

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2621: No Surrender

Leonel suddenly felt that the world had a surprising amount of clarity. His pale violet irises danced with a bronze hue that flashed in and out of existence.

His mind worked so much faster, scarily so. He felt that if he tried to Simulate things now, not only would he succeed... but it would be easy.

He still didn't dare to say that he could do so with 100% certainty, but he knew there would be a long string of 9's be after 99% if he were to calculate it. It was so much more perfect than it had been in the past that it was hard to even measure.

His hair seemed to float on the air, his entire body feeling as light as air.

'What would it be like to battle like this...'

It was hard to explain, but it felt like his soul, the very reason for his existence, was closer to him than it had ever been before. It was odd considering he had been born with it fused into his body, but he had never truly.... Felt it.

He understood why that was. This was different from one's soul stretching out across Dimensions.

Essentially, when one began their journey up the Dimensions, one would leave tiny pieces of them at every level. From the Third Dimension to the Ninth, every step would stretch out the soul just a little bit more until it was unrecognizable.

This was why other Races had so much of an advantage over humans. As humans grew stronger, their talent was diluted by their progress. But because other Races had their souls separated, they could feel a clear sense of it all the way throughout.

However, other Races still suffered from this dilution as well, just on a smaller scale.

The further they got from the Second Dimension, the harder it was for them to sense the root of their strength. However, unlike humans, their souls weren't stretched. Meaning, by mastering Impetus State Forces, they could bring their souls back into focus by becoming more in tune with how Forces worked on that level.

This was why the Impetus State was the minimum requirement for entering the Ninth Dimension.

But now, Leonel, and likely Aina as well, felt that their souls were neither stretched, nor a long distance away. In fact, it was even more exaggerated for Leonel who was only in the Fourth Dimension currently.

It was like his soul was whispering exactly the path that was perfect for him into his ear...

Almost like his own personal Clairvoyance.

It all felt so clear and real to him, and even without picking up another Ore, he felt that his Crafting had advanced by leaps and bounds once again.

He suddenly felt more than qualified now to forge his first Divine Armor... again. But he almost felt like the idea he had had was too rudimentary for his current level of skill.

'No... it can still work... just... a little differently...'

Leonel was no longer interested in using his Divine Armor to give him abilities he didn't already have. He had too many already, and after so long, he felt that he could finally see a faint path to them becoming one. He didn't want to ruin that by throwing another into the pot.

Instead, he was focused on enhancing his abilities and that was what he would do.

'In that case... a living Divine Armor it is...'

No one dared to fight Aina. She hardly got a chance to step onto the stage before the most proud geniuses below the Demi-God Realms called out in defeat one after another.

She just stood there with her Battle Ax firmly in her grasp, a graceful smile on her lips- completely in contrast to her earlier bloodthirstiness.

There wasn't a single soul left that dared to lift a finger against her, whether that was in the arena, or in the city.

She was free and clear, rolling through the competition as though it didn't exist.

There was a clear victor even before the battles began. And that only allowed people more time to talk.

They talked not only about Aina, but what shocked the world the most was the movement of the Gathering Stele.

Many had glossed over the fact, in awe of her strength. But the rest of Existence, especially those of the highest echelon that understood these matters on a deeper level, were entirely shaken.

The Gathering Stele hadn't just rewarded Aina, but it had done so even before the Finals began, let alone ended as was the custom.

To put this matter into its proper contextual significance, just getting a treasure from the Gathering Stele had become akin to climbing the tallest of mountains as a mere mortal. It had already been calculated that the Gathering Stele was raising its standards again and again because it was running out of energy and treasures. Every year that passed was another notch in its belt, weakening it further, and thus raising its standards higher.

For the Gathering Stele, in such a state, to make the choice to reward Aina ahead of time by such a margin...

Just how much potential did she have?

The last person to receive the Gathering Steles favor of the Gathering Stele was Crystalis Evergreen, a woman who had already elevated her world to the Demi-God status and had even formed a Rudimentary Idol.

For Aina to be the one to do so next, and under such circumstances at that...

Just what did it mean?

The last battle of the Finals came. Aina only appeared for a moment. Across from her, there was a Pure Blooded Spiritual, one she actually recognized.

This woman didn't voice her surrender. Instead, she slipped into a martial arts stance and held out her palms somewhat loosely toward Aina's direction.

She was ready for combat.

It was hard for Aina to go through Leonel's memories not only because of trust, but also because there were just so many of them. He could process things in seconds that it would take her minutes to maybe upwards of an hour to.

However, she had gone out of her way to learn this woman's face.

That of Lyra Emberheart's.

Chapter 2622: Lost?

Aina faced off against Lyra, recognizing this woman as the one they wanted to marry her husband to. Well, there should have likely been many candidates, but she was the only one that Leonel knew of, and as such, she was the only one Aina knew of. It was clear to Aina that part of the reason Lyra was fighting was for this. Honestly, she had thought that she would be very angry when she saw this woman, but when she met Lyra's eyes... She couldn't quite seem to feel that way.

Lyra was fighting her because of proposed marriage, but it was for Leonel, per se. Lyra was fighting for herself. All this time, she had been forced to face the comparison between herself and Aina. It had already been months of that spiraling inferiority welling up inside of her. She felt that if she didn't fight now, maybe she would never have the will to fight again for the rest of her life... and maybe her journey as a genius would end right here... She was entirely unwilling. Even if that meant dying here.

Lyra suddenly moved, a cyclone of flames forming around her like ribbons dancing in the skies. Her flames seemed to be of one heart, as though they were forged into silky fabrics that moved along with her will. When she appeared before Aina and struck out a palm her flames moved with her.

Aina flicked a wrist and her pole arm slapped against Lyra's palm. The palm was repelled, but the ribbons of fire snaked up her Battle Ax, pulling at it hard and suddenly as though to wrest it out of her control.

Aina's grip was much too strong. She pulled her pole arm back and the ribbons shattered, forming dancing balls of flickering flames in the skies that surrounded the two and blocked off Aina's bath of retreat.

Lyra's hair fluttered and her palms danced in the wind, seemingly fusing with it as her strikes were layered one after another. In a split second, she had sent out hundreds of strikes, each one filled with a light and delicate sort of aura, one that masked their true danger.

Aina raised an eyebrow and her Battle Ax spun in her hands. A vortex of Battle Ax Force clashed against the palms, sending sparks flying in all directions and only adding to the candle-like flames hovering in the surroundings.

The more the two exchanged blows, the more these flames multiplied, growing and growing until the point Fire Force seemed to be the only detectable Force in the surroundings.

Lyra's hair continued to flutter, their dancing rainbow array of colors beginning to influence the flames in the skies until suddenly, they went from a reddish almost pink color, to an eruption of rainbow as well.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The power of the flames skyrocketed. It was abrupt and suddenly, almost as though a flame within Lyra's heart itself had been lit.

Aina stood in place, her Battle Ax gliding through the air. Her golden irises observed Lyra as though she was deciding on something.

A delicate cry came from Lyra and the rainbow flames all solidified at once, a torrent of palms forming in the skies and crashing down toward Aina.

From an outsider's view, Aina was completely swallowed up. There was no place to escape at all.

Emberheart Force was among the most mysterious Forces in the world. If Scarlet Star Force was the number one Fire Force in the world, then Emberheart Force would certainly be ranked in the top ten if not the top five.

It was a Force that fused Fire Force and Soul Force, pulling on the emotions of its users to strengthen its flame.

Determination, grit, rage, humiliation... they all seemed to flicker within the flames, each taking hold of a different color and blazing with the glory of her heart... Her Emberheart.

BOOM!

Lyra gasped for breath, her palms still stretched out in a loose battle stance. She clearly felt that what she had done just now wasn't enough, but that was really everything she had.

WHOOSH!

The flames cleared and Aina appeared, standing unblemished. If it wasn't for her military outfit that was torn to shreds and dripping with blood, it would be hard to believe that she had even been in a battle at all.

Lyra didn't seem surprised, but the disappointment in her eyes was still clear and evident. In the end, she wasn't even able to leave a single scratch on her.

But she also didn't want to just give up like that. If Aina wanted to defeat her, she would have to either kick her off the arena or kill her. The words "I give" wouldn't come from her.

Aina observed Lyra in silence for a long while as the latter tried to catch her breath.

Honestly, Aina wanted to kill her. She didn't like the idea of anyone trying to get close to her husband, even if it wasn't Lyra's idea. At the end of the day, Lyra had known she existed and still tried to get close to Leonel anyway.

Aina could imagine that it wasn't necessarily Lyra's choice, but if things had gone differently, would Lyra have shown mercy in that regard?

Lyra wouldn't be likely to act to kill Aina directly, but if it came down to it and Leonel really was such a fickle man, she would have obviously snatched him up. And in a lot of ways, that was as good as death to Aina.

Ultimately, she had her reasons to very much dislike and even hate Lyra. But...

The woman had some guts.

That was just a peripheral reason, though, if she was honest with herself. This particular Spiritual Bubble, the Ma'at Bubble, had been the only one to not kick them while they were down.

She and Leonel had made enough enemies in this place, there was no need to unnecessarily make another.

Lyra suddenly froze, finding her vision going blank. Her last thoughts were ones of speechlessness...

When had she lost?

Chapter 2623: Gift

Aina stepped out of her final battle, taking a breath and looking into the skies with a light smile. It seemed that things had finally come to an end. She had kept her promise and done her part. Now... it was only a matter of what would happen from this point forth.

The Gathering Stele flickered and one hundred names were quickly arranged. At the very top, the name Aina Morales stood alone.

A human.

Everyone could remember the last time the Gathering Stele gave an award, but no one could remember the last time a human had placed in the top 100, let alone number one.

This name alone held a great amount of weight, a weight that most couldn't quite fathom, and a weight that even Aina herself wasn't sure of...

She wasn't sure what kind of storms this would kick up, but she was confident that Leonel had a plan.

They didn't have much of a choice but to place in the Finals. If not, there was no other path for them to save the Human Bubbles. But if there was anyone who could take advantage of a situation like this one... it was her husband.

All around the city, portals began to appear.

Aina looked over toward the distance and found Yuri and Savahn looking toward her with longing in their eyes. They had ultimately just spent a few days together, and for the rest of it, they could only watch Aina from a distance, too weak to partake. They knew if they tried they would just get in her way, but it was really killing them on the inside being unable to do anything.

And now, they were going to be separated again. The Gathering Stele would only return them to their homes. There was little they could do.

Aina smiled brightly so as to assure them. They would see each other again soon, that she was certain of.

With a step, she vanished and returned to the Human Bubbles. Or, more accurately, the Vast Bubble.

...

Aina stood high in the skies, looking around with a frown. The situation in their absence had only gotten worse. Despite the fact that all of the battles should have been projected, were they not paying attention to what was going on?

'Then again... most people probably don't know who I am here, nor do they know who Leonel is...'

Let alone most people, even the experts of the Vast Dream Pavilion had no idea who she was. In fact, a step further than that, even those experts had no idea how much Leonel had already done for them. They had all run away before they could see the result.

If even much of the upper echelon were in the dark, one could imagine how ignorant the general population was, and as the time continued to tick away-especially when this issue was stacked with the disappearance of the Four Great Families-the situation only became more chaotic.

Compared to the first time Aina had seen it, it seemed that there were a bunch of random small powers cropping up and trying to fight for supremacy, but ultimately they were barely much different from barbarian tribes.

Aina frowned, but she really didn't have any easy method of dealing with this.

She looked up and toward the direction of the Golden family. They should probably still be in seclusion. Ironically, in this sort of situation, it would be a power like them that would be best at dealing with this situation.

Leonel was very intelligent, but such a thing needed quantity, not quality. There was no time to subdue these people one by one.

As Aina was lost in thought, there was a sudden flash by her side and a smiling Leonel appeared.

Aina seemed to forget about the carnage below and leapt into his arms. Apparently her arms alone weren't enough, because she also wrapped her legs around his waist.

Leonel laughed. He was going to ask if she missed him, but that seemed to be unnecessary now.

He caught her, but he almost immediately frowned. One of Aina's legs was very much covered in fabric-it was torn and bloody, but it was definitely still fabric. The other, however, was completely bare.

Leonel simulated several things in an instant and he came to a conclusion immediately. His happy expression became gloomy.

Aina had lost a leg? That was absolutely unacceptable to him.

"Who?" He asked.

Aina smiled, pulling back and giving Leonel's nose a peck.

"Does it matter? That beast's dead."

The gloominess in Leonel's eyes didn't disappear. He had gone out of his way not to check on Aina because he didn't trust himself to not interfere. That dagger he sent out hadn't even been on purpose, it just happened to work out that way. He didn't even know what kind of commotion it had caused.

But it was in moments like these that he didn't like the sharpness of his mind. Looking at the wounds, or at least, former wounds on Aina's body, even without looking into her soul and looking through her memories, he could piece together most of what happened.

Seeing Leonel's reaction, Aina's smile grew sweeter.

"Okay, okay, grumpy man. Don't we still have things to do?"

"We..." Leonel blew out a breath, a hint of annoyance wrinkling his brows. The feeling in his chest right now was very uncomfortable, but he had already been ready for this to happen.

He sighed. "So everything went well enough?"

"They did. I also received a gift from the Gathering Stele, it's very interesting."

"A gift?"

Leonel checked the memories of the Life Tablet. He had a better ability to integrate them now after his recent breakthrough, but it still wasn't quite enough to integrate them all at once. He still needed to check things like this.

When he understood that the Gathering Stele did indeed, rarely, give out some gifts, he became curious.

"And what gift was that?"

"It seems to be... an Dimensional Ascension method perfectly tailored for humans."

Chapter 2624: Crimson Tattoos

Aina shared the technique with Leonel, fusing their souls as one. The first time they did this Aina couldn't help but blushing profusely, it felt far more intimate than just letting Leonel see her naked. But now, it just felt natural.

After a few seconds, Leonel raised an eyebrow.

"It... created this," Leonel suddenly said in a voice that was almost a whisper.

"Created?"

"Yes. I don't believe that this technique was just floating around in there. I believe the reason the Gathering Stele so rarely hands things out nowadays isn't because it's running out of treasures to give, but rather because it's running out of energy to create these treasures in the first place.

"If this technique already existed, there was no way it would only come to light now... I mean, unless it was severely suppressed by the 'Gods.'

"If I'm correct, it probably used you as a template to create this technique. You've opened up the path for this on your own.

"The Gather Stele treasures are always perfectly tailored to the people they're given to, and in this case, this is another perfect example of that. But it's also a shame..."

Aina smiled, understanding what Leonel meant.

This treasure was designed for the elevation of humanity as a whole. All things considered, it was very useful for Aina herself. If anything, it was quite useless to her.

In this way, it was a bit of a shame. But honestly, Aina didn't mind. She really couldn't think of a treasure that she would bend over backwards for, unless it was one that could allow her to use her Blood Sovereignty freely without being exposed.

Leonel looked down at the carnage below and sighed.

"Alright, we do have a few things to do."

"Make babies?" Aina asked with a bright smile.

"Hey, hey, what are you doing poking around in my brain?"

Aina laughed. "I think we should wait until everyone is united. Wouldn't it be nice to have children at the same time?"

"I agree," Leonel nodded.

There were layers to this. Even if Raj and Joel united with Yuri and Savahn, it didn't necessarily mean that their relationships were at the same stage as Aina and Leonel's. It seemed it would take some time.

But the newlyweds were definitely on the same page.

The world would never be perfectly safe. Nothing would ever be entirely ideal. They were already tired of stalling their happiness for a world that would never give them the same attention that they gave it. In that case, they would forge their own happiness with their own hands.

And, of course, Leonel hadn't actually been thinking about baby making just now. There was something else of much more importance that they had to do now, and that was to prepare for the fallout of the Gathering of Kingdoms tournament.

Carrying Aina, Leonel used the Segmented Cube's shuttle form to return to the Dream Pavilion with haste. Then, he checked on some things.

'Hm?'

The Crafted Dream Pavilion was currently ranked 221st.

Leonel noticed this immediately. As much as Minerva was paying attention to him, he was paying attention to her as well.

'In the past, they were only ranked 529th, but now they were obsessed with rank all of a sudden?'

Leonel sneered.

That woman was very arrogant, and she was even very talented, but she wasn't very smart. Leonel could see through her intentions in an instant.

'You spend so long suppressing yourself in the 500's, but then suddenly make such a large push. It's obvious you're aiming for a top 100 spot so you can find the location of this Dream Pavilion.'

Maybe Minerva was already aware that he might be able to guess this, and she probably thought that it didn't matter whether he guessed it or not.

She was right, in part. There was nothing that Leonel could do to stop her from accumulating merits, and it also wasn't like he could just intercept their missions either. They were too powerful for him to clash with, at least not head on.

On top of that, most of the defenses of a Dream Pavilion, at least the ones he had access to, were useless against a fellow Dream Force expert. He might have a chance if his Dream Force was stronger than Minerva's, but that woman was beyond him. Leonel didn't know about her recent breakthrough either, but even if he did, it wouldn't change this fact anyway.

'It seems they'll turn their attention here soon... But the me of now isn't the me of back then... I wonder, though... what will come first?'

...

Spectral Minor Bubble. A World of Beasts.

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!

There was a dense gloominess in the atmosphere. Roars filled the skies as a familiar white tiger lay as nothing more than a corpse before them.

The fury was palpable, and at the forefront, there was an old white tiger, a looming presence with a ghastly scar cut across one eye and a gash in low maw that hadn't properly healed in centuries.

Silvan was their best talent in a long while, and he died like a dog instead of the mighty tiger king he was.

Alaric, the old white tiger, was the only one that hadn't joined into the roars. But space flashed around him and his tail as though streaks of silver lightning, crackling with menace.

Suddenly, the old tiger's head snapped up as the wind kicked in.

BANG!

A finger descended from the skies, one that made the mournful tigers fall into silence in an instance. It was a giant man, standing at three meters tall alone and having a belly as solid and round as an iron wok. Despite his obesity, his muscles bulged like tendrils of steel, rippling beneath his skin with a monstrous air.

However, what was the most stand-out about him were two things... the first of which being the fierce red tattoos that covered him. If Leonel had been here, it would have most definitely reminded him of the most tribal and impactful Samoan tattoos he had ever seen.

The giant man bent down and under the astonished gazes of the tigers, actually pulled Silvan's corpse in two by the jaw, shredding the dead beast apart as though strips of chicken.

The tigers watched on in horror, but none of them dared to make a sound.

The giant man pulled out a half digested left from the dead tiger's belly... or so it seemed. Upon closer inspection, the leg itself was mostly fine. Instead, it was the tiger's

flesh that had melted and rotted around it, not to mention the other undigested food within, giving the leg a grotesque and disgusting appearance.

Even so, the giant man sniffed again, causing the raging wind from before to kick up with even more fervor.

There was an intoxicated expression on his face, one filled with the illest sorts of perversions.

He unleashed a billow into the skies, his crimson tattoos lighting up as the Forces of the world seemed to boil beneath his presence.

The tiger corpse he had neglected beneath him shattered into a rain of blood and gore, but he didn't seem to care in the slightest...

And maybe that was because his second notable feature were the white orbs of his eyes.

Chapter 2625: Humanoids Vs Beasts

"Are you going to tell me what you're planning now?"

Leonel laughed. "Why are you so sure I have anything planned? Let's just wing it."

Aina rolled her eyes. This guy was too unbelievable. If you wanted to lie, at least make it a realistic lie.

"Come," Leonel pulled Aina along with a smile on his face. The two strolled through beautiful clouds of pink, violet and blue until they stood on a particular peak.

"I'm going to make you a new outfit, I can't let dregs damage it so easily again." Leonel shook his head, some of his gloominess returning. But he pushed it down. There was a limited amount of time remaining and he wasn't exactly sure when the other foot would drop, but there would be quite a bit of chaos soon. He was certain of that.

The trouble was that he could only weave fabrics by using beast pelts, and trading for such things was a bit more... difficult. Beasts weren't just animals in this world, they were a powerful force of their own, including Demi-Gods and Gods.

There was a dividing line between humanoids and beasts, that was certain. However, regardless of his dividing line, there was a tentative peace between the two sides.

Much of these things were just fuzzy understandings to Leonel. There was a lot of history written and marked down in the Life Tablet, something that made sense.

The Wise Star Orders were responsible for keeping records, and among those records, aside from techniques, abilities and Lineage Factors, history was most definitely among the most important as well.

However, there was no objective history, especially when in the case of the God Beasts, the saying that "victors write history" didn't exactly apply.

The God Beasts were almost... painstakingly neutral. They took into account every detail, accounted for every potential spark and motive... it made for a reading of history that wasn't only bogged down, but even more complex than even the rules of the Dream Pavilion.

This was all to say that even Leonel found it hard to summarize the clash of beasts and humanoids.

Just objectively speaking, this was inevitable. Summarizing every bipedal organism as a humanoid was asinine. What did a human like Leonel have to do with a Void Race member like Shan'Rae?

By the same token, although they were all called beasts, how many different Races did they have among them? Could they really be looked at as a monolith either?

Such a history was bound to be complicated.

What this meant is that there was no easy way to just buy high level beast pelts from the Dream Pavilion like he could trade for ores and Force Herbs. In that case, making what Aina needed was far more complicated.

Demons were a good alternative to this, but there weren't really any that he could use in the same sense.

He thought about just making Aina an armor, but he knew that she preferred her usual outfit instead. She might even prefer to just use a normal set of clothing instead.

Aina was a woman who even preferred short hair over her long hair because it allowed her to battle more freely, she definitely didn't like bulky armors impeding her battle style either.

Of course, Leonel had the skill to not make it bulky. But if he could align himself with his wife's preferences, he would do so.

Luckily...

Aina flipped a palm. The Segmented Cube was still on her finger, so she was able to use it with the same ease.

In her hand, a long and thick tail appeared. It was at least four meters long and over two feet thick in most locations.

"I picked it up because I thought you might find it useful. Yuri said something about how the tail of a White Spectral Tiger is a dense concentration of their comprehension of Spatial Force."

"Oh?" Leonel said. Then, he grinned.

Anyone else holding that tail would have already been shredded to pieces. But now only did Aina hold it, but Leonel also held it in his palms for a while, weighed it, and then tossed it into the air.

Little Tolly slithered off of Leonel's left arm and flashed into the skies. It formed a sleek knife and cutting into the soaring tail. It moved like it was fileting a fish, and in an instant, a perfect pelt was left behind. It was layered in white fur and black scales, exuding a strong spatial fluctuation.

However, Leonel noticed instantly that compared to the bone hidden deep within the floating tail of flesh, the pelt itself was a far cry away.

'Interesting...'

Little Tolly flashed again suddenly, the bone was perfectly cut out as well. It didn't have a single scratch on it, nor did it have any blood or flesh remaining.

Runes danced across its surface, Runes that reminded Leonel a lot of the ones that floated in his very own Innate Nodes.

'How mysterious.'

His smile widened and his fingers began to move like he was striking the cords of the universe itself.

Tolliver responded in kind, separating into several pieces and slithering through the skies.

Leonel separated the fur and the skin beneath, processing the former into a tough leather and weaving the latter into a silk-like material.

Something like chaining short strands of fur into a much more substantial fabric was something that took careful control, but for the current Leonel, it felt as easy as breathing.

At the same time, he gutted the bone of its marrow and dried it, condensing the Forces around it until it shimmered like a glorious chain-whip.

Leonel separated the tail into its numerous smaller bones, and then he began to refine them into even smaller, condensed pieces.

Tolliver and Leonel coordinated, their movements so perfect that the world seemed to resonate along with them.

Aina stood to the side, looking in awe. However, she spent most of the time looking at Leonel's side profile, her gaze filled with an enamored light.

Chapter 2626: Who Needed a Shirt?

Leonel began to weave the final outfit. The bulk of it was made up by the white, silky fabric woven of the tiger beast's fur. Then, the next most common material came from the thick rubbery leather, forming a tight belt, and her military shoes.

Finally, there came the bone. Leonel refined them into shoulder guards, shin guards, elbow guards, a subtle breast plate, and a hidden gauntlet that covered just the back of her hand and some of her forearm.

Soon, it was completed and it trembled as it floated in the air. Leonel nodded to himself, feeling that he had done a good job.

This time, the Force Arts he used came entirely from the Runes of the Tiger's bone, skin, and furs. It was an interesting feeling. Not being able to control the Force Arts all on his own made it a challenge.

However, because he had gained the flexibility that came from Complexity and Simplicity, he was able to adapt. Compared to creating a new Force Art language for every Craft, this was actually a little bit easier. He just had to be mindful of the Runes of the White Spectral Tiger Race and how it moved and adapted.

"Try it," Leonel grinned.

Aina rolled her eyes. This guy just wanted to see her strip, but in the end, she obliged with a smile.

Leonel watched as Aina got rid of her tattered military uniform for his new Craft instead.

She almost moaned in satisfaction as she slipped it on. The silky fabric was so soft against her skin that it felt like she was being caressed by a cloud.

The hidden breastplate perfectly cupped her chest so that she didn't even need to wear an uncomfortable bra, and even the shin and arm guards she thought might restrict her movement somehow formed to her shape perfectly.

What surprised her the most, though, were the boots.

Honestly, of her usual outfit, military boots were often what she disliked the most. She mostly wore them because she didn't want her feet to be on the ground and they were the only things sturdy enough to take her strength.

Even back on Earth because she had entered the Fourth Dimension, her strength had already been particularly tyrannical. Normal shoes simply couldn't take her power.

But these boots... not only were they incredibly sturdy, but they made her feel as though they weren't even there. Not only that, but even her weight itself seemed to be cut in half.

Leonel smiled and nodded, feeling that Aina liked it.

"Thank you," she said, kissing him on the cheek.

"Do you want to continue using your Battle Ax? Or...?"

Leonel never really offered to make a weapon for Aina for multiple reasons.

For one, after realizing what it took to make a weapon that didn't crumble beneath his Spear Sovereignty, he realized how much strength he was leaving on the table. Unless he could make a Battle Ax that wouldn't crumble beneath Aina's Battle Ax Sovereignty, wouldn't he just be harming her?

The second reason was because her Battle Ax, the Heirloom of the Brazinger family, that is, seemed to inexplicably grow more powerful every day.

Every time he observed it, it seemed to be on a higher level.

Leonel wasn't confident that he could create a Battle Ax stronger than the peak potential of this Heirloom. But, he was fairly confident now that he could create one stronger than its current state.

Aina shook her head. "No, that's okay. I'll stick with it."

"Does it have any rules for how it grows more powerful? Do you need any resources for it?"

Aina smiled and shook her head again. "It's a bit weird. It doesn't even care about my Battle Ax Sovereignty. It only responds when my Berserk God Lineage Factor grows stronger, and only then. I made some huge progress during the tournament, so it's in a bit of an embryonic phase right now. Soon, it'll break free."

Leonel frowned. This sounded good, but he also didn't like the idea of Aina running around with a weakened weapon. That was a problem.

"Will that take too much time?"

"You don't need to worry. It's very quick, it just needs my blood. I didn't do it before because of the trouble it might cause... speaking of which, do you think that leaving so much of my blood behind, and even losing a leg, might cause some issues?"

Aina wasn't a fool. The most troublesome people and the reason she had to hide her Blood Sovereignty, Invalids, could sense how special she was by smell alone.

"Almost certainly," Leonel nodded. "But the problem isn't really others knowing you're a Blood Sovereign, it's how many know. If any Invalids find out, it will be by coincidence and they will almost certainly hoard this information to themselves."

Aina nodded, understanding. There was a difference between a few knowing and countless worlds knowing. If it was the latter, how would they even fight back against it? They weren't ready for such scrutiny.

"It seems like they're here," Leonel suddenly said, looking up into the skies.

Aina frowned. "Who?"

"Whoever's closest," Leonel smiled with a mysterious light in his eyes.

Aina rolled her eyes. "How are you still gatekeeping even now?"

Leonel laughed. "I'm not gatekeeping, I really don't know."

He reached out a hand and the wind suddenly howled.

Scarlet Star Force and Emulation Spatial Force surged as a glorious spear was formed.

Leonel grabbed it out of the air with one hand and grabbed Aina's hand in the other.

With a flick of his wrist, his spear descended and the skies were split in two.

By his side, his wife wore a radiant white military outfit accented in black. As for him... well, he just wore a pair of sweats and hadn't bothered to put a shirt on.

But who needed a shirt when you had Divine Armor?

BOOM!

Half of the Bubble cracked and fissured as a group broke their way through.

Chapter 2627: A Pair of Demons

Leonel appeared high in the skies, a platform of Emulation Spatial Force subtly flickering beneath his feet.

"Oh?"

Leonel had thought about who it might be, but he didn't think that it would actually be members of the Nomad Race.

Their Ethereal Glabellas shimmered on their foreheads and their extra hands danced with weapons or twisted into special seals as though they were casting spells.

Leonel had already expected for this to happen.

After the Gathering of Kingdoms ended, Existence would enter a frenzied state. It was less accurate to say that they were being personally targeted, and much more accurate to say that these people were desperate and looking for any rope they could hold onto to pull them to shore.

The goal of these people was quite obvious. They were trying to pre-emptively find a world to save themselves. Soon, they would all be destroyed. The only chance they had to survive was to find a world that had managed to survive the culling.

It could be said that this Gathering of Kingdoms had not just one layer, but two of cruelty. Not only was there the morality of doing such a culling to begin with, but then there was the inevitable carnage that would follow suit.

Even if you managed to survive by the skin of your teeth, you'd find yourself assaulted from all sides by worlds who didn't make the cut, and among them, there just might be worlds stronger than your own that just happened to get a little unlucky.

This was obviously tacitly approved by those overlords overlooking this matter. The culling alone wasn't enough, the death and carnage that followed were what they were really looking for.

However, it could be said that these people were both lucky and unlucky.

They were lucky in the fact that they had one, stumbled upon a world that had survived the culling and was extraordinarily weak, and two, this world also happened to have both Leonel and Aina, two people many wanted to know the location of. There was no doubt that this information was worth a great deal and might even be enough to save their entire world.

However, they were also unlucky because Leonel had the Dream Pavilion and could sense with great immediacy exactly where a breach had taken place and act instantly. And...

They wouldn't survive the next few minutes.

Leonel and Aina took action at the same time. There were only a few dozen Nomads who had appeared, and the strongest among them was only of the Eighth Dimension. Clearly, their job was to find the worlds in the first place, then establish a connection before allowing everyone else in.

They thought that they had time. Even though most of the world would know that a breach had happened, finding exactly where should have been a nightmare. By the time they did, there would already be a flood of their fellow people rushing in from the other side.

They were practically crying tears of joy when they realized that this was, indeed, a world that had survived the culling. They could tell because the Gathering Stele was still hanging high up in the skies, whereas it had long since disappeared in their world, marking them from eradication.

Suddenly, their leader looked up and noticed Leonel and Aina. He didn't recognize Leonel, but when he saw Aina, his eyes opened wide.

"You..."

Battle Ax and Spear descended.

The group of Nomads was shredded to pieces without even the chance to retaliate.

Leonel took the Segmented Cube finger sleeve back from Aina then flipped a palm. He tossed it forward and the crack was quickly healed, leaving behind a formation and a doorway instead.

Leonel's understanding of the structure outside of these fused Bubbles was quite deep. Back when he was first captured into the Three Finger Cult, he noticed the existence of a large-scale Force Art protecting them from the invasion of other Bubble Worlds.

For a formation of that scale to work, it had to take into account the terrain, which was why Leonel was able to piece it together by observing several maps.

This was all to say that the Inbetween Worlds around this region were intimately familiar to him even after the changes they had undergone, and that protective formation had given him a lot of inspiration at the same time.

Due to this, he was able to create this Craft, one that could not only heal these cracks but also form a gateway to the world on the other side.

As for why Leonel put up this gateway, it was because he knew this wasn't over. The moment the Nomads realized their people had died, or that they hadn't come back in a while, their first thought would begin to investigate this region. Quite quickly, they would realize that this was a world worth coming to.

If Leonel wanted to stop this, he and Aina had to take action and kill more than just the ones aiming for their world. They had to kill until the Nomads felt there were only gateways to hell consuming them from all sides.

"Aina," Leonel said lightly.

She nodded and suddenly, her aura flared. The military outfit morphed around her as wings sprung from the small of her back. Horns grew on her forehead and her skin turned from its usual rich tanned color, a stay over from her years of training beneath the sun, to a milky white as black lightning flashed.

Her Blood Sovereignty wasn't the only thing she hadn't used during the tournament... her Demon Form was also on that list.

CLINK. DOOM.

Leonel's appearance was suddenly obscured by an armor that looked as though it was formed out of Liquid Metal rather than normal ores. It slithered across his skin and obscured his vision.

Soon, the couple was entirely unrecognizable.

Since they were about to go on a killing spree, why not let them believe that Demons were to blame?

Morality? They didn't really think about it.

Their only duty was to themselves, their people...

Their happiness.

With a flash, they disappeared into the gateway.

Chapter 2628: Wicked

Leonel and Aina entered the Inbetween World and shot off in two different directions, Aina moving in a blur of black lightning and Leonel gliding like a silvery bronze streak through the air.

...

"Control yourselves!" a voice barked.

Compared to the Nomads who were usually quite tall, lanky, and willowy, this man was a tank. He wore nothing but a pair of loose linen pants along with loose wrapping around his forehead and head, only leaving space for the Ethereal Glabella that shone through.

His two extra pairs of floating hands clamped around his thick forearms as he crossed his arms. His roar was capable of ripping out the souls of the soldiers trembling with agitation before him.

The disdain in his fiery gaze was thick. Seeing his mighty Nomad Race react like this in the face of almost certain death filled him with disgust.

They were the Nomad Race; their adaptability was second to none. They were designed to be placed into a crucible and come out the other side even stronger than before.

They shouldn't shy away from this sort of trial by fire; they should be willing to face off against the dangers instead. And yet...

Grimm's gaze shifted and landed on a particular young man. Amidst the panicked and shifty gazes, he was one of the few who managed to keep their wits about them.

If Leonel was here, or if Rhangyl hadn't died, they would recognize this young man quite easily. He was none other than Wicked Rhismet, the Nomad young the two had come across during the selection.

It seemed that compared to Rhangyl, Wicked was less lucky, ending up in a weaker world. However, his strength had likewise increased by leaps and bounds the moment he stepped foot into a Complete World.

There were many geniuses of the Incomplete Worlds that truly soared after shedding the weakness of their former worlds.

Unfortunately, for whatever reason, Wicked made the choice not to participate in the Gathering of Kingdoms. As for the people of the Nomads, they didn't care to force him either. In their opinion, what could a brat from an Incomplete World do?

The only one who seemed to have a good impression of Wicked was Grimm. Wicked had never done anything impressive, but just looking at him Grimm felt that he at least had the look of a real Nomad.

BOOM!

The sudden sound came abruptly and with the rage of a descending storm. Anarchic Force spun through the air wildly as a man appeared within the cyclone just a few hundred meters away.

No... it was hard to even call it a man.

It was a humanoid that seemed wrapped in silvery-bronze metallic liquid. The liquid method writhed and wiggled through the air, coming out from his back, shoulders, arms, and legs.

It wrapped around his body tightly, leaving almost nothing but his crotch to the imagination. It was as though rather than wearing this Liquid Metal, the metal had become him, like a second layer of skin.

One of the tendrils suddenly poked at the air before the young man. The Anarchic Force suddenly dispersed as a Force Art was immediately formed in the skies.

BOOM!

The laser of light was meters thick and blindingly gold. By the time it faded away, hundreds of Nomads had died, leaving not even a corpse behind.

The liquid armor writhed again and the tendrils poked at the air again and again and again.

Soon, an array of magic circles filled the skies, turning the dark and gloomy in-between world into a bright and resonant hellscape.

The figure continued to walk forward, not swinging the trembling red, gold, and silver spear in his hands even once.

Every step he took, hundreds died, unable to even fight back. He reaped without a care, shredding them apart as though their lives were worth nothing but the dregs that were left behind after they were gone.

And then it happened.

The liquid armor trembled and the dispersing Life Force of the dead Nomads erupted.

Creation to Destruction. Life to Death.

The Life Force, as though fueled by the Anarchic Force in the surroundings, suddenly roared out and expanded. The very energy of their fallen companions shredded them apart, leaving their army even more decimated.

Grimm's eyes seemed ready to pop out of their sockets. The man's movements were far too fast and only a split moment had passed. He didn't even have the time to respond before what felt like half of his army was blown to bits.

"BASTARD!" He roared.

He stomped the ground hard, fissuring the black land. To do such a feat to earth tempered for so long by Anarchic Force, the power of this man could be imagined. Even the laser beams of light hadn't been able to cut into the ground just now.

Grimm appeared before the man in an instant, the aura of a Tier 1 Ninth Dimensional expert rolling out in waves.

The Anarchic Force in the surroundings was dispelled like a shadow beneath a sun's rays.

Grimm unfurled his arms and his six hands flashed through the skies, four floating in the air and two rumbling beneath the power of his arms.

However, it was right then that the figure suddenly took a step forward.

[Universe].

Grimm found himself slowing considerably while the figure suddenly vanished, appearing to his back and beginning another all-out slaughter on his fellow Nomads.

The tendrils of Liquid Metal rolled like waves through the skies. Every time one lightly plucked at the air, a Force Art would be born into the world, each one different, each one perfect for the situation at hand.

The Nomads finally began to organize and fight back, but it seemed entirely useless. Beneath [Universe], it was as though they couldn't control their bodies properly at all while the man was able to float around like swordfish through water.

He knifed and cut, casually blocked and parried, and all while not even lifting a single hand.

Then, he suddenly appeared before Wicked Rhismet.

Chapter 2629: Grimm and Wicked

Leonel didn't expect to see this face before him. But as he stood there, he didn't attack immediately. He felt something weird coming from Wicked, a great strength that made him feel more threatened than even Grimm.

He had purposely avoided Grimm because he was unable to face off against such a person head to head just yet. He could only wait until he was the last person standing and then drown him in schemes and battle tactics.

What he didn't expect was that there would be a second interesting character right here.

With his memory, of course he recognized Wicked. There were many of that Incomplete World trial that had caught his attention.

Aside from Wicked, there was still that tall and beautiful brown-skinned lady, the pink-eyed little woman, and of course there was also Alpha Clown and Alpha Bluestar.

Three of those were humans, and it was hard to tell if they had managed to survive the carnage. If they did, they would definitely be a great asset to the Human Race and he had thoughts of helping them out despite the fact he had clashed with a lot of them.

There was also Rhangyl, but he had already personally killed the man.

What he didn't expect was that Wicked would end up being the largest variable of them all.

Leonel grinned. The mask of Liquid Metal on his face danced, forming a replica of his grinning interior that could shake the soul.

"Interesting."

Wicked frowned. He had been ready to counter and catch Leonel off guard with a sudden killing intent, but he didn't expect for Leonel to come to a sudden stop even with Grimm bearing down on him from behind.

Just what was he thinking?

Leonel tapped a foot and vanished.

BOOM!

Grimm landed with the force of a meteor, roaring into the skies. When he looked up, he found Leonel standing high and mighty.

[Domain].

The two area of effect techniques stacked atop of one another.

A trembling formation appeared to Leonel's back like a pair of spreading wings. The Natural Force Art expanded, growing larger and larger until Auspicious Air seemed to replace the Anarchic Force.

Leonel held out his spear, his aura climbing higher and higher.

[Star Fusion].

BANG!

The Liquid Metal seemed to catch on fire.

Then, he swung down.

His Spear strike enveloped the world with gold. The might of a Life State Force shredded everything in its path apart, and even Grimm and Wicked had to continuously retreat as well, unwilling to meet it head on.

Leonel was unable to use the greatest strength of his Forces, they were simply too powerful. The true strength of a Life State Force was beyond him and his body couldn't output that strength.

In order to output just a small part of it, he had to complete his Spear Dance. Only in that way could he slowly accumulate the strength he needed from the surroundings and execute an attack that could hold at least a fraction of that strength. But now...

It was much easier.

His Natural Force Art became a support for his mind, unleashing the shackles of his soul and releasing the inhibitions of his body by proxy.

At the same time, his Divine Armor began akin to a conduit of Life, a perfect fusion between himself and Tolliver, he had gained a second outlet for the overwhelming strength.

Now, just a single one of his spear strikes could match up to the former strength of a spear strike executed after a completed Spear Dance. And... if he did a Spear Dance now...

Carnage was unleashed below.

Beneath [Domain], even Grimm could hardly use his Force properly. Although Grimm was powerful, his best Force was only in the Impetus State, could he fight back against a [Domain] fueled by not just one but several Life State Forces?

Grimm and Wicked alike found themselves wholly suppressed.

If an enemy had no Impetus State Forces and Leonel used [Domain] with all of his Forces, even with how restricted his Forces were now, he was able to strip away their ability to use Force entirely.

Against Grimm who only had two Impetus State Forces, only one of which was at the Peak Impetus State, even with his Life State Force severely weakened in their use, Leonel could still suppress him by more than 50%.

Under such a level of strength, the two could only watch as their fellow Nomads were slaughtered one after another. They couldn't even rise into the air with any sort of ease, how could they face off against him?

BOOM!

Leonel landed on the ground with a heavy thud, walking forward toward the last two remaining Nomads. By this point, the gateway to the Nomad Bubble had been shattered and there was no way back for these two.

Leonel swept his spear to the ground, a large swath of the ground suddenly being cut in two. The earth that Grimm found it difficult just to leave a crack in lifted up beneath his command, filling the skies with rumbling boulders.

Earth Force sprung free of Leonel, pooling into the surroundings and ground.

It was said that Earth Force was maybe the weakest of the elements. It was too difficult to use to the scale it was meant to be used at, it was simply too difficult to rip control of the earth away from its World Spirit, and even further than that, in a world of Anarchic Force like this, it was steeped in a Force designed to shred all others apart.

But now, this hard to manipulate Force suddenly bent and twisted beneath Leonel's will, forming flaming meteors that blazed in the skies like stars.

Now, it was just the three of them.

Leonel grinned, an eerie warp slithering through the liquid armor.

He had a lot of frustration building up inside of him, this world seemed to love to piss him off. He had to let Aina go and fight alone, but that didn't mean he liked it for even a single moment.

And he had just found two great targets to vent on.

BOOM!

He moved like the wind.

Chapter 2630: Fairness

Leonel held his hands out and the earth rolling in the skies fell like a rain of meteors. Fire wrapped around them like a vortex and suddenly the dark and gloomy in-between world became lit ablaze.

Grimm unleashed a roar, three glaives appearing in his hands. The one he used with his main body was the largest, having a polearm of over two meters and a curved blade of an entire meter on its own.

The ones his floating hands held were smaller, but only relatively so. They moved with an added nimbleness, dancing through the air with the agility of an assassin's short sword.

He seemed to form a formation all by himself, a rolling wave of glaive blades filling the skies and crisscrossing with menace as they faced off against the falling meteors.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

A rain of rock fell. Grimm's entire body felt like it was on fire, the effort it had taken was beyond what it should have. He didn't understand how earth that was so tough could be so easily controlled by someone like this...

His eyes suddenly widened.

Leonel appeared before the man like a ghost, his spear dancing through the wind as though gliding upon its coattails. And much like the wind, it felt ubiquitous and omnipresent, appearing exactly where it was needed and suffocating all those that wanted to avoid it.

Grimm's eyes practically glazed over, his heart skipping several beats. It was the most beautiful spear he had ever seen.

Leonel had spent a long time as a layman of the spear. There was even a point in his life where even Amery dared to say that he didn't deserve to wield a spear at all.

The current Leonel however, could dazzle the world with a single sweep.

Spear and glaives met, Grimm hurriedly retreating to regain the initiative with some space. However, he felt his movements suddenly become sluggish as Leonel's own accelerated. It was as though the friction in the air was assaulting him from all sides, making it feel like he was trying to move through sandpaper while Leonel was like an arrow through the wind.

Grimm only seemed to barely realize after several terrible exchanges that he was in the middle of a Domain of sorts. The Universal Force cascading down from above seemed to be fueling it in part.

Unfortunately for him and many others, he was completely unable to use Universal Force. No, it was more accurate to say that he was unable to use Universal Force that could actually impact his combat strength at all.

This was the situation of most powerhouses of the Complete Worlds. Even youths found it extremely difficult. Aina herself didn't battle a single person who made use of Universal Force.

Leonel was an anomaly in more ways than this man knew.

Suddenly, the silvery bronze mask that covered Leonel's face grinned wildly again.

The tendrils of silver wiggled and pierced out in the air, Force Arts appearing in the skies once more. But this was on a completely different level entirely. It felt like a God of the Bow was bearing down on him.

BANG!

The air fissured and Grimm was instantly overwhelmed. He tried to circulate his Force, but once again, he found that it was incredibly sluggish and didn't move the way he wanted it to.

Grimm roared, his Middle Impetus State Glaive Force flickering with a white-silvery light. The blades of his glaives came together in a tri-tip and swung down as one. The blade lights fused into one and more than tripled in strength, cutting into the blazing lights of Leonel's lasers one after another.

Grimm coughed up a mouthful of blood as he was sent flying back. He landed heavily on the tips of his toes, but as though he was pushing against an immovable force, he kept sliding back for several dozen meters before he managed to stop.

He exhaled a heavy breath, blood leaking from his lips as his eyes snapped up. He looked toward Wicked.

"Run. This isn't a battle you can partake in."

He had seen some oddities surrounding Wicked, but no matter how he looked at it, he couldn't see an excessive amount of strength coming from this youth. Staying here would do him no good.

He didn't know how Wicked could survive now that the gateways were gone, did he even have the strength to break through another Bubble? But staying here was certain death...

Wicked didn't even look at Grimm, his brows tightened into a frown.

Suddenly Wicked vanished and before Grimm could react, his heart had been pulled out from the back. The latter didn't even get a chance to see who had done it before his gaze dimmed.

Grimm's body broke down and he collapsed in a pool of his own blood. Soon, the wisps of Anarchic Force had swallowed him up.

Unfortunately... unless you had a Creation State Force, death in an in-between world was a true death even for a Ninth Dimensional expert. Grimm probably never expected that he would fall like this.

Leonel stood and watched this scene without much of a care, his spear resting on his shoulders and the smaller rocks that had once been his meteors floating around him. He looked toward Wicked, trying to understand what this man's ploy was.

If Wicked had wanted, there should have been a good chance to reach the Finals and save his Bubble like Aina had. It wasn't guaranteed as Aina was on a completely different level than this man, but Leonel could say that there was a good 30% chance at the very least. That was better than most could hope for.

"There's no need for us to fight, right?" Wicked said with a smile.

Leonel didn't respond. He had no intention of letting this man go, he was too much of a variable. Who knew what he would be capable of?

Wicked sighed. "Ai, the young are always so unruly. Where's the fairness?"

Wicked suddenly vanished.

Chapter 2631: Fascinating

Wicked still looked like a child of barely a few years old, but he didn't move like one at all. Nor did he speak like one.

The last time Leonel met him, he was already 93 years old, an age that didn't mean much in this world and was still considered to be firmly of the younger generation. And yet, he seemed to be able to tell that Leonel was young. At the very least, younger than him.

This tidbit made Leonel even more confused. He knew that Leonel was younger than him and had this strength, but he was still attacking like this?

From Wicked's perspective, he should definitely come from a Bubble World of great power that also easily cleared the Gathering of Kingdoms requirements.

Though attacking Leonel and trying to kill him as quickly as possible still made sense, there was something else about his reactions and temperament that weren't quite... right.

Leonel took a step back, the small figure of Wicked swiping at the air. A line of claw marks appeared in space, the fissures erupting with power.

Wicked attacked like something between a rampaging beast and a younger sibling chasing after his elder brother for bullying him.

The sight made Leonel even more speechless. What the hell was going on here?

Wicked gave him such a weird feeling, but when he actually attacked... he was so weak?

Leonel wasn't fond of not understanding things. The fact his Crafting had lagged behind had annoyed him for a very long time, and now this felt similar.

He didn't feel like his feelings were wrong, but the evidence before him pointed toward that end.

Suddenly, Leonel had a thought.

'Dream Force? Am I sensing something coming from him? Or someone manipulating him in the background?'

The thought was like a bolt of lightning and he seemed to put two and two together.

But there were many layers of oddities.

How had he killed Grimm, then? It should be that there was more than met the eye, certainly. But if he couldn't use that power continuously, why did he waste it on killing Grimm when Grimm was the one who could give him an opportunity to escape?

Even Leonel was slowly whittling Grimm down, wary of his strength to some extent. Was Wicked so stupid?

The more Leonel thought about it, the more he felt that it didn't make any sense.

Suddenly, Wicked's Ethereal Glabella glowed, its pale blue becoming a bright blue in an instant.

His body suddenly expanded and he aged by ten years, becoming a strong man in the prime of his twenties.

His strength explosively increased and suddenly, a spark of raging lightning shot through Leonel's Dreamscape.

'... Wow.'

Leonel accelerated backward, flickering through space and expanding the distance between them more and more.

"Don't run now!" Wicked roared out an almost diabolical laughter. "You made me do this, so you're going to take responsibility for it!"

'That ability just now, it's so much like the Cloud Race's ability to tap into their future potential in exchange for time they've spent slumbering. But it seems mutated and warped somehow, not for the worse... at least not necessarily. If I'm correct, then he's taken a hit on his mind in exchange for real power.'

He faintly understood some things about Wicked's origins. The man was able to incorporate new paths into his own in exchange for becoming a child again. That was why he was 93, and yet looked like a little kid... or at least he used to.

Leonel was fairly certain that among the times Wicked had chosen to regress, he incorporated the abilities of the Cloud Race into his being. But it shouldn't be that simple...

He seemed capable of using the ability more freely than the Cloud Race could, but in return, he acted like a child when he was in his child form, acting without thinking and even doing things that didn't quite benefit him either.

It didn't seem like he managed to shed those weaknesses either after he became an "adult". Rather than just turning and running, he was obsessed with capturing and killing Leonel now.

'This is super interesting... ' Leonel thought.

Now, the question he was wondering about was if the Dream Force manipulator he had sensed was Wicked's "future self", or if it was someone else entirely?

'If he has the thought process of a child, he would have definitely participated in the Gathering of Kingdoms, and with this strength, he should have been able to save his Bubble World.

'So why didn't he?'

Leonel's gaze looked toward the corpse. Could it be?

What if the fall of the Bubble was exactly what he wanted?

There were several reasons Leonel could think of for why, but now that he felt he had most of the story, he didn't feel that it was all that necessary to get the exact details. That was...

Until Wicked's body suddenly flashed and his body ballooned, black fur erupting around him until he suddenly became a large with black and dark gold fur.

'Aurora Black Panda?'

Leonel was speechless. It felt like he was making wild discovery after wild discovery.

How was a non-human using the Lineage Factor that the Human Race was despised for? If every Race could use it, what need would there be to despise humans in specific?

"HAHA! You probably don't know what this is, right?! Take your questions to the grave!"

Leonel shook his head. This would have, under normal circumstances, been a great battle. But this idiot actually exposed such a thing unnecessarily.

The Life Tablet suddenly flashed in Leonel's mind and without being able to resist...

BANG!

Wicked was slammed into the ground with such force that the black lands cracked.

He was suppressed to the point he couldn't even budge a single finger.

Leonel took a step and kneeled by Wicked who was still struggling wildly.

"Fascinating," Leonel muttered.

An anomaly even the God Beasts didn't account for...

Or did they?

Chapter 2632: Zoltene

Wicked tried to move and writhe, but the suppression of the Life Tablet was so firm that he could hardly budge at all. Aside from some incoherent sounds that sounded not much different from baby babble, he wasn't able to do anything else.

Leonel reached down and pulled his head up, looking into Wicked's ferocious eyes and seeing something else that was interesting.

'Could it be the reason he's a little... slow isn't because of a matter of age, but a matter of this instead?'

Wicked's eyes were filled with fury right now, and that wasn't too surprising given the situation. But the main issue wasn't that. Instead, it seemed that it was a bit... too much, almost as though it would be less accurate to say that he was furious and more accurate to say that he was... Feral.

There was a thin dividing line between the two, but looking at the foam coming from Wicked's mouth, it was clear that it was closer to the latter.

Leonel's thoughts bounced from idea to idea, but he couldn't seem to figure out exactly what was going on.

'Logically speaking, there's no reason for the Three Finger Cult to have only tried to influence the Dimensional Verse, they definitely had their hands in multiple pots.

'Even the Three Finger Cult of the Human Bubbles should just be a facade, or else it wouldn't be worthy of that Demoness. I've already had Anastasia scan their region and she found nothing of interest... at least nothing of interest outside the fact all of their Invalids have already vanished.

'But this... Is he a failed experiment, then? But for this to be a failure... the drawbacks don't seem too bad.'

Having difficulty controlling yourself was considered to be quite a substantial problem. But, all things considered, it was quite minor depending on your perspective.

Someone like Leonel would rather die than lose control of his mind. His intelligence was probably his best asset. But that didn't mean that everyone had the same risk assessment as he did.

In a competition like the Gathering of Kingdoms, your intelligence was nigh worthless. What good was scheming in that sort of situation? By the time you got to the penultimate round, the rounds would be so numerous that even if you managed to skirt by once or twice, could you do so ten times?

'But that's the other interesting point. Why avoid the...'

It suddenly clicked for Leonel. He hadn't even considered it, but could it possibly be true?

The Gathering of Kingdoms Stele was designed by the God Beasts of Creation. What would happen if someone with the God Beast of Destruction Constitution suddenly appeared within its realm of influence?

The obvious question, then, was why was Leonel fine?

He could only conclude that the Stele was smarter than the lump of rock it was formed out of. Not only did he have the God Beast of Creation Lineage Factors, but he also had the Life Tablet, wouldn't it be too foolish for it to target him for such an arbitrary reason?

Leonel made a move and began to look through Wicked's things. But quite quickly, he found that there was nothing of importance on him. As for his treasures, they were too lackluster. Leonel couldn't look at them as anything other than inferior Crafts. At this point, what he could create would take a Demi-God world to match up to at the very least.

Just when Leonel was about to give up, he had a thought.

'Maybe?'

He pressed a palm against Wicked's forehead and his Dream Force surged in.

It was quite difficult to invade another's Ethereal Glabella, it was the location of their soul and it was also the most protected item in the body. It could be said that it was both a benefit and a detriment that the Ethereal Glabellas of the Nomad Race were so large-

LONG LIVE ZOLTENE THE ALMIGHTY!!

A wave of Force surged out, smashing against Leonel and sending him flying.

Leonel coughed out a mouthful of blood, his gaze flickering with a fierce light. If not for his Divine Armor, that blow would have directly killed him. Although he would have managed to protect his soul, the amount of energy he would have needed to rebuild his body would have been astronomical.

The value of his body now was far more than it had been in the past, especially since his body was also the anchor for his World of Destruction. If his body was destroyed, all of his progress in [Final Destruction] would be wasted.

The worst part of such an outcome was that he would lose his Innate Nodes and Stars in an endless void. Although they should technically be somewhere, just how impossible would it be to find them and tether them to himself again?

As though that wasn't bad enough, because this would happen, whenever he did manage to rebuild his body, he would immediately return to the Fourth Dimension and be unable to rebuild it from scratch.

Leonel coughed, struggling to get up as his Vital Star Force rushed to mend his internal wounds.

'Zoltene... Zoltene...'

He had heard that name before as well. Back when he was clearing the enemies of Earth and paving a path for them to conquer the entirety of their territory, one of the religions he had to wipe out was the Zoltene Religion, the Evergreen Religion had been another one.

Leonel felt that he had accidentally stepped into another web. No... it wasn't an accidental thing. Rather, he was already being wound in another's trap and he didn't even realize it.

These matters were far larger than he knew and it seemed that there were already Gods involved.

It wasn't a coincidence. The fact that Wicked was both a devout follower of Zoltene and likewise an Envoy of Destruction? It was absolutely impossible for these two things to not be related...

And if it was somehow the case that they were, it would be the largest coincidence in the world.

Chapter 2633: Worst Case Scenario

After a while, Leonel's injuries were finally in a semi-decent state.

He had been caught off guard earlier, and he actually felt that he could potentially do something to deal with the situation this time around. At the very least, the Life Tablet might be capable of being a helping hand. But...

Gods weren't something he wanted to touch with a ten foot pole right now. If he was too willful and he brought their ire down, wouldn't he be screwed?

There was a difference between Demi-God Races and actual Gods. It was a matter of comprehension and personal strength.

Without forming a Dharma, one couldn't even exhibit the abilities of a God. And, without forming an Idol, one couldn't be a True God.

He didn't know which of these categories that Evergreen or Zoltene fell into, but regardless of what it was, it was impossible to form either one without a Creation State Force.

Well... unless you were his wife, but that was a bit of a special situation.

Aina hadn't formed a Dharma nor an Idol. Rather, she had formed a Quasi-Dharma, something that most couldn't hope to form.

The only reason this was possible was because of her Berserk God Lineage Factor. Leonel even had a feeling that the word "God" in that title was purposely chosen.

One of the greatest techniques of the Four Great Families was the capability of forming a Manifestation. Aina had managed to unlock it after witnessing it for the first time during the Cloud Race's attack on Earth, but since then, she hadn't used it.

It seemed that the reason for that was because she was trying to learn how to use it in a better way, and in the end, she clearly succeeded.

Of course, these were matters that Leonel just naturally came to understand from Aina's memory.

This was all to say that even if they were only from Demi-God Races or even Mortal Races below them, Evergreen and Zoltene had already shed whatever limitations their original Races had once had.

Leonel didn't know what Evergreen's Race was, but he knew with certainty that Zoltene was a Nomad. The connection was clear and it seemed to make the schemes he was trying to parse apart even more complex... or much simpler the way he thought about it.

"Anastasia, if I put him in your world, will it cause problems?"

"No," Anastasia replied simply.

Leonel grinned. That was what he liked to hear.

With a move, he pulled Wicked into the Segmented Cube. Under the suppression of the Life Tablet, he couldn't resist even if he wanted to.

Leonel's smile faded and his expression became serious.

Right now, he was between a rock and a hard place.

On the one hand, he felt that Wicked was definitely not a normal pawn of Zoltene. It felt smarter to just let him go.

But on the other... was it really? If he let him go, he couldn't control what might happen. Just the fact that he had suppressed Wicked so easily would expose the fact he had the Life Tablet, and thus his identity.

In the end, he would have to take the risk of capturing him instead. For now, it was the only path forward.

Anastasia's confidence was quite a bit of reassurance to him as well.

"Time to-"

BANG!

Aina landed by Leonel in a flash of black lightning.

"Finished?" She asked.

"For now... there was only one Ninth Dimensional expert here. How about on your side?"

"Three."

Leonel chuckled. He didn't believe that they had gathered up like that, it was more likely that Aina went and cleared three areas on her own.

He didn't blame her, she probably wanted to vent. Having to fight those fools for so long without being able to use her Blood Sovereignty must have been suffocating.

"There's a bit of an issue over here that can add some variables, but there's not much we can do about it right now."

"Is it bad?"

Leonel fell into silence for a long while, not sure how to reply.

"... Potentially. It would depend. I'm thinking in terms of the worst case scenario, but we'll have to be more prepared. First, I want to go to the Three Finger Cult and check their situation personally. I'll need to use my lovely wife as a shield."

Aina smiled but didn't say much.

Taking her hand, the two vanished. No one of the Human Bubble seemed to be aware that a young couple had saved them from yet another calamity.

...

The Cult Bubble.

After the fusion of the six Bubbles into one, the Cult Bubble had ended up in the worst situation. This was an unfortunate reality caused by the fact they were the vanguard of the three Human Bubbles to begin with. To make matters even worse, much of their territory was occupied by the large scale formation that was formed in preparation for the plot of the Human Bubble.

Due to this, the Cult Bubble had faced the largest scale attacks. However...

The Cult Bubble was also the only Human Bubble practically forged for war. It was the cruelest of the Bubbles and everyone born here was tempered through blood and fire. As a result, even though they were in the worst situation, their outcome was also better than the others.

When Leonel and Aina appeared in the region, though, he frowned.

'Mo"Lexi... she's not here?'

"Anastasia, where is she?"

"She..." Anastasia fell silent for a moment before she seemed surprised by something. "... I can't find her anywhere, but her flight vessel seems to have been randomly abandoned. There are a few people who scavenged for things within it, but other than that, she seems to have disappeared."

Leonel frowned, not sure what to make of this. He thought of the possibility that someone had killed her, but...

Something felt fishy.

What happened to her Black Tablet?

"Halt! This is the territory of-!"

Leonel and Aina glided by, ignoring the sudden influx of warriors.

Chapter 2634: Annoyed

Leonel strolled off and Aina split off from him, starting a battle of her own. He couldn't help but smile to himself, he had to admit that relying on Aina when he was certain she wouldn't end up injured or harmed gave him a unique sort of feeling.

He appeared inside the Three Finger Cult compound and frowned. Most who tried to lock onto him were quickly dealt with by Aina and even his clothing wasn't ruffled in the end.

The compound itself was still akin to a large airplane hangar, but the dense and stacked boxes were nowhere to be seen. Instead, there were markings on the ground, etchings that had likely been hidden beneath the crates.

Leonel walked to the end of the large hangar, but found nothing.

'Hm... cute.'

Leonel suddenly tapped a foot and a flood of Dream Force rushed through the etchings on the ground, and in a sudden flash, he vanished.

When Leonel's vision cleared, he found himself in a world all too similar to an Inbetween World. However... not quite.

Instead of rolling waves of darkness, there was a lot of rock that seemed carved out of obsidian. But rather than being glass-like, Leonel felt that even if he attacked with all of his strength, it wouldn't do any good.

He frowned for a moment and his Earth Force rolled out in a foggy wave, but soon his brows shot up.

'I can control the earth in an Inbetween World, but not here?'

Leonel looked around more seriously. There was a faint suppression around him, but he shrugged it off with ease. The gravity was heavy and the air felt even heavier. Moving felt as though he was trying to swim through crude oil.

"Who?!"

A booming voice echoed and a young man descended from the skies with a heavy BOOM.

Leonel's head tilted to the side, looking toward the tail that swayed behind the young man. It was a tail of shadowy black, sometimes it would split into two, three or even more forms, but ultimately it would return to a single form of oneness.

The young man had an imposing might and he seemed ready to throw a punch at Leonel, but almost instantly he fell to a knee so hard the ground quaked once more.

A shimmering dot of rainbow came from Leonel's forehead before it slowly faded.

The young man, who had been prepared to battle, was suddenly trembling in fear. Leonel, however, was frowning.

'First it was the Four Great Families that just vanished. Then there was the Dream Pavilion that actually ended up being a deeper well than I even expected. And now the Cult...'

The Cult can be used.

His grandfather's words suddenly flashed in his mind like a bolt of lightning.

All this time, Leonel was wondering where his grandfather was. It just felt like if he had so much preparation, what was he still biding his time for?

But the more he learned about how deep the waters of this world were, even in the Human Bubbles alone, the more he understood just how complicated this matter was.

Maybe even now... Emperor Gervaise Fawkes simply wasn't ready. Either that... or he was waiting for the perfect time.

"Who are you?" Leonel said in a rumbling, deep voice.

"I... Esteemed elder, I am Drakkar."

"Rank." Leonel commanded.

Drakkar's head descended to the ground even further.

"I do not have a rank, esteemed elder."

[Leonel Morales - Wise Star Order]

[Clearance Level: Novice]

[Contribution]

[Life: -]

[Gold: 2]

[Silver: 2]

[Bronze: 2]

[Black: 7 827 710]

[Common: 3 379 382 297 475]

Even after all this time, Leonel had only increased from an Apprentice to a Novice, but it seemed that this Drakkar didn't have a ranking at all.

Apprentice, Novice, Acolyte, Initiate, Disciple, Adept, Ascendent, Demi-God and God. These were the clearance levels, each one allowing a far greater store of techniques and abilities to be opened.

The largest change was honestly that his Bronze Contributions had ticked up by one. From Leonel's understanding, this increase of one actually didn't even come from the Council Members, but rather the Time Force user, interestingly enough.

Leonel had come to realize that Contributions above Black were incredibly rare, and that really put into perspective what both Aina and Goggles' talents represented.

He didn't even have to put in much effort. So long as his Dream Force could suppress the target, the Life Tablet could automatically pick these abilities and Lineage Factors up, something that was much more convenient than the way the Silver Tablet worked.

It was unfortunate that he didn't get to use it the same way against the participants of the True Dream World for obvious reasons.

Either way, if what this young man said was true, it seemed that even being titled an Apprentice was a shocking matter.

Suddenly, there was a shifting in the world around them and several figures began to appear, each one with a shadowy tail of their own.

To Leonel's surprise, he immediately recognized two of them.

The first was Radlis, the young man of the Umbra family. But Leonel found this far more acceptable than the second person he saw....

Seltin. She was Radlis' aunt and a woman that Leonel had personally killed with his own hands. Back then, she had tried to keep the Bronze Tablet he had given them as a sign of friendship and he didn't have the patience to deal with traitors, so he directly killed her, then took the Bronze Tablet away.

He had had the ability to revive her back then, but why should he have? She thought herself to be above him and at that point in his life, to say that he had little patience for people with such attitudes was nothing short of an understatement.

Leonel could immediately see their rage when their eyes landed on him, but his gaze had already shifted toward the third person he recognized.

'These people really do treat life and death too casually. Why is it that everyone I can't be bothered to give a damn about keeps returning?'

Standing high in the skies, a woman with beauty beyond words stood with a long head of fluttering white hair.

It was none other than Anya, someone that Leonel was also absolutely certain he had slaughtered.

'What a shit show.'

Leonel couldn't help but be slightly annoyed.

Chapter 2635: Succubus

Leonel closed his eyes. It was worse than just annoyance, he actually felt quite angry right now. It wasn't rational, but these sort of things never tended to be.

What right did these people have to come back to life when he had still not found a way to do the same for his father?

He took deep breaths, the wind in the surroundings swirling widely. 'Breathe.'

Leonel suddenly sensed several maleficent intents bearing down on him.

His eyes opened and the Life Tablet trembled. Most before him fell to a knee, completely unable to resist the sudden change.

He put a hand on his forehead and walked away. If he stayed here, he really would end up killing these people.

Of them, maybe only Anya deserved it. Although he was very dissatisfied with Seltin as well, he had mellowed out since then. Her offense wasn't truly worthy of death either.

But if these people started poking and prodding at his temper when he was already in a poor state, he'd probably end up doing something he regretted.

His grandfather's words were that the Cult was useful. How could they be useful if they were dead?

So he walked away, ignoring the kneeling people entirely as he began to walk through the world itself, trying to see what was so special about it.

As the minutes ticked by, his annoyance slowly faded and he shook his head. A sigh left his lips as he looked up.

He was unwilling to give up. He was unwilling to give up on his father, unwilling to resign his mother to a fate of being alone, unwilling to allow the rules of this world to dictate his actions...

Everything he learned seemed to make his wishes harder and harder, impossible, even. Seeing these people alive hit him in a place he didn't even want to consider before. In a way, the fact he had killed them himself was the worst sort of slap to the face.

Those he wanted to stay dead would be alive.

Those he wanted to be alive would stay dead.

What a fantastic world this was.

Leonel strolled to the point he couldn't even see those kneeling figures. Even so, he was quite certain that they were still under his suppression. The amount of control the Life Tablet had over the Northern Star Lineage Factor was almost eerie...

But if he thought about it, maybe it wasn't quite so normal for the Life Tablet to be claimed.

Mo"Lexi was probably a Wise Star Order, she should also be able to easily move in and out of the Dream Pavilion as well even if she didn't join them. But she had never been able to claim the Life Tablet for herself.

Of course, there was a possibility that this was just due to King's existence. But in this case, what had stopped her for so long after his death?

Now, she had mysteriously disappeared and...

Leonel looked up and found a sobering sight.

In the statue of a Shadow Tail, a beast with a wild and amorphous form, so large that it could consume a planet and so ethereal it seemed both real and not at the same time.

It was said that laying eyes upon a God Beast of Destruction could kill you. Although laying eyes upon an Envoy of Destruction wasn't nearly as dangerous, it was still a substantial risk in and of itself as well... even if it was just a depiction.

But Leonel felt nothing.

A flash of lightning suddenly blazed by Leonel's side and the spark formed a familiar beauty.

Leonel smiled.

"You seem to like this new form of movement a lot."

"You don't like it?"

"Who said that?" Leonel chuckled. "I get a vampire, succubus wife. Five year old me would be squealing."

Aina laughed, taking Leonel's hand as she looked around.

"What's going on here?"

Leonel sighed. "More bullshit, unfortunately. I just don't quite know how deep it goes."

"Hm?"

"I met a Nomad that took part in the selection, and somehow he had a Lineage Factor only humans should be able to unlock. Then, I found out he had ties with a God.

"That said Lineage Factor is the very one the people the Three Finger Cult use, and it was supposedly founded by the Demoness, King and the Silver Emperor.

"But at least two of those founders don't make any sense given what we know. So I have a feeling that the story told to appease the Dimensional Verse likely isn't the true story, and it might be the case that there were two other founders we aren't aware of, or it might be the case that the "three" in their name refers to something entirely different.

"There's also the chance that Nomad and Zoltene have nothing to do with the Three Finger Cult at all and there are instead multiple forces at play.

"Ultimately, it's all nonsense. More multi-layered, historical crap that means next to nothing."

Aina smiled, knowing that Leonel's frustration had nothing to do with trying to figure all of this out. She knew her husband well, what he liked to do the most was figure out things... especially when that happened to be something no one else could figure out.

She leaned her head into his shoulder as she listened to his rant.

Eventually, he exhaled.

"The reality is that there are probably multiple factions at play here, multiple people who want to take what remains of the Envoys and forge them into their own image, and humans just happen to be a convenient pawn toward that end.

"Did you find any Invalids?" Leonel suddenly asked.

"No. I didn't see any of them."

Leonel's eyes narrowed. Could it be that there had only been one and he killed it in that explosion? Or was there a pipeline that sent Invalids out of here. Or more accurately, Variant Invalids.

"There's no one around," Aina said, blinking innocently.

Leonel blinked. "Are you trying to seduce me while we're in the middle of war?"

"Yes." Aina nodded seriously.

"Succubus, indeed."

Leonel grinned and swept his vampire-succubus up.

- Chapter 2636: Human Incubators

Chapter 2636: Human Incubators

It was a few hours before Leonel and Aina returned to the kneeling people. Now that he was looking more deeply, he noticed a few things.

There were less than a hundred of them. Only three of them were in the Ninth Dimension, but there wasn't even a single Eighth Dimensional expert. The second tier of strength started at Anya who was in the Seventh.

There was still more to explore in this world, but Leonel felt that he shouldn't for now. Like he had said, these waters were deeper than he knew, and that Shadow Tail statue was probably just the tip of the iceberg.

Well, it was funny to say that considering what they had just done under that statue. But that was neither here nor there.

Leonel smiled beside himself, his gloomy mood having vanished into the wind. Standing with Aina's hand in his own, he couldn't be bothered to give a damn about anything else any longer. These people were irrelevant to him, and they were only as useful to meet his ends.

Nothing more, nothing less.

He swept a glance and his gaze landed on Anya and Seltin.

"You two, come forward."

Anya, compared to Seltin, was far more obedient. There was a graceful expression on her face and her demeanor was just as Leonel remembered it. Even after being forced to kneel for so long, she didn't lose any of that bearing at all.

Seltin, however, was greatly reluctant. There was a large amount of humiliation hidden deep within her eyes, and it seemed that even now, she felt that she should be above Leonel.

Those were eyes that Leonel remembered quite clearly. Their falling out didn't have to be so terrible, but whether it was Seltin or Leonel, both were endlessly prideful and unwilling to take any losses.

"Why are there so few of you," Leonel asked Anya.

Anya's hands clasped in front of her, gently resting just below her waist. She wore a familiar veil, but her dress was black, in sharp contrast to her flowing white hair.

It was hard to associate this woman with a demon at all. In fact, much like Aina, it was hard to associate her with humans either. They both looked far more like Spirituals.

Anya didn't hesitate to respond, seemingly not feeling any sort of hatred for Leonel personally killing her.

"These are all the people we've ever had," she said softly. "The number that could make it here is very small, and though the Incomplete Worlds were a good chance to increase the number who could successfully take on the Lineage Factor, many were... sacrificed."

It had to be remembered that though the Human Race was the only successful experiment, that didn't mean all of them were successful.

Of the humans that remained in the Bubble Worlds, there were none with the ability to take on the Northern Star Lineage Factor.

Although Leonel didn't know it now, the Constellation Families were an excellent example of this...

The Incomplete Worlds had become a breeding ground for reviving long lost Lineage Factors. But oddly enough, something that had started as a last ditch effort of the Fawkes had ended up benefitting so many other people.

It made you wonder...

"And that includes your Variant Invalids and Savants?"

"They were... commandeered," Anya said softly.

Leonel's eyes narrowed but he didn't ask about this topic any further. He could trust Aina to protect her mind, but not these people. They were practically puddy in his hands, let alone the hands of an actual expert.

If he had to guess, this version of the Three Fingers Cults was probably an anchor left in the Human World so that the true Cult would have a foothold to interfere with the Incomplete Worlds.

Now that they had finished their experiments, they took what was useful and abandoned what was not.

'No... not abandoned. I can think of dozens of uses for these people that could range from anything from using them as a scapegoat to obfuscate their involvement in the future, all the way up to hoping they might mingle with their fellow humans and trigger unexpected mutations...'

Leonel fell into his thoughts for a moment and then looked toward Seltin.

"Your Umbra family cut off connections with the Three Finger Cult. Why are you here?"

Seltin clenched her teeth but exhaled a breath.

"There was no choice in the matter. Those that managed to survive were brought here and that's the end of it."

"Survive what."

"I don't know... but as you can see, our numbers used to be much larger than this," Seltin all but growled.

Leonel nodded. The Umbra family was indeed much larger than this. But now, there were less than a hundred people here in total.

He reached forward and suddenly grabbed Seltin's wrist. She tried to resist, but even without his Life Tablet, she was no match for him. His grip was like a vice and it had no give at all as she tried to pull away.

Leonel ignored the woman's struggle, trying to see something.

Then he noticed it... the wounds.

They were hidden, and almost undetectable. But that was because they had long since healed. Even so, his senses could pick them up.

'Why do her inner organs have so much scar tissue?'

Leonel released her and took Anya's wrist. Unlike Seltin, she didn't resist at all. What was the point?

'Interesting... Anya doesn't have the same scarring at all...'

Leonel went through everyone and checked one by one, and to his shock, Anya and the Ninth Dimensional experts were the only ones who were unscathed.

His Dream World organized the scars and their parameters and he felt like he understood.

'Bits and pieces of them were cut out and regrown as though someone was taking samples of them. Then why were Anya and those three spared?'

Leonel felt that he understood this as well. They were more valuable.

If these people wanted to use the Human Race as a scapegoat to hide their actions in the future, how could every member of the supposed "Cult" be a weakling?

No, they needed people who were worthy of carrying their sins, and as such they couldn't afford to kill them or experiment on them.

These people had practically been human incubators, reborn for no other reason than to supply their own inner organs.

And why?

Well, that felt obvious too... Wasn't it so that the likes of Wicked could gain a Lineage Factor he had no business having?

The saddest part is that Seltin and the others didn't even seem aware.

Chapter 2637: One

Leonel stood in silence for a long while. Suddenly, he felt that these people were quite pitiful.

'They're the ticking time bomb these people left in the Human Race, huh...?'

Although Leonel could think of other reasons they might have been left behind like this, he felt that this one had a greater than a 60% chance that this was correct.

'If what I'm thinking is true, then there's probably also a better than 60% chance that this is related to the God Factions who want Humans wiped off the face of Existence...'

Leonel's thoughts jumped from place to place, mostly incoherently. Maybe only the greatest Dream Force users in existence could possibly follow his thought process.

In the end, he jumped through so many possibilities that statistically speaking, he had at best a one to two percentage chance of actually being correct.

"Alright. You, you, you and you..."

Leonel pointed out several people then threw the rest into the Segmented Cube.

"Follow me."

Among the people Leonel called forth, there was Anya and Seltin, as well as one of the Ninth Dimensional experts and Drakkar.

He could feel that these people had strong enough souls to withstand the Dream Pavilion and their existence would make things more convenient for him. Anya, in specific, would be a great boon to help shift the ratios a little bit and maybe open up more options down the line.

Quite soon, Leonel had returned to the Dream Pavilion. He also brought both Goggles and Eamon, allowing them to take full advantage of the Dream Pavilion's environment.

"From now on, you're members of the Dream Pavilion. I'm sure you understand that using your Northern Star Lineage Factor here is a no-go," Leonel spoke to the Cult members after sending Goggles and Eamon away. "Raise your Dream Force comprehension, make something decent of your circumstances, and maybe you can make something of yourselves as well."

The Ninth Dimensional expert couldn't hold back his confusion.

"... Elder, isn't this the Dream Pavilion? How...?"

"How? I'm the Pavilion Head, that's how."

The Ninth Dimensional expert's eyes opened wide, not being able to compute what he just heard.

Leonel waved a hand and left while holding Aina's in his other.

Almost the moment they stepped out, the world fractured again.

"Time for round two, it seems," Leonel said with a laugh.

Aina smiled. "Let's go."

The two broke out into a blaze of speed and unleashed another round of carnage on the Inbetween World. Once again, the ending was predictable.

...

'Cloud Race this time... that could have been very dangerous...'

Leonel exhaled a breath. If they managed to infiltrate the Bubble and combine into the Human Race, they would have been very difficult to weed out.

The Cloud Race, inevitably, had the highest survivability in these sorts of situations. Unfortunately for them, there was no easy way for them to enter this Bubble without exposing their location to Leonel.

Well, there were ways... but the problem was that the worlds with access to such methods definitely passed the Gathering of Kingdoms with ease.

'But they're still not here yet, huh...?'

These small invasions, mostly from desperate worlds trying to cling onto a final hope, were definitely not what Leonel was waiting for.

"Hey, Anastasia. Do you think that it's possible to scan through everyone's affinities like you did their Innate Nodes back then?"

"Yes, I can do that," Anastasia replied.

"Sounds good. Can you find everyone with a strong enough Dream Force affinity to enter the Dream Pavilion?"

"Um... how much is that?"

Leonel smiled bitterly, then after a thought he waved a hand and formed a clone with his Emulation Spatial Force. After some more thought, he formed two more.

"Give me a breakdown of how many people exist that can meet these three standards."

Of these three, one was a bare minimum requirement and they should have a decent chance at reaching the Impetus State. The second had a good chance of at least making it a half-step from the Life State, and the third was a bit ridiculous and was at least about 80% of his own talent.

Leonel went about his business as Anastasia began her scan. It should be faster in these Complete Worlds as there was less empty space to move through compared to Incomplete Worlds.

As expected, it only took a few hours for Anastasia to come back with an answer.

"There are 1273 of the first time, 13 of the second, and one of the last."

Leonel froze. "That many?"

What he was the most surprised about was that there was actually a person with 80% of his talent. Well, 80% of his talent in Dream Force. That was absolutely ridiculous.

"Show me them," Leonel said.

He didn't need to worry about the gap between himself and Anastasia in terms of mental capacity at this point, because a number of just over a thousand wasn't enough to shake him.

He took it in with absolute ease, but he was surprised when he saw who this person with 80% of his Dream Force talent was...

It was a woman, and a woman that he had met already at that. It was none other than Cindra, one of the Slayer Legion Generals and the woman who seemed a little too interested in Aina's father.

'But she doesn't use Dream Force at all...'

It was then Leonel understood.

Even he, who had a great Dream Force affinity, started off using Soul Force alone. It wasn't until he went to a recruiting city of Valiant Heart Mountain that he was able to swap his Soul Force for Dream Force...

But how many dared to do so? Unless you had another Dream Force expert to check your talent without the potential risk, who would gamble with losing their minds to check their Dream Force affinity.

Plus, considering there were trillions of humans, wasn't this number actually pitifully few?

'That woman used Light Force as well if I recall correctly... Is that a coincidence?'

A smile spread across Leonel's lips. This was much better news. If his conjecture was correct, this would be very useful.

"Anastasia, scan the Demons as well. They're already stuck in the same boat as us, might as well make use of it."

"Gotcha."

Leonel shot into the distance. It seemed it was time for him to do some more kidnappi-recruiting.

Chapter 2638: Odd

Cindra frowned when she saw the crystal Leonel was handing to her.

First, she was in shock that this boy found her at all. After the Slayer Legion dispersed, the commanders were the only ones who hadn't followed into the Segmented Cube along with Leonel. Obviously, this was because they didn't really want to put their lives in the hands of Leonel.

This left Cindra feeling a bit... conflicted. It was a cop-out, honestly. They were willing to trust him with the lives of all of those people, but not their own? It went to show that the Slayer Legion had already become too used to leading... it was a familiar symptom of power. Eventually, the corruption would seep in.

Of course, things weren't so exaggerated. But if there really came a day where the Slayer Legion was victorious, wouldn't things go very wrong, very quickly?

"I'm not a Dream Force expert," she said lightly.

"You just don't think you are. But I can sense it in you."

Now that he was looking for it, not to mention the fact his Dream Force had raised to a new level, Leonel was certain that Anastasia was correct.

His "80%" metric was a bit crude, and it would be hard to tell for a while if Cindra really had that amount of potential or not. But what was certain was that her talent in Dream Force was extraordinary.

She hesitated for a moment. She felt that Leonel likely wasn't lying to her... but she found it difficult to just trust him.

Just the fact he had found her in this vast world meant that they had never really left his range of influence. Could it be the reason he never cared to stop them was because he knew that he could find them again whenever he needed to? That was quite a scary thought.

Leonel tilted his head to the side before retracting his hand.

Cindra frowned. "What-?"

"Let's spar," Leonel suddenly said.

"Huh?"

Cindra was speechless. What's all that supposed to mean?

"Well, you think I'm trying to trick you, no? Won't it be easy to tell after a spar?"

Leonel's smile suddenly made Cindra feel a bit annoyed. Clearly, he was saying that he didn't have to trick her because he was so much more powerful to begin with.

Ultimately, she was just in the Eighth Dimension, and this should mean a lot... especially when her enemy was just in the Fifth. But there was something about Leonel that left her feeling particularly... uneasy.

Cindra sighed. "There's no need for that. I saw Aina's battle, I know that she's very powerful."

"That's neither here nor there," Leonel smiled, "for all you know I'm doing this behind her back and could just be trying to get one over on you, right?"

"Alright, you don't have to humiliate me. I get it," Cindra shook her head and reached out a hand for the Dream Force Crystal.

Leonel chuckled and brought out the Dream Force Crystal. He couldn't help but remember the overly cautious Eamon at that moment...

He wasn't trying to humiliate Cindra, but he just wanted to remind her that her reservations were silly. He really didn't need to go so far to trick her, and if he just wanted to influence her with Dream Force, he could just do it with his own, he certainly didn't need to use a Dream Force Crystal as a proxy.

What Leonel didn't realize just yet was how accurate his deductions were. Cindra was, indeed, the one that had guided Eamon, and the latter had clearly been influenced by her caution as well.

BOOM!

A silvery fog erupted from Cindra. It moved so violently that it pierced a pillar into the skies high above.

Leonel grinned before his expression suddenly changed.

"Shit."

Leonel's own aura erupted, and just as Cindra's own was about to reach a new realm, he placed a hand on her shoulder and pulled her into the Segmented Cube.

Cindra was too distracted to fight back against the sudden change. Much like Leonel in the past, memories of her entire life surfaced one after another, from the day she was born to the present. She didn't have any wherewithal about her because her mind was entirely pulled in by these thoughts and memories.

Then, at that moment, high in the skies, the outline of a familiar owl formed, a call that sounded akin to the phoenix's of myth and legend peeling across the skies like a bright spark of lightning.

Leonel exhaled a breath and shook his head. That was close... too close.

He just hadn't expected for the awakening of Cindra's Lineage Factor to be so... violent.

Honestly, it was hard to remember his own because he had been lost in meditation at the time as well.

Clearly, though, this was on a completely different level.

In the Dimensional Verse, the Snowy Star Owl was just a "mere" Sixth Dimensional Lineage Factor. But clearly, in Complete Worlds, this title held much more weight than it seemed.

This made sense. The Forces in these Complete Worlds were on an entirely different level and the Dimensions held entirely different weights.

Wasn't even El'Rion just in the Fifth Dimension? But how much strength did he have? Clearly, a Dimension could mean vastly different things to vastly different people.

But it wasn't just that... Cindra's Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor felt different from his own. It was still about its completeness, but it also felt more... natural than his own. Almost as though she was naturally born to wield this Lineage Factor while he was not.

'That's odd...' Leonel thought. 'I bet the Life Tablet will have an explanation for that-'

As Leonel was about to send his mind into the Life Tablet to unearth the answers he wanted, Cindra's gaze slowly cleared. When she looked around and realized she didn't recognize her surroundings, she immediately looked toward Leonel with an accusatory glance.

"You-"

She was speaking when she suddenly attacked.

Chapter 2639: Lesser

Leonel was speechless. This woman was so crafty, but did she have to be so paranoid at the same time? He could understand her feelings. He had taken her into the Segmented Cube in order to hide the manifestation of her Lineage Factor. It was impossible to tell what kind of trouble it would cause if this commotion was sensed by someone who knew what it actually meant. But from her perspective, it looked like he had taken advantage of her distraction to bring her into the very world she had been trying to avoid all this time.

'Fast,' Leonel's pupils constricted.

His thoughts immediately went to using Anastasia to suppress this woman. It would be easy. In this world, he was invincible so long as Anastasia stood on his side.

Even if he didn't use Anastasia, as a person with the Northern Star Lineage Factor, it should be easy for Leonel to use the Life Tablet to subdue her as well.

But he didn't for two reasons.

The lesser of the two reasons was that he didn't want to sour their relationship. Obviously, using such means would make her think the worst of him.

However, this was the lesser for a reason. He felt that if he restrained her, he could explain what was happening quite simply and she was smart enough to accept it.

The real reason he didn't stop her was because he was fascinated. She had only just awakened the Lineage and she didn't even have the supporting techniques for it... So how come she was suddenly so much more powerful?

Her fist appeared before Leonel in a blur of Light Force. It was so fast that it felt like she had cut through space itself, bending the laws of causality and bearing down on him.

Cindra's thought process was quite simple. She knew that Leonel likely had great control over this world, so she wanted to catch him off guard and restrain him so that she would gain the upper hand again.

Unfortunately for her, Leonel's thinking speed was still far beyond her own, at least for now. He had already thought through her intentions and the only reason she was still standing was because of his curiosity.

In a blur, the two figures exchanged hundreds of blows, Leonel being on the back foot for much of the exchange.

They slid onto the surface of the vast ocean waters, their movements kicking up currents and forming tides.

The Cleansing Waters licked against Cindra's ankles, and to Leonel's astonishment, they began to pull away at the impurities in her body.

Cindra's strength was getting better and better under its influence. She was so focused on dealing with Leonel that she didn't even seem to notice.

Leonel blocked a blow with his elbows and countered with a fist to her chest. Cindra's body blurred and she appeared to his side, a vicious roundhouse kick lashing out against his chest.

Leonel's steps pivoted rather than taking a step back. He blocked the wind slicing kick with a shoulder check and braced himself, his core tightening as he unleashed a furious uppercut into Cindra's liver.

A flash of Light Force rippled, mixing in with the Cleansing Waters and illuminating them as though gorgeous rays of the sun.

The light covered her body and explosively retreated, but not before Leonel's knuckles barely managed to graze them.

Cindra's protective coating shattered, sending sparkling shards of glass falling into the water. Her feet smashed down into the water, forming a massive chasm as she erupted forward.

The two figures clashed once again, the furious cascade of strikes sending out shockwaves into the air. They weaved in and out of clashes, the wind seemingly imploding and the clouds above dispersing beneath their might.

A vortex of water formed beneath every one of their strikes, pillars of glistening geysers flying into the skies with every cacophonous boom.

Leonel's laughter peeled through the skies, three quick fists layering atop of one another and echoing with sonic booms as they ripped through the skies.

Cindra stumbled backward. The feeling of her life being in danger erupted in her mind like an explosion of magma. The heat pooled through her veins and her heart leapt out from her chest.

Familiar, gorgeous white scales erupted across her body as a pair of wings spread from her back. Golden runes danced within these white scales and her hair became a long river of pearly whites and shimmering golds.

This time, when she pressed off against the water, the ocean seemed to separate in two and she appeared before Leonel so fast that rather than a teleportation, it felt more like the very world had shrunk at her command.

An idea came to Leonel's mind as a strike of lightning linked in his Dreamscape.

His own Light Force flourished, several mirrors appearing in the skies under the might of his Emulation Spatial Force.

The world whined and buckled as Leonel vanished.

BANG!

In Leonel's place, a mirror was shattered beneath Cindra's fist, but he had already appeared in another high in the skies, a wide smile on his face.

Cindra tried to move toward the new Leonel, but he had already appeared in another mirror, smashing a fist against her back.

Cindra moved, aiming for where the last Leonel had been, but he had already appeared to her back again, smashing out another fist.

The barrages were continuous and came from all sides. Cindra couldn't even read or react, her mind becoming overwhelmed by the influx of information as though Leonel's speed alone was suppressing her thoughts.

She suddenly unleashed a roar, finally catching a hold of Leonel. She watched as his fist came toward her, her eyes locked onto him.

She erupted with all her might, wanting to severely injure him...

When a tap suddenly came to her back.

Cindra froze, feeling the hand on her shoulder. Her strike obliterated the mirror, but once again, there was no Leonel.

A chuckle came from behind her. "Alright, that was fun, but I think that's enough, right?"

Chapter 2640: Relativity

Cindra trembled. She had no idea when he got behind her like that.

"You... how did you do that?"

She had studied Light Force with everything she had all her life. Even amongst Ninth Dimensional experts, she had never seen someone with better mastery over it than her.

It was ironic for her to say this considering her Light Force wasn't in the Impetus State yet, but she really felt that everyone else was too inferior...

Until now.

What Leonel had done just now was clearly an exceptionally high level of application to Life Force, and somehow... she also felt that he had just done it on a whim, like it was something he had just come up with.

She didn't know where that feeling was coming from at first, but then she suddenly got it. It was her Dream Force... her Dream Force was helping her read some of Leonel's intentions.

But how was her Dream Force state so high already? Hadn't she just awakened it?

"I have you to thank, actually. Your application of Light Force is quite unique, it gave me some ideas. I can give you the method if you want, but I cheated a bit. Though it's possible to do what I just did with Light Force alone, I made it easier on myself by using Emulation Spatial Force as well."

"Ah, can you please tell me?"

Cindra's eyes suddenly lit up and Leonel chuckled. She was, indeed, a lot like Eamon. The main difference was that Eamon acted this way toward Crafting and she, instead, seemed obsessed with Light Force.

At the same time, though, Leonel found her to be fascinating. Her Light Force was, indeed, not in the Impetus State. But for some reason, her application of it dwarfed his own.

Of course, technically speaking, Leonel never grew his Light Force to the Life State. Instead, he had grown his Scarlet Star Force to the Life State.

Even so, it had to be remembered that while Scarlet Star Force was a top one Fire Force, it was likewise was a top three Light Force and a top ten Star Force. That meant there was no way it was just normal for Cindra to be beyond him in this way.

Well... at least she had been until Leonel took a bit of advantage from her and raised his usage creativity to a new level.

"Sure. It's just a matter of relativity. Light is the most unique thing in the world as it can force even Time to be relative. The faster you move, the slower time around you is in relation to everyone else."

A blank look came from Cindra.

"Eh..." Leonel stopped speaking then sighed. It seemed that people in this world didn't know anything about the theory of relativity. He had just assumed they would since so many other things from Earth appeared here in one form or another.

Technically speaking, these theories should be easier for these people to unearth, not harder. After all, Einstein had to just imagine what it might be like to approach light speed, but these people could actually do it.

'Hm... maybe that's not exactly true. The stronger the world is, the more different the laws of physics are as well. Someone who can travel at light speed in a Third Dimensional world wouldn't necessarily be able to do it in a Fourth Dimensional World.'

As Leonel was lost in thought, a light bulb seemed to have gone off in Cindra's own.

"Ah!" She exclaimed. "I understand!"

She suddenly vanished from Leonel's sight and started zipping around. Suddenly she seemed to break past a barrier and her movements became more irregular. She suddenly began to appear and vanish on a whim, even to the point several copies of her appeared everywhere.

BOOM!

A rippling light came out from her as her Light Force stepped into the Impetus State.

Leonel pursed his lips. "Not bad..."

His thoughts were pretty simple. The theory of relativity was based on the fact that light speed was constant and could never be stacked, slowed or sped up. Even if you ran with a flashlight in your hand, the light coming out from it wouldn't gain your additional speed.

However, for that to be true, time itself had to be relative to light so that any third party observer watching this scene wouldn't suddenly combust beneath a paradox.

Well, that wouldn't actually happen, but Leonel chuckled to himself when he thought of it the first time. It was what had always helped him to grasp the concept.

This usage of Light Force was essentially that. Taking advantage of relativity to warp the perception of the same third party observer.

Essentially, this would force time to slow down for the person observing you so that the laws of the universe didn't collapse.

It was harder to do with just Light Force alone, but when you stacked Spatial Force with it, especially when there was some Dream Force incorporated, it could make you a monster in a small region.

Of course, it would be even more powerful if Leonel used [Universe] with it.

BOOM!

'Hm?' Leonel looked up somewhat speechlessly. 'Did she just enter the Middle Im-'

BOOM!

Leonel laughed. The only other person he had ever seen capable of having so many consecutive breakthroughs, other than himself, was Aina. It seemed they had really found a diamond in the rough.

'In that case, shouldn't I ask Anastasia to try and find some greater talents in general-'

Leonel's eyes suddenly narrowed as a message came from Anastasia.

"Anastasia, please do me a favor and explain to Cindra what's going on."

"Okay," a sweet voice replied.

Leonel left the Segmented Cube to find that the Bubble World had shattered again.

Aina zipped by and landed next to him.

"How did it go?" Leonel asked.

"A lot of them were happy to get out of their situations," Aina said. "They've lost a lot in the chaos. And you?"

"Cindra was a bit harder to convince, but I think it's fine now."

"Is this what you were waiting for?" Aina asked, changing the subject.

Leonel looked up. The Gathering Stele was finally beginning to fade away and that seemed to signal it.

BANG!

Leonel exhaled. "I guess so."

High in the skies, a furious Nomad appeared. They were five meters tall and their floating hands were each ten meters from palm to finger. He looked like a true deity.

These Nomads were clearly on an entirely different level, and that was because they had a Dream Pavilion. In fact, it was a Dream Pavilion Leonel recognized quite well...

The Gem Dream Pavilion. The fourth participant of the True Dream World Challenge Sequence.

It seems they had come to collect the debt Leonel owed them for slaughtering all of their experts.