should be gathered by now. We need to move."

"Miel," Cidra called out.

"Yes?"

"That boy, he mentioned the two exits..."

"We can't put stock in this. They aren't part of our military personnel and we can't risk our men on the words of a Fourth Dimensional existence. We'll move with the original

plan. Just in case, I will head the army of the second exit the boy mentioned. The rest of you will split up and man the other five entrances.

"Cidra, please follow after my daughter and the exit they took."

"Understood."

Everyone nodded. Considering the situation, this was the best they could do. They agreed with Miel's decision as well; it was the most logical.

Leonel felt a pinch at his waist and winced.

"What'd I do?" Leonel feigned innocence.

"You were fighting with my father, weren't you? Then you brought me out as some sort of power play?"

Leonel's brothers pursed their lips, biting into them hard to stop themselves from bursting into a fit of laughter.

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Leonel replied seriously.

"That's right, Leo. Deny, deny, deny!" James changed his voice to Milan's in his best display of ventriloquism yet. But what good was that when Leonel had senses like he did?

Unfortunately, when Leonel tried to glare at him, Aina pinched harder, so he could only look forward, pretending not to feel a thing.

"Humph," Aina grumbled. She hadn't been paying attention, so she didn't know what actually happened. But she would definitely ask Anastasia later.

"No need to wait, Aina! This guy had a big fight with your dad, punish him properly!"

Leonel glared at the finger sleeve on his hand. Wasn't Anastasia supposed to be his partner? Whose side was she on exactly?

Aina's gaze became dangerous. "Leonel-"

"Alright." Leonel's voice had a hint of sternness in it. It was a tone he had never used to talk to Aina before, at least not when they were truly together. "Let's be clear about something..."

Leonel met Aina's gaze as they ran, rushing across thick pipes and leaping from building to building.

"There are some things that I'll happily allow you to take the reins on, but not this time. Your father and I have a strained relationship, true. But I won't let you undercut me for his sake. The only person I signed up to bow and scrape for is you; that doesn't extend to your family or your friends. Do you understand?"

Silence fell and Leonel's brothers pretended to be looking elsewhere, clearing their throats. Even Anastasia didn't throw in her input this time; she could understand when she should and shouldn't mess around.

Leonel and Aina looked at each other for a long time. But after a few seconds of no answer, Leonel suddenly began to feel weird.

This woman... why did her eyes look like that? It looked like she was ready to rob the cradle, as though if Leonel didn't push her down, she'd push him down instead.

Leonel poked her forehead, stunning Aina awake.

"Hey, hey, focus. We're about to go into battle."

"Yes, king." Aina nodded obediently.

Leonel was speechless.

Leonel's brothers choked on air.

...

Sergeant Moe had been in a bad mood for weeks. First the several Godlen citizens had been sacrificed at Leonel's hands, then he humiliated them all by actually managing to escape right under their noses. As though that wasn't bad enough, not only had there been no trace of him for weeks afterward, but when he did finally appear, it was to steal the core of one of their mines.

It was still fine. After receiving the report, they thought that this was a good thing. Since Leonel was trapped in there with the rest of them, this was a chance to capture him as well. Due to this, the powerhouses of the Godlen family were personally mobilized, catching the demons off guard. They could have never guessed that so many Ninth Dimensional existences would appear for a mere Fifth Dimensional mine. How could they know that the Godlens believed the man who had stolen their Codex was stuck within?

Who would have thought that even after sending out so many powerhouses, it would have all been useless? Leonel had long since escaped and they put in so much effort for nothing.

The worst worst part was that because they had focused so much attention on a useless mine, they had actually lost their most important Ninth Dimensional Urbe Ore Mine as a result.

The demons had taken cheap advantage of them, and launching an assault was far too dangerous compared to just defending.

As they were hesitating, deciding whether or not to launch another all-out assault, news that the Ninth Dimensional Urbe Ore Mine had been destroyed came from above.

The mine was completely buried. If they wanted to excavate all the tunnels again, it would take years of effort and large amounts of manpower. This was Ninth Dimension Urbe Ore they were talking about; even the miners had to be at least of the Mid-Level of the Eighth Dimension to make any sort of progress, let alone now that it had been completely buried. Maybe only Vivak and the other Heads could take action at this point.

But how could they spare the time for this now?

After all these months of frustration, the Godlens really needed a win. As such, they moved the plan to deal with the Slayer Legion up.

This was their chance to regain morale and momentum... Morale and momentum that had been stolen from them by a single boy.

Chapter 2484: Too

Sergeant Moe held up a hand, his gaze boiling with fire.

In the desolate wasteland they stood in, it looked as though their armies were completely unorganized. In the eyes of anyone observing the situation, it would look as though they were still preparing to arrange themselves, but the reality was that they were in a perfect position. At his signal, the troops and battalions in the distance would be able to do an about-face in the shortest time, turning and rushing to complete a full-force attack on their two chosen points in an instant.

According to the plan, the Slayer Legion would find themselves divided, defending several points, when in reality they were concentrated in just two. They would be able to deal them a swift blow.

As for a potential pincer, Sergeant Moe was perfectly prepared for this. What use would there be in a pincer if their annihilation speed was even faster-

BOOM.

The ground before them exploded.

The small entrance that Eamon had used to sneak into the Slayer Legion's underground city wasn't considered to be a real entrance. At best, it was an emergency hatch that could be used to sneak away the young and the old should the situation arise.

The true entrances, the six main entrances that Goggles mentioned, were enormous. They were huge mechanical slabs covered in dense patches of dirt. It looked like an underground hangar's door, lifting up on an incline and revealing an exit that was 20 meters wide.

However, it wasn't meant to open nearly so explosively. It was only because Leonel had purposely broken the mechanisms, causing the two mechanical arms to explode upward with far more strength than they should normally.

The result was a huge amount of dirt filling the air, and some of the scattered soldiers were even sent flying, ripping through the air at astonishing speeds.

However, these soldiers were just the minority. Sergeant Moe was one of the thousand Eighth Dimensional existences that were leading these troops, as such he knew exactly where the entrance was. He wouldn't organize his shoulders to stand right on top of it.

It was too late to consider this matter. He immediately swept forward with his Internal Sight to get an understanding of what was going on through all the smoke and dirt.

To his horror, his Internal Sight was suppressed a mere centimeter from his body, causing a flashing to go off in his mind. He had trained his senses on his Internal Sight, so at that moment he was like a mortal who suddenly had his eyes covered with a sleeping mask. The matter was enough to disorient him and the other soldiers for that matter, for just a split second.

And that split second was enough for the carnage to begin.

Leonel and his brothers exploded out of the hangar. The inclined metal door had been ripped upward with such force that it flew from its hinges.

Raj raised a hand up to the sky, his Ability Index taking control of the Earth Force that forged the metal.

With a roar, he swung his arm out, using the 20-meter wide metal door like a spinning blade.

Veins bulged across his forehead, the weight making him feel as though his arm would be ripped from its socket. Even so, he managed to pull it down and devastation reigned.

The door had been forged of over a million kilograms of Seventh Dimension Reinforced Urbe Ore. When it was thrown out with such force and from such a height, only carnage could follow.

Leonel and his brothers rushed out. There wasn't even the wave of cries one would expect. Most of the warriors that died didn't even know what was happening until it was too late.

However, following the deaths came a loud boom, one that kicked up an even more violent wind of dust, dirt, and soil.

"Wife, those Eighth Dimensional experts are yours. Kill them all."

Aina grinned, it was just unfortunate that that infatuating appearance was hidden beneath her mask.

It had been a long time since she was truly able to let loose. However, if there was anything she could rank second to her love of Leonel...

It was battle.

Her battle ax appeared in her fair and slender hands, a blood red light surrounding her as she vanished.

A great amount of blood pooled into the skies, forming roses of death one after another.

Leonel didn't even need to look. His confidence in his Aina would never waver.

"Milan, James."

The two tanks took the vanguard, slamming their fists together and forming a pair of shields as Leonel took out his bow.

Others couldn't see through all the dust, but how could Leonel not? As for his suppression of Soul Force in the region, he would easily select who he did and didn't want to influence.

This would be an all-out slaughter.

"Go wild," Leonel said with a grin.

His arrows blurred, filling the skies. Large amounts of Bow Force and Universe Force filled each one, along with a healthy pulse of Destruction.

Many died before the arrows even touched them, others were so devastated that it looked as though a bomb had gone off in the region, exploding and leaving them falling in a hail of ash.

Joel and Emna took the role of supporting their forward offense. Behind James and Milan's shields, they advanced and retreated as they pleased, their blades flickering with streaks of blood that almost looked akin to crimson shooting stars dancing across the skies.

Drake stood shoulder to shoulder with Leonel, a sniper rifle being held up to his eye. With every shot he took, another soldier fell. There was a mysterious strength swirling around him and it looked like he was dancing on the very edge of something new.

At the same time, Aina appeared and vanished as she pleased across the battlefield. None of the Sergeants could last even a single strike and Eighth Dimensional experts fell like flies.

She appeared before Sergeant Moe in a sudden flash.

"Aren't you the one who chased him?"

The voice was so gorgeous, and yet to Sergeant Moe, it was like the reaper's call.

"Then you can die too."

He felt nothing. Even as his head spun through the air, the dust was too thick for him to even see his headless body in his final moments.

Chapter 2485: Retreat

Cidra couldn't have imagined that Leonel and the others would attack without her. Even when Leonel went off, she assumed that he was just an arrogant brat who knew that support would be coming one way or another.

She was obviously biased toward Miel, so when she saw Leonel pulled his daughter out like that, she had felt no small part of dissatisfaction in her heart, it was just that it wasn't her place to say anything.

So, although she hadn't purposely slowed down given the situation was already urgent, she still made sure that everything was meticulously in place before heading off. In her opinion, it was impossible for Leonel to even open the hangar doors on his own, so what good would it do him to get there first even if he had the intention of attacking on his own?

She was wrong. Oh so wrong.

By the time she caught up, there was a flood of light coming down from above, and with that light came thick clouds of dust that obscured her vision as well.

She tried to use her Internal Sight, but what she saw with it made her eyes widen.

Absolute carnage.

It should have been aimed toward Leonel and his people, and yet she wasn't even sure if a single one of them had been injured.

Leonel was completely controlling the flow of the battle. Every time one tried to organize the situation and reform the attack, he'd target their weakness, crushing them before they could even gather up momentum.

His small squadron of barely over ten walked around the battlefield like they owned it. Every second, hundreds died.

What shocked her most was Miel's daughter. She had strength that made her heart palpitate. If she appeared for even a moment, a head would fly into the skies without fail.

At the same time, her blood roses rotated in the skies above everyone's perception, unleashing a rain of carnage on the Seventh Dimensional experts as well. This made the troops in the distance who wanted to come over to support not even have a chance to approach.

To make matters worse for the enemy, every time she attacked another Eighth Dimensional expert would fall. How would they organize themselves if all of their commanders were dropping like flies? There simply wasn't anyone to pull the army back together.

She stood there in shock.

Somehow, even with Aina's performance, she found her senses floating back to Leonel again and again.

A screen of dirt and soul shouldn't be this effective. How could these powerful warriors not have Internal Sight?

Someone had to be interfering with their senses, and she had a feeling that it was this boy. In fact, how had this dust not settled just yet? Someone was also constantly agitating the earth, making it impossible for the Godlen army to even see their enemy.

'How could a Fifth Dimensional expert have this level of power?'

...

Leonel's pale violet eyes blazed with the light of an entire universe. His hands moved so fast they blurred, one arrow after another appearing in his hands before soaring through the skies.

The White Lion blow seemed to roar with life, suppressing the world around him as he shot faster and faster.

SHUUU! SHUUU! SHUUU!

'They'll take drastic measures soon.'

Leonel was already a step ahead. No army worth its salt would allow this to continue indefinitely.

"Blackstar."

A mighty roar echoed through the skies, the dense, foggy shape of a mythical dragon appearing.

Aina's figure flickered and vanished, appearing on Blackstar's back as they shot through the air, aiming for a man hidden in the distance.

Leonel had spotted this man immediately. Most of the so-called Sergeant here were only in the early Tiers of the Eighth Dimension. This man, however, was in the middle Tiers and should be a Tier Four. He was definitely the Head Commander of this operation.

Leonel was confident that Aina could take him alone. Her standards of combat were clearly far beyond that of the rest of the human alliance. Even though she was in the Seventh Dimension, her strength was towering.

However, with Blackstar, it would be a quick battle. This would suffocate the last of the Godlen's attempts to reorganize, and what made it worse was that retreating without the word of the Head Commander would be nigh impossible unless there were waves of defectors.

Leonel was very tempted to use his King's Might Lineage Factor, but he restrained himself. He remembered his grandfather's words well.

Although there were some humans that should know he had it due to their infiltration of the Dimensional Verse, what was more important was making sure that this news didn't become common knowledge to the point it spread to the rest of the powers in Existence. That definitely couldn't be allowed.

Leonel looked to the side. 'About time.'

A roar came from the side and another hangar door several kilometers to the side opened up and Miel charged out with his own army. Although he was clearly shocked as well, he didn't pause, immediately cutting into the army.

'This should be over now.'

Leonel's arms never stopped, but his mind had control over the entire battlefield.

Mere minutes later, Aina and Blackstar began their return. As for the Head Commander, he couldn't have been more dead if he tried.

The army didn't even realize their Head Commander had fallen. They continued to get slaughtered by the dozens, some barely managing to fight back.

"Retreat!"

"Retreat!"

Leonel's lip curled. It seemed they finally noticed.

He waved a hand and stopped his brothers from chasing. It wasn't worth it.

"Why are you chasing?" Cidra frowned.

Leonel sent a glance toward her. Originally, this woman looked to be in too much of a daze to do anything, but she eventually got herself together and led a charge.

"Are you serious?" Leonel asked, somewhat speechless.

Cidra frowned. She didn't like this boy's tone at all, who did he think he was talking to?

Chapter 2486: Forget It

Leonel put a hand to his forehead. He didn't really understand how incompetent an organization to have someone so incompetent leading a sixth of their armies. Did they not have anyone better?

"You realize that this is only a fraction of a fraction of the Godlen's strength, right? They didn't even send decent Eighth Dimensional experts," Leonel finally said. "On top of that, the demons are probably watching their every move."

"An enemy of an enemy is a friend." Cidra's frown deepened.

Leonel looked at this simple woman. He would have put a hand to her forehead to see if she had a fever or something if not for the fact they had no familiarity with one another.

"That saying only makes sense when you have the strength to back it up. To the demons, what use are you? Even the Godlens didn't take you seriously enough to send some real firepower at you.

"Your strongest expert is my father-in-law, and that man's not even in the Ninth Dimension. The fact you've survived until now is purely based on the fact you were too troublesome to deal with, not because you held any real strength of your own.

"The further out from here we are, the more difficult it will be for me to control the situation, the higher the chance the Godlens will send reinforcements, the greater the odds the demons will try to take advantage of the situation.

"You want to chase with your armies in this situation? We should take this small victory, retreat, and decide whether it's better to bolster defenses or pack up and find a new place to call home."

Leonel's words fell like the rain. Cidra didn't understand just how lucky she was that Leonel was explaining anything at all, but she still clenched her fists.

Leonel's words were obviously logical, but she didn't feel like they had killed nearly enough.

100,000 was too large a number. Although it had been a one-sided slaughter, they had barely lost 10% of their army.

Of course, this was an exaggerated number considering how few casualties there were on their side. But compared to the overall strength of the Godlens, this was hardly a dent. She wasn't satisfied.

Leonel fell into silence, watching Cidra's reaction as the dust settled.

He understood. This Slayer Legion, it was mostly made up of people who had been wronged by the human alliance in one way or another. It wasn't just righteousness that fueled them, but rage and unwillingness.

If it had been a normal battle, with heavy casualties on both sides, Cidra would have known the right decision to make immediately. But because it was so one-sided, she was extremely eager to make them pay a heavier and heavier price.

'This will be troublesome,' Leonel sighed.

He didn't just have to manage these people's strengths but their emotions as well. That would make this matter a nightmare to deal with, but there wasn't really another choice.

He had a feeling that this was where his grandfather wanted him to be.

Leonel didn't think that Emperor Fawkes' trump card would be so flimsy. There was more than likely a deeper plot somewhere that Leonel didn't know about. However, at least for now, this was all he had to deal with.

Now that he finally understood what one of the tips his grandfather gave him meant, he thought of the others.

'The Four Great Families are not to be trusted. The Dream Pavilion will never be as fragile as they seem. The Godlens are the most aligned with goals that you might describe as... the greater good. The Cult can be used. And your best chance at survival is the Dream Pavilion.'

His grandfather mentioned the Dream Pavilion twice in those words. Much like he hadn't originally known what it meant for the Godlens to be a part of the greater good, he had even less of an idea of what the other things meant.

However, this made Leonel realize that he might need to take a trip to the Dream Pavilion, not to join it, but to understand it.

King used to be the former head of the Dream Pavilion; he knew that. In addition, back in the Vast Bubble, or the Cataclysm Zone, the Dream Pavilion had had a huge sway in the treasures he could exchange for. They had been so mysterious, and yet so powerful at the same time.

However, for Leonel, the Dream Pavilion was the most dangerous place he could try to visit. A place flooded with Dream Force experts would be the worst sort of counter to him.

'I'll have to be at least Fourth Dimensional before I try it. Anything less and I'll just be looking for death.'

His grandfather's words had been hard to decipher, and he probably shouldn't take them at face value, just like with this Slayer Legion. It could mean too many things. So he couldn't just throw his life away on a bet.

Little Blackstar landed on Leonel's shoulder, and Aina by his side.

"What now?" Joel asked. He was used to being the leader when Leonel wasn't around, so he had analyzed the situation just the same. It didn't feel like this area was safe any longer; should they try to escape to a new region?

Leonel fell into silence. This was incredibly difficult. Down below, there were plenty of old and young, not to mention fragile and weak. It was an entire city with a population in the hundreds of thousands.

Leonel had no idea why a rebel army would foolishly take in so many liabilities. At this point, they weren't even providing them a good life; they were mostly just living in slums.

But after seeing Cidra's near outburst, he realized that these people had been led by emotion for too long, and now it was coming back to bite them. They must have really believed that the Godlens would never find them.

They were lucky that Leonel had a solution, that obviously being Anastasia and the Segmented Cube. But he wasn't sure if he should do this.

The Leonel of the past would have jumped at the chance, filled with childish ideals and wishes of grandeur, but now... now he was much more realistic.

'Forget it,' Leonel shook his head. 'Since gramps dumped this on my lap, I guess I have no choice.'

Chapter 2487: Talented Couple

"What do you think?"

On a far-off mountain, a distance so far away that it was impossible to fathom how, a group of demons stood, observing the battle below.

The one that spoke was a gorgeous woman with skin that looked as though it was painted with silver. Her hair was like a waterfall of white, and her armor was a black-steel color, glowing with a majestic light.

To her side, there was a young man, just as handsome as she was beautiful. His hair was a bed of flowing flames, and his skin looked painted with bronze and brass.

One had eyeballs that looked carefully shaped from a white pearl. The other looked as though a ruby was polished and placed into his skull.

Neither had pupils, and both exuded an aura of majesty.

The two were not alone. Behind them, there were three teams of demons.

One was a group of five Bull Demons. They had skin shaded a fierce red and a pair of horns on their foreheads, something that both the males and females shared. Regardless of who it was, they dressed with scant beast skins, and their physiques were simply on an entirely different level, brimming with muscles.

The second group was one that Leonel had never come across before, at least not in these numbers. They had humanoid bodies and cobra-shaped heads, their hoods flickering with gorgeous patterns as though adorned with ancient and obscure runes.

They weren't a uniform color like the Bull Demons, but regardless of what shades their scales were dominated by, they were absolutely beautiful creatures. Each individual scale shone like a polished gem.

The final group was somehow even more scantily clad than the Bull Demons. They had pale purple skin and some faint tattoos around their necks, wrists, ankles-though the most prominent were on their lower bellies. However, other than this, they looked no different than regular humans aside from the fact each and every one of them had model-worthy looks.

The men wore thongs that placed a little too much attention on their packages. The women wore a thin gauze skirt and a band across their chest that left little to the imagination; it could be seen right through.

Regardless of male or female, they all wore chokers that made them look more like slaves than warriors of the Demon Race that weren't to be trifled with.

The one who talked was the young man with bronzed skin. Unsurprisingly, he was a member of the Sun Demons. Though, it was more accurate to say that the Sun and Moon Demons were actually just one race.

The women became Moon Demons and the men became Sun Demons. Each had a path that either went toward extreme yin or extreme yang. Together, especially when they fought in their matrimonial pairs, their strength was far more than just one plus one equal two. They could easily exhibit strength far beyond themselves.

"The rebel army has a Dream Force expert, and it is hard to see with just my eyes alone."

The Moon Demon spoke as though it was just natural that she should be able to see from so many thousands of kilometers away. In fact, she sounded a hint uncomfortable that she could not.

"I felt the same," the young man replied. "The way the Godlens fought, it seemed like they might play a stronger role than we thought. Just one man foolhardy enough to call himself King gave us so much trouble for all these years."

"Do you believe that this one is so troublesome?"

"Probably the best genius of the Human Race, but they're in the rebel army?" The Moon Demon asked.

"They don't even seem to be part of the rebel army, those masked figures looked like they were working on their own-"

"Apologies, Moon Adru, Sun Khelgis, I have something of importance to report."

A female Bull Demon took a step forward after taking a look at a male Bull Demon.

If Leonel and Aina had been here, they would have recognized these two. The male was none other than Larkan, and the woman was, of course, Oriza. These were two of the four Bull Demons that Leonel and Aina had fought in the in-between world.

"Speak," Khelgis said calmly.

"I believe I recognize the aura of the Blood Force user?"

"You do?" Khelgis raised an eyebrow, though it looked no different from a line of flames dancing on his forehead.

"Yes. In the in-between world, we reported the potential existence of species of demons that managed to survive after millennia of entrapment. Two of our squad of four died at her hands."

"You're saying that they were in-between world, in Cult territory, and are now here, in Godlen territory."

"To the best of my knowledge, yes."

"And you reported that they were having sex?"

A giggle came from the Lust Demons. They had originally been blamed for this matter, but even they had more restraint than that. That said, they respected it. They suddenly wanted to meet this couple very much.

Khelgis' gaze flickered. The reason the sex was important wasn't that he was a pervert, but rather because in his world, a woman of such talent couldn't possibly pair with anyone other than someone of equivalent talent. This was how things worked among the Sun and Moon Demons. Trying to marry a woman who was beyond you would just get you killed.

Then, in all likelihood, unless there was somehow another astounding talent related to this group, the Dream Force genius was a man and more than likely the woman's partner.

It was an interesting piece of information... he could use this.

Chapter 2488: [Bonus] Fairytale

[Bonus chappy thanks to Mr. Ham <3 (1/6) --

"Unacceptable."

These were the first words Miel said in regard to Leonel's proposed plan. The idea of trusting Leonel to carry everyone out of here was grating on his nerves. It might be in one part due to the fact it was Leonel, but it was mostly due to the fact that he was the one who was tasked with protecting these people in the first place. The fact that he was now being asked to rely on a young man a fraction of his age to do what he should have been able to do was more of a blow to his ego than he was willing to take.

Of course, Miel, much like anyone else, had an ego, but it was deeper than just that as well. His admission that his ego played a role was him trying to check himself and truly come to understand where all the root of this was coming from. But the main truth was that...

He simply didn't trust Leonel.

It wasn't just about Leonel's incompetence. He just didn't like Leonel's character, and he didn't believe that this was a young man good enough for his daughter, let alone to lead them all out of here and take on the weight of thousands of lives.

Leonel claimed to love his daughter, but he had also dared to say those cruel words to her back then. He had seen Leonel's gaze back then, a gaze so cold and detached from everything in the world, a gaze that looked as though it was gazing upon not a woman pouring out his heart to him, but rather an annoying fly he wanted to swat out of his way.

He didn't care about what reasons Leonel might have had. He didn't believe that any man should act like that toward a woman he had even a modicum of respect toward. It shouldn't have been within the fiber of his being to even think of doing such a thing.

No matter how he looked at it, he felt that Leonel wasn't worthy of his respect, his trust or his daughter.

And yet there was Aina, sitting silently by his side.

He had expected his daughter to be angry on his behalf, or at the very least, try to mediate the situation. But she did neither. It was as though she had already picked a side, and that side wasn't the side of her father.

He knew that children were meant to grow up. He knew that they were meant to leave the side of their parents and grow on their own. He even agreed that a husband and

wife's greatest reliance should be on one another, if parents were too involved in such a relationship, it would work out poorly for all parties involved.

He just... he just didn't want it to be Leonel. And Leonel's response only seemed to prove him right.

"Alright. We'll be leaving then. Any deaths that happen will be on your hands."

Leonel didn't seem surprised by Miel's response, he didn't seem enraged, he didn't even try to rebuttal or argue. It was as though he didn't care about the lives of those people at all, and after making a token effort, he patted his butt and was ready to go.

If he really believed that he was the only chance for these people to survive, shouldn't he try harder? Shouldn't he do more? But he thought that they should believe him with just a single sentence?

Miel felt his temper flaring up again. He probably would have attacked already had it not been for his daughter sitting right there. He felt so much rage that he thought he might explode.

In the end, he was so infuriated he laughed as Leonel got up.

Leonel was going to ignore the laughter entirely, until Miel spoke.

"You have the heart of a demon. You supposedly believe you're the only chance for these people to live, and yet your aren't even willing to say more than a sentence. One day my daughter will realize the kind of person you really are and leave you."

Miel didn't say words to convince his daughter to leave Leonel.

How many times had he heard similar words from his own parents? They had begged, they had pleaded, they had warned and advised, but had it mattered?

Love wasn't something you could force someone to change. You could only hope to give them the tools to realize on their own.

As far as he saw it, his daughter was much more powerful than Leonel anyway. At the very least, she wasn't being forced to stay. If she was, even if it meant killing Leonel, he would have already attacked with lethal intent.

Leonel turned back and met Miel's gaze. He didn't seem enraged by the claims, and was instead very calm.

"Let me lay out something very clearly so that you understand. I'm a fan of explaining things, so take this as a special event triggered just for you. Just now, do you have any idea how much danger I put myself in just to appear and battle on your behalf?"

Miel stood stone-faced, clearly not planning to answer.

"There are probably people who've taken note of my existence already, people who've taken note of Aina as well. And for what? To save a group of people who're rotting away their existence in a city that hasn't allowed them to see the light of day in years? You probably don't know this," Leonel continued, "but one of the fissures between me and your daughter to begin with was because I kept constantly putting myself in the line of danger in order to save people unrelated to me. Don't you find it very ironic that her father is now asking me to do exactly that?"

Leonel continued to meet Miel's gaze, completely unwavering.

"In just a handful of months, I've already dealt the human alliance more losses than your Slayer Legion has in decades. Their farming project? Destroyed by me. The future of the Godlens? In my hands. And just now, if not for my actions, your little underground city would have already been wiped off the map. You want me to save people? I already did. I'm not going to overextend myself for the sake of your ego or your fairytale."

Chapter 2489: [Bonus] Own Person

[Bonus chappy thanks to Mr. Ham <3 (2/6)]

Leonel sat on a stone in silence, looking out into the ocean. Every part of Anastasia's world-well, almost all of it-was absolutely beautiful. But he wasn't able to enjoy the beauty of it at all in this moment.

It wasn't like he wanted to have conflict with Aina's father, it was just that he couldn't see eye to eye with the man. It only made it worse that it was almost impossible to win an argument against Leonel. By the time you thought of one rebuttal, he had had a thousand.

It was hard to see how that could be a problem with Leonel, but when an argument was so one-sided, and yet the other party still felt like they were in the right, it made it impossible to come to a true common ground.

The only way would be if Leonel purposely held back and allowed Aina's father some concessions, but he didn't want to do that. Maybe that was a hint of his selfishness coming up, maybe it was his unwillingness to lose, but he truly meant those words he said to Aina.

He was willing to lay down and take a loss to her, but not for anyone else.

Leonel knew there wasn't really anyone wrong in this situation.

He felt that he was still rightfully mad at Aina back then. She didn't like his reckless actions, but he always had 100% confidence in himself. The idea that his woman wouldn't have the same unfettered belief in him not only hurt his own ego, but something deeper than that.

It had taken him a long time to understand what really bothered him about that moment back then, but as he came to understand more about himself, the more clarity he had about that day.

He had always imagined his relationship with Aina to be some perfect fairy tale. Or maybe it was that he always had an ideal of her in his mind, an ideal that shattered that day he watched her kill someone for the first time.

His feelings for Aina came from a power beyond him, probably much like his self-confidence. In the beginning, he didn't even really know why he liked her, so he filled in the gaps with fantasies instead.

He thought he liked her docile and soft personality, but how she could also get serious when she needed to, how smart she was at the same time. He felt that she was the kind of quiet, housewife sort of woman, one that would always be by his side to silently support him.

That was why he felt so bad when she never came to his game. That was why he felt so lost when she didn't even look back at him when they almost lost their lives to those Invalids when the Metamorphosis just began.

The Aina he had constructed in his mind wasn't acting the way he fantasized about, and the cognitive dissonance ripped him apart.

But then he began to learn more about Aina, the true Aina.

She was battle-hungry and a true warrior, but she could also be reserved and exceedingly shy. She was a fierce competitor, and yet she loved to be dominated by him.

She was a complex person much like everyone else was, but that fantasy was stuck in his mind.

She was his ideal, the perfect woman, the only woman that could possibly gain his interest out of all the myriad of women out there. So...

How dare she not trust him? How dare she not lean on him? How dare she try to be her own person?

Leonel could feel that sudden turn of rage in him. It wasn't coming from his current self, but rather from a memory.

She had done it again, gone off and not trusted him. But this time, rather than it ending in separation and cruel words on his part, it ended in her death.

She should have trusted him back then as well. When the Shadow Tail appeared, the first thought in her mind should have been to come to his side.

They were two completely separate situations, and yet their root cause was the same...

She hadn't trusted him.

And that was why it was all so complex.

He could feel Aina changing. He could feel that her trust in him was becoming just as unconditional as her love, it may even have very well reached that point already.

But the context behind his unhappiness, the fact that he hadn't even known who she truly was, the fact he tried to fill in so much of her personality on his own as though she wasn't her own person... that made him wrong as well.

And then there was her father, who had no obligation to him at all. He was a father, of course his allegiances would be to his daughter and her happiness. What could he even say about that?

And all of that led to this moment, a situation where two men refused to back down and the lives of tens of thousands were in the balance as a result.

Leonel continued to stare out into the ocean, not moving.

Being smart enough to figure something out was one matter. There were plenty of people who knew that they had flaws, but that didn't mean that dealing with them came with any sort of ease. Leonel just happened to be in a very far-off percentile in the case.

A hand suddenly pressed down on Leonel's head and ruffled his hair wildly.

"You're not very good at sneaking around," Leonel muttered. He didn't need to look to know it was James.

"Sneaking around? I would never. How could I bear to hide this handsome mug of mine?"

"Handsome my ass."

"Hey, hey, we can't all be shameless enough to dye our hair purple. Even the contacts, man? Have some shame."

"This hair and these eyes are just as real as the money you spent on your last whore."

James laughed into the skies. "If you pay for them, you won't have father-in-law drama to deal with."

He put up an energy barrier the moment he finished speaking. Good thing too, because Leonel's elbow stopped right above his crotch.

Chapter 2490: Defector

"Hey, hey, hey, watch it. Those are the money makers," James leapt back, coughing lightly.

Leonel sent him a side glance, but rather than shrinking back, James laughed.

"This is too funny."

James plopped down on a nearby piece of grass, having a good 'ol time all to himself. He had never really seen Leonel get angry about anything.

No, it was more accurate to say that nothing really got to Leonel in the usual sense. Usually, if you made Leonel mad, you were just screwed. But this time Leonel wasn't just mad, but he didn't have a counter punch to throw. He seemed so human for the first time.

It wasn't like he could continue crossing that line and humiliating his father-in-law. If he did so, he would be screwed to live a life of misery. Who knew, it might even end in him losing Aina.

Miel was Aina's only family remaining; Leonel couldn't just ostracize him. If he was a bad father, that would be one matter. But he was a man who had done his best. Eviscerating him would feel good for a moment, and then cause years of distress afterward.

The only answer to the problem seemed to be for Leonel to take a step back, but in his mind, that was tantamount to losing. He didn't want to do that.

"Just using Aina to deliver a letter was enough to piss him off even though it had been his idea. Let alone this."

"I'm glad you're having a great time," Leonel mumbled.

"Really?" James replied cheerily. "It doesn't sound like you really are. Say it again if it's true."

This, unsurprisingly, earned James another glare. To which, he, of course, laughed again.

"It's not all bad, you know. It could be worse."

"And how's that exactly?"

"Well, there could be a mother-in-law involved too, then you'd be really screwed."

Leonel was speechless. Was he supposed to take solace in the fact Aina's mom was dead? The worst part was maybe that James was correct. At the very least, he could exchange some fists with Aina's father; if it was her mother instead, where would he have vented his frustration?

"Anyway, the way I see it, neither of you two is going to have something akin to a healthy relationship. So instead of doing all that, just show him you're not the person you think he is. Simple enough, right?"

Leonel shook his head. Anything he did now would come off as a power play to Miel. And honestly, he couldn't defeat Miel in a straight-up battle even if he wanted to. The only person who could do that was Aina, and he wasn't going to make Aina fight her father.

If he followed James' suggestion and just forcefully took the people of the underground city away, it would definitely end in a battle. And unless he was willing to kill Miel, which he wasn't, it was a battle that he would ultimately lose.

'Annoying.' Leonel thought to himself.

Leonel sensed something else. He looked over and found that Aina had floated by his side.

A bittersweet smile spread across both their faces before she spoke.

"You can take the people away."

"Hm?" Leonel asked.

"I convinced my dad. We have to move now, quickly. Or else we might not get another chance to."

"Ah..." Leonel nodded somewhat absentmindedly.

He hadn't even thought of this possibility, but he guessed that it was for the best. At least for now, Aina would just have to be the mediator so that things didn't explode.

At the very least, he appreciated her approach, and though he couldn't read Miel's mind, he was sure that he did as well.

Leonel stood. "Let's go then."

...

The next few days were hectic. However, the process of actually convincing everyone wasn't as bad as it seemed.

These people had no real loyalty to the land they lived in. If there was any reluctance at all, it was toward the idea that the place where they were going would be even worse. After all, even in this relatively "stable" city, the living conditions were horrible. They barely got enough food and water, and the streets were rife with crime and underhand dealings.

But all of this went out the window after they actually saw the land they were moving into.

Anastasia's world was truly a paradise, and they almost couldn't believe that they had the luck to receive such an upgrade.

Leonel watched all of this without saying a word, but he knew that things would only remain simple for only so long.

Humans were humans, after all. Maybe soon, the peace would give way to hierarchies, to entitlement, to troubling political stratospheres and class divisions.

They would probably even start now, not from the people themselves, but rather the higher ups that ruled them.

In the beginning, the Slayer Legion upper management might feel even a hint of gratitude toward Leonel for providing this opportunity, but it would only last for so long.

These people got into this rebel army for the sake of their ideals, but too long had passed since then. They had now gotten used to being at the top and wielding power.

What power could they wield if their citizens were under Leonel's control?

There were six Slayer Generals, and Cidra and Miel were just two of them. There were still four others. Plus, Leonel knew nothing about Miel's character, for all he knew, Miel would be the first to stir trouble.

Leonel felt a pat on his shoulder.

"Regardless of our differences, thank you for this, Leonel."

A man who looked to be in about his fifties patted Leonel's shoulder. He had a large belly and, quite frankly, if Leonel dressed him up in red and rosed his cheeks a bit, he would be the perfect Santa Claus.

Even so, there was a lot of heft and weight to his pat. His body was extraordinarily powerful.

Leonel knew him as Slayer General Yonku, a defector of the Three Fingers Cult.

Chapter 2491: Opportunity

"Just doing me part," Leonel said lightly.

Yonku laughed. "Don't get too down, kid. Who doesn't have father-in-law trouble? It's a natural path of all men. Miel is a good man, just protective of his daughter. Soon enough I'm sure you two will be perfectly chummy."

Leonel smiled. "You call him Miel. Did he change his name?"

"Ah, you didn't know this. See?" Yonku looked back toward Cidra who was wearing a stone-face of her own. "Don't mind her either, everyone knows she's in love with Miel though she thinks that she hides it well."

"Watch your word, Yonku."

A flickering Light Force appeared in Cidra's eyes. Leonel took note of it but didn't think very much of it. Light Force was rare, but not rare to the point no one would have it.

"HAHA!" Yonku laughed uproariously, his belly rolling. "Sorry, sorry, pretend like I didn't say anything."

Cidra, though, had already ignored Yonku and was looking right at Leonel.

"I do not."

Leonel blinked, looking at this serious woman with shortcut hair. He hadn't really taken it seriously before, but since she was being so serious about it, it was obvious that Yonku wasn't blowing hot air.

As for why Cidra wanted to make sure that Leonel didn't believe the nonsense, it was obviously so that he didn't turn around and tell Aina about it. That would be her worst nightmare.

She couldn't even get Miel to pay attention to her; how would she fare if she suddenly had to deal with the scrutiny of a potential step-daughter at the same time?

Leonel smiled. "I believe you."

Cidra's brows creased when she heard this, but she realized she couldn't push any harder, or else it might be too obvious.

The rest of the Slayer Generals chuckled, earning Cidra's glares.

The remainder of the Slayer Generals were pretty well balanced. They were all in the Eighth Dimension and they came from the various powers as defectors as well. The only power that was lacking a defector was the Dream Pavilion, but Leonel could easily make a guess as to why that was.

There was Slayer General Tidus, defector of the Godlens, Slayer General Cherie, defector of the Four Great families, and finally Slayer General Darlamane, defector of the Cult.

Cherie was an older woman with sharp green eyes and hair. She should be a member of the Crudus family, one of the Four Great Families.

Darlamane was actually a man despite his name. Though, he didn't look particularly delicate, not just due to his old age, but because he seemed to take meticulous care of his skin and hygiene. His face was practically radiant.

In truth, all of the Slayer Generals aside from Miel and Cidra seemed to be entering their twilight years. It was a bad sign overall for the direction of the Slayer Legion.

However, they weren't entirely hopeless. At the very least, they had a decent number of warriors well into the Seventh Dimension.

Each one of them led an army of 10,000. That wasn't great, but it wasn't as bad as Leonel was expecting. It was at least a foundation that could be built upon. They just lacked the resources.

The number of citizens who couldn't protect themselves only numbered just over 100,000 or so. So the ratio of people to soldiers almost bordered on outrageous, but it was a necessary evil.

Usually, a decent ratio would be less than 1%, that meaning one soldier for every hundred citizens. But here it was almost 40%, which was both shocking and a bit sad.

It ultimately meant that most who could fight were doing so. This city wasn't a place of leisure for the people. They were birthed into this struggle.

If there were any humans that Leonel felt deserved his protection, it was this kind.

He felt no loyalty to the human alliance. They didn't treat his life or that of his friends and family as equal to their own.

He didn't know if he felt loyalty to the Slayer Legion either. Honestly speaking, his grandfather's ways could be just as cruel as the human alliance's ways. He didn't seem to be on the side of "good" either, and his main purpose seemed to be to resurrect the Fawkes family to their former glory.

Leonel didn't even know if he was on the side of good either. At the very least, because of his own ego, he would have left these people behind.

He couldn't help but smile. 'So we're all scumbags just trying to survive, huh? How depressing.'

The last of the citizens were escorted into the Segmented Cube under Leonel's watchful gaze and the banter of the Slayer Generals.

With a wave of his hand, the Segmented Cube's portal closed and it slid onto Leonel's finger. He didn't mind the slightly uncomfortable gazes of the Slayer Generals when they saw this, it was inevitable given the circumstances. It didn't suddenly mean that they would definitely cause issues for him. At least not yet.

"Now, we should decide what we're going to do from here on out. I wouldn't mind allowing you Slayer Generals into the Segmented Cube as well, but I'm sure that's not what you want, right?"

The Slayer Generals looked toward one another. It was clear that Leonel hit the nail on the head, but what was the other option? To flee like rats? But then what?

Was this the end of the Slayer Legion, just like that? They were obviously unwilling.

The first time they faced a true attack and they folded so easily? It was both embarrassing and unacceptable.

"You have an idea?" Tidus asked Leonel.

In truth, he had been eyeing Leonel for a long time. Since there was an opportunity to interact, he might as well. He was very interested in this boy.

"Well, your enemies have no idea that you have a method to suddenly take everyone away and vanish in a blink. They think you're basically trapped and they can deal with you at their own pace.

"Isn't that a good opportunity to deal another blow to them?"

Chapter 2492: Billions

Vivak's desk flew across the room, shattering against the wall in thousands of flying splinters of wood.

These days, his temper was not good, not in the slightest. He wasn't known as a leader who was in his position for his smarts, but he was a man who was known for one, his strength, and two, his temperament.

He was very good at managing people, delegating tasks, and knowing when to take his hands off the controls and let the people he put in place do their jobs.

Unsurprisingly, then, he was likewise known as a person with a mellow and calm personality.

All of that had gone out of the window now. Every single last bit of his patience was being tried again and again, and this most recent incident with the Slayer Legion was just another example.

It wasn't even all that big a deal, objectively speaking. They had only sent a fraction of a fraction of their strength, but it was supposed to be an easy victory, a nice win to tuck into their belts and help bolster morale.

Who would have thought that it would just end up being another slap to the face?

At that moment, the door to Vivak's office opened. Vivak almost snapped again, but when he saw that it was his wife, he took a breath and turned around, looking out the window so as not to show her such an embarrassing side of him.

Amynta stepped to her husband's side. She just stood there silently as he slowly regained his calm, not saying anything. Sometimes a man just needed his wife by his side and things would feel just a little bit better. Amynta understood that, at least for right now, Vivak didn't need her advice.

The time ticked by, and Vivak eventually exhaled a final time, looking toward his wife with a hint of gratefulness in his eyes.

"Amynta, you look beautiful today. Did you do something with your hair?"

Amynta smiled. Her usual demeanor was quite cold and detached, so it almost looked out of place. Vivak, though, was quite used to his wife's personality and he was content to feel that only he and her brother could see this side of her.

"You say that every day."

"And I'll keep saying it until our last days."

Amynta leaned into her husband's arm, resting her cheek on his shoulders.

"You don't need to be worried about Simona," she said softly. "At least for now, she will be fine."

Vivak's gaze flickered. "You're sure?"

"Leonel is capable of viciousness, so I will not lie to you. He also doesn't seem to treat any woman except for his Aina like they're a woman at all. However, he's also a schemer and he's rarely needlessly cruel. He will only use Simona when it benefits him the most, and other than that moment, she likely won't experience too many hardships."

Vivak nodded, and the husband and wife pair fell into silence once again.

"Amynta, do you think that I've made a mistake?"

"In what way?"

"Trying to deviate from the path of the others, trying to make our own way when at this point in time, the Human Race should be coming together."

"Do you want to hear how I really feel about it?"

"Yes."

Amynta looked up and into her husband's eyes.

"I believe the Human Race, as it is right now, has no hope of survival."

Vivak didn't seem to be very surprised by this analysis.

No matter how you looked at it, they were truly finished.

The status of the Human Race to wider Existence was akin to scum at the bottom of their feet, a patch of mud or dirt they should scrape off.

The matters of the God Beasts had left a bad taste in the mouths of the other Races, and the fall of the Fawkes family ruined their chances at ever defending themselves without them.

They justified backstabbing the Fawkes family back then so well. They said that if the Fawkes family didn't fall, the other Races would act to wipe out the humans. They said the other Races wouldn't want to see the humans rise again, so it was best if they stuck to their lane and took out the ambitious Fawkes family.

And what was the result of that?

Generation after generation, they got weaker, a barrier, ironically created by the Fawkes family in the first place, acting as the only thing protecting their lives.

And now that protection was gone, and in its place, there were a great number of humans who couldn't even wield decent strength.

They went from the ants of Existence to the Envoys of the God Beasts, to falling from grace and then rising again to be as strong as any Race beneath the God Race...

Only to backstab their only backer and end up right back at square one.

So much infighting, so much death and destruction. They only had a single Life State level warrior, and he died ironically at the hands of a human they were trying to suppress and control.

What a fucking joke.

"You know that I've never agreed with the Farm Project. The problem isn't that it's too cruel, the problem is that it's too cruel and yet there's little return on the investment.

"You also know what I think we should do. Even if it means tainting the Godlen family bloodline, we should resurrect the Constellation Families using our own.

"The only way to fight back against near extinction is to have the power of the Stars at our back. Without them, we don't stand a chance."

It was clear that they had already had this conversation before, and Vivak had said no.

The reason was obvious. The pushback would be enormous.

The Godlen family had their own pride, but doing this would be akin to wiping out their own bloodline to take in another's. It was two parts humiliating and one part a slap to the face of their Ancestors.

"Okay." Vivak finally said.

He was a leader who knew how to adapt and he knew that his wife was correct.

The only hope they had was the resurrection of the Constellation Families.

"Good." Amynta smiled again, but this time it seemed to light up the room.

"And how do we-"

Amynta handed Vivak a ring. "This ring has enough blood to convert billions if need be."

Vivak suddenly felt a cold shudder ride up his spine.

Chapter 2493: [Bonus] One Year

[Bonus chappy thanks to Mr. Ham <3 (3/6)

The previous words of his wife echoed in Vivak's ears again.

"The problem isn't that it's too cruel, the problem is that it's too cruel and yet there's little return on the investment."

Looking at the spatial ring, holding it in his hands, and finally sending his senses in, he finally understood what she meant by that.

Being cruel wasn't the problem... being needlessly cruel and not getting enough out of it was.

"This is..."

"You know what it is, there's no need to ask me."

Vivak took a breath and exhaled. "Is this everything?"

"I thought about keeping some talents alive because they could truly thrive in this sort of environment, but the risk was not worth it."

Vivak nodded.

"How long will this take?"

"So long as the method is followed, only as long as it takes to inject everyone. It would be easy to form an army of billions if need be in just a few days. What will take some time is them getting in tune with their Constellations and learning to use them as one. There might be some slight regressions in their strength for a few weeks, but there should be explosive growth afterward."

"You've really planned everything out."

Amynta nodded. "This is why I went to the Incomplete World in the first place. Resurrecting the bloodlines of the Constellation families took many generations, and easily hundreds of thousands of years. Without them, it wouldn't have been possible. But I eventually succeeded. No... we succeeded."

Vivak finally calmed down completely and his eyes began to sparkle with a fire of confidence once again.

"Thank you, Amynta."

"Why are you thanking me? Are we not husband and wife?"

Vivak smiled, taking Amynta into his arms and kissing her forehead.

"I withstood a lot of pressure to marry you, at least that's what the outside world says. But in my view, there isn't any other woman who is your equal. Compared to that so-called Imperatress Anselma, you are leagues beyond."

Vivak meant every word he spoke. Anselma was a woman who was arrogant and might have entered the Ninth Dimension, but she wasn't worthy of his respect. She couldn't control her temper, she wasn't very intelligent, and her only redeeming quality was her strength and maybe her beauty.

If not for how much focus Amynta had placed on this, how could she not also be in the Ninth Dimension by now?

Amynta smiled and didn't say anything else.

From this day forth, the Godlens would rise. So long as they withstood this buffer period, they would surpass all the other factions.

** Dream Pavilion.

The location was a place that fit the name quite well, or more accurately, fit the layman definition of the world rather than its truest definition, that of the Force it represented.

The entire Pavilion was in the air, riding on clouds that ranged from a delicate blue, to pink to violet. The buildings themselves were representative of an Ancient Chinese air and aura, the architecture reminiscent of olden style Confucian Temples.

The number of individuals, though, given the sheer size and span of the Pavilion was minimal. It practically looked like for every one of these awe-inspiring temples, there was just one person to live in and manage them.

This was the Dream Pavilion, a place where the Dream Force experts of the world gathered. And yet, their number was pitifully few, counted in the several dozens quite comfortably. One would be hard-pressed to say that they surpassed a population of 100 by anything that could be described as "far".

If Leonel could see this, he would be able to understand quite well that "sneaking" into this place was nigh impossible. How could you sneak in when everyone knew everyone

else by first and last name? It was too ridiculous. Even if they weren't Dream Force experts, it would be difficult, let alone the fact that they were.

It was in this place that Clarence sat. His expression seemed to be undergoing a number of changes, at least that was what it seemed like at first. But if one looked closely, it was more like ghosts trapped within his body were trying to force their way out. Every time one was suppressed, another one would appear.

In the brief instances of time ghosts weren't trying to rip their way out of Clarence's face, you could catch a glimpse of the calm man underneath.

Suddenly, his eyes snapped open and he looked down.

He sat on a prayer mat at the bottom of a wide set of stairs embroidered in complex gold and red. At the top of this set of stairs, a treasure box lay, but it looked almost as though no one had ever opened it to see what was inside.

A hint of wariness flashed in Clarence's gaze before he sighed. He knew that this day was coming, he couldn't hide this matter for very long. They would eventually find out.

The treasure box shook for a moment before it settled back down. Its many runes began to light up one after another until the silhouette of a figure painted in violet fog appeared. Judging by the shape of their head, it was clear this person wore the same turbans as the other members of the Dream Pavilion. However, likewise judging by the situation... it didn't seem that this person was a physical member of the Dream Pavilion either...

At least not in the most obvious sense.

"I've sensed the death of Arrelious Regalis. A countdown sequence has been initiated. A new Pavilion Head will be appointed within a year. If there is no new Life State expert created by your Pavilion in that time, its rights will be revoked, its ranking will be revoked, and its connection with the Dream Pavilion will be shattered."

The voice spoke and didn't seem to really look at Clarence himself even a single time.

Then, without the slightest word, it vanished.

Clarence clenched his fists, sitting in silence.

Chapter 2494: [Bonus] Challenge Sequence

[Bonus chappy thanks to Mr. Ham <3 (4/6)

Clarence sat in silence, feeling the weight of the world on his shoulders.

The reality was that the Dream Pavilion was just one of many, and the only reason their numbers were so few was that there was no one else among the humans worthy of joining... well, aside from that old witch of the Cult and...

Clarence's mind landed on Leonel once again. He had forgotten just how many times he had thought of this young man in the last few weeks. But now it seemed that it was nothing more than a foolish dream of his.

A single year?

He laughed bitterly. He knew they were doing it on purpose. It was a slap to their faces that the mighty Dream Pavilion had such a stain on their record, it was just that they didn't have any other formal rules of kicking a Pavilion out of the structured Alliance... until King's death gave them the excuse they needed.

It was truly a great joke. The mighty Dream Pavilion, rather than finding out who had killed one of their Pavilion Heads, actually moved on and pretended as though it hadn't happened at all, instead using it as an excuse to wipe this stain from their record entirely.

It wasn't too much of an oddity for a Pavilion Head position to remain empty for a decade or more. How could the matter of a new Pavilion Head position be chosen so casually?

It had to be understood that to these behemoths, a year of time might as well have been the blink of an eye. It wasn't an exaggeration that a year of time to them was the equivalent of a handful of hours to a mortal.

They probably would have made the time shorter if it wouldn't be too obvious what they were doing. How could they possibly raise a Life State expert in that time? Especially in a Force as difficult to grasp as Dream Force?

But who asked them to be so weak?

The Dream Pavilion was constantly making efforts to bring in new blood. It was why they had made the Dream Force items so cheap during the exchange. But how hard was it to create such experts?

Not only did you need Dream Force affinity, it had to also be of a certain standard. Not just any existence capable of using Dream Force would be allowed in and earn their colors.

Clarence had been so interested in Leonel because he might have given them a chance. If they could have had a hundred year period, they might have been able to raise Leonel to that standard.

But now it was all for naught. Even in his wildest dreams, he would never think it to be possible.

Clarence stood to his feet and sighed.

The loss of the Dream Pavilion would be a heavy blow to the Human Race. It was the existence of the Dream Pavilion that made it impossible for powerhouses outside of their Bubbles to impose their will onto the already weak Human Race. Those God Race existences wouldn't even have to show their faces to genocide them down to the last man, woman, and child. Without the Pavilion's protection, they wouldn't last even a few days.

As for the idea of hunkering down and hoping to reclaim the Dream Pavilion in the future, how could it be possible?

They had been holding onto this Pavilion as the last bastion of a long-forgotten age of excellence. Claiming a Pavilion was much more difficult than maintaining one. There were only 9999 Pavilions in all of Existence, and there were many eager to claim one.

Once they lost this right, they could forget about claiming it again until they managed to forge a Creation State expert.

Just that thought was a great joke alone. They couldn't even form a Life State expert, where were they going to get such a God?

Clarence, now standing, closed his eyes then took another deep breath.

He took a step onto the wide staircase, trying to make his way up.

He nearly collapsed after just the first step. When he tried to take the second, he was blasted away like an iron ball out of a cannon.

He coughed up a mouthful of blood, his eyes turning crimson. The ghosts tried to claw their way out of his face again, but he quickly suppressed them, taking another deep breath to calm him.

Those bastards. They actually increased the difficulty!

There were nine steps, and in the past he had been able to make it to the fourth step quite comfortably. He knew it was foolish to even try to climb it again, but he was desperate and hoped his extra will power would help.

He didn't expect that he wouldn't even be able to take the second step this time.

There was no doubt, they were trying to close off all potential paths. They really wanted the Human Race to be entirely wiped out.

Clarence grit his teeth so hard that a few of them actually cracked beneath the pressure. He barely managed to use this pain to awaken himself and stop the ghosts from trying to claw their way out again.

He exhaled. There was only one chance remaining to them.

"I, Deputy Pavilion Head Clarence Regalis, hereby use my authority to activate the Challenge Sequence."

At that moment, in a far-off place, a stone stele standing in the depths of what looked like a world of dreams trembled.

There was a list of exactly 9999 marked on its body, and a name in the 123rd position trembled.

Vast Dream Pavilion.

This name shone wildly until it reached a fever pitch. Then, it quickly plummeted. From 123rd, it fell at an astonishing speed, not stopping until it fell to the 9999th position.

In a single instant of time, Clarence traded in millions of years worth of merits without the slightest hesitation.

The Vast Dream Pavilion rumbled, and the other Ninth Dimensional experts rushed toward Clarence's temple.

But it was already too late.

Chapter 2495: [Bonus] A Final F*ck You

[Bonus chappy thanks to Mr. Ham <3 (5/6)]

"Clarence!"

The roar came from an old man with a beard that draped down to his waist. He didn't look far off from a wizened old wizard that had just stepped out of a fairytale in all but the furious expression.

Clarence looked back calmly, having already expected this sort of result.

The Dream Pavilion had a solid position amongst the human alliance despite their small numbers because it had by far the largest number of Ninth Dimensional existences. In fact, they had almost three dozen such experts, a number that could match up against almost the whole Human Alliance on their own.

Due to that, though, despite the fact Clarence was, indeed, technically their head, and he also definitely had the authority to do what he had just done, he was also in a far worse off position because he had done so.

Just now, Clarence activated what was probably the last hope of the Vast Dream Pavilion, but in return, he had essentially given up all the glory it had once held.

Their Dream Pavilion was currently ranked 123rd, or maybe, by now, it had already fallen to the bottom... but that previous rank had little to do with the current Pavilion.

In the past, they were ranked number one without a doubt. Their sheer number of Wise Star Orders alone was enough to suppress all the other Pavilions, even if they combined their might. In fact, the Dream Pavilion system was created by the humans to begin with. Or, more accurately, the Envoys of the God Beasts of Creation.

Unsurprisingly, back then, their merits placed them in first place. Over the years, due to various matters, and exchanging merits to help them endure through various situations, they fell to the 123rd position.

In the most recent iteration, they were forced to exchange a large amount of merits for the sake of the seal that had protected them from the demons. Of course, that had been done by a Fawkes, one of their former Pavilion Heads.

Unfortunately, they had been constantly targeted by the other Dream Pavilions. Many generations ago, a tier system for rewards was introduced. The result of the change was that all treasures couldn't just be exchanged for a great number of merits, you had to likewise have the corresponding rank to use these treasures as well.

Due to this, the huge mountain of merits the Vast Dream Pavilion was sitting upon was rendered entirely useless. It was such a simple scheme, and yet it was one that left them helpless to fight back again. They couldn't even exchange for another seal of that caliber even if they wanted to... Not that it would matter.

What were they going to seal now that six worlds had been fused into one? There was nowhere to hide.

In the end, this was the only option they had available to them.

The Challenge Sequence.

The Challenge Sequence was something that could only be activated by sacrificing all of your merits. Regardless of the number you had, it would be put up almost like a betting arena.

The Challenge Sequence would be triggered once one or many Pavilions decided to match the merit quantity. Essentially, if one wanted to accept the challenge, they had to put up as many merits as the 123rd spot would get you.

Once this number was matched, the various Pavilions that had thrown their bids in would all be brought to an external world and they would fight for the right to the merits.

Essentially, the higher the total of the merits, the higher tier of world would be opened up and the more chances there would be.

It was obvious why Clarence had done this.

In a year's time, all of their merits would be voided anyway as a new round of battle began for a new Race or Power to claim the Dream Pavilion. Meaning, in another year, it would all be wasted regardless.

The most important reason wasn't out of pettiness, though. Instead, it was to give himself and the others a chance.

With the merits of 123rd, they should be able to open at least the 3rd Tier of that place. That Tier was the absolute perfect spot for anyone who had hopes of reaching the Life State early.

This was his last gamble.

That world was known as the Dream Plane... the Real Dream Plane. Not an ethereal place in the Second Dimension your mind went to, but rather a real and tangible place created by the God Beasts of Creation long ago.

The God Beasts of Creation, for reasons unknown to the world, placed a great deal of effort toward strengthening Existence's comprehension of Dream Force. In the past, Dream Force had been even rarer than it is now, and it was only thanks to them and the Real Dream Plane that things changed.

If Clarence wanted a chance to enter the Life State and stop the last bastion of hope for the humans from crumbling at the altar of the schemes of those bastards, this was the last chance that he had.

He didn't believe they wouldn't take the bait.

Those Pavilions in the top 100 wouldn't care enough to take action, but there would definitely be Pavilions in the top 1000 pooling their resources together to match the Vast

Pavilion. What better chance could they have than right now to rise up the rankings? This was their chance to make it big.

At the same time, this was Clarence's pride. Even as the other Ninth Dimensional experts clamored around him, his sneer was proud and his gaze didn't back down. All the while, his eyes never left that treasure just nine steps above him.

He would show them the pride of the Human Race. Even if he died, he would do so with a weapon in his hands and his bones broken, his lacerated flesh unable to help him stand any longer.

This was the last fuck you he had in him. If he could kill one or two of those sanctimonious bastards, he would die with a smile on his face.

Chapter 2496: [Bonus] Stars

[Bonus chappy thanks to Mr. Ham <3 (6/6)]

Leonel looked up, frowning. He sensed quite a powerful wave of Dream Force just now, and it caught him off guard.

His first assumption was that the Dream Pavilion was using a method beyond his understanding to look for him. After all, Mo'Lexi hadn't been the only one that showed up that day; there was another Dream Force user as well, and he seemed to be very interested in him.

However, just as quickly as it appeared, it vanished.

'That wasn't normal,' was the only thing Leonel could think. But he didn't have enough information to make a conclusion about it; he just felt an itch within him that was pointing toward that direction.

He had said he should wait until he was in the Fourth Dimension to go to the Dream Pavilion, but should he wait that long? He wasn't sure anymore.

"Hm?"

Leonel turned back and realized that there were still people talking to him. He had actually gotten so distracted that he forgot to split his attention. But in his defense, he had thought an attempt had just been made on his life; he didn't have the presence of mind to spend on anything else at that point.

"... It should all be ready now. I think it's right," Goggles finished.

Leonel looked up and scanned the empty city. Then he nodded.

"Alright, good enough then, I guess."

Goggles hesitated for a moment.

"Just speak your mind," Leonel smiled.

"I... I want to become as strong as you are, how can I do that?"

Leonel blinked. He didn't remember Goggles being so ambitious, but then again, back in the Valiant Heart Zone, they thought the pinnacle of power was King Alexandre. In this world though, the peak was far beyond Goggles that he couldn't even fathom it.

Back then Goggles had been in the Fourth Dimension like he was now, but King Alexandre was someone they all thought to be a Quasi Fifth Dimensional expert. Although it was a distance away, it was still manageable.

Plus, Leonel had been in the Third Dimension back then. It would have been weird if Goggles asked how he could become as powerful as him while he was technically "weaker" than him.

Leonel's smile became more meaningful. "Don't you know how powerful your Ability Index is? I should probably be getting tips from you."

Goggles seemed to be quite shy about receiving this sort of praise.

"I understand my Ability Index quite well. But... well, it's almost like circular logic. I need information to intuitively understand things, but to get information about it, I need my Ability Index. So it's relatively easier for me to get a deeper understanding of the things around me, but ironically very difficult for me to understand myself."

Leonel nodded after some thought. It was true. Unlike Aina, it wasn't as though Goggles could use his Ability Index like a form of Clairvoyance.

Indeed, it was no wonder, then, that Goggles' advancement had stalled for so long, especially since he didn't have a Lineage Factor to supplement his ability.

"I think the first thing you'll need is some understanding of Dream Force. I think that just by virtue of your Ability Index, your natural Dream Force affinity shouldn't be bad as they're somewhat inter-related.

"Once your Dream Force comprehension reaches a certain level, I can let you see the Force Art that constitutes your Ability Index.

"I'll be honest with you, Goggles. In the past, even I couldn't look at your Ability Index's Force Art for long without getting a splitting headache. It's only recently that I had a breakthrough that allowed me to do so. So you have a long way to go."

Goggles' gaze flashed. "I understand. In that case, what do I do?"

Leonel fell into his thoughts. He had never had to teach someone else how to use Dream Force before, but he recalled the day he swapped his Soul Force for Dream Force.

'In that case...'

"Here," Leonel handed Goggles a familiar booklet. It was this very booklet that held the foundation of [Dimensional Cleanse] within it.

This was the same booklet that Leonel had exchanged after completing his very first Zone, the very one that he had first cracked open in the Joan Zone and the technique his uncle had recommended for him.

He had kept it with him all this time mostly because there wasn't really a reason to get rid of it. Plus, it had some sentimental value.

"I guess the first place would be comprehending this technique. See what you can do and how many Stars you can form. Try to form at least one Star of Soul Force. If you can do that, I should probably be correct about your Dream Force affinity."

Leonel actually wasn't sure how others would fare when using this technique. However, what he did know was that he had yet to meet anyone who could form nine Stars, let alone ten like he had.

In fact, he didn't know a single person who had succeeded in forming even three of them.

He wasn't sure if it was just that the talent of the Incomplete World was so inferior, or if there was another reason. But regardless, Goggles would be a good yardstick so that he could measure his expectations for everyone else.

"Thank you!" Goggles said, feeling a hint of excitement.

Leonel smiled and let Goggles return to the Segmented Cube.

Soon, his smile faded, and he frowned as he looked up in the sky. He didn't know why, but he felt uncomfortable.

'Just what was that?'

Leonel hopped up to the top of a building teeming with pipes and then left through an emergency hatch. Now, the city was completely empty below and was the perfect rat trap. It seemed that he would just have to wait for their enemies to fall into it.

Even so, his mind was still completely focused on the feeling from earlier.

'I have to go... but first...'

First he needed to deal with this situation.

Chapter 2497: Awake

As Leonel was lost in thought, a soft feeling suddenly slid onto his thighs before a delicate fragrance tickled his nose. A smile spread across his face. "Not mad at me anymore?"

He wrapped an arm around Aina's waist, pulling her deeper into his lap. "First rule of pleasing your girlfriend is not bringing up times when she was mad before," Aina pulled away, not letting Leonel feel her up too much in feigned defiance.

"Is that really the first rule? Could have sworn it was 'she's always right'."

"That too," Aina nodded confidently. "There are multiple first rules?"

"Refer back to rule number one, please."

Leonel laughed, pulling Aina back in closer and giving her a kiss. He didn't even know what he was worried about anymore, whatever it was, he had thrown it far away.

Unfortunately for him, when a peck became a make-out session, and a make-out session was about to progress into something more, Leonel found himself stonewalled again. Aina slapped his hand away from slithering up her shirt. "Nope. Not until you make good with my dad."

Leonel coughed, looking down at his crotch. He was already at full mast, what did he do to deserve this hardship? How was he supposed to make good with that stubborn old goat, was he supposed to be celibate for the rest of his life now?

Aina giggled. How could she want to see her father and her future husband at loggerheads? But she had already promised Leonel not to interfere too much, so she could only stand on the sidelines right now.

"Hey, what do you think about your father remarrying?" Leonel suddenly asked.

Aina was caught off guard by the question, but she eventually answered seriously. "No one should spend their lives alone."

Leonel somewhat expected this answer. He had mostly asked it because he thought of Cidra again and found it amusing, but he didn't want to make a joke of it unless he knew Aina's stance on it first. Now he knew he was clear to make his jokes, but what he didn't know was how he felt about the answer. He forgot to consider how much that question was also relevant to him. Wasn't his mother in the same situation right now?

But he felt a visceral disgust when he thought about his mother marrying another man. He could lie to himself and say that it was because he had confidence in one day resurrecting his father, and even now that remained his greatest goal, but he knew that wasn't the whole truth. At best, it was half of it.

That said, there was a difference between himself and Aina, though. His father had only just died, and Aina's mother had died decades ago. Maybe if he was more removed from the situation, he would feel similar to Aina.

He shook his head. It didn't matter. He would definitely bring his father back one day.

"Are you asking because of your mom?" Aina asked in a soft voice.

Leonel forced a smile. "No, I actually asked because it seems that there's a lady who likes your dad a lot."

"Really?" Aina blinked in surprise.

Leonel laughed. "If he saw your reaction right now-"

"I didn't mean it like that!" Aina denied immediately.

Leonel only laughed harder, earning him another pinch. "It's just that I asked him about that, and he said there was no one. He must have lied to me."

"Well, maybe he's not interested," Leonel shrugged.

Aina shook her head. "He's never interested in anything but food and fighting."

"Sounds like someone else-" Leonel's voice trailed off, having received a glare for his efforts.

"He's probably not dense enough to completely miss it, so it's more likely that he's ignoring it. I definitely need to vet this lady, who is it?"

Leonel chuckled remembering Cidra's glare. "Cidra."

Aina blinked, and then her eyes seemed to glaze over in thought. She remembered this person quite well, but after a moment, she frowned. "What is it?" Leonel asked.

"That woman spends a lot of time in..."

Aina's voice trailed off. She didn't want to make too many judgments about a person she didn't actually know, but it was hard to believe that a woman would spend so much time in those areas and not be involved somehow.

"Forget it," Aina shook her head. "I probably shouldn't interfere in their matters too much. If she really does end up with my dad, we might end up like you and my dad now."

Leonel grinned. "Right, right. Forget the love affair of others; we should focus on our own."

He tried to lean forward for a kiss, but Aina slipped away. "Nice try."

Leonel could only watch as Aina vanished into the distance. He sighed and leaned back.

It had already been three days since he set up that trap in the underground city, but nothing had come of it.

Three days actually wasn't much, and it made sense that the Godlens would be cautious about trying something like that again. If they were too eager, they might end up suffering again.

However, Leonel felt that it was something else. So, he took the risk and asked Anastasia to look into it, and it had only made him worry more.

The Godlens had gone into a complete lockdown. They activated their formation and hunkered down, and they seemed to be working on something big.

Unfortunately, it was impossible for Anastasia to breach the formation and take a look at what was going on inside, at least not without alerting them.

Now, Leonel was in limbo. His enemies didn't look like they were going to fall into the trap, so he was just floating without aim.

'It seems like I should go to that collapsed Ninth Dimensional Mine then. The Godlens have already pulled back into their city, and the main dangers over there are demons who are just patrolling the area now. I still don't know where I'll get Ninth Dimensional Evolution Ore, but at the very least, we can cover this base...'

"Leonel, Emery, Noah, and Jessica are awake."

Chapter 2498: Sure?

Leonel made his way to Noah, his thoughts still filled with many things.

Ninth Dimensional Urbe Ore was still manageable. But in this world, there were literally no other Ninth Dimensional Ores.

Urbe Ore was a Foundational Ore, an Ore that was ubiquitous in its usage and it could be said that it was the most abundant in the world. And yet, the Godlens only had one of them.

Their next best mine was an Eighth Dimensional one that seemed to have Fire Elemental Ores of some kind. Leonel didn't even look into it much.

In the wider Existence, according to Anastasia, people used Reinforced Urbe Ore as the currency of choice. Unfortunately for the Godlens, that meant that even with a Ninth Dimensional Urbe Ore Mine, they still used Seventh Dimensional Reinforced Urbe Ore as their baseline currency. They would be paupers if they went anywhere else.

This was all to say that this was the mine of the greatest value the Godlens had, and yet it was the most common in wider Existence.

Just in general, Ninth Dimensional Evolution Ore was impossibly rare. This was an Ore capable of upgrading Ninth Dimensional Ores, which were already at the very pinnacle of existence.

The more Leonel thought about it, the more he thought his dad just rolled out of bed and decided to mess with him. If things were already this wild now, what would it take to enter the Fifth Dimension? Beyond that?

Leonel shook his head as he came to a cabin in the woods. He raised his hand to knock on the door, but Noah opened it first, a complicated look in his eyes.

Leonel grinned. "You look like you're doing much better, that's good."

"You saved me again."

"Eh..." Leonel scratched his head. "... honestly, you were only in so much danger to begin with because of me. Things wouldn't have gone left so quickly if I never appeared. I should have trusted you to have things in hand."

Indeed, back then Leonel had only allowed himself to be captured because he was worried about Noah. If he had trusted Noah to protect himself, things wouldn't have gone so poorly.

Noah blinked. "... You've changed."

"Why does everyone keep saying that?"

Noah blushed a bit, leaving Leonel not knowing how to react. This cousin of his sure embarrassed easily.

"Regardless, now we're here, we should stick together. I mean, unless you want to try and make your own way. I won't say no."

Noah hesitated, then looked back toward Jessica who was still within the cabin.

"I heard that you want to start an organization?"

"I do. I'm finally tired of getting kicked out of them."

Noah smiled. "Okay, we will join. Does it have a name?"

"Not yet. But! I guarantee it will have cool uniforms."

This time, it was Noah's turn to be speechless.

...

Amery was already practicing his sword. He didn't say anything even as Leonel walked up to him; he just continued swinging that wooden sword again, and again, and again.

Unlike Leonel, he had been there. He went from a genius, to losing at the hands of someone a Dimension below him, to getting returned to his grandfather, only to be captured again alone with his fiancée, and as though all of that wasn't terrible enough, after Leonel vanished, he had to watch his people die one after another.

His parents were gone. His grandfather was gone. His cousins, his siblings, his family was gone.

And it was all because this sword in his hand wasn't strong enough.

Golden streams of Sword Force pulsed again and again.

Amery hadn't been able to protect his mind from manipulation like Noah had. Due to that, he had been trapped in his own head the whole time, forced to watch as everything happened around him. He thought he would never be able to break out at all, until it was somehow the man who enslaved his family to begin with was the one to save him.

Leonel didn't say anything either. He stood there with his arms crossed, watching Amery swinging his sword again and again. The man didn't seem like he was going to tire anytime soon, but Leonel's patience also seemed to be endless.

"Are you going to give me a chance to kill them?" Amery suddenly said.

"Does 'them' include me?" Leonel replied with a smirk.

"It might." Amery replied evenly.

"Then probably not. I'm not a fan of losing, and I don't have a habit of losing to people I've already defeated."

"It doesn't look like you'd stand much of a chance right."

"Want to give it a try?"

Amery's wooden sword flashed, and its tip stopped just an inch in front of Leonel's nose. Leonel himself didn't even flinch, his arms remaining crossed.

With a flicker, the sword vanished again, and Amery started to diligently swing it again.

"Good talk," Leonel laughed, turning to disappear into the distance.

Neither felt that it was necessary to say much more than that.

...

Leonel stepped out into the world again, taking a deep breath.

The Segmented Cube unfolded and entered its shuttle form. He stepped into it and shot off into the distance. It wouldn't take him more than a few minutes to reach his destination.

His mind was still consumed by thoughts of how he'd get his hands on that much Evolution Ore, but soon that was swept away by that flash of Dream Force in the distance. It was taking everything he had to not go in that direction instead.

He wasn't ready to go, plus it also didn't help that doing so would mean entering the territory of the Four Great Families. There was probably a reason his grandfather said they were not to be trusted even though he would naturally already know that.

'I need to go. This feeling isn't here for no reason.'

When Leonel got close to the region of the Ninth Dimensional Urbe Ore mine, he stepped out of the shuttle. Although he could definitely out-speed any demons in the

area, it wasn't like he could do the same while he was digging into the ground. He had no choice but to approach more stealthily.

...

"Are you sure?" The Moon Demon asked.

"Sure? No. But with the Godlens turtling up, this is our best shot at catching another fish."

The Sun Demon smiled, looking toward the ruins of a crumbled mine.

Chapter 2499: Someone

'Hm?'

Leonel's eyes narrowed. He could feel some uncomfortable pressures forming around him.

Being a Dream Sovereign allowed him more than just access to the Dream Plane before entering the Life State. Or, maybe more accurately than that, the Dream Plane had much more to offer than what it seemed.

Usually, with Internal Sight, one could only sense what was within their range. However, when one transcended beyond this and began to use the Dream Plane as their main mode of sensory information, it was possible to begin to get a feel for what was outside of your range.

This wasn't to say that Leonel could see things clearly outside of said range, but he could feel various things, things like intent, will, and powerful presences. The more intention such existences had toward him, the easier it was to feel.

The power of Dream Force, especially at these high levels, wasn't to be underestimated. It was for this reason that Leonel's father and grandfather had to be so cautious with how much they told him.

The only drawback was that these feelings were incredibly subtle and easy to ignore if Leonel wasn't paying careful attention. This was especially so since he didn't have the luxury of having someone else to guide him and could only make his path forward on his own.

However, at this moment, he was in an incredibly focused state. He knew that he was walking into danger, so how could he not be on high alert?

He frowned, looking around. But he didn't sense anything, and he was even more hesitant to allow Anastasia to check things out for him. Who knew who was lingering in the shadows? The fact the feeling was so subtle meant that whoever it was likely hadn't quite sensed him yet.

'How far am I from the mine? Maybe three or so kilometers?'

Leonel thought to himself, his mind churning. He looked toward the ground, hesitating.

"Little Tolly."

Leonel spoke as he pressed his Tolliver-coated hand to the ground. He was a bit reluctant to do this as he didn't know how well Tolliver would fare, but this was the best idea he could think of. At least for now, he wasn't willing to charge in a different way.

'The fact I sensed this person, though, should mean that they aren't a Dream Force expert. Once I'm down below, I can take the chance since they won't be able to get to me easily even if I am wrong.'

Tolliver devoured through the earth as though it was clay, processing it and turning it into a substance that Leonel could easily manipulate with his Earth Force.

This was honestly the reason why Leonel put so little effort into his Earth Force. Aside from meeting his father's requirements of raising it to the Impetus State, he very rarely used it. Other Forces were just far more forgiving.

However, the strong suit of Earth Force was that it was everywhere for the most part, and yet even with its Impetus State version, it was so hard to move earth normally.

The ground was too sturdy and too robust to casually use in battle. And if it could be easily manipulated, then it would be too weak to use in battle.

For now, the best use of Earth Force for Leonel seemed to be using it in conjunction with [Domain] to suppress other Earth Force users or using it to maximize his Metal Body.

'Earth Force can't really be so weak...'

These were casual thoughts Leonel had as he disappeared deeper and deeper into the ground, using his Earth Force to fill in the hole with the softer, refined rocks Tolliver spit out.

When he was about 50 meters below ground, he began making his way toward the mine.

"Anastasia, check the surroundings for me. I felt something weird."

Images flashed in Leonel's mind. He breathed out a sigh of relief every time they passed through a demon who didn't react to Anastasia's scan.

Unfortunately, it didn't last long.

'Shit.' Leonel cursed.

...

'Hm?'

A Lust Demon looked up, her large violet eyes blinking. She had sensed something weird just now.

Lust Demons weren't known for their bodily strength like many other demons, or their elemental affinities like the Cobra Demons. They were experts in the senses, in illusions, and in control. They might not be Dream Force masters, but all of them were Soul Force masters, and they had powerful methods of protecting their minds and boosting their senses as well.

"Alysa?"

A Bull Demon with a raging hard-on noticed the Lust Demon's weird reaction immediately. He was tired of being teased by this woman and was ready to pounce, but she had actually pulled back just now.

In truth, he expected this sort of thing. Lust Demons, especially their women, were very conniving and loved being teased, but they rarely casually bedded anyone. And even when you did manage to con your way into their bed, it was more likely that you were the one to have been conned instead.

Of course, this wasn't to say that these women were prudes or protective of their chastity. This was far from the case. It was rather that if they were going to drain someone, it would be of their chastity.

It was said that they could only grow powerful by taking down men with strong wills. The men who were so easily swayed by their bouncing breasts and swaying hips were exactly the kind they disdained the most.

How would they grow stronger if they only drained these average men?

Alysa ignored the Bull Demon, the palm she had pressed to his chest suddenly gaining a great amount of strength. No matter how hard the Bull Demon tried to close the distance, he couldn't take even a single step.

"Someone is here." Alysa flipped a fair, violet palm and pulled out a communication treasure.

"Young master, the Dream Force expert is here but I couldn't pinpoint his location."

Chapter 2500: Digging

Leonel shook his head. He knew that this would happen, but this was unexpected.

According to Anastasia, only those with Life State Dream Force should be able to sense her, but her comprehension of Forces were only limited to their uses in raw form. This was why Leonel had always been so cautious with how he used her, especially since he noticed how limited her mental faculties were.

She was probably correct, but the problem was that there were techniques like [Domain], [Universe], and [Finality] out there. The Godlens weren't the only ones to have such broken techniques, and techniques didn't necessarily need to be so powerful to give Forces such unexpected effects either.

Of course, this wasn't to say that these techniques gave his enemies the power of a Life State technique. If that was possible, the humans wouldn't be in such a sorry state.

Rather, it was that techniques allowed a shortcut for weaker Forces to display abilities usually only allowed by more powerful Forces. This Alysa character definitely didn't have Dream Force anywhere near the Life State. In fact, she only had Half-Step Impetus State Soul Force from what Leonel could tell.

And yet, this was the situation.

'The human alliance is actually so pathetic. A Seventh Dimensional demon is doing something their Ninth Dimensional powerhouses couldn't...'

There was good news, though. Her weak Force showed. At the very least, she couldn't track the source of the senses that just washed over her.

The question was whether Leonel could allow Anastasia to go all out and get him a full lay of the land, or if he should pull back.

"Go all out," Leonel said.

Soon, the images in Leonel's mind continued to flicker by faster and faster.

Of the Lust Demons, only Alysa sensed him. Of the Bull Demons, none did. Of the Cobra Demons, there were actually two. However, the Cobra Demons didn't seem to

sense him due to a powerful Force. Instead, their tongues slithered in and out of their mouths as though tasting the air. Then, they suddenly stood straighter, their slit eyes becoming wary.

Leonel took note of this and slotted it in the back of his mind. And finally, he saw them.

A man with bronze skin, not a normal tan color, but it truly looked as though he had been cast by the metal.

By his side, there was a woman with similar cast silver skin.

Sun and Moon Demons. Leonel recognized them immediately and his expression became serious as both of them turned their heads toward his general location.

Leonel pulled back after getting the information he needed.

For whatever reason, the demons had only sent their juniors forward. Even the strongest of them was only at the Quasi Eighth Dimension.

Leonel didn't believe it was because they were weak, but there had to be a different reason entirely. Remembering the flash of Dream Force he sensed earlier, he wondered if these matters were related.

His heart skipped several beats as his agitation grew. He really wanted to know what that pulse of Dream Force was all about to make even the demons react like this.

Leonel shot forward even faster, reaching the outer regions of the mine. But at that moment, he began to sense that Little Tolly was struggling, and they had no choice but to slow down.

Urbe Ore was known for its toughness, and this would only be doubly so for Ninth Dimensional Urbe Ore. This made the ground around them particularly hard as well just by virtue of its influence, which was why it became even harder for Leonel to use his Earth Force properly.

Khelgis appeared in the last region he sensed Leonel in a flash, the red orbs that were his eyes rolling back and forth with great speed. But he actually didn't see or sense anything.

It was clear that Khelgis had yet to realize that Leonel had been underground. In fact, even though he and Adu had sensed the general region, it was only to a resolution of about 100 meters in diameter. They were only certain that Leonel had been here, at some point, within a hundred meters.

Khelgis' eyes narrowed, and then he suddenly looked at the ground. But he immediately shook his head.

That would be impossible. The ground here was far too hard.

Even if he knew Leonel was 50 meters below ground, it would take him several minutes of effort to get down there. By then, Leonel would have already moved. The only way was to find the trail of soft earth Leonel had left behind, but that was already easier said than done considering how perfectly Leonel had hidden himself.

Khelgis fell into his thoughts, and every one of the other demons didn't dare to breathe too loudly.

'No, it can only be the ground.'

Khelgis' eyes flashed, and a searing heat rose. And then, he peered directly toward the ground below.

His senses passed right through the earth, digging deeper and deeper.

Everyone knew that sweeping your senses through the ground was much harder than through the air. Earth Force was finicky for more existences than just Earth Force users. However, that didn't mean it was impossible.

At first, Khelgis saw nothing until he froze.

There was a path of Earth his senses swept through much more easily than the rest of it, as though it was loosely packed dirt instead of solid ground.

His aura flared. He knew it; Leonel was actually underground.

With a flash, he began to move, picking a direction and rushing toward it.

He didn't find Leonel, but he found the next best thing: an entrance.

"Larkan."

"Yes!" A familiar Bull Demon rushed forward.

"Start digging."

Larkan was taken off guard, but he didn't hesitate. How could he dare to ignore the orders of a Sun Demon?

He punched at the ground, but to his surprise, it actually split apart with great ease. Usually, the earth was incredibly hard, especially here where the high-level Urbe Ore had a great influence.

Throwing that to the back of his mind, he continued to tunnel downward. In a single breath, he had already entered the earth by more than 20 meters and was more than halfway down.