

Dimensional Descent - Chapter 32

PANDA-N0VEL Aina rolled her lips over themselves. In a motion that was far slower than she cared to admit, she washed her hands clean, wiped away the portions that fell on Leonel, and covered his body in a blanket.

Even hours after she finished, her heart still beat wildly.

Days later, Leonel startled awake, finding himself in a rocking vehicle. It took him a moment to realize that he was lying on a bed made of straw and that the 'vehicle' was a horse pulled carriage.

Leonel shot up, taking quick and deep breaths.

How could he let this happen? Not only had he gone to sleep, but he was completely out of it. He was in a Zone, he wasn't at home.

It took several moments before Leonel realized that Aina was sitting on a cushioned bench opposite his, averting her eyes.

Leonel looked down at himself and blinked in confusion. He could tell that he was naked now, but at the very least, his lower half was covered. There was no real reason for her to avert her gaze like that. But, he didn't question it too much.

"Are you alright?" Leonel asked. PANDA-N0VEL.COM

Aina finally turned to face Leonel, seemingly stunned by his question.

"... I should be asking you that." She said softly.

“Me? I’m fine.” Leonel smiled, rotating his arm as though to prove a point.

He really did feel great.

“I’m sorry for passing out like that.” Leonel said apologetically. “I wouldn’t be able to forgive myself if something happened while I was out of it.”

Aina opened her mouth to answer, but she felt that if she tried to speak now, she wouldn’t be able to control her tears. So, she said nothing.

She knew that Leonel couldn’t control what happened. Not only had he spent himself dry for her sake, but he had awoken a Lineage Factor he wasn’t even aware of. Usually such awakenings happened in a controlled space under the protection of your family. It happening in such a dangerous place was about as disastrous a outcome as you could have. PANDA NOVEL

However, Aina also knew something else. The longer you could withstand the awakening of your Lineage Factor, the greater potential it would have in the future. If her vague thoughts while she was unconscious were correct, Leonel had stayed awake for more than half a day. She had never heard of anyone lasting more than a couple hours at best.

On top of that, Leonel wasn’t meditating and gritting his teeth like those people had been. He had been fighting a battle against thousands of enemies. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say his degree of difficulty was far higher and worth far more.

The how long one stayed awake metric wasn’t exact. It was just a vague metric of how much the Lineage Factor managed to be stimulated. Therefore, if Leonel was battling while his was activated, it went to reason that every second of his remaining awake was worth far more than normal.

Aina couldn’t even fathom what that meant. The only one she knew of who could match him was her... But the difference between them was that when her Lineage Factor activated, she lost control

of her mind. So while her performance was just as impressive, it wasn't something she was proud of...

She had almost killed her father that day.

"... Please stop apologizing to me..." Aina finally managed to say.

Leonel smiled. "It's not your fault." ~~~~~

"I..."

"Do you have my pants?" Leonel cut her off.

Aina stared blankly for a moment before nodding. She had even managed to patch together the tears in it a bit.

"... They're a bit small for you now, though." She said softly. "I think you've gotten taller."

Leonel's smile widened. "So you pay enough attention to me to notice?"

Aina blushed and turned away, throwing his pants over.

Leonel managed to slip his pants on before standing up and stretching. He was certain that this carriage was only built recently. He likely had the siege engineers to thank.

"You still haven't answered my question." Leonel turned back toward Aina. "Are you alright?"

"..." Aina sighed. "Put a shirt on first and I might consider answering."

Seeing that a bit of Aina's cheekiness was back, Leonel's heart felt lighter. He happily obliged and put on his flexible armor before covering it in an off-white linen shirt he wasn't sure of the origin of.

“Happy?”

Aina turned away. If one focused on his upper half and not his sorry excuse for pants, Leonel actually looked quite good. Luckily he hadn't thought about why he had been unconscious for so long, yet still managed to stay clean.

“... My Lineage Factor has a negative effect on my psychological state. I lose control of it from time to time, but especially when I'm on the verge of a breakthrough. Only when I stabilize into my new realm will I be able to rein it in again.”

“I already guessed as much.” Leonel waved a hand. “Like I said already, it's not your fault. I only want to know if there are any lasting impacts to your health.”

“No... Aside from fatigue, there are no other side effects.”

“That's good. Then don't recklessly act when you're on the verge of a breakthrough again. You should have stayed by my side like I asked.” Leonel said sternly.

“But you...”

“Hm?” Leonel tried to probe out the rest of her words, but Aina seemed to not want to speak anymore.

‘But you...?’ Leonel frowned. Suddenly, he froze as though he was hit by a lightning bolt.

He realized he had made a mistake. He and Aina were partners, but he had unilaterally decided to help the Frenchmen. Could it be that Aina took the risk despite knowing the possible outcome because of his decision?