

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2521: Easier

The flood of information came in such fierce waves that Leonel's mind nearly collapsed. If it wasn't for the fact he had experience with becoming a Dream Asura, and the extra flood of information and sensory overload that came with it, it might have truly happened.

He had no choice but to hunker down and hope that Clarence didn't use the opportunity to attack him. But the truth was that the current Dream Force affinity around him was so dense that someone trying to approach might just directly lose their mind as well. Clarence couldn't get close even if he wanted to.

It wasn't until three days later that the flood of information finally stopped, and Leonel was able to open up a haggard pair of eyes. It looked as though he hadn't slept in years; his mind had really gone through what felt like centuries of living just now. It wasn't the kind of thing he wanted to experience again in a short time.

Luckily, aside from his experience as his enlightened self, he was also a Dream Sovereign and had strengthened his body considerably, allowing him to access more of the true strength of his Dream Force.

As for the information he had received, it was unsurprisingly... a lot.

For one, there was a bunch of information about the Vast Dream Pavilion and its history. He learned that he had somehow become the de facto Pavilion Head and all this responsibility he had wanted to avoid in the first place had suddenly been thrown onto his shoulders.

Just earlier, he had wanted to create his own organization; he was already cycling between different cool uniform ideas and equally as cool names, and now he was strapped with this?

The truth was that if Leonel could take the benefits and avoid the hassle, he would. The trouble was that with that information had also come a great deal of context.

He was aware that every Dream Pavilion in existence knew what was in that box, which meant everyone knew that it was suddenly in the hands of a "Fifth Dimensional" brat who just happened to be a Dream Sovereign.

That second part was enough to shock them, but not nearly enough that they would suddenly change their minds about attacking him. What did Leonel being a Dream Sovereign have to do with their own goals and aspirations? They would rather claim the power he had for themselves, regardless of his life and death.

The only way to keep the Life Tablet protected from greedy eyes was to use the Dream Pavilion itself as a protective mechanism to tie the hands of those that wanted to take advantage of him...

The problem was that all the Contribution Points he would have needed to do that had just been gambled away by Clarence. If nothing was done, the Vast Dream Pavilion would plummet to 9999th place and then all hell would break loose.

It was truly the worst sort of outcome and there was little he could do but play this game now.

'How fucking annoying...'

Leonel didn't even know how he would do this; it would probably be the most dangerous thing he had ever done, and that was saying something. He had just escaped the hands of two organizations flooded with Ninth Dimensional experts as a Third Dimensional expert, and after getting hundreds of times stronger, he would suddenly be facing off against enemies likely thousands of times stronger than the Ninth Dimensional experts he had just escaped.

Luckily, it wasn't all bad. Even if it was, Leonel would have managed to keep his calm. But now that he also had information to back that, he was even more at ease.

Another challenge? So what?

The so-called True Dream Plane wasn't a place anyone could do as they pleased. It was a location where the only Force available was Dream Force. In fact, even though it was called the True Dream Plane, and it was advertised as something you could enter with your body, that wasn't necessarily true either.

According to this information, the True Dream Plane would only allow the portion of your soul that acted as a connecting line to your body to enter.

One could see, then, how this would put humans at a great disadvantage.

Dream Force was freest when it was separated from the body. Even for Leonel's Control Ability Index, he could only use his Dream World as a proxy to impose order onto his body.

Humans who entered the True Dream Plane would find themselves fighting back against a great amount of cognitive dissonance. When that was layered with their already relatively weak Dream Force to begin with, it was a nightmare.

Luckily, Leonel didn't have this problem, and there were many other things he would be able to take advantage of in that situation, especially when the Life Tablet was on his side and given the fact he was a Dream Sovereign.

There wasn't much else left to do than prepare.

He turned his attention to Clarence. The latter had already recovered and seemed to have been watching over him. There was a tinge of regret in his eyes, but also a hint of helplessness.

Hindsight was 20-20. If he had known everything in advance, he would have never triggered the Challenge sequence. But what was done was done. At this point, he could only say that they were lucky that Leonel had taken so long to appear. Thanks to that, their opponents were already locked in.

If the higher-ranked Dream Pavilions had known of Leonel's existence, or the Life Tablet had been claimed earlier, they would have definitely entered this Challenge as well.

However, just because they couldn't enter any longer, didn't mean that they wouldn't be able to influence the situation. There was no doubt that they were already moving in the shadows.

And Leonel's arrogance, even to the point of kicking them all out so forcefully...

Well, it definitely wouldn't make things any easier.

Chapter 2522: Cute

Leonel slowly rose to his feet, stretching out his back.

Right now, they were in a lull period. The opponents had been set, and the Challenger now had the right to pick the time and date. The only rule was that it had to be within a year.

The smart thing seemed to be to drag it out for as long as you could, but Leonel knew that this was the exact wrong move. He had already thought of what Clarence had.

There were a great deal of moves being made in the shadows right now, and he had already wasted three days. He couldn't waste any more time.

However, it wasn't all bad.

Existence was impossibly vast, and the Dream Pavilions were scattered all across it. Even with the greatest means, it could easily take years to move from point A to point B, and that was even taking into account large-scale teleportation platforms and things of the like.

If he gave him a year, they might really find a whole host of ways to make his life a living nightmare.

But there was no way he'd do that.

Without speaking to Clarence, Leonel waved a hand and set the time. When Clarence got the notification, his eyes widened, but he didn't say anything in the end.

'This boy...!' Clarence looked at Leonel deeply.

He had been there when Leonel escaped from the clutches of the Godlens. It might be because he was arrogant that he chose to do things like this, but Clarence didn't believe that to be the case.

He felt that Leonel was bold, but only in the right areas. Even so, he was surprised that Leonel had set the date for just a single day from now. In fact, it wasn't even a full 24 hours.

"The Godlens sent a representative," Clarence suddenly said.

"Oh?" Leonel smiled. "I guess news spreads fast."

"They want the Godlen Codex back."

"Tell them to kick rocks. Those techniques are better in my hands anyway."

Leonel turned and walked away, leaving Clarence in silence. Soon, a grin spread across Clarence's face and his laughter echoed.

He had been tired of the Human Race's way of doing things for a long while now. By this point, he was almost 100% certain that Leonel was the one that ruined their plans.

From the very beginning, this inconspicuous boy had been pulling the strings from the shadows and it ruined things they had been planning for centuries. He didn't even know how Leonel managed to trigger the fusion of six Bubble Worlds, and yet he was still certain that it had happened.

Regardless, none of it mattered. If Leonel could pull this off as well, none of the rest of it would matter in the slightest.

He might become a man truly worthy of the title of King.

**

"A day from now? This human is different."

The speaker was a Nomad man. The gem on his forehead was particularly prominent, his turban carefully wrapped to allow it to shine through.

"Do you think the humans planned all of this?" Another asked.

"It's possible. We may have fallen for a trap. I don't believe that they would be so stupid to trigger this challenge when they had a Dream Sovereign waiting in the wings. They may be trying to enter the top 100 once again. If they won this Challenge, they would have just enough points to claim that bottom spot."

"But it doesn't make sense. That boy is only in the Fifth Dimension. Why not wait for him to grow?"

"We all know how much of an advantage Dream Sovereigns have in that land. The advantage is even greater with the Life Tablet is in play. If they have one or two other treasures from the olden days to pull out, they might very well be confident in winning."

"Meaning this could just be a statement from them? A warning shot."

"Maybe even a petty jab. They've been ruthlessly suppressed by those at the top for generations now. Triggering this Challenge right after they were given such a short timeline to find a new Pavilion Head, and winning, would really be a resounding slap to their faces."

As he spoke these words, the calmness in his voice didn't transfer to the rest of his face. His expression carried a deep sneer.

Mere humans dared to use his Gem Dream Pavilion as a stepping stone?

...

The Crafted Dream Pavilion.

At the top of a wide set of stairs quite familiar to the likes of Leonel and Clarence, a woman wearing a flowing dress of pink diamond sat. Two wings, more white than a subtle pink, spread to her back, looking as though each feather had been delicately carved by a white-gold leaf of metal.

This was a woman that truly looked as though she had been plucked out of the sky from a world of deities. Everything but her hawk-like eyes and fierce brows were truly perfect.

This was the Pavilion Head of the Crafted Dream Pavilion. The Gem Pavilion was ranked 947th, while they were ranked 529th. It could be said that the Gem Pavilion only swept in to fill the numbers because between the 529th ranked Crafted Dream Pavilion and the 491st ranked Breeze Dream Pavilion, most of the Contribution Points had already been matched.

One could see, then, how large the gap between the top echelons and the bottom rung was. The Vast Pavilion had to double their Contribution Points just to rise up 20-odd spots, while these three Pavilions, despite being much lower ranked, were able to pool their resources together to match them.

This wasn't too surprising, though. There was a line of demarcation every 1000 spots. All those ranked between 100 and 1000 were about the same. Upon entering the top 100, though, there was a significant gap with every 10 spots you moved up...

Despite the fact there was a higher ranked Dream Pavilion partaking, though... it could be said that the Crafted Dream Pavilion was by far the most dangerous.

They weren't ruled by the Nomad Race like the Gem Dream Pavilion, nor the Spirituals like the Breeze Dream Pavilion.

No, they were ruled by a Demi-God Race. A Race of men and women descended from the once mighty Minerva Race...

The Owlman Race... Also known as the Sages.

The woman on the throne curled her beautiful lips into a smile.

"Cute," she said softly. This was truly amusing to her.

Chapter 2523: Belief

Leonel planted a kiss on Aina's forehead, cupping her cheeks with a smile on his face. Though she smiled during the action, she frowned soon afterward.

"What are you going to do this time?"

Leonel grinned. "Just wreak a little havoc, nothing too big."

"You're a terrible liar."

Leonel laughed. "Objectively, I'm the perfect liar. If there was a competition of liars across the world, I would probably be number one. I'm captain liar, king liar, emperor liar."

Aina scrunched up her little nose, the adorable action causing Leonel to stop and laugh.

"You're beautiful, you know that?"

Aina blushed at the sudden words. "What are you talking about all of a sudden? Are you trying to sweet talk your way into my bed? Keep going, it might work."

Leonel's smile bloomed even brighter. He felt that he was really lucky to have a woman like this. Although they hadn't had the smoothest path to getting here, he felt that every moment was worth it.

"Just know, Aina. Nothing can keep me from returning, I promise."

Those pair of radiant golden eyes stared up at him, carrying a hint of something Leonel hadn't seen before.

It was belief.

It wasn't shrouded by sadness, darkness, or even the slightest hint of doubt. She just believed in him. And for some reason, that made Leonel feel stronger than he ever had before. Goosebumps raced across his skin and he was suddenly intoxicated by the gaze of this woman in his arms.

He kissed her. It wasn't their spiciest kiss, but it was probably their truest.

Aina's eyes were a hint misty when they pulled apart.

"Do you want to?" She asked softly. She had never been actually serious about gatekeeping their bed. Who knew how long it would take for Leonel and her father to make up? If it took years, wouldn't she be suffering too?

"Save it for me," Leonel said with a grin, giving her ass a little pinch. "I'll rock your world when I'm back."

Aina laughed. "Save those big words for if you actually manage to defeat me."

"According to my calculations, my win percentage is near flawless," Leonel said righteously.

"Is that so? I seem to remember a certain virgin quick shot."

Aina's eyes blinked innocently, as though she was asking Leonel to confirm if that was true or not. What she received in return, though, was a devious grin.

"Alright, you win."

Aina's clothing suddenly exploded apart, floating into the air like wisps of ash and smoke.

She was too stunned to react. When had Leonel gotten that ability? Plus, they were in the middle of a forest right now, her preferred training spot. But there was nothing stopping someone from suddenly walking in on them. Whenever they were in their room alone, Anastasia knew not to peek, but this wasn't their usual safe zone.

The sudden anxiety made her heartbeat quicken and her face and body flushed red.

However, there was nowhere to escape to. Her delicate back found itself pressed against a tree with Leonel looming over her, fully clothed.

Leonel pressed a palm by the side of her head, grabbing one of her breasts with his other. It felt so soft in his palm that it almost reminded him of melting butter. It was a feeling he could get lost in for all eternity, but he was here to tease this future wife of his.

Aina shuddered at the sudden touch. Beneath his tense nerves, her body flexed, revealing the subtle lines of power she hid beneath that delicate figure. The faint abs that moved beneath her heavy breathing, her rippling, tall breasts, those wide hips that flowed out from her narrow waist...

Every inch of her was perfect.

She was as tense as she could have been, and yet Leonel only continued to play with her one breast, ignoring the other and the rest of her. The sensation of heat and anxiety overwhelmed her, and suddenly a faint drizzle of a sparkling liquid dripped down her inner thigh.

Aina didn't notice it, but Leonel most definitely did.

A smile spread across his face. "Do you want to go inside?"

Aina nodded, her voice not working.

"Are you sure?"

She nodded again, but for some reason she seemed to forget what a nod of yes and a shake of no. Her head hesitated, and then she did the latter, before changing and going

to the former, and then second guessing herself once again and going for the latter once more.

Leonel's smile deepened, his head lowering and kissing her delicate lips.

Aina shuddered as she moaned beside herself. She couldn't even control it, and didn't have the time to feel embarrassed that she had entered such a state from a mere peck on the lips.

Leonel's hand left her breast, trailing down her toned torso and grabbing her thigh with a strong palm. The current Aina was standing on her tippy toes, too uncomfortable to place her feet on the ground... or maybe it was just that she really wanted Leonel to kiss her again.

The strong hand, though, made her knees feel weak. If not for how tense she was, she might have already collapsed.

Leonel looked into her eyes. Those golden irises darted back and forth, somewhat wanting to focus on Leonel, but also scanning the forest to make sure that no one was coming. Her heart only beat faster and faster.

And just when her anxiety had reached a peak, she suddenly felt Leonel's hand slip between her thighs.

Her hands shot downward, grabbing Leonel's forearm with both hands. However, when she felt its size, the pulsing vascularity on it, the fact her own hands couldn't even wrap halfway around his hulking mass, she looked into his eyes again. She had simply never been so attracted to any other man before. Even his forearms were perfect, what flaw did he have?

A finger gently glided down her other set of pink lips and her mind went blank. If not for Leonel's kiss, she might have alerted Anastasia's entire world...

And she wouldn't have given a damn as the pleasure came in waves.

Chapter 2524: 37th

Leonel tightly wrapped the last band across his forearm and made sure that his turban was in place. He looked like quite the Arabian prince right now if he did say so himself.

According to the system of the Dream Pavilion, the different colors of turbans represented different things, but truthfully he couldn't be bothered to give a damn. He had suddenly become the Pavilion Head and none of that other stuff mattered, so he just took a black turban for himself.

His wrists and ankles were tied by matching black fabric, and there was also another matching piece of fabric in the form of a cloth belt around his waist.

Other than that, his clothing was quite loose. A set of white linen that felt so light that it truly might have been made out of clouds. There were some faded images of clouds floating across it, but Leonel had chosen a far more subtle option.

With that done, Leonel stepped out from the temple. However, down below, there was only Clarence and no one else, causing Leonel to sneer.

"The Challenge was something that Leonel didn't really have a choice but to participate in as the Pavilion Head. This was the case even though the decision had been made without his consent.

However, to everyone else, there was technically nothing forcing them to go. Although Leonel could make them with his powers, they probably thought he didn't dare to.

Truthfully, Leonel just didn't care to. What good were these burdens to him? He had stronger Dream Force than everyone but Clarence, and even then his Dream Force was stronger than Clarence's in this case because of his Dream Sovereignty and the Life Tablet.

Clarence sighed helplessly. 'I tried, but...'

'We don't need useless members,' Leonel said with a wave of his hand.

What he didn't say was that if not for a certain rule, he would have kicked them all out directly. Unfortunately, the Dream Pavilion not only needed a Pavilion Head, but they also needed a certain number of members to continue being a Pavilion.

However, Leonel would have a method of dealing with Gemmes and the others very soon.

'Let's go,' Leonel said.

With a step, he vanished and appeared on the highest clouds of the Dream Pavilion. Almost the moment he did, a swirling portal appeared. Within it, he could see the shadows of several groups. Three, to be specific.

Two of them had numbers of two or three dozen. One, however, looked much more similar to Leonel's own group. Even so, they had more people than Leonel did as there were three of them, each one with a pair of wings on their back.

Leonel couldn't see anything more concrete than this, but it hardly mattered. There was no changing things now.

'It's time.'

Leonel took a step forward and Clarence followed him.

The world swirled around him and soon the figures that had been blurry before solidified.

The location could only be described as a trial court, except this time, instead of just two defendants, there were four, and instead of them facing a judge, they faced each other, each one taking up one of the cardinal directions.

This time, Leonel got a good look at them all.

Nomads, Spirituals and Owlans. The highest ranked were the Spirituals, and yet Leonel was fairly certain that they weren't even half as dangerous as the Owlans.

After he swept his gaze through them, he no longer looked toward them at all. His expression was calm and unhurried, his state of absolute focus reaching an incredibly deep realm. The air around him felt solid and even those that tried to probe him couldn't make any progress at all.

Before, they were certain that he was in the Fifth Dimension, but now they weren't so sure. In the end, they could only chalk it up to the Life Tablet.

They knew that thing was a ticking time bomb. If not for the fact Leonel had claimed it at the last minute, it wouldn't have been their turn to claim it. The best they could hope for was to claim it, and then pawn it off to a higher ranked Pavilion in exchange for some rewards. They knew better than to wish for something that was beyond them.

At that moment, in the center of the "courtroom", a shadowy figure appeared.

Its form was large and imposing, just its presence alone, even partially formed, made those present want to bow their heads.

And then it looked at Leonel.

Leonel had his eyes closed. Even when the figure appeared, and he clearly sensed it, he didn't open his eyes.

'The Void Dream Pavilion is willing to take up this Challenge on behalf of the Vast Dream Pavilion in exchange for the Life Tablet.'

Leonel's eyes slowly opened.

'Do you know Shan'Rae?'

The sudden question took everyone off guard, even the shadowy figure itself.

'Shan'Rae. 37th in line for the Void Throne. Unmatured.'

'Mm,' Leonel nodded. 'When you go back, be sure to tell her that I remember her quite clearly. In the future, she won't be so arrogant.'

Silence fell.

The fact that the figure knew Shan'Rae at all was a truly shocking matter. This meant that this junior had an exceptionally high status. Although there were very few God children to begin with, why would someone of high status bother to remember them all unless they were important?

37th in line for the Void Throne was even more shocking. This meant that this junior was the 37th most talented of the Void Race, regardless of generation. So long as you weren't of the eldest Generation, you were qualified to be on this list... even if you had just been born.

This held even more weight than just remembering her name.

But then how could Leonel possibly know her?

'You can go now,' Leonel said calmly. Then, without waiting for any other interruptions, Leonel pressed a foot down and Dream Force erupted.

The Challenge had begun.

Chapter 2525: A Child

No one expected Leonel to begin the proceedings so abruptly, least of all Clarence. But at the end of the day, he realized that being subservient at this point would do them no good. It would only kill their own momentum for little to no reason. The more mysterious and all-knowing Leonel seemed, the more they would benefit.

He could already sense the shift in the gazes of the participants, some of them even sporting frowns. Seeds of caution sprouted in their hearts as they all vanished.

...

Void Dream Pavilion.

A man with skin that looked like reflective glass, displaying the stars and galaxies within, slowly opened his eyes.

He didn't seem enraged, but the expression of such a Race was hard to read to begin with. If one really wanted to know, all they had to gaze upon were the rising number of supernovas dotted across his body.

But soon, even those calmed.

According to the rules, Dream Pavilions in the top ten had special privileges, one of them being replacing a willing party in a Challenge event. He had chosen to take action on this matter.

He wasn't the only one to think of it, but he was the fastest to react. The time Leonel left them was indeed too small to affect the situation on any sort of wide scale.

He wanted to call Shan'Rae here, but unfortunately, he couldn't just casually do so. She was a junior, but she wasn't a junior he could order around as he pleased. Her status was too high, but his status wasn't anything to sneeze at either even though Dream Force wasn't a strong suit of the Void Race.

Even so, it could be said that the only reason they had a Dream Pavilion in the top ten was that it was a matter of status. So long as they existed, it would be fine and even ignorable. If they didn't, it would be a matter of humiliation.

This was the power of the God Races. Even when they weren't suited to a Force, they would still have experts related to it, even if those experts weren't taken the most seriously.

In the end, the Void Dream Pavilion Head did nothing. This would expose a matter of great humiliation and he shouldn't be worried about a minor character like Leonel anyway.

The Life Tablet would be of interest to the Void Race, but only insofar as they didn't want to have to deal with it falling into the hands of a God Race that could actually manage to use it. The fact that it was in Leonel's hands now was a bit of a problem, but that was only because they felt it could be taken away by someone else at any time.

'The Owlman Race should take victory in this matter. They have been making small moves all the while, but they're trying to be subtle about it. If not for this, they would have come back to the top 100 long ago.

'It's likely that they're worried about the shadow of the Minerva Race weighing them down, so they're choosing to lay low for now.

'However, the Life Tablet is too great an enticement for them. If they can get it, they will confidently rise again and they might make an attempt to become a new God Race and wash away their Demi-God status.'

After analyzing the situation, the Void Pavilion Head felt much calmer. A new fish in a large ocean wouldn't really move the needle for the Void Race. In fact, the more variables, and the more diluted the resources, the better.

That way, replacing the Pluto Race as the true Emperors of Existence wouldn't be far away.

Even so, that Leonel Morales had better not appear before him. Or else he would teach that child that there were things worse than death.

...

Leonel's gaze cleared, and he found a world that felt like a copy and paste of the Vast Dream Pavilion... but far larger and lacking the temples.

In place of the temples, there were instead mountains of crystal, exuding rainbow-like colors of a wide range, not too dissimilar from the Life Tablet in his mind. In fact, it even felt like they were carved of the same material.

'Hm?'

Leonel immediately leapt back.

His body, right now, was shrouded in a willowy cloak of white and gold fog, his previous clothing having seemingly covered up. Above his head, there was a crown that hovered about three inches from his scalp, releasing the same foggy energy.

Beneath this cloak and crown, the clothes he remembered wearing were underneath, but even they felt slightly ethereal. The feeling was odd, almost as though he was controlling his soul to move around in his head instead of controlling his body directly.

As for why he had leapt back, it was because a willowy wisp of a creature had suddenly attacked.

It was exuding similar foggy colors, but much more muted. It took the form of a small little fox of barely three quarters of a meter tall, three tails waving around to its back.

'Starry Tailed Fox? A child?'

Yip!

The Starry Tailed fox attacked again, this time even swifter and faster. Leonel felt a suppression around him. This creature might be small, but much like the God Races, the power it exuded was incredible despite its youth. It didn't even make sense to check for its Dimension; what made the most sense was checking for its threat level.

And that was high.

However, it was greatly restrained here as well. Its main Force was Dream Force and Dream Force alone. The golden lights it was giving off were nothing more than a mirage.

'Down,' Leonel thought, and a wave of Dream Force manifested like any other. The world was twisted and controlled, bending to his might and slamming the little fox to the ground as though a gravity domain had just been activated.

Leonel reached forward and picked it up by one of its tails.

Chapter 2526: Advantage

These were the Dream Creatures of the True Dream Plane.

Upon entering, they were all sent to random locations, and even Clarence wasn't by his side any longer. The purpose of these Dream Creatures was both as a challenge and an opportunity.

You were meant to kill them and take the bundle of Dream Force they left behind. This Dream Force was unique in that it gave you access to two paths.

The first path was the path of the creature itself and the second was your own.

To make a complicated matter simple, you could either use the kernel of Dream Force as a conduit to use the abilities of the creature in question, or to access one of your own.

However, there were obviously tradeoffs.

If you chose the first path, you might not be used to the abilities of the Starry Tailed Fox.

However, if you chose the latter, the Starry Tailed Fox might not be used to your abilities, and as a result, it would be limited in how much of said abilities it could help you to access.

Without these creatures, the only Force one could use here was Dream Force.

Manipulating Dream Force in this world was akin to manipulating Wind Force or any other ambient Force in the outside world. You could quite literally use it like a bludgeon, a blade, or anything of the sort. In fact, maybe the best way to think about it was akin to a telekinetic ability that only worked in this place.

The higher your Dream Force comprehension, the more Dream Force you could mobilize in a single instant of time, and as a result the stronger you would be in this world.

The problem, then, was obvious.

No one used Dream Force like this in the real world.

Even Lionel, who had a rare ability to project his Dream Force out of his body, used it to create things and manipulate the world; using Dream Force so crudely wasn't something most were used to.

As such, even if one had a high Force Manipulation, it would take a hit in this world.

Obviously, much like everything else, Ability Indexes were useless in this world as well, as were Lineage Factors.

It could be said that you were stripped down of almost everything but what you could take.

And that was why Leonel felt he had a chance to make it out of here even amidst all these godlike beings.

Not only did he have a chance, he had a huge advantage.

First, as a Dream Sovereign, his natural ability to wield Dream Force was beyond just his comprehension of it, it was almost an ingrained instinct. As such, he felt no awkwardness using Dream Force like he just had.

Second, his Life Tablet allowed him a far more solid connection with his original body, but that was only the least beneficial thing it could do for him. The most important was that every one of these creatures he killed would have a larger well of Dream Force to pull from as less of it would dissipate after its death. Well, that and one other thing...

"Hey, little guy. Be obedient."

Yip... Yip...

Leonel flipped his palm and he went from holding the little fox by its tail to it balancing on his forearm and looking into his eyes.

The little creature was quite adorable, and under the influence of the Life Tablet, it was completely suppressed.

The Life Tablets were originally meant to control and trap the God Beast Envoys. Well, the Tablets in general, that is. Under its influence, it could only listen.

This wasn't extremely useful in the normal sense. Every second he controlled the creature was another huge drain on his Dream Force, especially since it was using his real body. So, unfortunately, using an army of creatures like this wasn't in the cards.

But what was in the cards was...

"Where's all the good stuff?" Leonel asked with a grin.

There was one goal more important than anything else here. This Challenge obviously wouldn't just end with the death of all but one group; that would be too bloody. In fact, a death here wouldn't be a true death unless someone was exceptionally sinister and wiped out every drop of your Dream Force.

Of course, Leonel wouldn't be banking on the kindness of his enemies to save his life. Considering the angst everyone had against humans, how could they not kill him? That aside, how would they get the Life Tablet that had fused with him if not by killing him? It could be said that everyone could live but him.

This was all to say that the goal of this Challenge wasn't killing.

Those mountains in the distance, all child's play. There was only one mountain they needed to pay real attention to, at least when it came to victory: and that was Dream Mountain.

It was the largest, located on the highest cloud and disappearing into the skies above.

The goal was to be the first to reach it, but doing so was easier said than done. If one casually stepped onto it, your Dream Force could be snuffed out instantaneously and you would suffer a true death.

The main goal was to gather enough treasures that you could force your own anchor, sacrificing those anchors instead of your true body.

It sounded complicated but the short of it was that they needed to create a shield that would weather the storm for them.

Creatures like this Starry Tailed Fox were one way, but there were also various treasures hidden in mountains.

It would usually take time to find these treasures, and the creatures themselves weren't exactly easy to find either. Leonel had just gotten a bit lucky that one attacked him immediately.

However, if Leonel could use these creatures to point him in the direction instead, these creatures that spent year 'round in this True Dream Plane, wouldn't his advantage be huge?

Yip! Yip!

Chapter 2527: Gem Force

The little fox shot off and began to lead Leonel down a trail.

'I have maybe five more minutes before I'm tapped out. I hope this place is close or else I'll have to call it.'

Luckily, it was. Or, more accurately, Leonel realized that he could move through this world quite fast. He didn't just have to use Dream Force like a weapon; he could use it as an auxiliary amplifier to his real body as well and almost swim through the air instead of running.

When he realized this, he picked up the little fox and shot through the air. It seemed that escape and maneuvering would have to be something he focused on in this round.

Soon, he spotted what the little fox was pointing him toward. Then, forming up a large concentration of Force, he trapped the little fox in a box and shot toward the distance.

The fox would only listen to him for as long as the Life Tablet's suppression stuck around. Any longer than that and it would become a danger to him. He thought about just killing it directly, but it was hard to tell when he'd find such an easy to control guide again.

Leonel glided to a stop, shrouding himself in Dream Force to hide his presence.

On his way here, he had noticed several things about this world, the most important of which was that Internal Sight didn't work the normal way either.

One's Internal Sight became more like echo location than a secondary extension of your senses like it should have been. As a result, what others were sensing wasn't your body, but rather the interaction of your body with the Dream Force around you.

If you shrouded it well enough, you could become like the Rapax: entirely immune to detection through Internal Sight.

'I still wonder how they do that,' Leonel allowed himself a fleeting thought before focusing on the situation at hand.

In the distance, there was what looked like a scepter. It hadn't been spotted by any humans, but there was a pair of White Stone Elephants nearby and they looked like they were grazing. It was odd considering this world didn't actually have any grass to

speak of, but he didn't question it. They had to survive off of something, and that something was likely Dream Force.

Although White Stone Elephants were ranked beneath Starry Tailed Foxes, this wasn't the metric Leonel was using to weigh their threat.

For one, the ranking of the Light Northern Star Lineage Factors had much less bearing on the actual strength of the creatures themselves. That wasn't to say that there wasn't a gap between their strengths, because there were. It was more to say that a God Beast Enjoy was a real danger no matter what rank they were.

Leonel's run-in with the Shadow Tail should tell anyone everything they needed to know.

And secondly, these elephants were clearly not as infantile as the little fox had been. They were more mature and thus had far more strength. Of course, they weren't as large as true White Stone Elephants, or any of the other God Beast Envoys for that matter.

Just according to the visions Leonel had seen, those beasts could swallow entire planets should they want to. These elephants, though, were only about four or five meters tall. They were juveniles as well, though not as much as the little fox.

'Their threat level should be about the same as the Eighth Dimension, thereabouts. Though, I probably shouldn't look at it like that, too vague... There are two of them. Should I kill them first, or grab the treasure and run?'

Leonel's thoughts flickered for a moment and decided.

'Why not both?'

He suddenly shot forward. He was parallel to the ground, the clouds so thick around him that he could hardly be seen. At the same time, his control of Dream Force was so perfect that it was impossible to see his momentum shifting the clouds around him.

The pair of elephants seemed to sense something odd but it was too late.

Leonel burst forward with a great amount of Dream Force and smashed the barrier around the treasure, grabbing the scepter.

A surge of Force came from the touch. Leonel felt that the scepter increased his Dream Force control, or rather the amount he could control, but around 20%. It wasn't anything huge, but it was worthwhile.

The White Stone Elephants raised their trunks, their slightly illusory bodies trembling as they trumpeted into the skies.

The clouds wobbled as they rushed for Leonel. Their bodies were instantly coated by a sparkling, gem-like Force.

Leonel had skipped over the White Stone Elephant, but he knew that it had a strong Earth Force under its belt, and that must be it.

Earth Force wasn't very useful in the general sense in this place, but if he could use it for added defense, it would be invaluable.

Leonel rose high into the skies until the elephants had no hope of reaching him. Dream Force surrounded him and kept him afloat as he waved the scepter, unleashing a barrage of blows below.

Like invisible hammers, they collided against the bodies of the elephants, causing their Gem Force to break apart beneath the pressure and crushing their bodies.

Leonel controlled the pieces of broken off Gem Force with a natural ease, then he used the Life Tablet to suppress the mind of the elephants, causing their reaction time to lag just a touch.

If he could control the little fox, of course, he could do this as well. He didn't need to spend all that Dream Force if he could use it as a cheat to quickly win the battle.

The Gem Force crystals of the elephants tore into their skulls.

Just as they were about to dissipate and a large amount of their Dream Force was going to be wasted, the Life Tablet trembled and all of it shot toward Leonel, entering his body.

Chapter 2528: Tier One

'I need a method of measuring strength in this place, my previous attempt was too crude. I'll go back to my roots.'

Leonel smiled to himself. He remembered the first time he had stepped into this world of blood and carnage, his days back in the Mayan Temple. He had thought his Ability Index was just purely sensory due to the Ascension Empire's watch. So, he had tried to maximize it in the best ways he could. One method was assigning enemies he saw various stats. He had built that database off of what he knew about human limits and the like, and it had worked well until overpowered Ability Indexes and Forces began to play a larger and larger role.

He eventually abandoned that model because it wasn't worth his while to keep tabs on it. Though, he still had a natural ability to read a person's ability, see through their weaknesses and strengths, and act accordingly.

'There's no need to use such an elaborate system as I'll only need it for the length of this Challenge. Let's go with a simple Tier One to Tier Nine system for threat levels. I'll place my initial level at Tier One for when I just entered this world and Tier Nine is probably the power you'd need to reach the top of the mountain. I'll put a threat like the little fox at Tier Zero as they aren't any threat to me at all...

'I'd guess that the likes of Clarence would probably be a Tier Two threat to me the moment he stepped into this world. From what I can tell about the other, the highest threat upon just entering this world would be that woman, she's at least at Tier Five even without gathering any treasures and the like. Her entourage is only a half step below her as well, both of them could likely be considered Tier Five as well. Most are at Tier Three, with only a few stragglers being at Tier Two like Clarence, but they're the minority. There should also be another minority at Tier Four as well.

'After absorbing the two elephants, I'd say that I'm about halfway to a Tier Two threat. With the scepter, I'm about 60% of the way there. Just taking advantage of my added flexibility in using Dream Force compared to others, I am probably comparable to a Tier Two threat already.'

Leonel nodded to himself, feeling comfortable with his new system. He had to work faster than others because he wasn't the only person who could improve in this place. His greatest advantages lay in one, his flexibility, and two, in the knowledge he could gather.

The fact that he was already halfway to Tier Two with such a poor treasure and just two Tier One threats like the elephants just went to show how great his advantage was.

By his calculations, another person would have to absorb what amounted to 20 elephants of similar strength to make as much progress as he just had.

Leonel returned to the little fox. It was close to breaking out of its box and bared its teeth the moment it saw Leonel, but Leonel had already used the elephants and the scepter to mostly recover by now.

He released the fox and brought it under control again. With the help of the elephants, he actually felt that the amount of Dream Force he had to use to keep it under control had lessened a bit. He could keep it up for seven or eight minutes now. That was perfect.

"Lead the way."

The little fox did as it was told, and Leonel was pulled around the mountain. He didn't allow the fox to pull him toward the other mountain ranges, choosing to limit it to this mountain alone.

Of course, that was also a detriment to Leonel as well. The little fox was too weak to move around much more than the bottom ranges of the mountains, so it didn't know much of anything about what was going on up above.

That said, that detriment probably also benefited Leonel as well. He was too weak to rush to greater challenges right now. The weakness of the little fox was exactly what he needed.

Even so, sometimes Leonel had to outright ignore some of the locations the little fox led him to. Twice, in fact.

One was for a sword, and the other was for a pair of boots.

He ignored the sword because it was of little use to him. He didn't kill the creatures around it either because even though it would benefit him, it might also let someone else take cheap advantage of the situation-though he was fairly certain that there was no one else in this mountain range but himself.

The boots, however, had another problem, and that was that he would need at least Tier Three strength before trying to claim it. That was because it was perched at the top of a large crystalline tree embedded into the side of the mountain range, a tree that was guarded by a Snowy Star Owl.

The Tree was easily over 200 meters tall, and the owl that called it home was easily over five. That owl was the first Tier Four threat that Leonel had run into.

Still, none of this stopped Leonel from quickly reaching Tier Two.

Even at this stage, the scepter still gave the same 20% boost. It seemed that the strength these weapons and treasures gave were consistent and didn't change.

By this point, Leonel had gathered a cloak, a belt, and a necklace.

Their boosts didn't stack or multiply; they were instead additive. The scepter and belt gave a 20% boost, while the cloak and necklace both gave 10% boosts. In total, Leonel's Dream Force abilities were amplified by 50% total.

Although it should have been 60%, it seemed that there was a drawback to the treasures after all.

Chapter 2529: You

From what Leonel could tell, the scepter and belt were on the same level and as such didn't restrain one another. However, they took precedence over the cloak and necklace, suppressing their strength by half. Leonel realized, then, that he would have to likely balance his treasures out in the future. Even if he ran into a treasure that gave a large boost, he might have to abandon it depending on what effect it had on his weaker treasures.

Seeing the hidden layers of complexities of the challenge, Leonel noted them and didn't mind them too much. Even with this drawback, he was still only a hair away from Tier Three, and not even an hour had passed. Unless one was of much greater strength than himself, it was impossible to move so quickly. But the gaps between Tiers were also harder and harder to bridge with the creatures he was targeting right now.

Leonel killed another and finally felt that he had closed the gap on Tier Three. It was time to target that Tier Four Snowy Star Owl. He let the little fox go. He already knew the general location of the other treasures it wanted to point him toward-that being the ones in other mountain ranges. And, since killing it wouldn't do him any good, there was no need to do so.

Although he was pretty sure that these creatures weren't actually real, and were instead just echoes of Dream Force, it still didn't feel good to kill such an adorable little guy even if it wanted to bite his head off every time his suppression over it loosened.

Leonel chuckled to himself as he neared the region. He was still flying, soaring through the miasma of Dream Force as though he was swimming through the deep sea.

'Echoes of Dream Force, huh...!' He felt that he was subconsciously correct about this, it felt like something his Dream Sovereignty was telling him. It was the subtlety of his advantage in this place. Ninth Dimensional existences couldn't truly die, at least not before their "time". They would leave behind echoes of their Force comprehension.

Leonel imagined that these creatures were much the same in a way... except the creatures they came from were so impossibly powerful that maybe the world simply couldn't sustain them anymore, instead breaking them up into these little pieces.

The Snowy Star Owl appeared. It was a beautiful creature. Wings of white underlaid by gold, a proud head, and claws that sparkled like gems and yet carried the same level of danger as it did beauty. It was also the creature that Leonel was the most intimately familiar with.

Before it even noticed him, he pulled at it with his Life Tablet, disorienting its mind and affecting its will. Then he sprang forward. Although he could fly, fighting while doing so wasn't something that he was used to.

He pointed his scepter forward and a Dream Force flared around it, forming the shadow of a spear around it. At the same time, arrows appeared in the skies all around him, targeting the Snowy Star Owl from all sides.

Leonel used his Weapon Forces as though he was still in the outside world, moving with such fluidity and calm that one wouldn't think that they were restricted at all. If one looked closely, it would also be possible to see that somehow, his Bow Force had regained its Sovereignty. But Leonel wasn't surprised by this in the slightest.

Of all the Forces that one should strive to use in this world, relying on slain creatures to reform a connection with your original body, Weapon Forces were without a doubt the highest priority because they were so in tune with the Second Dimension and one's Dream Force to begin with.

Weapon Forces weren't natural. They were the product of human ingenuity and it was people that sparked their life. In this world, they were the perfect tool. And when paired with Leonel's Dream Force, they seemed to have gained wings.

He wasn't filtering it through some other concept or understanding. No, he was powering it directly with his will, a step beyond what his grandfather had managed to accomplish. The arrows collided with the wings of the owl just as it wanted to rise and surge toward him. Many shattered off of its body, but they continued falling, hitting the same spots over and over again as Leonel closed the distance.

The first few could only delay the owl, but the next few made it feel real pain until the following few finally tore through its hard exterior. Just in time for Leonel to close in with his spear.

Man and bird erupted into battle, harsh winds threatening to slice Leonel apart and blow him back all at once. He wielded Dream Force, sending the wind sifting around him as though he had begun an aerodynamic machine. At the same time, he took advantage of this split to thrust forward, a spear dance erupting.

BANG. BANG. BANG! He was only half the size of the bird, but his Dream Force moved so flexibly and beautifully that one would have thought that he was the giant in this situation. It wasn't just using Dream Force like a blunt weapon, but it rather became an extension of himself, a conduit of his will.

Slowly, a much larger shadow of Leonel began to appear around him, almost like an avatar of his will and an arbiter of his desire. He began to suppress the owl, his gaze blazing with his intent. A wide smile spread across his face, suddenly realizing why it was he had always felt so in tune with Dream Force.

It wasn't just because he had Dream Asura blood running through his veins, or that he was a Wise Star Order, or even that he was born with the perfect Ability Index... It was because it was the only Force that didn't influence you, the only Force where YOU were the influence.

Leonel's laughter boomed as he shredded the owl to pieces. His Dream Force reached the Peak Impetus State.

Chapter 2530: Blown into the Wind

The moment Leonel's Dream Force progressed, his foundational strength rose from Tier One to Tier Two. At the same time, he went from having barely entered Tier Three to already being a large part of the way toward Tier Four.

The Life Tablet rumbled and wisps of the Snowy Star Owl condensed and rushed into Leonel's body. In that instant, Leonel was over 70% of the way to Tier Four. Another two or three creatures on this level and he would definitely reach that point. However, he wasn't thinking about that for the moment, or even the boots that the owl had been protecting. It was instead that he had forgotten the most valuable part of this Challenge.

Why was it that Clarence, when his back was against the wall, had chosen to do this? Well, it was in one part a "fuck you" to all the masterminds in the background trying to suppress the last bastion of the Human Race, but there was a deeper reason.

He wanted to use this as a chance to reach the Life State. He felt that it was his last chance to do so, and it was his last opportunity to save the Pavilion from falling into the hands of another race. This was a low tier Challenge Zone. However, even the lowest tier, which this wasn't, gave one help toward the insights of Dream Force that no other place could. If there was any place to use to progress your Dream Force, it was, without a doubt, this place.

From Leonel's calculations, someone at the Higher Impetus State like him should have been Tier Zero. He was Tier One because of the boost of his Dream Sovereignty. Up the ladder, there was the woman who was probably at the Peak Life State and thus Tier Five. Now that he was at the Peak Impetus State, he would have been Tier One, but he was Tier Two instead.

As for why he felt that Clarence was Tier Two despite not being in the Life State, it was because he felt the man was very close and was probably already at the Half-Step. If they could take advantage of this situation, it might be possible for the Human Race to come out with two Life State users, where in the past they had had just one.

Well, Leonel was already one thanks to his Scarlet Star Force. He just couldn't maximize its strength. But Clarence would be able to. That would be a huge stabilizing

force. He still wasn't sure if Clarence was trustworthy or not, but what he did know was that he had some backbone. And that was worth something.

'Let's leave this mountain range. But first...' Leonel shot forward and grabbed the boots. '40%... Worth it. Leonel thought for a moment and chose to keep wearing the cloak and necklace though they had just become useless.

Under the suppression of the boots, they fell to 0%, while the scepter and belt fell to 10%. However, overall, it was still 60%, which was 10% larger than it had been before. As for why he was still carrying the now 0% treasures around, it was because even he couldn't tell the strength of these treasures without touching them. Though there was a possibility that someone with the skill of that woman could, Leonel was confident that he could shroud her chances at doing so.

This way, Leonel would appear to be much more powerful than he was just by virtue of the items he was wearing. Luckily, due to the fog of white and gold, not to mention the crown hovering above his head, the combination of treasures looked less ridiculous than they would have otherwise.

Leonel shot down the mountain. He didn't choose to climb up its side any further because he knew there would be dangers beyond him. There were likely at least Tier Five and Tier Six threats up there if the owl chose to stay here.

He made a move toward another mountain range, his Internal Sight spread out far and wide. He wasn't in fear of being found anymore. In fact, just following the odds, he hoped that he would be found. His speed of progress was definitely far beyond everyone else's. That meant that the only threats to him right now, logically speaking, were probably those Owlans and the Pavilion Heads of the other two Pavilions as well as a few of the top brass.

It was a numbers game, and he felt that he would benefit from eliminating some competition right now. Although it seemed smarter to bide his time and wait until he was Tier Seven or higher to rush and kill everyone, this challenge had too many variables.

While it was true anyone else would need ten times more resources to advance as far as him, they could also challenge much stronger beasts and claim much stronger treasures as well. Right now, they were still getting used to the lay of the land and trying to find those advantages. If just say back, they could make up for their deficit against him just based on pure strength.

He couldn't allow that. However, what Leonel found first was completely out of his expectations. He froze, standing in place. Looking up, he found a haggard figure impaled by several small tree branches. These miniature crystalline trees became like barbed wires in the man's flesh.

This was a world where they hadn't even entered with their real bodies, they were just projections. To go through all this trouble to not directly kill a person, but to instead make them suffer such long, grueling, and agonizing pain... Just why?

He had just been thinking about this man, just been thinking about how close the Human Race was to ascending if they could just survive this one plight, if they could make it over this one hill. And yet, here he was now, breathing his last breaths. Clarence's Dream Force formed wisps in the air, disappearing like smoke blown into the wind.

Leonel stood in silence.

Chapter 2531: [Bonus] Huge Role

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Mr. Ham <3 1/6]

Leonel didn't move for a long while. If one observed his expression, it would be hard to tell that he could feel anything at all, let alone what he was feeling.

Sometimes his analytical abilities were a bit of a curse. The human response would be to rush forward. He didn't know Clarence very well, but he had done more for the actual sake of humans than anyone else Leonel had ever met.

It wasn't that fake, pompous, uppity path those powers tried to take, sacrificing those they thought to be lesser than them and trying to herd them like animals. He had put himself on the line, like a true man of humanity should have, like a true leader should have.

Compared to the likes of Vivak, or Mo"Lexi, or any one of the Great Families, he was leagues beyond.

In the end, the Dream Pavilion hadn't been under his control. The decisions that they had made earlier had all been Kings, and the decisions made afterward could only be jointly decided by the several Deputy Pavilion Heads even if Clarence was the strongest of them all.

He was a man worthy of respect, even though he hadn't immediately had all of Leonel's trust.

However, Leonel didn't run to what was left of him. His mind knew why.

Clarence would be gone in 4.7 seconds. It would take him, even at his fastest speed, 5.2 seconds to reach him. In that last 0.5 seconds, it would feel like an eternity, such a small segment of time to a Third Dimensional existence might as well have been an

impossibly vast chasm to someone with his strength, and only made worse by his speed of thought.

There was no reaching him. There was nothing he could do even if he did.

Clarence hadn't just died, he had died in humiliating fashion, and then he was forced to slowly eke out the rest of his existence a shattered remnant of what he had once been.

With his Dream Force shredded apart like that, even if his accumulated comprehensions came back together to reform him, he might not even be the Clarence of old, his previous memories, mannerisms, and personality having been lost.

At that point, was he even still Clarence any longer? He was already dead.

So Leonel stood there and watched. He didn't pay much attention to the world around him, and in those last moments, he felt that Clarence was barely able to notice him. His eyes, or what remained of them were slightly blurred. Deep within, there was still a light of madness, a slight hint of a fighting spirit that hadn't quite faded just yet.

That light only wavered when he saw Leonel, replaced by a regret, not for the loss of his life, but because he felt that Leonel's fate would likely be not much different than his own... regret that he had caused maybe the last hope of the Human Race to fall here just due to something as stupid as a miss-timed decision.

And then he was gone.

Leonel waved a hand. The Life Tablet moved, and the kernels that remained of Clarence's Dream Force were forced to condense once more. Leonel had hoped that maybe he could save some of it, that maybe if Clarence had a chance to come back at some later date, that he would at least have a piece of himself remaining to assimilate with.

But it was still useless.

The Dream Force seemed to slip through his fingers like running water, pooling down to the ground and vanishing into the miasma.

Even the Life Tablet couldn't do anything about it. Even maybe the greatest treasure ever forged was helpless to reform something that was lost.

He couldn't help but think about his father again. Would he really ever be able to bring him back? Even if he did, would he ever truly be the same?

Leonel's gripped fist loosened.

From start to finish, his expression didn't change even the slightest, a mask of the deepest indifference taking hold of his every feature.

But he was angry.

Without a word, he moved, climbing up the mountain.

He found a Tier Two creature quickly, a much weaker Snowy Star Owl. This was exactly what he needed. A flying creature like the owl would be able to reach areas it wasn't necessarily supposed to reach, and it was weak enough that Leonel wouldn't have to drain a large amount of Dream Force in order to control it to direct him.

With its help, he quickly found three Tier Threes in quick succession, two of them being around treasures with 20% boosts. After the suppression of the boots, that raised his abilities by 80% total. Even though his base Dream Force wasn't enough to reach Tier Four, the addition of the new treasures was enough to hit that point.

However, it wasn't enough. He needed enough strength to reach the top of the mountains.

He had been too focused on increasing strength that would vanish the moment he stepped out of this world, and not enough on things that could give him a great deal of help in the immediate and afterward.

His breakthrough to Peak Impetus State had reminded him of that, and instead of arranging his Dreamscape to focus on things that would speed up his victory, he changed its parameters just a little bit.

The information that the Life Tablet had given him was too vast. Much like when he entered his enlightened state, much of it slipped through the crack. But unlike when he was in his enlightened state, the information didn't just vanish because it was part of the Life Tablet itself.

Due to this, Leonel could only access information he directly focused on, so he used one of the very first abilities he had carved from his Ability Index: Dreamscape.

Dreamscape could essentially think for him, connecting dots it would usually take him time to connect. It had been a great help to him over the years.

And now it would play a huge role again.

Chapter 2532: [Bonus] Dominant

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Mr. Ham <3 2/6]

From focusing on the speed of victory, Leonel shifted the task of his Dreamscape to dominant victory. He would take no hostages in this game, and he no longer gave a damn about how deeply offended the enemies of the Human Race would become.

Since he had come here, he was already a thorny rose in their otherwise well-trimmed gardens. Since that was the case, he might as well poison the bouquet at the same time.

The True Dream Plane had nine total states that it could be in. With each state you went up, the dangers would be greater, but the rewards would likewise be all the more appetizing as well.

The point of the Challenge was never to kill, much like Leonel had said previously. It was created as a friendly ground to exchange pointers. As for why Contribution Points were necessary to open it, it was because of how expensive the True Dream Plane was to open and run. Everything here needed a great deal of energy and it couldn't be opened just because one felt like it.

This was all to say that the main point of the True Dream Plane was improvement, not battle, not revenge, and certainly not killing.

The reason Leonel was focused on the speed of victory before was one, for Clarence's sake, and two because if he allowed this to drag out for too long, the advantages he had in the beginning could be quickly whittled away.

Although he had made a nice little Tiered system for himself, and it seemed that if he worked hard enough, he'd be able to touch Tier Nine eventually, the harsh truth was that the only reason he was on a level playing field with these behemoths was because of his Sovereignty.

Plus, he also hadn't forgotten that these powers had definitely come with trump cards of their own. He wasn't the only one who might have an advantage of some sort.

Right now, they were probably all focused on finding him as quickly as possible. Leonel wouldn't even be surprised if Clarence's death location had some sort of device that could be used to trap him or track him should he have gotten close.

As for why the person who killed him didn't stick around, they probably thought that bait was the best use Clarence had but didn't like the odds of Leonel suddenly stumbling into his death, so had chosen to try to cover all their bases. It was hard to tell where that person might have gone. They might even still be in this mountain range right this moment.

This aside, the main point was that Leonel knew that there were other ways to take advantage of this world.

It wasn't a coincidence that the main goal was to reach the tallest mountain peak. That was to say that that mountain wasn't the only one with a great benefit hidden within it.

The problem was that according to Leonel's calculations, the top of the mountain was protected by at least a Tier Six threat. The taller mountains would have Tier Seven, Eight, and potentially Nine threats.

If he wanted what was hidden up there, he needed to dig deeper. Or, find another way.

Leonel decided to experiment a bit.

He could only control a Tier Zero threat like the little fox for around five minutes at the start, back when he was Tier One, that is. Now that he had the equivalent of Tier Four strength, it had doubled for every step.

Unfortunately, the treasures couldn't help to bolster the time. That was because the treasures only had a direct impact on this ethereal body of his, while absorbing the Dream Force of the dead creatures could help solidify the connection with his real body, thus meaning less Dream Force was lost during the crossing over, and thus making it easier on him by several measures.

Simply put, right now, he could control that little fox for 20 minutes with ease, 40 minutes if he really hit Tier Four.

For every step up a threat took, that fell by half. This was the result of Leonel's experiments.

'That means that I can control a Tier Six for 18 seconds, give or take? Almost 40 if I really hit Tier Four... That's enough.'

Using the Snowy Star Owl, Leonel quickly upped his kill count until he was truly at Tier Four. This wasted an extra two hours, but this was work he would have done anyway. He also managed to find some treasures to put him at 100% amplification.

Then, he abandoned the Snowy Star Owl and shot up the mountain. He moved low to the ground, not even running on his feet, but instead flying low. He controlled the Dream Force around him, his goal being the top of the mountain.

What he didn't expect was that after all this preparation, he'd find the Tier Six beast that he was preparing to deal with in a heated battle with something else.

Leonel's gaze flashed with a gold-like.

It was a Starry Tailed Fox, one that stood proudly at almost five meters tall and had three tails that rose into the skies and seemed to stir the clouds.

The opponent opposite it was a Nomad, and he was surprisingly able to fight it although he was clearly at a disadvantage.

'They're at this strength already? That's impossible.'

No one should be able to match Leonel's skill, not with all the simulations he had run. That meant there was a variable that was out of his control.

He used his eyes to scan for anything he was missing until he noticed an oddity in the man's forehead.

All Nomads had Ethereal Glabellas so large that they peeked out from their foreheads. It gave them an almost otherworldly appearance, if their two pairs of floating hands didn't already do that.

Inside, Leonel could faintly see the scene of shimmering runes that caged what looked like a White Stone Elephant.

His eyes narrowed.

Chapter 2533: [Bonus] Forgetful

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Mr. Ham <3 3/6]

Leonel would be lying if he said that he wasn't surprised by this. Rather than killing the creature, this man used his Ethereal Glabella to somehow trap it, and it was a shortcut of sorts to solidifying the connection with his real body.

'It should be related to those runes. That's definitely not a natural ability, or my studies would have stumbled upon it. In that case, it's definitely a treasure they used some special means to bring in.'

But Leonel could also tell that this treasure had its limitations.

That White Stone Elephant should be a Tier Five threat, and that was around the same threat level the man was exuding as well. As for the man's original threat level, it should have been Tier Four.

This was to say that this man only had to capture one beast to immediately shoot up that level. Even for Leonel, if he had to calculate how many Tier Five beasts it would take him to go from Tier Four to Tier Five, it would probably be at least a dozen.

Unfortunately, the cost for each Tier was just heavier. It would have taken him longer to reach Tier Four if not for the fact his Dream Force had improved.

But with those benefits came clear drawbacks.

This man could obviously only capture one creature at a time, and he was probably trying to defeat this Tier Six so that he could swap it out and replace his Tier Five one. If he did so, he would be even more dangerous.

'He should have something to rely on if he came here so boldly,' Leonel thought. Then his gaze changed perspective and landed on what he really wanted.

At the peak of the mountain, there was an altar. On the top of that altar was an orb.

According to what he knew, these orbs were the greatest treasures of this world, with the best of them being on the highest mountain peak.

It was said that passing on your comprehension to someone else was impossible, but these orbs had condensed kernels of truth that could open one up to different avenues of thought.

They were known as the Forgetful Orbs.

This sounded like an odd name for a supposedly useful treasure, but its effects were magical.

It did exactly as it said, erasing your memories. But what was special was which memories it erased. It wasn't core memories, but rather the context of the memories. For example, it wouldn't take away a memory of you sliding into bed to sleep, but it would take away how you had gotten there. It wouldn't erase the memory of you walking up the stairs, but the fact you walked up the stairs in the first place to go to your bed to sleep.

What was the purpose of this?

It was quite simple. Comprehension was never about that you knew something, but how you came to know something.

Take Leonel's Scarlet Star Force. Why had it entered the Life State? He had known that it was tied to Destruction ever since he awakened it at 18 years old. Why did it take him till he was slowly nearing his thirties for it to finally click?

It was because he knew it was related to Destruction, but he didn't know what that meant, where the Destruction found its roots, or most accurately... That it was the benevolence of Creation itself that gave way to the path of Destruction.

The context was what was important... no, it was practically everything.

The Forgetful Orbs was a masterful piece of engineering, and an application of Dream Force so far beyond Leonel that even though he felt like his Ability Index should be able to replicate it, he had no idea how... at least not without at least experiencing it for himself first.

By stripping him of the context of his Comprehension, he would enter a state of limbo of sorts. However, because his Force Manipulation would remain intact, he would be able to easily reform the connections.

These connections, though, would be unlikely to be perfect.

It was almost like writing an essay you already had once before. The ideas were already fresh in your mind, and you already somewhat knew how you had structured them the first time, and now you could rewrite it faster and likely even better than the first time.

If you went through this process enough times, your comprehension would inevitably deepen.

There was no better way to check if you had a good grasp on a subject than having to explain it to someone else. And in this context, it would be like you were explaining it to yourself once again.

According to the Life Tablet, this application of Dream Force was so high level that it had never been replicated before. It was probably one of the reasons the God Races insisted on having at least one Pavilion to themselves. If not for how expensive it was to enter True Dream Planes that had Forgetful Orbs that could work on their true powerhouses, they would have probably tried to monopolize them all.

Since they were the de facto leaders of the Dream Pavilions now, they couldn't just use Contribution Points to blind themselves. Obviously, the Contribution Points had to represent something, and they were the ones shelling out the funds.

Leonel shot forward, swimming low through the clouds of Dream Force. He didn't even look toward the battle anymore, quickly closing in on his target.

His control over his own Dream Force was perfect. He was completely undetectable unless one of the two laid their real eyes on him, and which one would be looking at a random point on the ground in the middle of such a heated battle?

He appeared before the orb and no longer bothered to hide himself, mostly because he couldn't. A random point in the ground was one thing, the treasure everyone was after was a completely different one.

He plucked it off the altar before their gazes.

Chapter 2534: [Bonus] Karma

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Mr. Ham <3 4/6]

The Nomad's eyes opened wide. He didn't expect such a thing to happen, and he definitely didn't expect that if it should that the culprit would be Leonel of all people.

In truth, he had thought that the humans had come in with some huge trump card. They had moved quite a bit to deal with them. These runes floating before his forehead weren't even the start of it. In reality, the games had begun even before Leonel activated it all.

They had wasted a great deal of Contribution Points on a treasure that could allow them to avoid random teleportation. As a result, they had all appeared in the same mountain range.

Clarence had ended up being quite unlucky as a result. He didn't lose his life at the hands of just a single Nomad, but rather over a dozen of them.

Eventually, they had chosen to spread out after their leader helped each one of them catch a Tier Five to bolster their strengths immediately, thus solidifying their advantage.

Their task now was to each claim a Tier Six while their leader went off to fight a Tier Seven. Then, they would regroup using a similar method to what they used previously and steam roll the competition.

Everything was going smoothly, and though he seemed to be at a disadvantage now, that was already to be expected. He was just about ready to launch his counter attack...

And then Leonel appeared.

In truth, they had originally entered just for the Contribution Points. It was a large amount and they wanted them. So long as they were at least second place, they would recoup their bet and then some.

However, when Leonel appeared, that focus had shifted, but not as much as one might think.

They knew that wielding the Life Tablet was beyond them and their main goal was still pretty much the same. According to their leader, they were only to deal with Leonel if the opportunity presented itself.

To think it would present itself like this.

Ovrian had already stopped taking the humans seriously. Clarence's easy death had already proved to him that they had done all this preparation for the others, not the humans. In the end, they were just paper tigers and they had no real preparation at all.

To think they'd send a Sovereign to die.

It was a shame, though. If this was Leonel's real body, they would probably capture him and train him up. Then, when he reached the Ninth Dimension they'd kill him and use his Essence to see if they could create a Dream Sovereign of their own.

The odds were slim, but it was possible.

Still, the Life Tablet was worth more than any of that.

Ovrian leapt backward with a sneer on his face. At the same moment, the Tier Six Snowy Tailed Fox broke free of their battle and rushed right for Leonel. He knew that this would happen the moment Leonel appeared. The top priority of the "king" of this peak or any of the others was always the Forgetful Orb. Leonel would have to spit it back up quickly.

He stopped, crossing his arms over his chest with a sneer on his face.

And that was precisely why he was caught completely unprepared.

Right then, the fox that had been charging toward Leonel suddenly stopped. Without even looking back, one of its tail descended from the skies and whipped against Ovrian's body, breaking his spin in two.

Ovrian was entirely unprepared, he had been waiting to see what would happen to Leonel, but...

He felt his vision blurring. Suddenly a force grabbed at the White Stone Elephant stuck in his Ethereal Glabella and it began to inexplicably rampage as well.

A huge suction of Dream Force made his mind blur with incomprehensible thoughts and by the time he could even barely see again, his Dream Force was already dissipating rapidly.

However, just when he thought it was over, he felt a tight hand holding his neck. He found that he was rapidly falling down the side of the mountain, and he was in Leonel's hands as they fell together. Even if he wanted to, his Dream Force refused to dissipate entirely and fear suddenly took hold of his heart.

"Tell me," Leonel suddenly asked. "How many people do you think are watching this Challenge?"

The Nomad's mind iced over. He had no idea, but he was sure it was many. Challenges were rare, and there was the Life Tablet involved. There were likely even God Races watching right now, even if it was just a small number.

"You probably had a good time humiliating the Human Race, didn't you?"

Leonel asked this with a smile, but for some reason Ovrian just felt chillier and chillier.

"You know, I don't really care about the differences between Races. To me, a life is a life. You probably think I'm speaking nonsense, but I've given up real, tangible benefits before because of those beliefs, and I'd do it again."

Ovrian didn't know why the words of this young man were striking him so close to heart, to his soul. He wasn't being moved by them. Rather, he just couldn't feel anything other than fear. Real, tangible, unbridled fear.

And then it struck him.

Dream Force.

How was the ability of his young man to impose his will on the world so powerful already?

Leonel landed on the ground.

"But every one of you keeps provoking me."

"It wasn't me!" Ovrian suddenly squeezed out.

"Oh? But I never mentioned anything," Leonel laughed. "What wasn't "you", exactly?"

"I... I..."

The Dream Force in the surroundings rippled beneath Leonel's landing.

"It's fine, I've already guessed most of it. This mountain range has so few existences of a truly powerful tier. It took me two hours just to find enough to reach this level. That beast in your forehead probably isn't the only one your group caught, huh?"

Leonel's smile faded, a deep indifference returning.

"I hope you aren't reincarnated as a human in your next life. Wouldn't that make Karma too on the nose?"

Ovrian died screaming.

Chapter 2535: [Bonus] Life

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Mr. Ham <3 5/6]

Leonel waved a hand and let the Dream Force dissipate. He didn't seem to care very much about what he had just done and had already moved to focus on other things. He knew that there were probably several pairs of eyes on him, but whether he did things this way or another, nothing would change.

He caught something in the air and then looked up. He had left the Starry Tailed Fox behind and had taken a bit of a quick path down the mountain, but there was no telling if it would try to follow after him.

As for what he had caught in his hand, it was none other than the net of runes the Nomad Race was using to skyrocket their strength in a short time.

Leonel observed it for a moment and shook his head. Observing Force Arts that were so far beyond him in skill was annoying enough without it also being drawn in a language he had never seen before. He wasn't even sure how to use it, or if he should use it at all for that matter.

There was a clear tradeoff with its use and it wasn't necessarily worth it, not if you were alone now like Leonel. If you were in a huge group and could make use of it to elevate the whole in a short time, it was definitely worthwhile.

'It is a bit annoying though...'

He was used to grasping everything Crafting and Force Arts related instantly, but now he felt like the same kid he had been back then when he first started to learn about these matters.

It made sense. His father was far beyond the rest of the Dimensional Verse in skill, and under his tutelage, everything Leonel learned laid a foundation that made seeing through everything else as easy as breathing.

Unfortunately, while the foundation his father had laid for him was still solid, Leonel wasn't far away from completing the training regimen. In another couple of years, he felt that he would catch up to his father in Crafting Skill, and by then he would be on his own for the first time.

Leonel sighed.

The fact his father had accomplished so much in the Dimensional Verse of all places would probably make him a God in the eyes of most. Even the God Races themselves couldn't look down on such a feat, but it couldn't continue into perpetuity.

He put away the net of runes for now and looked toward what he really wanted: the Forgetful Orb.

After some thought, he shot into the distance, putting some more space between himself and the Starry Tailed Fox's mountain before finding a secluded place.

Then, he crushed it.

It wasn't smart to do this in this environment. In fact, it wasn't just not smart, it was highly dangerous. Most hoarded these orbs until they returned to a secure environment. Only then would they use them.

Of course, some would store them purely for the sake of exchanging for Contribution Points as well.

The reality was that the Forgetful Orbs were top-tier treasures, but they weren't guaranteed home runners either. You were more likely to have an incremental improvement than a sudden breakthrough.

But that was also because most weren't using them properly.

For one, Forgetful Orbs were most useful when used in conjunction with the True Dream Plane. This place was filled with Dream Force, and it acted in ways Dream Force didn't act anywhere else.

It was the fault of the new higher-ups that these Challenges had become bloodbaths instead of what they had once been, causing many to deviate from the path they had originally taken.

And second...

Well, no one had the Life Tablet.

Breaking apart, analyzing, rebuilding, these were things the Life Tablet was there to assist Wise Star Orders with.

The moment Leonel broke the orb and targeted his Dream Force, he felt that he was in limbo and there were constant attacks on his mind. "Forgetting" the context of your Dream Force in a world where you relied on your Dream Force to stay alive was masochistic, without a doubt. But Leonel did so without hesitation.

It was just that he trusted the Life Tablet, or that he trusted his talent either, it was instead that he had a clear view of what had triggered his Sovereignty.

He remembered the imposing might Mo"Lexi had released back then, the world of endless blood and carnage... how it had made him feel.

The reality of it was that he felt as though a mirror had been put up to his face, like he was forced to confront every one of his actions.

He felt the visceral and disgusting feelings one should have to what true Destruction was, and it was that moment that crafted his Dream Sovereignty, not because it was related to Destruction, but rather because he didn't want to have anything to do with it.

That single, pulsing will had cleared the blood lake of his mind and released the large portion of his soul steeped in the blood of demons from its shackles, and he gained...

Tranquility.

The Forgetful Orb could erase the context of his Force comprehension, but it couldn't erase the context of his Sovereignty, the kernel that gave his Dream Force true Life.

As a result, it took Leonel mere minutes to begin to reconstruct the web of his Dream Force once more. He could feel every line, intimately understand every hidden truth. It became stronger, more robust, and when it finally came together again, he felt the world around him slowly changing.

He opened his eyes, a deep violet light pulsing within. In reality, though, it was a pulse of silver that matched well with his irises, using them as a filter to manifest itself to the world.

Leonel looked down at himself. 'Quasi Life State, and so easily at that... That took maybe a few minutes.'

He gripped his fists, feeling the strength of Tier Five very clearly.

Chapter 2536: [Bonus] Example

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Mr. Ham <3 6/6]

The Quasi Life State was worth so much more to Leonel. Because of his Sovereignty, it was as good as a true Life State. It was akin to two halves coming together to make a whole.

According to what El'Rion had said back then, Sovereignty was the representation of the Life State. It allowed much lower-level Forces to display some of the strength of the Life State ahead of time.

It could also be said that a Force that was both in the Life State and maintained a Sovereign air was on an entirely different level than both. The truest strength of Sovereignty wouldn't be seen until one entered the Life State and maintained it.

Thanks to this, Leonel skipped over Tier Four entirely and gained Tier Five strength, catching up with the foundation of the Owlans. It had not even been a quarter of the day, but he didn't feel complacent at all.

Remembering how much progress the Nomad Race had been able to make so quickly, he understood that he couldn't afford to get complacent.

He looked down at the net of runes before him.

'Hm... This could be useful even if I don't fuse it with myself.'

Leonel picked it up and shot into the distance. His Tier Five status plus his 100% booster was showing its strength right now and he shot right back up the mountain to where a certain Tier Six beast was still rampaging.

The moment it spotted Leonel, it lunged at him, but just as quickly, it was suppressed by the Life Tablet.

Leonel didn't want to control the creature for information. Ironically, precisely because it was the strongest creature of this mountain, it knew the least about the surrounding areas. That was because it never left the Forgetful Orb.

Leonel moved his intention a bit and the Tier Five creature inside of the net of runes was released. It was quickly killed by the Tier Six Starry Tailed Fox, and Leonel used the Life Tablet to absorb all of its strength.

'Barely anything.'

It would have taken at least a dozen of those Tier Fives to go from Tier Four to Tier Five. Now that he was already in Tier Five, the improvement was even less.

Luckily, he hadn't come here for that.

He poured Dream Force into the net of runes and controlled the Starry Tailed Fox at the same time. After some time, the two resonated, and then the latter leapt into the net of runes, becoming trapped.

'Success. That took over a minute. Luckily, I can control a Tier Six right now for just a bit over that time, or else it could get dicey.'

Leonel nodded to himself.

This idea was workable.

He didn't have enough Dream Force to just continuously control these creatures for long periods of time. But what if he could store them and conveniently bring them out when he needed them instead?

The Nomads had just given him the perfect item to do that, and he bet that if he killed more of them, he could likewise gather more to be used in a pinch.

Much like with the little fox back then, Leonel could control beasts a Tier down from him for around five minutes.

Back then, he had been in Tier One while the little fox was Tier Zero. Now, he was in Tier Five, he could control a Tier Four for five minutes, a Tier Five for half that, and a Tier Six like this one for half of that, putting him at just over a minute.

If he tried the same with a Tier Seven, he would run out of Dream Force, and then his life would be in danger.

Unfortunately, he also couldn't control more than one of these beasts at a time, or else the time he could have them under his control would plummet further, and then he'd end up on the bad end of the backlash.

'I can try to study the net of runes more. If I understand it better, I can cut down the time from a minute. But...'

Right now, the reason it was taking a minute wasn't that it was difficult to control the beasts, but because of how much Dream Force he had to pour into the net of runes, and how carefully he had to control it.

Luckily, controlling the beast and fueling the net of runes relied on two completely different sources of Dream Force, one on his real body and one on this fake body.

But ultimately the annoyance was that he didn't perfectly understand the Force Arts. They were too complicated and beyond him. He could only use it in this crude way.

Even so, that was enough.

A sneer spread across Leonel's face as he bolted down the mountain and headed toward the previous one he had been on.

Now he had an easier method of hunting down the kings of these peaks, and if he was correct, there should be quite a number of Nomads focused on their battles right now as well.

He would make an example out of them.

By the time he was done, the Gem Dream Pavilion would have no one. He would make certain of that.

And that was exactly what he did.

Leonel moved from mountain to mountain, hunting down Nomads and Tier Six creatures alike. At the same time, he conveniently pocketed Forgetful Orbs.

He realized after cracking open his second one that it would take more than one more Forgetful Orb to enter the Life State truly, so he set aside that matter for the moment.

If he spent too long meditating, many of the Nomads would succeed and by then, dealing with them would be much more difficult. If they had Tier Six power, even if he set all his Tier Six captives at them in a trap, they would still be likely to escape.

The world watched as a seemingly pitiful human, the weakest ant they had maybe ever seen, massacred a Race of beings supposedly so much better than his own.

And they could do nothing about it.

Chapter 2537: Spotted

"HUMAN!"

The roar was filled with rage and fury. And yet, the response it received in kind was the complete opposite.

"That's not my name, you know?"

Arrows blanketed the skies, and yet the Nomad could do nothing to deal with them directly as a Tier Six threat bore down on him. He was suffocated from all sides, the pressure reaching a level that stifled him entirely.

He could only die with grievances, staring toward Leonel with a furious look in his eyes, a furious look that only lasted until he realized that there was a strong grip on his Dream Force.

He thought that, at worst, he would return to his body having been booted from the world...

Never did he think that Leonel would actually dare to kill him directly.

The worst part was that Leonel didn't even pay attention to his death, having landed beside another Forgetful Orb and pocketing it. Then, he suddenly moved.

Before the Tier Six threats could react, he appeared behind their necks. Just as his Dream Force was about to run out, his spear ripped through their spines and out of their throats.

The Life Tablet trembled, and two Tier Six existences were absorbed by Leonel.

'Tier Six.'

Leonel looked at his stores. Right now, he was at 200% in terms of amplification, but he had already run into another bottleneck.

Now, not only were more powerful treasures suppressing weaker ones, but if he gathered more than five powerful treasures, they not only suppressed every treasure underneath them to 0%, but they even began to restrain one another.

Leonel had five 40% amplifying under his control, putting him at exactly 200%. If he pulled in a sixth one, they would all fall to 30%, making it not worth it as that would put him at 180% for all six of them.

The only way he could benefit would be if he found another set of stronger treasures, but in this region, it seemed 40% was the highest.

According to Leonel's calculations, he was quite strong right now. A foundation of Tier Six with a booster of 200% gave him at least the capital to run from a Tier Seven.

Unfortunately, the gaps between the Tiers, especially at this level, made it very difficult to close these gaps. But Leonel had his own ideas about this matter.

If he could enter the Life State, he would immediately cross over another entire Tier. However, he felt that it would be better if he reached Tier Eight first before he did that.

The quantity of beasts he needed to defeat were getting more and more ludicrous. He had already killed almost ten Nomads, and during that time he had faced off against and used several means to kill over 20 Tier Six threats, and he had only just hit Tier Six from Tier Five.

If he wanted to hit Tier Seven, he would need to likely kill over 30 Tier Seven threats, and reaching Tier Eight would require killing over 40 Tier Eight threats. If he also had to kill over 50 Tier Nine threats to reach Tier Nine, it would take too long.

But if he put the work in on the front end, and then used a cheat to enter Tier Nine directly from Tier Eight, it would be much more worthwhile.

Only he could do this as well for several reasons.

For one, he had the lowest Dream Force comprehension here. Second, he had the advantage that came with being a Sovereign and having the Life Tablet.

This was feasible and it was his path to a dominant victory.

He reached forward and picked up the net of runes the Nomad had stored. This one had already managed to kill and snatch a Tier Six existence, but Leonel had still been confident in defeating him thanks to the 200% boost and the fact he was so close to Tier Six to begin with.

This ability of the Nomads to immediately jump to the strength of the beast they captured was excellent, but the drawbacks were also considerable. It was impossible for them to capture more than one beast at a time, and it was also impossible for them to use treasures.

'The fact this man succeeded means that there's definitely another aspect of this net of runes that I'm not familiar with. I think I have the confidence to observe the next one for a bit longer now.'

Every time he caught one of these fights ahead of time, the Nomad seemed to be biding their time in order to unleash something to catch the much stronger enemy off guard.

It had to be remembered that their Pavilion Head only helped them to capture Tier Fives, and then they went off to battle Tier Sixes on their own. Why did they have so much confidence against an enemy so much stronger?

Leonel targeted the next mountain range, moving even faster than he had before. By now, he had a total of nine rune nets. All but two were empty, though.

The Tier Sixes had been more valuable for raising his own strength, especially since he could only easily control one at a time anyway. Storing them away when he could only make use of one at a time in most situations would be an egregious oversight on his part.

However, now that he was Tier Six, he should be able to control a Tier Seven for just long enough to make it work. He would just have to find one first.

He had yet to see even a single Tier Seven or above. They were likely in the stronger mountain ranges.

But if he went over there, the odds of him running into stronger enemies would likewise increase.

'For now... it's only a matter of time before they feel that they've leveled enough and conclude that a "Fifth Dimensional" expert like me will probably be stalling in these weaker areas.'

As Leonel finished his thoughts, he appeared on a new mountain range once more and soon spotted another Nomad.

Chapter 2538: Yes.

The Nomads had made it too easy on him. Each one had spread out in the mountain ranges immediately around the location he had found Clarence's corpse in. Leonel didn't even need to waste a lot of time looking for them; he didn't even need to capture a guide anymore. He simply followed the chain of mountains one by one.

Clearly, after killing Clarence, they thought that he wasn't a threat, and they could have never imagined that Leonel was just in the mountain range one over from their original starting position.

This time, the Nomad in question was battling a White Stone Elephant. Now that Leonel thought about it, he had yet to see any creature ranked over a Starry Tailed Fox. It might be that this Dream Plane was too low ranked, or maybe they would only appear at Tier Seven or higher.

This Dream Plane, of nine, was ranked third overall. Not too high, and probably not too low either depending on one's perspective.

The battle was raged on for a long while with the man barely holding on.

Leonel frowned. He felt confident enough to stick around, but he didn't want to waste so much time watching this battle.

Almost half a day had passed since the Challenge began, now that Leonel thought about it. And yet, every one of the Nomads he had run into, except for the last one, had been in the middle of battle. But Clarence had died long ago.

'Whatever it is they're trying to do, it takes a lot of time... Hm, maybe...?'

According to Leonel simulations, and some information he'd gathered from observing earlier battles, there was a better than 50% probability that the Nomad's were waiting for an opening to launch a one-strike sure-kill sort of attack.

This was the best explanation. They weren't setting up anything else, and their bodies hadn't had any other treasures on them.

'In that case, why not make the opening for him?' Leonel's lip curled.

His Life Tablet trembled, and he took control of the elephant. The Nomad frowned as though feeling something odd, but in the end, the battle was too intense for him to take note of anything else, especially when the fluctuations he had sensed were immediately replaced by the swinging trunk of an elephant coated in an indestructible, gem-like Earth Force.

However, the elephant overextended itself. He was just barely able to dodge it, and the moment he did, his expression seemed to light up with glee.

Finally!

The net of runes on his forehead trembled, and the beast within was suddenly dissolved and a powerful beam of light rushed forward.

Leonel's brows raised. So that's what it was, huh? But wouldn't that destroy the beast they were trying to capture?

That was when it happened.

The net of runes shot out and entered the wound along with the beam of light. It was barely noticeable, and if not for his keen senses, Leonel would have definitely missed it.

Leonel's eyes widened in shock. Was that how it worked?

It was no wonder he couldn't understand the Force Arts. It was once again something far beyond him.

The creatures here ultimately weren't real; they were just bundles of Dream Force. Their "death" couldn't be considered real either. So long as they were stabilized by some external force, it was possible for them to survive.

This net of runes was able to help them maintain that structure, but the tradeoff was being trapped and controlled.

Although the rune could be used the way Leonel used it, it took time and much more effort.

That sounded like a funny thing to say when these Nomads had been fighting for many hours just to get to this point, but if Leonel controlled a creature and froze them, wouldn't he be able to reliably deal this fatal blow every time? He wouldn't need to fight for hours at all.

As for why the Nomads never used this ability on him, it made sense to Leonel as well.

Whenever he fought them, he was at a far distance and was often using the Tier Sixes as a buffer to assault them. They could only use the ability once, and he was often far enough away from them to dodge it easily.

Second, although they were fighting to keep their lives, they never really felt that they were in danger either. Most of them thought that they would obviously survive in the end because they didn't think that Leonel dared to kill them.

Unfortunately...

He did dare.

Suddenly, he moved.

Just as the net of runes was about to return to the Nomad, he caught it. Right now, without the net of runes, the Nomad had returned to Tier Four. Its speed in this world was too far inferior to Leonel's own.

"You..." The Nomad was speechless for a moment before he regained his bearings. He immediately dismissed Leonel, thinking that he had only not managed to sense him earlier because he was too focused on battle.

The Nomad's eyes narrowed when he saw the net of runes in Leonel's palm.

"Return what isn't yours and I can let you leave here alive."

Leonel gave the man a glance. Raising a finger, Leonel pointed to his own forehead.

"Your race's forehead is so large, blinding, even... so why are you all so stupid?"

The Nomad's eyes widened. "What did you just say to me?!"

BANG.

The Nomad froze, looking toward one of his arms, only to find that even the shoulder it had been connected to was gone, let alone the arm itself.

A simple concentrated blast of Dream Force left him in this state?

How was that possible?

Fear began to creep up in his heart. That blow just now didn't just injure him, it eviscerated all of that Dream Force as well. If it hit his head, wouldn't he...?

"Really think about what you're doing," he said slowly. "Do you want to offend-"

"Yes." Leonels said with a smile.

BANG.

The Nomad's head vanished.

Chapter 2539: How Best?

Leonel tossed the net of runes in his hands and then chose a direction. He needed to test this thing first. He wasn't a fan of jumping into things without information.

Soon, he found a Tier Five to target as it would take heading to a new mountain range to find another Tier Six, and he had already run out of lower tier mountains to take advantage of. The next few were all guarded by Tier Sevens at the peak at worst.

It was more awkward than he expected, but he finally got the hang of it. Plus, it was also much faster. It only took about 20 or so seconds now to get it to work, whereas before it had taken over a minute.

On top of that, he had dialed in the power.

Essentially, it could explode forward one time with a strength just one and a half Tiers above the creature trapped within it. If the target was in a vulnerable position and exactly one Tier above the creature within, then it was almost certainly a sure-fire kill every time.

With Leonel's control abilities, he should almost certainly never lose in that bet.

The only drawback was that it seemed to take about an hour or so for it to be able to repeat this feat. But that was, once again, not a problem for Leonel.

Didn't he now have ten nets of runes?

Well, he had nine now, with one on cooldown. And of them, only two had actual creatures within any longer, with the third one he had just used only having a Tier Five within it now. But this was still a huge advantage for him.

According to Leonel's calculations, because he was in Tier Six, he could already control a Tier Nine creature for just under 20 seconds. That was just shy of what he needed to succeed, but even if there was a Tier Nine in front of him right now anyway, he would still need a Tier Eight creature that he had previously trapped in order to take it out.

As for a Tier Eight creature, as a Tier Six, he could control one for just shy of 40 seconds. He already had the capital to capture one.

Now, the only thing holding him back was finding these creatures. And his first target would be a Tier Seven.

...

"You overestimate yourself, Burul," a man said with a calm voice.

It was a battle between a Spiritual and a Nomad. Dream Force flew about in a flurry of exchanges, but the two men stood across from one another, separated by hundreds of meters, without even the slightest intention of closing in the gap.

There was a creature trapped between them, a Tier Seven that didn't even have the option to retaliate. It could be maybe considered the first time someone might actually feel sorry for one of these gorgeous creatures.

It was a Starry Tailed Fox standing at over seven meters tall. It was a powerful and majestic beast, but right now it was no different from a caged animal, unable to find a way out from the strikes of the two men.

It was clear that both of them had their eye on this Starry Tailed Fox, but what was interesting was that the Nomad, Burul, already had a Tier Seven trapped within his shimmering Ethereal Glabella.

"You Spirituals always think yourselves to be better than you are. You're stuck here along with the rest of us, and you're no better than us mere mortals. Who do you think you are to speak to me like this?" Burul sneered.

The Spiritual, Regnier, didn't seem to react much to these words, his calm remaining just the same. It was this indifference that could really drive a man mad, and yet Burul, who wasn't well known for his good temper, chuckled.

"I wonder, if you saw the state of your fellow Spirituals by now, how indifferent could you remain? How many of them are left, do you think?"

Regnier frowned, his eyes flickering to that net of runes fused with Burul's Ethereal Glabella. He had been observing all this while, and he felt that there was something off about it, but he couldn't quite grasp just what it was.

"Why are you trying to hide it? I know your Breeze Dream Pavilion has a method of tracking all of your other members. Why don't you tell me how many of them are left?"

Regnier didn't respond, mostly because using that treasure required his concentration. If he diverted his attention now, then he might suffer.

...

From a long distance away, Leonel watched this scene. He had already captured one Tier Seven, and he had the support of now three Tier Sixes on top of that. He had come here to capture yet another Tier Seven, swapping them out for his current Tier Sixes. But he didn't expect to run into a battle of Pavilion Heads.

It was obvious to him that Regnier couldn't immediately dismiss Burul's words because he hadn't actually been able to check whatever that treasure was.

As for Burul, he believed that his fellow Nomads were still alive and that all of them had the strength of Tier Sixes by now, so he was confident that in a battle between the Nomads and Spirituals, he would come out on top.

In truth, he would have been right... had Leonel not already killed all of them.

Unfortunately, the Tier Seven that Leonel had just caught was still on cooldown. It would still take more than 50 minutes before he could use it to attack, and that left him out of his depth in the battle that was going on below.

But the tracking device on the Regnier really intrigued him.

In this battle, there was a better than 80% probability that Burul would be the victor. It was definitely a victory the latter was looking forward to as the Breeze Dream Pavilion was ranked above his own.

But now Leonel was thinking about how best to take advantage of this without actually having the strength to do so.

'Hm...'

Chapter 2540: None

Leonel took stock of what he had, and ultimately he felt that his odds of success were too low. However, he had a different idea.

He focused his attention on the Spiritual Regnier.

Regnier was clearly a Wind Spiritual. Although his Innate Node hadn't come in with him, Leonel could very clearly feel that he had one just by the way he manipulated the Dream Force around him.

The Spiritual Pavilion Head was using a method that many others had used before the. It was too much of a waste of resources to use the Dream Force one got from killing the creatures to establish a firmer connection with your real body for the sake of using Forces you were more used to.

So instead of doing that, a novel sort of martial art was created with Dream Force as an outlet and your favorite Force as the foundation.

Essentially, rather than forming a connection with their original Force, they used Dream Force like they would have used their original Force.

Although this made their Dream Force Manipulation slightly weaker as a result, the benefits they gained from the experience and ease made up for it in spades.

To make a complicated matter simple, Regnier was essentially using Dream Force now no differently than he would use his Wind Force.

Some Forces were better used in this manner than others, and Wind Force was clearly one of them. They didn't rely on explosive power like a Fire Force might, and were instead more used to pulling and pushing at things, a more ideal way of using this Dream Force.

Due to this, though, Regnier was a bit dangerous to deal with although he was at a very, very slight disadvantage against Burul.

Burul was very clearly using Palm Force, a rare variation of a Weapon Force not much different from Fist Force. However, because it was so close to him, it was even more effective than Leonel's Bow and Spear Force were in this world.

Unfortunately for Burul, he wasn't a Palm Sovereign, and as such he lost out in that just a touch as well.

Unfortunately for Leonel, Burul's Palm Force was powered by years of experience he didn't have.

Luckily, though, it wasn't quite in the Life State just yet. This went to show how difficult it was to progress into the Life State. Even a powerhouse like Burul was likely to only have one Force at this Realm.

Leonel shot into action when he felt that he had observed enough.

At that moment, the Tier Seven beast trapped between the two of them began to move oddly. Originally, it had been worried about its own injuries, but in that instant it made a suicidal action as though it had lost its mind completely, rushing toward Burul without regard for the injuries it would accumulate.

Burul was caught off guard but instead of panicking, he laughed. Inwardly, though, he was pissed. He just wanted Regnier to think that he was happy about this turn of events.

In reality, he had already caught one Tier Seven threat, he didn't need another one. It was just that the Tier Seven threat was the added variable that stopped Regnier from running away. If it and Burul suddenly attacked him at the same time, he could suffer. So he had no choice but to put his full attention onto the battle at hand.

Now that the beast was suddenly running toward Burul at the cost of heavy injuries, this would not only distract Burul, but it would give Regnier ample room to run.

Although he could use his net of runes to kill it instantly, that would put his trump card on cooldown for an entire hour. Who knew what could happen in that time?

'No, I can use this. Regnier might not have the time to think about it and might assume that I can use this attack more than once. He might even assume that it's a proximity thing. If I use it now, he will be highly wary of me and might battle more cautiously than he should, giving me an opportunity to take advantage.'

Burul's thoughts moved like lightning, worthy of a Ninth Dimensional powerhouse. A beam of light shot from his forehead just as the Starry Tailed Fox came in close.

The creature was torn to pieces as Regnier's eyes opened wide. What was that just now?

Regnier's focus was entirely on Burul. When he saw such a sudden attack, and even how the Tier Seven threat was somehow trapped and returned to Burul, his mind was on high alert.

He had to run.

He turned to do so but his heart jumped. When had this child appeared behind him?

Leonel didn't hesitate and took the initiative. In fact, the attack was already before Regnier before he could react.

Regnier didn't even get the chance to register the fact the attack wasn't a threat to him before it landed. Because he was so high strung, he treated it as a real and tangible threat, retreating to get out of the way.

Dream Force pooled around him like hurricane-force winds, ready to shred apart Leonel's attack.

But at that moment, Leonel reacted as though nothing was there. He stepped through the Dream Force as though it wasn't there.

No, it was there, but when it entered Leonel's sphere of influence, it turned silent.

Regnier's eyes widened as Leonel's spear flickered. This time, it wasn't a scepter turned spear, but rather a real spear, flickering with a silvery light.

The speed, the skill... it tore Regnier's clothing apart and left cuts all over his ethereal body.

The avalanche of shock left him frozen, and he only barely managed to register that Leonel was also somehow slowing down his speed of thought. No, he was suffocating the link between his real body and this projection, making his thoughts run much more like a mortal than the mighty expert he was.

But then it clicked.

Leonel was great, a genius even...

But he was doing no damage.