

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2561: [Bonus] Rings

[Bonus chapter courtesy of Fire2112 (aka Firemonster) <3 6/6]

Aina felt as though time had come to a stop. She had waited so long to hear these words, and they had come so unexpectedly that they hit her like a speeding truck.

Her golden eyes misted over, and her lips trembled. It was taking everything she had to not start an ugly sort of sobbing fit. She didn't want Leonel to see that.

But the longer she tried not to cry, the more time the silence lingered.

And yet, Leonel just lay there on her lap, a bright smile on his face.

He had thought about waiting for a grand occasion, maybe after he had accomplished some amazing feat or maybe after he had eliminated some powerful enemy.

But when he really thought about it, it felt like that tranquil confidence taking control again. He was confident that Aina would always stay by his side, so why rush? He was confident that he'd be at the center of grand feat after grand feat, so why be in a hurry to choose which one of them to propose in?

His mind could think millions of thoughts a second. The number of venues, variations, methods he had thought of just to ask this seemingly simple question were endless.

He could probably construct the marriage proposal heard around the world if he really wanted to. But he had thought of thousands of ways to do exactly that.

He was too obsessed with showy displays, and when that was matched with obsessing over being in control of every detail of every little thing, it manifested in the worst of ways.

He threw himself into life and death situations he should have had no part in; he confessed to the woman he liked in front of wide stairs in front of as many eyes as possible, and he ignored his best friend's plight and decided on cracked ribs instead of throwing a game that was ultimately meaningless to him.

So this time... he threw all of that out of the window.

"Yes..."

The word was so soft and nondescript that even with Leonel's current body, he almost couldn't hear it at all.

"What was that? I can't hear you." Leonel said with an even wider grin.

The tears Aina was trying so hard to hold back unleashed like a torrent.

"Leonel Morales! So help me god, if you make me ugly cry on my wedding day, I will cut it off!"

Aina's crying became somewhat hysterical as she grabbed Leonel's face, not caring as she mixed in her salty tears with the taste of his lips.

Leonel laughed, letting his wife cup his cheeks and assault him with her affection.

The fact Aina called this her wedding day told Leonel all he needed to know. She never cared about the proposal or a fancy wedding; she just wanted to hear those words come out of his mouth.

To her, those ceremonies were unnecessary; she hadn't even asked for a ring.

Leonel pulled himself up through Aina's avalanche of kisses, pushing her down onto the soft grass.

Cupping his face, she finally pulled away. She looked like a mess, her eyes barely able to remain open through her tears. Even so, everything about her expression spilled over with love. She couldn't have roared it any louder.

"I love you, Leonel," she said softly.

"I love you... Aina Morales," Leonel replied, his smile gentle and his gaze maybe more protective than it had ever been.

They stayed like this for a while, each one seemingly trying to memorize the face of the other, the memories enraptured by the moment.

"Hurry up and consummate me," Aina suddenly said, her hips doing a little wiggle. She laughed and giggled as more tears seemed to come from nowhere.

"I don't think that's how you use that word," Leonel laughed.

"This is my day; this has nothing to do with you. I can use any word however I like, thank you very much."

"Yes, ma'am!"

Their clothes became nothing but a distant memory. They intertwined in every way they could, their hands, their tongues, even Aina's legs around his waist.

It was maybe the simplest sex position they had used in a long while, and yet neither of them seemed eager to try something new.

They simply felt every inch of one another, basked in every scent, every sensation. They didn't even want to come up for air.

Aina's soul seemed to move on its own.

Leonel's own consciousness was blurry and he wasn't sure what was happening, and knowing Aina's ability, she probably wasn't conscious of it either. She was lost in her own world... no, their world, feeling Leonel slowly rub every inch there was inside of her.

Even so, Leonel opened himself up to Aina entirely. And in that moment, they were connected not just in body but in soul.

Wise Star Order had told Leonel long ago about what it felt like to be so intertwined with a Spiritual. He had said sex with the soul was the greatest feeling, so much so that the normal thing might never feel the same again.

But while this was common for a pair of Spirituals, for humans, it was much less casual and far more dangerous.

However, when it was between a pair of people with all the mutual trust in the world, none of it seemed to matter.

Leonel ignored the calculations, ignored the memories aside from this one right here, ignored thoughts on what this might mean.

His hands, his tongue, his cock... his soul, were all bonded with the only woman he had ever loved... the only woman he would ever love...

And it was the sort of feeling that was better than any victory he had ever claimed, any enemy he had ever conquered.

At that moment, they seemed to lock into one.

Their left hands suddenly began to radiate a gentle light.

Delicate runes were slowly engraved on their fourth fingers... Aina's like a vine of roses and Leonel's like a ring of black and red.

Chapter 2562: Closer

"Leonel..."

Aina spoke between panting breaths, only pulling away for small spurts to barely just get out the words she wanted to say.

"... it feels too good... I think I'm losing my mind..."

As the wholesomeness of the atmosphere faded, it was replaced by a burning heat that seemed to want to scorch her body. Even so, Aina didn't feel like she was exaggerating. Whether or not Leonel's seed would put a baby in her was entirely dependent on her choice, and her mind was so foggy right now that she was another half inch from saying consequences be damned.

Leonel suddenly thrust deep inside her. He had learned to vary his strokes so well, building up her anticipation and reading her mood as though she was an open book.

Slow, deliberate, short strokes... she knew he could reach deeper, she knew that he could practically pierce right through her if he wanted, and yet he didn't, teasing her entrance open again and again, as though forcing her to relieve the first entry repeatedly.

And then when she felt like she couldn't handle it anymore, he slowly pushed in so deep that their hips ground against one another.

"Oh god..."

Aina didn't feel like she talked much during sex. Except for some teasing interludes, she found that her mind was usually in another space and time entirely.

But now her lips and thoughts moved on their own. The entire world was a blur to her as her eyes seemed another few centimeters from permanently rolling into the back of her head.

She could barely hold on, feeling herself rolling in a tide of pleasure. It was as though all her instincts had taken over her reason, like she was another pawn of nature.

Leonel could feel Aina's level of desire more than ever before, and he was sure that it was the same for her. Each one seems stuck in an infinite sort of feedback loop, the emotions of the other fueling their own and then cycling again and again.

He didn't even seem to need to use his Ability Index to grasp exactly what she wanted, exactly what she needed.

And it felt damn good.

He pulled one of his hands away from being stuck in a lock with hers, using his arm to pull her up by the waist.

Aina's entire body seemed to have become sensitive. The feeling of Leonel's strong arms pressing against her soft skin was like another spark of electricity running through her spine.

And yet, when she finally settled into their new position, her waist pulling her further and further down Leonel's cock, her entire body seemed to go limp.

Leonel propped himself up on his knees, supporting Aina's waist with an arm. Their left hands were still pressed together and she seemed to refuse to let go.

He could feel every inch of her squeezing down on him. Lost in pleasure, her body writhed, heating up and leaking from seemingly everything she could manage.

She finally let go of Leonel's hand, but it was only because she thought she could use both arms to better bring them closer. She wrapped them around his neck, her fingers practically embedding themselves into his scalp.

Tears continued to flow down her face. It wasn't fair. She wanted to be closer, somehow closer than this. She wanted them to be one.

She felt Leonel's hands on her ass, pressing his forearms against her thighs and controlling her weight as though she weighed no more than a light feather's touch.

He picked up their pace, his rhythm no longer as varied, but instead becoming relentless. He loosened the restraints bit by bit, moving faster and faster.

Aina held onto him so tightly that he thought that she might imprint herself into him. The feeling of her soft breasts against his hard chest was like heaven, her ass felt like a silky water in his hands and her writhing insides were like the finest, fragrant oils.

A chalice of the gods poured its Ambrosia over the tip of his cock, making every stroke feel as though he was ascending into another world.

Aina's tongue wrapped around his. It was so delicate and he could almost feel its unblemished pink color. It rolled around so smoothly, matching an expertise that matched her Body Clairvoyance and countless hours of practice with this very man in her arms.

Leonel felt a pair of fingers dig into his back, but even those spikes of what should have been pain in this situation rang like the bells of pleasure.

He and Aina both pulled back from their kiss at the same time. She could seem to sense how close Leonel was, and she herself had lost count of how many times she had been driven over that mountain.

She wanted to see the pleasure in his eyes as he finished inside of her. She wanted him to use her every way he wanted, any way he could think of. She wanted to be his in every sense of the word.

Without Leonel's lips blocking hers, her moans became more feverish. Her intense gaze met Leonel's, their forehead pressed against one another and their hot breaths blowing against each other's cheeks.

"Yes... yes..."

It seemed to be the only word she could say, repeating it again and again. It was hard to say if she was reconfirming her answer from earlier, if she was talking about Leonel's cock, or maybe she was urging on what was most definitely coming.

She squeezed down around him tighter. Every time his arms lowered her to the base, a warmth would spark around her clit at just the slightest touch. Her body felt like it was on fire and there only seemed one thing that could possibly give her what she wanted...

There was only one way to be closer.

Looking into Leonel's eyes, she felt him convulse inside of her. He could see those sparks of love in his eyes, the willingness to do anything for her, protect her from anything, shield her from the world itself if he had to.

And then like a rushing stream, she felt a feeling more perfect than anything she had ever experienced before.

Chapter 2563: Little Vixen

One would have thought that after such a wild level of stimulus, the two might have calmed down. But that was far from the case.

Aina felt like her mind had been overloaded, but Leonel's Vital Star Force had plans of their own and Aina's soul, intertwined with his own, didn't want him to stop until he had vented everything. She practically did everything but speak out the words: "Use me".

The pleasure she derived from it was like riding on an endless high. Nothing could seem to knock her down from it. And in the end, she just wanted more and more of it.

It was hard to tell how much time had passed. It might have been days, maybe even weeks. The two hadn't bothered to care. Even now, while soaking in the lake of Cleansing Waters, they were pressed against one another, Aina's back against Leonel's chest and his cock still pressed between her.

Aina's eyes were barely clear anymore, but sensing just the slightest hint of desire from Leonel, she reached down, cradling the head of his cock in slender fingers, pressing them against her delicate pink folds and sliding it inside of her.

She released a heart-shuddering moan, enjoying the feeling of Leonel's hands rolling over her breasts. The two didn't move nearly as fast as they had during the earlier rounds; it was hard to tell that they were moving at all aside from a subtle grinding.

At this point, it seemed to be less about reaching a peak and enjoying the slow, steady waves that came before it.

Leonel bent forward, pressing his cheek against Aina's. She reached back with a palm, pressing against his other cheek. Her eyes were misty but filled with love and affection.

Feeling Leonel delicately play with her pink nipples, her body felt like it was in an elevated state. He was hardly moving his cock, but it only made every subtle movement hit ten times harder.

"Can this count as a honeymoon?" Aina asked in a sultry and somewhat amused voice.

Leonel could feel the coercion in Aina's voice. He knew that she could hardly control herself right now; even the coolness of the waters they waded in was unable to bring down her heat, but he was still somewhat surprised that it was so powerful.

Aina had awoken a coercion ability long ago in Valiant Heart Mountain, the day her curse was cured. But after learning to control and restrain it, she never really used it again, except during that combination attack they had created together in the Void Palace.

Now that she was somewhat absentminded, lost in the feeling of being one with Leonel, that ability came back in full force. If not for Leonel's Dream Force being in the Life State, he might have lost his mind and started railing his wife with everything he had.

Of course, she wouldn't mind it. But he quite liked their current slow pace. It allowed him to admire every inch of her.

He smiled. "You can't go around talking like that; you could make a man lose himself."

Aina's smile brightened, though her eyes remained misty.

"What's that? You want to fuck me even harder than you already have? You really want to break me, huh?"

Leonel chuckled. He could hear the slight excitement in Aina's voice as though that was exactly what she wanted him to do.

When it was said in that voice, he really did almost forget about everything else.

"I'll take everything you have," she spoke again, her voice dripping with seduction.

The waters around them rippled, even turning a hint red and violet as the world reacted to her will.

"This hole... all of them... are yours..."

Aina seemed really drunk, her words only getting more vulgar. She wasn't usually so rated-R, at least not with her words. She was mostly the type to tease with subtlety and then let Leonel take the reins.

Leonel decided to play along.

"All of them?" He questioned in a teasing tone.

Aina gasped. "Mr. Morales, you're so naughty."

"I plead my innocence, Mrs. Morales, by reason of smoking hot wife."

Aina's laughter was like a tonic of pleasure for Leonel. He felt like he was riding on a cloud.

He knew that Aina didn't want to change her name from Brazinger until she could make that family regret their actions, but much like him... she seemed to have chosen him over the world, chosen him even over herself.

The two of them had become one in a way very few could.

"I apologize, I've been rude," Aina continued seductively. "Please punish me."

She pressed her ass a little more firmly against Leonel, grinding down.

She bent forward a little, a cute little pink dot staring back up at Leonel. Clearly, she wanted him to take it.

"Why does that sound like exactly what you want?" Leonel asked, his hands grasping Aina's waist so firmly that she squirmed with excitement.

Leonel was actually very tempted to take what she wanted to give him, but he felt that doing so while Aina wasn't quite in her right mind would be irresponsible of him.

That said, he also didn't want to ruin the mood with his sudden bout of morality, so he grinned instead.

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Morales," Aina said innocently, her ass wiggling back on him.

SLAP.

Aina squealed, a slight giggle of delight coming from her cherry lips.

She reached back from her leaning position, wanting to give her wrists to Leonel so he could really rail her. But what she didn't expect was for Leonel to take her wrist and suddenly pull her off of him and onto her knees. With the height of the water, her nipples only faintly peeked over the waterline.

Her misty eyes glittered with excitement as they landed on the veiny rod before her, its heat slapping against her forehead.

"You can't give little vixens what they want," Leonel said righteously.

Aina was caught between making another quippy remark and really wanting to take his cock into her mouth.

The latter won out.

Her body shuddered with pleasure as her soft lips wrapped around him. One would have thought that she was pleasuring herself.

She grabbed Leonel's hips, her eyes watering even more as she pushed her down as far as she could go.

Leonel watched speechlessly. This wife of his had really lost her mind...

He grinned. He liked that.

Chapter 2564: "Most"

Leonel and Aina held each other close, the latter resting her head on his chest.

The two had truly taken their time to enjoy one another's company. The days ticked maybe, weeks even, without the slightest care in the world. They knew that this sort of thing was probably the closest thing to a honeymoon that they'd get, but they really wouldn't have it any other way. When they lived lives like they did, there was little appeal in going on vacation to see new and amazing sights. By this point, what hadn't they seen? Plus, could there be a world more beautiful than Anastasia's? And even if there was one, could they have sex in the middle of it without being interrupted?

They both had a tacit understanding, then, that this was what they wanted. Neither would even mind wasting an entire year in this state of limbo. This was the kind of happiness people searched for their entire lives; there was nothing out there that was better.

The two fell into a deep sleep. From time to time, one would wake before the other, and seeing that their partner in life was still resting, they'd comfortably go back to sleep as well.

A long while later, they both awoke, feeling refreshed and full of life, but they continued to lay there in silence, listening to the soft rustling of the trees and enjoying the softness of the grass against their bodies.

Leonel took a look at his left ring finger and smiled. He hadn't expected for some mysterious energy to etch a wedding ring right into his finger, but he guessed the tradition had to come from somewhere.

He always thought that some guy had randomly chosen it at some point. Some people said that it was the finger closest to the heart, but that didn't even make any sense. In that case, instead of a ring, why didn't everything just walk around with pendants swinging over their chests? It was a hell of a lot more noticeable than trying to check for a ring on a constantly moving hand.

Sometimes the world didn't like logic, though.

Even now, he didn't know why this finger was chosen, but he liked it. It was like a piece of Aina tattooed into him, in the least morbid way possible. If you took a step like this, you couldn't even pretend not to be married even if you wanted to.

Leonel was glad for Aina's Clairvoyance. He didn't know about the exact process on how to do such a thing, or even that it was possible. It might even be the case that this

tattoo could have been engraved anywhere, but because Aina was a woman of Earth, she chose the place she was the most familiar with. Either way, he liked it.

He reached down and pulled up the hand Aina had resting on his chest to his eyes with a smile. Her hands were beautiful, and the tattoo seemed to add a delicate sort of exoticness to them.

"I've noticed you like looking at my hands a lot," Aina spoke with a laugh. "I've heard of foot fetishes, but a hand fetish? Is that better or worse?"

Her voice sounded a bit gruff and slightly deeper than usual. It was hard to tell if that was because they hadn't spoken in a while, because she had used it too much when they had been speaking, or if it was because a certain something had gone too far down it earlier...

Leonel smiled. "What can I say, I like admiring every part of you."

Aina gasped. "You take that back, I am not an object."

"I'm hurt. They say women change after they get the ring, but this is just too fast."

Aina's light laughter was carried by the gentle breeze.

"So what did you go do before, exactly?"

"Oh, nothing much. Just taught a few Ninth Dimensional pricks a lesson, killed a few of them, pissed a lot of them off, the usual."

Aina shook her head. Someone else might think he was speaking nonsense, but she believed him completely. Of course, what she didn't know just yet was that he wasn't referring to humans.

"Then what's your plan?"

"Open up the Dream Pavilion, I guess. There's a huge lack of Dream Force experts, and the few that there were ran away. I doubt they've come back, they're probably just waiting for the other shoe to drop."

"And you're leaving them alone?"

"There's a minimum threshold I have to keep so that they can't target the Pavilion, unfortunately. Or else I would have lopped their heads off already."

"Mm," Aina nodded.

"But there are some other troublesome things coming down. Those pricks didn't really like my performance, so they made some more annoying rule changes. Well, most of them didn't like it."

"Rule changes?"

"Yeah. There's one thing that's unavoidable, but they sent down two 'decrees'. I almost forgot about the second one, but it doesn't matter much."

"Whenever you say that it's almost guaranteed to be a big deal."

Leonel laughed. "They didn't like the fact I basically wiped out a Dream Pavilion, killing all their members. They used that as a pretense to ding my Contribution Points. The Vast Dream Pavilion fell from 100th place to 101st."

"Is that a huge deal?" Aina asked.

"There are definitely a large amount of special privileges I lost because of that, but I wasn't banking on them either. I expected them to do this already, which was why I never made plans based on that ranking. They even dinged the Gem Dream Pavilion as well to avoid looking too biased, but it only made them look more pathetic."

"Then what did you mean by only 'most' were made? Some were happy?"

"Ehh..." Leonel drew out his hesitation. "They may or may not have sent some Spiritual-elf women to try and seduce your husband. Can you believe it? The nerve of them."

A dangerous aura came spurting out from Aina in waves.

Leonel grinned. "But, I have an idea for you to get back at them. Wanna hear it?"

Chapter 2565: Peace

Aina pouted and laid back down on Leonel's chest. She was clearly very unhappy. If she had known this would happen, she would have gone too. Although she could only use Soul Force, surely Dream Force wasn't that hard to learn, right?

Honestly, for Aina, she rarely used Forces other than various Weapon Force and Blood Force not because she couldn't, but because she didn't like putting her eggs in too many baskets. Spreading the wealth was good practice in most cases, but not when your task was becoming as strong as humanly possible. In fact, even her Weapon Forces were purely used in accessory to her Ax Force. So really, she only used two Forces mainly.

However, with her Clairvoyance, learning other Forces was not very difficult at all.

For example, the lightning Force she gained access to in her demon form, it progressed along easily even though she rarely practiced it much.

It could be said that her Blood Force and Ax Force were already at an extreme level. It was just that she was much like Leonel, unable to bring out their full strength due to the limitation of her Dimensional level.

Right now, she was working on her own unique methods of pulling out more potential from herself. Unlike others, the fact she had progressed her Dimensions too quickly honestly didn't bother her too much. She didn't need to return to the Third Dimension like Leonel had because she had perfect control over her body and soul.

Separately, the Wise Tablets could only rate Aina's Clairvoyance skills as Gold Grade...

But what if both were in the same body?

That was a different matter entirely.

"How?" Aina finally grumbled.

"Well, I could participate in the Gathering of Kingdoms personally. But I had a much better idea."

"And that is?"

"Send you instead."

Aina raised an eyebrow. "Why's that a good idea?"

In truth, it would probably feel good. She'd get to lay claim to her territory, and bash in the faces of a few harlots overextending themselves trying to touch what didn't belong to them.

But on the other hand, one Leonel had already attracted so much attention, if a second Aina appeared wouldn't it feel like the humans were rising up again? There would be some people who really didn't like that. And some of those people would be Gods.

"Well are you?" Leonel asked with a grin. "Human, that is."

Aina blinked, suddenly understanding.

"You want me to participate as a demon?"

"Well, you don't really need to say as much, but they'll connect the dots themselves. And honestly, even if they think you to be a human, I don't think it'll change much.

"Plus, I don't want you using your Blood Sovereignty in front of all of those people. I don't know if Invalids appear in the same form in this world because I haven't actually done much research on it. But I'm sure they exist.

"There's also one other thing to mention. Winning isn't necessary. The culling is only for the bottom rung, we just need to make it far enough to not be among them. Then, you can withdraw.

"I'm sure they'll try some underhanded methods, but nothing we can't handle. They'll be preparing for me anyway. When they get you, they'll get a huge wake up call."

"Okay," Aina said with a smile.

It didn't matter if Aina participated as a demon or not because as things went, their "world" was now formed of six Bubble Words now that had fused into one.

When Leonel thought about it, it might even be that the Demons were eager to charge into this land precisely so that they could get the protection of the Dream Pavilion, only to realize that they wouldn't have a chance at it any longer. They probably even thought that they were already safe.

Leonel almost felt bad.

Almost.

The Gathering of Kingdoms focused purely on the younger generation for obvious reasons. They wanted to test the potential of worlds. There would be no Ninth Dimension monsters this time around, and the strongest would be in the Seventh Dimension, Aina's Dimension.

Of course, the handicap of not being able to use her Blood Sovereignty to the greatest degree, not to mention the fact she was born and raised in an Incomplete World, would weigh heavily on Aina. But Leonel was quite confident that she'd bash quite a few heads in.

Those poor honey traps wouldn't even see what was coming.

After talking about these things, Leonel and Aina forgot about the world again and sank into their own fantasies.

Sometimes they would talk and laugh, sometimes they would have soft vanilla sex, and sometimes they might jump off the deep end, mostly led by Aina's drunk antics.

Leonel found it amusing how "drunk" his little wife got whenever they had sex with their souls. She lost her filter; her words would make a sailor seem prim and proper, and she always seemed to "forget" what happened.

Of course, Leonel knew she never forgot. With their souls so close, he could practically feel all of her memories. She remembered quite clearly; she just chose to conveniently not say a thing.

Leonel silently filed away this perfect sort of blackmail material, loving every second of it.

He couldn't find himself tiring of calling her his wife, and this time really meant it. Well, he had always meant it, but there was a deep resonance with his soul this time, one that made him smile from ear to ear like a made man.

His soul felt firmer than it ever had before, and the feeling of knowing where she was, what she was feeling, what she wanted, no matter how far apart they were or how much time passed was more reassuring than he could have ever known.

This sort of peace, he wanted it to last forever. The idea of a struggle that would last for a lifetime had truly begun to piss Leonel off somewhat.

He would do whatever he could to ensure that one day... at least for his family in this little corner of the world... peace would be all they knew.

Chapter 2566: God

Leonel stretched and tried to move, but Aina was still wrapped around him like some sort of cross between an octopus and a koala bear.

"You're so clingy, wife."

"Are you complaining, husband?" Aina sneered, not opening her eyes.

Leonel's face almost split with a wide smile. That was the first time Aina had called him that, and it felt sweeter than he had thought it would.

Aina opened an eye when she didn't hear Leonel respond, only to see a smile that she could only return in kind.

"I'm not done with you yet," Aina said after closing her eyes. "Be an obedient hunk of a pillow, please."

Leonel chuckled. "Alright."

He pushed himself up and shifted Aina's position, letting her curl up in his lap and arms as he pulled himself into a meditative position.

Whether she was here or not wouldn't really affect much. In fact, it made him calmer and his thoughts and Force only seemed to move more smoothly.

He had already gathered up all the resources he needed to enter the Fourth Dimension, but he was still missing a few things on the comprehension side.

His Forces weren't the problem. He had already succeeded in elevating them all to the Middle Impetus State and then some. What still remained on the list was comprehending True Destruction Sovereignty, tempering his body with Sixth Dimensional Pure Ores, and raising his Constellation Realm comprehension from Rudimentary to Common.

Luckily, that sudden breakthrough while he was running from Khelgis and Adu had covered a lot of those bases as well.

His Destruction Sovereignty had now entered the True State, melding what he was born with what he had comprehended.

His Constellation Realm Comprehension had reached Common.

As for his Metal Body, the situation had changed. Due to Leonel's deviation, he believed that what he had done was actually better than tempering himself with Sixth Dimensional Pure Ores.

Like his father had said, he had deviated from the original path, and thanks to the earlier mentioned breakthroughs, he began to use his Northern Star Lineage Factor as a conduit for his body's improvement.

Soon, there would come a day where his body was almost the perfect reflection of a God Beasts and the weakness of his human body would no longer be a limiter. And better yet, he would far surpass the demon body hidden within him.

A quarter of Leonel's blood might be that of a Demon, but in this state, it benefited him little to none. Aside from the boost he gained to his Dream Force affinity as a result, he was free of those chains... and he liked it that way.

Although he wasn't filled with as much rage as he had experienced back then, he was still Leonel and he was still stubborn about many things. That woman had forced him to watch his wife die right in front of him...

He would never rely on that power again.

Instead, he would wait until that power was nothing more than a pawn in his palms. When that day came, he would assimilate it as another extension of himself.

Nothing more, nothing less.

With all of those checkmarks met, and the True Dream Plane's rewards having given him full access to a mature Evolution Ore Mine, Leonel had everything he needed to break through.

All he needed to do was convert the 1,000,000,000 kilograms of Ninth Dimensional Evolution Ore to 100,000,000 kilograms mutated to match his Forces.

Luckily, he had Anastasia to handle that and it was all already prepared.

The materials appeared around him, teleporting from various regions of the Segmented Cube's world. Then, holding his wife in his arms, and without a care in the world, he began to absorb the materials.

He remembered the first time he had made changes to his Destruction World, it felt like his sense of self was being crushed bit by bit.

This time, the change was even more violent than last time, but he took it much better. Sweat beaded down his brows and his body tensed, but at the very least, he wasn't curled up in a ball and hiding in a corner somewhere.

He felt that a large reason for this was his Dream Force. As much as he wanted to say it was because of Aina's soft body pressing into his, that was only really a cherry on top.

His mind right now gained an almost flexibility to it that it hadn't had in the past.

Absolute confidence sounded nice, and it was also very strong, but it was also very brittle. If it was bent beyond a certain point, it would snap apart and break.

Leonel had gone beyond that point several times and the outcomes were never pretty.

But the flexibility he had now made his body more receptive to change.

He watched as the spheres of his Destruction World grew larger, increasing in size and truly flourishing.

Anastasia's Cleansing Waters was able to raise the quality of Ores to their peak. Leonel didn't have to refine anything out and could just bask in their perfection.

As his body elevated to a new Dimension, he felt a tirade of strength that had seemed to be blocked behind a dam rushing out of him.

His Forces, especially, began to truly flourish. Even without a single other breakthrough, he had truly become like a new person.

When Dimensions were first introduced to him, they were described as the difference between mortals and Gods. Crossing that dividing line should be akin to raising to a completely new state.

As Leonel grew more powerful, he began to care for this explanation less and less. It was just too easy for him to jump across Dimensions and crush people who should, supposedly, be Gods to him.

But feeling the changes in his body, his heart began to thump as those previous thoughts surfaced once again.

At the very least... if he was comparing his current self to his former self...

He had truly become a God.

Chapter 2567: Broken

Leonel released a shuddering breath. His bronzed skin shimmered, reflecting like metal beneath the sun, and yet still being soft beneath Aina's touch. Well, the skin was soft. The muscle beneath was anything but.

Between his Vital Star Force, his Metal Body and his various Lineage Factors, his body was a cut machine.

His muscles were compressed to the absolute extreme, giving him a somewhat lean silhouette. But his chest was broad and his shoulders were akin to boulders. Remembering a certain anime his dad really liked back on Earth, his own back could be said to have a demon face of its own, the sunlight getting lost in its deep crevices.

It wasn't just his upper body either. Even the slightest twitch of his legs revealed striations and cut separations of his quads, while his abs would have descended into infinity if not for his crotch.

However, it was one thing to look like this, but the power he felt rolling through his veins was on a completely different level.

Right now, he felt that he could crush the likes of Khelgis and his companion with a single fist. He wouldn't even need to take out his spear, and he had yet to even forge his Divine Armor.

Leonel smiled down at the woman in his arms. He kissed her head, taking in that familiar scent that was so reminiscent of apple cider.

"Finished?" Aina asked.

"Yeah, I am. For now," Leonel said.

"For now, huh? You want to ruin my honeymoon." She said in a pouty and willful voice, but it was clear she wasn't very serious.

Leonel laughed. "We can stay here for as long as you want. Worse comes to worst, we can just leave the human Bubbles behind and go traveling. Who needs a Dream Pavilion?"

Leonel wasn't being sarcastic in the slightest. If that was what Aina wanted, he'd do it. Nothing else really felt all that important to him right now.

The only people he'd worry about would be his brothers, who were already with him, and his mother and grandparents, who had their own plans.

Aina smiled sweetly. "I'm not that bad, I'll let you do what you need to do... eventually."

"I did want to ask something, though. How's your Dream Force? Do you use it?"

Aina laughed, feeling a bit speechless. But then she felt it made sense.

She made food for Leonel all the time, and that ability was like an extension of her Clairvoyance. When their souls intertwined, she could subtly feel what he needed and act on it.

So, it could be said that Aina was highly familiar with Leonel's many paths as she was always able to adjust to them perfectly, giving him exactly what he needed.

But, Leonel didn't have the same ability. Although he could use his Ability Index to just scan and forcefully comprehend Aina through route logic, it felt a bit... artificial.

He didn't mind it if it was for the sake of giving his wife pleasure in bed, he still used some of that even to this day though not as strictly as in the past, more so casually. But using it for anything felt like unnecessarily prying into her secrets. It felt wrong.

"I used Soul Force before, but, uh..." Aina's voice trailed off. Then she began somewhat of a long explanation.

It turned out that when their souls interacted like that, a large part of the reason Aina entered a drunken state was because she was being somewhat overwhelmed by Leonel's Dream Force.

The sensory information that Leonel was fielding at once was several levels above Aina, and due to that, in the feedback loop they entered, she was always the one taking the brunt of it.

Leonel was used to fielding so much sensory information at once, but she wasn't. It overwhelmed her nervous system and she practically went into shock, her thoughts becoming a little dull as though she had taken one too many shots of alcohol.

However, even with those "drawbacks", that Leonel didn't really feel were drawbacks, the level of intimacy between their souls had reached a level where rather than just vaguely being able to understand what Leonel needed, Aina could feel it as clear as day. When that was matched with the added clarity she felt after her death, it practically felt like Leonel was a clone of herself in a weird sense... essentially, only in the sense that her Soul Clairvoyance worked just as easily on Leonel as it did herself.

Clearly, this was a perk of being husband and wife. Leonel didn't know what sort of ritual Aina had completed during their wedding night, but it definitely held more weight than maybe either of them knew.

Even so, what was there to regret?

So what if the other could get a clear look at their entire being whenever they wanted? Their level of trust in one another had long since reached that state even without this step.

The only difference was that in this situation, they had actually benefited greatly. Though, Aina had likely benefited much more in the immediate future.

"...My Blood Force is almost at the Middle Life State, my Ax Force is at the Lower Life State. The black lightning Force I use sometimes is only at the Peak Impetus State. Those should be my main Forces and the ones I use the most.

"The weird thing, though, is that other ones appeared suddenly. I didn't understand until I realized it was actually you."

Leonel's lip twitched. She just gained an extra to Life State Forces just like that? Wasn't this ability a little too broken?

But he didn't realize that she wasn't even done.

"I can even feel your Sovereignties as well. Dream Sovereignty is actually very useful. My Soul Clairvoyance made it easy to protect my mind already, but with the two, I feel like I'm unlocking other abilities I didn't even know I had.

"I don't really need Spear or Bow Sovereignty, but Destruction Sovereignty is very useful too..."

Chapter 2568: Steps

Aina giggled. "Don't look at me like that. This is what they call 'taking responsibility'."

Leonel laughed. He guessed that could be considered better than any dowry or gift to the family. But it wasn't like it was completely thanks to him that Aina was able to gain this.

Without her Soul Clairvoyance, a clearly broken ability, she would have never been able to do it. Now, she was probably even more powerful than she had been in the past.

But this was also good in Leonel's views. One of them would never have to worry about falling behind the other. They'd always be able to keep up with each other like this, especially since...

"Don't pout so much, this means I can help you a lot too. I can feel the recipes for a lot of Force Pills you need floating around in my mind."

"Like?" Leonel asked.

"Well, I can see that you want to use your Death Pulse Deer and Golden Tiger Lineage Factors as sacrifices to make your body stronger. You're relying on your comprehension to do that, using your understanding of Earth Force, Constellation Force, and your Scarlet Star Force to succeed.

"But I can see that you're still losing a lot of its potential. I would imagine that the true Golden Tiger and Death Pulse Deer are exceptionally powerful creatures and their strength, even in the Fourth Dimension, wouldn't be so limited.

"I can create a series of Pills that make the Lineage Factors, um, I guess you could say more in line with your goals for them?"

Leonel raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"Well, right now the purpose of those two Lineage Factors isn't exactly what you want them to be. Though they have portions of themselves that do enhance the body, especially during a beast transformation, they're actually more focused on Force and Force usage.

"Trying to transfer potential to use Force into pure bodily strength isn't an easy one-to-one transition. I'd say you're losing out on probably... 90% of the potential, at the very least? The issue is mostly in how your Lineage Factor is manifesting itself.

"Lineage Factors appear in all sorts of different ways. Some appear as new organelles within your cells, some create new tissue, mutating existing organs or creating new ones entirely, some focus on the blood cells creating new or different types, some change the folds of your brain... the number of paths is endless.

"In this particular case, there are a few changes to consider, but they mostly occur in your mind, between your soul and your brain. There's a heavy emphasis on these Lineage Factors increasing your capacity and affinity for certain Forces over making physical changes to your body, and that's why they're so hard to convert.

"You're trying to take something that's almost metaphysical and make it purely physical, there's no easy way to make that conversion."

"But my lovely wife can?" Leonel asked with a grin.

Aina smiled sweetly. "I can, but it won't be a single-step process, nothing this complex ever is.

"First, I have to convert those subtler changes to your soul and use them to influence your Ethereal Glabella. Then, using the Ethereal Glabella as a bridge, I can use those former soul fluctuations to cause changes to your brain.

"Once that's finished, your own body can begin upshifting and down-regulating certain genes you already have within you, amplifying certain changes.

"But ultimately, that will only get you to around... 30%, I guess? That's still triple your current power, but that's not quite enough, and every further step is more difficult.

"The main problem is that the God Beasts probably chose this route because it was the easiest to get the greatest number to succeed. If they could have given humans bodies comparable to their Beast Envoys, they probably would have done it already.

"Even if you're up or down-regulating certain Genes, they'll still be human Genes for the most part, though you seem to have another set within you unrelated to us...

"Then that means that we'll need measures a bit more drastic to push it beyond 30%. So, I'll need to create a feedback loop between your body, brain, Ethereal Glabella, and Soul. That will probably be the most intensive process and it will require the most resources, but assuming success, it can get you to 50%.

"That will be the hardest part because afterward, your Ability Index can take root. I'll then connect the feedback loop to your Ability Index and you'll gain personal control over the process. By then, the process toward 100% will be entirely reliant on how many resources we can find for you to absorb.

"So, like five or six steps, maybe? To reach 100%. That'll require at least one pill each, maybe more depending on certain things and resources we have on hand."

Aina practically finished talking in a single breath and Leonel just looked at her, feeling a bit guilty.

Force Pill Crafting was clearly something that Aina was passionate about, and he knew so little about it. He hadn't even known what Forces she specialized in, or more accurately, what level they had reached. Yet, she knew him like the back of her hand.

He held her tight. "My wife is so smart."

Aina scoffed. "When you say it like that, you make it sound like you thought I was stupid."

"No?" Leonel grinned, earning him a pinch.

"You're getting a little too glib, Mr. Morales."

"I liked husband better, let me hear it again."

"Hmph," Aina turned away, pretending to be mad.

"If you're too stubborn, I might have to punish you again," Leonel said with an evil smile.

Aina's shoulder trembled. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Oh? Is that so? Miss 'all my holes are yours'?"

Aina gasped. "I did not say it like that!"

"So you remember after all!" Leonel's grin became wider. "What do you say? Still willing to let me take it?"

Leonel lightly patted Aina's perky bottom.

"Sure," she said a little too quickly before she raised up a palm. A surge of Earth Force gathered on her palm, forming a tower that looked a little too familiar for Leonel's liking.

He looked down at his crotch.

"So long as you let me get a turn," she spoke between a fit of giggles, pushing Leonel down.

Chapter 2569: Wealth

2569 Wealth

Leonel managed to protect his backside, albeit just barely. Giving Aina access to Earth Force though... Very bad idea.

Aina ended up giving him a list of things she would need to make the first batch of pills and they actually weren't so bad. It would be a simple matter to trade for those things through the Dream Pavilion. Even with all those ridiculous restrictions they placed to suppress the Vast Dream Pavilion, there was still a great deal of advantage you could get from them if you knew how to make use of those chances.

Leonel knew, though, that out of respect for Aina, they would definitely have to go and see her father.

She probably thought that he would forget, which was why she was still clinging to him and was being a bit defiant about letting him go.

It was one thing to not inform her father about who she was dating and sharing a bed with. But Leonel was her husband now. The weight of the two things was completely different even if to many it just felt like a small change in title.

Leonel had always... well, almost always treated her well. At the very least, when they took the titles of boyfriend and girlfriend, he had never done anything to hurt her and he often put her own happiness far ahead of his own.

They had both loved each other for a long time and that feeling had never changed but...

There was just something about that step that they had taken together that made the world's colors seemed brighter, made their feelings feel sweeter...

The way his eyes lit up when she called him husband, and the way her smile brightened when he called her wife...

Even without anything changing, it somehow felt like everything had changed.

This was her man, her life partner, her other half.

There was simply no way she couldn't tell her father about this. Even if Leonel didn't get his approval ahead of time, they owed him a conversation afterward.

Luckily, Aina knew that Leonel wouldn't forget about such a thing. So she patiently waited with a sweet smile on her face, clinging to him as he practiced his techniques. There was a deep peace in her heart that wasn't going anywhere, and would likely never go anywhere.

As for Leonel, well... he was stalling. No, he wasn't stalling, he definitely had something very important to do, and that was of course to understand his path to entering the Fifth Dimension.

Why would he be stalling?

The Third Dimension focused on Force, but the Fourth Dimension focused on the body. The former established a connection with the higher energies of the world while the latter essentially refined yourself with them.

Of course, this was a bit of a deeper layer. On the surface, you formed your Nodes in the Third Dimension, and in the Fourth you established the periphery network of Nodal Pathways that circulated said Forces around your body more ubiquitously.

You would connect your Nodes in addition to creating a large network that could put the original circulatory system to shame.

The first time Leonel crossed the Fourth Dimension, he had stepped clear across it, hopping from the Third directly to the Peak of the Fourth. He entered the Fifth not even a few days later.

It could be said that he wasn't necessarily familiar with a slow and winding process of making it through the Fourth Dimension, but the fact he had blazed through it was its own form of familiarity. With his Control Ability Index, very few would understand how to make substantial changes to their body aside from him.

You'd likely have to have Body Clairvoyance like Aina did to surpass him in this area.

The problem, of course, was that his father's [Final Destruction] technique didn't work like that.

His Nodes weren't located in his body, they were rather in the Second Dimension in his self-created Destruction World.

This posed a clear problem. How would he form a connected network through his body if he didn't even Nodes within him?

Pain.

That was the real answer to the question. He'd have to suffer again, and this time he'd have to withstand an assault of his being, his soul and his body at the same time.

According to his father's method, he would have to form a connection between his World of Destruction and not just his body, but each one of his cells individually.

To be considered to have entered Tier 1, he would have to establish a connection with 10% of his cells, so on and so forth until 90% for Tier 9. He would then have to hit 100% to be qualified to make an attempt to enter the Fifth Dimension.

He was essentially making his entire body a Nodal Pathway. He would be able to eject Force from any cell of his body.

Leonel couldn't help but wonder if this would impact Aina's plans for him. After all, she talked about changing his Gene expression and this might change that as well, especially when he got into the details of what his father wanted him to do.

"... This really might complicate things," Aina fell into her thoughts. "It will be hard to tell unless I can feel the changes."

"You don't have to try and seduce me like this. I am at your service," Leonel said righteously.

Aina laughed. Technically, their souls were always connected now so they didn't need to go so far, but she had no intention of correcting him.

"Try it with one cell first, I might be able to feel it."

Leonel sighed. "My old man is really a glutton for punishment, just that he likes punishing me instead of himself.

"I'll need a ton of resources to do this too, I'll need one complete Essence of Pure Ninth Dimensional Reinforced Urbe Ore per cell. He's trying to kill me."

Aina's eyes widened.

One Essence Reinforced Urbe Ore, especially Ninth Dimensional, was heavy. It wasn't a single kilogram, it was a thousand.

A normal human body of Earth had over 30 trillion cells in it.

As for Leonel, he had over a hundred times that.

Just to enter the Fifth Dimension, he'd need the wealth of world that probably rivaled a Demi-God World!

Chapter 2570: Requirements

2570 Requirements

The worst part of all of this was the fact that this was just the requirement to make it to the Peak of the Fourth Dimension; this wasn't the list of requirements to enter the Fifth Dimension, as that was its own can of worms. Leonel was actually worried to check.

A thousand kilograms of Pure Reinforced Urbe Ore per cell for over 300 trillion of them. That was so many zeroes Leonel didn't even want to count them out.

Even so, without a choice, he looked at the requirements for entering the Fifth Dimension and he almost facepalmed.

[Elevate all Forces to the Half-Step Life State]

[Comprehend Black Constellation Realm]

[Comprehend Black True Destruction Sovereignty]

[Comprehend Dream Sovereignty]

[Swallow World Spirit of Demi-God World]

[Forge self-created Natural Force Art]

[Elicit Auspicious Air]

Leonel released an audible groan.

The list was fine for the most part. He was making good headway on all of them. They even made sense. They weren't asking him to make excessive changes to his body like the others had.

This made sense. The Fifth Dimension was all about elevating one's state of mind, breaking free of prior restrictions and reaching a higher level.

The fact that all the requirements seemed to be related to his mind were all in line with this.

However, what were the last two supposed to be about? How was he going to do that?

Setting aside the clearly suicidal implications of the second to last option, the last one made his head spin.

A Force Art capable of eliciting Auspicious Air was ridiculous. There was a reason it was called a Natural Force Art... it was Natural, it was in the name. It was something formed

by Existence. It could be gathered, sometimes controlled, but you couldn't just create it because you wanted to.

Leonel had one in his mind right now, though it had long since outlived its use. He had outgrown it.

He originally received it in the Merlin Zone, a mere Fourth Dimensional Zone. So it could be said that the fact it had survived for so long was a testament to just how valuable these things were. It took him elevating his mind to the Impetus State for him to feel that it had no use whatsoever... and it was Fourth Dimensional!

Leonel faintly remembered the feeling that [Dimensional Cleanse] might have something related to Natural Force Arts within it, but he still hadn't fully comprehended what that was after all this time and now that he had to make it so far it wasn't helping.

At this point, between needing the wealth of a near Demi-God world, and having to claim the World Spirit of one, he might as well be an egg throwing himself at a rock. Plenty wonderful.

It took him entering a battle Royale with a bunch of Ninth Dimensional powerhouses, of races that made humans look like weak mice, just to get his hands on the Evolution Ore he needed.

If he wanted to accomplish this, he'd probably have to start selling himself on a nearby street corner.

Leonel really didn't have the words for this old man of his.

Until this point, [Final Destruction] could be practiced in an Incomplete World. Although the Ores of the Dimensional Verse and other worlds of the like were weak, with Anastasia they were a dip in the Cleansing Waters away from reaching perfection.

In fact, it would have been far easier to progress in an Incomplete World until this point. No one would be able to threaten him and he could directly snatch anything he needed.

But his father shouldn't even have a concept of a Demi-God World Spirit, and an incomplete World certainly didn't either.

'No, that's not true...'

Leonel's thoughts shifted to Anastasia again. She was a World Spirit, and an extremely powerful one at that. She had just been handicapped due to the stupidity of the Minerva Race.

Anastasia would be all the reference his father needed to draw some conclusions.

He also had to remember that the dictionary was translating the intentions of his father based on words he could understand. That meant that Demi-God World Spirit should just be a mixture of Velasco's understanding and Leonel's own.

Even so, it should be accurate. When it was an average of these two minds, it would be rare for them to be incorrect.

Velasco knew exactly how powerful the World Spirit had to be, and Leonel had learned enough about this world by now to make accurate enough guesses.

Thinking to this point, Leonel knew that there was no wiggling out of it.

He sighed.

His reaction this time had been much more fierce than the other times. He had a much more joking air in the past as though he was bantering with his father again, but he never really doubted that he could do it.

But this time...

There were positives to the choices he had made with his Dream Force, but there were also drawbacks.

But he would Persist.

'I bet there's World Spirits for sale in the Dream Pavilion, even ones that high up. Those people have no shame.'

Demi-God Worlds were more in number than actual Demi-God powers. The Pure Bloods were a perfect example.

He'd just have to find a way to get his hands on one.

Still, dealing with the power behind it was one thing, but what about the World Spirit itself? Anastasia directly avoided contact with other World Spirits due to the danger, so would it be different here? What if they could destroy him with a wave of their hands?

Leonel took a breath and exhaled. He settled himself down, feeling his heartbeat slow beat by beat.

He could do this. With his wife's hand in his, what couldn't he do?

He opened his eyes. "Should we go visit a certain father-in-law now?" He suddenly said.

Aina smiled. "Why does that make it sound like there's more than one?"

"Who knows? Does pops swing that way?"

Aina rolled her eyes, but the happiness in her eyes was as clear as the fluttering butterflies of nervousness in her gut.

She hoped this would go well.

Chapter 2571: Trust

2571 Trust

Leonel and Aina stepped out hand in hand. Leonel didn't seem worried about whether or not Aina could handle the Dream Force as well. Even if she hadn't benefited from his comprehension, just the fact she had Soul Clairvoyance would have made it a simple matter for her to deal with, even if Dream Force was bombarded at her.

"This place is beautiful," she said with a smile.

"And empty."

Aina giggled at the slight annoyance in Leonel's voice. She knew that he probably really wanted to round up those bastards and teach them a lesson, but they weren't in a position to do so. At least not yet.

On the way out, Leonel had conveniently given Eamon and Goggles the Forgetful Orbs. He needed two more Deacons and one disciple.

Luckily, Aina had just become a master herself, one worthy of becoming a Pavilion Head, even. So now, he just needed one more Deacon and one Disciple.

He believed that Eamon would be able to reach the threshold for Deacon soon, and Goggles would be a worthy disciple to take in.

Leonel had met Eamon in the mutated Evolution Ore Mine. He had proven himself to be meticulous and sharp, albeit extremely cautious to maybe even his own detriment.

Could Leonel trust him? Probably not as much as Goggles. After all, although Goggles' memory had been wiped of their time together, he knew and understood Goggle's temperament while he only knew a little about Eamon.

Goggles was a man who seemed cowardly, but was willing to put his life on the line for his friends, ultimately. He had been right there alongside them all as King Alexandre killed them one by one. It was a failure that Leonel still remembered clearly to this day.

Eamon was a person that Leonel could feel was kind and genuine, but there was only so much you could tell by normal means. His Dream Force did help with that, though.

Regardless, there was no doubt that he trusted Goggles far more.

Leonel sighed.

"What's on your mind?" Aina asked. "He's really not so bad, you know. He has a stern face, but he's just a big teddy bear."

Leonel chuckled. He wasn't thinking about Aina's father, though maybe he should have been.

He couldn't be as flippant as he was in the past. His getting along with Miel was a matter of Aina's happiness, and he took that very seriously.

Without his tranquil Dream Force he could feel himself bending a little. But he couldn't help but admit that he was still fiercely stubborn.

It felt like the more these Forces changed around him, the more he was beginning to understand his true self. But the reality was that this true self was more annoying than he liked to admit.

All he had to do was apologize to the old man, right?

The problem was that that apology would never be sincere, and he didn't think that just lying to Miel and swallowing his feelings was the way either.

Miel, maybe rightfully, hated him for how cruel he had been to Aina back then. But there was a whole swirl of emotions and context that surrounded his reply of "So What?".

If he apologized and pretended like he was entirely in the wrong, it just wouldn't be genuine.

Did he regret so brazenly ignoring Aina's outpouring of love?

A little.

But if he was honest with himself, that was his true and raw reaction back then. To him, her betrayal was deep and it wasn't something that he got over easily. In fact, he never truly got over it until Aina began to trust him to the extent she did now.

Back then, his psyche had been built on absolute confidence in himself. The idea of the woman he loved so dearly not having that same confidence in him hurt.

Was it true that he was reckless with his life? Yes. Did he carelessly throw his life around that mattered quite little in the grand scheme of things? Also yes...

But he was also starting to understand that he wasn't as logical of a creature as he tried to think himself out to be.

He wanted his woman to trust in his abilities, to believe that he could hold up the skies with a palm if he had to. He wanted her to hold that belief even if it looked like he was on his last breath.

In kind, he wanted to be the same sort of emotional support for Aina. He would choose her over the world itself, so why couldn't she reciprocate with trust?

Those were his raw emotions about the matter and the reason he and Aina had reached this point was because their ability to support one another on an almost spiritual level was perfect.

Aina never tried to excuse her actions of back then. In fact, she had stayed silently by his side until he was ready to be over it.

In his view, Miel was a third party who had a clear and understandable bias, but would only serve to tip the scales and ruin something that was otherwise perfect.

Leonel felt a light squeeze on his palms from Aina's hand. He looked over and met her gaze.

"We can wait longer if you want," she said softly.

"Aina, how much do you think about what happened back then? Does it still bother you? That I could be so callous? Do you worry that I could do that to you again in the future?"

Aina fell silent.

"... I trust you, Leonel."

These were all the words he needed to hear, and they were much deeper than what he had wanted them to mean.

To him, trust had just meant that she looked up to him like some fantastical action hero who didn't bleed or fear.

To her, trust meant placing her heart in his possession. If he wanted, he could tear it to shreds and leave it beaten and battered with bruises.

But he wouldn't.

Leonel smiled. "Let's go."

That smile vanished when he stepped out of the Dream Pavilion.

- Chapter 2572: Weak

Chapter 2572: Weak

2572 Weak

Leonel hadn't really been paying attention. Quite frankly, until their honeymoon officially ended, he couldn't gather the care to give a damn about what was happening in the outside world.

The only reason he was stepping into the outside world in the first place was because Miel wasn't among the number he had taken into the Segmented Cube. In fact, none of the Slayer Legion Generals were. So, he planned to take Aina out to find her father. With Anastasia's abilities, it wouldn't be too complicated. But...

He didn't expect that the entire Vast Bubble would be in a state of complete collapse.

He would have thought that it was the Vast City alone, but beyond the burning buildings, the screams of terror, and the foul acts taking place in dark alleys they believed no one would see, it felt like the entire Vast Bubble was in a similar state.

The protective, fortified cities that acted as barriers to the Demon Worlds were overrun.

At first, Leonel thought that this was because the demons had launched an all-out offensive. But there simply weren't enough demons around.

Although the fortified cities were being overrun, it was by those unranked demons that had managed to cross before the real merger. This definitely wasn't the actions of the Sun and Moon Demons.

And then he looked into the skies.

His eyes widened because there was something even his Internal Sight had picked up. It was a floating, cube-shaped stele. It was so large that there was no doubt that it was visible from across the Bubble. In fact, Leonel could vaguely feel that this Stele was visible across every world below the God Realms.

It was simple. It was an introduction to the Gathering of Kingdoms, and the reason the world was in chaos was because they had learned that, for the first time, they would have to participate.

Leonel's eyes narrowed.

There were only three ways to avoid the culling: the first was to have over 20% of your younger generation perform to an acceptable standard, meaning passing the Preliminaries; you had to have at least 100 who reached the Penultimate Round, or one who reached the Finals.

The Finals... it was a round where only 100 would make it across all participating worlds. Just what did it mean to be in the top 100 of trillions upon trillions of geniuses?

These rules had sent their Human Bubbles into a frenzy. They clearly thought that they had all been left for dead. What good was there to maintain decorum now?

This culling would test the vitality of a world and how much potential it had into the future. If your older generation had failed to make your world into a Demi-God one, then it would be up to the younger generation to do it in the future. If they couldn't match up, then what good was there for it to exist?

It was clear that Leonel's actions had stirred something. It was truly unacceptable to them that a human would claim the Life Tablet once again.

If they could've taken it themselves, they would have done so long ago. He had touched upon a taboo and they wanted to make humans pay for it.

Leonel suddenly smiled. "Getting antsy, huh?"

Aina was indifferent to the destruction below. She had never blinked in front of killing and carnage in the past like Leonel had, and she certainly didn't now.

Even so, there were a few shady figures in dark alleys who inexplicably had their heads torn off in a geyser of blood.

"So that's the tournament you mentioned?" Aina asked.

"Yup."

"Top 100? You have a lot of faith in me," she smiled.

"Of course. You'll be the only one entering, you think that's a lot of pressure?"

Aina's smile deepened. She seemed to feel some of what Leonel felt. Having someone so unconditionally believe in you... really felt good.

"So you want to be a house husband? Sending me out to fight your battles for you?" She teased.

"I prefer the term sugar daddy. Just tell me what resources you need and you'll have them. This husband of yours has fat pockets now."

"Oh no, they'll say I married for money," Aina spoke in mock horror.

"That's only because they'll never see me in bed."

Aina's laughter peeled through the skies. In the middle of the world's end, the couple didn't seem to care in the slightest.

Miel looked up into the skies solemnly. The Stele had been a great source of worry for him in the last few days. He had immediately gone to find his daughter as what he had worried about was actually happening.

If things had gone according to his plan, none of this would have ever happened. Aina would have been mistaken as a Half-Spiritual and then whisked away. But now, the Stele had already locked onto all of their auras. Everyone, including the Demons, was roped into this.

They probably thought that they'd be safe from the culling, but they never imagined that they would make things world.

Their six Bubble Worlds now counted as one, which meant the ratio of talented Demon geniuses had plummeted even further than before. Their actions in invading cosigned them to their deaths.

Miel's last-ditch effort was the Brazinger family. For the sake of his daughter, he was willing to do something his pride wouldn't allow of him, but he hadn't managed to find Aina in time.

According to his information, Leonel had actually entered the Dream Pavilion and they had triggered a Challenge.

The idea that Leonel had probably brought his daughter into the jaws of death filled him with fury, but that fury quickly became anxiety when the Four Great Families vanished into thin air before he could find a way to weather the Dream Pavilion's storm of Dream Force.

'Why am I so weak?!'

He grit his teeth hard. If only he had his former level of power, none of this would have happened.

It was then, as he watched the world fall into the pits of despair, he laid eyes on the one woman he wanted to see most.

Tears fell from his eyes as he saw Aina and Leonel walking toward him hand in hand.

Chapter 2573: Tears

Miel's happiness was overwhelming and he forgot about everything as he wrapped his arms tightly around his daughter. He rarely showed this much outward affection, but this time he had truly moved without thinking.

Leonel smiled as he watched from the side.

"Dad, we have something to tell you," Aina said after the two pulled apart.

Miel blinked, his mind regaining his focus as he looked from Leonel to Aina. His mind immediately jumped to the worst case scenario and he actually looked at Aina's belly first.

Aina smiled bitterly and Leonel did his best not to crack a joke. He was going to say: "Even if you stare for that long, old man, it'll take months before she starts showing". But he had to maintain some level of decorum for today.

This was a matter of Aina's happiness and he couldn't be cracking jokes that could quickly take this matter left.

"That's not what it is, I'm not pregnant," Aina said.

Miel sighed and almost to visible sigh of relief. It was hard to tell if that was because he really didn't want such a permanent tie between Leonel and Aina, or if it was that he couldn't fathom them raising a child under these circumstances.

The end of the world wasn't exactly ideal for family planning.

Miel's frown returned after a moment. He suddenly remembered that in this situation, these two would have no choice but to participate in the Gathering of Kingdoms. Their auras had likely already been marked by the Steele, there was no way to pretend like they came from a different world now.

Of course, they could still flee, there was no one that was going to stop them. Normally, those that would have thoughts to flee wouldn't even have the methods to do so.

After all, the only way to truly be safe was to go to a world with a guarantee of survival and to do so before the Gathering was triggered.

But first, traveling through Existence was exceptionally difficult. Even those Demi-Gods that wanted to cause trouble for Leonel couldn't do so fast enough, which was why he had triggered the Challenge Sequence so quickly.

And secondly, even if you could do so, given the nature of these cullings being based on population and percentages, how could they casually allow mass immigration?

Although they made it sound like the people of these worlds would have a chance to integrate into others, who would take in the weak when it would only lower their chances of surviving in the future?

Most would die. That was the ultimate truth.

Miel clenched his jaw so hard that he didn't even notice the subtle resonance between his daughter and Leonel.

Leonel, though, was paying attention to everything, and he thought it best to not mention that he wanted Aina to participate on her own. Miel would probably throw a fit. It was clear he had no idea how powerful his daughter was right now.

After some thought, Leonel turned to Aina.

"Hey-"

Leonel didn't even get to finish before Aina gave him a peck on the cheek and vanished into the Segmented Cube. She had already done her part by breaking the ice.

Miel frowned as he looked at Leonel. He was a bit surprised to not find the same familiar streak of arrogance between the latter's brows, but that was all.

The two men looked toward one another for a long while before Leonel stretched out a hand.

Miel blinked for a moment. A handshake?

After some hesitation, he decided that he was the older party here and couldn't casually brush it off.

Leonel smiled as their hands clasped. "I think it's best I introduce myself again. I'm Leonel Morales."

"... Miel," he responded somewhat stiffly.

Leonel retracted his hand. "Aina and I came here today to tell you that we've gotten married."

Miel's pupils constricted into pinholes. He immediately had a visceral reaction and his mind jumped to all sorts of conclusions, most of which were perfectly justifiable.

He wouldn't think that they fused their souls, that wasn't something most even thought was possible. His first assumption would be that Leonel had conned his daughter into holding a wedding without even her father present just so that he wouldn't reject... he would see it as a power play.

"I know what you're thinking," Leonel said, "but it's not like that."

Leonel held up his left hand and faced it toward his father-in-law. Something told him that Miel would recognize it.

Miel's eyes widened, his crimson irises trembling wildly as he grabbed Leonel's wrist. Tears began to form in his eyes, and a stoic man who rarely showed emotion started balling his eyes out.

He didn't make a single sound, but his tears fell like a pair of waterfalls.

Even Leonel didn't expect this sort of fierce reaction. He somewhat expected Miel to recognize it, but it was more of a hunch than anything else.

Miel knew what it meant, maybe more than even Leonel and Aina. That bond could only appear through a link of absolute trust between two parties who were deeply in love.

He had never imagined that his daughter's affections were actually so deep, nor that Leonel actually cared so much about her either.

It was impossible for such a thing to succeed if it was as one-sided as he thought their relationship to be.

What Leonel didn't know was that Aina's Soul Clairvoyance came from somewhere. He assumed that Aina was a Spark because it was a Lineage Factor, and it obviously wasn't a Lineage Factor that was shared by the rest of the Brazinger family...

But the real reason it wasn't shared by the rest of the Brazinger family was because it was started by this man right before him, and it was precisely because of that that Miel knew the weight of what he was seeing... because he had once formed one himself.

Leonel's gaze landed on the hand that gripped his wrist. There on Miel's fourth finger was a band of scorched skin that looked as though it had suffered third degree burns in the past.

Chapter 2574: Happy

Leonel was intelligent. At that moment, it clicked. Ability Indexes weren't inheritable, but Lineage Factors were designed to be passed down. Because he knew about Sparks, he thought that Aina had just created her own and it seemed to make sense that such a thing would birth from her Body Clairvoyance Lineage Factor.

But this... this also made sense. In fact, it made much more sense.

Miel released Leonel's hand and looked into the distant skies, trying to regain his composure. The two men stood there in silence for a long while as he regained his composure, but Leonel didn't seem to be in a hurry.

"... You make my daughter happy."

It was hard to tell immediately if it was a question or not. He seemed to already have the answers he wanted from the wedding band, but it was hard to remove his distaste for Leonel in a single bound.

Even so, it didn't change Leonel's answer in the slightest.

"Between the world and Aina, I choose Aina."

Miel's gaze flashed and his eyes landed on Leonel like lightning. His crimson irises held wave after wave of emotion.

There was a lot of surprise, some reminiscence, some guilt, some... disdain? But it didn't seem to be aimed at Leonel at all, which only made it odder.

Miel sighed. "Stop using your Dream Force on me. You can't see what I don't want you to see."

Leonel's own gaze flashed, but then he looked toward the man skeptically. Miel was only in the Eight Dimension, and he obviously wasn't that kind of super genius, or else he would have wiped out the human alliance he hated so much already.

Was it because of Soul Clairvoyance? That probably made sense, Aina had perfect control over her mind.

"It's not because of Soul Clairvoyance," Miel explained simply.

Leonel smiled. "Is this where my father-in-law establishes his dominance?"

"Yes." Miel replied simply, taking Leonel off guard somewhat.

At that moment, Miel's aura seemed to skyrocket and in the blink of an eye, it was at a level that left Leonel completely suffocated, so powerful and all consuming that the fused Bubble Worlds trembled.

Then it disappeared.

Leonel blinked. "That wasn't real strength, you projected that into my mind."

"Of course I did. I don't want others to know, I have my own circumstances."

Miel didn't explain further, but the implication was clear. No matter how grand your imagination, without actually having that level of strength, it was impossible to fake it even through a mental projection.

"I want you to know that I'm much more powerful than you think."

'Used to be,' Leonel thought, somewhat defiantly. But again, he held his tongue.

However, even though he did, Miel actually smiled, looking at him with a knowing glint in his eye. The man who never smiled lips actually curled. Even Aina would be floored if she was here.

But honestly, Miel was in a very good mood. There was suddenly a lot to smile about.

"Since things have reached this point, I have nothing else to say about the matters between you and my daughter. Just treat her well and I won't have to kill you."

Leonel's brows raised but he eventually nodded solemnly.

"Now, about the Gathering of Kingdoms," Miel cast a glance up at the skies. "I can take you two away to a place. You can't hide in the Dream Pavilion although the Steles aura can't penetrate it. According to the rules, a Dream Pavilion must be attached to a world, so they'll use the culling as an excuse to take it away.

"The best option is to give up the Dream Pavilion for now and I will take you to a Spiritual Bubble that is quite open and accepting of Half Spirituals. With your and Aina's abilities, you will be able to blend in with a few simple methods."

Leonel hesitated for a moment before shaking his head. If it wasn't Miel, how could he ever hesitate to tell someone his thoughts.

"We can participate," Leonel suddenly said. "In fact, I plan to have Aina participate alone."

Miel frowned, but the reaction wasn't as violent as Leonel was expecting, so at the very least, they could have a normal conversation about it.

Rather than saying more, though, Leonel waved a palm and Scarlet Star Force manifested. Then, his Dream Force flourished, a crown appearing above his head and robes adorning his body in wisps of silver and gold fog.

Miel's pupils constricted. "Life State!"

He could feel that there was something elevated about Leonel's existence, but it was hard to scan a Dream Force expert. It wasn't just this that made it hard to get a grasp on Leonel, but also the fact he seemed to be in the Fifth Dimension, but was actually in the fourth.

"I think you know how it works, Aina's insights into her own Forces were already comparable to my own, but now she's gained mine well."

Outside of Leonel's expectations, Miel was actually surprised by this.

Then Leonel remembered something... Ability Indexes were separated into five tiers, but they weren't the only abilities with tiers to them.

Not everyone with the Northern Star Lineage Factor could form a connection with the Golden Tiger or Death Pulse Deer like Leonel could, and the concept was the same here.

Clearly, Miel didn't expect his daughter to already be at this stage.

But eventually, he shook his head.

"It's not enough. Your Force Comprehension is exceptional, but talent weighs very heavily in Existence. Someone with much weaker comprehension than your own can make up for it by their sheer body constitution. The only way to equalize that somewhat is to reach the Ninth Dimension, but even then if the gap in talent is too large, it would be hard to make up for."

Leonel smiled. "Good thing, then, that Aina doesn't just have Soul Clairvoyance, she had Body Clairvoyance as well as an Ability Index."

Miel's eyes opened wide and he seemed to really look at Leonel for the first time.

"Bring me to my daughter," he suddenly said.

Chapter 2575: Hurt

Aina looked like she was just fine after she left her father and Leonel behind, but truthfully she was a nervous wreck. What she didn't expect, though, was for Leonel and her father to suddenly appear before her just a few minutes later.

She exhaled a breath of relief quite quickly, though, feeling that things between them shouldn't be so bad if her father came in when he had so vehemently refused to previously.

"Aina, give me your hand," Miel suddenly said, reaching forward.

Though confused, Aina did as she was told. Miel stayed silent for a long while as he held his daughter's palm, but there was a continuous wave of emotions passing through his eyes as the time ticked by.

Just when Aina was about to ask what he was doing, he pulled his hand back. He looked toward his daughter with no small hint of shock in his eyes.

Aina could feel that her father was probing her, but she had little resistance against it. She, obviously, wouldn't put up any guardrails against her own father.

"You've actually progressed so far..." he said softly.

Aina smiled. "Not enough."

Miel sighed. He knew what his daughter meant by that. Obviously, she wanted to wipe the Brazinger family off of the map, but that was a more complicated ordeal than he knew.

Quite frankly, Miel wanted to tell his daughter to just target those that were responsible. But he didn't have the heart to say it.

He had lost his wife, the love of his life, and his daughter had to suffer that same pain, except she was far less experienced, far less mature, and didn't even have him by her side while she dealt with most of it.

He didn't feel he had the right to tell her how to deal with her grief.

"Aina, do you know how I and your mother met?" Miel asked softly.

Aina's eyes widened, but she didn't reply. Miel already knew the answer to that question, she didn't. If not for her Soul Clairvoyance, she wouldn't even remember her mother's care and affection so clearly, she had been far too young.

"I didn't agree with many of the things the Brazinger family did. I... I held more power in the family than you know, and a large part of the reason I didn't tell you about these things was because I felt a great deal of responsibility.

"I chose to leave my duties behind, throwing a tantrum like a child and following after Gervaise to Earth. Those were the circumstances I met your mother under, but it was also because I did so that she suffered so much.

"If I never acted like that back then, and I met the challenge head on instead, I would have never met her. And if my strength hadn't been drastically suppressed so that I could follow those foolish impulses of mine, I could have protected her several times over.

"I..."

Miel took a breath and looked away from his daughter's gaze. There was a great amount of guilt and remorse in his eyes, but there was also something else...

Embarrassment, humiliation...

But he steeled himself.

"Before I arrived on Earth, I had another wife."

Aina's eyes opened wide, these were the last words she ever expected to hear. She never knew the story between her father and her mother, but she always thought of it as a classic love story. She could have never imagined that it had such dark underpinnings.

She looked at Leonel and felt that she suddenly understood Imperatress Anselma's almost unhinged fury. How would she act if Leonel did something like that to her?

As for why her mind immediately went to that woman, there could have only been one. It was too obvious the moment her father said it. There was only one person who seemed to hate her more than anyone else.

"Your mother never knew until the end. It's all my fault. I was a selfish man and I never intended to fall in love with your mother. I was throwing a tantrum and wanted to harm that woman as much as possible.

"Your mother was the kindest soul I ever knew. I originally never intended to take things so far with her. The guilt was killing me, but in the end I was a weak man.

"I told myself a countless series of lies, that everything would be fine, that we would grow together and I would break things off with that woman.

"I did do the latter, but I was too arrogant. I should have waited until I was stronger, I should have tried to hide it better, but my overblown sense of pride put your mother directly in the line of fire and she died in the worst way possible... and I could only watch it happen."

Miel gathered his courage to look into Aina's eyes. The humiliation he felt toward having to tell his daughter this story was unimaginable, but he felt that he owed her these words.

In the past, he was the only family she had. She was already so alone in the world, he couldn't allow her to hate his guts. If she only knew hate in this world, maybe she would become as twisted as that woman. He couldn't allow her to go down such a path.

But now, he could rest assured.

Even if his daughter hated him now, it was fine... because she had a husband who would support her now, a family of her own aside from him.

He could feel the emotions churning in Aina's eyes as her tears fell. Her memories of that sweet and caring woman were so clear in her mind, and to think that she was just a pawn of her father to get back at that worthless woman...

It hurt, it really hurt.

Aina broke down, but Leonel was there to catch her. She sobbed into his arms, holding onto him tightly.

Chapter 2576: Moral Obligation

Miel closed his eyes, hiding the pain away. He sighed inwardly.

After some thought, he took something out of a spatial device and put it down. After that, he looked up and felt his body relax. He had said what he needed to say. If he was scorned by his daughter, so be it.

They said that it was the role of a father to be hated, and only long after their children had grown up would they understand his sacrifices.

Miel didn't believe that he deserved any description so great. He wasn't a martyr, he was a selfish man who used a good woman and made her suffer endless pain for the crime of loving him. Even if Aina always hated him, he deserved it.

In this life, his only role left was his ambition to set the Brazinger family on the right path once again. Everything else would have to wait.

Then, he vanished.

Leonel held Aina in his arms, looking toward where Miel had disappeared. He could only sigh as well, he hadn't expected that things would end up this way.

He could imagine the guilt Miel was feeling. If Leonel was correct, he probably never wanted to marry Anselma in the first place.

He understood how those four families worked, they were obsessed with bloodline and perfectly controlling every aspect. The idea that they would carefully select one another's marriage partners wasn't all that surprising. In fact, he would be more surprised if they didn't.

He could believe that Aina's mother was his first true love. But he also knew that sometimes intentions were more important than the ultimate end result.

He might have come to love Aina's mother, but the reality was that he had tried to use her at first. She was an innocent woman, a mortal of Earth, and yet she was embroiled in this matter because she had been charmed by the wrong man.

There was also the matter of how she likely had little choice. Miel was a man from another world, wielding untold power, having knowledge completely beyond that of Earth. Any normal woman would find it difficult to resist his charms. Aina's mother might have felt that she had found her dream man, Aina's father would have been so much further beyond any other man she had ever interacted with.

And why had Miel chosen her in specific?

Leonel's mind couldn't help but fill in all the details on his own, his simulating abilities reaching near perfection.

There was only one realistic answer: her beauty.

Such a superficial and meaningless reason, and only for the sole purpose of making Anselma as jealous as possible.

It was no wonder Anselma had been so obsessed with ruining Aina's appearance, cursing her to a life with a disfigured face and endless pain until Leonel came around.

Leonel rubbed Aina's back.

He remembered how he felt about the idea of his mother marrying another man. In a lot of ways, this sort of feeling for Aina might be even worse than that. He could feel that it was truly ripping her apart from the inside out.

Was it worth it to tell her?

This thought came to mind. It was likely that Aina would have found out one way or another since she was so obsessed with crushing the Brazinger family, but the question still stood...

Was it worth it?

There was probably a balancing act going on. On the one hand, did Miel really feel that Aina needed to know? Or was it that the guilt was eating him up on the inside and he had to say it even if it hurt Aina so that he could finally feel better?

Leonel actually didn't know the answer to that. All these complex, tangled emotions were hard to unwind.

So, he just held his wife as she vented out emotions she had probably had buried deep within her for a long while.

It was many hours until Aina calmed down. A mortal would have long since tired out, but it was both a gift and a curse to be so powerful.

She leaned against his embrace in silence, her eyes puffy and tear streaks dried on her cheeks. Her breathing was still a little ragged, but she had mostly pulled herself together.

"... Leonel... what should I do?" She asked softly.

"Whatever you want to do." Leonel answered without hesitation.

If she wanted to hate Miel, he wouldn't try to change her mind. If she wanted to forgive him, he likewise wouldn't stand in her way.

"I really hate her... Am I a bad person?" She asked softly.

The her Aina was referring to was definitely Anselma.

Leonel understood Aina's sentiment as well. If she lost him, maybe her actions would be just as unhinged. She loved Leonel so much, she couldn't imagine losing him to another woman. She felt a crazy raging jealousy in her heart just thinking about it.

But at the same time, she would never forgive Anselma, it was impossible, there wasn't even a single fiber of her being that wanted to.

"..." Leonel sighed, the question was too complicated. His initial reaction was obvious. Even if Anselma was hurt, it wasn't her right to take it out on an innocent woman who knew nothing. But the more Leonel thought about what was wrong and what was right, the more difficult it was for him to reconcile an objective morality.

Was the culling of the Gathering of Kingdoms bad?

On the one hand, you would massacre trillions of people, but on the other hand... wouldn't you allow for the life of many more than that?

What was right? What was wrong?

Leonel kissed Aina's forehead.

"Don't let your thoughts be dragged down by such thoughts," he said after a while. "Your only moral obligation is to yourself and those you love, anyone who steps in the way of that will have to pay a price for it."

Aina's grip around Leonel tightened as they stood there in silence.

Chapter 2577: Morality

Morality

Even on Earth, where there was relative peace, no one could come to a perfect conclusion on it. Was there an objective morality? Was it relative, based on the situation or maybe the opinion of the majority? Was it based on religion or was it anti-religion? Were there some cases where the opinion of the majority should be overruled by a more well-informed minority?

Each discipline had their own fancy name, written by people who spent their entire lives studying philosophy, and yet none of them could come to a consensus.

There were too many variables, too many different cultures, too many differing life experiences.

Sometimes Leonel wondered how their views on morality might change in a world like this one. Would it scale up with the strengths individuals held and not change much at all? Or would their thoughts have to be overhauled for the sake of aligning with a new truth?

Leonel didn't know.

For quite a long while, he had been tugged around by those questions of morality, torn between what would satisfy his mind versus what would do him the most good.

He had come to feel in the end that most of it was bullshit. In a world like this one, created just to end one day, what good was there in some objective morality? Trying to find one had ended up causing him more heartache than anything else, and for what, exactly?

He could remember the feelings of his future self quite well. That endless void of loneliness, that gut sinking guilt, it was endless and vast.

If that was what chasing morality got him, he truly didn't want it.

But at the same time, that didn't mean that they would do nothing. The trouble was whether he was doing it for the right reasons or not.

His morality was originally based on logic. He couldn't understand what could objectively decide the worth of a life, so he didn't. Instead, he treated everyone equally and even believed that since he was granted talent, it was his duty to help to elevate everyone else.

Now, he understood himself a bit better than that.

While he was a selfish person, while he did rush out to seek cheap thrills or maybe even quite expensive ones that might come at the cost of his life, he also had a hard time ignoring the plights of others.

He was very empathetic in the sense he was able to read people's emotions like they were an open book. It was a quirk of having such power Dream Force.

And due to that, he often tried to project himself onto others, wondering why they didn't react the way he would in a given situation, why they were showing weakness when they should have some backbone, why they were breaking down into tears when they could pick up a spear...

Unbeknownst to him, he was always fielding in these emotions and the loneliness and guilt of his future self made him want to fix it, to put a stop to whatever that sinking feeling was, to stop that looming star in the distance from coming any closer.

He liked to help people, that was the fourth thing he had learned about him.

But even then, it was a complex web, much like it was for everyone else. A person's character changed by the hour, let alone by the days and years. The constant weaving and push and pull of these base principles that built your personality was what it meant to be human.

And as such, that fourth principle of his lost out to the very first...

He was selfish.

He wanted those that made his wife cry to pay, he wanted to see nothing but her happy smiles, smiles that could light up his world.

And he would make sure to work toward that.

He rubbed Aina's back as she sniffled, seemingly feeling much better than she had earlier.

She could feel that Leonel wasn't lying to her. What she maybe feared the most was Leonel thinking less of her for still hating Anselma. However, with how connected the two were now, she could clearly feel her husband's thoughts.

There wasn't an ounce of him that felt that way.

It made her feel at peace, like she was protected while enveloped in his embrace. And after a long while, she released a gentle smile.

"When does the Gathering of Kingdoms start?" She suddenly asked.

Leonel chuckled. "So eager?"

Aina's little nose wrinkled. "I really want to bash some faces in. Who are they to try and seduce my husband?"

Leonel laughed uproariously, picking Aina up in a bear hug and swinging her around.

The two smiled and the chilled atmosphere gained its own bits of warmth.

"Are you going to tell me why you really want me to participate now?" Aina asked.

"Can't I just want to show off my wife? I think that's valiant enough."

"Maybe, but I doubt that's why," she replied with a sweet smile.

She knew Leonel too well. Showing her off was probably the last thing on his mind. He'd probably prefer to lock her in a basement somewhere only he could admire her.

"Hey, hey, what are you thinking right now?" Leonel said defensively. "Am I such a person?"

Aina blinked innocently, pretending as though she had no idea what he was talking about.

Leonel grinned. "It's just a little gamble on a snotty nosed brat."

Aina raised a brow in confusion, not quite understanding. Leonel also didn't necessarily have to hide things from her anymore either considering the recent breakthroughs, but he seemed to still have the habit.

Leonel looked to the side and found the distraction he was looking for. With a wave of his hand, the item Miel left behind flew up and he tossed it at Aina.

She caught it with a flickering light of complexity in her eyes, but ultimately, Miel was her father. So, she opened the ring up to see what was inside.

Chapter 2578: Fourth

Aina took out what looked like a polished jade. It was completely flat and it had an oval shape to it. From some angles, it looked quite milky as the light reflected off of it, at others it looked like a pearly white, and at others it gave off the subtlest pale jade color.

Leonel could tell immediately that there was something inscribed within it, but he let Aina sink her mind into it first.

Several hours later, she came back up with a frown on her delicate brow.

"It's a technique called [Soul Reincarnation]. It feels like a very high level Spiritual technique, but humans shouldn't be able to execute it, unless..."

"Unless they have Soul Clairvoyance?" Leonel guessed.

Aina smiled and tossed the technique at him. He unceremoniously took a look at it as well, but unlike Aina, it only took him a few minutes to go through all of it.

When he pulled his mind out, he too had a frown on his face.

"Show off," Aina scoffed, causing him to laugh.

The technique allowed one to do exactly as it said, reincarnate the soul and return to a weaker state. But it was also highly dangerous. In fact, it could be said that only Aina and her father would have any sort of confidence in succeeding, and that was despite the fact it was a Spiritual technique.

What he was frowning about wasn't the danger, he felt that Aina had a near 100% certainty of succeeding. What really had him frowning was the fact it felt so similar to...

Leonel's hummed, feeling his mind churning something together.

This technique was basically a chance at a redo, returning to a weaker state to reforge your path while carrying the understandings you already had. But there were drawbacks even beyond the difficulty in succeeding without Soul Clairvoyance.

The first was that your comprehensions would be sealed away. It was similar to the Forgetful Orb, but far more exaggerated because it didn't just remove the path toward comprehension, but even the comprehension itself.

The point was to follow the same path you already had, coming to understand things you already had once before.

Then, when everything came together in the end, memories you had forgotten would fuse into one and it wouldn't just be an additive improvement to your power, but a distinctly exponential one. Depending on the success level of the technique, even a thousands of fold increase over previous strength wasn't impossible.

This was for a Spiritual using this technique. For Aina and her father, it was much the same except they could remember the feel of how powerful they had once been, which was why Miel was able to project that strength directly into Leonel's mind.

Now that Leonel thought about it, Miel had already returned to the Eighth Dimension, didn't that mean that he was already close to returning to his former strength? Didn't that also mean that very soon, he would have an explosive increase in his power?

It seemed that Miel had taken following his grandfather to Earth as an excuse to finally try this technique out.

The scariest part of [Soul Reincarnation], though, was the fact that there was literally nothing stopping Miel and Aina from using it again and again. For every success, they would have yet another explosive growth in strength.

'Wait... who's to say that this is only the first time Miel was using it?'

Given what he understood about Soul Clairvoyance, it shouldn't have taken Miel the almost 30 years Aina had been alive to only just finally reach this point. Even a decade was probably stretching it.

At the same time, if he had read the details of the technique properly, then every time it was used, it would take longer and longer than the last time to succeed. Even if he was being conservative, this would probably be Miel's third attempt, maybe even likely the fourth.

How powerful would he be once he returned to the Ninth Dimension?

Even with all of this said, this wasn't what was on Leonel's mind. Obviously, he was thinking about his own return to the Third Dimension. Were the two related? Was that also why Miel didn't ask any questions about his regression and just trusted his daughter to him?

But there were some very clear differences...

For one, Leonel clearly remembered all of his comprehensions, none of them had been forgotten. There were some other minor differences, but none were as important as this one alone.

'Are they unrelated? Is it just a coincidence? Maybe the methods are derivative of each other? But why did I have to be unconscious for one while the other is actively practiced? Weird...'

Leonel couldn't really understand it, but what he did know was that he and Miel weren't the only ones to have regressed in strength. His grandfather had almost certainly experienced the same.

Then Leonel thought about something else...

The one Lineage Factor that had yet to come back after he began to progress and entered the Fourth Dimension was his King's Might Lineage Factor.

Could it be related?

King's Might gave him so much control over the souls of others, could it be...?

It hit Leonel like a bolt of lightning, the simulations rampaging in his mind until he came up with one that had a better than 80% chance of being true.

If he was correct, that either Miel or his grandfather had spent a great deal of time in the Spirituals world, ending up with this technique.

One way or another, his grandfather got his hands on it and used it as a framework to create what could only be described as the fourth crown techniques of the Lineage Factor.

If in the past [Breathe], [Assimilate] and [Arise] had been alone at the top, he was willing to give this new method a seat along with them.

It was no wonder it wasn't in the Golden Tablet, his grandfather had created it.

It seemed that the old man was more impressive than Leonel gave him credit for.

Chapter 2579: Together

Honestly, Leonel didn't mind that King's Might had yet to return. If he was correct, it was probably by design on his grandfather's part. If how they treated the Human Race was any indication, the reveal that he was a Fawkes while likewise wielding such strength and mastery over Dream Force would probably cause a descent on this world. His life would have a clock slapped onto its forehead and he would just have to sit around and wait for death.

But... it was also because he was a Fawkes that certain plans had better odds of success than others did.

"Should I?" Aina asked.

She did really want to practice the method, but the trouble was that the Gathering of Kingdoms was just on the horizon. If she bit off more than she could chew, she wouldn't have enough strength to win.

But at the same time, rebuilding her foundations through the use of her Body Clairvoyance was difficult.

"I actually think that you could manage it in a much shorter time than pops can," Leonel said.

"Are you going to keep calling him that?" Aina said with a roll of her eyes. The first time she thought it was just a joke, but it was obviously a pattern now.

Leonel laughed. "Do you want me to shun him? We can do that too. Whatever my lovely little wife wants."

Leonel had always called his father "old man" or "dad", he would never use such names for Miel because as much as he respected the man, there was no one he respected more than his father.

However, Miel was also family now. He didn't feel it was right to call the man by his first name, and since Aina had built the bridge between them this time, it seemed that it was Leonel's turn to try and build a bridge in kind.

"Call him whatever you want," Aina said with a pout.

Leonel smiled. He could sense Aina's complicated feelings on the matter, but he could also tell that there was a part of her that felt happy Leonel and her father were at least on decent terms now.

"Like I was saying, though, the pairing of Body and Soul Clairvoyance should make this technique go by even quicker for you. You should be able to reach the ninth Reincarnation quite quickly, a few decades, maybe."

There was no limit to using [Soul Reincarnation], but there was a point of diminishing returns. This was a limit of the technique itself, rather than the actual method of Reincarnation.

After the ninth attempt, it would take three more before you had the same returns as the first Reincarnation. After that, it would take nine more to have the same as the second, and 81 more to have the same as the third.

It went on and on like this, each attempt taking far more time than the last. So the ninth Reincarnation was known as reaching perfection in the method.

"Plus, I have a feeling that being bonded to my soul will actually help you. And, with the Dream Pavilion at our backs, and all the Contribution Points in the world to spend on just the two of us, I think you can knock out the first Reincarnation in just a few days.

"The only question is if you want to."

Technically, the two were still on their honeymoon. Meeting with Miel was supposed to be the cherry on top, but it had ended up being far more doom and gloom than either of the two had hoped.

Jumping right into practice and meditation from here on was a bit of a hard pivot, and Leonel wanted to give Aina the room to decide.

"You really think I can reach the top 100 without it?" Aina responded with her own question instead of answering directly.

"If I didn't think you could reach the top 100 easily, if there was even an inkling of doubt, I wouldn't even suggest it."

Aina smiled. "You believe that much in me?"

"Of course. I actually think that you're already capable of battling the Ninth Dimensional humans of these Bubble Worlds if you went all out, I just haven't asked you to because it's never really been necessary."

Aina was progressing with astonishing quickness ever since she awoke. While he was stuck in the Golden City, she was still lacking a bit, but since then she just kept soaring by leaps and bounds. After they got married, her strength was even more ridiculous. Though, Leonel honestly had the feeling that she'd never use his Forces, not because of some twisted moral logic about unfairness, but rather because she was already following the path that was perfect for her.

Other than around the edges here and there, and maybe to hide some of her real strength during the tournament, she probably wouldn't use his comprehensions much.

"And it's also because... I have a pretty good feeling that you're a God Childe."

"A God Childe?" Aina blinked in confusion.

Leonel explained what El'Rion had told him and Aina's eyes flashed with recognition.

"So that's why...?"

That voice that was always in her head only finally disappeared after she was revived. And honestly, it could be said that part of the reason she always had a sheer masochistic form of training was because it was the only thing that quieted that voice somewhat.

"Yes," Leonel nodded. "I think that right now, whether it's your Body Clairvoyance or Soul Clairvoyance, they're actually much more substantial in weight than they would be in anyone else. Almost as though you've unlocked a sixth tier of them beyond the Savant Tier."

Aina blinked, lost in thought for a while before she smiled.

"Okay then, then how about together?"

"Together?" Leonel asked.

"Why train separately?" Aina continued. "There's nothing stopping us from doing it together, it'll be our own unique honeymoon."

Leonel smiled. "Okay, then let's make like newly weds and spend a ridiculous amount of money. Just a pair of sugar daddy and woman who married for money."

Aina laughed as they vanished, their destination the Dream Pavilion.

Chapter 2580: Prestige and Access

Leonel and Aina appeared in the Dream Pavilion. Compared to the rest of the world, this place was still one of absolute peace. Those that could have caused trouble here had long since fled with their tails between their legs, they thought that there was really no point in staying behind as there would only be death waiting for them.

Leonel doubted they'd have the balls to come back for years, and that was only if one of them had a particularly potent daredevil side to them. For all they knew, the Pavilion had already been taken over by another Race and they just couldn't be bothered to deal with the humans below. In fact, now that he thought about it, they probably assumed that the Gathering of Kingdoms was precisely that method to "deal with them".

The Human Race had been immune to the Gathering of Kingdoms since its inception. Considering how far they had fallen from grace, there likely weren't even legends or folktales remaining.

Plus, even if they did come back, this was Leonel's domain. He could crush even the Sun Demon Emperor if he was stupid enough to step into this place.

Leonel led Aina by the hand into the very same Pavilion he had taken the Life Tablet from. Soon, they had entered a familiar world of white with a glass counter that extended toward both sides into infinity. This time, however, there was no honey trap- there wasn't even a person on the other side.

With a wave of the hand, a long list of materials appeared and a ranking appeared above.

[Vast Dream Pavilion] [Rank: 101] [Prestige: 0.1]

Leonel smirked.

The Prestige ranking was a multiplier that ranged from 0.0 to 1.0 most often. Though, there were some that could go above 1.0 and some that were in the negatives.

This number hadn't existed with the inception of the Dream Pavilions, instead it was one of those convoluted rules buried in legal jargon designed quite specifically to deal with the Vast Dream Pavilion.

In the past, there were no barriers on what you could buy. Gathering Contribution Points was difficult enough, so if you had enough to gather an obscene amount of resources, then it was your prerogative to spend it on whatever the hell you wanted.

Obviously, though, the higher ups felt that the Humans were leaning too much on their past glory to solidify their positions, and as such the rules changed.

First there were three divisions. Mortal, Demi-God and God. These separated treasures into tiers.

You could trade for a Mortal Treasure in, almost, any case. For a Demi-God, you would have to have a Prestige of 0.4 at the very least, and for God you would have to have 0.7.

However, these were only the surface level rules. As Leonel had said many times, these Dream Force experts loved to drip their rules in complexities as though everyone would forget how smart they were if they didn't.

What you had to look out for wasn't just Prestige, but rather the formula they tagged it with.

The graph looked like a normal exponential curve, the problem was that the formula was so long you'd probably need several mortal textbooks to stuff it all in.

Prestige was on the x-axis, so the higher your Prestige was, the greater the chance you had of your "access" shooting to the skies, and the lower your Prestige was, the greater the chance you'd be stuck on the slow growth side of the graph.

The question was, what was the rest of the formula made out of?

The first was time, not in terms of how long the Pavilion had existed, but rather how long it had been since said Contribution Points were earned. It took an average of all the years and plugged in a single number.

Unsurprisingly, the Vast Dream Pavilion got the short end of the stick. Even after this recent success, half of their points were still earned countless generations ago, causing the graph at 0.1 to not even look like it was moving at all, it just looked like a flat line infinitely close to 0 Access on the y-axis.

But that wasn't the only thing plugged into the formula. The list was so long and convoluted that Leonel couldn't be bothered to go through them all, but there were even things like number of disciples, how talented said disciples were, then there was a plugin for current strength of disciples versus potential strength, then there was yet another just for current strength.

Each one was yet another ding that caused the unique graph of the Vast Dream Pavilion to be by far the worst maybe in the existence of this system.

Essentially, if Leonel were to summarize, "Prestige" was just a surface number while the real important metric was "Access" which went from 0 to 9.

And right now, the Vast Dream Pavilion's Access wasn't even 0.1, and as a result what they could trade for was frighteningly limited.

There was also one other thing to mention, and that was the fact that Prestige was also a multiplier for the worth of your Contribution Points. Having 0.1 Prestige meant that everything they bought would cost ten times more than it should.

Quite frankly, Leonel was surprised they didn't go with something even more exaggerated than this, but it was probably because they felt the rest of it was enough of a kick to the balls.

Still, Leonel looked at the obscenely long formula with a sneer on his face.

The thing about exponential graphs was that you didn't need to go very far before your returns were suddenly far more than you bargained for, but that was a thought for another day.

It didn't matter much to Leonel. He could trade for the lower level Mortal items, and then use Anastasia's Cleansing Waters to raise them to God items. Although he couldn't trade for any elaborate, high level stuff right now, raw resources wouldn't be a problem at all.

