

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2771: Paralysis

The Emberheart Lord wasn't sure of what to do, this was horrible. What would that person do if they believed this? No, was that person stupid enough to do so? They could easily check the internal workings of the Spirituals and find out such a large secret, they certainly wouldn't make such a mistake. If they "fell for it", they would do so on purpose.

Did the Dwarven Race know that? No, how could the Dwarven Race even do this in the first place? Were they enraged that the world wasn't giving them the credit they deserved for the Gathering of Minds? But this didn't seem to be in-line with their character.

'Wait, was this done by that person?'

A cold sweat poured down the Emberheart Lord's back.

While it was true that the slandering of the Human Race was ordered by that person, using it as an excuse to bring the two Pure Blood Bloodlines together and finally become a Demi-God Race was their idea alone.

Was this the means that person was using to counter this? After all, Lyra's marriage to the Moonstone Lord's son was a fairly large part of the original plan as well.

Was the Dream Asura onto them? Were they dissatisfied with their actions?

The thoughts paralyzed the Emberheart Lord and he didn't know what to do.

If he went out into the world and told everyone that this Lyra was fake, would he be offending that person? And if they did so, could they even bear the consequences?

And even if this wasn't the case, wouldn't this outright offend the Dwarven Race?

This didn't seem to matter because this was clearly an open sign of provocation on their part...

But was it?

Who was to say that the Dwarven Race wasn't being tricked by someone else? He had gotten news that the Cloud Race was pressuring the Dwarven Race a great deal for the sake of their Blueprints. Was this part of their plan?

The number of thoughts truly paralyzed the Emberheart Lord.

Sometimes, being too intelligent was a handicap of its own. He had thought of many things most wouldn't even see through on the surface, and he had no idea that he was playing right into Leonel's palms by doing so.

This kind of paralysis of choice was exactly what Leonel wanted to do.

This sort of game was truly the most fun to play.

...

Flaura sat up in her chair, her gaze flickering as she read the report.

How could she not be paying attention to what was happening? As far as she was concerned, this was a little interlude. They would push the Dwarven Race into the eye of the storm and conveniently use them to springboard back to the top 300. But this... was far out of her expectations.

'Someone is playing on my board.'

She finally seemed to realize that there was someone else playing in her arena, but she had no idea who it was. The more she thought about it, the more she felt like she was running around in circles.

This feeling... she didn't like it at all.

Why did it feel like she was slowly losing control?

...

Leonel looked at the challenges. Unfortunately, right now, since he was playing the role of Aerin he had to be more soft-spoken and careful with his actions.

Many had thought of the potential that Aina was in disguise, but no one could have guessed that it wasn't just one of them, but both of them. And what the Dream Asura nor Lyra's father knew was that he was probably the biggest trap here.

'Interesting,' Leonel smiled inwardly. 'Seems I finally have some luck on my side.'

He picked one and then looked at Aina. He gave her hand a squeeze and then let it go.

Aina knew that Leonel wasn't doing this because he was worried about her, nor was he just trying to be needlessly intimate. The point was to show the world that they were more than just friends. Just these subtle actions alone were more than enough.

With a flash, Aina disappeared into a one on one challenge and Leonel took a seat and closed his eyes in meditation, ignoring the Patriarch.

...

Aina appeared on a large translucent game board. It looked like a constellation, somewhat, and every cross was filled with a complex partial array.

It was a half-complete game of Portal.

This was certainly the twist of the challenge. Originally, it should have just been a game, but it turned into a game that had already started. Depending on several factors, that could easily leave them either at an advantage or a severe disadvantage.

The two were on opposite sides of the board. Aina was given the white pieces and the man with blooming hands was given the black. Almost immediately, the two began checking over the board, but what the man didn't expect was that Aina would move almost instantly.

She landed on a point and the portal swirled to life. The pieces moved and shifted, and the man found himself moving out of his control.

Aina continued to move, her movements quick and agile. From an outsider's perspective, you would have never thought that she was being controlled by someone else, her understanding of her own body was simply immaculate.

She moved again and again, seemingly never needing the man to make a move of his own first.

And that was the fearsome part about Portal. Who went next was based on the relative number of pieces on the board. Whoever had less pieces would go.

That meant that if you could control the portals to carefully sacrifice your own and the opponent's at the same time, while maintaining a tailing position, you could continuously move, putting yourself in a more and more advantageous situation.

Usually, this couldn't happen until mid-game. But because the game was partially completed, Aina and Leonel could immediately take advantage.

The man swiftly felt a sense of helplessness. He simply couldn't calculate fast enough.

He could only kill.

His aura soared.

Chapter 2772: Shredded

Morgok balled up his fists and attacked with a furious momentum. His Hands of God fell down like a rain of meteors, suffocating Aina from all sides.

Aina didn't even look up. Just as they were about to land, she activated another portal and vanished.

The Hands of God landed with a furious momentum, but right then there was an equally as furious backlash. They were almost shredded to pieces and Morgok was forced to teleport them back toward him through space, displaying an ability he hadn't wanted to show so early on practically immediately.

His face twisted with displeasure, but there was nothing he could do. He turned his attention toward his Hands of God, seeing that they were in a sorry state. On one of them, he could see as deep as bone. The others were still fine because the first was enough of a lesson for him to retreat with the others.

He already knew that the Portal board wouldn't just allow him to attack it, there would certainly be a price to pay as a result. It was just that he thought he could crush Lyra, or rather Aina, before that happened.

He had no idea how he was so wrong.

He knew the limits of Lyra's skill, so when had she become such a problem?

Aina didn't even look up, she had absolute confidence in Leonel. It was a confidence that had taken them many years of hardship to build between one another, the likes of the Gods couldn't break that trust apart, let alone the Nomads.

The situation on the board kept rapidly changing. Pieces disappeared and separated again and again, sometimes they would change location, and sometimes they would be sent to the graveyard of sorts, sacrificed for the sake of it remaining Aina's turn.

The more this occurred, the more Morgok's expression changed. He didn't really understand what was going on.

There was only so much that Aina could accomplish by doing this. Sure, she was getting a larger and larger advantage, but the fewer pieces there were on the board, the more chances that Morgok would have to reverse the situation.

The game of Go ended when both players consecutively gave up on a turn. In Portal, the rules were the exact same. Essentially, if there were still places to play, then the game would continue. And just by virtue of what Aina was doing, she was constantly creating more and more spaces to play. You could never end the game using this strategy.

Suddenly, Aina came to a stop and flicked out a hand. Three pieces soared through the air and landed in various locations.

Finally, they had an even number of pieces on the board and Morgok could go.

A fierce expression appeared on Morgok's face as he began a counter attack. He was infuriated by what had just happened, it was time for him to show his true prowess.

Aina might be winning now, but that was purely because he hadn't gotten a chance to go. Now, everything would change.

He quickly began to make his moves and the landscape began to change. Those watching frowned, realizing that Morgok was indeed getting the advantage back. Had Lyra made a mistake?

They played back and forth until Morgok suddenly caught an advantage and took three turns in quick succession.

The situation on the board changed once more and it looked as though Aina was backed into a corner, both figuratively and literally.

Because they were literally on the board, they had to be careful of any schemes their opponent was playing. For Aina, who was much weaker than Morgok, she had to maintain a distance at all times, especially when it was Morgok's turn. That was because during Morgok's turn, she couldn't use the Portals to escape. In fact, Morgok could use the Portals to bring her to him if she wasn't careful.

Due to this, Aina could only step on the Portals that Morgok didn't have immediate control over. Unfortunately, the number that could fall into this category was growing

smaller and smaller. As a result, she was quite literally now stuck in a corner of the board, unable to move forward because she was surrounded by antagonistic squares.

A sinister light flashed in Morgok's eyes as he stepped forward.

Suddenly, Aina only had one move to make, but the problem was twofold.

If she made the winning move, the one that gave her a chance to change the situation in a few more exchanges, she would fall right into Morgok's trap and teleport toward him.

If she made the losing move just to protect herself... well, it would be the losing move. On top of that, it was just a delay tactic. The next turn, she would be right back in the same exact situation, and this time her hand would be forced.

As expected, Aina seemed to see through this. This was the only chance she had.

She quickly made the winning move and Morgok flashed an ugly grin.

His Hands of God had returned to their blossoming form before, but now they exploded into action, appearing above Aina and smashing down.

There was nowhere left to go and their pieces were even. Unless she survived this, she was finished.

But that was when something absolutely shocking happened.

A spatial fluctuation made Morgok's expression change. The last thing he saw was Aina's indifferent expression. She didn't even gaze at the hand above her, looking at him as though she was staring at an ant.

Was this really the Spiritual Princess?

This was the last thought he had before he was shredded to pieces, leaving mere droplets of blood where there had once been a whole person.

The world fell into silence.

One moment, they were playing a game, and in the next, one of them had died a terrible death. How the hell had this happened?

Patriarch Khafra's expression turned the ugliest shade of purple, his aura rippling out in waves.

Chapter 2773: Pieces

Lyra, or rather Aina, appeared by Aerin's, or Leonel's side. They looked forward without a word, seemingly having already expected this outcome.

When Patriarch Khafra finally deduced what happened, he stumbled back. Was the Spiritual Race's Princess always such a monster? That was impossible.

He realized what happened now.

Aina, or rather Leonel, didn't set up the board for the sake of victory. The entire time, he was manipulating combinations of Force Arts to get his desired effect.

But first he needed to run a test, and that test was precisely Morgok's first attack. Everything had hinged on the Nomad Race's ability to teleport their Hands of God through space. Who would have thought that this ability the strongest of them took pride in, would be used against them like this?

Ultimately, in order to be able to create an instant teleportation like this, there was a constant connection that needed to be maintained between the floating hands and the person using them.

Space was a very dangerous thing. If there was an error in a teleportation platform, not only could you not make it to the other side, but you could end up stretched across millions of miles, your body crushed into atoms.

Leonel's idea was simple. What if he put the teleportation of Morgok's hands and the Portals in conflict? Just the slightest tug on either side could end up destroying everything, including Morgok.

But this was far easier said than done.

For one, he had to lock onto the exact frequency of Morgok's personal spatial control. Then, he needed to not only create a Portal that could perfectly counter that, but he had to do so in a way that not only forced Morgok to attack a particular square, but hid his real intentions while it seemed like he was just playing the game normally.

Just nailing one of these factors was impossibly difficult. Nailing all of them at once was more than just a stroke of genius, it was impossibly monstrous, to the point that Patriarch Khafra thought he was dreaming.

Could he even do this?

No matter how he spun the problem in his mind... he knew that he couldn't.

Deciphering what the two had done was one thing, but actually doing it was a different matter entirely. Back on Earth, there were thousands of people that could dissect a game of chess, but there were only a few dozen who could play a game of the highest caliber.

Patriarch Khafra felt his heart beating out of his chest. Did they make a mistake here? What was happening?

Unfortunately for him, it was already too late. Leonel didn't even give him a chance to consider his option. He directly chose the next challenge and they both vanished.

Patriarch Khafra and Leonel stood across from one another. The latter was calm, but the Patriarch, on the other hand, still hadn't quite recovered.

From his experience, he knew that he had to calm down. With his mind in this state, it was too easy for a Dream Force expert to take advantage of him.

But understanding was one thing, actually executing was another matter entirely.

It could be said that Leonel had killed two birds with a single stone. Whether Patriarch Khafra wanted it or not, his mind was practically puddy in Leonel's hands now.

At that moment, the world shook and numerous beasts began to appear.

This challenge wasn't much unlike the first time Leonel faced off against Patriarch Khafra. It was all about defeating beasts.

They both stood on opposite ends of a long corridor. Between them and the middle stood nine sections. Each section held a different Dream Beast of various levels of Strength.

Whoever made it to the center first would be the winner of this round. It was that simple.

Logically speaking, Patriarch Khafra should crush Aerin in this challenge, he knew that. He had seen the other challenges there, and this was the last one that he thought Leonel would pick.

But it was precisely because of that that his mind was so shaken.

Just what... just what was happening?

DING!

Patriarch Khafra's heart shook. He had been watching the entire time... but how had Aerin crushed the first beast with such speed?

A Snowy Star Owl flapped its wings and lunged at Patriarch Khafra, obscuring his vision to the other side.

DING!

Patriarch Khafra was flustered as he struck out with a palm, only to hit empty air. A slash of wing crossed his chest like a scythe, but it couldn't draw blood. The creature was far weaker than himself, so how could it?

DING!

DING!

DING!

Every second that ticked by, every sound that echoed shook Patriarch Khafra to his very core. He was shocked beyond belief. By the sixth DING! he could feel the real horror settling in.

Was he going to die here?

He didn't know why the thought came to his mind. He was so much stronger than these creatures, this Dwarven Prince was no match for him.

He tried to comfort himself, saying that it had to be that the Spirituals were just hiding a genius, it couldn't be that they would both have such a shocking performance, right? That was impossible.

DING!

DING!

DING!

The despair truly set in. That was the ninth. Aerin had won.

DING! Patriarch Khafra's eyes opened wide. He could feel his mind collapsing. He felt that he had offended someone he shouldn't have, but he couldn't remember who it was, he couldn't grasp it.

He had killed too many people, ruined the lives of too many families, he couldn't possibly remember them all.

DING!

DING!

DING!

The sounds kept getting closer and closer until he saw those eyes.

18 beasts stood around him, bearing down with menace.

It was when he looked into that gaze that his mind truly collapsed.

Even if the face was different, he remembered those eyes.

The entire time Lyra was inside the challenge, he had had his eyes closed. Wasn't that identical to how Leonel had been acting when Aina appeared?

He looked down toward Aerin's finger, looking for a marriage bond.

But he was out of luck.

Patriarch Khafra was shredded to pieces.