

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 3161: A True

Leonel appeared in the outside world, yet another great pressure falling on his shoulders as he took deep breaths. Blood dripped down his body, but he continued to step forward calmly.

He began another slow walk forward, his spear held lightly in his hands. He was already focused on the next battle, his Spear Force swirling around him in an odd Domain that seemed to both be one with the world and want to shred it apart at the same time.

Suddenly, he came to a stop.

He looked up to find that his path ahead was blocked.

Indeed, much like in the Valiant Heart Zone, there was nothing stopping those taking part in this trial from attacking one another directly. After all, it was free reign and true chaos here.

It was just that everyone here was focused on trying to get to the end.

Who didn't know that they would likely be stuck here for years? Without at least that much effort, how could they hope to make it to the end of this nigh-endless corridor?

Rather than a rule, it was more like a self-enforced restriction. Who would want to waste energy on internal conflict now?

Plus, this was the best training arena that they could ever ask for. It would be a shame if you lost your life before you had to.

However, Leonel barely had time to register the fact that the opponent before him was actually a Cloud Race existence before he realized something else.

'Huh? There's an odd fluctuation here. Don't tell me...'

The Cloud Race spearman shot forward, his Cloud Figure waving behind him in a clouded mist. His spear flickered and seemed to vanish.

Leonel had already been through dozens of statues by now. He had created several Ability Index abilities to read through spear techniques, and he understood this man's in an instant.

He was using a change of speed. He started his attack with one gear before he accelerated, hitting another in an instant.

That sudden acceleration would catch most opponents off guard, and the result would be almost as good as an attack from the blind side.

But...

PUCHI!

The light sound of Leonel's footsteps echoed as he walked by the man. It wasn't until he had already disappeared into the next statue that the Cloud Race man collapsed to the ground.

Leonel stepped out of the statue, his breathing a bit uneven.

Many hours later, he found yet another person blocking his path. This time, he was able to truly confirm what was happening.

The Idol Battlefield was actually exchanging a chance to skip ahead of statues for his head. It would have been amusing if it wasn't so completely ridiculous and irritating.

The reason Leonel could tell this was because there was an odd energy around the people that came to block him, something that looked like a partial teleportation.

These people were actually behind him, by far, but they had been suddenly placed ahead of him and then forced to fight him.

It was foolish.

Leonel believed that the Idol Battlefield was actually quite cruel. The people coming from behind him had no chance against him.

Even the people ahead were mostly only ahead because he had taken his sweet time analyzing the forest they had originally been transported to. In addition, now, he was also taking his time to analyze every spearman he came across and incorporating their techniques into his own while bettering them. This made him much slower than others who simply relied on their own techniques as well.

This was to say that if you were ahead of him, you likely didn't have much of a chance anyway. But if you were behind him even with such a handicap, you stood no chance at all.

Now, he was being blocked by a Nomad.

Honestly, he was surprised by this as well, because he didn't think that there would be Mortal Races here either.

What Leonel didn't know was that the Idol Battlefield had given a great deal of Spear and Bow experts a chance to come, accelerating their progress, all because of him.

The irony was that these people only had this chance because of him, but now they were also throwing their lives away because of him.

A head was lopped into the air, clattering to the ground in a splatter as Leonel made his way past. The fatigue was beginning to accumulate on Leonel's body, but his steps remained just as determined. He wouldn't allow a single thing to slow his footsteps. Not one.

Slowly and steadily, he made his way forward.

Every time he defeated another great of the past, the color in his eyes seemed to grow deeper. The violet hues around him grew darker, not in a sinister way, but in a fuller, rounder sense.

The pressure he faced every time also increased, not just in the skill of the spearman, but also the aftereffects.

Without fail, every time he defeated one of them, a pressure would descend from the statues as though they wanted to force him to his knees.

The further he got from the statues, the weaker the pressure became, but as he came across stronger and stronger statues, the distance from which they could pressure him likewise increased. Because of that, it became harder and harder to keep a steady rhythm to his movement, and his body seemed to want to collapse at any moment.

Yet, as the blood continued to accumulate along his body, he didn't even frown in the slightest. His expression didn't change as he faced off against one expert after another.

Cool and in control, his Spear Force flourished.

His hair began to flutter in the air even without the slightest hint of wind, releasing plumes of gorgeous violet light.

Every time his heart beat, an echo of Spear Force would rotate in the air.

The surging might around him continued to grow until he found yet another existence blocking his

path.

But this time...

It was a Beastman. A True God Race.

The growling head of a Bear Beastman stared Leonel down.

Chapter 3162: Bear Beastman

Blood dripped down Leonel's body, mixing with his sweat and the blood of his previous enemies. The spear in his hand fluctuated between different forms, seemingly all on its own. Sometimes it was highly flexible, reaching a length of over three meters. But at other times, it was stocky and solid, so rigid at two meters that it could hold up a mountain without bending in the slightest. Sometimes, it was even so short that it looked as though it should only be in the hands of a child.

The Bear Beastman looked at the spear, his gaze narrowing as his whiskers whipped back and forth beneath his hot breath.

The Beastman was still surprised that it had been sent here for the sake of a human.

As a God Race, when had they ever taken Humans seriously? So why was the Idol Battlefield doing so?

However, seeing that fluctuating spear, the Beastman felt danger. His animalistic instincts made his hair stand on end, and his five-meter-tall body crouched slightly.

Given his already ridiculous height, he towered over Leonel. And though he had bent over now, the increase to the volume of his fur made him somehow seem even larger.

A heavy spear rested in his thick hands, veins pulsing with semi-golden blood running up the back of his hands and his forearm.

Although he was a bear man, much of his lower half seemed human. It was just that he was covered in dense hair that made it seem like he had fur.

Leonel, however, never paused his steps.

Even when he noticed the Beastman, he continued to move forward, his spear fluctuating between its various states as though he was trying to decide which path to take.

Then he suddenly vanished.

The Beastman reacted quickly, swinging down his spear at the same time.

BANG!

Leonel found his knees almost collapsing beneath him. The strength of a Beastman wasn't to be underestimated. The strength of one that was in a hyper state of focus and attentiveness was on a level even higher than just that.

However, their spears only met for a brief instant before Leonel's spear struck out in the same spot another nine consecutive times with a wrist vibration so fast that it looked like he had never changed his stance at all.

From a dominant position, the Beastman felt as though Leonel slowly overwhelmed his power, and then suddenly, the Beastman was on his back foot, his spear shooting into the air almost over his head.

However, at the same time, Leonel was still forced to take a step back, his arms and wrists trembling.

Leonel's foot planted itself into the ground, and he shot forward again.

A battle erupted between the two, and Leonel's style seemed to change time and time again.

Suddenly, the Beastman felt as though he was being sucked into a vortex of footwork. His spear became like a magnet against Leonel's, but every time he wanted to overwhelm the latter with power, his spear would vibrate, and he would suddenly find himself repelled.

Had the Beastman done more than overwhelm his opponents with a shocking amount of power, he would have already noticed that Leonel was subtly beginning to fuse together the aspects of the previous challenges.

But when the Beastman had faced off against those statues earlier, he had killed them in a single strike. He didn't have the time to analyze what they were doing, and as such, he didn't understand the kind of shocking prowess and comprehension that Leonel was displaying.

Leonel's steps suddenly became lighter. He moved like the wind, his spear leaving afterimages in the air as he crossed from one side of the bear man to the other and then back again.

The Beastman, to his credit, was extremely sharp. He wasn't just a man of raw strength; otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to make it so far.

Despite his overwhelming power, his strikes were precise and controlled. None of his power leaked out, and while there should have been reverberating BANGS and shattering winds, the collision of their weapons was highly muted.

Leonel hadn't originally felt the need to take anything from this Bear Beastman, but he subconsciously began to, as though his mind could seek out and find the worthy spear techniques all on its own.

The muscle control, the precision, the solidified, unbreakable aura.

Leonel's steps began even after as though he didn't know fatigue. His ability to control the muscle fibers of his body was far better than this Beastman could even begin to fathom.

The moment he analyzed and took the man's spear technique, it was as though he had suddenly taken an enormous leap in power.

Leonel was obsessed with controlling his Forces better, manipulating them to a greater extent, but how much time and effort had he put into the raw, explosive power of his body? Its flexibility, its dexterity, its speed, and agility?

Almost none at all.

The extent to which he used his body was when he practiced Metal Body, and that was purely for the sake of increasing his personal defenses and strength.

Maybe he wasn't particularly wrong to take such a path. After all, the importance of Forces far outweighed practically anything else in this world.

When one started to be able to control the Force in the atmosphere, the body became even less important than that. After all, there was hardly a need to use one's internal Nodal Pathways at that point.

Even with an Innate Node, it was far easier to use it as a conduit to pull in more Force from the atmosphere than to use the Force from it directly.

However, fighting this Beastman, Leonel seemed to comprehend something...

His speed accelerated once again. He was practically a hurricane spinning around the man, his spear jetting out akin to the scythe of a reaper.

BANG! BANG! BANG! SIIIIIIING!

With a sudden flare, Leonel cut the Bear Beastman's head off, landing on the ground behind him.

Chapter 3163: Short Spears

PLOP.

Blood spurted and rained down upon Leonel as his almost foggy violet hair danced. The blood that landed on his head was burnt to ash, but those that fell down his shoulders and body began to cake, falling in a rain of their own.

Leonel took deep breaths, not looking back a single time before he continued forward.

Even in the face of the blood running down his own, his eyes shone like bright torches.

Leonel continued to pass through one statue after another, but his battles were becoming longer and longer, especially when, from time to time, existences of powerful Races would suddenly block his path.

Since the Beastman, no other God Race had appeared, but several Demi-Gods had.

Leonel wasn't too surprised by this. The Beastman had a very unique makeup, and the number of them who used weapons was quite low comparatively speaking. As such, it was far more common for them to use fists, claws, and other techniques. So the odds they would be on this Spear Path was low. When it came to pure Spear Force comprehension, although the Beastman was stronger than the opponents he faced next, he was weaker in terms of spear technique.

It could be said that the Beastman's 'technique' was more just body control, which wasn't really a spear method at all.

It was no wonder why the Idol Battlefield sent him in earlier. But ironically, that made the opponents Leonel faced next even easier to handle and deal with.

None of them could even begin to give him the same challenge that the Beastman had.

But, by the same token, the statues were becoming progressively more difficult. The more stubborn Leonel was about using their own techniques to defeat them, the more he suffered as a result.

The wounds that accumulated along his body were only growing more exaggerated, and it seemed like he might truly collapse at any moment.

Leonel entered a new statue, his breathing somewhat haggard.

'Im?'

Across from him, there was a man. He was quite small and skinny in stature, standing at only 5'6" or so and being quite lanky at the same time.

No, it was lankiness, but his body was extremely compact. He was probably not more than 120 or 130 pounds in total, with most of his mass being made up of lean muscle fiber.

However, what was odd wasn't his looks. He just looked like a normal humanoid, albeit with odd greyish skin.

No, what was truly odd was the fact he was wielding two short spears. And as though those spears weren't enough for him, his back held a holster that fanned out what looked like six more of them. Leonel blinked for a moment before the spear in his hand flickered and split into two as well. Soon, he too had a fan of six short spears on his back.

The spears were maybe four feet or so long, quite short for a spear. At the same time, their blades made up a third of their bodies, making Leonel wonder why this man didn't just use swords instead. The idea of dual wielding spears was stupid to Leonel. Dual wielding required a flexibility that Spear Force didn't usually have.

Even when you were wielding a hyper-flexible spear, the main tenets of Spear Force remained. As much as he didn't understand dual wielding, he understood the need for extra spears even less. Was he planning on losing his spears mid-battle? Or did he plan on throwing them?

Leonel wouldn't mind the latter. As high as his affinity with the Bow was, his affinity for throwing weapons was even higher than that. It was just that the tradeoff in battle wasn't usually worth it for him, so he stuck with the bow.

Suddenly, the man attacked.

'Fast...'

The spear appeared before Leonel's throat in an instant, but his gaze couldn't help but flicker with disdain. He really was wielding the spear like it was a sword.

The moment Leonel had this thought, he ruthlessly stamped it out.

Respect and Persistence.

Leonel's focus returned, and he took a step back, parrying the spear to the side with the flat of one of his short spears. However, the short man's second spear quickly followed up.

The battle quickly became awkward for Leonel. He had perfect control of both of his hands, and he was ambidextrous in that way. But he still wasn't used to using two weapons like this.

Coordinating them into a single rhythm wasn't easy, especially when he was trying to copy an opponent whose style he didn't understand.

If he was just relying on himself, he would have figured it out already. After all, with how many ways

he could split his mind, controlling two weapons was as easy as pie.

But the style of the man wasn't something he could grasp. It wasn't changing constantly, but its rhythm was just... off.

No matter how much he looked at it, it didn't feel like this man was a Spear Force master. It was like he was a Sword Force master who forced himself to use the spear.

Leonel's gaze flickered as a short sword cut across his shoulder. He pivoted to the side and decided to change tactics. Maybe he could get a better understanding of the man's rhythm if he forced him into a defensive posture first.

He spun to the side and thrust a spear right at the man's liver.

To his surprise, the man was even more agile than he expected, leaping into the air barely a half foot and doing a pirouette that caused his blades to clash against Leonel's own not just once, but twice. He landed on the ground lightly and slashed out at Leonel's now completely open chest. Leonel quickly brought up his second short spear but could only block one, despite the fact he had calculated the blocking of both.

However, midair, the man's blades clashed with themselves, changing their trajectory.

Chapter 3164: Because

Chapter 3164 Because

Leonel blocked one blade, and the second cut into his chest deeply, lodging itself into his ribcage and almost ripping down and all the way through.

A flicker of surprise flashed through the man's eyes. The blow hadn't been blocked by Leonel's bones, but rather his heart. This was the first time he had ever seen something so astonishing.

The pain shot through Leonel's body like a spike. He had actually been outmaneuvered.

Sure, it was because he was trying to grasp a style he had never seen before instead of using his own techniques, but it made his rage flare up again.

'What is wrong with me? Focus!'

Though Leonel said this, he knew what the problem was. He was becoming irritable because of his fatigue.

The constant interference by the Idol Battlefield was really pissing him off, but he had nowhere to vent it. It wasn't really the fault of the people targeting him. Most of them didn't even know what they were getting themselves into. And it wasn't even really the fault of these legends of the past either.

The head of the person he really wanted to take was the one who had forced him into this situation in the first place, but he was still so far away from her, and now he was struggling with these small fry she could probably kill with a snap of her finger.

Of course he was frustrated. And the more frustrated he was, the more he leaned on the truest part of himself, the part that wanted to rip through all of these figures with his own techniques, the part that felt that his way was the best way and there was no need at all to learn from these losers, the part that wanted to look down on the world with arrogance and impunity.

That was when it clicked for Leonel.

He had already grasped it before, but he didn't truly understand it until now.

The more he attempted to increase his Spear Force's strength, the more it would begin to impact his psyche.

He had reached this conclusion already, but he had taken it too lightly.

Right now, he wasn't just in a battle against the Demoness; he wasn't just in a battle with the Idol Battlefield; he also wasn't just in a battle with these statues or the fools that targeted him outside...

He was in a battle with himself.

Leonel's hand flashed, and his short spear knocked the man's blade out of his body. He ignored the pain and the gaping wound in his chest, heaving deep breaths as blood leaked down his chin.

He wouldn't allow himself to fall like this.

These words weren't aimed toward the short man or the danger he posed. Instead, it was aimed toward himself, his own psyche, his own mind...

His own flaws.

Part of the burden on his shoulders was himself, and he had to acknowledge that.

He looked down at his spears for a moment before his gaze flashed.

"I hate your path. But I'm going to swallow it anyway!"

Leonel spoke with blazing intent in his eyes, his violet hair fluttering wildly.

With a step, he shot forward, and the two began to clash once again.

They fought across kilometers in the blank white space, forgetting everything as they became one another's whetstone.

Leonel kept pushing. He knew that he hadn't brought out this man's full strength in the slightest bit. Even now, he didn't quite understand the path at all... and it was a long while before he understood just how impossible it was.

This man really wasn't a Spearman. He was a Swordsman.

He was a Swordsman that had taken his sword to the limits of Dharma, and then for an inexplicable reason, switched to Spearmanship.

'I understand!

When Leonel's Ability Index finished constructing the man's past, he grasped what it was.

The reason he couldn't grasp the man's technique was because there was no technique. His path was unpredictability. The more chaos there was in his strikes, the stronger he was. He had even managed to catch Leonel off guard several times in battle.

Leonel had never seen someone clash their weapons against themselves on purpose just to land a hit, and if not for his Innate Node Heart, he would have suffered a lethal wound in that first exchange. And that wasn't the last time in their battle he had faced such a thing.

It was no wonder he had such a hard time with this man. Leonel's battle style had always been based on calculations and deductions. There was very little chaos to his style at all.

The fact that this man would even go so far as to abandon the sword entirely...

After some thought, Leonel made a decision. He shut his Ability Index off, and his eyes seemed to almost become dull, almost as though a lid had been placed on a flickering flame.

This was dangerous, and he knew it.

It wasn't just that his Ability Index was key to analyzing and understanding his opponent's battle style, or the fact he wouldn't be able to rely on Dream Counter to save his life now, but it was also that if his Dream Force wasn't active....

There was nothing to suppress the Path of his Weapon Forces any longer. They would consume him.

At that moment, a new fire lit in Leonel's eyes, and the man was taken aback. The short man felt like he was facing off against a completely different person, a man with arrogance that sank down to his very bones, a man who would stand even above the Northern Star if he was given the chance to and not lost a wink of sleep about it.

The wounds Leonel suffered began to increase explosively, but the chaos of his attacks also increased.

He dug deep, trying to truly understand what this chaos was. He should be able to grasp it better than this man ever could.

Why?

Because he was Leonel Morales.

Chapter 3165: Profound

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Twin spears danced through the air, clashing with one another and each other as often as they did the opponent. Sometimes, it was hard to even tell if they were fighting themselves or an enemy. Sometimes it even looked as though the two spearmen had teamed up to face off against an invisible enemy.

Leonel's spears slowly became faster, sharper, and more incisive. He picked his spots with greater case, and he began to mix in order into the chaos in a way that the short man had never seen before.

Staring into those deep violet eyes, the heart of the man couldn't help but shudder, especially when a crown began to manifest atop Leonel's head all on its own.

Suddenly, the man spun again, and one of his spears was launched from his back. While he was still in the air, he kicked out, his foot landing on the butt of the spear and sending it flying forward like a meteor.

There had been barely three meters separating the two, and the sudden action caught even the arrogant Leonel off guard.

He twisted to the side, but the spear still drilled into his shoulder.

The short man landed on the ground once before launching himself into another pirouette, kicking out once again.

A second spear shot out with shocking speed, but this time Leonel parried it to the side, repeating the actions of the man in quick succession.

However, when Leonel landed on the ground, the spear he had dodged came spiraling toward his back while the one lodged in his shoulder was forcefully ripped out.

The sensory overload was perfect timing, and the spear coming from behind managed to dig into his hamstring at the same moment the one that had been lodged in his shoulder slashed down at his neck.

A new spear dance seemed to erupt as the man kicked out one spear after another, controlling them through mysterious means.

Leonel had never seen Spear Force used like this... Spear Force being used almost as if it were Bow Force...

This man didn't seem to follow any of the rules of Weapon Forces, bending and twisting them as he pleased. But it was odd that he was even seen as a spearman in the first place. It almost felt like he should be put in his own category.

The wounds Leonel was suffering accumulated, but he found himself liking this sort of battle even more than the first phase.

The variables accumulated and short spears flew around.

He was having trouble adapting his Spear Force to control spears at a distance like he might his Bow Force without, well... using Bow Force.

He knew that the moment he used Bow Force in this place, the Idol Battlefield would use it as an excuse to target him once again. But his Spear Force was much too arrogant to be used like Bow Force in the first place.

It seemed like much of the disdain he had for this man was coming directly from his Spear Force,

and his Bow Force seemed particularly unhappy that it wasn't being used at all.

Leonel continuously weathered the storm, facing off against the barrage of attacks as he slowly forced his Spear Force into submission.

He tapped into that odd state of fluctuation his Spear Force had been in when he fought against the Bear Beastman, trying to get it to focus on the flexibility of use and the chaos of it all.

And that was when it finally clicked for him.

His eyes lit up once more, and his Dream Force came back in full force.

"I understand. I understand... I understand..."

Leonel's mumbling didn't slow the speed of his spear, though it didn't speed it up either. However, that wasn't what the short man felt like.

The sudden burst in skill might as well have made it feel like Leonel was accelerating the rate of his attack. The fluidity of his motions suffocated the man, and despite being fluid, they were ironically and contradictorily impossible to track as well.

With fluidity should have come order, not chaos. It was why the man's style was erratic to begin with.

But what he didn't know was that Leonel was a man who was now steeped in chaos. His very being itself was fueled by the existence of chaos. And chaos was his only path to outdoing the woman who had ruled his life for so long.

The short spears that Leonel was having trouble controlling before became strong and solid, zipping with speed and precision.

They all clattered in the air just once before they split into countless paths, slipping by the counters the short man formed with his own.

Fear flickered in the short man's eyes as he realized all of Leonel's short spears could now target him. But he was still a man of many battles.

The short man changed tactics, sending the spears that missed Leonel toward him instead. Since they were going to both attack, they might as well go down together.

What the short man didn't expect was for Leonel to tap the ground once in a motion that was nigh identical to the man's.

His body pirouetted past the first and second, landing on the ground just in time to be above the third and below the fourth. Then, he parried the fifth and sixth with the short

spears in his hands. The short man could only watch in horror, not understanding how Leonel had read through the chaos of his tactics with such unbridled ease.

But he only had the chance to think about it for a moment before he was skewered from all sides. Leonel stood in silence, deep, gashing wounds covering him from head to toe as he looked down toward the ground. One would have thought that he had reached his last legs, and if he was honest with himself, he had.

He had made it so far, but this battle was too difficult, and the rest would only be tougher than this. However, if one looked into his eyes, they were only shining brighter and brighter as he slowly pieced together something profound.

No data found.

- Chapter 3166: Ground Them

Leonel thought about his experience. Even with the pain wrecking his body, it was entirely unable to make him lose his focus. He had experienced worse pain during those decades of seclusion, and he had long since learned to focus through it even before then.

He had come a long way from the young man who almost gave up while awakening his Lineage Factor. Every decision he made after that built upon it perfectly.

Every time he didn't give up, every time he took the harder, less traveled path, every time he faced off against death and laughed in its face...

It had built up into the man that could stand here today, covered in blood and deep wounds, suffering from ruptured organs and fragmented bones...

And yet still having a back that stood as straight as a javelin despite the weight that was pressed onto

it.

Chaos...

It was the thought that had been consuming him for a long while now. He knew that he was an anomaly, and deep within him held a key to overturning the plans of the Demoness. But the feeling was still vague within him.

The combination of his Path of Creation and Destruction was giving him the power he needed ... it was the source of his Chaos.

But how to harness it, how to use it effectively, these were still things that were eluding him.

Leonel had always had a problem with how many paths he had to follow. He was talented in too many aspects, and it was hard to bring them all together in a way that maximized them all.

If he were to abandon some things, everything would work out naturally. But if he did that, he would also be giving up on his maximal potential as well.

He didn't want to do that.

Unfortunately, that was just what happened from time to time.

He had been so focused on his Weapon Forces recently, for example, that he hadn't honed his Light Force in ages... even his Scarlet Star Force seemed to have been forgotten.

Of course, this wasn't entirely true. He had incorporated them into his Innate Node and could add them to his Weapon Forces whenever he wanted, but this alone wasn't enough.

It was like he was on the precipice of something great, but he just couldn't take the final step.

He was sure that he was right in making his Weapon Forces the center of his being, but he didn't know how to mesh all of the rest of it together...

But now, he felt like he had gotten an inkling.

A Spear Force that was birthed from Sword Force...

It was something that would make Amery lose his mind if he ever saw. That man was so obsessed with the sword and even now was quite invested in the rivalry between the Morales and Suiard families.

If he saw one of his own abandon the sword just moments from reaching the peak, he would probably attack him to kill much the same way he had attacked Leonel in belief that the latter was wasting his Spear Domain Ring's potential.

This time, Leonel would have to agree with the uptight bastard. But it wasn't because of the sword per se. He would feel the same way no matter what path the short man had taken. Much like the other spearman that Leonel had come across until now, he felt that this man hadn't taken the absolute best path that he could have. In the end, he was still missing something.

Changing all of his Sword Force comprehension to Spear Force comprehension before taking that last and final step was a stroke of genius and ingenuity... but it simply wasn't as good as what Leonel could do.

'I would call this birthing chaos within chaos. He made a chaotic decision in choosing Spear Force over his long-used Sword Force at the last moment. But that is exactly what causes his path to lack the necessary balance, and it's also what's held him back from reaching a truly astonishing level...' There was a reason the man was only about halfway through this seemingly endless corridor of spear masters.

All things considered, this was highly impressive. But it just wasn't good enough in Leonel's book. He had to succeed in this place... succeed to the point that even the last of the spear masters couldn't stop him.

According to his grandfather, making it all the way to the end of the corridor wasn't the goal. If they really had to defeat all of the best spearmen in history, maybe only one or two people, if that, would manage to do it per generation.

In fact, it was more likely for none to succeed.

Instead, the goal of his corridor was to allow the refinement of one's path of the spear. Success was decided by a metric forged according to your own standards.

That was to say that for Leonel to constantly be using the paths of others to fight instead of his own, he was practically guaranteeing that he would never be shipped out of here even if, by some miracle, he managed to make it to the end.

But this time, it was worth it.

'Chaos birthed within chaos isn't the path. The true path is birthing chaos from a set of order. And my order must come from my Spear Force, a balance of true Creation and Destruction...

'Only when Creation and Destruction come together in harmony can there be order. But order is only the other side of the coin to chaos...

'Define it...'

The more Leonel fleshed out his thoughts, the sharper they became and the more his aura flourished.

The beating of his heart sent ripples into the surroundings and a beautiful array of gorgeous colors bloomed.

He had two sets of Creation Sovereignties and two sets of Destruction Sovereignties. Both formed cycles with one another...

And now he was finally about to ground them.

- Chapter 3167: Failed

Chapter 3167: Failed

BOOM!

The violent upsurge of Leonel's aura threatened to blow everything around him apart.

His blood continued to trickle down his body, but in the chaos, it might as well have not been there at all.

His body was instead in perfect harmony with the world.

Creation so powerful it cycled into Destruction and Destruction so great it formed Creation. Destruction so powerful it allowed Creation and Creation so great it formed Destruction.

A Creation that took more than it could give back and a Creation that rose from the ashes of Destruction.

A Destruction so gentle it allowed for rebirth and a Destruction that capitalized on the greed of the sin of too much...

The differences between the two were incredibly subtle, and yet in Leonel's mind, the distinction was clear.

A gentle Destruction and a Creation that rose from the ashes...

Order.

An overbearing Creation and a sinful Destruction...

Chaos.

And yet the two could just as easily be flipped in his mind.

The chaos as defined by Leonel didn't refer to a darkness. It referred instead to a chance at life, the improbability of breath, a chance to roll the dice again...

And order... it wasn't necessarily good...

He had watched order destroy his life. It was because of rules and regulations that his father was no longer by his side, that his mother had to give up her life for him, that he had lost so much in his life...

The interchangeability of it, the dance of probability and chance, the relationship between Creation and Destruction and the balance the Northern Star sought for them all...

This was where real power lay.

BOOM!

Leonel's body shuddered and his Innate Node glowed brighter and brighter, reaching a fever pitch so great that his Spear Force began to howl almost like a beast.

It was all very simple, was it not?

The key to all of this was finding chaos within order... The short man had been so close to something so profound.

'He gave up his Sword Force for the sake of Spear Force, triggering the chaos he needed... However, I will not give up my Spear Force... nor will I give up my Bow Force...

I'll find the chaos within their order and give my chaos the structure it needs as a result.

'Chaos is unpredictable and unruly. If I want to control it, I need to be the one to set the rules and parameters that it follows...

'Much like the way the Northern Star can guide life along the path of proper evolution even with the presence of chaos, I too must become its guiding rails...'

Evolution was inherently chaos. It was a series of random mutations chosen by nothing more than chance and circumstance.

However, over a long enough period of time, these random mutations would begin to show patterns as well.

Those that were strong and useful would remain.

Those that were weak and detrimental would be destroyed in the annals of time and history, forgotten and never to be remembered again.

That was possible because the world had its own set of rules about what was possible and what was not...

Order.

BOOM!

Leonel's wild fluctuations became oddly more controlled. And then from more controlled, they became muted.

It looked as though a Dharma was trying to be formed above his head, but it had no form, no substance.

But if one looked closely, it would be possible to see that this wasn't because Leonel couldn't manage it, but it was rather because he didn't want to just yet.

He had the foundation of the idea, and he felt that he could succeed in forming his Dharma

whenever he wanted.

But it wasn't quite perfect just yet...

That said...

Leonel's eyes snapped open.

Ahead of him, just outside of his wildly fluctuating aura, there was another person blocking his path. But this one... was surprisingly an Owlman. Or rather, a Minerva as they called themselves now.

He was quite a handsome man, with a pair of white wings that spread boldly from his back. The spear in his hands looked to be carved out of gorgeous white marble, and all things considered, he was practically like an archangel descended from above to hand out punishment.

The man gave Leonel a sharp look, his aura powerful and his momentum not waning in the face of Leonel's own.

If he could have attacked by now, he would have. Unfortunately, since this corridor was designed for comprehension, those present received a lot of protection.

But equally as unfortunately for the man, he had underestimated the level of animosity the Idol Battlefield had for Leonel. Leonel received no such protections; it just seemed like he did because the momentum of his breakthrough was so great.

It was only when the man realized that Leonel's momentum was waning that he realized his mistake.

He took a step forward and shot ahead without a word, menace in his eyes.

It was clear and obvious that unlike the others, he had some deep-seated hatred for Leonel already baked in.

It didn't take much to realize why that might be. Minerva had announced her love for Leonel to the

world. That had pissed off not just many of the other God Race youths but many of the hidden geniuses of the Minerva as well.

After all, a woman who was a goddess in their eyes falling for a human was simply unacceptable.

And now that Leonel had failed his Dharma breakthrough, there was no better time to deal with him

than right now.

Everyone knew that a Dharma failure, especially for a Weapon Force, would lead to untold consequences, and the fact Leonel wasn't moving at all only seemed to enforce that.

The man's spear appeared at Leonel's throat moments later, and there was a surge as he flapped his wings once, accelerating past Leonel.

The man landed behind Leonel stably and on his feet. But soon, it became clear he was frozen in place as his head fell from his neck.

Chapter 3168: Only One

Leonel didn't even look back at the man as he continued his way forward. If someone was watching, it would have been hardly possible to see the trajectory of his spear at all. That was because he had just used Timeless Radiance.

The incorporation of an ability of a bow that wasn't even in his hand into a spear that was casually created from thin air was enough to say that Leonel's Dharma creation "failure" wasn't what others might expect.

When others failed Dharmas, it was a blow to their psyche, both intangibly and tangibly.

On the one hand, they felt like their paths had been ruined, and the confidence they had in them took a hit.

But on the other hand, there was a much more tangible restriction that took place afterward as well. Failing to form a Dharma was a lot like having an Innate Node. The failure to do it once would make it much more difficult to do in the future and would even come with a hit to one's Force

Manipulation.

This was because, despite the failure, the connection with Existence would have already been made. Or rather, the severance of one's connection with Existence.

The first step to forming a Dharma was going from relying on the world around you to yourself to forge, manipulate, and create your own Forces.

But contradictorily, you would also need Existence's help to finish the creation of a Dharma as well. After all, part of forming a Dharma was acknowledgment by the Northern Star that you had a path worthy of investing in.

But how could you do that when your connection with Existence was already severed?

Leonel, however, didn't seem to worry about it at all.

The reason he had cut off his Dharma creation was twofold.

First, he wanted to go through all of these spear experts. He wanted to see how far these experts went and what kind of monsters the spearmen of history had.

And second... his Dharma had to also include his Bow Force.

Leonel began to go through the experts one after another.

His speed in doing so now was on a whole other level, but it wasn't because he had changed tactics.

He was still swallowing up the techniques of his opponents... it was just that he was doing it with much greater speed now than ever before.

The chaos of his spear shone forth. It had a fluidity now that it never did before.

He didn't need to rely solely on his Ability Index to analyze the paths of his opponents. The arrogance of his spear now contained a flexible character to it.

It was one of the rules of order that Leonel had set. He hadn't changed the arrogance of his spear, but instead, he challenged it.

It wanted to be the number one Spear Force to ever exist? Sure. Then prove it by swallowing every Spear Force you came into contact with.

Leonel's Spear Force path changed again and again, fluid and almost ethereal in its presence.

His own Spear Path seemed hidden away like a slumbering dragon, curled away in its cave and waiting to make its presence known.

However, for now, no one could make him show it at all.

Everything he came across was blown away. One fluid strike after another, endless and sharp in their cadence.

Every time Leonel walked out of a statue, rather than being more injured like before, he only seemed to be getting better and better.

These spearmen couldn't pressure him any longer, and his body's natural healing factors were kicking in, especially with all of the Spear Force in the air.

And now that he could swallow any Spear path, it was like his enemies were presenting him with the Force he needed to heal himself.

Again and again, almost to the point of monotony, he crushed those in his path.

He was beginning to think that entering this Idol Battlefield was the smartest decision that he had ever made in his life. This sort of improvement was simply not something that he could have made in the outside world.

Only under these continuous grindstones could he manage to make it so far, only with this sort of pressure, only with this focused sort of attention on the task at hand.

Nothing could shake him from his focus...

Until he reached the second to last statue.

Leonel entered with the same careless disregard as ever to find a man standing across from him. He had a head of flowing bronze hair, deep amber eyes that shone like stars, and a pair of glasses to hide them behind.

He stood tall and straight, and yet his aura almost seemed casual and weightless in a way, almost as though he had yet to come across anyone that could force even a modicum of seriousness at him. In fact, looking at him felt a lot like watching a dragon in deep slumber... an ironic picture considering Leonel felt that that was precisely the image his own suppressed Spear Force was experiencing.

The man met his gaze, looking at him without much of a change in expression.

The spear in his hand was as unadorned as that expression of his. A simple wooden spear with a blade that looked almost hand-sharpened.

The only sound that could be heard in the room of endless white was the breathing of the two men, slow and steady as though nothing could move them from their peace.

And yet, one of them at least had tears falling from his eyes.

Leonel looked at the form of his father, his chest in turmoil and a deep rage he had always been trying to keep suppressed was continually trying to bubble its way back up.

If it had still been there, he couldn't have guaranteed that his soul wouldn't have been steeped in blood once again as the bloodthirstiness hidden within began to pool forth.

There was only one man who could make him feel this way.

Velasco Morales.

Chapter 3169: True State

The fury bubbling up in Leonel's heart practically took a tangible form. And soon, that was exactly what it did.

His feet smoldered, the corners of his eyes billowing with thick tendrils of smoke.

He wanted nothing more than to find someone to vent this frustration on, but there was no one but his father here before him.

And the worst part?

It wasn't even truly his father.

He had already realized it during his battle with the others, but while they might have their personalities and their quirks, they didn't have their memories, and they certainly never spoke. They might as well have been mindless husks that only knew how to swing their spears around. But this was a step too far. Much too far.

Ever since his first outburst, he had controlled himself well. He didn't mind it when the Idol Battlefield continuously targeted him again and again; he had even been willing to allow it, using it as a whetstone to sharpen himself against.

It didn't matter to him when it didn't protect him during his breakthrough. It didn't matter to him that it kept sending people to target him. It didn't matter to him when the statues

of these so-called heroes of the path pressured him from above, making his steps heavier and draining away his stamina piece by piece.

But this...

"I swear..." Leonel said slowly, his voice rumbling like low brewing thunder. "... I will destroy this Idol Battlefield."

The white space sparked and clouds appeared high above.

A strike of lightning came, but Leonel's wrist only flickered once, shattering it to pieces.

His eyes blazed with fury.

The statues should represent the people who had come to the Idol Battlefield before and had made a name for themselves.

His father had never stepped foot out of the Dimensional Verse; he had never had a chance for his name to resonate.

And yet, this Idol Battlefield was using his likeness for what? A dig at him? A way to try and attack his mental state?

He would make its World Spirit pay in the cruelest of ways.

Leonel's wrist trembled once before he exhaled a breath.

His tears lit on fire, leaving streaks of embers rolling down his face that flaked away slowly. Red-gold flame mixed into his violet hair, his skin practically beginning to shine as though it had become sparkling crystal.

His trembling spear blade steadied, becoming no less stable than his father's.

He raised his spear. Its body had changed, looking to have become a simple wooden spear no different from his father's.

He wasn't the same man he was back in the Dimensional Verse. He had accepted the burdens that

now rested on his shoulders, and he would carry them no matter what...

Even if that meant fighting his own father.

Velasco raised his spear almost lazily. Leonel could hardly catch his movements at all, but before he knew it, the spear was at his throat.

Leonel's gaze flickered as he took a step back. He flicked the body of his spear upward, colliding with the polearm of his father's and sending the blow to the side and up over his shoulder.

He shifted his head to the side, sliding his steps and pivoting around his parry.

His blade surged in a wide arc, aiming to slice his father in two.

However, as he was performing this fluid action, he felt a spike of pain that ripped through his neck and shoulder.

His neck was half severed, and his arm was almost separated from his body. The blade he thought he had dodged seemed to have an edge to it that even he couldn't sense.

Blood spurted as he was blown backward by the sudden force. His spin missed his father's torso as a result, and he was sent into the distance.

Leonel landed on the ground heavily, his eyes half vacant. A large amount of blood was leaking from him, and worst of all, there was a difficult-to-manage corrosive force that wanted to swallow him whole.

He couldn't seem to stifle the bleeding at all, and he felt his life slipping away.

He grit his teeth as a great amount of determination surged out from him.

If he was going to fall, it certainly wouldn't be because of pain.

His Spear Force surged into his wounds and formed a delicate web of restrictions and protections that stifled the bleeding.

He was his Weapon Forces, and his Weapon Forces were him.

His body flickered and vanished from the spot it was lying in, becoming a streak of Spear Force that dodged out of the way of a follow-up strike.

He stood in the air, Spear Force swirling around his body.

The number of things his father had left behind for him were numerous. But among them, not one spoke of the spear, despite the fact he knew his father had to be an absolute master of the craft.

He had never understood why that was and could only wave it away with perfunctory guesses. After all, his father didn't follow the path set out by his grandfather or the Morales, choosing to make his own way forward. Maybe he felt Leonel wasn't compatible with his methods, or maybe he thought that the best path was precisely what Leonel was doing right now...

Forging his own.

And if he was going to do that, he was going to have to swallow even his father's.

After that exchange, he felt like he had only grasped the faintest corner of it, but it was profound nonetheless.

It was no wonder his father's spear never looked like anything special. It was all about perspective. An odd glint reflected in Leonel's eyes, and the casual aura his father seemed to have vanished. The phantom of a demon appeared around him, a dragon's body coiled around one arm, and a roaring tiger seemed to come out of another.

Above his head, a crown of Destruction flickered with a wild radiance, and his simple spear was

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twice as thick, its blade three times as large, so much so it looked more like the jagged edges of a glaive than a spear.

This was his father's true battle state.

The battle state he hid within his Destruction World.

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Chapter 3170: Kill. Kill. Kill.

Leonel was someone who was rarely impressed. But if there was anyone who had experienced his appreciation several times, it was his father. And this time was truly no different.

One of Blackstar's abilities was to flicker in and out of his Shadow World. This allowed him to maintain some form in the outside world while also being incorporeal to it.

If one was fighting him, this was a true nightmare. The fact he could choose when someone could even be allowed to land a blow on him and not was shocking enough.

When Blackstar really wanted to give an opponent a headache, though, he could disappear into his Shadow World completely, only popping out randomly in a swirl of darkness whenever he wanted. This sort of shifting was the most difficult to deal with because unless you had a high enough Darkness affinity, it couldn't be sensed in the slightest.

Leonel had seen how powerful these abilities were, but he had never considered the possibility of using his Destruction World similarly. That was because the foundations of Darkness and Destruction were too different.

The Shadow World was exactly that, a world in the Shadows. The characteristics of Darkness were well in line with allowing the abilities that Blackstar showed.

Although it looked like an application of space, in reality it was a method of using the absence of light to one's advantage. The opening of an entire world only made it more exaggerated.

But here, Leonel's father was hiding all of his destructive might in his Destruction World. What Leonel didn't understand was where those illusory images were coming from.

The tiger, what looked like a dragon, those constructs in general... were they created via some method? Were they distilled from real creatures? Or was it something else?

Leonel still wouldn't be sure.

What he was certain of was the fact his father's blade couldn't be trusted. No matter what it looked like in the outside world, he had to pay attention to the variations and changes in the Destruction World as well.

Someone else would be out of luck. After all, there were only two people in the entirety of Existence with access to the Destruction World. Or, technically... just one because this was nothing more than a projection of his father.

Without it, Leonel wouldn't have been able to see what was hiding away on the other side.

Leonel wiped away the blood from his lips as he understood.

His father's spear style was highly refined, and its foundation was the sturdiest he had ever seen. It was the style of a man who had practiced the very same spear stances again and again without fail.

Even without his Destruction World, just measuring up to this level of foundation would be incredibly difficult.

However, when he added in the variations hidden within his Destruction World...

Both men vanished at once, and their clashes began to echo.

The battle looked quite odd. Leonel was dodging out of the way of the spear blade what looked like several feet sometimes, when usually he would just dodge by a few millimeters.

The action was forcefully putting him at a disadvantage. The further he was from his father, the harder it was for him to counterattack.

But only he knew that this was exactly what he had to do.

The size of his father's blade changed freely, but the speed and swiftness didn't change in the slightest. It was a fundamental breaking of the laws of physics, and yet it was precisely because he had a World to himself that he was able to do this.

PA! PA! PA!

Velasco suddenly pierced out three times in quick succession, and the tiger wrapping around one of his arms roared.

The echo spread through the Destruction World, and Leonel's expression changed as he hurried to accelerate backward.

But even though he reacted quickly, he found that a layer of his skin had been turned to ash. His expression changed again as he rolled to the side.

At some unknown point, his father had appeared to his side, slashing out toward his son's back.

But when Leonel thought he had dodged, a snaking energy thrust out almost like the chain from a whip. His father's spear suddenly became incredibly flexible, but the blade remained eerily stable on its path through the air.

With a slash downward, Leonel, who thought he had dodged, found a hole ripping right through his abdomen.

The pain rocked his body, and his inner organs were quickly corroding to the point that he felt flashes of death loom over his head.

He rolled to the side, but his father had somehow appeared right next to him.

The forms of his father's spear were changing too fast, too quickly. And because Leonel still hadn't figured out how he was forming those phantom constructs, he was still struggling with counterattacking.

Without the Destruction World's support, Leonel's spear was just a normal wooden spear, and there was nothing that it could do in the face of such monstrous power at all.

Leonel couldn't help but unleash a chuckle as he was sent flying away again, another hole ripping through his body.

His skin was turning a sickly ashen grey around his wound, his flesh flaking away like ash as it fluttered through the air like grey snowflakes.

Leonel landed on his feet, coughing violently without the blood to give. Any blood that he would have spilled was instead turned directly to ash.

His father's comprehension of Destruction made his own seem like child's play.

He was too busy messing around with profound meanings and truths, trying to connect them with Creation, Chaos, and Order, but he had forgotten to actually delve into the true meaning of Destruction itself.

His father clearly didn't have this problem. He didn't overcomplicate his Path of the Spear. Or at the very least, the foundation he built it on couldn't have been simpler.

Kill. Kill, Kill.

Just this and nothing else.

Chapter 3171: Two Sides

Leonel wiped his mouth with a sleeve out of habit even though there was no blood. His father was already coming, but Leonel's Ability Index had activated. Time slowed to a crawl as his thinking speed accelerated.

Come to think of it, everything he knew about Destruction was built on Creation. It was no wonder his comprehension of Destruction was shallower than his father's.

His original foundation for his Destruction comprehension was his Scarlet Star Force. But as he had already deduced, Scarlet Star Force was actually just a strong Force of Creation, one taken too far to become Destruction.

Leonel was supposed to be a Destruction Sovereign, but those aspects of himself only came out when he was angry... his feet began to smolder, and the corners of his eyes billowed with smoke... but did he truly understand Destruction?

Why couldn't he just blast enemies to ash like his father did? Why wasn't his blade nearly as Corrosive?

Leonel's eyes brightened with enlightenment. Or, rather, they were brightening when his father suddenly slashed down.

Leonel felt an attack right against his psyche as his father somehow tore through his own thoughts. His expression couldn't help but change as he hurried to block. But the shock in his heart couldn't be hidden as he was sent rocketing backward again.

That was possible too?

Leonel's Dream Force had Time Force characteristics now. This meant that his already exceptional thinking speed could be accelerated even further just by twisting the time in his head. He didn't have to try to influence the surroundings at all.

But his father had cut off his thinking time with a slash that seemed to supersede Time and Space. Leonel's eyes widened as he rolled to the side again. He hopped up, trying to round to his father's back, but Velasco's fundamentals were too solid. He only pivoted his foot slightly, his steady blade remaining pointed at his son's throat from start to finish.

The concentration in Leonel's gaze practically solidified as he bent his body backward, just barely watching as the blade soared over his nose.

A burning sensation touched the first layer of his skin, and even without being able to see it, Leonel almost felt as though he had just gotten an acid peel. Just being this close to his father's spear had actually caused him so much damage.

He somersaulted backward, leaping out of the way further.

The echo of his heartbeat thrummed through his chest, and the world slowed down around him again.

He could feel his father's slash coming again, ready to pierce it all in two, but the calmness in his expression didn't change.

BOOM!

Leonel's aura suddenly changed, and for the first time, cracks appeared in the floors beneath him.

This endless room of white had always seemed to be both endless and indestructible. And yet, for the first time, there was real damage done to it. And it was caused by nothing more than an aura release from Leonel.

Leonel didn't have to completely overhaul his understanding. All he had to do was realize that he needed a shift in the way he looked at things. Only by shifting the way he viewed Destruction could he tap into the truest layer of his strength.

He had already been standing on the edge of the cliff for so long... his only problem was that he had focused too much on Creation.

It wasn't truly his fault. After all, he realized at that moment that he was never born a Destruction Sovereign... Instead, he had been born a Creation Sovereign so powerful that most people mistook it for Destruction Sovereignty.

The true natural, inborn Destruction Sovereign was his father. Between the two of them, he had always been the only true Destruction Sovereign.

When Leonel understood this, everything seemed to make sense, and his views of the world changed.

The plumes of smoke that came from his feet and the corners of his eyes settled down into a gentle stream of violet. Butterflies, songbirds, and motes of light fluttered around Leonel.

But very quickly, they became more substantial.

The butterflies morphed, becoming phoenixes that cried to the skies above.

The songbirds shifted and changed, metamorphosing into dragons.

The motes of light burst apart, becoming a large shell that seemed to want to blot out the skies.

Deep within Leonel's eyes, a roaring tiger could be seen, and when he opened his mouth, that sound echoed through the world in a booming cadence.

One after another, these constructs wrapped around his body, vanishing into his World of

Destruction that was also shifting and changing.

All of a sudden, it felt like the weight of a world was stabilizing Leonel's blade. No matter how he shifted and moved his spear, his blade always remained steady.

And for the first time, he seemed to truly be the mirror image of his father.

In that moment, Leonel could swear he saw the shoulders of his father relax. But it was only for a moment before Velasco accelerated forward.

His strength now felt dozens of times heavier. It was like Leonel was fighting it out against an entirely new man.

From an outsider's perspective, their clashes were inexplicable.

Their blades wouldn't even touch, and yet an invisible force would repel them.

Every time they clashed, the world in the surroundings would shudder and collapse.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Father and son spun around one another in a sharp spear dance that balanced on the edge of life and death.

As they fought, both of them were improving at a shocking pace. It was like a race between a pair of geniuses, each one learning something new with every strike they levied, making it stronger and

more shocking.

BOOM!

Their spears froze in the air, a violent crack in space separating the two. Fissures appeared in reality, and a black hole threatened to form beneath the pressure of their might.

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On one side, there was a man wreathed in gorgeous violet.

On the other, there was one wrapped in a dense red-black.

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Chapter 3172: Again

BOOM!

The two separated, and they landed on the ground heavily. The world of white shattered apart beneath them.

Both bent their knees at the same time, ready to accelerate forward. However, the weight they carried on their shoulders was far too much. Just the act of sinking themselves down in preparation for an acceleration was far too much.

The world of white finally couldn't hold up anymore, and it collapsed.

Feeling the world failing around him, the two men came to a stop, staring at one another from a distance.

Velasco raised a hand to his glasses and adjusted them. Then, he gave Leonel a cheeky smile. "Got you again!"

Leonel's eyes widened.

However, those were the last words he heard before his father disappeared into wisps of smoke.

Leonel found himself standing outside, a deep laughter beginning to rumble through his chest before it collapsed into sobs.

He knew what his dad meant. That man always loved his pranks. His favorite sort of prank was his voicemail joke, pretending that he was there on the other line... when in reality, he wasn't.

When Leonel saw his father adjust his glasses, he had felt his heart leap into his throat. He had really wanted to believe.

But those words at the end...

They were just like him.

Leonel leaned on his spear, his tears falling like a torrential rainfall.

He raised his head to the skies and roared a furious bellow.

The statues that came before were shattered one after another, unable to withstand his rage. In that moment, it felt as though the whole of Existence could hear him.

His fury, his unwillingness... the last of his grief.

And yet, all the while, even while leaning on his spear his father gave him, his back remained straight.

He wouldn't place down the burden on his back this time. He refused to allow it to collapse for even the slightest moment.

He had felt it in the weight of his father's blows. The invisible aura that he carried around wasn't just a matter of Destruction and its constructs... it was also about the responsibility of a man.

All his life, Velasco had carried those burdens silently and without complaints, joking around with everyone he came across and living a carefree life.

Maybe before he met his mother, he had never had any intention of marrying at all. He knew what sort of life he would have to face and didn't want to have to burden anyone with missing him.

Life was odd in that way, that disgusting mixture of emotion that made it impossible for anyone to place their feelings in a neat and tidy little box.

Leonel could imagine the thoughts of his father were similar... both feeling thankful that he had such

a family and regretful that he had forced them to experience such a thing.

In some way, Leonel should probably be thankful to the Idol Battlefield for using his father like this, thankful that he had had an opportunity to receive the last of his father's legacy, thankful that he could see his father's smile one last time.

But he wasn't thankful.

He was filled with a belly full of rage that he couldn't settle down no matter how hard he tried. The weight on his back was only becoming heavier and heavier, as he looked up.

His father's statue was the only one that deserved to be here.

If this Idol Battlefield wanted to use him, it was free to have him.

Leonel slowly raised his head, every one of his movements seeming to carry the weight of the world. Even with a casual raise of his head like this, it was like the world was shuddering to accommodate him.

His gaze landed on the final statue, the rage flickering deep within his eyes.

He took a step and vanished.

When he appeared again, he found an old man sitting cross-legged with a spear across his lap. He wore white, blemishless robes and his head of sparse white hair danced in the wind.

However, there was no wind to speak of in this place at all. The man's aura was simply that thick. He slowly opened his eyes, staring at Leonel with an amiable smile.

"You have a lot of rage-!"

Leonel slashed down.

The old man blinked, but his reaction wasn't slow. In one moment, he was sitting in peaceful meditation, and in the next he was already on his feet, the large sleeves of his robes fluttering as he pierced out to meet Leonel's strike.

His spear didn't have any fancy tricks to it at all. There didn't seem like there was anything to learn. Maybe this man was the progenitor of the spear itself, the man who forged the Spear Force and allowed everyone after him to use it.

It was no wonder he was the first statuc.

The two clashed, and the flicker of Leonel's spear began to match his cadence. He swallowed up the man's spear, and his movements became faster.

A violent aura burst around Leonel, and the beauty of his spear dance seemed to return.

In the past, his Spear Dance had been gorgeous, but then it had slowly become simpler and more refined until he could complete the Spear Dance in just a single strike.

And now... he could still complete it in a single strike, but the slice across the air was absolutely mesmerizing.

The man seemed to easily sense the blade hidden within Leonel's Creation World, but Leonel didn't seem to care in the slightest.

The old man showed some surprise by the third exchange, and by the fourth, he was completely serious.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel suddenly seemed to pierce through a veil. His body flickered and vanished, and for the first time, the old man's spear seemed both hurried and flustered.

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PUCHI!

The old man's head flew into the skies, the light of shock still in his gaze.

"Who gave you the right to be ranked ahead of my father?"

Chapter 3173: Ancient

Leonel's smoldering fury still flickered in his eyes. He gave a look toward the old man's statue and swung out once, destroying it.

The Idol Battlefield shook with rage and indignation, but Leonel didn't even bother to dignify it with a response.

Now, in this long corridor, there was only one statue.

Velasco stood tall and proud with a pair of glasses on his face, his expression haughty enough to look down on the world.

It was the expression he deserved to have, one that Leonel had always hoped for him. Had his father been allowed to step onto the world stage, just how powerful would he have been able to become? What Leonel didn't know was that he wasn't supposed to kill that old man. He was very different from the other spirits as he was part of a man who was very much still living and breathing.

Of course, that wasn't the man's true body... but he had had a lot to tell Leonel, a lot to tell him about things that could very well be quite important.

But now...

In a deep corner of the Idol Battlefield, an old man opened his eyes with a flicker of rage. However, he shook his head and sighed soon afterward. He was getting too old for this.

"You're awake, Old Spear? What happened?"

A voice echoed out into the endless darkness.

"I don't want to talk about it! Old Spear grumbled.

"Hohoho, you lost? Let me see, let me see!

There was a pause before an uproarious laughter echoed. The laughter continued for such a long time that Old Spear's suppressed rage was starting to come back. But before he could even try and settle it down again, it became a chorus as several more voices joined in.

Clearly, they had all been awoken by the commotion and started to rewind time to watch as well.

They had never seen Old Spear suffer such a loss, and it wasn't a surprise that it was Old Sword that was laughing the hardest.

"I can't breathe, Gods!" Old Sword was practically popping a lung,

Old Spear sneered. "Laugh now, but have you forgotten what the last phase of the Idol Battlefield is?"

The laughter slowly waned. Indeed, this was a huge problem.

Old Sword eventually snorted. "It won't be a problem. The child has truly enraged the Regulator now. Whether or not he can even make it to cause me problems is still up in the air!"

"The child is truly a bit too unruly! The voice of an old woman echoed. She was Old Dagger. "There isn't much we can do now that he's already on this path. And there are many things he doesn't know!"

"He should have been a saber wielder. I like him!" Old Saber guffawed.

"This is why all your chosen die!"

"Fuck you, Old Glaive!"

The banter of the old-timers continued for a while. It seemed that they had all missed having an excuse to talk like this.

The most silent among them was Old Spear. He could feel the seriousness of the matter.

"... The end of Existence is coming and the Ancient Humans have appeared once again. It was they who set the path of the Northern Star, and now it is much too late to reverse. They will certainly monopolize a great deal of treasures.

"Still harping on these matters. What good is it? It's all irrelevant by now. Just let the Northern Star come down and destroy everything. Let the world be born anew on the other side. I've grown tired of being changed here like some sort of dog!"

The old-timers were indeed the progenitors of the strongest Weapon Forces in Existence... but what no one knew was that after their deaths, they didn't pass on like everyone else.

Instead, they were captured by the Regulator of the Idol Battlefield...

And what was even less known was the fact that the creation of the Idol Battlefield was thanks to the so-called Ancient Humans.

Many would likely be shocked to find out that the Spirituals were descendants of the Human Race. The Human Race was so simple and they lacked any sort of real talent when it came down to it. The idea that a Mortal Race with such potential would come

from them would shock the world. There was a reason they had managed to keep it a secret for so long.

Everyone knew that if the Spirituals were given enough time, they would definitely make it to Demi-Godhood and eventually true Godhood; their potential was just that great.

The only reason they had tried to microwave their success was because the pressure of the God Realm was becoming too strong. With the Cullings becoming more frequent and deadly, even the Demi-Gods were starting to feel like they might be targeted next, let alone the Mortal Races.

The Spiritual Race felt, then, that they didn't have the time to grow slowly like every other God Race had.

In the end, they ended up offending Leonel because of their attempts at speeding up their progress. But maybe this was a good thing for them. There were certainly a great number of people who didn't want to see the Spirituals rise up at all. More competition wasn't something that these people were a fan of.

However... if you asked these old-timers here, not a single one of them would be shocked. That was because all of them were Human. The Progenitors of each one of the Weapon Forces on the Idol Battlefield was precisely that.

When the Idol Battlefield was said to be a matter for "humanoids, that was simply a whitewashing of the truth of events. The reality was that it was built by humans, for humans. And that would always

be the case.

It was just that, somehow, every time the Idol Battlefield closed... this fact would be forgotten by those that partook in it.

But that was hardly the most shocking part...

Another reason they wouldn't be so surprised was because it wasn't just the Spirituals descended from humans...

Almost every single Humanoid God Race in Existence right this moment could trace their lineage

back to the Human Race.....

The Ancient Humans.

The Ancient Humans.

Chapter 3174: Swallowed

Leonel took deep breaths.

He had been able to ignore his fatigue earlier because he was pissed off, but that battle against his father had taken its toll on him. The main trouble, of course, were those spears that had gone through him.

He was lucky his father hadn't used his Destruction on the first spear that went through both his shoulder and neck. But judging by his final words, maybe he had done that on purpose. If not, Leonel would probably be dead right about now.

However, that didn't change the fact the rest of his body was riddled with holes pooling with

Destruction energy.

Luckily, he could restrain that quite well. At the very least, he was far more equipped to do so than anyone else with his Creation Sovereignty,

But it was hard to reverse damage that was already done, and even harder to unwind the stamina he would use up to deal with the situation as well.

There was a heaviness to his body now that went beyond just the illusory weight on his shoulders. If he was too casual about it, he could end up suffering greatly.

However...

Leonel vanished.

When he appeared again, instead of appearing at the next phase, he found himself standing at the beginning of a very long corridor once again.

The only difference between this one and the spear trial was that the statues wielded bows. Leonel looked ahead in silence for a moment before a fiendish grin spread across his face.

Did the Idol Battlefield think that this would break him?

Maybe if he had struggled so much with Bow Force first and then he was sent off to face the same challenge of Spear Force he would feel a heaviness to the situation, maybe even a little bit of despair that he would have to temper down.

But this Idol Battlefield had underestimated him far too much.

Between his Spear Force and Bow Force... his Bow Force talent had always been on a level all to itself.

Even if he had to start from square one again, building up his Bow Force from nothing, he would still perform far better in this long corridor...

Let alone the fact that he had no need of doing such a thing.

The insights that he had gained from his Spear Force could be translated at least in part to his Bow Force as well.

When his talent and this foundation was brought together into one...

What chances did this corridor even stand?

A hint of pride threatened to spill forth from Leonel's brow again. But this time, he didn't do much to try and suppress it. Suppressing it wasn't the way to deal with this pride of his.

If he kept suppressing it like he always had, he would just end up dulling his own blade, and over the long run, he might even end up weakening his Forces overall.

Instead, the image of his father's smile flashed in his mind. He was a man who had a great deal of pride himself, but it never stopped him from sacrificing. There was nothing that could stop him from taking the steps he needed to protect his family.

He was completely unlike Leonel's future self who had just watched as his friends and family died one after another. Eventually, he held all the power in the world...

But who did he have to share it with?

Leonel clenched his fist and the spear in his hand shattered. Motes of light fluttered around it as his Scarlet Star Force surged along with his Violet Winds.

Soon, a red, violet, and gold bow took shape.

Leonel's aura thrummed with a valiant light as he took a step forward and entered the first statue. Not even three seconds later, he appeared outside once again and moved on to the second. He tore through the line of Bow Force experts like they were ants on his cutting board; one after another, he plowed through them, making the experts of Existence look like toddlers.

The eyes he had for Bow Force couldn't be compared to others. He seemed to be able to sense their Paths with a glance and swallow them up with a slight intent.

Bowmen that focused on speed, power, trickery... it didn't matter. He seemed to adapt to them all with great ease. In fact, many of these paths were things that he had thought of personally before in the past and incorporated in some way into his Bowmanship.

It wasn't until he was over 90% of the way through that he found anything of interest at all, and yet these still only took a fleeting moment to grasp.

Bow Paths on the same level as Infinite Radiance and Timeless Radiance were like cookies on a platter to Leonel.

One female bowman had an arrow path of space that ignored barriers to attack vital points directly. There was another arrow that echoed through time, striking down an opponent across several iterations, so no matter how they dodged, they would be struck.

There was yet another that concentrated a singularity into the point of an arrow. Not only did it have the near-infinite weight of Infinite Radiance, but it sucked an opponent in, making it impossible for them to dodge as well.

The second to last bowman, a man who took up the same level of strength in the Path of the Bow as Leonel's father did to the Path of the Spear, had a Bow that could attack across dimensions.

He could use an arrow even to sever one's connection to the Dream Plane, killing a person silently without them ever knowing.

But this also meant that by attacking through the Second Dimension, he could ignore distance. There was nowhere in Existence that someone could hide from his arrow.

He blurred the line between physical reality and intangible will, even capable of cutting off the connection people had between their affinities and themselves.

And yet... he too was swallowed up by Leonel.

Chapter 3175: Fault

Leonel exhaled a breath, steadying his heaving chest.

The last Bowman was truly something. His path was fascinating, and if Leonel was honest, he had never considered using the bow like this.

It was something that the bow was uniquely suited to. It was the controller of a battlefield, regardless of distance. If you manipulated the way you defined "distance" a bit, it was easy to incorporate Dimensions and their folds into it.

No matter the time or era, the most skilled archers always had the job of targeting the most high-value targets. They were meant to act to sever the lifeblood of an army, sucking them dry of the very foundation that upheld them.

To sever... to cut off the lifeblood...

This archer took this personally, placing the matter as their top priority and taking it to an extreme. They were certainly worthy of being one of the greatest talents of the bow to ever exist.

Leonel took a step and appeared in the final statue, only to find an old woman sitting with a bow across her lap.

He raised an eyebrow.

This was odd. The woman was wearing the same exact robes as the old man from earlier. Was that a coincidence?

Definitely not.

Until now, every one of the experts he came across were just wearing things they had during their lives. There was no rhyme or reason linking them at all except that old man and this old woman.

The old woman's eyes opened slowly and she unveiled an amiable smile. Though, deep in her eyes, there was a hint of surprise there.

Leonel thought that surprise was because he was the first to make it here in a while, but Old Bow felt different. It wasn't because he had made it here; it was because he had already made it to Old Spear, and on top of that, he had even managed to do so with such incredible speed.

Leonel must have used barely a week? Whereas the spear corridor had taken up an entire three months of time.

And somehow, he looked even less injured than he was before. That meant that he was actually using the time to recover as though the Bowman couldn't provide him any sort of challenge at all. It was definitely a shocking matter.

"You aren't going to take my head?" Old Bow asked with a smile.

If Leonel was speculating before, after hearing these words, he was certain now. That old man and this old woman were definitely related.

It seemed that he was a bit too enraged before. Maybe they didn't place his father second, but rather had a default number one that couldn't be changed.

Then again, he knew himself. Even if he had known it at the time, he would probably still react the same way.

But judging by the woman's smile, it was unlikely that the old man he had "killed" before was truly dead.

None of those Old spirits had expected that Leonel would actually be such a master in two Weapon

Forces.

Leonel lowered his readied bow, looking at the old woman for a long while without saying anything, Old Bow chuckled, shaking her head. "I can see that you're holding up a lot on your shoulders, you're not in the mood for small talk. This old woman won't talk your ears off, then. I will only tell you what you need to know.

"We old folk are not against you. However, what you've stepped into this time is very complicated. The Regulator of this battlefield is also not under our control.

"I will give you the same opportunity that everyone who has reached this point has received. It is good for you anyway since it seems that your bow affinity is much greater than your spear affinity regardless.

"Had you accepted this challenge for your spear, if I am honest, I believe you would have likely died." Leonel raised an eyebrow. Suddenly, he wanted to go back, but it didn't seem like this woman would let him.

Old Bow chuckled, seemingly reading Leonel's mind.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm talking nonsense again. Pretend I said nothing about that. I'm sure you'd give us another surprise. But you do not need to worry. This is an experience you only need once!"

Old Bow raised an aged hand and pressed forward. There was a ripple in the air and Leonel's mind suddenly felt like it was trapped in a river of time.

"Hm?" Old Bow blinked in surprise. "I see..."

She was completely shocked.

The process required sending one's soul back through the stream of time, but Leonel's Dream Force had actually comprehended and broken into the stream of time on its own.

Others would be in a daze when this occurred, but Leonel was actually fully lucid. In the end, he didn't need to pass out like the others did. He could observe it all like he was watching a movie.

The reason you needed strong Weapon Force to do this was because only those with exceptional Weapon Force could pull themselves out of the illusion in the end. But it seemed that they had truly underestimated Leonel.

Even if he had no Weapon Forces to speak of at all, he would have been able to pull himself out. In fact, Leonel didn't need much time to read through everything.

Others would have needed to experience it piece by piece at a slow and steady pace. They might have even spent an entire year in meditation in order to experience the worth of a few decades. However, it all accelerated around Leonel to the point where in just the blink of an eye, he had seen everything he needed to see.

And yet, after pulling himself out on his own, he didn't move, standing in a bit of a daze for a long while.

Just what had he seen just now?

The end of Existence... was it the fault of the Human Race?

Chapter 3176: Die

Leonel digested this information in silence.

He found it hard to accept mostly because it didn't make any sense. But it was even sadder when he came to understand the reason. The fact that it was related to Weapon Forces only made it more ridiculous.

At the beginning of all things, there were only Humans and the Beasts. The battle between the two had experienced a push and pull several times across their long history, with both sides coming out on top at some point or another, but neither being able to do so for long, while much of the time was spent in a stalemate.

In the beginning, Beasts had the upper hand. They had stronger bodies and a huge advantage as a result.

But then Humans began to flip the narrative with their intelligence. They created tools, weapons, and the like, suppressing Beasts until they came out on top.

Unfortunately, this didn't last for long. After a long time of being suppressed, the Force Manipulation began to become mainstream and both Races started to feel their way through this complicated process.

Unsurprisingly, this process came easier to Beasts because they could rely on their instincts while Humans could not.

As the Beasts increased their Force Manipulation, the advantage Humans had in intelligence plummeted off a cliff, and soon enough, there was little to no difference between the intelligence of the two parties. But worse than that was the fact that now Beasts were just as intelligent and several times more powerful at the same time.

At this point, the Human Race was at a crossroads. They were having too much trouble catching up to the Beasts.

Although they began to slowly create Dimensional Methods over the years, bridging the gap felt impossible. They could never match up to the natural affinity that the Beasts had.

The main problem was that the Human Race wasn't designed to have one particular affinity. They could be good at a great number of things, and from time to time truly exceptional geniuses would be born suddenly and be able to carve out paths for themselves. But...

They weren't like the Humanoid Races of today, like the Void Race that was born with great Spatial affinity, or the Pluto who were born with shocking bodies and Time affinity. In a lot of ways, the Humanoid Races of today were like the Beasts of the past. They had natural affinities that placed them so far beyond normal Humans that they had all forgotten their roots.

This was the crossroads that the Human Race reached. They needed to change something; otherwise, they would be crushed by the Beasts in due time.

They no longer had the advantage of intelligence, and their talent was also lacking now.

This was the birth of three Paths.

The Crafting Path.

The Hyper Evolution Path.

The Weapon Force Path.

The first of the three was quite unique comparatively speaking. Although Beasts had caught up in intelligence, their thinking was still quite rigid and they preferred using their own bodies to attack.

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In addition, their cultures made it more natural for them to absorb Force Herbs directly. As they were one with Nature, they never thought about shifting and changing it. So they left many things as the status quo.

By comparison, Humans had been creating tools since their inception. They were much more attuned with manipulating nature for their own benefit.

This created a faction of Humans who wanted to go all in on Crafting, hoping that if they created powerful enough treasures and Force Pills, they could forcefully bridge the gap.

The second of the Paths was the Hyper Evolution Path... the Oryx weren't the first to experience such a state, and they certainly wouldn't be the last.

Sensing the plight of the Humans, Existence gave them a chance to trigger Hyper Evolution. As a result, in a short time, the Human Race began to display several mutations that made them more powerful than normal and brought them closer to the Beasts.

This was the time where the first iterations of the Humanoid Races began to appear. They still looked very much human, but they were gaining features that weren't the norm very quickly. Given a few more generations, they would become entirely different.

And then came the last Path... the Path of the Weapon Forces...

The biggest weakness of the Human Races was their affinities. Innate Nodes appeared too randomly, and Lineage Factors could only be so great in a Human Race that didn't have other special characteristics.

No matter how strong a Lineage Factor made you, a Human would never be as powerful as a Pluto. Their biology had a limit. Unless they became something that was no longer human, they would never bridge this gap.

And many were unwilling to take that step.

Watching their Humans mutate around them, becoming "things" that they could only see as abominable creatures, they couldn't sit idly by.

The bridge between humans was widening, cracking at its foundations. Many felt that people were abandoning their Ancestors, becoming something far more bestial than they were meant to.

This led to them breaking free, going all in on a Path that they had been warned about long before... The Path of Weapon Forces.

This Path was no longer about waiting for Existence to hand them things; they were going to take it themselves.

They forcefully used the state of Hyper Evolution to forge a connection with the Laws of the World. After all, what was the state of Hyper Evolution if not a stronger attunement with the world? One that allowed efficient evolution in a short period of time?

Why not use it to allow a connection with the more fundamental, creating an opening that allowed the Human Race to manipulate the foundational Laws of the world, twisting and forming them into the Weapon Forces that they knew and loved today...

But as with all things, there was a consequence to pay.

Existence began to die.

Chapter 3177: Hand in Hand

Leonel wasn't sure how he felt about this. It wasn't exactly the fault of the people. There was no way that Existence could last forever no matter what. It was the natural progression of the world to eventually fall into a silence, destroying itself before being reborn anew.

This was the cycle he had always known.

At worst, Existence's fall had been accelerated. But...

Even with this acceleration, it had been trillions upon trillions of years since then. Existence had still managed to continue for so long. If the Ancient Humans hadn't made this choice, would the result have been much different?

Well, at least right now, Leonel wouldn't be facing the end of the world. But even then, it didn't seem to change much about his life at all.

It was a shame, though, that Crafting wasn't the Path they chose to stick with.

Ultimately, the Weapon Force Path worked well for a short while and reversed the situation once again, but it was the Beasts who they thought would ignore Paths of Creation that ended up picking up the Path of Crafting, eventually becoming the God Beasts of Creation who lorded over the whole world for a long while.

In an irony of ironies, the God Beasts of Creation became harbingers of peace and allowed the world to live in harmony. As a result, the clashes between the Humans and Beasts came to a stop, and the Ancient Humans who chose the Path of the Weapon Forces were forced to cull their ambitions.

They were neither strong enough to make much of a difference, and even when they did try, they were ruthlessly suppressed by all parties.

Eventually, they were forced into hiding, and this resulted in the normal humans that remained being oppressed as well.

The Beasts had grown to become overlords. The Humanoids had forged out their place in the world, becoming powerhouses in their own right, leaving Humans without much room for growth.

That was when the God Beasts of Destruction appeared, forcefully striking a balance.

It seemed that the Path of Crafting had its own issues. When it was taken to an extreme, it too was taking from Existence in a way that was too violent. In the end, the Infinity Beasts had to be countered by the Void Beasts.

This gave Humans a chance to rise up again. The Ancient Humans had vanished, but their descendants were taken in by the God Beasts of Creation, eventually becoming the Envoys of Light, and Darkness, and the Fawkes and Four Great Families.

All the while, the Ancient Families were in the shadows...

Until they succeeded in creating their utopia.

The Idol Battlefield.

This occurred during the great war between the Infinity Beasts and Void Beasts. The Ancient Humans thought it was the best chance to reverse their circumstances, and they were right. Using the corpses of Infinity Beasts, they built the foundation of this Idol Battlefield. In the end, the Ancestors of the Weapon Forces were tied to this Battlefield, pulled back from the dead and restrained onto this land.

They had no input into the plans of their descendants, and by now the Idol Battlefield was practically a minefield of its own, functioning with a rogue Regulator that only wanted to pump out more and 16:47 O

more powerful Weapon Forces no matter what it had to do.

Ironically enough, their descendants still hadn't seen the problem. Maybe they thought that if they brought their Weapon Forces to a high enough level, they could control the Laws of Existence well enough to reverse everything.

But in all these years, no one had been able to reach such a level, and it was nothing but a foolish dream to do so as well.

How could you ever reverse the situation with just one Weapon Force? If you wanted to undo the damage to Existence, you would need to control ALL of the Laws, not just a few of them.

That meant you would need every iteration here to find a successor capable of reaching a level beyond anything anyone in Existence's past had.

It was an absolutely ridiculous ask.

Even if Leonel had such a chance, it would only be with his Spear and Bow. And even then, it was likely only his Bow that might have a small chance at reaching such a level.

Wanting to do this was like asking the world to produce dozens of Leonels, each one as talented in their own Weapon Force as Leonel was with the Bow.

It was foolish.

At this point, it was maybe even beyond foolish. They weren't thinking straight and just accelerating everyone to their deaths.

But maybe this was everyone....

The Ancient Humans were obsessed with bringing Humans back to the top of the world through the Weapon Forces they trusted so much...

The Infinity Beasts had been obsessed with Crafting, thinking that they could create enough to forge the perfect world through their Path of Crafting...

And look at the Pluto now, they were trying to force themselves back into a state of Hyper Evolution, dancing on the edge of life and death in hopes that they could reverse the decline of their Race in these final moments.

No matter where you looked, of all three Paths, each one had ended in abject failure, and yet every one of them that still lived was scrambling for a chance to give it one more go.

Looking at it from a third party's perspective, Leonel realized just how ridiculous it all was.

They said that the definition of insanity was attempting the same thing over and over again while hoping for a different result...

Ironically, some of the strongest existences to ever step foot in reality were exactly like this.

However, there was something even more profound here, something that made Leonel chuckle bitterly.

If everyone was making the same mistake... was it really a mistake?

What Existence wanted most was for its children to evolve, and what were the Pluto, the Ancient Humans, and the Infinity Beasts of the past doing... if not trying to evolve?

But it was precisely this drive to evolve that was leading to the end of the world.

They came hand in hand, and there was no escaping it.

From the very start, this was always meant to be the natural progression of things, and maybe this exact scenario had already played out countless times before.

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The end of the world was coming, and every attempt to stop it only made it come faster.

Chapter 3178: Always

Leonel stood in silence for a while, digesting everything he read. It was a long while before he looked up to meet Old Bow's eyes once again.

Honestly, he was a bit confused. What about this was an opportunity?

Was the opportunity just knowing that the world was going to end? He already knew that.

Was the opportunity to know why the world was ending? Who cared about that?

Old Bow chuckled as though she could see through Leonel's thoughts.

The opportunity was actually to feel Time Force and learn how to incorporate it into your Weapon Force. Those that could pull themselves out from the illusion would always come back with this understanding, and if they could refine it well enough before the end of the battlefield, then they could leave here with their knowledge intact.

Otherwise, the Regulator of the Idol Battlefield would be able to erase their memories, much like they had done with everyone that came before them, and the end result would just continue to be more of the same.

Old Bow didn't explain because she knew that Leonel would be able to figure this out on his own. And Leonel's next question proved that.

"Then why is the Regulator obsessed with erasing the memories of those that enter here? What am I missing?"

It didn't make sense to Leonel even after some thought. The Regulator was birthed through the efforts of the Ancient Humans, fine. But the Regulator obviously didn't listen to these Ancient Humans, or else there would be a very clear path to succeeding here.

Someone like Leonel, who had two such powerful Weapon Forces, should be treated like a VIP if the Regulator was listening to the Ancient Humans.

Not only was Leonel a true Human, but he had exactly the potential in both Spear and Bow Force to succeed where they had failed in the past. He should be exactly the sort of candidate that they should be propping up.

This was all to say that the Idol Battlefield wasn't on the side of the Ancient Humans unless these Ancient Humans also didn't consider him a true Human, which Leonel doubted was the case.

That meant that the Idol Battlefield shouldn't have a vested interest in protecting the Ancient Humans from the rage of the world.

The only reason Leonel could think of for why the Idol Battlefield would erase the memories of those that came here of these events was to stop another wave of mass genocide against the Humans. But as had already been established, this Idol Battlefield didn't give a damn about the Human Race or the Ancient Humans.

That left practically no explanations as to why they would go so far. Leonel realized that he must be lacking some information, or else why would the Idol Battlefield go so far?

Unless...

"The Idol Battlefield may not be on the side of the Ancient Humans any more than anyone else, but it does have a vested interest in preserving the Path of the Weapon. If everyone found out that no longer using Weapon Forces would help Existence to last longer, what do you think would happen?" Leonel shook his head, looking off into the distance.

It was as he expected. This world was designed to fail. Not the Idol Battlefield, but Existence itself.

Creation was the opposite side of the coin of Destruction. One couldn't exist without the other, and there would be perpetual Creation for only as long as Destruction didn't take over.

Then there would be a period of Destruction before Creation returned again. But by then, all those living wouldn't have a place in the world anymore.

There was simply no circumventing this. Leonel's future self had seen it personally. So long as there was one shred of Creation left remaining, the Northern Star could never truly reset the world and start anew. It wasn't until he died in this future that the universe could begin its final Destruction before sprouting life once again.

By then, there would be no point to anything. Everything they had known or had known would be gone, leaving nothing more than an empty carcass of a world for the next round of Races to raze to the ground before the cycle started all over again.

There was no escaping it. It was inevitable.

If even World Spirits and Regulators were susceptible to driving the world into a ditch, then what good was it to fight against it?

Leonel shook his head and sighed.

Indeed. The world did feel like one big practical joke. It really made a man wonder... why?

However, after his sigh, his lip curled a bit.

Old Bow, who was watching his expression like a hawk, couldn't help but be taken aback. The sigh was pretty common, albeit much more muted of a response than she had received from everyone else.

She assumed that this was because unlike the others, Leonel and the talents that had entered the Idol Battlefield this time around were dancing on the edge of the end of Existence. Compared to the other talents who still felt like the end of the world was an impossible distance away, this was a very different situation to be sure.

It was only natural, then, that Leonel would take it more in stride.

But that smile... it was completely out of place.

As for Leonel, he wasn't thinking about any of the matters that weighed Old Bow down. He was smiling because he felt that he had made the right choice to allow his wife to experience happiness.

If the world's end was inevitable, what was the point of holding out hope, waiting for everything to settle down before they could finally chase after their happiness?

In this case, they might as well do their best to grasp what strands of jovial memories they could before they faced off against the inevitable.

Who knew? Maybe this obsession with improvement, of delaying, of finding a solution...

Had always been the problem.

Chapter 3179: No Bounds

3179 No Bounds

Leonel seemed particularly relaxed as he looked back toward the old woman, raising his bow once again.

"Shall we?"

The old woman blinked for a long while before she smiled, standing to her feet.

"My logic tells me that there is no point. But my pride is telling a very different tale."

When she stood to her full height, Leonel realized that she was much taller than he thought. In fact, she was a half head taller than even he was.

Although Leonel had shrunken in size after losing his Demon Bloodline, he was still of decently tall stature for a Human, standing at around 6'4 or so. And yet, Old Bow was about an inch taller than him.

Her legs were slender and her arms were long. In a way, she almost looked like the curve of a bow herself.

In her youth, she must have been quite the beauty. Even now in her old age, there were hints of rouge on her cheeks and an elegant flare to her actions that made her still hold those hints of enticement.

Her bow was long, over three meters from tip to tip. And yet, it fit her perfectly.

The world fell into silence as her fingers clasped onto her bowstring.

At that moment, it became clearer to Leonel than ever that he was facing off against the Ancestor of the Bow, the originator, the creator.

However, as soon as that reverence appeared in his heart, it was ruthlessly stamped out.

The light smile on Old Bow's face faded as a sharpness tore the murkiness of her gaze apart.

"I can see now why the Idol Battlefield hates you so much."

Leonel raised his bow. Unlike Old Bow, his smile didn't fade. His mood, after taking a downturn thanks to the Spear corridor, was now in quite a good state.

"Jealousy doesn't look very good on you, Old Bow," Leonel said with a chuckle.

"I disagree. As the Old Bow, the Ancestor of the weapon you hold in your hands, my arrogance is warranted. And as the archer of the battlefield... of all battlefields...

"My greed knows no bounds."

Leonel felt his heart tremble. There was a profoundness to those words that he just barely caught onto the faintest edges of.

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If Leonel had fought any one of these experts of the past at their full capacity, his head might not still be on his shoulders.

But it was also because of that, that he was able to get true insights into the rawness of their abilities.

This woman was truly an existence that was worthy of lording over all other Bowman...

Except for him.

The twang of their bows echoed at the same time and a rain of attacks opened between the two.

They stood just 20 meters apart, a distance that was incredibly short even for a mortal archer, let alone two practical Gods like them.

And yet their reactions were unmatched.

They pushed one another, their arrows colliding tip to tip with perfect precision every time, no matter how they curved through the air, no matter how they exploded with speed.

They said that to an archer, distance didn't matter. But what many meant when they spoke these words was a longer distance...

What about shorter ones?

How many archers in existence would find themselves helpless if the enemy was too close? How many of those same archers would pride themselves on how many kilometers away they could snipe a target down from?

****BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!****

Their arms moved faster as they took a step forward, and then another.

Leonel released a wild grin and the sharpness in Old Bow's eyes only grew more condensed. He could sense how prideful she was, how she refused to lose.

Neither of them used any fancy tricks. No Ability Indexes, no Lineage Factors, they didn't even use Bow Force itself very much.

It was like they had returned to the days before Old Bow created Bow Force, relying on nothing more than the sharpness of their eyes, the steadiness of their hands, the twangs of their bows.

****BANG! BANG!****

Leonel suddenly accelerated. His hand speed was the same, but he began nocking two arrows at once, and then three.

Even without his Ability Index, his feel for the bow was like a man against the world.

Feeling provoked, Old Bow did the same. Her arrows began to twist through the air with a more vicious momentum.

At this point, the two were only separated by ten meters. Their arrows continuously rebounded against one another only to be destroyed on impact.

Rains of shards of wood and Force descended from the skies, but they still took a step forward, and then another.

Old Bow suddenly nocked four arrows at the same time. When she released, they diverted along two paths, twisting and winding around one another.

At that instant, two sets of two arrows matched against one of Leonel's arrows each, blasting through them and shattering the stalemate.

The fiendish glow in Leonel's eyes grew to another degree.

Rather than matching Old Bow's quantity, he only nocked two arrows. They flew separately in the air, meeting Old Bow's quadruple rain in an instant.

His arrows split the twin arrows of Old Bow apart, parrying one downward and the other upward and off course.

However, his arrows didn't stop, borrowing the twisting momentum that Old Bow had given hers and inexplicably accelerating forward.

Old Bow hadn't expected this and was actually preparing a follow-up attack. By the time she realized that she had to toss her calculations out of the window, she also realized that she and Leonel were too close together now.

If they had been 10 meters apart, she could still manage. But now at just five...

Old Bow released a sigh.

Chapter 3180: Heart

3180 Heart

TA. TA.

The two arrows whizzed into Old Bow's chest. She looked down and shook her head. She had lost. She had truly lost in bow fundamentals to a youth who didn't seem to have even experienced a few hundred years of life.

She couldn't help but feel disappointed.

"Thank you," Leonel said with a smile.

"You don't need to make me feel better," Old Bow said a bit bitterly as she began to fade away.

"I mean it," Leonel said.

Old Bow's gaze flickered, but she was already disappearing before she could say anything more. Soon, there was nothing but silence once again.

Leonel stood there in silence, resisting the Idol Battlefield's expulsion so he could immerse himself in his thoughts more.

His gaze continuously flickered, his mind feeling like it was breaking free of a cocoon of some sort.

'My greed knows no bounds...'

He understood what Old Bow was referring to. It was the job of an elite archer on a battlefield to take out high-value targets. The stronger the target, the better. The more elite the archer, the stronger the target they would go after... regardless of distance... regardless of risk... regardless of the strength of the target themselves.

"Regardless of distance" didn't need to be explained other than to say that all distances had to be factored in... whether that was much further... or, much closer.

"Regardless of risk" also explained itself. An archer with great feats beneath their belt was bound to be targeted by other elite archers and powerful Generals of the like. The more of their skill they showed, the more likely they would also become one of the very same high-priority targets that they sought after.

And then "regardless of strength"...

Greed...

Leonel wondered...

Was that something that he had ever had?

He had always loved to win, but was that Greed?

No. In fact, his younger self didn't even like to show his sharpness all that much. Only when he was in the right situation or he was provoked would he act out.

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If there was a competition to win, and he happened to already be a part of it, then his Pride would kick in, and he would definitely do everything he could to have his cake and eat it too.

However, if there wasn't anything driving him, he didn't mind sitting back and reclining. He had never been a person who sought out attention or the adoration of others.

Back in the Dimensional Verse, this was truly a flaw of his. His overall laziness in regard to improving and bettering himself stemmed from the same careless disregard of much of everything around him.

Even the very foundation of his dreams and aspirations was built on selflessness.

He wanted to become a King not because of the power, but instead to help forge a world that everyone could be equal in... a world everyone could experience happiness in.

If it was up to him, he would just find somewhere to sit back and recline.

It could be said that the concept of greed wasn't very well ingrained in Leonel's psyche at all. If anything, it was antithetical to the person he was.

The only time he had ever truly displayed greed was when he was willing to burn the world for just a chance to resurrect his father and see him once more.

But not only had he snapped out of that, he was even fearful of returning to that version of himself.

He began to suppress all aspects of himself that he didn't like, forcing himself to grow as a person so that he could keep more of his family and friends around him. Greed was always something that he saw as a bad thing.

But there was something about Old Bow's words that enlightened him to something else.

Why was it that the overly confident version of himself, the lazy man of great talent that ended up sitting at the top of the world all alone, a problem...?

Leonel had always believed that the answer was because he was too selfish. He was too obsessed with winning, so he had neglected everything else.

But when was that ever the case? Didn't that version of himself still love Aina with all his heart? Didn't he still love his mother? His brothers? His friends? His father?

Maybe the real problem with that version of himself wasn't that he was selfish, but rather that he too was selfless.

That confident version of future Leonel always found plans that worked. But the problem with those plans was that they all had a 100% certainty of working out for him. He picked them because he thought it would give him the greatest odds for survival, and he was right.

But what if he was also wrong?

What if instead of picking the plan that had a 100% chance of success every time... he picked a plan with 90% success that could also save the life of someone he cared for should he succeed? What if he picked the plan with an 80% chance of success that might allow two people he cared for to succeed?

What if he picked the plan with a 30% chance of success that would give him everything he wanted in the end?

His future self had ended up losing everything because he continuously made the perfect decision despite knowing that it might lead to some casualties.

But maybe the perfect, robotic decision wasn't what he needed all the time. Maybe he needed to take some risk, maybe he needed to risk bruising his pride...

Not the pride of himself, but rather his Dream Force.

He felt like he understood something he hadn't before. His pride came from his Dream Force, and his Dream Force was what helped him to analyze all of these plans. How could it sit idly by as he chose a path that was less ideal for selfish reasons?

But why always rely on his mind when sometimes the heart was more worth following?

A Valiant Heart.