

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 3181: I Want...

Leonel's aura began to surge.

The moment he released the reins, he was expelled from Old Bow's statue.

The instant this happened, his power boiled over, and the fluctuations caused the Idol Battlefield to almost flip on its head.

Leonel, though, didn't seem to notice. As the wisps of his hair grew a deeper violet, and his exposed chest rippled with the rays of light coming from his heart, he stood in silence, gazing off into the distance.

A Valiant Heart.

He felt as though a second piece of the puzzle had come and infused into his body. Leonel had been jaded by this world, but at the core of his being, he was a man who cared... maybe too much.

He had almost died in his first Sub-Dimensional Zone because he felt bad for the teenage girl who thought being sacrificed would be the only thing to bring her family salvation.

During the first parts of his journey, he had diligently counted every single one of the people who fell by his hands, regardless of whether they deserved it or were innocent bystanders swept up into his matters by the orders of their superiors.

He had let the guilt of his talent being greater in comparison to many others weigh him down practically every step of the way, and he had dedicated his life to making the world a better place, not just once, but twice...

At the cost of both his own happiness and that of his wife's.

But it was still deeper than just that.

He had practically built his life for the sake of his father. Whether it was his pursuit of reviving him in his first life, or the building of his Dream Force on his concepts of Respect and Persistence in this one.

It could be said that even the path that dictated his mind itself wasn't his own.

When Leonel really thought back, he couldn't help but wonder...

Was his decision to have a baby with his wife the first time he had made one as his own man?

Did that even count? After all, although he wanted a child, he had ultimately done so for the sake of his wife.

Even that decision couldn't truly be considered to be... for him.

What did he want?

He wanted his friends and family to be happy.

Another cop-out of an answer.

He wanted the world to live in peace and harmony.

Yet another floundering answer.

He really couldn't think of anything so clearly. Who Leonel Morales was ended up being wrapped up in the thoughts and opinions of so many others that unraveling them one by one to get to the very core of his being just felt impossible.

After he shed them all away, there was nothing left but a mindless husk. He might as well have been an Invalid at that point.

But that was when it clicked for Leonel.

Being his own person didn't mean selfishly pursuing everything he wanted to do. Selfishness could also encompass what he thought was good as well... It was all a matter of perspective.

He wouldn't be Leonel without his friends and family, so how could he try to divorce them from himself when they were the existences that made Leonel... well, Leonel. 'What do I want...'

Leonel looked into the skies, his heart shining brighter as his Dharma began to form above his head again.

'I want the Demoness dead...'

His eyes glowed brighter, and the echoing sounds of weapons sharpening resonated through the air.

****SHIIING! SHIIING! SHIIING!****

Leonel continued to stare absentmindedly into the distance, his heart continuing to glow with a fiercer light.

He seemed to have broken through one layer, but he wasn't there yet. There was more.

'I want Existence to survive...'

****RUMBLE.****

The Idol Battlefield shook to its very core. It was a profound set of words, and yet Leonel still continued to stare off in a daze.

The Demoness was maybe the strongest power in all of Existence.

Existence itself encompassed everything there was or ever had been.

And yet, thoughts about these two just seemed to be the first few layers of Leonel's true inner heart. It was like somewhere deep inside, too deep for any of his Forces to

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seriously at all...

Almost like it was inevitable...

'I want my friends and family to live the lives they have happily...'

****DUDOOM. DUDOOM.****

The echo of Leonel's heartbeat shattered the space around him. Bow and Spear Force formed spontaneously, fusing out of the Forces that lingered in the air and ripping the rules of the Idol Battlefield apart.

No Force other than Bow Force should have been able to appear in this corridor, and yet Leonel did it with ease.

The layers of his heart peeled away one after another.

'I want to be happy...'

****RUMBLE. RUMBLE.****

Clouds began to form above the Idol Battlefield as the world whined and groaned. Existence itself seemed to be witnessing the birth of something that it couldn't quite fathom or understand.

The shaking went as far as to cause cracks to appear at the edges of the battlefield, and some of the long-used Trials almost collapsed in on themselves as a result. It felt like everything was revolving around one young man and his realization of himself.

And yet, there was still another layer to peel away.

As Leonel's heart shimmered like a beacon, he felt that there was something else sitting on the tip of his tongue.

He remembered his days in the Royal Blue Academy, the fun he had between classes, how nice it was sitting behind Aina and watching her cute mannerisms, how fun it was being able to just chat and joke around with his brothers every day, and then return to jeer his father at night.

It was a carefree life, maybe one he yearned for so much he became purposely lazy when that wasn't really the type of person he was.

"... I want to be Free."

Something solidified above Leonel's head.

Chapter 3182: More Complex

Leonel looked up toward the ceiling of the corridor. It was so tall that it might as well have been a sky itself, and above that was a glass dome that reflected the moon and the stars.

He didn't seem aware of the changes taking place in his body at all. It was more like he was just looking around, observing the world for the very first time.

His breathing was calm and even, his thoughts flowing smoothly.

Was it really freedom? Was that all he wanted? The right to be lazy when he wanted, to tease his wife when he wanted, to joke around with his brothers when he wanted...

That would be a nice life, indeed.

Maybe it was something everyone wanted deep down. No matter how ambitious, no matter how timid, no matter how pitiful, in the end, it all boiled down to these same words.

The only difference between him and others was how it manifested.

Wanting freedom was nothing new. It was almost a lackluster dream... and yet, what was always most important wasn't what the conclusion was, but rather how it had come about.

Leonel took a breath and finally seemed to turn his attention to what was above his head. He didn't seem to care about the formation of the Dharma in the slightest.

It was quite simple, at least to him. If others saw it, they would feel like it was fathomless, carrying a depth that even most Idols simply didn't have. And more shockingly than that... it was the second Dharma that Leonel had formed.

It wasn't unheard of to have more than one Dharma. The hard rule for Idols was only for exactly that, Idols. There were other geniuses who would try to form multiple Dharmas and then fuse them into an Idol when they were ready.

But the problem with Leonel's Dharma was that it was already a fusion of several Dharmas... and yet it was still just a Dharma.

The formation of a second Dharma was already something only 10% of people with a Dharma in the first place could accomplish.

To put that matter into perspective, saying that only 1% of people who reached the Ninth Dimension could form a Dharma was a vast underestimation of the difficulty.

It was actually more accurate to say that only 1% of people who reached the Ninth Dimension could form a Life Realm Force.

And further than that, only 1% of people who could successfully form a Life State Force could ever form a Creation State Force.

Of that 1%, only another 1% of that could form a Middle Creation State Force, and that pattern continued until barely 0.1% of those who formed Peak Creation State Forces could ever form a Dharma.

By this point, the percentage was so small that it was unfathomable.

It could be said, then, that a leap to 10%, while seemingly large, when the context was taken into consideration, was only natural.

Still, there was an explanation for why only 0.1% of Peak Creation State users could form Dharmas, but 10% of Dharma formers could create a second, and that was because the vast majority of Idols were formed from two or more Dharmas.

Those that stepped into the Dharma Realms already had a strong idea of what they wanted their Idol to be, so they had already made all of the necessary preparations.

It could be said, then, that given that context, the 10% figure was even more shocking than the 0.1% figure. To be prepared, a clear genius, and yet still fail at such a rate was astonishing.

The number of those that could form three Dharmas, though, was shockingly low. It was such a low number, in fact, that across all of Existence, there were only a few hundred people.

As for those that created four, there were only a handful. Not even one dozen.

This was why Leonel's Dharma was such an anomaly.

His first Dharma, his Crown, was technically only constructed from one Force... but was it?

Violet Force was a self-creation that took into account several Sovereignties and Forces into one. His Dream Force, Vital Star Force, his Creation Sovereignties... the list felt endless.

It might look like a single Dharma, but it was the culmination of many. After all, it too had once been an Idol that Leonel forcefully suppressed into a

Dharma.

However, for his second Dharma, it was even more obvious. That was because this Dharma hadn't originally been an Idol, so it wasn't nearly as cohesive. As a result, there were several obvious standouts within.

His first Dharma looked like a Crown, but this one looked like a Royal Crest.

At the center of it, there was a bow drawing a spear to be loosed. They were surrounded by a foundation of violet mythical creatures that wrapped around them and seemed to fuse into their bodies, strengthening them. Then, surrounding them, there was a gorgeous array of violet lotuses, fluttering violet butterflies, and motes of violet light.

Then, surrounding it in a border, there was a solid barrier of red and gold, accenting and offsetting the dense purple and mauve colors.

Just at a single glance, one could see that it incorporated both Spear and Bow Force into a single Dharma. That was already something that should be near impossible, even for an Idol.

It wasn't the first time someone had mastered two Weapon Forces to this extent, but they would normally either choose one to abandon the other, or they would choose a different foundation for their Idol and Dharma so that they could continue to use both.

Leonel, however... seemed to skirt these rules entirely.

But it only got worse when you looked deeper. The border of red and gold was none other than his Scarlet Star Force Innate Node. Then, deep within, the contrasts of his Creation and Destruction Sovereignty layered themselves in as a foundation.

This Dharma... it was more complex than most Idols in existence.

Chapter 3183: A Shock

Leonel exhaled as the momentum of his breakthrough finally slowed.

Looking down at himself, he still seemed calm. His body seemed to be in a terrible state on the surface, but he had never felt better... at least mentally.

On top of that...

SHUUU! BANG! BANG!

He tore through barriers in the Seventh Dimension one after another. From Tier 1 to 2, and then from 2 to 3. His momentum didn't slow until he was already a 7th Tier Seventh Dimensional existence.

His body rippled with power.

'So this is it...'

The formation of a Dharma came with a strong connection with Existence. During this process, it would allow one a chance to accelerate progress if the opportunity could be grasped.

Leonel had squandered the opportunity before because he had to put a great deal of effort into suppressing his Crown down from the Idol level to the Dharma level. That had wasted much of the energy he could have taken advantage of for himself.

Luckily, he had been able to use his King Force to

reverse-engineer a breakthrough for him, going "back in time" to multiply all of the training he had already done and making it more effective. It was a broken ability; even he had to admit that.

But this time, the breakthrough was much more straightforward... However, if an outsider was observing this, they would have a very

different opinion. That was because it was far too ridiculous for Leonel to form a Dharma of such quality and only move seven Tiers up.

It wasn't rare for a genius of Leonel's caliber to leap ahead an entire Dimension. Of course, that was only if they were around the Seventh Dimension like he was.

There were several Gods with full Idols that were still stuck in the lower Tiers of the Ninth Dimension because of how difficult it was to progress within it.

If a genius of Leonel's caliber was in the Ninth Dimension for some reason when they first formed their Dharma, then moving forward a single tier would already be a miracle.

However, judging by the fact Leonel had only moved seven Tiers forward, it was clear that even this Dharma wouldn't allow him to move a single inch if he had been in the Ninth Dimension.

This was well within Leonel's expectations. As powerful as his father's Dimensional Method was, the drawbacks were obvious.

Not only had he had to climb through hellfires and scale mountains of blades just to make it to the Sixth Dimension, but now, even without such ridiculous requirements to meet, the sheer amount of energy he needed was astronomical.

This was why he had to come here. This place was the only location where he could progress so fast, and yet... it still wasn't enough.

That was because Leonel knew that he would have to improve his father's [Final Destruction] Dimensional Method very soon.

Or, rather, "improve" wasn't really the right word. The Dimensional Method was already shocking enough. When it was matched with his [Dimensional Cleanse], it was like a tiger had gained wings.

There was no doubt in Leonel's mind, after he had come to the God Realm, that he practiced the strongest combination method in Existence.

The trouble was that he wasn't a Destruction Sovereign like he had always assumed. He was a Creation Sovereign.

[Final Destruction], as a result, was actually misaligned with his abilities. It was actually weakening him.

Of course, that was too simple of an explanation. If it was just "weakening" him, he wouldn't be growing so strong.

But if there was a hypothetically neutral technique that was just as powerful as [Final Destruction], and he practiced it instead, Leonel calculated that he would be twice as powerful as he was now.

If he took it a step further, and there was a theoretical [Final Creation] technique instead... let alone twice as powerful, he would be dozens of times stronger than he was now.

This was what he meant by [Final Destruction] making him weaker.

That said...

Leonel finally completely relaxed, exhaling a breath and taking a breath. With just this breath, his wounds began to heal at a visible

speed.

He didn't use [Instant Recovery]; he didn't have to... If a Destruction Sovereign destroyed, then he created.

He had spent his entire life thinking that he didn't have great Life Force affinity. Vital Star Force had come exceptionally hard to him. It was like pulling teeth trying to improve his comprehension of the Force just by a single inch.

Yet, ironically enough, one of his most powerful self-created techniques came precisely from Vital Star Force, a Life Force...

[Star Fusion].

How did he square the two?

The reality was that he had never had poor Life Force affinity. His

Life Force affinity was exceptional. So shocking that it was no

longer even considered Life Force.

It crossed over into new realms, touching upon the Second Dimension, and inevitably the First.

It was just that he never understood how to tap into it. He wasn't even aware that it existed in the first place.

Leonel closed his eyes for a moment and exhaled another breath.

When he opened them once more, there was a vibrancy to his aura that made the stars pale.

The healthy glow of his skin became fiercer. It was almost as though he had concentrated starlight into his very body.

His Innate Node began to change, and Star Force descended in droves.

It was said that no one had a Star Force affinity. Most didn't even understand what that meant. Star Force was a foundational Force, and it was the reason Force could even be disseminated throughout the universe, but it was hard to pin down just exactly what Star Force was.

As for Leonel, he might not be able to explain it just yet...

But he could sure as hell use it.

Leonel's body flickered and vanished, leaving the corridor.

When his eyes opened once more, he found himself surrounded by spearmen before his eyes opened wide.

Chapter 3184: A Flash

Leonel's senses were too sharp by now. It only took a glance for him to scan the entire room despite how vast it was. And that was exactly why he spotted his uncle in the first instant.

Montez looked completely different. Leonel wouldn't say that he was only about 50% similar to the man he had once been. He was far more Dream Asura now than human, and those around him keeping their distance seemed to realize this as well.

After the Demoness' actions, the Dream Asuras had gone from a respectable Demi-God Race to a public enemy that was almost placed on the same level as the Invalids.

Montez sat there, leaning against a wall with the butt of his spear between his legs and its blade resting over his shoulder and against the wall. He looked more like a mercenary than a participant, his body caked in blood.

Leonel's jaw set. He would be a fool if he didn't feel that this was yet another plot of the Demoness.

But to what end?

What was the point of turning Montez into an all-out Dream Asura after spending years suppressing him?

Montez looked up, sensing Leonel's gaze. The moment Leonel saw the flash in his uncle's eyes, his worst fears had been realized.

Either Montez had been compromised, or he didn't even know who he was.

Leonel couldn't decide which was worse.

Did he hate his uncle wanting to kill him because he didn't remember him, or because he knew who he was and wanted to kill him anyway?

The fact that he even had to weigh such options infuriated him. His good mood from just now seemed to have evaporated into smoke. It was like everywhere he turned, the Demoness would be there to sling dirt and shit at his face.

There was no escaping it, and the foul stench followed him everywhere he went.

His aura fluctuated around him, only for him to sense several killing auras lock onto him as well.

Leonel's gaze flashed like lightning as he finally seemed to care enough to check the rest of the room, only to notice that there were indeed several eyeing him.

Among them, there were two who especially stood out...

A Sylvan and a Pluto.

Even while sitting, it was over two dozen meters tall.

Despite how much space it took up, it still insisted on resting its spear across its lap. It was no surprise that its spear was proportional to its body, so the space it took up was even more exaggerated.

This Sylvan wore a mask of bark over his face, but the vines, roots, and structures that made up the rest of his body were much more... fantastical.

He exuded colors of bronze and gold and almost looked more like a specially carved and curated piece of wood rather than a normal tree.

The Sylvans were more humanoid than they were tree to begin with, but the mask this particular Sylvan wore painted a completely different image.

When its two polished brass eyes landed on Leonel, he could feel a great deal of pressure descending from above to crush him. And yet, he still moved his eyes to the Pluto.

The Pluto were close combat experts. The vast majority of them didn't use weapons at all, but that didn't mean that none of them did.

And those that did... well, it could be said that abandoning the path you were best suited for either meant you were an absolute fool or an absolute genius.

Considering this man was here, he was almost certainly the latter.

What Leonel didn't know just yet was that this man was Ger'Ain. He was none other than the Pluto that had been traveling along with El'Rion. The moment he saw Leonel, he recognized him from the description that El'Rion had given him, though it was no longer an exact one-to-one.

But as far as Ger'Ain was concerned... there was only one human that could carry the same aura that Leonel was now.

Leonel only gave him a casual glance before looking away, his thoughts returning to his uncle.

He had no idea how to handle this situation. Any suggestion or memory loss triggered by the Demoness would certainly not be easy to deal with, and he also had to be cautious with how he approached things as well, or else he would fall into yet another trap.

No matter how broad-minded a person was, it was enough to drive them mad.

It felt like no matter how many steps forward he took, the Demoness was always far off into the distance.

At first, he wanted to blame it on the fact he was born into her plans and was at a disadvantage as a result. But the more stuff like this happened, the more he wondered if it would even matter if they had started on a level playing field.

flared, and several who were eyeing him felt a stinging pain in their eyes.

Many of the weaker ones screamed out in terror, their eyeballs bursting into a rain of blood and gore at the same instant.

Leonel didn't say a word, but he also didn't need to. He was pissed.

Looking into the skies, his rage flashed by his irises before he slowly calmed.

His rage wasn't going to get him anywhere.

He would let it simmer for now. But anyone unlucky enough for it to erupt upon would realize too late there wouldn't be time for regret.

Leonel found a corner of the room to sit in, his aura stormy. He was given a wide berth and no one got close.

The time silently ticked away, and those that made it through the corridor began to slowly trickle in.

Then, what must have been weeks later, there was a flash.

Chapter 3185: Ancestral Zone

Leonel slowly opened his eyes.

It was starting.

It could be said that up until now, the Idol Battlefield was mostly just a test. It was necessary to reach a certain threshold to be allowed to reach this next step. Only then would you be allowed to enter the true Idol Battlefield.

The fact that the corridor was so similar to the Valiant Heart Zone wasn't lost on Leonel. He felt that these things were definitely related. And if he was correct, then what was on the other side of this was to be expected.

Of course, he had his grandfather's descriptions of the battlefield, but while they confirmed his suspicions, what they didn't do was give the exact method of clearance.

But... if Leonel was correct, then he knew exactly what he had to do.

Leonel's vision cleared and he found himself sitting in a small cottage.

As expected, he had once more assumed the life of an unknown entity, slipping into their role seamlessly.

However, his eyes couldn't help but sharpen when a big-bellied woman suddenly came into the room.

'Aina?'

Leonel looked at the Aina look-alike for a long while before he was stunned to find that it wasn't just a look-alike.

He hurriedly stood and caught his wife's arm. She was laboring to move around these days, and she was as fragile as a true mortal.

She took nurturing their child very seriously, so she diverted as much of her Blood Force away from herself as she could manage.

While other mothers who looked this frail would also put the child at risk, it was the opposite for Aina. The more frail she looked, the healthier the baby would be. It could be said that this child was truly getting VIP treatment.

Despite only being in the Third Dimension, they were receiving the full supply of Blood Force and Life Force from an Eighth Dimensional powerhouse like Aina.

"Leonel?" Aina asked softly.

She had just suddenly appeared here, and she found herself carrying around a heavy basket of laundry. She subconsciously walked around until she figured out what was going on, only to find her husband. Go to Settin

However, she wasn't as certain as Leonel that what was before her was real. She was very wary and almost kept him at arm's length until it clicked for her as well.

She had put a great deal of effort into her Dream Force in these last several months. After the last time their child was targeted, she refused to allow it to happen again. So though she was slower than Leonel, it wasn't by much.

Leonel took the basket of laundry from his wife and took her into his arms.

"Are you alright?"

"Yes, I'm fine," Aina said softly. She was a bit dizzy and disoriented, but other than that, she was fine, and most importantly, the baby was fine.

Leonel held his wife's head to his chest, a flash of rage sparking in his eyes. This was definitely another machination of the Idol Battlefield. Aina was completely uninvolved, and because she was pregnant, he didn't want her anywhere near this battle.

But now, she had been forcefully brought in, and if his thoughts were of any indication, it was impossible for him to send her back.

Leonel suppressed his rage again, exhaling a calm breath.

He sat Aina down and scanned the region with his Dream Force.

He found that he was suppressed to the Third Dimension, but that should be the same for absolutely everyone.

The details of this leg were vague. According to his grandfather, it would be a Zone that would take place over the course of years with an unknown target. Those that failed would be stuck inside forever, just like a usual Sub-Dimensional Zone, But unlike the usual, there were no devices that could read this one and find its purpose.

After checking, Leonel realized that even the Life Tablet was incapable of doing so. But it made sense. The Life Tablet was powerful, but it was ultimately just a treasure with its own individual limits.

By comparison, the Idol Battlefield, though its creation was triggered by the Ancient Humans, was supported by Existence and ruled by a Regulator and World Spirit.

It was a fundamentally elevated existence because of that.

However, Leonel already knew exactly what this Zone needed from him.

A Valiant Heart.

Leonel stepped out of the small cottage the two shared, going to the well and drawing up some water. After getting Aina a glass to settle her down, he didn't do much else. In fact, he spent the next few hours with his wife, just talking about things that didn't matter.

Much of the time was spent trying to think of baby names. She still insisted on not telling him what the gender was, so he could only fumble around, giving suggestions for both. Eventually, he just started giving out unisex names that would work for both.

No one ever accused him of not being efficient.

Aina chuckled when she noticed his change, but she didn't reprimand him. Leaning her cheek to his shoulder, she could feel at peace. So long as Leonel wasn't worried, why should she?

It had taken her a long time to get there, but there was no one in this world that she trusted more. She believed that no matter what the situation was... Leonel would win.

"Alright," Leonel said after a long while, exhaling. He checked his hand for the millionth time to realize that the Segmented Cube really wasn't with him any longer. He could only hope that Anastasia was alright.

For Aina to be forcefully taken out of the Segmented Cube, she would certainly have not sat idly by. For the Regulator to succeed anyone could only mean that Anastasia had certainly met her match.

"What do you want to do?" Aina asked with a smile that said 'Now you can't get rid of me.'

I chuckled. "Blood, of course. How else am I going to get a Valiant Heart?"

A Valiant Heart? Leonel had actually already formed it the moment he understood himself intimately. The changes to his Innate Node were hard to describe in a few words.

But now, this Zone was located in Ancient Times, on an Ancient land where Ancestral Humans grew.

There were no Dimensional Methods, no Force control, and no shocking powerhouses that could overturn the skies with a palm just yet...

All he had to do was make his mark.

Chapter 3186: Two Paths

Leonel stepped out of the cottage, looking out into the world with a calm expression.

They seemed to be located in the middle of nowhere, and there weren't any landscapes to be found.

The one thing that this Zone couldn't suppress was his Dream Force. His Dream Force had reached a Realm where it had stepped outside the bounds of reason.

It had to be remembered that Zones were entirely constructed from Dream Force. This was something that Leonel had learned during his time in the Void Palace of the Dimensional Verse.

He had thought that maybe things would be different here, but that didn't seem to be the case. It was stronger Dream Force, to be sure... but still Dream Force nonetheless. He remembered being highly impressed with the ability of Sub-Dimensional Zones to replicate everything before. But now, he didn't find it to be very shocking at all. After all, his Ability Index had evolved to the point that he could do the same.

It just wasn't worth the stamina drain. Or, rather, he hadn't come up with a method that would otherwise make it worthwhile.

There was no doubt that having access to his Dream Force like this gave him a great advantage, but he knew that things wouldn't be so easy.

For one, though he did have access to his Dream Force, it still wasn't to the same level as it had been in the past. It was highly limited, and he could only analyze small regions.

Second, the Regulator most certainly wouldn't be happy. With just the smallest uses, he could feel an aura pressing down on him. The result was him using up his stamina at a shocking degree of speed.

This wasn't something that Leonel was used to. He practically never considered his mental stamina at all because it was so shocking. But this time around, he would have to.

That said, he had already figured out several things in just a few moments. Who needed an analysis device when his own mind was the analysis?

The first leg of this Zone should be related to awakening Forces.

The question was how.

There were two paths that Leonel could see. The first was to essentially take the path of the Ancestors and reforge a Weapon Force.

Due to the situation of the Zone, this would be much easier than it was in the past. This wasn't just because any Weapon Force master would be intimately familiar with

the Weapon Force in question, but also because the Zone seemed to loosen the restrictions on this path somewhat.

Of course, this was still easier said than done.

For example, a race car driver might be intimately familiar with their car, and might even be able to do some complex repairs should the situation call for it. However, if you asked them to build a new car from scratch, how many could?

An even better example might be a huge fan of a novel. They might know the story in and out, and be able to answer any of even the most obscure questions someone might have. But if you asked them to rewrite the story from memory, would they be able to do it?

This was the situation they all found themselves in now.

Although Existence wouldn't be here to restrict them, reforging their Weapon Forces as though they were the original creators was far easier said than done.

The worst part was that many would succeed, but only in part. They wouldn't be able to grasp the essence that made their Weapon Forces so powerful in the first place, so they would be at a disadvantage against those that could understand it to a deeper level.

This would be what decided the weak and the strong in this world.

That said, there was also the second path that Leonel had mentioned.

In this path, one would aim not for a Weapon Force, but a normal Force. However, the Regulator didn't make it easy.

If one wanted to succeed, they would need to basically forge the first. Innate Nodes of this era as well.

Both Paths were extremely difficult, but the second was especially so.

There were probably several taking part in this Trial who had forged Innate Nodes for themselves before. But how many had done so without a world of resources at their fingertips?

Even Leonel had only managed to forge his Valiant Heart Innate Node because he raided his grandfather's treasury. If not for this, it would have taken him decades, if not centuries, to gather up everything he needed.

Where were you going to find such resources in a Third Dimensional World like this one?

The answer was that you couldn't.

So, you would have to make up for a lack of resources with comprehension, and that would mean taking an even tougher path than the one of Weapon Forces.

This was clearly meant to only be a secondary path for those especially confident in themselves, an extra method of growing stronger and rising to the top of this world to become the one true Ancestor of their Weapon Force.

On top of all of that, compared to Weapon Forces that were naturally forged from simpler Forces to combine into something more complex, normal Forces were naturally of one piece. Although they too were forged of many simpler laws, because they normally came as a package deal, teasing apart the intricacies was much more difficult.

This was why treasures were often relied on, because they could take on the burden themselves.

In fact, Leonel had cheated even further, using three Innate Nodes that he already had in his body on top of treasures.

This truly illustrated the sort of tall task the Idol Battlefield was expecting. But even SO...

Leonel's advantage was still firmly there.

That was because he wasn't fumbling around like everyone else, and he already had access to his most important Force.

That only left one question...

What was a Valiant Heart?

Chapter 3187: BOOOO!

Leonel still wasn't sure even until this moment. But if he had to describe it... it was akin to a beacon that lit his path, a guiding principle that made his journey smoother. His Forces listened to his call with greater ease, his comprehension flowed with greater speed, and everything about the world felt clearer and sharper.

This should be the penultimate requirement of this Zone, but he had already completed it. As for the ultimate requirement... it was likely showing that his Valiant Heart was superior to all other Spearman... and bowmen for that matter.

He hadn't forgotten what the Regulator had done to him earlier. It had certainly registered him as both a Spearman and Bowman. That meant that he would have to prove himself twice over.

But that wasn't something that he feared in the slightest. It wasn't something that was capable of moving him in the slightest.

He pressed a hand to his chest.

'A Valiant Heart... It feels a lot like an Idol... and yet not...'

What Leonel didn't know was that a Valiant Heart was the foundation needed to form an Idol. It was just that it was such a vague conception that most didn't know it by name or even know how to separate the existence of an Idol from it.

As such, the Title of "Idol" ended up swallowing it up when there was actually a line of division between the two.

However, whether Leonel could slowly tease apart this reality and understand the dividing line between Valiant Heart and Idol would be dependent on him.

Leonel took a breath.

"This air smells sweet."

A smile graced his lips.

A sound caught his attention from the back, and he found his wife pulling out a rocking chair from the inside.

A look of horror crossed his expression and he rushed inside, taking it from her.

'No straining!'

Aina smiled. "I'm not so fragile!"

'Shh, Leonel would have no talk back. He held the rocking chair in one hand and Aina in the other. He placed the rocking chair on a bit of flat land outside and helped her sit.

The two had their souls connected, so she already knew what Leonel was going to do next.

As expected, Leonel walked to the first line of trees after helping her settle in.

Rather than going on an adventure into the surroundings, wouldn't he first need a weapon? The question was... how would he make one?

There were no weapons around, just a single cottage. His body was as weak as a mortal's, so he couldn't just knock down trees with a palm like he would normally be

able to. And unlike Aina, who had been forcefully brought in, he had lost his connection with Tolliver. He couldn't sense his World Spirit at all right now.

Leonel pressed a palm to the tree, his gaze flickering.

He could think of many ways to cut down a tree. He could make a few stone tools, he could try making use of friction, or he could just use his hands to dig up one of the much smaller trees by their roots-the soil was certainly soft enough to make an attempt.

But then what?

How could he forge a weapon from that alone? This hurdle would probably be the largest to leap

over.

The easiest solution would probably be to make a journey away from this cottage.

If he was correct, everyone probably started in a similar location. There was almost certainly a denser population of people somewhere down this mountain.

The first challenge was to survive the trek downward, then maybe find a way to get a weapon from a blacksmith. Then they would begin refining their Weapon Forces.

However, wouldn't it be too embarrassing to need the help of a blacksmith when he was a Crafter? It was just that he was a Crafter without tools.

'There are two possibilities. Either I put some effort into learning some rudimentary Fist, Palm, or Finger Force that I can use to cut these trees down. Or...

The first possibility wasn't impossible. Leonel had grasped Fist Force before, though it was a very long time ago. Of course, time meant nothing to Leonel given his memory and the fact he could access timelines he hadn't even personally lived through now.

However, Leonel couldn't help but wonder if it was worth it.

Was there a better way?

After some thought, Leonel found a rock and then bashed it against the side of a medium-sized tree

a few times until there was an unbarked, smooth patch of decent size.

Then, his fingers flickered.

His control over his body was exceptional, and although he needed to use all of his strength to carve into this tree, the lines he formed were still steady and perfectly neat.

Soon, a Force Art had taken shape.

Leonel had a simple thought. Since the entire world was formed of Dream Force, then that meant that whatever he carved would be treated as a Force Art.

SHILING! PA. PA. PA.

A line of energy suddenly cut into the tree before splitting it into several pieces. All of a sudden, there was a pile of perfectly straight, two-and-a-half-meter-long spear bodies laying on the ground. The rest of the wasted material just fell harmlessly to the ground, and in a flash of flames, they turned to ash.

'Nice.'

"BOOOOO!" Aina's voice came from behind him.

"What? You didn't like that?" Leonel turned back to her with a chuckle.

'Not at all. I was expecting a lumberjack, stripper show, and I got a little magic trick instead!

Leonel couldn't help but laugh. Maybe the Regulator wasn't so bad after all. It was much less monotonous if he had his wife by his side.

This Zone would almost certainly last a long while, and danger would be around every corner. Although he feared for his wife's life, if he was strong enough...

Would it matter?

His gaze flashed with determination.

Chapter 3188: Not Listening

Leonel picked up one of the spear bodies and shook his wrist before piercing it out.

The butt of the spear body struck against a tree's body.

Despite only having the strength of a mortal, the bark burst apart and a small dent was formed into the tree.

Although Leonel kept calling himself a "mortal, in truth, he was probably three to four times stronger than the strongest man on modern Earth would have been.

His body, though suppressed to the Third Dimension, wasn't something a normal man of Earth could hope to match.

Unfortunately, his power had been artificially capped. Otherwise, if he could tap into the strength he had the second time he returned to the Third Dimension, cutting down these trees would have never been an issue in the first place.

'Now I just need a blade!'

Leonel flicked his wrist again, testing the flexibility of the spear body until he was satisfied.

Even so, he still took off his shirt and tied three other spear bodies to his back with it.

Aina whistled from the distance. "Finally giving the people what they want:

Leonel smiled and came to her side several minutes later. He had reworked things, making a large basket he strapped to his back.

"Come on. Hop in, Mrs. Morales."

'Is this what they call luxury?'

'Of course. You won't find better accommodations anywhere else!

Aina shook her head with a laugh and obediently took a seat in the basket.

Leonel had made it more than large enough, but she was still worried. Of course, this worry wasn't for herself, but rather Leonel.

Usually, her weight wasn't a problem at all. Leonel had been able to easily carry her for a long time

now.

But now, he was a mortal, and a hundred extra pounds was a lot, especially when she was much heavier than that.

She didn't say anything because she knew that Leonel would insist on carrying her around like this no matter what. But...

Leonel hoisted her onto his back, adjusting himself.

Indeed, she was probably heavier than what he could comfortably carry around right now. His speed was less than half of his usual.

'I'll just have to make up for it.

Three spear bodies rested in the basket with Aina. To his waist, there was a quiver of arrows that likewise lacked a blade. But he had pointed their tips. In his hand, there was a bow that he had just created.

In a few moments, Leonel had probably become one of the most equipped people in the Zone. Ironically, Leonel had forgotten one of the main advantages he had.

He wasn't the only Crafter among the entries, but he was the only one familiar with Sub-Dimensional Zones and would know how to take advantage of them in this way.

That was because... he, his uncle, and Aina were the only ones to come from Incomplete Worlds, while he was the only one with high enough Dream Force affinity to have sensed it already. Not only had his uncle had his Dream Force suppressed by the suppression of his Dream Asura Bloodline, but he had also lost all of his memories anyway.

'My range is probably only around 30 meters or so with this bow... We'll see!

Leonel set up, moving as smoothly as he could to stop Aina from jostling around too much. This used up even more energy, but his breathing remained steady and even.

He might be suppressed, but his vitality was still through the roof, and the strength of his body spoke for itself.

It wasn't even 20 meters into the journey when Leonel's ears twitched for the first time.

'Already?'

It seemed that the region around the cottage was a safe zone. The moment he journeyed past a certain region, he was targeted.

He took a step, and his hips pivoted as he raised his bow.

A fox creature surged toward him, weaving in and out of trees and moving like a flash.

Still, Leonel calmly exhaled and released his bowstring.

There wasn't the usual fierce TWANG he was used to hearing, and the arrow moved at an agonizingly slow pace.

And yet...

The fox seemed to present its head right to it.

Puchi.

The eye of the fox was pierced right through, the arrow half inserting into its head.

'Looks like we found dinner.' Leonel said with a smile.

The cottage was bereft of water and food. With Third Dimensional bodies and no Force control, people would begin to feel the hurt in less than a day. It was the Regulator's way of forcing them down.

Although Leonel had taken advantage of a nearby well, after drawing from it once, it had gone completely dry. Clearly, this was on purpose.

Leonel continued forward after storing the fox with Aina. But soon he realized that this was unnecessary.

The beasts came so frequently that he was almost certain that this was the action of the Regulator. They started off mostly weak, little foxes that could be killed with a single arrow. He didn't even worry about running out because every time he ran low, he would just write a new Force Art on a nearby tree and make more.

But soon, one arrow was no longer enough, and he started to have to fire multiple, especially as the creatures grew from foxes to wild dogs, and then from wild dogs to wolves, and then from wolves to panthers.

There was another oddity here as well. Bow Force was eluding him, as though it was a faint wisp in the air that didn't want to acknowledge him. That was something that he had never experienced before.

Leonel was unlike the others. He could remember the exact formula of Bow Force like the back of his hand. After firing so many arrows, he should have already triggered its appearance.

Yet, it wasn't listening to him at all.

Leonel couldn't help but sneer inwardly. There was only one reason this would be happening. This Regulator was truly testing his patience.

Chapter 3189: Blast Through

Despite the issues, Leonel remained calm.

The main problem with not being able to sense Bow Force wasn't the skill portion; it was rather the power output. If he could get his hands on his Spear or Bow Force, he wouldn't have to worry about the lethality of his weapons. Even if a bear appeared, he would be confident in piercing its skull with a single arrow. He wouldn't even have to aim for its eyes.

But now, he would have to be extremely wary of such a beast.

'Running out again...'

Leonel gave the panther that had a blooming bouquet of arrows in its eye a look before walking to a nearby tree and using a trusty rock to repeat the process he had done several times already. Soon, he had several dozen pointed tip arrows in his quiver.

But he hardly took a step before he frowned again.

Leonel slowly put his bow away, handing it to Aina. Then he pulled out a spear body.

Lumbering through the forest ahead was a bear. It was low to the ground, and its fur was a fierce black, yet its eyes were somehow an even darker shade of black.

Suddenly, it leapt forward, breaking into a sprint.

Leonel's gaze gained an eerie calm to it. His suppressed anger smoldered, but everything about his expression was the picture of serenity.

He took a step to the side at the perfect time, sliding behind a tree.

The bear burst by, but not before Leonel's spear shot forward.

Fierce and steady, it thrust through the air, leaving a whistling, spiraling wind in its wake. BANG!

His spear collided right into the ribcage of the bear, and an audible snap echoed.

The spear snapped right at its center, but Leonel's expression didn't change in the slightest. He only reached up, snatching the broken piece out of the air as it spun wildly.

He knew that that audible snap came from more than his spear, especially after he heard the horrible cry the bear released.

Leonel used the force of their collision to take a step back. He wrapped around the tree as the bear fell to the ground, circling to its back and then stabbing down with both broken edges of his spear.

The splintered edges buried themselves into the hind legs of the bear. It was only an inch or two, but the horrible roars of the creature echoed just as loudly.

Leonel leapt back with light steps, taking his bow back from Aina and nocking three arrows at the same time.

'I have to thank you, Regulator... if you won't let me take this path, I'll forge another!

Leonel fired his arrows.

At the same time, the bear had whipped its head back in an attempt to snap at him and stop the pain coming from its back, only to find one arrow coming for each of its eyes and the last soaring into its open maw.

Puchi. Puchi.

The bear was immediately blinded, and when it snapped down on the arrow that entered its mouth, the roof of its maw was ripped through.

Blood spurted, and the creature was suffering more than it ever had in its lifetime.

Leonel drew another two arrows and released them. Then another two. Then another two on top of those.

Soon, the bear had a bouquet of arrows in both eyes. It shook on the ground, trying to hold onto its last strand of life.

But then Leonel nocked his last arrow.

This time... just the faintest wisp of a gold light gathered.

The sharpness in Leonel's eyes deepened, and his hand danced in the wind in wisps of violet fog and energy.

Dic.

SHUUU! PUCHI.

This arrow aimed right for the center of the bear's forehead and ripped right through.

Leonel slowly lowered his bow, his expression still calm but his thoughts moving wildly.

This entire world was built on Dream Force. But this was both a benefit and a detriment to the Regulator.

The good news for it was that it could control everything with absolute precision. The variables of this world were completely under its control.

The bad news was that because it was Dream Force, it had to rely on templates that already existed. The Regulator wasn't building all of this from scratch; it was pulling on things that already existed in some shape and form. Only that way was it able to display its true power.

The reason Leonel couldn't grasp Bow Force was that the Regulator was stopping the flow of Dream Force forged Bow Force from making it to him.

If Leonel continued like this, he would either have to put in thousands of times more effort than others to grasp Bow Force, or he might never be able to succeed.

That was something he couldn't accept.

But then he had a sudden bout of enlightenment.

As he had said earlier, there would be many who created some form of Bow Force that was ultimately inferior to the original. As such, they would be at a disadvantage against those who understood the essence of the true Weapon Force to a much deeper extent.

If the reverse was possible, why not the vice versa?

Why not create his own Bow Force and Spear Force from scratch? Forming a Weapon Force the Regulator didn't have a template for and as such couldn't suppress from reaching him?

And why not make it stronger than the originals?

His understanding of the two Forces had already surpassed that of their Ancestors. He had personally defeated them both at the same level.

In that case, he would just take it a step forward and truly make them his own.

Leonel's gaze glowed fiercely as he looked up. The moon was stretching overhead, and after a day, night had finally fallen.

He would have to stop and rest soon. But whether the Regulator would allow him any rest was still up in the air.

All he knew was that it didn't matter what obstacles were thrown his way. He would blast through them all.

Chapter 3190: Permanent Residency

Leonel walked out of the forest with slow steps. His back was still straight, but his body was covered in blood.

The Regulator had truly not wanted to let him off.

The good news was that at least half of this blood wasn't his own.

The bad news was that that meant the other half was.

There was no escaping it. He was too weak right now, and this world insisted on not allowing him to use his Bow and Spear Force properly.

He had begun his journey of reforging the Weapon Forces. But that would take time. And it also didn't help if he had dozens of enemies being thrown at his face again and again.

By the end there, he almost got stuck in a valley where four different packs of wolves had insisted on attacking him at the same time.

Between carrying and protecting his wife, and dealing with so many enemies at once, it was a miracle that he was still alive.

But he had managed to leap over the first hurdle and had cleared the forest. Now, it was just a matter of making it to civilization.

It shouldn't be too far away. In fact, after concentrating his Internal Sight into a line, something that he hadn't had to do since his Dimensional Verse days, he spotted a small city about 40 or so miles ahead.

Before, his Internal Sight was so overwhelming that he never bothered to concentrate it. Though he could still increase the distance by concentrating it into a line, whatever he spotted would be so far away that it would be a waste of time.

He rarely needed to look at things so far away.

Yet look at him now.

Leonel's eyes flashed with a confident and murderous glint. Regardless of the challenge, he would trudge forward.

There was no weight that he was afraid to bear now.

Hours later, the city was well within his line of sight.

Honestly speaking, at a decent pace, even with his current body, Leonel could have covered the distance in one or two hours. However, he had taken a full six.

For one, he didn't know what dangers the Regulator might try to throw at him again. And second, he needed to recover in case the Regulator didn't throw anything at him.

Luckily, it was the latter this time.

A distance away, he set the wooden box on his back down and helped Aina get out. He discarded his spear bodies and just held onto his bow and quiver of arrows. Then, taking Aina's hand, they made their way through the last kilometer or so.

The landscape was relatively flat. There were still some trees and shrubbery around, but as one got closer to the city, it was replaced by what looked like mostly farmland.

Wheat, corn, and another variety of crops surrounded the south-facing direction.

Leonel chose to walk around this to the western side just in case. He didn't want to trigger trouble by being accused of stealing.

Soon, they had made it to the entrance of the small city.

It was surrounded by tall wooden logs and looked quite rudimentary. However, all things considered, it was probably the largest plot of civilization around.

They had two large gates, a radius of 500 meters or so, and tough-looking guards wielding real steel weapons at both entrances.

There was even a short line of people looking to get in.

Leonel listened to the conversations these people had with the guards silently until it was their turn.

"Trade, tourism, asylum, or permanent residency?" the guard asked in a practiced motion, hardly scanning them.

"Permanent residency" Leonel replied.

"For how many?"

Leonel looked at Aina's bulging belly. "Two!"

The guard seemed to notice his hesitancy and looked up as well. A bit of his hard exterior faded when he saw that Aina was pregnant, and he understood Leonel's pause.

However, he still had a job to do.

"What is your use?" he asked directly.

Leonel was actually moved up the priority list of permanent residency because he already had a wife and soon-to-be child. This made him an ideal candidate.

What the city didn't want was a bunch of bachelors with nothing to lose moving in.

However, Leonel still needed to have some worth. Otherwise, he'd become dead weight to the city one way or another, and that was unacceptable.

"Blacksmith and hunter, Leonel said calmly.

"Blacksmith?"

The man didn't seem to hear Leonel's second word at all as his eyes lit up. But then he looked at Leonel skeptically.

What kind of blacksmith didn't have any iron weapons? Leonel didn't even seem to have a hammer either.

Though... because the arrows were hidden in the quiver, the guard couldn't see that they were tipless as well; otherwise, he would have been even more skeptical.

After a while, the guard looked at Aina again, who was just silently standing by Leonel's side, and decided to put the hard-ass attitude on the back burner for the moment.

"You will need to pass a test to confirm your skill. If you truly are a blacksmith, you and your wife will be accepted with open arms. But I will warn you, if you are lying, there will be consequences! The guard gave Leonel a look as though to tell him to turn back now if he truly was lying. After all, if he failed, he would implicate his wife as well.

However, Leonel just nodded, and the guard hoped that that meant he was confident.

What the guard didn't know was that Leonel didn't know the first thing about being a blacksmith. He had never even swung a hammer before. This time, he was completely flying blind.

Soon, a member of the militia was assigned to Leonel, and he was brought to the blacksmithing quarters of the city.

"Sir blacksmith, it gets quite hot in there and the air... it's not the best to breathe, the militiaman gave a subtle hint toward Aina.

Chapter 3191: Lie?

Leonel had already expected as much, but he had yet to find a safe place to leave Aina.

Although Aina wasn't truly helpless and she could definitely fight if it came down to it, he would very much prefer that she didn't have to lift a single finger, not with the baby's delivery date just over the horizon.

That was when the door to the blacksmith quarters suddenly opened. Or, rather, the flaps.

It was so hot on the inside that they couldn't stand to have real doors and used these instead for some ventilation.

"Who's there?"

A middle-aged man with half his hair burnt off looked out. He scanned the area before his eyes landed on Aina, and he seemed to understand the situation.

"ELAINE!" he suddenly barked out.

"What the hell are you shouting for!?"

The sound of a valiant woman came from behind them. They looked over to find a home across the cobbled stone street, and Leonel understood the situation as well.

Just as the middle-aged blacksmith was about to explain, Elaine caught sight of Aina as well, and she practically rushed over.

"Come, come, come. We can't let the baby be around these smelly men."

Aina was half pulled, half carried away into the home across the street and couldn't help but chuckle. She gave Leonel a look as though to say good luck before vanishing into the home.

"Alright, pretty boy. Let's go."

Leonel found himself grabbed as well, and soon he was yanked into the forge.

Leonel stood in the billowing heat, looking around. He saw all sorts of levers to one side, hammers to another, and a line of rusted metal rods and sheets lined across a wall to yet another.

He didn't even really know where to start, and the middle-aged man, known as Kammy, wasn't very patient.

"Alright, pretty boy. I hope you weren't lying at the gates, or else even if I want to protect you, there's probably not much that I can do.

"You look young. So long as you can manage a fire, I can let it slide. But I would only be doing it because of your wife, and I WILL ride your ass hard for it. You're a man; don't put your woman in danger because of your ego or a scam."

The ranting of Kammy could truly talk someone's ears off. Suddenly, Leonel understood why it was that the middle-aged couple had been able to communicate without words at all and understand one another's intentions. They had probably spoken so many words in their first decade of marriage that they had already heard all the possible combinations of them.

"... Alright, that's enough chatting. Show me what you can do. The city only has three blacksmiths and eight blacksmith apprentices, but our militia has 300 men. There just isn't enough to go around, and the area's getting more volatile..."

The middle-aged man started ranting again despite saying he had had enough of the chatting. Leonel just tuned him out, scanning the region.

The forge and its levers were perfectly replicated in his mind, and he began to deduce how to use it.

Then he looked at the metals by the side, deconstructing their chemical structures and analyzing their melting points.

Leonel had analyzed far more complicated metals in the past before, and even if his Dream Force was being sapped away quickly by the Regulator, the ease with which the deductions came to him offset the amount of stamina he had to use up.

Simulations began to run in his mind of how he might maximize the use of his hammer, and soon, he felt that he had a decent understanding.

After all, he had watched Ramon swing his hammer for days. It was hard for someone with an Ability Index like his to watch an expert at work for so long and not pick up a thing or two.

"... Kid, did you really lie? At least try to make a leaf or something..."

The ranting continued as Leonel walked to the side and finally picked up a hammer. It had quite some heft to it as it was the largest one here.

Kammy was taken aback. He had been about to stop Leonel from making what he thought was an obvious mistake, but by then, Leonel had already picked it up.

The only one in this shop that could pick up that hammer was Kammy himself. Of course, Kammy's personal hammer was even heavier than that, but he was still shocked nonetheless.

Leonel swung the hammer around a few times as though he was getting used to it, and for the first time, Kammy seemed to notice the blood that still caked Leonel's body in several places.

Leonel ignored the world and picked up a rusted metal piece to the side and threw it into the opening of the forge. His feet flashed, and he pressed down on several pedals and cranked some levers.

In exactly 87 seconds, he pulled the metal out, and Kammy shook his head. That was

11:15 -

way too soon; Leonel didn't have any patience at all.

!... He didn't even crank the forge up to the right temperature for that...'

Kammy's voice trailed off as Leonel slammed the metal onto an anvil, striking down from above.

His muscles rippled and sparks flew.

He gave the metal three rhythmic BANGS before tossing it back into the forge and cranking the levers once again.

His left foot moved onto the pump and rapidly pressed down. Billowing hot wind was pumped into the forge again, and after another 93 seconds, Leonel pulled it out and repeated the process.

Kammy watched in silence as Leonel did this again and again, and at some unknown point, the forge reached a perfect equilibrium.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The molten metal began to emit a blinding red glow.

Using the anvil as a guide, Leonel began to sculpt with his blows, curving the metal

around its horn.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel's eyes glowed, and red-gold sparks danced.

Chapter 3192: Ignore

Leonel dunked his creation into a vat of water, and a sizzling steam shot into the air. When he pulled it out, it rippled with a slight pull of Force before it vanished.

'Not bad. Still need some work!

One would have thought that Leonel had made a blade he could finally use, but it was actually a brace.

The moment he picked up the hammer, he had decided to make one. That was because he calculated that if he swung as hard as he wanted to, he would eventually harm his wrist. If he wanted to make progress, he was going to have to find a way to protect his health first; then he could handle the rest.

Kammy came over from the side and looked at the brace.

"Why did you waste precious metal on this shit?" He seemed exasperated after breaking free from his shock.

He had realized somewhere in the process that Leonel was actually quite skilled. He did things in ways that didn't make sense to Kammy, but he was still a true blacksmith nonetheless.

The way the metal shined was definitely a clear sign of this, even though it had only happened for a moment.

It was said in their world that metals refined to perfection would be able to emit a light of their own. Metals that were close would shimmer like that for a moment.

In their city, there were only three men that had reached this standard before, and Kammy was one of them. Now, Leonel was the fourth.

The good news was that Leonel definitely hadn't lied. The bad news was that he had wasted such precious metal like this.

All of the metal in the forge had to be accounted for. They had a small quota for screw-ups, and Kammy was actually giving up a small portion of his to let Leonel have a go at

it. Considering how scared everyone was of the city lord, this was undoubtedly a shocking thing.

"A waste?" Leonel cocked an eyebrow before smiling. Using the tongs, he slipped the brace onto his wrist.

"What are you doing?! It's still hot!"

Leonel didn't react to these words and just flexed his wrist.

Hot? Not at all. This wasn't because of his Fire Force affinity, but rather because he had forged the metal so that it had properties of both steel and aluminum. It was as tough as the former and as light as the latter. In consequence, it also transferred heat just as fast as the latter as well.

The brace had long stopped being hot.

Kammy blinked in confusion when there was no smell of burning flesh. Considering half his baldness was due to fires, he was very intimate with that scent.

Leonel walked to the side and picked up another metal.

"Hey! I already let you—!"

Leonel tossed the rusted metal into the forge again.

"You didn't even let the forge cool first! That metal might look the same, but it's-."

Leonel began to crank levers and pump in air.

"You wait for the forge to cool after every time? You're wasting coal. The temperature might be too high now, but it will be perfect by the time the metal is ready to reach its melting point."

Kammy's lip twitched, being left speechless for the first time in maybe his entire life. He obviously knew that the metals would take time to come up to temperature. But the problem was that it... who could tell?

The temperature of the forge itself was just a sequence of levers and a ratio of air pumped. But the metal would have a variable range.

It was often best practice to set a proper temperature for the forge first and then leave the metal in for longer than you had to.

After all, because of the laws of physics, the metal couldn't overshoot the temperature the forge was set at. At most it could match it. So it was a safe bet no matter what.

But Leonel was calculating ahead, measuring not just the forge's temperature, but the metal's temperature at the same time.

How was that even possible?

Trying to put one's Internal Sight into that forge would lead to all sorts of problems.

It had to be remembered that Internal Sight wasn't just an extension of sight; it was an extension of all five of the senses.

Sight would be overwhelmed by the bright fire, touch would be burned to hell, smell would give you no proper feedback in return... there was simply nothing to gain.

And yet...

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel repeated the same process again and again, moving smoothly and assuredly. He brought the metal in and out of the forge, cranking levers and pumping air as though he was controlling the forge as an extension of his own body. Kammy was so distracted that it took him a while to realize that Leonel was swinging the hammer with what should have been at least three times the strength he used previously. He could practically see the metal whining beneath his might.

"That brace..."

Kammy's eyes shone. It was dispersing the impact and weakening the backlash to Leonel's arm.

So it wasn't a wasted craft after all? Just how was a brace alone able to accomplish this?

SHIIING!

Kammy hurriedly dodged out of the way of a blade Force that carried itself through the air.

Leonel tossed the metal back into the forge.

Every time he pulled it out and hammered, another blade would appear, then another, and then another.

They layered on top of each other before...

BANG!

A resplendent light shot up and a ripple surged across the room.

The air overturned, and dancing blade lights descended.

Kammy's eyes were pulled to the spearhead, and he practically forced his eyelids more open with his fingers and thumb.

He couldn't believe what he was seeing.

And because Kammy was so distracted, he didn't see the sneer on Leonel's face.

He had found a way to ignore the Regulator.

Chapter 3193: Another

The Regulator was an absolute annoyance. If Leonel could have directly killed it, he would have made the attempt already.

But he knew those thoughts were foolish.

If that Regulator could go toe to toe with Anastasia, then he certainly stood no chance. Such thoughts were nothing more than something to help him sleep better at night, not that he was getting much sleep these days.

Even so, he had his own ways of sticking a middle finger to the Regulator.

Blacksmithing was definitely a much different profession than Crafting had been for him.

Rather than Finger Designations, he had to replace it with rhythmic swings.

Rather than communicating with Tolly to deal with impurities, he had to hammer them out or burn them away.

Rather than fusing metals with a thought, he had to adjust temperatures and melt them into one another, then force their fusion with tempering processes.

The list of things he had to do felt endless, and it was like he was learning how to Craft all over again...

But he absolutely loved it.

Just now, he had managed to touch onto the faintest edges of the Life Grade.

Normally, this wouldn't be possible with just this alone. That was because the Life Grade required the formation of an entirely new Force Metal, one that could stand on its own.

But Leonel was just using normal iron and hadn't added in anything special... Except for Dream Force.

Everything in this Zone was forged of Dream Force, including these seemingly solid metals. That meant that they could be manipulated in ways normal metals in real life couldn't.

Leonel had managed to forge a new path of blacksmithing, one that would only work in this world... and also one that would ignore the Regulator.

A Regulator was a Regulator for a reason. It could target Leonel, but it could only do so while following its own rules. If not, why would it just target Leonel like this and not directly kill him?

Leonel's father, the man he respected the most in the world, had ended up dying at the hands of a Regulator of the mere Dimensional Verse. Compared to that Regulator, the

Regulator of the Idol Battlefield was most definitely orders of magnitude more powerful.

Killing the Leonel of now would be as easy as snapping its fingers. But it didn't.

It also didn't send any more beasts after Leonel once he left the forest as well.

And the reason was the exact same.

Its rules.

Making it more difficult for Leonel to communicate with and sense his Spear and Bow Force was still bending the rules within a certain parameter. It was still justifiable. However, after Leonel created a Life Grade Weapon that resonated with Spear Force on its own, this was no longer possible. That was because the weapon in Leonel's hand now had nothing to do with the challenge of the Zone.

There was nothing the Zone could do about it.

Suddenly, Leonel had gained the best of both worlds.

With a spearhead like this one, he could now access Spear Force, and at the same time, he could continue to forge his own Spear Force Path.

Of course, there were drawbacks.

For one, this new Crafting Path he was creating wasn't perfect just yet. At best, he was accessing a neutral Spear Force, not his Sovereign Spear Force, and certainly not his Dharma Spear Force.

He would need to refine his methods for much longer before he took this step.

But the good news was that he already had several ideas. He had yet to carve any Force Arts into the blade, and he had a feeling that he would get many more chances to test out his theories very soon.

"You... just who are you...?" Kammy looked at Leonel incredulously. "In this entire Bellmount Ridge Region, spanning thousands of miles, there's only one blacksmith amongst hundreds that can do that..."

"Oh? There's another?"

Kammy was speechless. Why did it sound like Leonel didn't believe him?

He was about to reprimand the pretty boy, only to realize that he probably didn't have the right to.

Who was he to lecture this man about blacksmithing?

Plus, that blacksmith he spoke about had been a legend for so long that he had either already died or certainly had a foot in the grave. But Leonel looked like he had barely just turned 20...

Of course, Leonel was much older than that. In terms of years personally experienced, he was over 150 years old. In terms of his body's age, he was almost 30 now.

But in this Third Dimensional World, those that could look so young and be so old at the same time didn't exist... not yet, anyway.

At that moment, there was a sudden ruckus at the door, or the flap, and Kammy looked over with a frown.

A blacksmith apprentice who seemed to be in his 30s rushed in.

"Master Kammy, the City Guard is here to pick up the order."

Kammy waved a hand. "It's all by the door. Just take it."

"They... they say it's not enough... Master Elaine is arguing with them..."

Kammy's eyes flashed with rage. "Is it Jones?"

The blacksmith apprentice didn't dare to speak.

Jones was the youngest son of the city lord. There were rumors that he was secretly selling their work on the private market to enrich himself, but Master Maine had ended up suppressed for bringing this matter to the City Lord, and now no one dared to bring it up.

The amount of weapons Kammy had handed over was certainly enough. The quota never changed, including a certain number of repairs and a certain number of fresh weapons and armor depending on the blacksmith in question.

The fact Jones was asking for more only meant that he was truly overstepping his bounds this time. He wanted more obviously so that he could skim off the top. He wasn't even trying to hide it anymore.

With a flash of rage, Kammy stomped out.

Leonel frowned as well, following. If Elaine was involved, what about Aina?

He wouldn't mind starting a massacre regardless of the consequences if even the slightest hair on her head was harmed,

Chapter 3194: Jones

Leonel followed after Kammy calmly, his expression unreadable. Had the middle-aged blacksmith been watching Leonel, he might have realized that it might have been in their best interest if Leonel stayed on the inside...

But realizing it was one thing. Actually being able to stop Leonel from going to see if his wife was alright was a different matter entirely.

And maybe Kammy would have understood this as well.

A man's love for his wife couldn't be described in just a few words. A man's love for his pregnant wife existed in a league all its own.

To call it a reverse scale simply didn't do it justice.

The two walked out from the flaps of the smithy to hear Elaine cursing to the high heavens.

"We've already given you the quota. It never changes, so don't start your bullshit now. Do I look thin and frail to you? Do you know how many children these hips have birthed? Do you think I would fear a brat so wet behind the ears? Come, come. See if I don't spin your jaw around your neck!"

Elaine gripped onto a broom with one hand and a rolling pin in another. Her apron was still caked in flour, and she had just been eager to listen to a few more baking techniques that Aina was teaching her when the commotion triggered.

When she saw Jones and his men bully the apprentices who didn't seem to know what to do, her motherly instinct flared up.

There were eight apprentices across the town, and two of them were her flesh and blood, and the last was a son she had adopted. Kammy had three apprentices here, and they could all be considered to be under the valiant housewife's protection. How could she not flare up?

Jones sneered at Elaine's display. The first time he had seen it, he had actually gotten quite scared. But after coming away unharmed several times, he realized that this housewife only knew how to put up a valiant front; she wasn't actually all that valiant at all.

And how could she be? A single poke from one of his guard's swords and she would be dead.

Jones had beady little eyes and pale skin that didn't make sense for most of those in this city. Bronzed or tanned skin was pretty much the norm in this region. For someone to be as pale as Jones, it was either they were incredibly sick or they spent not even the slightest modicum of time working.

His skinny-fat posture played perfectly into that. He had a somewhat lanky frame but a belly that half spilled over his waistline, giving him a disproportionate and truly disgusting appearance to look at.

If that wasn't enough, his oily hair and wretched scent certainly didn't help at all.

He ignored Elaine and looked to her back, watching a calm and silent Aina. His eyes lit up, only to be marked by a barely perceptible fury when he saw just how pregnant she was.

One would have thought that Aina was owed to him, as though she had committed some sort of taboo by carrying a child that wasn't his.

Maybe in this town, that was precisely the case. In fact, the first time he saw Aina, he was more shocked than anything else.

He didn't believe that there was such a beauty around that he had never seen before. He was aware of the existence of every single one of them. How could he have possibly missed the very best of them?

Even though they could hide her for a while, by the time she grew up, rumors would have spread. Which meant that this woman must have come from outside the town and was very likely a new resident.

Just as Jones was about to make some inquiries, the valiant housewife blocked his line of sight to Aina.

"You better keep those stupid little beady eyes away from my daughter-in-law, you little bastard. Otherwise, I don't mind castrating you right here and now."

Aina raised an internal eyebrow, but she didn't say much. She could guess the woman's thoughts.

There was definitely some veil of protection that came with being one of the only three blacksmiths' wives, so Elaine was trying to extend that protection to Aina as well.

Unfortunately, she had made a little bit of a slip-up.

"A daughter-in-law that I've never heard of?" Jones finally spoke in a high-pitched, ear-grating voice. "Are you trying to say that one of your sons married outside the village and no one knew about it? Tell me, what is your family conspiring? Don't tell me that you're planning to defect to our enemies?"

Elaine froze, not quite knowing how to respond to this.

"Detain them, guards. I'll have to thoroughly investigate this matter. In these troubling times, we can't let even a single traitor go. This is also a matter of the security of our city, don't go easy on them just because they're women or... pregnant."

There was a distinctive pause before he spoke out the last word.

Elaine's brows jumped with fear and horror as she realized the implication. As for

16:56

Aina, her reaction was muted. If she hadn't seen a certain man suddenly step out from the smithy, her reaction alone might have caused Jones to piss his pants. But now that her husband was here, there wasn't a need for her to lift a finger and potentially cause the baby harm.

As for the implication of Jones' words, they were all too obvious. He was a man of many sick fetishes, but pregnant women were not on that list. Wouldn't it be more convenient if that baby was gone?

PUCHI! PUCHI!

Kammy didn't even get a chance to say anything as the two guards fell with bloody holes in their chests.

At some unknown time, Leonel had already picked Jones up by his throat, squeezing down so hard that the man's face became red, then white, then purple.

BANG!

Chapter 3195: Tricky

The brace on Leonel's wrist vibrated, and all the accumulated tremors of his earlier hammer surged.

Jones felt the pressure building in his head as the horror set in.

His skin began to bulge from the blood pressure, his skull deformed soon after as his brain pushed up against its mold, and then his eyes popped out of their sockets in a rain of blood.

All the while, Jones wasn't able to make a single sound. He could only scream in his own thoughts, trapped in the cage of his own mind as it became a murky, disgusting mess of gray matter oozing from his nose and ears.

Then, he couldn't withstand the pressure anymore, and his head exploded.

A shocking silence filled the city streets. There had been many spectators that had gathered by now. After all, the Kammy smithy was on a busy street. Their residence was the only one here, while there were many other commercial properties that the people would frequent.

Seeing Jones stir up trouble again, many wanted to remain uninvolved, but many more wanted to see just how far these matters would go.

Jones was a true stain on their city. His presence made several things harder on everyone, but no one could say anything.

In reality, the intelligent amount the city knew the real reason Jones was allowed to run rampant.

The city was in a bad situation with the marriage alliance between Vener and Vate City. The city lord wanted to increase taxes, but he didn't want to become the villain himself, so he let his son do it.

Most of the hatred of the people was directed onto Jones, and the foolish and naive didn't even realize that many of the things Jones did were done in tacit acceptance of his father.

Jones thus became a hound. While most of the things he did were just to enrich himself, much of the money he gathered went right into the coffers of the city lord and were sent to bolster their defenses and prepare for the next battles.

But now...

He was dead.

Leonel waved a hand, and Jones' headless corpse fell to the ground.

Aina came to his side, shaking her head and gently using the apron she wore to wipe the blood from his face.

Because they were in the Third Dimension now, it was much more difficult to do certain things, and Leonel was certainly overexerting himself for the sake of both the display and causing their enemies the most amount of pain possible.

What she didn't realize was that her casual actions were just as shocking. When had these people ever seen someone they assumed to be a housewife wipe not only blood but gore as well from the face of her husband?

Why was the action so casual? So unassuming... so natural?

Aina wiped the last of the blood away and straightened out Leonel's clothing. She didn't even bother to take off her now blood-stained apron as though it was only natural that it be like that.

Everyone else could only focus on the interaction and the corpse that now lay on the street, but the two of them didn't seem to care in the slightest.

Kammy and Elaine looked at Jones' corpse, their expressions somewhat pale. When they gazed up to look at one another, they seemed to have both come to a tacit understanding as well.

Elaine took a step forward and hurriedly whispered to the two.

"You two need to leave as quickly as possible. You can't stay here anymore."

Leonel didn't reply. That was because while Aina was still focused on cleaning him up, he was focused on making sure she wasn't harmed. He was practically scanning every one of her hairs to see if there really was one missing or not.

As for what he would do if he found something out of place when Jones was already dead, maybe only he was aware of that.

It was only after he ensured that Aina really was just fine that he looked over to the housewife.

"Where does the city lord live?" he asked.

He didn't really need the answer. He could find it with a thought. Instead, he had asked for a completely different reason.

The same instant he asked, he scanned the changes in the reactions of everyone around.

There were quite a number of those who reacted with horror, unfortunately, making him realize that this matter wouldn't be so simple.

The city lord was smarter than he thought, and he wasn't outright hated by his people. Just taking him out wouldn't be good enough because that would mean he'd have to likely travel with his pregnant wife to another city unless he planned on fighting it out with the entire militia.

If he had his normal slate of abilities, he wouldn't care. But he really couldn't manage it now.

'Considering the quota, there should be about 300 or so official men of the military. They would likely be stronger than usual Third Dimensional existences, and I still haven't confirmed whether this world truly has no one of the Fourth Dimension or not. It would be dangerous to go up against so many people!

Kammy was shaken. He grabbed Leonel's wrist and pulled him back.

"Why are you asking that?! You need to be careful," he hissed.

"Why? Didn't you say that this is his son? I have to at least explain my actions to him, no? I'm a blacksmith now. There might be a chance to survive."

Many people breathed sighs of relief when Leonel said this, but they were the fools of the group, smitten by the trickery of the city lord.

It was those who had initially reacted with excitement that gave Leonel a second look.

Indeed, they had seen through Leonel's intentions as well, and some seemed to appreciate his pull back.

There was some hope for this city after all, it seemed. However, how the fallout would go was hard to say.

Chapter 3196: Anesse

Regardless of what the outcome might be, Leonel himself was unprecedentedly calm and unmoved by it all. So long as his wife was safe and healthy, he didn't care about anything else.

He took Aina's hand and began to walk. However, rather than making his way out of the city, he walked toward the city lord's mansion.

City lord Anesse was a middle-aged man. But unlike Kammy, he didn't seem to be tapering off from his prime. He had a robust build, a greying beard that exuded an air of strength and wisdom, and a pair of deep black eyes that seemed to carry an abyss of their own.

News of what happened was exceptionally slow to travel. There were no methods of instant information transfer. So the man didn't know of anything that had happened, nor of the loss of his son.

Instead, he was going over reports, his stoicism growing more somber the more he read. These matters were truly getting complicated and just squeezing his citizens for more wasn't going to work.

They needed more warriors, powerful ones. If not, no matter how many resources they handed over, what good would it do for them in the long run? If anything, it would just be giving their enemies more of a lane to take advantage of them. This was unacceptable.

A knock came from the door.

He looked up from his desk with a frown. "Come in."

"City lord, there's someone here to see you."

"Who is it?"

"This man claims to be the fourth blacksmith of the city."

The city lord's expression darkened even further.

If he had been told earlier about such a thing, he might not have let Leonel in at all. For a fourth blacksmith to appear at such a precarious time practically screamed enemy spy. Who knew, maybe they would find out in the middle of battle that their weapons were defective?

"Hey!"

The voice was abruptly cut off as they were dragged back. In the doorway appeared a couple, both covered in blood.

City lord Anesse stood up, his aura surging.

"Honestly, I think I overestimated you a bit too much," Leonel said almost as though he was talking to himself. "To think that I could just walk in here without much effort at all."

He had been worried about the number of militiamen and the difficulty he would face as a result, but he didn't expect that he wouldn't need to face off against them at all to make it to the city lord.

Of course, he still couldn't just kill the city lord due to the reaction he had seen from the citizens. But being able to get here still made things far easier than he ever expected.

This was the weakness of these small cities. They hardly had proper sanitation, let alone advanced technology.

This was more like what most Third Dimensional worlds were like. Earth was a true anomaly.

The amount of advancement that Earth had made without Force was something that should truly be studied.

"Who are you?" City lord Anesse's aura flared. He was truly a man used to wielding power. But maybe it was precisely because of this that he didn't have any true bodyguards by his side.

Maybe he would have them when he went out. But in the confines of his own home, and given his personal power, he would never believe that he would need them here of all places.

Leonel walked in with Aina and closed the door behind him.

There was a pounding that came from the other side, but Leonel only casually took out the blade of the spear he had created. With a flicker of his wrist, a complex pattern was drawn into the door, and all of a sudden, the sound of the pounding vanished and the door no longer even vibrated.

"I can give you two options," Leonel said casually.

City lord Anesse's expression became firm, and he seemed to be preparing for the fight of his life. He even gave a slight glance to Aina before focusing on Leonel. If it came to it, he didn't believe that Leonel would be so casual with his wife's life. She would definitely be his weak point.

Leonel read the city lord's reaction and changed his mind.

"I guess there's no need to give you an option, then."

PUCHI!

The city lord reacted quickly, his skin becoming covered in a dense grey stone. Leonel's finger collided against it. He managed to make it through, but only in part.

'Interesting!

Leonel's arm stretched over the desk that separated them, his finger thrust at the city lord's chest, but he couldn't make it any closer.

He thought the battle would end in a single strike, quite frankly. It probably would have had he used the blade, but he hadn't thought it was necessary.

It seemed, though, that although the city lord wasn't in the Fourth Dimension, he had awakened an Ability Index.

That made sense. Even if these humans hadn't figured out how to create Dimensional Methods yet, Ability Indexes were innate. They would be born with them so long as a world had made it through the Metamorphosis.

Leonel thought about just using the blade and ending things, but he decided against it. There was something he wanted to see.

BANG!

The city lord took a step back to stabilize himself before exploding forth.

He kicked at his desk, sending it flying at Leonel as he rushed to the side, picking up a heavy ax.

Leonel was forced to stop the desk, but the echoes of danger bloomed in his mind. He knew even without his internal sight that the city lord was swinging his ax down at him from the other side, planning to go through both him and the desk.

Leonel's palm touched the smoothness of the desk before he grunted, pushing the heavy wood desk down and back.

The desk collided with the city lord's lower body, stifling his forward momentum and causing the ax to swing wildly through the air.

Chapter 3197: Wary

The swing of the ax missed Leonel's nose by a hair, swiping down, splitting the desk, and then burying itself into the floor.

Leonel took a step forward, stamping down on the polearm of the ax with a foot and driving it down hard.

The city lord's grip almost failed. But though he managed to hold on, his body was sent tilting forward.

Leonel took advantage, stepping to the side off the polearm and in the same motion, sending a fist right at the city lord's head.

BANG!

Leonel's hand almost shattered on impact, the jaw of the city lord becoming covered in the very same grey stone, but his expression didn't change in the slightest. It was as though he didn't know pain.

The city lord's eyes rolled as he nearly lost consciousness. He stumbled, his grip over the ax loosening as he almost collapsed.

BANG!

A second fist landed from Leonel, then a third.

The city lord couldn't read or react to what was happening at all; his mind wasn't even clear. It was like he was being attacked by three enemies at once instead of just one. A single miscalculation had left him in a quagmire that he couldn't pull himself out of. Blood ran down Leonel's knuckles as his skin was sheared off with every collision.

In the swirling darkness of his mind, city lord Anesse could only barely see a pair of deep, violet eyes. Despite the fact his knuckles were being stripped down to the bone, the coldness never faded from them.

Those two orbs were the only thing the city lord could see as the life was practically beaten out of him.

He couldn't help but wonder what mistake he had made to end up in this situation... And that was when he caught sight of a second pair of cold orbs. They were golden, and they hovered there with the very same steadiness.

This was no normal pregnant woman...

Those were the last thoughts he had before the last of his mind gave way. His brain practically oozed out of his orifices, his blood falling like the rain.

Leonel exhaled a calm breath.

He wasn't originally planning to kill the city lord if he was obedient. But what was with these people and targeting his wife? Did they have no shame? Not letting even a pregnant woman go?

He shook his head almost as though it was regretful that the city lord chose death.

However, he only did so for a moment before he picked the two halves of the desk up and put them together. He drew a Force Art at their split joint, and it naturally fused together. Quite quickly, it looked as though nothing at all had happened in the office. Leonel picked up the city lord's corpse and put it on the table.

Other than the blood oozing out of his orifices, the city lord actually looked perfectly fine.

'It should be possible...'

Leonel had been testing something with every punch he levied at the city lord.

This Sub-Dimensional Zone was entirely focused on Weapon Forces, so doing anything else was quite difficult. Even his Ability Index was suppressed, let alone his Lineage Factor.

The obvious solution to this problem was to kill the city lord and then use King's Might to resurrect him to do his bidding. But that was easier said than done, especially with the Regulator targeting his Dream Force in particular.

However, as Leonel had said many times already, everything in this Zone was constructed from Dream Force.

Everything.

That meant that technically speaking, using King's Might here should be easier than using it anywhere else would be. After all, he had direct and unfettered access to the souls of people.

But the theory was one matter; the actual execution was another. In reality, he couldn't even access his King's Might at all, let alone use it.

However...

He had gone through a great deal of trouble to survive the trials of the Emperor's Might Golden Tablet and unlock the techniques within.

And if one remembered... the techniques of Emperor's Might were all drawn as Force Arts.

So what would happen if he drew the Force Art for [Arise] right onto the body of a dead enemy?

Leonel's wrist flickered continuously, drawing out the complex Force Art piece by piece.

He had needed to test out the city lord's body to understand its ins and outs.

Usually, when he cast [Arise], he would be able to directly control it with his Dream Force, shifting and changing some subtleties to make it fit.

For example, when he faced off against Shan'Rae, he had to put in far more effort because her soul had protections.

Here, it was even more complicated because he was trying to draw a one-size-fits-all Force Art onto the body of a dead man who didn't even have a soul in the normal meaning.

However...

SHUUU!

The stone skin of the man suddenly lit up and gained a violet tinge. With a twinkle, the man's eyes suddenly flashed open.

"My King!"

City lord Anesse rushed to his feet off of the table and kneeled before Leonel.

Leonel exhaled a breath, a slight sheen of sweat covering his brows. The complexity of

the Emperor's Might techniques certainly weren't a joke.

He wasn't sure he would succeed if the city lord was truly in the Fourth Dimension. The suppression here was too much. But this would be enough.

Soon, those of the city lord's mansion saw an odd sight. Their stoic city lord was actually waiting on a young man that had entered quite hostilely moments ago.

It wasn't long before news of a fourth blacksmith spread. But what was more shocking than this was that the city lord had taken him in as a true confidant despite the fact he had killed his son.

This, though, in the eyes of the foolish people of the city, meant that the city lord was truly a magnanimous person who hadn't known about the actions of his own son. And this made others, especially the spies from other cities, extremely wary of Leonel.

Chapter 3198: Wash Your Neck

"Are you certain?"

A city lord of a nearby town asked with a frown, trying to understand if they truly had a grasp of the situation.

It was too odd. Jones died, and yet instead of crushing the perpetrator, Anesse befriended him? That didn't sound like it made much sense at all.

Even if Anesse was just using his son, his son was still his son, after all. On top of that, given Anesse's intelligence and the ease with which he manipulated his populace, he would definitely use this as an opportunity to reel in more power.

The only reason they were having so much trouble dealing with his city in the first place was because of Anesse's solid understanding of politics and how to guide the feelings and views of the people. Otherwise, he would have found himself crushed beneath their momentum long ago.

Something like the death of a son, even if the majority of the city hated him, could easily be used.

For example, Anesse could have held a large procession and forced the city into a mourning period.

As bad as Jones was, he couldn't have possibly had the time to affect every person of the city. Most would only have heard about him through the proxy of others and would have no personal experience with the matter.

As the mourning ramped up, many would even begin to doubt whether Jones was truly that bad or not, or if the rumors they had heard were just exaggerated, or even a step further, spread by their enemies to trick them into hating their own people.

If Anesse drummed this up and ended it with a public execution of Leonel, it would bring everyone in the village together. Though there would be some dissenting voices, they would eventually be drowned out by the general public sentiment until they began to turn even people who called themselves their friends away.

This was how easy it was to manipulate the human mind. Everyone was susceptible. You didn't need to convince everyone. Even just 60% of the population being on your side was enough to sway the remaining 40% until they had no choice but to follow.

This was why Anesse was bold enough to allow his son to run rampant in the first place. He intimately understood this matter...

Which was why it was so ridiculous that he would make a choice like this.

The only explanation was that...

Leonel was dangerous.

BOOM!

Just as the city lord was lost in thought, there was a sudden burst at his door, and his messenger's head flew into the skies.

The city lord hurriedly stood from his desk, only to find a spear jetting out through his chest.

"Weak. Weak. Weak. The lot of you. I can't believe they gave me this stupid human body."

The spear shook, and the city lord on the end of it vibrated, then shattered apart into a rain of gore.

"Alright, this city is mine now. Anyone who has anything to say can taste my spear and see how it likes it. Of course, if you happen to be a woman, I have another spear you can taste. Never say I don't treat the fairer sex well."

All across this Zone, scenes similar to this one played out. In fact, many of these situations had occurred long before Leonel even arrived at his city.

Although Leonel was one of the first to forge a weapon and make his way down the mountain, he was also by far the most delayed. The Regulator had thrown so many beasts and challenges at him that those only now taking over their cities were actually

on the slower end of the spectrum, while the most powerful of them had already done so long ago.

However, these newbies were quite impatient. And those that had been there for a while noticed the vulnerability of Leonel's city as well.

As their spies came back with news, they realized that Leonel must be one of them, and likely had an ability to manipulate or cast illusions that could trick the people. If he was allowed time to sink his claws into the city, he would be able to control his own far better than they could in a short time.

In that case, they would take a more hardline approach.

Battle.

What better way was there to gain prestige than to perform well in battle? They would be killing two birds with one stone.

"We will wait a bit..."

A voice came from a city lord's office, but it felt far too deep and rumbling to have come from a human.

However, none of the officials dared to enter to find out why.

The inside of the office was a mess of beast carcasses. A bearman who stood so tall that even in a seated position, his head had to bow to avoid the ceilings, ripped through them one after another.

"My strength... I want my strength... Get this human skin off of me..."

The more he ate, the more he reverted back to his truest state.

An oddity that no one had been able to understand was that all Races that entered this Zone had become humans. It didn't feel like they were stuck in the body of another, but rather like their own bodies had regressed.

If Leonel were present, it would have been easy enough for him to understand why this was. After all, all humanoids were descendants of humans.

But to most, they assumed that it was just another test of the Zone, and they were all too eager to return to their true bodies.

And this Bear Beastman was no different.

Blood leaked from his lips, and his body shuddered with pleasure as strength poured into it once again. He seemed to have gained some sort of PTSD from living in the body of a weak human.

"Once I'm done here... I'll find the bastard who dared to kill my brother... I will smell it. on you... Wash your neck..." he spoke between bites.

- Chapter 3199: DONG!

Chapter 3199: DONG!

The rhythmic clanging of metal echoed again and again.

After dealing with the city lord, Leonel seemed to have forgotten about the rest of the world as he went back to forging.

In truth, he wasn't very interested in doing this back-and-forth with the experts of this world. Going around, conquering cities, and razing his enemies to the ground wasn't interesting in the slightest.

This was the most obvious path to clearing this Zone, but Leonel also knew that it wouldn't work for him for several reasons.

First, the Regulator would make it a living hell for him. Trying to follow the conventional path would just give it more chances to do exactly that.

And second, he already had a Valiant Heart. His goal wasn't to form one like the others. His goal was to form his Weapon Force on his own.

These were the two requirements for clearing this Zone.

However, for obvious reasons, the second would also be a living hell thanks to the Regulator.

This ironically put Leonel right back at step one. He wasn't going to succeed in forging his own Weapon Force by meditating in silence. He needed to battle. And that put him right back in the Regulator's clutches.

It was a vicious cycle, to be sure. But that didn't mean he had to follow everything to a tee.

If he was correct, his enemies should be making their way toward him right this moment, so he would use them as a nice whetstone.

****CLANG. CLANG. CLANG.****

Leonel stopped swinging his arm, shaking his head.

'Still not good enough!

He tossed the blade to the side.

Making a long-standing Weapon Force better was next to impossible. In order for it to be triggered in the first place, it already had to have reached perfection in some aspect. There was nothing to improve.

The creation of a Weapon Force shouldn't be looked at like inventing an item. The creation of a Weapon Force was exactly the same as someone creating oxygen. How could you improve oxygen?

'No, it's even more fundamental than oxygen, as I know it is two oxygen molecules bonded together. Creating a Weapon Force is no different than piecing together a fundamental atom from its electrons, protons, and the basal elements even more fundamental than them...'

As stable as oxygen was on its own, trying to add to it or remove from it would immediately destabilize it.

Ironically, Leonel's task was even more difficult than what he described precisely because of this.

It might be easier if he were trying to create an entirely new chemical. But he was trying to mess around with an already stable one, one that had been refined and perfected for countless generations. It was practically like trying to make a noble gas more stable than it already was. There was no room for improvement.

If not for the machinations of the Regulator, Leonel might not even think to go this route.

He had already created his own Force before in Violet Force; he didn't need to do it again to stroke his ego. Even he, deep inside, felt that Spear and Bow Force were already perfect as they were.

He didn't have any ideas for how to perfect them even further.

Leonel took a breath and exhaled.

To the side, Kammy couldn't understand Leonel's disappointment at all. He was practically like a child on Christmas Day, going through the blades Leonel created one after another.

Most of the militiamen used spears. There were a few swordsmen and archers among them, but seeing the quality of these blades, he thought about just forcing them to abandon their weapons of choice.

Even a few casual, unpracticed jabs with these blades would skewer enemies before they knew what happened to them.

It might be worth the loss in skill.

Plus, this was a world without Force just yet, so the value of a mortal using a weapon they were familiar with wasn't nearly as high as it would be otherwise.

"Can I give these to the militia?" Kammy asked, realizing that it wasn't ultimately his decision to do this.

"Hm?" Leonel looked up, then waved a hand. "Sure... but it's not like they'll need to use them."

"What was that?"

"Nothing." Leonel shook his head as he stood to his feet.

He randomly grabbed at the air, and a wooden shaft snapped into his palm.

'Well, at least I can do that now!

He hadn't remembered the last time he cared about such a thing. With Spear Force came a natural control over spear weapons that could even be seen as a sort of telekinesis that could allow him to retrieve a weapon like this.

It was this same sort of innate connection with such weapons that had stopped him from forging spears for so long, and also what gave him Dominion over spears as a

Sovereign.

Leonel couldn't remember the last time he had fought a Spear Force master seriously because spears had almost always been useless against him. This Idol Battlefield could very well count as the first time in his life that he had such a chance, the first time he could face off against enemies with Spear Sovereignty strong enough to resist his

own.

****DONG! DONG! DONG!****

Kammy's expression changed. "Enemy attack!"

Leonel pressed a hand to his shoulder. "Calm down."

With another wave of his hand, a random blade Leonel had forged shot up from the pile and onto the tip of his shaft. He took some twine and began to slowly bind the two together.

It was so tight that the wooden shaft even seemed to compress beneath the pressure as veins bulged across Leonel's forearm.

"Let's go," Leonel said calmly.

The militiamen were quickly gathering at the city's entrance, but Leonel walked through them, hopping to the top of the city wall and then casually landing on the

other side.

Alone.

No one had the time to react to the shock of the matter before it was too late.

Chapter 3200: Weak

In the distance, 300 or so men ran forward as a unit. They were led by a human male with particularly jagged teeth at the helm. He held a savage expression on his face that made it almost too clear that he wasn't human.

Leonel found this interesting. They're forced to be humans here, huh? But he seems to be morphing back. I wonder what triggers it, and what about me? Am I still considered human in the sense that this Zone would accept? Is that why my Lineage Factors are so suppressed? Or is it something else?"

He made a mental note to check this out more in the future. But right now wasn't the time.

Clearly, there was a method of reverting back to your best state. He just hadn't noticed it yet. But if these people could figure it out, he certainly could.

"LEONEL! COME BACK!" Kammy roared from the other side of the city gates.

"I'll handle this on my own," Leonel said with almost a little bit of a yawn, stretching his body from one side to the other.

Before, he had said that dealing with 300 militiamen would be too troublesome, and that was still true. However, back then, the reason he didn't want to do it was because of the danger he would put Aina in.

But now... the city was under control, and he shouldn't need to worry about Aina's safety.

In that case, he could go all out.

Did he have 100% assurance of winning?

No.

But he would do it anyway because if he didn't put himself to an extreme, he would never grasp what he needed to.

Just as Leonel was about to take a step forward, a howl came from the man with jagged teeth at the helm.

By now, Leonel had already made out his aura. With his memory, he had memorized every single man and woman in the Spear Force holding area.

He knew, then, that this man was actually a Rapax. Considering how rare it was for the Rapax to use weapons, he was either trash or an elite among elites.

Clearly, since he saw Leonel was alone, he wanted to fight alone as well, the pride of a Rapax taking hold.

His head seemed to elongate somewhat when he made this choice, giving him an extremely odd appearance, almost like a human man with a head that was a few shades too long.

Then he appeared before Leonel, his spear thrusting out.

CLANG!

Leonel's wrist flickered, easily parrying the blow to the side and striking out with a palm.

The Rapax was sent stumbling backward, blood flying from his lips.

Leonel looked down at his hand and shook his head. He had actually fractured his wrist on that blow. It was just a hairline fracture, but that didn't stop it from hurting like hell. It would definitely affect his battle.

With a fluid motion, he swapped the brace protecting his right hand to his left, making a mental note to make a second when the time came.

By this point, the Rapax had recovered and realized that Leonel was a strong opponent.

He unleashed another howl and swung down with force.

Leonel shook his head. "Weak"

His spear danced. He took a more conservative stance, realizing that he didn't have the same body he used to have. There was no need to focus on trying to end the battle with style points.

He shifted from stance to stance, the speed of his spear steady, but its blade sharp. Without what seemed like superhuman abilities, the battle was extremely bland to a layman... but the Rapax was sweating bullets. If not for his ability to overwhelm Leonel with strength, he would have already lost his life once, twice.... thrice....

CLANG! CHIIII! PUCHI!

Leonel's spear ripped through his defenses and pierced right through his heart.

With a kick, Leonel sent him flying off his spear tip as he took a step forward.

The army of militiamen was still charging. The battle had had several exchanges, but it had lasted not even half a minute.

Leonel had never come here for the sake of finding one worthy opponent. In the history of existence, after he defeated Old Spear, there was no one at the same level that could match him in spear technique... with or without Spear Force.

What he needed was a pressure that could only come from quantity.

And these men would give him that.

They would be far weaker than the Rapax, but...

Leonel took another step forward, and his aura surged. It was far more muted than it was when he had his full array of abilities, and yet... he still felt like a looming presence in the eyes of those who laid eyes on him.

BANG!

Leonel crossed his spear across his body and roared, his chest expanding as his feet rooted themselves into the ground.

He clashed with the first line of men and held his ground for a full second before he was sent flying back.

But that was all he needed.

The delay of the three men he clashed with impacted the row behind them, and then that row impacted the row behind them.

Leonel stabilized his footing, and then his spear snaked forward.

It moved like a shadow through the air, puncturing three throats in quick succession before the line could even begin to recover.

PUCHI! PUCHI! PUCHI!

Blood flew, but Leonel suffered a slash from the side. He didn't have his usual array of movement methods, and at some point, there were just too many enemies.

However, the fact there were so many was also a benefit in itself.

As many as there were, only three or so could attack him at a single time.

Leonel waded into the deep waters, his eyes glowing with determination.

For every wound he suffered, he killed three more, and soon blood began to splash around him like a dancing array.

Those on the city walls couldn't believe what they were seeing.