

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 3021: CLATTER. CLATTER. DOOM.

The world seemed to be overturned. The clouds became rolling waves, the winds rose and fell like tsunamis, and a violent violet aura painted it all, masking it in a majesty that made few want to oppose it.

The enormous golden figure of Leonel began to shrink. The gold condensed into a purple-gold that reflected the lights of the world. However, it didn't look like anything remotely human. Though it was humanoid, there was nothing else...

The only ones who understood what was going on were those with sharp enough visions. They understood that the reason Leonel looked more like a solid violet-gold statue than a human right now was because [Instant Recovery] had suddenly reached a new level at the same time that the requirements for Leonel's body had skyrocketed.

Leonel's constitution had reached a new tier entirely, and because of that, the energy required had touched a truly unfathomable level... A level only possible for the greatest geniuses to ever step foot into the world.

The first time Leonel's Dream Asura constitution awakened, he cleared floors the best Seventh Dimensional powerhouses of the Void Tower should have been capable of as a mere Fifth Dimensional existence.

The second time Leonel's Dream Asura constitution awakened, he was only in the Sixth Dimension, but he wiped out entire Domains of people with casual waves of his hand. By that point, despite the fact his foundation was shoddy, that he had only been born in an Incomplete World, he had a strength that could match the Ninth Dimensional experts of true Complete Worlds.

Now, Leonel was entirely different. He seemed to still be in the Sixth Dimension, but comparing the him of then to the him of now would be nothing short of foolish. Even if there were trillions of his past self, all working together, they wouldn't stand a single battle with his current self.

The power he had displayed back then was without a single Impetus State Force, it was without a single Incomplete World fused, it was without his Destruction World, without his father's [Final Destruction] technique, without an adequate comprehension of [Dimensional Cleanse], and most importantly...

Without the capability of even accessing the full range of his abilities.

Every time Leonel used his Dream Asura constitution in the past, he had an inability to remember what happened because his non-enlightened self didn't have the mental capacity to keep up with even a fraction of a second of thought from his enlightened self.

On top of that, the constitution wasn't his own. It was like play putty in the hands of the Demoness, so she could turn it on and off at will. And by virtue of allowing her to do this, the constitution didn't truly accept that it was Leonel's.

But now, things were different.

Originally, if not for the machinations of the Demoness, Leonel would have been born with his Dream Asura bloodline intact. Maybe he would have had some scales and horns, maybe that would have only appeared after a transformation. But regardless, it would have been his.

It could be said that this moment was a long time coming. Leonel truly didn't want to have to use this, it was why he had waited so long. He had made a promise, and... he knew exactly how this would end.

But that voice in his head was correct. Of course, that voice wasn't truly some other existence. It was himself.

Leonel had long reached the state of perfect tranquility. Even the Demoness couldn't control him, let alone some dark voice in the back of his head.

Still, if he allowed his pride to get in the way of doing what needed to be done, consequences be damned, then he would truly still be the same Leonel of the past, more interested in his ego than actually keeping the people around him alive.

His brothers had died too many times for him, his wife had died right before his eyes, his father had sacrificed everything he had for his sake...

Why was he the only one that couldn't sacrifice anything? Why was he the only one always so obsessed with the perfect victory that he was unwilling to take a step back?

CRACK.

The statue of violet gold rippled and cracks began to appear on its surface. It fractured like an egg and blinding violet lights pooled out of it.

BANG!

The fragments flew out in all directions in an uncontrolled spiral, revealing Leonel's form beneath.

A hollow wind swept by and the world turned to silence.

Leonel stood there without a word. Standing at over five meters tall, his muscles rippled with a dense air. Every time his heart beat, an echo would rock the space nearly to the point of shattering.

Violet scales dotted his body and a pair of horns that pierced toward the skies graced his forehead.

Leonel had always been a somewhat handsome man, but he had never been handsome to the point of turning heads and entrapping women... at least not when his temperament and arrogance were ignored.

But right now, it could only be said that he had climbed to the top of what it meant to be an ideal man. Every muscle was perfectly placed, his jaw was sharp, his eyes were lofty... and the demonic air around him was simply suffocating to an extreme.

A long river of violet hair danced to his back and his pale violet eyes had darkened considerably, almost looking like deep, amethyst gems sparkling and reflecting light.

However, other than this, nothing else seemed to have changed at all. He was still in the Sixth Dimension, his Divine Armor was still the same, he didn't have any new insights or breakthroughs...

There didn't seem to be anything separating him from any other absolute genius of the God Realm who was also in the Sixth Dimension. In the eyes of many, maybe this was only enough to place him among the top three talents of each individual God Race.

How could this change anything?

Chapter 3022: Dangerous

Leonel stood there, looking down at the Primordial Terror. He waved a hand, and particles of light seemed to gather, forming a casual pair of sweatpants to protect his decency.

He seemed unhurried and unbothered by anything, but under everyone's eyes, the cracked Destruction World below healed itself and solidified.

The Primordial Terror's eyes narrowed, but he truly couldn't feel any threat coming from Leonel. Leonel had definitely grown more powerful, but he had also lost the support of

the infinite energy that [Instant Recovery] provided to him. On top of that, it seemed like Blackstar and Drake were all out of gas. They had been supporting him for too long, and right now, they found that supporting the current Leonel took too much out of them for them to continue.

Blackstar had appeared in Aina's arms at some unknown time, and Drake, pale-faced and gritting his teeth, could only do his best to continue supporting Joel and the others.

It was difficult to see how anything had changed at all.

And yet, no one had moved even until now. Instincts honed through countless years of battle had been ingrained into their very souls. Right now, even the likes of the arrogant Elysium felt himself walking a tightrope, gripping his sword hard.

Why did this Leonel feel so... Dangerous.

Leonel suddenly took his first breath. The wind whistled, the trees that had managed to survive the carnage swayed, and even the four battleships in the distance shook in the air, rumbling from side to side as though they might collapse from the skies at any moment.

Then, Leonel waved a hand. At that moment, a corpse that seemed formed out of countless shadowy tails appeared, dangling in the skies.

He looked at it casually. This was none other than the Shadow Tail that he had used the destruction of the [Dimensional Cleanse] trial world to kill.

It had been a great springboard for Blackstar and Kira in their training. But by now, it was already useless. It was entirely lifeless and contained nothing special within it at all.

"This thing is pretty special to you, isn't it?" Leonel asked, but it wasn't entirely clear who he was talking to. "You wanted to create something that could relieve you of your burdens and take up the mantle of Destruction for you, but you actually used such a stupid method.

"Passing down your essence to these creatures, creating the Envoys of Destruction and the Void Beast... You just ended up making yourself their Deity. This method would have never freed you."

The eyes of the Primordial Terror shook violently. Space cracked like streaks of black lightning around him, and several individuals in its own camp died directly, unable to withstand the pressure.

Leonel had only said a few casual words, and yet they had gotten down to the very root of his problem. It was a problem that even the Primordial Terror hadn't seen through. It had just ended up wallowing in its own misery.

Gods were existences that could gain power through being worshipped. It was why the likes of Evergreen and Zoltene had their own religions. It was just that... Only the weaker Gods cared to do such a thing. It was a method of shoring up the weaknesses of their Idols and hopefully creating something that could surpass their previous limits.

The Primordial Terror obviously had no need to do this, but it was only now he realized that he had inadvertently done exactly that.

"Idiot."

Leonel spat out a single word, and it cut the Primordial Terror down to the very core.

How could he possibly escape the fate of being a Destruction God Beast if all he did was create worshippers to his idol? In fact, he had managed to do it so well that he only felt like his power was increasing again and again these days, and it wasn't until Leonel pointed it out that he actually understood.

"I bet there was someone who suggested such a great idea to you, though. I wonder who that was."

Leonel's words continued to be casual without compare, but just as the Primordial Terror was feeling as though it had just been struck by lightning and was about to turn toward that purpose, Leonel suddenly acted.

He tossed the Shadow Tail Envoy out and pressed his hands together slowly. Time seemed to slow to a crawl, and in a BOOM, an enormous Natural Force Art appeared in a single instant of time.

"[Assimilate]."

Leonel spoke lightly, and the world churned. The beautiful violet-gold Natural Force Art was suddenly corrupted.

Everyone thought that Leonel was about to unleash a mighty attack...

But that wasn't what happened at all.

"[Emperor's Edict]..."

Leonel continued to look forward with a dull, uninterested gaze. It was as though the world was no longer fun for him, no longer a challenge. Everything moved in slow motion because he thought too fast. Everyone felt too stupid to him because they had fallen for such obvious traps. Even the skies didn't feel nearly as bright as they should.

What was interesting about this world at all?

"Come."

It was a single word but true anarchy descended.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The Scorned Queen Beauty's expression changed and she opened her mouth to say something, but it was entirely drowned out.

Even she was an insignificant ant. No... she had always been.

One after another, the Envoys of Destruction began to appear in the skies.

The Shadow Tails.

The Dusky Steel Bats.

The Aurora Black Pandas.

The Crimson Clawed Apes.

The Death Pulse Deers.

There weren't many of them. The Shadow Tails had the largest contingent at about a dozen or so, but there were only three Death Pulse Deers.

"You know," Leonel said lightly, "in the past, I was hunted down by the ants of Evergreen because I killed one of her apostles. Do you know why Gods are so protective of them? I'll give you a hint. It's certainly not just a matter of face."

The Primordial Terror's expression changed, and for the first time, there was a hint of panic in its eyes.

"You're quite slow. I'll give you another hint... there's a reason why only the weakest Gods use such methods. It's because tying others, especially such weaklings, to your Idol...

"Is a recipe for disaster."

Leonel stood loftily in the skies.

"[Emperor's Edict]... Die."

The Life Tablet fluttered with life. With its appearance, the Envoys couldn't resist even if they wanted to.

Chapter 3023: Nothing More. Nothing Less.

The world bowed to Leonel's words. The Envoys felt their hearts convulse and then explode one after another. They tried to struggle, realizing that they hadn't been called here by a friend, but it was already too late. Leonel's mandate was like that of an Overlord God. Under the influence of Emperor's Edict and the Life Tablet, they folded.

Leonel took a step through the skies... or so it seemed. In reality, it looked as though the world moved around him the moment he raised up his foot.

"[Arise]."

In one motion he killed them, and in the next, he forced them to rise. Their life and death danced in the palm of his hands. The stores of his Dream Force were so vast and omnipresent now that something that would have been impossible in the past had become as easy as flipping over a hand to him.

Let alone a single Shan'Rae, he could have resurrected thousands of them. And these Envoys... they were nothing more than his playthings with the Life Tablet active.

Violet armored beasts began to appear one after another, and just as Leonel came to a stop, a Death Pulse Deer's head had just risen to meet his landing.

ROAR! ROAR! ROAR! The risen beasts roared to the skies, or so it seemed... But no matter which one it was, their eyes were locked onto Leonel with a look of absolute reverence.

The hearts of those in the surroundings overturned. They felt like they were watching a true monster rise up. Know Fear... Whether they liked it or not, that fear had already wormed into all of their hearts.

"Do you feel that weakness?" Leonel asked lightly, not caring for the reverence of the Envoys of Destruction. He was in an unprecedented state of calm.

"You..." The Primordial Terror shivered, but that action alone left it stunned. When was the last time it had felt so... cold?

"You don't understand it, right?" Leonel asked lightly. "Since you did me the service of wasting my time with your sob story, and even had the audacity to harm my wife, I don't mind letting you know just how much of a fool you are.

"You were trying to save your clansmen from following the same fate as you?" Leonel casually swept a glance through the hoard of Celestial Terras. Even now, they had yet to take action. From the beginning, since the Fallen God Beasts turned true God Beasts

appeared, the Celestial Terras had been on the sidelines. They acted lofty and untouchable... And Leonel didn't like that.

"It's unfortunate for you that whether you want them to or not, they have all the reverence in the world for you. Do you understand now?"

The Primordial Terror stumbled back. "No... Impossible."

"Very possible. In fact, it's the only truth. You're just too much of an idiot to see it. The only reason you didn't feel your strength plummeting as the Envoys of Destruction and Void God Beasts were killed one after another in that war was because your own Race was taking on the burden. You didn't notice because by that point, you had already suppressed your Race and told them to hide their sharpness. The strength that was shared between you was buried and sealed away by your own hands. How could you sense it?"

The Primordial Terror continued to tremble. All this time, it thought that it was the master of all, that it had control over everything, only to now realize that it had always been a puppet in the hands of another.

Leonel didn't seem eager to destroy the Primordial Terror despite the fact it seemed like it would be as easy as flipping over a palm for him.

"These things... They were your trump cards?" Leonel spoke lightly, his eyes landing on the Scorned Queen Beauty, Cynthia. "It's not bad, honestly. The fact you survived was a surprise to me. The fact you somehow managed to get your claws on a subordinate of mine is also pretty good. You must have put in a lot of effort. I have to thank you for bringing them here, or else even with my current strength, it would be a tall task to summon them all."

Cynthia trembled. Leonel's eyes were so bright, and yet they felt so dark, so cold. It was like she was staring into the maw of an apex predator.

A Crimson Clawed Ape by Leonel's side suddenly moved. It raised up a bent finger as though it was trying to casually point something out. And yet, by the time they reacted, it was already too late.

"No!" Goggles dove in the way before the Crimson Clawed Ape even finished. But it was precisely because he acted first that he even managed to react at all.

The beam of red was completely silent. Space didn't even so much as quiver, and yet reality bent around it. From a certain vantage point, although the ape had never moved, it was like it had just reached out and touched Goggles. And yet there was still the beam of red. It was something that those without enough strength couldn't even fathom.

Despite the power disparity between Goggles and the ape, it only left a small hole in his head, one that didn't even exit out the other side. It could only be said that this Crimson Clawed Ape's Force control was on another level entirely.

Goggles collapsed to the ground, and Leonel didn't seem to be surprised by the result at all.

He gave Cynthia a glance and then ignored her. Someone else would be coming to kill her. As for why Leonel wanted that, only he knew.

His glance, though, made it obvious to Cynthia that he had only aimed for her because he knew that Goggles would take action. Leonel didn't even see it fit to take personal action against such a person.

As far as he was concerned, Goggles' only use was for his own enlightenment, nothing more, nothing less.

Chapter 3024: Proud

Goggles' existence had awakened him to the reality of the world. Even if you could manage to control things perfectly and bring back a soul just the same, it was impossible for you to curate and control every single one of their experiences.

Goggles had always been a person who fell in love with those he shouldn't and devoted his whole heart to them. He had done it with the wife of another man, and now Cynthia managed to take advantage of it. The issue wasn't the flaw itself, but how it manifested. Goggles was almost practically the same person, and yet his experiences had caused him to go from the best of friends to the worst of enemies... and that was in the case that his soul actually survived. Leonel's father's soul hadn't survived. If Leonel wanted him back, he would have to reconstruct it entirely. At that point, how could this person even still be his father even if Leonel perfectly formed and curated every aspect? It didn't matter how much effort he put in, how powerful he was, or how dedicated he was. His father would never return. And he had accepted that. Velasco Morales had passed a torch to him, entrusting him with the future. That was the true heaviest burden he carried. So it was about time he took it up properly. The Envoys of Destruction suddenly moved and the armies in all directions were mowed down like grass. Leonel stood in the skies without the slightest care. Every time someone died, he casually spoke the words that sent a shudder down their very souls.

The Primordial Terror found itself getting weaker and weaker, but it couldn't even take action. Its mind was practically crumbling, and everything that it thought it wanted, everything it thought was real, was no longer.

Leonel clasped his hand behind his back, his gaze absent-minded. It didn't even seem like he cared about the result of the battle below. Aina found herself standing limbo, his brothers gasped for breath, but there were no longer any enemies around him. Even Nana found that the pressure coming from her fusion had almost vanished as she gritted her teeth to finish the last leg.

He was simply unbridled and entirely undefeatable. He didn't even lift a single finger, but the entire world was overturned by him. Soon, the army beneath him grew from dozens to hundreds, from dozens to thousands, from thousands to millions.

Know Fear. The strength the Emperor's Might Lineage Factor had never reached such a level. It was already something that the entire God Realm had feared, but now...

The Primordial Terror found itself hyperventilating. It was the creature that should have struck fear in others, and yet, right now...

Were the Dream Asuras really the true overlords of Existence? When had this Demon Race grown so powerful to have two such monsters?

The entirety of the Primordial Terror's army was wiped out. The only ones that remained were the Fallen God Beasts and his own Celestial Terra clan. But for whatever reason, Leonel didn't seem to care to target them either. Leonel appeared above the Primordial Terror, his gaze indifferent.

"In the end, the problem is that this world has too many stupid people. You have no one but yourself to blame for all of this. You let your despair overwhelm you, and it clouded everything.

"In another life, maybe I could empathize with you... but not in this one. At the very least, you can finally rest in peace now."

The Death Pulse Deer that Leonel stood on suddenly raised its antlers into the skies, and a large amount of Death Force began to gather. At some point, the Primordial Terror finally stopped trembling. It watched as the Envoys of Destruction began to gather up strength, and even as they sapped away more of his energy. Leonel was actually using what lingering connection they had to it to weaken it even further.

And yet, at this point, the Primordial Terror finally felt hints of peace in its eyes. Indeed... it was a fool. But at the very least, it would get its own happy ending. Finally... peace. The attacks descended, and the Primordial Terror was erased from the world. Its eyes dimmed, and a hole appeared in its forehead, blasting its Ethereal Glabella to pieces. The world fell silent. This young man had single-handedly wiped this army out... and he didn't even seem to feel like this was any sort of accomplishment at all. At that moment, a lithe figure, one with beauty beyond words, suddenly appeared, standing so close to Leonel that they were within arm's reach.

The Demoness looked up at Leonel, a hint of pride in her beautiful eyes. Right now, Leonel was over five meters tall, but she was only around two meters tall. Even so, she floated in the skies, gently reaching out and stroking Leonel's cheek as though she was truly a doting grandmother.

"You've done grandma proud," she said in a soft, sweet voice.

Leonel didn't respond, his gaze just as indifferent. The Demoness smiled. "Aren't you going to set your Envoys on me?"

Leonel once again didn't respond. Was there a point? The second Life Tablet of the Four Great Families was certainly with her. After having planned all of this out, this woman who had the entirety of Existence in her palms wouldn't possibly falter here.

The smile of the Demoness grew more gentle.

"Maybe in another life," she said softly. Her eyes watered slightly before they dried up, a subtle water vapor vanishing into the ether.

Her arm reached out and pierced through Leonel's chest. Slowly, she pulled out a heart larger than even her head. Without the cavity of Leonel's chest to protect it, every pump of this heart bent and twisted the space around it, shattering it into pieces. The tears in reality were so fierce that even the God Runes couldn't repair them.

The Demoness looked up at Leonel's indifferent face one more time. She rose up, gave him a kiss on the forehead, and then vanished.

Leonel stood there for a long while until the world began to swim. His scales faded, his body shrank, and he collapsed, falling like a meteor from above. His Dream Asura Bloodline had been completely stripped from him.

Chapter 3025: I'm Sorry

"Leonel!"

Aina's eyes opened wide, and she rushed forward. The distance between herself and Leonel was far too large. Even though it had felt like they were just within arm's reach before, the scale of the battle had been far too large. What was just a step for a God before was still far too much for the current Aina. She still had a lot of room for growth.

She could only watch as her husband hit the ground, an enormous dust cloud rising up into the skies as though a nuke had just been set off.

She rushed through the torrent of spinning, twisting dust clouds that battered against her skin like knives as though she couldn't feel them at all, rushing to Leonel's side.

By this point, the battlefield was filled with far too much trepidation to even move. The amount of fear that Leonel had burrowed into their very bone marrow was difficult for them to deal with. It was as though their feet were rooted in place and their bodies were out of their control as their souls fled.

Watching Leonel get his heart taken out of his chest didn't change any of that feeling at all. In fact, they were still under the impression that he could just stand up whenever he wanted.

It was only Aina, who was the most worried for him compared to anyone else, who immediately treated him no differently from any other human.

But it was also because of this fear and this feeling that Leonel was a monster that allowed him to escape the fate of others taking advantage of his situation... at least for now.

Aina skidded along the ground on her knees, coming to a stop by Leonel's side and hurriedly picking his neck up from the floor. Tears fell from her cheeks in a torrent, battering the ground with almost the same incessant pestering of rainfall.

She reached for the hole in his chest but didn't dare to touch it, her eyes flickering between a torrent of sadness and a fury that couldn't be suppressed. She was having a hard time suppressing her impulse to shatter and kill everything in sight.

Leonel's brothers rushed after Aina, but by this point, the Destruction World that had held out strong until now had also shattered.

Luckily, Leonel had long since wiped out all of the enemies that had come to support the Primordial Terror. And interestingly enough, those that he had spared—a number that mostly included the Fallen God Beasts—didn't immediately take action either. However, they seemed to be stopped by something that was more than just fear alone.

Leonel's eyes were dull and almost lifeless. There was just a small strand of what could be considered consciousness remaining.

Just now, his body felt like it had truly been stripped of everything. Although the Demoness had only taken his heart, his heart had long become the root of almost everything.

He had two Nodes in his heart, his Morales Lineage Factor, at least the evolved version, had once expanded his heart and took it to be a core of its being as well. He had even refined his heart using his Northern Star Lineage Factors, and it had become a core of his strength of body.

It could be said that even though the Demoness had only wanted one thing, she had effectively taken everything. And maybe from the beginning, that was the plan.

Wasn't she the one who created the Morales Lineage Factor to begin with? Wasn't she the one who gave him Scarlet Star Force Innate Nodes that acted as a continuous refinement for his Bloodline? Wasn't she the one who had perfect control of his Dream Asura bloodline from the very beginning?

Everything she did, even playing the True God Beast of Destruction in the palm of her hand, was always meant to lead up to this very moment.

Leonel had known how it would end. He hadn't even bothered to fight back because it would have been a waste of effort. Not only was she far more powerful than he could even fathom in that state, but she would also have a dozen different plans and counterplans in case he escaped her control by some means or another.

She was simply the most intelligent person that he had ever met, and the only person he had ever known to have intelligence rivaling his own.

The difference was that he was born too late. She had been able to move the chessboard as she pleased by then... and even when Leonel thought that he had jumped out of her game, he had only landed on a far larger board.

Unfortunately, he hadn't been able to see it until it was far... far too late.

However, Leonel didn't feel angry. As he felt his life slipping away, he held onto his wife's hand. At the very least, she would be safe. He knew she would be... because now that the Demoness was gone, they should be coming soon.

This time, he would die first. But that was fine. The other path... the one where he held on out of stubbornness, even at the cost of their lives... that wasn't a life worth living.

He believed in his wife, in his brothers. He had helped them lay a foundation, and in the future, they would be able to take those final steps themselves.

He didn't know what the plans of the Demoness were, but now... he would just have to rely on them to get it done.

"I'm sorry, Aina..." he said softly. "... This time, I didn't win."

He spoke in a soft voice, using what remained of his strength to squeeze her hand.

Aina felt like she heard the sound of her heart shattering into countless pieces.

"No, no, no..." her voice was even softer than Leonel's as though she was afraid that speaking too loudly would awaken him.

It was right then that everyone seemed to realize that Leonel was truly finished this time.

Cynthia's gaze flashed with a malevolent light. "ATTACK!"

Chapter 3026: His Name Had Been...

The skies rumbled, and the battleships suddenly began to charge up.

Aina collapsed onto Leonel's chest, her mournful sobs still soft, but the shaking of her body couldn't be hidden.

The eyes of Joel and the others turned red.

James clenched his fist hard, remembering the night of their last football game.

~Why couldn't you just lose this one time?!

~ He remembered roaring those words, feeling every syllable of them.

He had been tired of Leonel's antics, knowing that he needed to lose that game, and yet he still insisted on winning it anyway.

Leonel had always been obsessed with victory, with winning, with coming out on top.

He hated it when others got one over on him, and he was certainly the last person who would run headfirst into a trap that he could see coming.

But this time...

Tears rolled down James' cheeks.

Why couldn't he be selfish just one more time?

He had saved them enough times.

They had experienced death before; they could just do it again.

So what if they were in the Ninth Dimension now?

The Life Tablet could revive them.

It didn't have the same limits as the others.

"Why..." His voice cracked.

They all stood there in silence as the Force in the skies roared and rumbled.

It was as though they couldn't sense that the world was bearing down on them once again.

In the end, even after all the promises, they were still too weak once again.

They said that the tears of men didn't fall so easily, but staring at the light smile on Leonel's face, even though he didn't have the strength to look at them, they couldn't even begin to control theirs.

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

The four battleships roared, and beams of light descended.

They crossed light years of space in a blink, appearing before them with nothing more than a flash of light.

James and the others took a breath, their gazes turning malevolent.

"Respect the game. Persist to the end." They whispered these words at the same time, clutching their weapons.

Their hearts roared with life as they faced off against the world.

"WHO DARES TOUCH MY SON?!" The furious howl of a mother echoed through the skies.

It came with so much force that the air rippled in waves.

The call seemed too weak to even shatter space, and yet when the soundwaves came in contact with the four beams of light, they crumbled.

The sight was unlike anything that they had ever seen before.

The concentrated beams of Force shattered from the inside out, crumbling as though they were truly made of glass and falling apart.

It looked entirely fake until the bits and pieces crumbled to the earth, wreaking devastation everywhere they landed.

At that moment, as the dust cleared and the volatile Force weakened, a woman wearing green draconic armor appeared.

Fury burned so brightly in her green eyes that they seemed more like a pair of flickering flames.

Her golden hair flowed like a river, whipping about wildly, and tears had practically soaked her cheeks through.

She looked down to see the state of Leonel.

Her own heart shattered, and her world felt as though it was crumbling right before her eyes.

She had lost her husband... and now, her son had breathed his last.

The grief of a mother soared through the clouds above, her will becoming so tangible that winds of green spiraled, forming several eastern dragons with scales like shimmering emeralds.

Alienor unleashed a shriek that shattered the skies.

"All of you... deserve death." She had tried so hard to make it through.

Everything had been so perfectly planned.

They should have appeared days ago, just in time for this battle.

But it felt like they ran into one roadblock after another, like someone was pulling their puppet strings from behind the scene.

She had already felt like this twice in her life before.

The first time she was forced to watch her husband die, and now her own flesh and blood, before she could even get to know her son like she wanted to, had died just the same.

At that moment, Cynthia realized what the problem was, and further than that, recognizing Alienor, her battle intent soared to the skies.

"I will stop her! The rest of you make sure that he is dead!" Her own roar raised up into the skies to Alienor's, and there was a clash of green and silver in the air.

Cynthia suddenly appeared before Alienor....

The skies overturned, and to the astonishment of the Owlans, the Four Great Families, and the Fallen God Beasts, one monstrous battleship after another began to appear.

Each one carried the mark of the Ascension Empire on their vessels, but to the people of the world, this marking meant something completely different...

The Fawkes Family!

Their hearts leapt into their throats.

Hadn't the Fawkes family been wiped out already?

How could they be...

That was when their eyes all landed on the man that stood at the helm of the largest ship.

He wore dragon imperial robes.

His should white-gold hair barely shifted in the wind, and his piercing green eyes seemed to carry slits in them that faded into and out of existence.

That was the only sign there was that this man had any sort of fluctuating emotions at all.

This man...

Their hearts shook once again.

It was said that many generations ago, there was a genius of the Fawkes family born.

It was said that the Fawkes had always been a thorn in the side of the Gods as they were too powerful, but it wasn't until the birth of this young boy that everyone realized that it was no longer possible to contain this.

This young boy, at just the age of seven years, managed to do something entirely unprecedented...

Not only did he comprehend the three strongest techniques of the Fawkes by that age, but...

He combined them into a single phrase with the help of [Emperor's Edict] to form an unprecedented Idol.

At just seven years old, he became a True God simply by speaking it into existence.

And now, that young boy had grown up.

If they remembered correctly, his name had been...

Gervaise Fawkes.

Chapter 3027: You Cannot

The abilities of the Fawkes were fearsome enough without also having such a change occur.

If the Fawkes could become Gods so young, or if they could even just form Idols by speaking it into existence, just what kind of power would they grow into?

This was unacceptable to many, and in the end, this was the ultimate result... the death and destruction of the family.

Back then, the Four Great Families had gotten a whiff of what was going on, and they themselves had been targeted because their Heirloom Treasures were too powerful as well.

Whoever received acknowledgment from these treasures could also instantly wield power that they had no business controlling.

In order to take the heat off themselves, the Four Great Families struck a deal.

They would retreat from the God Realm and live out in peace in the lower Realms so long as they were given enough God Realm Incomplete Worlds.

In exchange, they would help deal a crippling blow to the Fawkes.

Ultimately, the Fawkes were the far greater danger, and the Four Great Families were just appetizers, so they accepted.

The reality was that no one wanted to get into an all-out war with the Fawkes because once they did, they would quickly find their own being turned into cannon fodder against them.

The losses would easily become substantial.

However, if they had an inside man for the job, then it was very likely that they would be able to deal a swift and decisive blow before the Fawkes could properly retaliate.

In the end, that was exactly what had happened... but no one expected the boy from back then to still be alive... Even the Pluto had no idea that their repaid favor would go back to helping this boy in particular, or else maybe even they would be hesitant to repay it.

But who would have known that the players of back then would be incompetent to the point of letting the one target they should have surely killed escape?

Just how had this happened?

BOOM!

Everyone's attention was rapidly ripped away to find Cynthia soaring through the skies.

She was pounded into the ground with such ferocity that it felt like even this God Rune infused world would split in two.

Bubbles of green popped all around Alienor, and she was truly no different from an enraged lioness.

She dove down from above, grabbing at Cynthia's throat.

The latter tried to fight it off, but it was of no help.

Cynthia slapped out a palm to block, but a whipped draconic green wind slapped it out of the way in return.

She turned to the side to avoid Alienor's palm, and the ground beneath her was raked by a claw.

Even though Cynthia thought she had dodged it, bloody marks appeared across her cheek, leaving her feeling a stinging pain.

Alienor ripped her hand back, a chunk of earth coming with it.

For a moment, it even seemed as though the land was being ripped upward until the rock finally broke free and away.

Cynthia kicked out at Alienor's chest, colliding with it steadily, but Alienor didn't even seem to notice.

The strength completely dispersed by some mysterious power and expelled into the outward.

A cone-shaped rip in space appeared behind Alienor's torso, but her real body was completely unharmed.

Finally, Alienor managed to grab Cynthia's corpse.

Staring at this incomparably beautiful countenance, Cynthia still somehow felt the greatest fear she had in her entire lifetime.

It didn't feel like a beautiful woman at all, but rather a roaring dragon.

Alienor grabbed Cynthia's arm and tore it off.

Blood spilled and Cynthia let out a heart-rending screech.

Her body shook and convulsed, only for Alienor to suddenly squeeze down on her throat.

All the sounds that Cynthia had been making were crippled and became muffled.

The skies were dyed in red as Alienor suddenly let go of Cynthia's throat, erupting with three quick palms that resonated louder than even claps of thunder.

Alienor unleashed every ounce of pent-up rage she had in her soul.

Cynthia was supposed to be a great God Child, she had been nurtured and raised by the Four Great Families, living out her life in leisure while Leonel was outside fighting for his life every waking moment.

All the while, she had been plotting and scheming, waiting to deal a death blow to this family that she hated so much.

And yet, in the end, to a furious Alienor, she looked like nothing more than an inconsequential plaything.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Every hit came with a sob, and yet was so controlled that every ounce of the destruction was concentrated into Cynthia's body.

Again and again, she was beaten into the ground, her limbs were torn off, her blood painted the skies and dyed the ground.

She was beaten senseless, and even when she decided that she wanted to die, she was entirely unable to.

When an Empress spoke, the world listened.

If an Empress didn't want you to die just yet... What right did you have to?

Cynthia could only find herself completely devastated.

Panting on the ground, missing both legs and an arm, she looked toward the skies, defeated... however, even this final sight was robbed from her as two piercing green winds ripped through her eye sockets.

There was a moment of silence before Cynthia unleashed a banshee-like shriek.

It was filled with unwillingness and humiliation.

She thought that the day she saw Alienor again, she would be able to retain the favor.

But this time, she was defeated even faster than the last time.

In fact, the battle would have ended in a single strike had Alienor not wanted to use her as a punching bag.

"You cannot speak."

A bubble formed around Cynthia's mouth.

"You cannot breed. You cannot think. You cannot want for anything."

Every word came with another bubble, and everything that made Cynthia human was hollowed out until she was left with nothing at all.

Alienor trembled, looking toward her son.

Chapter 3028: My Little Lion

Alienor appeared by Aina's side and fell to her knees. By this point, even Anastasia had appeared, and she was already a sobbing mess. She was trying her best to wipe her tears away with her little arms, but she couldn't seem to move them fast enough.

There was a peaceful smile on Leonel's face as though he had already done everything that he could do and he was content with the outcome. There wasn't even the slightest unwillingness remaining in him.

"I'm sorry, Aina," Alienor said softly, knocking the young girl out with a palm strike. She then suppressed Anastasia into the Segmented Cube and sent Aina in with her along with Leonel's brothers.

Tears fell from Alienor's eyes as she picked up her son, holding him close to her chest. Worrying that her armor would harm him, she put it away, not caring about the blood that soaked her through. She cradled Leonel's head, her sobs choking her breath.

"I'm such a terrible mother..." she said between her sobs. "... To make you do this for me... I'm such a terrible mother..."

Alienor wasn't a fool. She was far smarter than Cynthia, who was already known as an exceptional genius. It was easy to say that at least half of Leonel's flexibility of mind came from her.

Why would Cynthia even be alive now? Why did Leonel leave her alive despite knowing how conniving this woman was? It was because he knew that the moment the Demoness vanished, his mother would appear...

Cynthia was nothing more than a distraction.

Most would stop thinking here. They'd think that Leonel left his mother a target to vent on to help her feel a little better. But Leonel knew better than that.

He wanted to distract his mother with a threat for long enough that he would die before she could do anything about it. He didn't want to give her a chance to save him.

What Leonel didn't calculate was that his mother had grown far stronger than he knew. Alienor's talent was no weaker than her father's. The difference was that while Gervaise had been born into the God Realm, she was born on Earth and a pitiful little Incomplete World.

However, the moment Gervaise succeeded in turning the Dimensional Verse into a God Realm, and with her being able to take advantage of their time dilation, right now... it could be said that Alienor may very well be one of, if not the strongest, combatants in the entirety of Existence.

Even the Primordial Terror at full strength would have to fight a long, drawn-out battle with her. Let alone the likes of Cynthia.

So Leonel had miscalculated in the end... and there simply hadn't been enough time that passed.

Alienor held her son close.

"I wasn't there while you were growing up. You were never as close with me as you were with your father... I couldn't help but feel jealous, but I also knew it was my fault.

"That day, when I saw you wearing his glasses, dressed nice and sharp, it took everything I had not to bawl my eyes out.

"But that wasn't fair to you. It's not your job to replace your father in my heart, it's not your job to step into his shoes, nor is it your fault that you had more love for him than you did me."

Alienor carefully stroked her son's cheeks. She cupped them in a hand, trying to carefully rub the blood away from him, and yet only making it worse.

Her chest convulsed as she held Leonel closer.

"I was too weak. I let my son suffer... if only I had been stronger..."

A ball seemed to be lodged in Alienor's throat. As clearly as she tried to speak so that Leonel would hear her, it always came out hoarse and raspy. This only made her cry harder, but she tried to keep a clear mind.

At some unknown time, Gervaise and his wife had landed on the edge of the crater, and Gervaise wanted to say something, but this time, in a rare sight, it was Leonel's grandmother that held him back.

Gervaise's pupils trembled.

"... Don't ask a mother to sacrifice her son..." she said softly. Though her words sounded far firmer than her daughter's, her own tears were already falling uncontrollably. After all... wasn't Alienor also her child?

Leonel's talent was too strong. Using a normal [Arise] on him would never work, and all his talent had just been stripped from him.

The chasm that left behind wasn't something that Emperor's Might could fill, and Leonel knew that. Even such a powerful Lineage Factor and the Life Tablet had its limits. If they didn't... Velasco wouldn't still be dead to this day.

So, he had planned ahead. He already knew that he was going to die, and he already knew that his mother would appear soon afterward. He knew that his grandfather was stonehearted enough to stand to the side, but he couldn't trust his mother to let him make this sacrifice.

In the end... he had miscalculated again.

"... I'm sorry, Little Lion. Your mother already watched your father die, I'm not strong enough to watch you die, too..."

Alienor chuckled a bitter chuckle that turned into another round of tears.

"I'm such a bad mother... even now, I can only think of how nice it would be to reunite with your father."

Alienor stroked Leonel's hair, kissing him on the forehead.

"Mother was never there when she needed to be. But I hope that you know how much mom loves you, how much mom will always love you."

Alienor took out a clean handkerchief and began to wipe away the mess she had left on Leonel's face. She was so soft and meticulous that one would have thought that she was caring for a delicate vase. But to her, her son was more valuable than any antique.

When Leonel was clean, she pressed her forehead to his.

"Live well, my Little Lion... Mom has never been good to you, so there's no need to feel sad... In fact, mom is very happy right now... I can finally do something for you... and I can finally go accompany my love... Farewell, my Little Lion..."

Alienor's energy surged, and the skies turned a delicate golden-green.

By the time it had all settled down, Alienor was gone. And all that was left was a sleeping Leonel.

Chapter 3029: Now

Leonel's eyes snapped open.

He didn't even bother to look around, he just stared at the ceiling above. It was a simple ceiling, a white one he could see through the mesh that was the canopy of his bed.

It wasn't particularly interesting. At least, it wasn't interesting for much other than what it represented.

It represented that he could see, that when he breathed, air came in and his lungs expanded, that he was alive.

Leonel didn't need anyone to tell him what that meant. He didn't need to be there to see how the war ended, or what it meant for him to be lying here completely intact.

He had no idea where he was, but it felt like that didn't matter at all. That was absolutely worthless information and there was nothing worth learning about it. He didn't even care about the fact there was a familiar figure leaning on the window sill of an enormous opening.

Cool wind blew in and the light curtains shifted from side to side.

"Seems the brat is finally awake," the figure spoke.

Leonel didn't respond, not even looking over. He just stared at the ceiling. It was impossible to tell what he was thinking, or if he was even thinking at all.

In truth, he felt that his speed of thought was far slower than what it had been in the past. His mind wasn't nearly as nimble, and he almost felt a bit... stupid.

It was amusing because he could still feel his Dream Force being at the Peak Creation State, his Wise Star and Sea Order status were still there, as was his Ability Index. But it felt that something that was core to keeping them together was gone.

No... it wasn't something that had kept them together, but rather something that had allowed them to work together. It was a subtle difference, but it was only now that it was gone that Leonel could truly feel it.

It was funny. He remembered in the past struggling to consolidate his paths into one, not realizing that maybe his most important path had already accomplished that for him.

Now, instead of stacking, multiplying, and playing off of one another, each one of his individual talents of the mind had become too independent. Instead of building off of each other, in some facets, they even hindered one another, leaving his mind feeling much slower and less assured than it had in the past.

However, none of that seemed to matter as Leonel continued to stare up into the ceiling.

"A mute now, are we? Why does it seem like you're not very sad, though?"

Leonel still didn't respond, continuing to stare at the ceiling.

His heart rate was slow and steady.

His heart...

He listened to it for a moment, realizing that in the past he would never hear it so often. It was like his body had gone back to normal. It was beating 40 times a minute, which was excellent for an athlete of Earth, but it was a far cry from his former one beat per several minutes.

It was dull and almost weak in comparison. There were no reverberating impacts, no heart-shuddering ripples of reality.

It was just a normal heart. Well, comparatively. The fact that it was beating at all in what Leonel was sure was the God Realm went to show that it was actually pretty far from truly normal. But it was this sort of normal heart that made his chest feel particularly empty.

"That's good," the voice spoke again. "I thought I'd have to pick you out of a pit of despair again. You see, I'm a very free-flowing spirit. I don't have the patience for all that bullshit. You get me?"

Leonel still didn't respond.

He could feel his Ethereal Glabella. It was mostly the same as well. The Demoness had seemed completely uninterested in his Life Tablet and had left it behind.

Honestly, he couldn't help but wonder if that was another ploy. Although he knew she had a Life Tablet herself, that Life Tablet was a Legacy Tablet. It shouldn't have all the same abilities as a Wise Tablet. In fact, they would likely only be able to cover for the weaknesses of one another when they were together.

Then again, one of the strongest abilities of the Wise Tablet, that being controlling the Envoys, was useless now. What good was it when they were all dead?

The figure by the window moved and looked back. With a few steps, it picked up a stool and plopped it beside Leonel's bed.

"So tell me, kid..."

The last thing Leonel felt were his Innate Nodes. They were still there, but he could already feel a burning sensation. His body wasn't nearly as strong as it had been in the past, but he had already evolved his Innate Nodes to the point that they were true monsters.

Each one was even larger than his original kidneys had been, making them likely larger than any other Innate Node on the God Realm. But now, he didn't have a body or constitution strong enough to let them circulate through his body despite how exceptional his Force Manipulation had already become.

Was his talent really so high? So high that even his mother's sacrifice could only bring him back in such a pitiful state?

Leonel's eyes never left the ceiling. It seemed like he could see his mother's reflection on it.

"... When are we gonna flip the world upside down?"

The words echoed in the room almost as though it was empty. They penetrated down into Leonel's heart, and he finally looked over at the figure.

It was the very same man who had disappeared inexplicably all those years ago.

Nilrem. Wise Star Order.

Leonel stared at him for a long while, his eyes as deep as an abyss and yet as bright as Amethysts. It felt like one was staring into the deepest pool of water to ever exist.

"Now." He said as he slowly got up.

Chapter 3030: Silk Boxers

Leonel pushed himself up and off from the bed, his gaze having become especially bright. The shadow that should have been over his features wasn't there, replaced with a bone-deep determination.

"You're not going to ask me any questions?" Nilrem asked.

"What would I ask?" Leonel spoke, getting used to his body.

Right now, he felt as though he truly had been reborn. The issue was that it wasn't an advancement.

Still, getting used to his sudden weakness was a necessity as well. If he tried to do something based on his previous understanding of his body, and ended up injuring himself or worse, then he would have no one to cry to.

"Who I am? How I disappeared? Why I only appeared now?"

"Don't care." Leonel replied.

"Damn," Nilrem clicked his tongue. "Somehow, you skipped through centuries of maturity and jumped right to being that annoying prick I remember. Is this progress or regression?"

"It's whatever you want to call it."

Leonel punched out at a wall with his full force.

There was a sharp wind as his form was perfect, but upon feeling the collision, his eyes couldn't help but narrow.

He actually felt pain.

He was a Crafter. He could see through these materials with a single glance, slower mind or not. It was a strong material, especially for the mere wall of a bedroom. But it wasn't strong to the point that he would feel pain from hitting it, even if he considered the God Runes in this place.

He didn't even leave a dent on the wall.

Still, he just nodded casually. It seemed that he would have to re-practice his metal body... basically his entire Constitution had been reset.

"Fine, fine. I'll tell you." Nilrem spread his arms as though he was being magnanimous. "Have you ever tried to spell my name backward? Hm? Hm?"

"Yes."

The smile on Nilrem's expression froze. Then, he suddenly recovered.

"Fuck off, you don't even know my real name yet, I haven't told you. You're an ungrateful bastard who's been calling me Wise Star Order this whole time. What the hell would spelling that backward get you?"

Leonel didn't reply, stretching out his limbs and trying to circulate his Forces. Circulating normal Forces was fine. Circulating his Scarlet Star Force was painful, but not nearly as bad as it was when he was still a kid.

This was clearly because his body was nowhere near as weak as that, and his Force Manipulation was obviously playing a large role.

Both of his Innate Nodes had two Sovereignties attached to them, so it was impossible that he would be completely unable to control them like he had in the past.

"Well, my name is Nilrem," Nilrem said proudly. "How about you try and spell that backward now?"

Leonel still didn't react, checking how [Final Destruction] was doing.

It seemed that after the reconstruction, he had lost his Incomplete Worlds?

'No, that can't be the case...'

Leonel's brow furrowed, and he felt a hint of annoyance. He would have already figured this out by now usually.

A flash sparked in Leonel's eyes and his calm returned. If he got annoyed every time he couldn't do something as well as he could in the past, then his words would be nothing more than meaningless drivel.

His calm returned, and suddenly he was as tranquil as a lake.

He thought about it calmly, tuning out much of Nilrem's next few words. It took a few seconds, but eventually, he understood.

It was a protective mechanism.

His current body had lost much of the foundation he had built for the sake of using [Final Destruction]. The only reason he could circulate Force at all was because he had Innate Nodes.

But just the same, it was also a simple fix. Considering where he had woken up, he bet that his grandfather had already established a Kingdom in the God Realm.

Since he had prepared for so long, there was no doubt that everything was already prepared. He bet that they were even an already established power of the God Realm at that.

In that case, he would just ask his grandfather to give him what he needed. It was about time the old man did what grandfathers should, instead of him always being the one bailing out Earth.

After making this choice, Leonel donned a robe by the bedside, didn't even bother to do it up, and strolled out in his silky white boxers and fluffy slippers.

"... I was unfortunately obstructed like everyone else. You've really got a bitch of a grandmother, you know that? If you want, I can give you some tips for how to deal with her. Have I told you the story about how I pissed on an Empire's banner? That's definitely a good one. And there's also the time I pissed on—hey, where are you going?"

Nilrem rushed after Leonel, feeling exasperated.

This was the only timeline where Leonel actually just outright ignored him like this? Where was the shock and awe?

And what was this kid doing? Didn't he know that he was in the heart of the Fawkes Clan Empire right now? Did he know how many important officials there were around here? What was he doing just strutting around like that?

"Hey kid, you keep walking around like that and one of these old cougars is gonna eat you up in your sleep."

"I never expected that the Merlin I had heard about growing up would swing that way. Do you mean the cougars, or you?"

Leonel's sudden response after so long of nothing took Nilrem off guard. He didn't even know how to respond to the accusation.

"... Fuck you, kid! My name is Mer—I mean Nilrem!"

"Do you even care that much? I'm pretty sure you forgot your real name at some point."

"How do you even know that?!"

As they walked through the empire, they came across several people, most of whom gave Leonel weird glances.

'Hm... I don't recognize any of these people. What was that old man up to?'

"Halt!"

Leonel ignored the words. He was about to kick up the Throne Room doors, but then he remembered how weak he was and settled for pressing his palms against them, pressing hard until they finally slowly creaked open.

The silence was so palpable that a pin drop could have been heard.

Leonel strolled in under thousands of gazes.

Chapter 3031: Changes (1)

It wasn't a surprise that Leonel seemed completely out of place. His violet-black silk robes danced behind him as he moved, his boxers on full display. His bare feet were probably the first of their kind to grace these floors. After seeing this scene, Leonel understood something: the time dilation.

Having been to other Incomplete Worlds, Leonel knew that time dilation wasn't a normal factor. It was only the case in the Dimensional Verse, and maybe the other Verses that were part of their group. The difference was obvious: The Pluto. Why had El'Rion been sent with such a valuable treasure? It was obviously for the sake of giving his grandfather the time dilation he needed to set everything up. Leonel had been gone for maybe half a decade at most if he didn't include his own time dilation escapades. If he calculated based on what he knew about the Dimensional Verse's time dilation, what would have likely been trillions upon trillions of years had passed. But he doubted that it was that long. If he was correct, then the time dilation likely weakened the stronger the Incomplete Worlds became. If it didn't, then time dilation would probably be far more common in the higher Realms. In that case, it was likely a few hundred or a thousand years that had passed from his grandfather's, grandmother's, and mother's perspectives. When he framed it like this, everything made perfect sense. Gervaise had wanted an opportunity to rebuild and reconstruct the Fawkes family. After Leonel left and became the vanguard of the Empire, they received the time they needed to do exactly that. Most of these people were probably distantly related to him in some way or another. At least 60% or so of this panel of nobles had Fawkes blood. Even with his senses considerably dulled, Peak Creation State Dream Force was still Peak Creation

State Dream Force. The others were likely other powers of Earth that had risen up in that time. He was unlikely to recognize them at a glance, but there were some that he did. For example, the Dove family. He remembered that they were the Prime Minister equivalents of the Empire back when Leonel was around. He also remembered having some interaction with their Heir back then. Though, by now, he was probably a large figure—

Just as he had this thought, Leonel found him in the crowd and gave him a casual smile. "Damn, why the hell is this walkway so long," Leonel muttered. He had already been here for half a minute, but he wasn't even halfway to the throne that was ahead. His grandfather really liked to put on airs. He tried to use his Emulation Spatial Force Innate Node, but expectedly, that failed. Any empire worth their salt even in the Mortal Realms would have protections against Spatial Force, let alone one that could stand in the God Realm. Nilrem rushed in after Leonel, conveniently brushing off his knuckles after having dealt with a few guards. He waved like they were a pair of rockstars greeting their fans. Neither one of them seemed very bothered by the silence at all. For Leonel, it still made a little sense because he had no idea how important this meeting was. But for Nilrem, who knew exactly what it was, and still didn't care... well, that was a completely different matter entirely. Still, Nilrem didn't bother to explain. He knew that even if he did, Leonel wouldn't give a damn. In that case, why not enjoy a good show? The philosophical differences of this grandfather-grandson duo would be an interesting clash to watch, indeed. Eventually, Leonel made it to the bottom of the stairs and looked up with his hands on his hips. Gervaise looked down, his expression unreadable. It was hard to tell that he was looking at his grandson at all, but Leonel didn't mind it. He knew that this was the type of person his grandfather was. He took his position of Emperor very seriously and always put the Empire above all else. He might smile and joke with Leonel while they were alone, but he certainly wouldn't do it right now. "Hey, Merlin. What's my noble title?"

Nilrem cleared his throat. "Nilrem."

"The question, Merlin?"

Nilrem rolled his eyes. "Imperial Prince?"

"That's it?" Leonel asked.

"What else did you want?"

"I was born with that title. I don't get anything else on top of it? Where are my cities? Where's my land? Where's my army?"

Nilrem chuckled. "What would you get that for?"

"I don't know. Maybe because I was putting my life on the line alone, taking on the anger of the world, so that this guy could look pretty on a Throne. It's a shame, don't you think?"

"Definitely, definitely. But how would you be conferred a Title from bed?"

"We could make it work. Bless me with some holy water or something, sprinkle it on my forehead. Who knows, maybe I only took so long to wake up because my soul wasn't at peace."

"Why wasn't it at peace?"

"It could smell shamelessness in the air."

"Ah, so sensitive, so sensitive. You figure?"

"Well, I can't think of any other reason so many would still be sitting in their seats and silently observing when I walked in."

"You think they should bow?"

"Isn't that only right when in the face of their savior?"

"Ah, I thought you meant they should bow because of your Noble Title."

"Well, that too. But I'm not a fan of relying on things my parents gave me."

"Is that so? But didn't you come here to extort—I mean ask your grandfather for some things?"

"I said parents, Merlin. Keep up. Grandparents are in a different category."

Nilrem stifled a chuckle, but a few others weren't as good at disguising it as him. The sudden snorts were loud in the mostly silent room. It seemed that while there were a few people dissatisfied with Leonel's current actions, not everyone had a stick up their ass.

Chapter 3032: Changes (2)

Leonel was about to open his mouth to say more, but Gervaise flicked a finger and a badge of some sort landed on him. Before Leonel could react, he was teleported away. "I'll remember this, old man!"

Nilrem found himself standing alone at the bottom of the throne. He coughed lightly. "Pleasant weather we're having today, aren't we?"

Silence.

"Hehe, I'll take my leave, then. Don't mind that disciple of mine, everybody. He's a kind soul at heart."

Several gazes flashed when they heard this. When had Leonel become Nilrem's disciple? Since when had Nilrem ever been close to anyone? All this guy did all day was chase skirts, but they also knew just how much of a powerhouse he was.

The process of establishing their Empire on the God Realm wasn't easy; several battles had been fought. But the moment this man appeared, it was like everything was solved within moments. Several armies retreated without doing anything, and those that dared to stay suffered terrible losses.

Afterward, there were many sideline powers who agreed to let the humans through so long as Leonel was handed back. These powers included the Sylvans who were enraged by Leonel's use of their geniuses for resources. But in the end, even those far more powerful powers were sent away with their tails tucked between their legs.

Many of these people knew next to nothing about Nilrem other than the fact he was a powerhouse. It had been a while since they settled down, and many thought to use this opportunity to get closer to him.

Getting closer to the Emperor was like climbing beyond the skies; it was next to impossible. But Nilrem seemed to be just as strong, and yet far more open to interacting with people. They had thought it would be easy to get close to him... only to find out that the man's shamelessness knew no bounds.

Normally, in a political relationship, there would be some give and take. But Nilrem only knew how to take and never gave anything in return. To make matters worse, he would even pretend to not understand the underlying implications of their words as though he was a complete greenhorn and not a powerhouse that could destroy worlds with a thought.

Still, a powerhouse was a powerhouse. None of them dared to be enraged, and many of them wanted to see if this was just a method Nilrem was using to weed out the weak of will. There were plenty of experts who were hounded by people every day. It was hard to differentiate between the serious and unserious amongst them, so they kept trying... what they didn't expect was that things would end up like this.

Of course, if Leonel was telling the truth and his grandfather was truly their Emperor, which was clearly the case or else the cold-hearted leader they knew wouldn't have

been nearly so lenient with him, then maybe it made sense... but even these thoughts didn't last long.

In these years, Gervaise had had several more children, birthing more uncles and aunts for Leonel. On top of that, these uncles and aunts had many of their own children. Among these grandchildren of the Empire, there were many who had tried to get on Nilrem's good side, and yet none of it had mattered.

So why this grandchild in specific? Was this the child of Goddess Alienor? The one she had died for?

It finally seemed to click for many who Leonel was, and then his earlier words finally seemed to make sense to them. For some, this made their expressions soften, some had contemplative expressions, and a minority group didn't seem to react to this information at all as though it was meaningless. Still, they all had the same question.

Why Leonel?

From what they understood, Leonel had once been a great talent, but it was mostly taken away. There should be no reason for Nilrem, who only seemed to care about himself, to take him as a disciple. It didn't even seem like Leonel was particularly respectful to Nilrem either, calling him by a completely different name.

Many made promises in their hearts to check out this situation later. There were clearly many things about this that they didn't quite grasp.

Nilrem waved to everyone and then vanished.

**

By this point, Leonel was standing in an unfamiliar region. It took him a bit to adjust himself and understand where he was. His mind was in a very dizzy state for a few seconds before he understood.

'Oh, not bad. I guess you're less of an asshole than I thought.'

Leonel and his grandfather had never truly seen eye to eye on anything. Their approaches to life were vastly different.

But what Leonel knew was that he wasn't entirely stone cold either. He did have the capacity to love, albeit a bit selfishly. The heart and care Gervaise had had for his mother was real and true, and at least in some part, that transferred to Leonel. In the end, though, Gervaise was the most interested in investing in those descendants that could give the most returns.

Still, there was no denying how much Leonel had done for the Empire, and Gervaise wasn't yet to the point of cutting ties just because he felt Leonel wasn't nearly as useful as he had been in the past. In the end, Leonel was still his grandson.

If Leonel wanted to waste away the rest of his life in peace on his grandfather's dollar, Gervaise was fine with that. But, today, Leonel's words had made it clear that he was very much not. Obviously, this was to say that this was the real reason Leonel hadn't been given such a Title or responsibility. Gervaise wasn't sure what kind of mental state Leonel would be in when he awoke.

But now he knew.

As for where Leonel had been sent, it was none other than the treasure room of the Fawkes Empire.

It was time to make out like a bandit.

Chapter 3033: Yes

Leonel stored away any complex feelings that threatened to bubble up, making his way forward. Right now, he didn't have the luxury to wallow in his own thoughts or be disappointed. There was only one thing that should be on his mind. Winning.

It seemed that the world thought that he was mostly finished. If they didn't, it was almost impossible for them to have let him go so easily. Though, that was definitely related to the strength of Nilrem and his grandfather as well.

Leonel had stirred up a great deal of conflict, offended even more powers, and the amount of things concentrated onto him were difficult to put into just a few words.

However, many of the things that had made him so scary and fearsome had been taken away by the Demones. At the very least, using [Emperor's Might] to revive Gods three Dimensional Realms above his own had now most definitely become impossible.

All things considered, Gervaise was now the highest priority target, and if they couldn't kill him, then there was little reason to kill Leonel.

In truth, Leonel hadn't been there for these things, but that didn't matter in the slightest. His mind might have slowed, but he hadn't become a fool. He knew that for him to wake up on a comfy bed instead of in a cell, or worse yet, not wake up at all, there had to have been a lot of things done while he was out of it.

As disappointed as he might or might not be with what he had seen in the newly minted Ascension Empire, it didn't matter since in the end, they were the reason he could still

be here... and they were the reason that he would be able to cause the new storm that was coming next.

Right now, he was a discarded pawn, a piece that the Demoness had already gotten rid of. And while this seemed to have come with a whole host of problems, it had also come with something else that was very important... He could finally be sure that he had completely stepped off of her board. Maybe she didn't even care to pay attention to him any longer.

This time, Leonel would be the one coming... and maybe not necessarily from the shadows either.

Leonel knew that in order for his master and his grandfather to be delayed in arriving to the battlefield, there had to have been a host of individuals who took action.

He didn't care who they were, or what plots and schemes they had fallen for to end up in such a mess, but they would be the ones he targeted first.

If not for their interference, the plans of the Demoness would have certainly been disrupted. And whether they were useful fools or willing pawns, they would pay for their choice.

A hint of coldness flashed in Leonel's eyes as he reached a particularly large vault door.

At that moment, two auras crashed down on him from above and nearly sent him sprawling to the floor. His body was perfectly healed, but the issue was that it was too weak. In fact, even if he had been at 100%, these powerhouses were too much for him to tackle head on without several more tricks.

It was clear that these two guards both had Dharmas at that very worst, and they were also both Tier 1 Ninth Dimensional existences. Leonel had been too lost in his own thoughts to mind their presence, but now he was suddenly annoyed.

However, just as he was about to speak, Nilrem appeared by his side.

The pressure dispersed and the guards coughed. While they didn't spurt any blood, their grunts were enough to say that they had at least been somewhat injured.

"This is getting annoying. I've been up for all, what? Ten minutes? How many times are people going to try and cross me?"

Nilrem gave Leonel a weird look. From what he could remember... no one had done anything to Leonel at all?

Well, then again, Leonel had always been sensitive to such things.

The fact that he hadn't been granted any rewards for his service was enough to be annoyed about, but these two stupid guards thinking that a normal Sixth Dimensional expert could just appear here was frustrating in its own right.

But the problem was that Leonel didn't have the patience for even the slightest of slights right now. Anyone who bothered him or did things that weren't exactly how he wanted them was wasting his time, delaying his progress, and thus worthy of his anger.

If he had had the strength, he might have directly killed them.

Nilrem continued to look at Leonel as he returned to calm, opening the vault up with the badge that he had been given.

Leonel was certainly far more calm now than when his father had died, and he could also tell that that wasn't because he didn't care nearly as much for his mother. It was instead because he had matured and had learned how to focus his rage in ways that made much more sense.

However, that didn't mean that there wasn't something that he was suppressing. And every time someone tried to stall his steps, or impede his progress, he would likely lash out with that very same suppressed emotion.

This time, however, Nilrem didn't believe that there was anything wrong with it. That was because he could feel that this wasn't the same out-of-control rage. It was tempered... and it made even him somewhat fearful of this disciple of his.

He knew what Leonel could have had the potential to become in the future with his original talent... but now that he didn't have it anymore, could he still do it?

Nilrem wasn't entirely sure before, but now he felt that there could only be one answer to this question.

Yes.

It could only be yes.

He strolled into the vault after Leonel.

Chapter 3034: Diabolical

The treasury of the Fawkes family was more than Leonel expected, but after he thought about it, he felt that it only made sense. Gervaise had been preparing for a return to the God Realm all this time, and the methods that he had used couldn't possibly be normal. From the start, his intention was to be no weaker than any other God Race.

Of course, this was difficult in two ways.

First, the Ascension Empire was still lacking in population numbers. Right now, they had a population that could be counted in the tens of billions, and that much was good enough for the God Realm especially since birth rates were quite low here. But the main issue was that this population had yet to be refined down to the point where only the truest talents were left.

The Fawkes had only had one line remaining, so though Leonel's grandfather and grandmother had had more children, it was still difficult to truly proliferate.

While the usual issues with incest weren't a problem with beings of this level, Gervaise had watched the Four Great Families stall due to their methods. Then he had watched an "impure" like Aina become such a powerhouse, while his own grandson had become a monster due to the mixing and breeding of different bloodlines.

He had realized then that mixing wasn't a weakness, it was actually a strength. It could help to shore up what was missing from certain bloodlines with others, and though there would be a lot of misses when taking this route, it wouldn't necessarily be any different if they took the more... diabolical route.

As such, Gervaise had allowed his new sons and daughters to marry as they pleased, and he watched what happened from the sidelines. After all, he and his wife were still young and spry all things considered. They could still have many more children.

It was just that Leonel's grandmother hadn't been in the mood for such things recently, and honestly speaking, neither was Gervaise. She wasn't the only one that had lost a daughter.

This was all to say that the Empire was technically still in an experimental phase. The only reason it hadn't been touched was because Gervaise was too powerful, and there were a few more powerhouses locked away as their trump cards.

The second was foundation.

Although this treasury looked shocking to Leonel, that was because he had never seen a true God Race's means. That wasn't to say that the treasure vault of the Fawkes weren't still shocking, but they would still be ranked near the bottom of the truly fearsome characters.

They lacked enough Crafters, enough inheritances, enough time.

'The Crafters are decent, I guess. But this standard isn't good enough.'

Leonel spent an entire three days just walking around the treasury. By then, news of his appearance had already spread like wildfire and a great deal of changes began to take place whether overtly or covertly.

However, for now, none of these things seemed to have anything to do with him.

...

"Kid, how long are you going to make me follow you around like this for?" Nilrem began to grumble.

"Am I not allowed to take stock of my inheritance? Also, who asked you to follow me?"

"Inheritance?" Nilrem laughed. "You have 16 new aunts and uncles, and there are probably something like 63 cousins for you between them all."

"Do they have anything better to do than breed?" Leonel was aghast when he heard this.

"This is an Empire. They fuck for the sake of the Empire. Get used to it. Your Third Uncle has like 27 wives but he's only impregnated three of them. All things considered, the blank shot rate is too high among your family."

Leonel sneered. "Are you trying to imply something?"

Nilrem chuckled. "I don't know what you mean, my dearest disciple."

"You want to make a bet? I can make my wife pregnant in one sitting."

Nilrem began to laugh so hard tears came out of his eyes.

Leonel frowned and gave him a sharp look. "What are you laughing so hard about?"

"Me? Laughing? At my precious disciple? Never... never..."

Leonel continued to glare at him, but Nilrem only laughed harder.

"Kid, if you keep wasting time around here, someone else is going to snatch up your wife."

...

At that moment, outside the vault, the guards had changed several times and the time had come for a shift change once again. This time, the very same guards that had been here on Leonel's arrival were coming to switch in... and it was also right then that all four guards froze.

A deadly aura pervaded into their very souls. It felt like a reaper had wrapped a dark, clawed palm around their hearts. And what shook them with the most fear was that this deadly aura wasn't even aimed at them.

None of them moved, cold sweat pouring down their backs.

...

"What did you say?" Leonel asked, the cheeriness in his eyes vanishing.

Nilrem seemed completely unaffected by Leonel's aura. He collapsed to the ground, laughing his ass off.

"Hey, hey!" Nilrem wiped tears from his eyes. "Kid, please don't kill the messenger. What does this have to do with me? Plus, with your wife's strength, what are you even worried about?"

"What happened?" Leonel asked, his unhappiness not fading in the slightest.

"Who asked for your wife to be so beautiful? In fact, kid, give me some pickup tips? How'd you do it? Let an old man know."

Leonel turned up his nose in disgust and some of his aura seemed to fade somewhat.

"Stop messing around and tell me what happened."

Nilrem sat up and wiped the last tears from his eyes. After a shrug, he finally gave a straight answer.

"The Fawkes family has become a bit obsessed with procreating thanks to a few policies. Any woman of 'good stock' is a target, especially if she hasn't birthed a child before... even if she's married. Though, technically, because you died, your soul link shattered. Right now, your wife is single," Nilrem chuckled through the darkening of Leonel's expression again. "A few little princes want to hop into your wife's bed, and she hasn't killed any of them yet because this is your family. Isn't she sweet?"

A dangerous light continuously flashed in Leonel's eyes.

"Oh. And it also doesn't help that there's a new update to the God Realm's beauty ranking. Number one and two are both yours, aren't you excited?"

"Number two?" Leonel frowned, ignoring number one as though he already knew that it could only be his wife.

Nilrem began another round of hearty laughter.

"A certain little girl named Minerva. I heard that she was being pestered and said that she only loved one man."

He cleared his throat and put on a high-pitched voice as though he was trying to imitate her perfectly.

"The man I love is Leonel Morales. Kill him and I'll give you a chance to speak with me."

Leonel was left completely and utterly speechless. What the hell was this? A tactic to get him killed? Wasn't it too low-class?

And why the hell did the God Realm have a beauty ranking? Didn't they have anything better to do?

Suddenly, his gaze flashed. 'The Sylvans...'

Chapter 3035: This is the Path for Me.

If there was any race that hated Leonel to an extreme, it was the Sylvans. And if there was any race that was well known for their intelligence, well... it was also the Sylvans. Leonel had to admit that if he was correct and this was just another plot, it was a good one. There was rarely anything more than young men with too much energy liked to do than impress women. In truth, he was precisely one of these very young men that he was disparaging right now. The only difference was that he didn't give a damn about any woman but his own wife. In the past, just how much trouble had he gone through trying to court Aina? He would have waded through hell and high water to get to her, and back then, she wasn't even considered to be some great beauty. Leonel still remembered that for much of the time he knew Aina, he didn't even know her true face; he only knew the mask she wore. It wasn't until after that it was revealed to him that her face was scarred beyond repair, but even then, he knew that behind the scars was a rarely seen beauty. Regardless, he was willing to wade through a great deal to be with Aina. These young geniuses with the full backing of their families had nothing better to do than chase after beauty. It might even be a mandate given to them by their families and encouraged by their elders as well. By now, Aina's status as a Blood Sovereign had been revealed. She was a rare breed of woman not only in talent, but she could also perfectly control her pregnancies. Even the seedless Invalids could have children with her. One could imagine the kind of children she could have with true talents. And this was all before she had even revealed her Life Grade Force Pill Crafting to the world. It could be said that even under normal circumstances, Aina would be highly sought after, let alone with the Sylvans fanning the flames. Leonel had always thought his wife was most beautiful no matter what state she was in, but the standards of the God Realm were so widely variable. A Void Race woman, a Beastman woman, a Sylvan woman... all of these different races have their own tastes and preferences. So... What were the

odds that two women who looked as human as humanly possible would be ranked at the very top? And that both of them would have some ties to him? Of course, Aina and Minerva were certainly city-toppling beauties. If Leonel wasn't so biased, he would have to admit that Minerva was no less beautiful than Aina. But there were plenty of beauties of this same exact standard in the God Realm, and many of them were far more established than Aina and Minerva as well. The fact that two human-like beauties would be ranked at the top, both of them would have connections to him, and both of them would be completely new additions... Who were the Sylvans trying to fool here? Obviously, it was a method of targeting him. It was an open scheme that someone with the slightest bit of intelligence could see through. Surely, Minerva was smart enough to see through it too, and that was likely why she had said what she said. "At least they're smart, putting my wife number one." Leonel nodded. "Your wife is number two."

"I'm going to kill them all."

Leonel's dangerous aura shook the world again. The Sylvans weren't only intelligent; they were very clearly shameless. Logically, if they wanted to put him in the most amount of danger, placing Aina number one would be far more effective. He couldn't think of this as anything other than something they had done on purpose for no other reason than to piss him off. Nilrem burst into another fit of laughter. Was this what they called an open scheme? He knew what it was, but he jumped right in anyway. Ah, to be young and in love. Beautiful indeed. Leonel's figure flickered, and he began to collect the things he needed one after another. He didn't hold back in the slightest, but as Nilrem watched him, his expression only became weirder and weirder. "What are you trying to do, exactly? This is nothing like your last path."

"Do I look like I can follow my last path?"

"Well, no. But it's not impossible to..."

"Don't wanna hear it. I don't want anything to do with that stuff anymore."

"Hey, hey, hey. Just because you've been scorned by love once doesn't mean you should give up on it."

"What the hell are you talking about, Merlin."

"I hear your grandmother's a real hot tamale, you wouldn't mind if I shot a few shots, would you?"

"Have at it. If you come back with your dick and balls intact, I might actually respect you."

"Is this how you treat your master? Do you know how many people want to be taught by me?" Nilrem asked, aghast. "Speaking of which, what happened to Candle and Vice?"

"What? You want to make use of my hard work? At least take me to dinner first before you try to fuck me."

"You know, you make a lot of sexual jokes around someone you call a kid. You have something to tell me?" Leonel gave him a glance for the first time in a while. Nilrem was left speechless. This kid... could really anger someone to death. Silence fell as Nilrem's tongue was rendered immobile. An hour later, Leonel finally seemed to be finished, and Nilrem looked at him with a stern gaze different from what he had done before. "Are you sure?"

"When am I ever not sure?" Leonel responded. "Want me to list them?"

Leonel shook his head and chuckled. "This is the path for me. No one will be able to take what's mine again... not before my spear and bow."

Chapter 3036: Tackle

Leonel's intentions were clear. He would build around the one thing that could never be taken away from him, his Spear and Bow Sovereignty.

No matter what machinations there were, no matter what schemes, as long as his spear could pierce through them and his arrow could shoot through them, there would never be anything to worry about.

They would become the foundation of his strength, and everything else would only be extras to their flourishing.

In truth, he would have to thank the Demoness. The Dream Asura bloodline in him was like a stench that he could not remove without harming himself. Now that it had been done for him, he would never have to consider it again.

When his foundation was reaffirmed and rebuilt, he would then be able to use it as the new core of his being and rebuild himself back up to his former talent.

It could be said that only the Dream Asura Bloodline was taken from him, but the problem was that it was the mesh that had allowed all his other talents to work together and multiply the effort of the other talents around it.

Without it, he had lost the core of his being, and now his talents were just as scattered as they had been in the past. No... it was even worse now because his Dream Force talent was no longer as potent as it had been in the past.

Before, even when his methods were scattered and unfocused, he was still able to use his mind a great deal. Of course, it was still far weaker than when his Dream Asura bloodline was activated, but it was still much stronger than it was now.

Now, though, that wasn't possible. He would have to rebuild a new center of his power, and without the former potency of his Dream Force and his weakened body, it would be even more difficult.

His Spear and Bow Force were already unruly before, not allowing him to properly control them. Now, it would certainly be worse.

But that was when Leonel had a thought. What if, instead of taking this as a bad thing... he chose to treat it as a good thing instead?

He would use the clash of his Bow and Spear Sovereignties to refine his body, and it would become the new foundation of his Metal Body.

The benefits of taking such a path were obvious.

If rather than using Metal, he used Weapon Forces, he would be able to heal himself just by gathering more Weapon Forces from the surroundings.

His body would become as tough as any weapon. Rather than being an unrefined, unprocessed metal, it would be able to take any metals that he did process, giving them a sharpness and robustness that they never had before.

If he succeeded, using his Weapon Sovereignties would also become possible again because he would not only be more in tune with them, but his body would also be more equipped to handle any backlash until he had truly fully controlled them.

The benefits were clear, but there was also one major drawback to all of this.

Danger.

Great danger.

It could be said that taking this step was like walking a tightrope of life and death. Letting his Weapon Forces rampage around his body was akin to having true chaos in him. It would be exceptionally easy for him to be ripped apart beyond repair.

But Leonel didn't hesitate to take this step at all.

What happened back then, although he didn't regret it, was a humiliation. He had been forced to rely on a Bloodline given to him by a woman he hated to the very core of his being, only for her to thank him and then take it away.

He would never allow something like that to happen again. His power would be built by his own hands.

He could still remember the version of himself that was so complacent and lazy. He couldn't find the motivation to do anything because it all came so easily.

Now, he was on the other side of that.

Back when he activated his Dream Asura Bloodline, Leonel could feel that he could easily form his Dharma and Idol right then and there. His mental capacity was at an unimaginable level, and it was like everything he had ever learned could be easily consolidated with a thought.

But he hadn't taken that step. Not only would it not have helped, but he didn't want its help.

That consolidation would have been the culmination of the Demoness' work, not his own.

This time, everything would be built by his own two hands.

"Alright. If that's your choice, show me the technique you're working on and I'll help you refine it. You're still a little too simple-minded to do this on your own. I can imagine all the mistakes already."

Leonel rolled his eyes, but he didn't reject it. He might as well put this man to work for something. His insights shouldn't be too bad either.

The two walked out, ignoring the cold sweat of the guards.

"Where's my wife?" Leonel asked. He had long since noticed that the Segmented Cube wasn't with him. He didn't believe for a moment that his grandfather had taken it, so it should be in Aina's hands.

"Where do you think? On a battlefield somewhere."

"Fighting against who?"

"The Four Great Families, of course."

Leonel nodded.

"She's probably already on her way back, but that'll make a lot of people angry."

"Why's that?" "Well, she's kind of the core of her army right now."

"Makes sense," Leonel chuckled.

The master-disciple duo were casually chatting until they were suddenly blocked by three figures. They had entered a garden and were following along the walkway back to Leonel's living quarters. Leonel himself was already thinking about his next steps after he finished this first refinement when these people appeared.

Though he didn't know who they were, the gold hair and green eyes told the entire story.

However, just as they were about to speak, there was a blur of red that suddenly passed by.

Leonel couldn't even react before a delicate fragrance assaulted his nose and a familiar beauty tackled him.

Chapter 3037: "Me"

"Oof..."

Leonel stumbled backward and almost fell over before catching himself. Or rather, he thought he caught himself before a sneaky foot hit the back of his heel and he was sent tumbling over.

He didn't have the chance to give Nilrem a glare before he hit the ground. However, the beauty in his arms didn't seem to care in the slightest.

Aina didn't say anything, and her sobs were mostly silent, but Leonel didn't need to hear them to feel them. She hugged him so tightly that he thought he might suffocate, but he really couldn't bring himself to say anything about it. He could only hold her waist and rub her back, slowly controlling his own emotions.

He wasn't the only one who had lost people, and his death would have hit Aina no less than what Leonel was experiencing right now.

All things considered, he didn't really care very much about how he, himself, was feeling. He had already decided to be the bedrock that would hold up the skies, so that was what he would be... especially for his own wife.

"Don't you three know that it's rude to stare?" Nilrem asked the three gentlemen that had come to block Leonel's path.

Well, it was hard to look at them like gentlemen at all. That was because, due to how fast Aina had blown by them, they had mostly ended up sprawled on the ground.

They had only barely managed to pick themselves up and were already sporting ugly expressions when Nilrem spoke.

Looking at the man who was sneaking glances at Leonel and Aina as though he was enjoying the show as well, they couldn't help but feel incomparably aggrieved on the inside. But they still didn't dare to say anything to this man.

Instead, they all politely greeted him, storing away their dissatisfaction in the depths of their hearts.

"Senior, I'm Alric Fawkes. Pleased to meet you. I hope you'll forgive me for my earlier rudeness."

"I'm Cian Fawkes, please accept my apologies."

"I'm Mund Fawkes..."

Nilrem hardly gave them a glance. He had met these three before, and he had the memory of an expert, let alone the fact he was also a Savant of Dream Force. He only needed to hear their names once to remember them.

They were a trio of half-brothers born around the same time to the current Third Imperial Prince of the Empire. This was the third-born male heir to Gervaise, who was obviously born two males later than the only uncle Leonel had had any interaction with until now... well, the only uncle of the Fawkes family line.

As for his Uncle Montez, he still wasn't sure where he was.

Not only did he know their names, he knew their exact lineage and their relation to the throne. But these three insisted on introducing themselves every single time they appeared as though they were afraid that he wouldn't remember.

It seems that they couldn't take a hint. It wasn't that he didn't remember, it was that he couldn't be bothered to exchange pleasantries with them.

Eventually, at some point, Leonel and Aina stopped being all lovey-dovey. Well, it seemed like that was the case for Leonel, but Aina still practically wanted to bury herself into his embrace, pressing herself against the side of his body and holding onto his arm as though it was dear life.

She looked up at his side profile as though checking and double-checking to ensure that this was real and not just another dream. She didn't even spare Nilrem a glance, let alone the three little princes.

Finally, it was Leonel that seemed to have to deal with them.

"Who are you?" Leonel asked as though he hadn't heard their earlier introductions.

The three frowned and looked at Leonel all at once. They sized him up, but whether it was from his clothing to his strength, nothing seemed up to par. Even until now, Leonel was still wearing his silk robes and boxers as though he hadn't been frequenting the most important areas of the Empire.

"You are Leonel Morales?"

They seemed to emphasize Leonel's last name as though to draw a clear line.

They weren't the only ones who disdained Leonel's choice in last name. Even those born from Imperial Princesses still took on the Fawkes family name. It was an enormous shame that the strongest of the Imperial Princesses had actually taken on the name of another... a dead man at that.

Leonel could practically read their minds, but since they didn't speak the words aloud, his expression didn't change, nor did he show any anger.

"Are you here to waste my time with worthless questions?"

"No." Alric said plainly. "We didn't come here to waste time with you at all. Commander Aina deserted her post and came here. We were only on our way to reprimand her when we saw you."

"Alright, you've been seen. You can go now."

Alric's gaze flashed with a malevolent light.

"It seems that you are very new to the Fawkes and how we do things. Here, we work only on what can be done and what you've done lately. Right now, you are as useless as—"

"Finished?" Leonel asked, still feeling bored.

However, Alric didn't seem to care as he continued. "No. As your cousin, I'll advise you that there are some things that are better left to a clean break. The sooner you cut them off, the better. Or else it will only lead to further heartache in the future.

"The Fawkes shouldn't allow the useless to reproduce with geniuses. You are wasting her prime years, and if you waste her womb as well, there'll be a place for you in the blasphemers of the bloodline."

"Oh? And who would be better?"

"Me."

All three of them spoke at the same time and then glared toward one another. They were nothing if not confident.

Leonel nodded slowly, meeting each one of their gazes.

"Kill them."

Before they could be surprised, Aina had already moved.

Chapter 3038: Real Demons

Three heads flew into the skies. Each one of their faces was marred with shock as though they couldn't even believe what had just happened.

They couldn't even last a single exchange with Aina. The gap between them was so impossibly large that it couldn't be fathomed. Plus, they weren't close-range experts to begin with. The Fawkes were all Dream Force experts.

But that was what made it all the more amusing. They were Dream Force experts, and yet they couldn't sense Leonel's killing intent.

Maybe it was fine if they couldn't sense Leonel's. In fact, maybe they had sensed it and just ignored it because they couldn't be bothered to care about a "weakling" like him.

But to be unable to react to Aina's movement just went to show how ridiculous they were.

They couldn't hold a candle to her whether that be in strength or prying away her love, and yet they wanted to steal her from him? What kind of sick joke was that? Who did they think they were?

Plop. Plop. Plop.

The three dull sounds of heads hitting the pavement and blood spurting echoed in the silence.

Nilrem sighed. "You shouldn't have done that."

Aina had already returned to Leonel's side as though nothing had happened. In fact, she would be fine with the skies falling if it meant that she could be with Leonel.

The only reason she hadn't killed these people before was because they were Leonel's family. But if Leonel didn't care about this, then why should she? She didn't even hesitate, and she was swift and ruthless.

As for the battlefield, she cared even less. The only reason she had joined in the first place was because sitting by Leonel's side, anxiously waiting for him to wake up, wasn't helping her at all. Plus, it was a chance to vent her hatred onto the Four Great Families, so why not take the opportunity?

But now that Leonel was awake, none of that mattered anymore. She had already decided long ago that Leonel was more important to her than revenge. If Leonel didn't want her to go to the battlefield, she wouldn't. It was that simple to her.

"Why not?" Leonel asked casually.

"Have you ever heard that blood is thicker than water?"

"Does blood also make their skulls thicker too?"

Nilrem was rendered speechless. He already knew after Leonel said this that he truly didn't give a damn.

Leonel was a person who didn't care an ounce about his own mother until he awakened Dream Force and realized that she loved him no less than his father did.

If he could entirely ignore his mother, who he had known nothing about until then, while others in his situation might have dreamed of meeting their own, why would he care about cousins who he also knew next to nothing about?

No, he knew worse than nothing. He knew that they wanted to steal his wife away from him and use her like some sort of breeding cow.

For that alone, they deserved death.

The only time that Aina had ever shown true fear to him in her entire life other than when it seemed like he might die was when she faced the Puppet Master.

It was her dream to have a big family, to be in control of her own womb and birth the beautiful dream that she had been hoping and praying for all her life.

When the Puppet Master threatened to take that away, she had truly broken down.

Leonel could still remember her trembling on his back that day he dropped a city from the skies.

That was the kind of fury that Aina could rile up in him. Back then, he wasn't even at the Fourth Dimension. If he could make a city fall from the skies then while he was so weak, these people didn't want to imagine what he would do now.

Nilrem sighed again. "Fine. You don't care about family, but know that there will be a fallout from this. There are rules that you can't break casually no matter who you are, and your grandfather can protect you only to an extent. After all, these are also his grandsons that you just killed, and if he bends the rules for you, then the laws of the Empire will begin to be twisted and manipulated by others.

"This is the first case of fratricide in the Empire's history. How he deals with this will set a precedent moving forward. Unless you want the entire imperial court to become a den of murdering and scheming, you should probably want to be punished heavily as well."

Leonel chuckled. "Fratricide? I'm not the one who killed them."

Nilrem was rendered speechless again.

Leonel grinned and pointed to a finger sleeve on his wife's finger.

"I hear the Segmented Cube is nice and cozy. Why don't you have a look?"

"You little shit..." Nilrem was speechless.

Leonel's laughter echoed, but it sounded like the bells of a demon in Nilrem's ears.

...

Leonel placed the last head on a pike, then pulled out a thin piece of rotting wood that was about two or so meters in length.

A flame appeared on his fingers, then he began to write.

Aina stood to the side, covering her mouth and trying not to laugh any harder than she already was.

After Leonel was finished, he took a few steps back then began to admire his handiwork.

He nodded to himself. "Not bad. Not bad."

The sign read:

'Here lie three scum of the Earth. Known for their dirty deeds and attempts at wife stealing, the Heavens have decided to punish them. I can only say that I, Merlin, am as broad as the Heavens and magnanimous as the clouds. Do not thank me for my actions; you may worship me instead.'

The pair of husband and wife stood there laughing together. It should have been an eerie sight, three heads pierced through their fleshly necks. And yet, the two didn't seem to mind it or the scent of blood.

From a third party's viewing angle, they truly did seem to be the real Demons in this situation.

Chapter 3039: Do You?

"Is this enough of an answer?" Leonel spoke with a grin, whispering into Aina's ear. Unfortunately, she couldn't answer between the pants.

They had left the scene of the heads on pikes long ago. Aina wanted to talk about how Leonel was feeling, and Leonel showed her in his own way. Weakened or not, at least on this battlefield, he was still number one.

Still panting, Aina grabbed the sides of Leonel's face, looking into his eyes. It was like she was trying to check if he really was okay, but all she could see was a warm smile looking back at her.

Inexplicably, she couldn't help but tear up again. Leonel didn't seem to be faking it or holding anything back, but that only made her cry harder.

"Hey, hey, hey, don't cry. People are going to think I'm bullying you."

Leonel laughed. The last thing he wanted was for a woman to be crying while he was inside her. The misunderstandings would lose him his head.

"Didn't you hear? The whole God Realm wants to marry my wife now. If they find out I made you cry, they'll chop me limb from limb."

Aina laughed between her tears, then suddenly recalled something. She looked at her left hand and pouted, a hint of disappointment blooming in her eye.

Leonel looked over at it and smiled, pressing his hand to hers.

On her ring finger, where their soul bond should have been, there was what looked like a burn mark. That moment must have been incredibly painful for Aina, but she was more focused on grieving for his death than worrying about her own suffering.

This was what happened when a soul bond was broken. It was a pain that one felt not just to the flesh, but to the very soul. One could only make a single one in their lifetime, and now that it was burned away, that piece of Aina's soul was gone.

Leonel looked at the burnt soul bond. His smile was still there, but there was a flickering light in his eyes that was hard to ignore.

He knew that the former him would already have a solution. He could practically feel it, as though it was on the tip of his tongue. But no matter how hard he thought, he couldn't figure it out.

Maybe it would be better to feel that there was no solution at all... or maybe he was just overestimating his former self. It was just that he couldn't ever remember not having a solution to a matter like this, and he had to admit... it was frustrating.

However, he didn't allow it to show on his face, nor did he let that frustration fester. He held his wife's hand and held her close. He didn't make any promises out loud, but there was one in his heart.

He wouldn't let his wife go around with others thinking that she was a widow. He would find a solution eventually, no matter how long it took.

Aina could no longer read Leonel's mind as easily as before, and without their soul connection, she couldn't take advantage of his Forces either. But she could still feel that Leonel was going through something she couldn't understand or be a part of, and that was why she was so emotional.

However, she also realized that being emotional wasn't going to help them. It would just make Leonel waste more time trying to comfort her when, in reality, he should be spending his efforts on other things.

"What do you want to do?" Aina asked, her gaze filled with earnestness. It sounded as though she was ready to hop into battle right here and now.

"You really want to ask questions like that right now?" Leonel spoke and suddenly moved, catching Aina off guard.

Aina yelped a bit, a moan escaping her lips.

"What was that? I can't hear you. Did you say something?" Leonel brought his ear to her lips and got a bite to his earlobe for his troubles.

The two laughed and embraced one another for a long while, seemingly oblivious to the fact that there was soon to be a great deal of chaos that was about to come right to their doorstep.

"My father is here," Aina said at some point.

"Huh, what?!" Leonel froze, looking around as though the man was right behind him.

Aina burst into a fit of laughter. "Since when were you afraid of my father?"

She seemed to recall that the relationship between the two wasn't very good at all. In fact, Leonel was more than willing to be antagonistic when it was needed. So this response was a surprise to her.

"I'm afraid of what any man would do after seeing a man balls deep in his daughter."

Aina pinched Leonel's waist from both sides hard.

"What are you saying!? I didn't mean he was here right now!" Aina said exasperatedly.

Leonel laughed. "So you mean that he was with the old man all this time?"

"Yes," Aina nodded.

"Why'd you bring him up? You want me to come with you to go see him?"

Aina nodded again.

"Okay," Leonel replied with a smile. "You sounded so serious, I thought it was something bad. If you just want me to bully him a bit, leave it to me."

Aina playfully hit his chest, shaking her head. This guy could never be serious.

Her feelings about her own father were quite complicated after learning the truth behind his history with her mother. It was honestly very difficult for her to forgive him.

But... after what happened with Nilrem taking the fall this time, she felt that she and Leonel needed another backer, someone who could protect them if things ever truly went bad.

For Leonel's sake... she felt that this was the best way to help him. Plus, she really did want a real family...

She looked up to meet Leonel's eyes and felt as though he had seen right through her.

"Do you want a baby?" he asked softly.

Chapter 3040: Something to Fight For

Aina was stunned by the question. Then there was such a sudden rapid fire of emotion on her face that even Leonel was having a hard time keeping up. There was shock,

then excitement, then worry, then more excitement, and then apprehension, then there was guilt.

"Leonel, I—"

Leonel shook his head, stopping her. He knew what she wanted to say.

They had agreed to have children a long while ago, but there was always some tacit understanding between them to always delay it. Aina had even said that she wanted to wait until her friends were at that point in their relationship as well.

But both of them were smart. They knew that it would be a foolish decision to do such a thing, so they had always found good reasons.

But when Leonel thought about it... really thought about it, he couldn't help but wonder. Would it ever not be foolish? Or was he always overthinking things?

It was funny. Now that his mind was slower, not overrun by logic all the time, he felt far freer.

No matter how he looked at it, there would maybe never be a right time to have children. Even in some potential future where he finally killed the Demoneess and had his revenge, the Northern Star was still a looming problem that wasn't going anywhere.

After the actions of the Primordial Terror, Existence's time had been shortened to just a few thousand years at best. The situation had been mitigated somewhat after its death, and some balance had been returned, but Existence still wouldn't have much more than ten thousand or so years left.

To the wider world, this kind of timeline might as well have been a single blink.

So what would he say then? That he couldn't have children until the impossible task of reversing the flow of the Northern Star was accomplished?

Wouldn't he then have spent his entire life fighting? Having spent every waking moment fighting against some monster or shadow in the distance? How could that be considered a life at all?

Leonel and Aina had been born on Earth. Even with the advancements in technology, they had only expected to ever live a few hundred years at most.

Now, they had several thousand to work with. Wasn't that something worth cherishing? Why should they waste it?

Sure, they loved to battle... but that shouldn't be all they did.

He wanted to build a family with his wife... and he was willing to stand tall and have a blade prepared for anyone who wanted to stop it.

"... We've waited long enough," Leonel said with a smile.

"But..." Aina's eyes brimmed with tears again. She really wanted a family, she really did. But she also didn't want to add to Leonel's burden. "... There's too much danger, and I don't know what being pregnant might do to me, I might be weaker, I might not be able to help you as much..."

Leonel stroked Aina's cheek with a gentle touch.

"There'll always be danger. But I heard dad strength is crazy."

Aina laughed through her tears, and eventually she nodded. This was what she had wanted for a long while.

Of course, she wanted at least ten more after this one, but why not start with one and see how things would go? Even if they only had one child, she would cherish him or her with all the heart she had to give.

She kissed her husband, her heart fluttering.

The two quickly lost track of time again.

...

Aina giggled. "... We only need to do it once. I can handle the rest."

"No, no, I need to make certain that you're properly bred."

"What am I? A puppy?!"

"Puppies can have babies. You're my little obedient bitch, though..."

Aina's moans swallowed up the rest of her words. As expected of his little masochist, she lost her mind the moment he said those words.

...

Leonel didn't bother to count how much time passed. Eventually, he laid Aina down to rest and a smile spread across his face. He felt as light as air.

He rubbed his wife's belly although there was nothing to see just yet. He knew that with her control, not only could she conceive whenever she wanted, she could even pick out the perfect pairing of their Genes to give their child the best life possible.

This was the reason he had wanted more than one. The larger the selection she had, the better it would be...

Of course, that was just his official, corporate answer. As for the real answer... well, he would keep that to himself. Who asked his wife to be so hot?

...

The smile from Leonel's expression vanished into a deathly sort of determination. The cold coming from his gaze was so frigid that the air seemed to shudder.

He entered the Segmented Cube and reacted just in time for a little girl to rush into his arms.

His coldness dimmed a bit as he smiled, patting Anastasia's head.

"What are you crying about? Aren't I here?"

Anastasia used his shirt to wipe away her tears, sniffing as she tried to regain her bearings.

Leonel's sternness returned. "Anastasia, I need a strong time warp, one stronger than the pods. You can get rid of them if that's what it takes. I need a space to temper my body."

"How long?" Anastasia asked.

"Just give me a method to contact you when I'm finished."

"Okay."

Leonel stripped himself down as Aina prepared.

The method he was going to use now took time, more time than he was willing to give it. Normally, time dilation couldn't be used for training because it would distort Forces. Unless you had exceptionally high Time Force affinity, it was impossible.

But Leonel wasn't training his comprehension. All he wanted was a space to put himself under the greatest pain he had likely ever endured in his life.

At that moment, he had a flashback... it was the day he first awakened his Metal Synergy Lineage Factor.

He had almost given up beneath the pain and his soul nearly collapsed. But he had managed to pull through.

Since then, he had experienced a great deal of things... and now he had much more to fight for than the kid who cared about no one other than himself.

This time, he would truly be going all out.

It was time to see the power of the Weapon Forces that had called down the Idol Battlefield.