

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 3201: React

Leonel sidestepped a spear and swung out with a blade. He cut an arrow piercing toward him in two, sending just the arrow tip to the ground where a militiaman by the side accidentally stepped on it.

The roar of pain was abruptly cut off with a head flying into the skies.

Leonel became like a reaper, his body coated both in his blood and that of his enemies. The army had become such a mess and had lost any semblance of leadership they had, so even when they tried to run, they would find themselves face to face with Leonel, without options to save themselves.

An arrow pierced into the flesh just above Leonel's hip, but he only pivoted to the side, causing a spear to miss his torso and slice the arrow away for him instead.

Finishing his pivot, his spear arched back and up, running the blade through his helper's throat and up through the back of his skull.

Every action of Leonel's seemed to serve two or three actions at once.

He tried to delve into the mysteries of Spear Force, but he found himself relying more and more on his Ability Index. Every little calculation was well within his means, but the calculations themselves seemed to take up far more stamina than they ever did in the past.

Leonel found that he was slowly encroaching on the level where instinct and calculation were becoming one, and he was only able to sense it when his Spear Force was no longer restraining him.

His movements became faster, sharper. Every time he swung out, someone died, and at some unknown point...

****PUCHI!****

His spear drilled downward, pinning a militiaman to the ground through his throat with a blade. Leonel gasped for breath, the corpses of over a hundred men lying at his feet as he propped his foot up on one of their chests.

Despite the shock and awe of those on the city wall, Leonel wasn't satisfied in the slightest.

Almost half of the men had managed to run away and escape, for one. But he would have been able to let that slide if he had advanced considerably. Unfortunately... he didn't feel like he had.

The fusion of his Ability Index and his spear abilities seemed great, but Leonel didn't see how this would help him awaken his Spear Force. If anything, it was bringing him further away by muddying the waters again.

A new Spear Force would have to be purely Spear Force. It wasn't a Path he was looking for; he already had plenty of those. What he needed was something fundamental, something grounded. Making his Spear Force more complex wasn't the path to that.

He had really pushed himself to get everything he could out of this battle, and yet it wasn't enough. Leonel knew that he had time, but he just wasn't satisfied with this alone. If he allowed himself to lull into the pace of this battlefield, maybe he would never make the progress he wanted to make at all.

Huffing for breath, he looked down at the spear in his hand.

He raised a hand to his hip, ripping out the arrow tip stuck inside and tossing the bloody, flesh-mangled mess to the side.

He closed his eyes, taking another deep breath before his gaze sharpened.

A large, looming shadow had appeared over him... a man with the head of a bear and the menacing

momentum of a beast stood towering over him at more than twice his height.

The power of his muscles rippled, practically superheating the air around him, causing steam to billow out in waves.

Leonel looked up calmly, his gaze indifferent and his spear still pierced through the throat of the man he was stepping on.

Above him, the Bear Beastman had a maw open and dripping with blood and saliva, his teeth littered with bits of ripped flesh.

'It's you!'

The growl of the bearman caused Leonel's hair to flutter back.

'Die."

A

spear descended from above.

Leonel felt like his body was screaming at him to find some place to rest, but he still raised up a block.

BANG!

Leonel had killed quite a number of people on this battlefield, but there was only one beastman that he could recall.

As for how this man knew it was him, he didn't know...

Nor did he care.

Another whetstone had appeared.

BANG!

Leonel fell heavily to a knee, his spear braced above his head.

The beastman kicked out. There was a slight shift before. After all, he had to retrieve his spear to balance himself while he sent out such a kick. But it was still too fast.

Leonel could barely block with his own spear before it landed.

SNAP.

His spear broke in two and his body was sent tumbling back.

ROAR!

The Bear Beastman looked as though he had truly gone berserk. He wanted Leonel to experience pain, to experience horror. However...

Leonel slowly stood to his feet, his expression still the picture of indifference. He ignored the bearman, looking to his back to find that there was indeed a large number of militiamen coming.

But rather than the 300 of the first group, there were closer to a thousand this time. It was either this bearman's city was much larger, or he had already conquered several others already...

Leonel had a feeling that it was the latter.

Rather than replying to the man immediately, Leonel closed his eyes and took a breath. Listening to the steady rhythm of his heart, tendrils of calmness surged through his body.

When he opened his eyes again, he had settled down considerably.

He looked down at the broken spear in his hand and tossed it to the side.

With a wave of his hand, a spear a militiaman was holding on the city walls was torn out of his palm and sent flying toward Leonel.

He had already decided that he would fight. He would fight until he saw the gates of death and fight his way through them if he had to.

When he faced off against that line dividing Life and Death...

He wanted to see how his heart would react.

Chapter 3202: Weaker

Leonel's battle intent blazed. Facing off against this bear man who stood so much taller and larger than he was, wielding so much more strength, all while he was heavily injured and outnumbered to top it off...

It was a situation where most wouldn't make it out alive.

And yet, Leonel's back stood straight and tall. His thoughts didn't have the slightest intention of backing down, and his heart hummed to a rhythmic cadence.

So much of his strength was sealed away, but his mind was just the same.

He held out his spear, and a shocking aura suddenly erupted from him. His hair whipped violently in the winds, but there wasn't the slightest bit of Force whirling around him. It was like the world itself was resonating to the cadence of his heart.

SHUU!

The two shot forward, and their blades raced through the skies. Leonel's broken ribs and injured body screamed at him all the while, but the intent in his eyes only glowed brighter and brighter. BANG!

His arm almost shattered beneath just the first impact, but he twisted his wrist to the side, just barely off-loading the strength down through his body, to his feet, and into the ground while parrying the spear to the side.

The bear man was far swifter than his brother had been, pulling back with sharp speed the same instant Leonel had and slashing out again.

Leonel found himself protecting himself and his spear from every blow. Himself to avoid the blows themselves, and his spear to stop it from breaking mid-battle.

His mind was practically overloaded with all sorts of information, and his Dream Force was being wrung out like a wet towel.

His stamina was seeping away faster and faster while an oppressive air hung over the battlefield. In the distance, the army of a thousand came to a stop. They were perfectly disciplined, standing in perfect rows of straight lines, and looked ahead to the battle in unison.

A fog came from them as dusk fell, and the air cooled. One could almost hear their heartbeats from a distance drilling into their psyches.

The militiamen of Leonel's village had faces colored with despair, lacking the slightest hint of red. Just the thousand-man army alone was enough for them to shake. But the strength of the bear man made them realize something else...

If Leonel could force 300 men to flee on his own, and the bear man was so much stronger than him... didn't that mean that they were facing something even worse?

Were they dead already and just didn't know it?

The dichotomy between the momentum of both sides only grew worse the more injuries Leonel suffered, the worse he was beaten back, the more devastating the blows he faced.

Every spurt of blood, every crackling bone, every slight grunt was like another blow to their morale... because they knew that even if Leonel somehow managed to survive this one, there was an even worse challenge waiting behind him.

And these disciplined men... didn't look like they would run the moment something went wrong.

Leonel could practically feel the pressure on his shoulders increasing. It was an amorphous feeling, one that had been so fleeting to him in the past and yet so clear now.

Not only could he feel the weight pressing him down, but he felt it clearly as the bear man seemed to grow stronger and stronger.

The momentum of his side was only increasing while that of Leonel's was only weakening with every step.

A valiant heart...

Leonel's wrists shook as he suffered another blow, but his gaze flashed at the same time. 'Weaker!

His eyes locked onto the bear man's furious expression. The latter's seething growls and almost feral obsession with making Leonel not just die, but suffer, had been practically tuned out by Leonel entirely.

Leonel had been entirely focused on this burden on his shoulders, not realizing that this man had completely lost his mind.

"You are too weak to face me," Leonel suddenly said.

They were words that didn't make any sense at all, and yet they also pierced right into the depths of the bear man's very soul.

BANG! BANG! BANG! CHIII!

Leonel withstood two blows back to back entirely head-on this time. His knees buckled, and he almost collapsed, but he held on.

With a pivot, he took on the third blow. Sparks flew as their blades clashed and then slid along one another.

Leonel's wrist forcefully twisted, and the polearm bowed. His blade caught the twine that held the bear man's blade to his polearm and cut it in two.

They might not have had a level playing field when it came to raw strength. But... their weapons were a different matter entirely. The only difference was that the one the bear man was wielding was much larger, by almost twice in terms of both length and thickness.

Unfortunately, that didn't matter.

Leonel's spear swept to the side, hitting the tip of the bear man's spear with precision that shook the soul. His blade tip couldn't have been steadier, and for a moment, his back carried shades of his father's presence.

It didn't matter how heavy the burden was.

He would carry it.

CHILI! CHIII! CHII! CHII!

The bear man's blade was almost completely knocked out of the groove it sat in. When he tried to

strike again, he found that he didn't even have a straight blade anymore.

And in that moment of hesitancy and shock...

PUCHI!

Leonel's spear ripped through his throat.

The bear man froze, and many eyes opened wide in shock.

Leonel's earlier words felt like nothing more than a joke. And yet, now...

It was almost like their sense of the world was crumbling down around them.

Leonel swiped his spear to the side, ripping it out of the man's throat.

His breathing heaved, and his chest shuddered in pain with every breath he took. But even so, his back remained straight.

Chapter 3203: Trust

Leonel took a slow step forward, and then another. His aura continued to grow, the burden on his shoulders solidifying as he faced off against the now somewhat shaken army of a thousand.

However, though they were shaken for a moment, their discipline ultimately shone through. Their own momentum began to climb, clashing against Leonel's and almost smothering it down to ash.

And yet, Leonel still took another step, and then another, before he suddenly broke out into a run.

His heart shone resplendently, and his momentum wouldn't be waned by the likes of these people.

With his spear, he would cut down anything that stood in his way.

Aina sat on a rocking chair, slowly rocking back and forth. Her mind seemed to be at peace, a far cry from Elaine, who seemed to be losing her mind.

The middle-aged housewife had noticed that her husband wasn't here, and rumors were already flying around in the city about a thousand-man army being outside their gates.

She wasn't a fool. She knew what happened in situations like this one.

There would be a forceful conscription.

Usually, her husband would be out of the age range for such a thing, but if the situation was bad enough, how could they have the time or care for such a thing? Her boys had already gone off, but she wasn't even allowed to get close to the wall to figure out what was going on... and she certainly had tried... several times by now.

But they weren't allowing civilians not part of the conscription to get close to the walls, so she had no idea what was going on, and it was making her lose her mind.

Her boys... her husband... maybe her boys would have a chance to survive, but that old man, what chance did he stand?

In her delusional fantasy, she thought that she should be there by his side swinging her rolling pin. Maybe she would be able to stop a few enemies that tried to stab him in the back.

Elaine rushed to the open pit over and pulled out the third apple pie of the day.

The house was practically steaming with the scent of fresh baking. This might have only been the third apple pie, but she had lost count of the other baked goods she had made already.

"You should try cutting the apple slices thinner next time," Aina said lightly. "More cinnamon, less brown sugar. Also, bake the crust ahead of time a little longer..."

She spoke these words with a casual flair.

"Right... right..." Elaine nodded, looking down at the pie on the counter as though it held the dreams she was suppressing. "Again... do it again..."

Elaine listened to Aina's vague instructions, somewhere in the back of her mind knowing that Aina was doing things like this on purpose.

After all, if she just told her how to make the perfect apple pie, maybe she wouldn't have anything to distract her anymore.

Plus, the variables of the cook changed every time she started. Controlling the flame of an open pit fire was almost as difficult as controlling the forge. Then there was the fact they didn't have any measuring cups or devices, so everything was by look and feel, increasing the variables all the more.

This meant that almost no matter what advice Aina gave, so long as she remained so vague, there would always be something for Elaine to improve.

This sort of distraction was about the only thing Aina could use to try and calm the middle-aged housewife. But it was clear to Aina that she was quickly fraying at the edges. There wasn't much that could be done other than this.

Eventually, after the fifth pie, Elaine could only stare at Aina.

"Why are you... so calm?"

She had been hesitating about asking this question because it could easily be seen as disrespectful. What if Aina assumed she was saying that she didn't care about her husband? Any woman who had married for love would take offense to such a thing. And even women who had married for more superficial matters would fight tooth and claw to avoid such labels. How could they so easily admit it?

In fact, in the latter case, the reaction might be even fiercer because they had something to hide.

However, Elaine wasn't a woman who had much of a filter to begin with. So after her mind had been frayed more and more with the ticking time, she could no longer hold back.

"Hm?" Aina looked up from her thoughts with a smile, rubbing her large belly with one hand and rocking back and forth slowly. She seemed... content.

"Never mind..." Elaine shook her head, realizing that she might have overstepped.

Aina's smile deepened. "I once was worried all the time. But I stopped that a long time ago..."

Elaine blinked. "... Why?"

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"Our situations are different. I do not want to say anything that you might take the wrong way," Aina replied.

Elaine's mouth opened to reply before she laughed. It seemed like both of them had been holding back for various reasons.

"You can speak. I'm not so fragile, and it seems that neither are you."

Aina chuckled a bit before her eyes became a bit hazy, as though she was reminiscing about something.

"In the past, I used to harp on all his actions, wondering why he wasn't doing things the way I wanted, why he wasn't protecting his life the way he should, why he was

always making me worry about him...

"But recently, I stopped doing that."

"Why's that?"

"Because... he earned my trust."

Elaine's brows shot up, realizing why it was Aina had been hesitant to say this earlier. Even now, she wasn't quite sure how to take it.

"But like I said..." Aina continued. "... Our situations are different. In fact, just a year or so ago, he was dead. Maybe I should have stopped trusting him again. But, right now...

I don't feel that way at all.

"In fact, I'm confident that there can only be one outcome to all of this."

Leonel stood silently in a field littered with corpses, his hair dancing in the wind and two broken spears dripping in blood in his palms.

Chapter 3204: Soon

Leonel breathed in and out slowly.

His body was a complete mess. One of his arms had his entire tricep stripped off. Out from his back, there were at least a half dozen arrows and a broken spear sticking out of him. His face was covered in such a dense drizzle of running blood that one would have thought that it had been raining red earlier.

Every breath felt like he was inhaling scalding iron, and his body was teetering on the very edge of collapse. And yet, he was still standing.

In those moments, he had forgotten about everything. Almost like he was the iron being tempered in flames, he allowed the pain to wash over him, suffering countless blows, injuries, and horrors.

With his normal body, these injuries were nothing. But with a body suppressed to the Third Dimension, it was a miracle that he was even standing at all.

And yet, he was.

The silence hung palpably. Even until the end, those of the city didn't know how to react.

When had they ever seen a man defeat a thousand on his own?

In the end, more than half had ended up running away once again, leaving Leonel disappointed in his own performance. But it was hard for those of the city to look at it like that at all.

Leonel unleashed a shuddering breath as he raised his head to the skies. He couldn't help but wonder where that line existed, what was holding him back... was it still the Regulator?

His hands loosened and the broken spears fell from his hands, piercing into the ground.

He turned back toward the city, walking with slow, steady steps.

If this one battle wasn't enough, he would fight another.

If that wasn't enough, he would fight a third.

If that wasn't enough, he would fight a fourth.

He wouldn't allow himself to be stalled here. His steps would continue to trudge forward until he reached the end of this road and the Demoness' head lay on the ground before him.

He walked directly into the city and disappeared. From start to finish, no one spoke a single word.

What could they say?

In the end, it was City Lord Anesse who took control of the situation and sent people out to clean up the battlefield and burn the dead.

In a world like this one, allowing the bodies to stay around for too long would end up spreading disease and killing off their city's population.

However, even as they did this work, none of them could forget the scene they had just witnessed.

It was only made more shocking when Leonel did it again the following week.

And then again the week after that.

Leonel fell into a boiling vat of water Aina had prepared. They had been in this world for two months already, and at least once a week, there would be a large-scale attack that was triggered.

Every time, the enemies would be stronger and stronger, and in this most recent battle, the enemy actually had a rudimentary form of Spear Force that seemed almost about to take shape.

Not only were they getting stronger, but their numbers were growing as well. The bear man had been a bit of an anomaly at first, but now it felt like every time an army appeared, it was a thousand-men strong.

And every time they came, Leonel would fight them alone.

Sitting in the wooden tub with his wife behind him, cleaning his wounds, there was a silent peace in the air.

Leonel didn't feel his pain at all; he just felt comfortable.

His injuries were slow to heal in this world, but Aina had managed to find a way to speed it up. After studying the herbs that were around for a week or so, she managed to find combinations of normal Third Dimensional herbs that were excellent at

stimulating his healing processes.

By now, Leonel was easily twice as powerful as he was when he first stepped into this world, and somehow he both felt like his Spear Force had advanced by leaps and bounds and that he hadn't made any progress at all.

It was an odd feeling, to be sure.

Being twice as powerful didn't sound impressive until one thought about how long it would take a mortal to achieve such a thing normally. To be twice as strong as the common man should take at least half a decade to a decade of training for most. But Leonel had accomplished it in less than two months.

But he didn't feel like there was anything impressive about it at all. That was because

as others gathered, regained their humanoid forms, and slowly began to access more of their Lineage Factors and Ability Indexes, on top of unlocking their Weapon Forces, Leonel was stuck in a rut the Regulator wouldn't let him out of.

From an outsider's perspective, it seemed only natural that he would eventually run into a wall that he couldn't surpass.

When that time came, he would die, and his wife, without the ability to protect herself, just might follow suit.

How could Aina fight against so many enemies in her current state?

Leonel even began to wonder if he had made a mistake by not investing in conquering more men.

In reality, there were many he had defeated that came to the city of their own volition, growing it. By now, their 300-man militia was not only fanatically loyal to him due to his power and strength, but they had more than tripled in size, giving him a thousand-man army as well.

But he pushed such thoughts down. He knew that this path wasn't for him.

For Leonel, building an army and using it to conquer everything would be... too easy.

No one could outmaneuver him on a battlefield.

But none of this would help him unlock what he needed.

He had come to the Idol Battlefield for his own power, not to raise a power that would be useless to him outside of these walls.

"I'm going to give birth soon," Aina suddenly said.

Chapter 3205: Tomorrow

Leonel's gaze flickered, but he eventually calmly nodded. Then, he smiled.

"When?"

"Tomorrow."

"Okay" Leonel beamed.

High above him, an invisible pressure seemed to grow.

The weight of a father's love...

He had experienced it once before, but now it seemed that he would be on the other side of it.

A long while after, Aina left the bathroom, leaving Leonel to his own thoughts.

He ran a hand alongside the tub, lost in thought. They came fast and swift, but disappeared just as quickly.

Slowly, he stood from the tub, allowing the water to run down his body. The once clear water, radiating an herbal scent, had become a murky mess of crimson and sweat by

now.

He found himself in front of a mirror, staring back at the handsome countenance he

saw.

He drew a finger across the air and a pair of glasses appeared. They were an exact replica of his father's. Unfortunately, he couldn't access the Segmented Cube to pull out the real pair.

He stared at the clear-framed glasses for a long while.

Honestly, he didn't feel like he was worthy of wearing them. The day his mother made them for him was maybe one of the most uncomfortable days of his life. He just hadn't said anything because he knew that she needed that moment.

But now, he realized that there would be no delaying it any longer. There were many things in life that you had to do. Without facing them, you would never be ready... and you could never be ready to face them.

Leonel balanced the glasses on an edge, spinning them on his finger. It felt as light as a feather, and yet he knew that would only last a moment.

With a flick of his wrist, he slid them onto his face.

He looked at the face staring back at him, and he could almost feel his shoulders slouch beneath the pressure.

Was it really getting to him?

'It's just you and me here. Don't you think you can be honest?'

Leonel stared back at himself as though he was looking for answers.

He stood to his full height, slicking his wet hair back with a hand and exhaling a breath.

After feeling like he had delayed long enough, he dried himself and walked out. With a motion, he grabbed a wood-body spear from the side.

"I'll be back," Leonel said lightly.

Aina nodded, rocking on a chair that Leonel had crafted for her this time. She had liked the one in Elaine's house so much that she had to use her wife privileges to get one of her own.

Leonel headed out of the door, smelling the air as it whipped around him.

'About 80%. Better than the usual!

That was how much he had recovered since his last battle. By now, they happened so frequently that he could smell them coming over the horizon.

That dense scent of blood, that subtle shaking of the earth, the shift of Force in the air.

He could feel it all almost... intimately.

He walked through the city slowly, and a silence seemed to fall.

Everyone who saw him had the very same gaze of respect in their eyes. Almost out of respect, the city had a moment of silence whenever Leonel went out to battle.

Though they had never seen him wear glasses before, they all subconsciously felt that there was something that had changed.

Every step almost seemed to make the ground more solid, almost as though they had gone from walking on soft soil to something as tough as granite.

By the time Leonel walked to the city gates, the entire city had fallen into this silence. Flags flew on the city wall and the clatter of weapons died down as the last of the militiamen took their posts. They might not be part of this fight, but they appeared every time Leonel moved to the city wall.

It was their way of showing respect.

Leonel had never led them personally. He hardly talked to most of them. In fact, they only seemed to receive orders through City Lord Anesse.

And yet, there was no doubt about who they respected the most.

Leonel took a seat, allowing his legs to dangle from the city wall. He laid his spear across his lap, looking out into the world.

The approaching army wasn't even in the line of sight of most. At best, one could see lines of smoke rising into the air. But as they got closer, Leonel realized that this one was going to be a true challenge...

As though the others weren't enough already.

It wasn't just a single army, but two. Each one had what must have been upward of 2000 men. But the numbers weren't the real issue. It was the two that led them.

A Sylvan and a Pluto.

The Pluto was none other than Ger'Ain, the very young man who had once been by El'Rion's side. But just the fact that he was a Pluto spoke volumes all by itself.

And the Sylvan... a man who went by Vaelin. These two were the very same two that had caught Leonel's attention in their waiting room.

It seemed that his luck was truly bad, to have not just one, but both of his strongest competitors appear here at the same time... and not even three months into a Zone that was supposedly meant to last for years.

Was his luck really so bad?

Obviously not.

And neither was he meant to have faced enemies so frequently either.

Under normal circumstances, he shrugged off the machinations of the Regulator. He had managed to control that seething anger, and he hadn't allowed it to erupt again

since the first time.

But he was particularly sensitive today.

Targeting him like this on the eve of his child's birth? Was that supposed to be another coincidence?

A deathly sort of aura began to radiate from Leonel. Sparks of something unknown cracked and popped around him.

Chapter 3206: A Father's Fury (1)

Crackles of air shook around Leonel as he picked up his spear, stepping off of the wall and falling to the ground with what looked almost like a light brush with the soil.

A minor puff of dust rose up around his feet, but other than this, one would have thought that a feather had fallen from the skies.

Leonel exhaled a breath, trying to control his temper. But as he walked forward to the coming armies, he was finding it more and more difficult to do so.

Something rattled around inside of him, his body wanting to erupt. It was tempered by his own several controls and his insights for the future, but like a wild dog bucking against its chain, he could feel that it truly wanted to unleash.

The two armies came to a stop.

Vaelin and Ger'Ain stood at their helms, their eyes glowing with murderous intent as they locked onto Leonel...

And maybe for good reason.

Vaelin knew that Leonel had touched upon a taboo of the Sylvan Race, taking their Sylvan Hearts and using them for his own personal purposes as though they were truly trees to be lopped down for their lumber.

On the other side, Ger'Ain knew that one of his own had fallen at the hands of Leonel. Not only had he fallen, but Leonel had even gone as far as to turn him into a puppet. Any Race would be absolutely furious about this. Not a single one of them didn't have protections and caution against the Fawkes for this precise reason.

But not only was Leonel a threat because he could do it, he was also a threat because he actually dared to.

When these two factors were put into the same person, they formed the perfect recipe for an existence that should be wiped out at all costs.

However...

The two men looked toward one another, the dangerous light in their eyes still flaring. They almost looked as though they wanted to take one another out first.

Each one was a prideful man in their own right. They wanted nothing more than to deal with Leonel on their own. Something like teaming up wasn't on their mind in the slightest.

As expected, the fact that they had appeared here at the same time was nothing more than a "coincidence." One that was almost surely set up by the Regulator itself. Another flare of anger rose to Leonel's mind before he forcefully pressed it down.

He could feel that these were remnants of his flagrant arrogance. He wasn't just angry because of the danger this put him and his family in, but also that someone else was controlling his life to such an extent.

Every decision he made, and every attempt he began to try and rein in control of the situation ended up slipping out of his grasp and growing to become a new tool that was instead used to control him.

He absolutely hated it. He hated it with every fiber of his being.

Leonel gripped his fist so hard around his spear that the blade tip quivered.

He looked down at his once steady blade, realizing that he was truly losing control. This was unacceptable.

With a slow motion, he held his spear out, watching as the blade tip went from a vibrating metal to a steady statuesque mass that was unmoved by the aura spiraling into the skies and the swaying winds.

Leonel took a step forward, and then a quick second before he dashed forward. This fury...

He had to unleash it.

His body flickered, and he seemed to continuously accelerate, his body growing warm as the aches from the previous battles were suppressed by his adrenaline.

He appeared before Vaelin, striking out.

Vaelin frowned, his own arm shaking as a spear formed from his palm. He seemed to grow it out from his own smooth, wooden skin, his glowing brass orb eyes sharpening as he slashed down.

BANG!

His strike was swift and simple, but carried an eerie sharpness to it.

Leonel found that his blade was somehow even steadier than his own, but in a moment, he understood.

As steady as Leonel's blade was when he was standing in silence, in battle, there were bound to be some quivers, not just due to his movement, but also the reverberating clashes with an enemy.

However, a true spearman could easily compensate for this, giving the illusion that the blade remained stable nonetheless.

Leonel had obviously long since mastered this, but at least in this respect of spear mastery, Vaelin was better....

And that was for no reason other than the fact his spear was literally grown from his body.

In terms of overall spear skill, no one could match Leonel. But in terms of spear control, it seemed that this Sylvan was in a tier all his own.

He could control the very wood of his spear itself as he fought. This was a level of precision that Leonel couldn't match,

Leonel hadn't realized this at first, and his fury was clouding his mind too much. This caused his attempt to parry the Sylvan to fail miserably.

The Sylvan's blade suddenly changed inside position with his own, snaking from the outside of Leonel's parry to the inner blade, reversing the parry and jettling Leonel's spear off to the side instead.

Leonel found the blade appearing before his throat in an instant.

It was a level of countering he had simply never seen before. The Sylvan had actually reversed his parry into one of his own, deflecting Leonel's blade to the side and still somehow keeping enough curve on his spear to attack in the same fluid motion.

For a moment, all Leonel could see was that spear tip and those brass orb eyes that looked as though they had calculated everything in advance.

Thoughts of things ending just like this, so easily, so swiftly, crossed his mind. He wondered how many opponents had died at his hands just like this...

The weight on his shoulders trembled.

Leonel's gaze sharpened and he dropped a knee. The weight he carried around seemed to accelerate his fall downward and to the side. Veins popped across his neck

as he dodged, rolling out of the way.

And yet, there was still a spurt of blood that arched through the skies.

Leonel felt a sharp pain in his neck and trap as deep gashes appeared in both. His artery was nearly cut, and he felt his right arm hang limply to the side as its connection with his shoulder was nearly entirely severed.

Coughing up a mouthful of blood, Leonel continued to roll, sliding out of the way of a second strike before somersaulting to his feet.

Blood poured down a side of Leonel's body in a rain.

The Sylvan stood over him, large and imposing. Whether it was Ger'Ain or Vaelin, the both of them were practically twice his height. It might have been even worse had they not been suppressed by the Regulator too.

And unlike him... There was a flicker of Spear Force on the end of Vaelin's blade.

Leonel could feel it rampaging in his flesh, making it near impossible for him to stop the bleeding in short order.

"This is all you have? And you dare to blaspheme the warriors of my race?" Vaelin's voice came out in an almost ancient cadence, as though he was several generations older than he truly was.

Leonel didn't respond, slowly rising to his feet and touching the gash on his shoulder and neck.

The wounds were so deep that even an entire finger couldn't clog it up. His vision was already swimming, and it felt like he could collapse at any moment.

And yet, he had still forced himself to stand.

How many months had he been here already? Just two? It felt like so much more than that...

"I'll take your head here and then feed your corpse at the altar of our young. It's the only way you can atone for your sins."

Leonel looked up for the first time, meeting the gaze of the Sylvan.

He looked like a man who could already be dead. Blood coated his hands, an entire side of his body was a shower of his own crimson, and his neck looked as though it had already been an eighth slashed open.

Practically speaking, for a Third Dimensional existence, he was already a walking corpse.

But for some reason, Vaclin suddenly felt uncomfortable.

"You know," Leonel began to speak, his voice coming out in a gurgle as blood spurted out from and into places that it shouldn't. "An Emperor like my grandfather really would be in perfect control of his temper. But I don't know why I'm wasting my time. All that effort to try and control my emotions, and it's just making me slower.

"Why bother?"

Leonel looked like he was genuinely asking Vaelin for answers.

"I'm no Emperor. I'm a King. And right now, you're really pissing me off."

Leonel's temper flared.

Chapter 3207: A Father's Fury (2)

Leonel's words sounded ridiculous, especially when there was blood spurting out of his mouth and his neck like a fountain. It looked as though he would truly die at any time... even his skin was only becoming paler.

However, Leonel himself didn't seem to notice the state of his body at all... and neither could Vaelin for reasons he couldn't describe.

Leonel looked the same, and yet felt entirely different at the same time. The weight of his world descended from above and the Sylvan just felt... heavier.

Leonel exhaled a breath and a chilly fog came from his lips.

Then he took a step forward, thrusting out with his spear.

BANG!

Leonel's spear almost flew from his hands, the strength of the Sylvan being too much. But Vaelin was still forced to take a step back, being unable to follow up with a counter as fast as he would have usually liked to.

Vaelin's gaze flickered with surprise. Why was Leonel's spear so much heavier now? BANG! BANG! BANG!

The two crossed blows and exchanged combinations. For a moment, it looked as though neither were experts at all, their attacks feeling somewhat stiff and unpracticed.

However, the more they fought, the more furious their blows became, the more fluid their strikes looked until they suddenly reverted back to a bland, unsubstantial echo of what they had once been.

Vaelin felt his heart leaping up in shock every time this happened. For Leonel to make him feel so uncoordinated... was definitely on purpose.

Leonel was trying to find a counter to his great control, and that was also what made Vaelin realize something else shocking...

Leonel's skill in the spear was far beyond his own, by a measure he couldn't even fathom.

He was easily three times stronger than Leonel, a gap that, to even experts, let alone mere mortals, was simply impossible to close.

And yet, Leonel's spear had not only magically become heavier, but his skill was able to bridge that gap.

Every time their strikes became uncoordinated, cold sweat would permeate the Sylvan's back. That was because he could catch sniffs of death.

But when their strikes became fluid again, he felt even more fear... that was because the danger you couldn't sense was the most shocking of them all.

Suddenly Vaelin pierced down from above, snaking through an opening and aiming right for Leonel's chest.

Leonel swayed to the side slightly, but while his spear was heavy, his body movements were lacking. As he lost larger and larger amounts of blood, his body function was obviously impaired. He was already injured before the battle even began, let alone

now.

However, even when Vaelin thought he would be able to tear through Leonel's body, his blade only nicked his side, slipping through almost too easily.

'Did he...'

Vaelin's eyes widened.

The only way his spear wouldn't meet much resistance was if he had slipped between Leonel's ribcage.

If that was what he was aiming for, he wouldn't be so surprised. With his control of his spear, he could split a grain of sand in two if he wanted.

The problem was that he was just aiming for Leonel's chest in general. The odds he would only hit skin was...

Nonsense.

CHII!

Vaelin was so concentrated on the opening that he didn't even realize what Leonel's spear was doing until he was almost too late.

A root extended from his foot and forcefully pulled him to the side, but a gash was still cut across his neck.

Vaelin hurriedly made distance between himself and Leonel, touching at his neck with a look of horror on his face.

Had he almost died?

Why did he feel that way?

The vitality of the Sylvans was hard to describe in a few words, even while suppressed like this. Unless Leonel could find and destroy his Sylvan Heart, he should be able to recover from basically any other injury.

So why... why did he feel this way?

Fear, rage, and humiliation spilled out of Vaelin, but his brass orb eyes remained cool and almost coldly calculating.

Leonel stumbled, gasping for breath. His face had turned such a ghastly shade of pale

..

that he practically looked like a ghost. The only good news was that the blood was drying... but every time he moved too vigorously the wound would begin gushing again, causing him to lose even more blood.

If not for the fact he had strengthened his body somewhat, helping his recovery along, and had some of his wife's residual herbs still lingering in his bloodstream, death

would have truly been the only outcome for him.

Vaelin couldn't believe that this half-dead man had almost taken his life. However, he didn't charge forward in a rage.

He was a Sylvan. Not a brainless brute.

He looked over toward Ger'Ain.

"Do you want to kill him, or not?"

Ger'Ain sneered, his voice coming out in a rumbling cadence. "What is that supposed to mean?"

Vaelin's gaze flickered and he came up with a plan.

The Pluto were too prideful to gang up on someone. But it would all depend on how you approached things.

"He's too pathetic. Let the armies kill him. Is this a warrior that's worth fighting in the first place?"

Ger'Ain's gaze flickered. Indeed. Seeing Leonel's weak state made him lose basically all interest. He didn't want to have such a victory at all. He wanted nothing to do with it, quite frankly.

So long as Leonel died, he didn't care what else happened. There would be no pride in taking down this kind of opponent.

As for why Vaelin wanted to send in both their armies, he could guess that as well. Even if Leonel was on his last legs, he could probably take out a decent number. After Leonel was dealt with, they would almost certainly be at one another's necks, so this

was Vaelin's way of evening things out.

As for what happened afterward, that would be settled by them. It would have nothing

to do with Leonel.

"Fine" Ger'Ain said indifferently. "Go kill him."

The armies rumbled.

Leonel stood there in silence, gasping for breath as blood gushed out of him. He almost looked like a white canvas painted red. Half his body was covered in the crimson, while the other half was as pale as a sheet.

He coughed up a mouthful of blood, but his back remained straight, piercing toward the skies above.

With a raise of his spear, the world fell into silence around him. He didn't hear the stomping feet or the roaring war cry.

Everything slowed, but it was hard to tell if he was truly so focused, or if it was because he was about to pass out.

All he knew was that his wife and child were behind him.

A flickering image seemed to appear to his back, and deep within his eyes, reflecting across his glasses, he could see his own father's back.

Leonel took a step forward and clashed with the army.

His spear danced, ripping out through, severing limbs and puncturing hearts.

His blade slid through the gaps in rib cages, avoided the bone of limbs to tear through frail ligaments and tendons, even having such precision that it slipped between the disks of their spines while avoiding their armors at the same time.

There was a steadiness to his blade now that made it feel as though the world itself had said it should be, like the weight of the world was concentrated into its very

fabric.

He hardly moved at all, only taking steps from side to side from time to time to conserve what little energy he had left. But even when seemed like he should run out. of it, he dug into a deeper well, and then a deeper one than that.

His body began to overheat, and then from overheating, it became eerily cold. It was

just a normal day and the temperature was about at room temperature, and yet a frosty blue began to appear at the tips of Leonel's fingers and feet.

His body heat receded into his chest to protect his valuable organs and heart, but it didn't have anything else left to give for everything else.

And yet, his blade still remained steady.

His arms seemed to move on their own, his body being pulled along by the strength of something beyond even himself.

The laws of the world continued to gather around him, the shackles the Regulator had on his Dream Force rattling and quaking as though they might shatter at any time.

Control.

Control.

Control.

That was true freedom,

SHIING! SHIING! SHIING!

Again. Again. Again.

His spear drilled through the neck of one warrior, twisting until it found the path of least resistance out from the side of his throat.

He arched his spear out of that man's body and right through the gaps in another's armor, slipping right through their ribs and puncturing their heart.

With every kill, Leonel's presence seemed to become a larger and larger mountain.

Chapter 3208: A Father's Fury (3)

The hours ticked by and Ger'Ain and Vaelin had begun to frown themselves.

They didn't care about their armies. Quite frankly, they only had them to stop others from taking advantage of them. In truth, they understood that the true purpose of the trial was to strengthen themselves; they just hadn't had much time to do it yet as it had only been a handful of months.

However, they also didn't want to lose them all.

Leonel just seemed relentless, and every time they thought he would fall, he dug deeper.

What they also hadn't forgotten was that Leonel should have an army of his own. They could see them on the city walls and they weren't bad themselves.

Even though they were definitely weaker than their own army, and the numbers were inferior as well, it would at least do something to help. But...

The more they watched Leonel, the more they felt a fear creep into their hearts.

He was just a small human, less than half their size, and yet he looked like a mountain looming in the distance.

There was nothing flashy about his attacks at all, and yet he took each individual down with ruthless efficiency. And because he wasn't moving much, as the corpses piled on around him, his kills only became easier because their armies had to climb over their companions on uneven footing just to make it to Leonel in the first place. In the end, they even had to start diverting some of their manpower just to move the corpses out of the way, but that dampened morale and only put them at more risk of being killed.

Stable.

That was the one word that they could use to describe Leonel... it felt like no matter what happened, he would be a stable mountain standing in their way, never allowing them to gain a single advantage on him.

After his outburst about being a King, Vaclin was certain that he would find a chance to deal a death blow to Leonel, only to realize that somehow that outburst and that outpouring of fury had somehow only made Leonel even-keeled.

It was like all his fury had been channeled into his spear, making it heavier, sharper, faster, more controlled.

Every stroke elevated showed an improvement to his power, which made little sense because with every stroke, he lost more blood and should have only been becoming weaker.

The anxiety in the hearts of the two men only seemed to be growing and they wanted to step in, but they couldn't....

One part because of pride...

Another part due to something that they couldn't put into words.

It was almost as though they wanted to see if it was really possible for a man with nothing left to give could actually make it to the end of the road.

And what shook them all the more was that Leonel didn't seem to spare them a single thought or glance. It was almost like they were just another one of the numbers he was facing.

Who cared if it was 1000 enemies or 1001? Who cared if it was 2000 or 2002?

They were all the same.

Threats.

Threats he would cut down.

CHII! CHII! CHII!

The breath coming out from Leonel's mouth became so hot that it formed tendrils of smoke that curled out from the corners of his mouth, spiraling into the air in plumes of grey.

It carried a crimson tinge to it as though his blood was being vaporized itself, but the weaker he looked, the stronger his spear became.

It seemed like his blade was no longer being propelled by his body alone. His limbs, the torque of his torso and the twist of his hips were nothing more than a secondary afterthought.

Maybe it was a trick of the light, but the Sylvan and Pluto even felt like there was an eerie light that was slowly coming out from the blade as well, almost as though it was also overtaxed and expelling its own steam in fatigue and overheating.

CHII! CHII! CHII!

Aina sat on her rocking chair, rubbing her belly and singing a small tune. The happiness on her face was practically palpable. She had a rosiness and life to her that could probably only be experienced by a woman who could feel every aspect of the little one's life growing within her.

Her voice was truly beautiful. If anyone other than her child could hear her, it would have brought birds descending from the skies and deer walking out of forests.

She laughed to herself at the thought. Leonel definitely would have gotten a kick out of that. Maybe he would even start calling her Snow White as an inside joke between themselves.

No. He wouldn't pick a nickname like that. He would definitely go with Bambi instead.

"Your father's brain works in mysterious ways," Aina said softly.

She felt a strong kick and her smile deepened.

It seemed that it was about time now...

Aina stood slowly, supporting her belly with one hand. But before she could even make it to the door, a familiar middle-aged woman burst through, carrying a large array of

boxes.

Aina was a bit speechless but could only laugh as Elaine shouted out orders to her sons to get everything sorted and then kicked them all out again.

Soon, Aina felt that she was surrounded by love. Elaine and her sons' wives all helped her into a tub.

Honestly, Aina had been planning on doing this on her own. She didn't think that it would be a big deal.

But then again... her original plans were to give birth with her full array of powers. She didn't expect to be suddenly suppressed like she was now, forced to face this event with a Third Dimensional body.

That made things quite dangerous because their child was not normal.

Aina had not only picked the best of her eggs, she had even matched it with the most compatible of Leonel's seeds. Then, she spent years nurturing their child with all of her Life Force and Dream Force.

Their child's body had originally been that of a Spiritual's, but Aina had constructed their body personally...

But there was a reason Spirituals were born as souls and only constructed their bodies afterward.

These were all reasons that this was far from the usual sort of birth. However, Aina regretted nothing.

This life... she wanted it.

She would hold on for the sake of her husband fighting outside, for the sake of the

child in her belly, for her own sake...

She would birth this new little Morales no matter what.

...

Leonel grabbed onto a sword jetting out from his abdomen. He squeezed down, the blade puncturing his skin. But he still ripped it out violently, swinging his spear at the man and sending his head flying into the skies.

Leonel coughed, mere droplets of blood coming out of him at this point.

Most of his body had gone from pale to a greyish blue as though it had been completely drained of all the blood it had left. The fact he was still on his feet at all was

a miracle.

He took a step forward, his spear dancing.

He slashed across the Achilles tendon of one man, driving the butt of his spear into his nose as he fell to a knee.

The man couldn't control his body folding backward in the slightest and could only watch as Leonel's spear shot through his throat.

Leonel stabbed the spear further down, feeling for the sensation of the blade going through the earth before leaping upward. He used his spear as a pivot point to spin around quickly, then hid behind its body to block a blow that had come from his back. The spear of the enemy clanged against his own, rebounding back even faster than it came.

Leonel ripped his spear up and out of the ground, taking advantage of the man's off-balance form to skewer him through the heart.

He stood in the middle of a battlefield littered with corpses, looking around for a new enemy, only to realize that there was none.

He sent a glance toward the city, feeling that something on the inside was changing. He didn't need to think much to know what it was at all...

Raising a blood-caked hand to his face, he adjusted his glasses, looking toward the Sylvan and Pluto.

By now, he had run through their entire armies, leaving them just five meters from him. Neither had moved a muscle even up until he killed the very last of them.

As for why that was...

Leonel didn't care. The answer wouldn't make a single ounce of difference to him, and what was in their hearts was irrelevant to him.

Standing there at half their height, he somehow still seemed taller than the both of them.

Slowly, he raised his spear to face them.

CRACK. CRI! CRI! Leonel looked down at his spear to find that the blade had finally given way.

A mournful cry filled the air as the lament of the blade echoed. Leonel could feel its sadness...

This normal blade had truly wanted to fight to the end with him, if for no other reason than to witness this final ride.

"Is that what you want...?" Leonel asked, looking at the cracked blade. "... Okay, then we will do this together..."

The blade never mattered...

Leonel raised his spear higher as the cracked end of the spear fell off.

... Not so long as he could guide his blade with his heart.

SHUUUUUUUU!

Chapter 3209: A Father's Fury (4)

A spiraling aura took shape around Leonel's cracked blade. His heart thumped and his body's aura soared to pierce the skies.

The pressure of the mountain on his back seemed to descend into the world itself.

Staring at him, one could tell that there was absolutely nothing that would make him lower his spear, nothing that would impact his will, nothing that would dull the blade hidden in his heart.

His body might have seemed to have lost all life, his Force didn't seem to respond to him, and his flesh itself had practically begun to atrophy, but the light in his eyes...

That hadn't dimmed in the slightest and seemed to have no intention of doing so. Come.

That was the one word it seemed to roar at the top of its lungs.

And then Leonel moved.

His spear danced through the skies, carving what looked like a simple arc but actually targeted both Sylvan and Pluto at the same time.

He truly treated them no differently from the men he had just faced off against, and he would cut them down no differently.

Despite his pride, Ger'Ain reacted on instinct, feeling the scent of death kissing at his neck. Before he even knew what was happening, he was locked in a battle, shoulder to shoulder with Vaelin, and had no easy way to extricate himself without suffering a lethal blow.

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The Pluto's grey-blue skin rippled with an underlying violet light as his eyes flickered with rage.

Humiliation.

Undisguised, unabashed humiliation.

He couldn't tell if Leonel was doing this on purpose or not, but somehow, the idea that he wasn't could make him feel more fury.

The fact that Leonel didn't have to think to target him like this, to think of attacking his pride, and only doing so as though it was only natural... as though it was only natural for a pitiful, puny human to fight against the lofty Sylvan and Pluto Race all on his own.

He didn't second guess it; he didn't even hesitate in the slightest.

It was like to Leonel... this was just another battle.

They were only another road he would cross, mountain he would scale, sky he would pierce.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel's spear weighed heavy, but its swiftness was undeniable. He pushed Vaelin to his backfoot before crossing blades with Ger'Ain and taking a step back.

His feet pivoted as he parried the Pluto's spear to the side, erupting with a flat foot to the side of Ger'Ain's knee.

At this point, Leonel's smaller size was to his advantage. He was fighting against giants by comparison, but his nimbleness was beyond theirs even if his speed was not.

Ger'Ain was forced to brace his knee for impact so Leonel couldn't shatter it at the same moment his spear was sent piercing into the ground, having missed Leonel. Vaelin recovered in that instant, swiping out a blade toward Leonel's back. However, that was when the angle of Leonel's "kick" changed, and he used Ger'Ain's knee as a platform to launch himself upward and over the blade coming for him, leaving Vaelin's blade about to rip through the Pluto.

The Sylvan only sneered. As if he would fall for something like that. How great was his intelligence? And how much greater was his spear control?

His blade came to a steady stop, ready to pierce up toward Leonel, who had not left himself in a vulnerable spot mid-air.

But Vaelin realized too late that Leonel's trajectory wasn't just upward. It was up and back.

Leonel somersaulted through the air, his feet landing on the body of Vaelin's spear with a vicious downward momentum.

Unfortunately, the strength of Leonel's two opponents wasn't so simple. Something like withstanding Leonel's weight on their spears, even while suppressed to the Third Dimension, wasn't a problem for them. Especially after Leonel had lost so much weight due to his injuries, blood loss, and flesh atrophying.

Vaelin's gaze flashed and his arms flexed. Rather than stopping the upward trajectory of his spear, his torso flexed and his feet dug into the ground. With a roar, he lifted

with all his strength, his intention being to punish Leonel by sending him flying higher into the air.

And yet... that still seemed to be within Leonel's calculations.

Leonel's feet only lightly touched Vaelin's spear before they "slipped."

Vaelin, who had just put all his strength into thrusting his spear and Leonel upward, suddenly found himself off balance.

It was happening again. Leonel was forcing uncoordinated movements using methods the Sylvan had just never prepared for before.

Suddenly, Leonel had landed on the ground and the Sylvan's chest was wide open.

Leonel could feel that Ger'Ain had already recovered to his back, but the angle was far too tight. Leonel was beneath both of Vaelin's arms, and with the angle Ger'Ain's spear was pierced into the ground, he wouldn't have a vantage point to work with.

So, Leonel didn't even hesitate.

The weight of a mountain trembled to his back as he erupted with a spear strike that spiraled the energies of the world to the tip of his blade.

Even without Force, the laws of reality seemed to bend to his will.

Leonel didn't even have the energy to roar... but his spear did for him.

PUCHI!

He rocketed forward with so much strength that his spear and arm ripped through the Sylvan's chest.

Blood exploded from the large man's back, golden streaks and runes followed suit as Vaelin froze, his eyes wide.

He realized too late that Leonel had already seen through all of his abilities. It was why he had run away in the first place, because the scent of death was only getting closer and closer.

With the added variable of Ger'Ain, a man he neither trusted nor was used to working with, he only sped himself closer to death.

And the fact he didn't trust Ger'Ain only seemed smarter after Leonel suddenly sensed a blade rip through Vaelin's body and head right for him.

Chapter 3210: A Father's Fury (5)

Leonel stood with an arm running through the Sylvan. They were more than close; they were practically one body at this point.

The fact that Ger'Ain's blade was already here could only mean that the Pluto never planned to spare the Sylvan in the first place. From the start, his fury had erupted, swallowing all his reason.

Leonel had actually used his body, the body of a noble Pluto...

As a platform to leap into the air?

Ger'Ain's roar filled the skies, and the light of dusk seemed to only pool over the

horizon faster as a result, almost as though the sun had been sent into a state of shock and fear by his fury.

Leonel had calculated this possibility, but he knew that even so, there wouldn't be much that he could do.

PUCHI!

The spear ripped through the Sylvan's side and came right for Leonel.

Although there wasn't much Leonel could do... that didn't mean there was absolutely nothing. At the very least, the fact that the spear had to come through Ger'Ain's body first slowed it down and reduced its lethality considerably.

Leonel kicked out with a knee that drove into the side of the Sylvan's own, then knocked his body over toward Ger'Ain even as the spear came toward him.

Suddenly, Ger'Ain found his spear's trajectory being forcefully changed by the fall of the Sylvan's body.

He tried to forcefully change it, but that ironically only slowed his blade down further. Trying to twist his wrist and change a blade's arc abruptly while in the middle of a cut was something any artisan would tell you was a foolish endeavor.

Leonel stumbled away, almost falling in weakness. Ger'Ain's blade still managed to nick some of his hair, almost cutting his scalp off from the rest of his body.

Taking deep breaths, Leonel steadied himself as Ger'Ain flung Vaelin's corpse to the side. The Pluto seemed to have grown in size, his shoulders bulging with what somehow looked almost like venomous veins and his body pulsing with power.

He raised his spear into the air and slashed out again and again.

He had a furious sort of power to him, his spear leaving afterimages in the air that only layered together after meeting Leonel's own. Then, rippling waves of strikes would erupt all at once.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel blocked the first, and then the second, but the third drove him down to a knee. A pitiful spurt of blood came from the wound on his neck and shoulder before he was forced to block a kick that the Pluto tried to drive into his chest.

His body was sent sprawling into the distance, and for the first time since the battle with the army began, Leonel found himself on the ground.

He coughed, trying to get up, only to realize why it was that he had been so focused on not falling all this time.

It felt like he had no energy left to do so, the whining and groaning of his organs whispering into his ears about shutting down for good. And maybe many of them already had.

"DIE!"

Ger'Ain didn't mince his words, nor did he waste any time. The humiliation bubbling up in his chest was such that he didn't care about anything other than dealing a death blow to Leonel. He wanted to see him ripped limb from limb, to see his organs spilling out of his body, to see his head on a pike.

His spear swung down with such ferocity that its polearm bent beneath the pressure, its body curving in the air as its blade accelerated.

Leonel pulled on whatever strength he had left to roll to the side. But....

SHILING!

He hardly felt the pain. His body lacked so much energy that his nerves didn't even seem to fire properly anymore. Even when he lost his arm, it almost felt like an aged scab was falling away naturally.

He coughed, but more so due to the impact of such a powerful blade running through his body, while Ger'Ain only felt more infuriated that he still hadn't been able to kill Leonel with such a blow.

The Pluto raised his spear even higher and no longer even looked like a spearman at all. He reversed his grip on his spear and plowed it downward like a jackhammer. Leonel tried to roll out of the way again, but he couldn't. Without an extra arm for leverage, he wasn't fast enough.

The blade ran right through his chest, deviating slightly as though it had crashed into something heavy before ending up half in his ribcage and half in his gut.

But maybe just as bad now was the fact he was pinned to the ground.

Looking at the blade running through him, Leonel found it hard to believe that it was even there. Had he really pushed himself so far that he couldn't even feel such a thing? No... somehow... he felt that he still hadn't pushed himself far enough... it still... wasn't enough.

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Aina's consciousness faded in and out. The pool of once clear waters was bathed in blood now.

She could faintly hear the screams of the women around her, telling her to stay away, to just give it one more push, but they seemed filtered through a mesh like her mind was in too much pain to process any of it at all.

She had yet to hear what she really wanted to hear... there was neither her husband's voice nor the cry of her baby...

Where were they?

Another shudder of pain barely snapped her awake.

"ANOTHER TUB, GET ME ANOTHER TUB! I need to see what's happening!" Elaine roared out orders.

'No...!' Aina thought to her.... I have to hold on...'

Her head faintly turned toward Leonel's direction. They were separated by kilometers, and yet they might as well have been side by side. She could feel him... if only she could also reach out and touch him.

Her consciousness faded.

Chapter 3211: A Father's Fury (6)

Ger'Ain's roars filled the skies as he drove the spear deep into Leonel's body.

The last flickering lights deep within Leonel seemed to tremble one last time before his body gave way. Even as his brain fired signal after signal to move, he had pushed himself much too far.

With so much weight bearing down from above, he couldn't move even if he wanted to, let alone the fact his body wasn't responding to him.

Failure.

So close... and yet so far...

In the real world, it didn't matter how furious you were or how much passion you had. At some point, you would reach the end of your road if you weren't strong enough. Leonel unleashed shallow breaths because he couldn't physically breathe deeply anymore. He might not have felt the pain, but there was nothing at all that was good about that.

Faintly, he could feel his wife's gaze from the far-off distance, but he couldn't even turn to look at her. And even if he could... there would be kilometers, a city wall, and countless buildings in their way.

A fury bubbled up in his chest, writhing out of control like it had before, but it was likewise useless. All it did was sap up what remained of his energy.

The haggard, enraged breath of Ger'Ain lumbered on from above, pressing down on Leonel's body and only making him feel more suffocated and disgusted with himself, 'I can't...'

Leonel's gaze flickered like an ember waning or a light overloading its fuse.

His will was still akin to a towering tempest, so powerful that Ger'Ain could feel it weigh down on himself as well.

But no amount of will could seem to move his body.

"You killed... a Pluto... that much is fine, I can accept it... but you... also defiled his body, you ruined his memory..." Ger'Ain gasped between breaths. "... One of my own kind... the sort of pressure we bear for the sake of the world... you cannot imagine... and yet... you disrespect us like this..."

Ger'Ain's rumbling words seemed to fuel his fury all the more.

He ripped his spear up from the ground, taking Leonel's body along with it. Hanging from the end of the spear, Leonel could hardly do anything but hold onto his own. But because the gap in their size was so large, even if he managed to move his body and swing his spear with any sort of force...

He wouldn't even reach Ger'Ain's neck.

The Pluto's spear was simply too long.

"I will show you what it feels like to be disrespected and defiled! A warrior like you deserves a good death, but I will not give you one! I will trample over your pride and humiliate you even in death! I will nail your tongue to your head and hang your penis from your mouth instead! You will not rest in peace for a single one of your days!"

The more Ger'Ain caught his breath, the louder his voice became, and more thunderously it boomed across the skies.

The fury of a Pluto seemed to have spilled forth from him, and Leonel only now finally grasped what Ger'Ain's path of the spear was.

It had been hard to grasp, much harder than Vaelin. He had assumed that it was somewhat related to time, which was why it was so muted.

But the reality was that this wasn't the case. In fact, part of the reason Ger'Ain was so agitated came from a reason even he couldn't properly understand for the same reason.

His spear was filled with the pride of the Pluto race, the pride of a Race that stood atop the world, that bore the weight of humanity's survival for so long.

But ultimately...

How could such a spear show its might before Leonel's? How could such a prideful spear continue to be when it was so clearly inferior?

Now, however, this spear seemed to be gaining momentum as it sat skewered through Leonel, as it humiliated the man that once stood above it.

With dull eyes, Leonel looked down at the spear skewering through him.

Was this how his father had felt? Dying to someone so inferior to him only because there was someone much more powerful pulling the strings in the background.

He couldn't help but wonder what his father's last thoughts were. Were they of hopelessness? Despair? The unfairness of it all?

Leonel coughed, another weak spurt of nothing coming from him as his body simply had nothing more to give. The fact he still had the reflex to cough at all was astonishing in its own right.

"No..."

Leonel's voice came out as weak as the flap of a butterfly's wings. Even Ger'Ain didn't hear it. Let alone the Pluto, even Leonel couldn't quite hear it. Though it was hard to tell if that was because he had spoken so softly, or if it was because his ears couldn't quite pick up sound like they used to.

As for what he was saying no to, it was his father's last thoughts...

He knew what his father was thinking... he had seen that smile on his face... there wasn't an ounce of despair or helplessness there.

That was because unlike him, his father had cleared a path for his wife and son... unlike him, his father's son had already grown into a man ready to carry on the burden himself... unlike him, his father had succeeded.

Leonel's arm suddenly moved as the weight on his shoulders grew heavier. He wasn't just carrying his wife, his unborn child, or the memory of his parents on his back... He was also carrying his father's burden, his last hopes, his last dreams, his last smile. Leonel held his spear in his teeth and grabbed onto Ger'Ain's polearm with a hand. Deep within his mind, a tranquility that had been at silent rest stirred.

Control.

For the sake of his family, if it was all he had left, he was even willing to become a Demon.

A bloodthirsty light filled his eyes.

Chapter 3212: A Father's Fury (7)

Ger'Ain looked at Leonel's vain attempts as though he relished in them. The more Leonel struggled, the more chances he would get to make this man truly regret the things that he had done.

However...

SHIIING!

Leonel ripped the spear through his body, curving it up and through his collarbone. Ger'Ain stood frozen in shock.

His spear was more like a glaive than it was a real spear. It only had one truly sharp edge while the other side was blunt, and at the moment, the sharp edge was pointed down to the ground.

That meant that for Leonel to pull himself off of the spear, he had actually forcefully destroyed large segments of his body with nothing more than the blunt edge of the blade.

Not only that, but he had basically cut himself in two while doing it.

He fell to the ground, trying to do so on two feet, only for half of his torso to spill over to one side, pooling out with his blackened, atrophied inner organs.

A flash of fear lit in Ger'Ain's eyes, one that he couldn't immediately suppress like the first one. The Pluto were a Race of warriors with existences that towered over all others...

But even he couldn't fathom this sort of matter.

He was only caught off guard for a brief while, and that fear only stunned him for a split second...

But it was enough.

He hadn't noticed that he had ended up over Vaelin's corpse. So when Leonel fell down, his torso blooming open with petals of sickly grey-black organs, he landed right onto the Sylvan.

Leonel released his spear from his mouth and turned his neck, taking a savage bite out of the opening in Vaelin's chest.

Ger'Ain's eyes widened, realizing what was happening a step too late.

And it was then he noticed something else as well.

In the open cavity that was Leonel's chest, there was one pulsing light.

His heart.

Ger'Ain remembered that when he pierced down into Leonel's chest, he had run into

Γ

something he couldn't puncture, and his spear ended up deviating. He hadn't thought much about it then, but he finally understood what it was.

He couldn't pierce Leonel's heart because his heart and his Innate Node were one and the same.

Creation taken to an extreme could only be seen as Destruction.

Leonel ripped his neck to the side, pulling out a large meaty bit of golden flesh from Vaelin's Sylvan Heart. His earlier spear strike had already destroyed much of it, but there was still quite a bit that remained. And in maybe one of the most savage displays of his life, Leonel tore into it as though it was a steak rather than the corpse of a man who had just been alive.

Ger'Ain suddenly swung his spear down from above, but the moment Leonel had released his spear from his mouth, his now free hand had caught it.

A second too late, Ger'Ain realized that Leonel had already thrust his spear up before he even decided where to attack.

Leonel's cracked spear blade caught the edge of Ger'Ain's own and parried it to the side.

Ger'Ain had attacked with so much force that having his momentum deviated forward like this knocked him off balance somewhat, causing him to be unable to stop his blade at all.

It missed the side of Leonel's face and buried itself into Vaelin's body.

Surts of power roared through Leonel's veins as he kicked upward, golden lines pulsing along his atrophied leg.

His heel collided with Ger'Ain's hip perfectly, forcing the Pluto to be flipped over Leonel's head by his own momentum.

The two halves of Leonel's torso tried to mend themselves together using the power of the Sylvan Heart, but the strings of flesh that connected them were too loose, and Leonel didn't give them any time before he rushed to his feet at the fastest speed he could muster.

Wielding his spear in one hand, he pierced down at Ger'Ain, who successfully rolled to the side.

BANG! BANG!

Ger'Ain was forced to abandon his spear in Vaelin's body and was sent taking two steps back in quick succession.

Leonel closed the distance again, his eyes filled with a furious, raging light.

The fear in Ger'Ain's heart only grew. The sight of a man fighting with a single arm while his body was both figuratively and literally falling apart was too much.

Every time Leonel made a vigorous movement, the tendrils of flesh trying to hold his torso together would snap, but it was as though he didn't notice at all.

If he didn't care about the Sylvan blood dripping down his chin, why would he care about this?

And somehow, his spear strikes were only becoming heavier. It was like he was the one who had insulted Leonel, as though he was the one who deserved to pay for all the things he had done.

And suddenly, Ger'Ain began to wonder if he truly did deserve death. Should he just accept that his life should be taken away by this blade? Was that what he deserved? Leonel's spear shot through the air again and again, becoming faster and faster. It didn't have nearly as much variation as it usually had when he wielded it with two hands, but he seemed to have adapted instantly, pressing Ger'Ain, who could only use the gauntlets on his fists to defend.

As a Pluto, Ger'Ain was more than comfortable in close combat as well, but he was quickly finding himself overwhelmed.

PUCHI! PUCHI! PUCHI!

Lines of blood erupted across his body, the heavy Pluto blood that couldn't be spilled falling in a rain as though to satiate Leonel's spear.

Before this spear, the blood of a Pluto was absolutely worthless.

If there was one man worthy of defiling his Race, it was the man before him.

Leonel took a step, and he suddenly accelerated in a way a weak body shouldn't.. Shifting and moving like the wind, he appeared behind Ger'Ain and pierced a hole through his knee.

In a single motion, Leonel leapt up and drove a crossing knee across Ger'Ain's temple. The Pluto caught himself with a palm to the ground and tried to use it as leverage for a spinning kick from his upside-down position.

But Leonel seemed to have seen through it all, sidestepping it and slashing a deep wound across Ger'Ain's groin through a gap in his arm.

Faster.

Faster.

Faster.

Leonel howled, his spear leaving trails of deep wounds across Ger'Ain's body until the man couldn't even move anymore without a part of his body reminding him that he had long since lost the tendon that connected it to his thoughts.

Ger'Ain barely managed to prop himself up on his elbows, biting at Leonel's approaching blade as a last effort to stay alive.

In the end, he was still a Pluto. He would die with-

Leonel's spear shifted with a twist of his wrist, under cutting Ger'Ain's bite and tearing into his throat.

The Pluto's head was sent soaring into the air, and Leonel's spear flashed, dancing through the skies in streaks of silvery light that erupted into gold. Leonel roared, and Ger'Ain's head was split into hundreds of pieces in an instant.

Leonel raised his head to the skies.

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

Chapter 3213: Precipice

Leonel's aura seemed to rip through the veil of the world itself, towering up with such ferocity that even the clouds were pierced.

A Royal Crest Dharma appeared in the air once more, but this time it grew more shimmering and resplendent.

The spear hidden within became flooded by Force as it poured in from all directions. Like a dam that had been breached, the floodwaters barraged their way forward, moving with such momentum that even the Regulator couldn't hold them back anymore.

Leonel's spear howl shot through the air, the cracked blade in his hand shuddering as it underwent a baptism that shocked the world.

The bow followed suit.

Leonel had lifted his bow up a single time since coming to this city, and there was a reason for that. He had always been confident in his path forward when it came to the bow. He knew that if he could succeed with his spear, his bow would only naturally follow.

That was his confidence as a marksman.

And he was proven correct.

As Force began to spill over into the bow construct of his Dharma as well, the world trembled to its very core, shaking to the point it seemed that it might collapse.

In these months, Leonel had had several ideas for how he might reforge the Spear and Bow, but none of them felt perfect.

Every time he thought of a change, he realized that it was less of something that was appropriate for a Weapon Force and more so something that was more appropriate for a Path.

However, none of that was good enough. Just making the spear faster, or heavier, or sharper, was useless.

What made Weapon Forces so special was the underlying fluidity of it all. It was precisely because Spear Force could be used in such a wide variety of ways that it was so special as a Weapon Force. Or, more accurately, it was precisely this that made all Weapon Forces special.

Changing something so surface-level as weight, or speed, or sharpness, wouldn't get Leonel the results he was looking for. If anything, it would just box in his Spear Force, get rid of its fluidity, and create something that was much weaker overall.

But then Leonel had a breakthrough in his thought... a breakthrough triggered by a spear surging into his palm.

Leonel had always taken his casual control of spears for granted. He could resonate with them, causing them to snap into his palms. It was also this very same mystical connection that allowed his Sovereignty to destroy most other spears he came into contact with.

In truth, the Idol Battlefield was the first time Leonel had ever actually fought against spear masters. All his life, spears would crumble every time he faced off against them. It was only while fighting the strongest spearman in Existence that things finally changed and he was able to feel what it was like to combat a spear.

And it was also because of that that he felt the tug, push, and pull of Sovereignities all the more clearly. He couldn't destroy these spears as easily, but he found that he could apply pressure onto them, suffocate them, even.

And when he began to analyze these spears, taking what he wanted for himself, he created the foundation of what would be the first change he made to his Bow and Spear Force.

The Spear had the Absolute Domain, a range of influence that made it invisible in a middle-range distance. It was such a large part of its abilities that the Spear Domain Lineage Factor was even built on this principle.

The Bow was an even higher level of control than that. From the limited range of the spear... it became rangeless. There was no target it couldn't track, no general it couldn't slay.

And now they would have this foundational concept ingrained even further into their being with... Suppression.

BOOM!

The golden Forces became brighter, piercing an even larger hole into the skies as Leonel's Dharma became more complex.

Now, the Spear and Bow didn't just have range. Suppression was a fundamental part of their being. The Suppression of distance, the control of a region, the suffocation of other weapons.

However, this still felt more like a Path than it did a fundamental change to the Weapon Force. But there was a reason for this... that was because of the next change.

BOOM!

Leonel's aura continued to skyrocket as madness unfurled. Tinges of red seeped into the foundation of his Weapon Forces, fighting and combating the violets that appeared at the same time.

They roared and raged, tugged and pulled.

Dream Force.

Leonel wanted it to become his key to everything. It was what would separate him from others and what caused the fundamental divide between his current Weapon Forces and his Weapon Forces of the past.

But it was tricky. If he was going to rely on a new Force, then it obviously wouldn't be a Weapon Force anymore...

Or was it?

What were Weapon Forces if not amalgamations of Forces?

What separated the fundamental laws that constructed a Weapon Force from any other? Why couldn't you just add Fire Force to Glaive Force and create a new Weapon Force like that?

The problem stemmed from the same reason you couldn't just melt together metals and hope they had a good outcome in the end. If you could, there wouldn't be such a large dividing line between normal Crafts and the Life Grade... or even a larger dividing line between the Life Grade and the Self Grade.

But that was precisely what Leonel had come to realize.

These Weapon Forces... all of them were at the Life Grade. They were constructs that many might tweak here and there, but they were fundamentally a Life Grade existence.

It was Sovereignty that tweaked it further, pushing it toward the Self Grade...

But it wasn't nearly enough.

It was at that moment that a precipice of combat and Crafting came to a head.

Chapter 3214: A Third

BOOM!

Leonel's roar filled the skies, towering up and above even the pillar of light erupting from him. It traveled far and wide as though letting the world know that he had arrived.

Everyone used Forces the same way. Through their Ethereal Glabella's, they communicated with the world around them, and based on their affinities, there were a range of responses.

Every time, it was the world that granted the right to access Forces, and it was often limited by various factors of the world as well, such as World Spirits, Regulators, and sometimes even the Northern Star itself.

When you had a Sovereignty, you had the right of priority over these Forces. Your dominion over them became more assured, and the worlds you were in placed fewer restrictions on you compared to others.

If you had an Innate Node, in some cases, you were even better off. The Force naturally formed within you, so you didn't have to communicate with or rely on anything other than yourself.

However...

The relationship with the world was still there. It was the Northern Star that allowed this sequence to happen. As such, there was hell to pay when it came to forming Dharmas and Idols after the fact, something that Leonel had already personally experienced.

This was the weight that came with Innate Nodes, and why, though Gods could create them with relative ease, they chose not to.

The only difference was when one was innately born with an Innate Node. This was the only factor that changed things so considerably that one could have their cake and eat it too, almost like receiving a blessing from the Northern Star.

What was the main difference? Why did Leonel face so much more resistance with his new Weapon Force Innate Node than he would have ever faced with his Scarlet Star Force Innate Node?

The Self...

Leonel realized something profound from that simple action of forcing a spear to soar on its own volition into his palm.

Dream Force was tied into the Second Dimension, and life sparked in the Third. By the time one got to the Fourth and started using Forces, there were already two degrees of separation that would only grow worse.

That was when Leonel realized that the reason Innate Nodes one was born with were so much easier to manage and handle was because, from the very spark of one's birth, one had been experiencing its changes...

Meaning, the very fabric of the Innate Node was already woven into your Dream Force from birth. How was it that a Spiritual could be naturally given Innate Nodes if they were born as nothing more than a soul? Wasn't that obviously because someone that was either born with an Innate Node or not could be seen even from the depths of the Second Dimension itself?

In that case...

Why not do the reverse?

Why not take his Weapon Force and change it so fundamentally that it acted as an Innate Node of sorts all on its own? Why not inextricably tie his Weapon Forces to his Dream Force in such a way

that bloomed with the power of his will and psyche at its very core?

Leonel had already done this in one direction by forming the very first. Weapon Innate Node to ever exist. However, to do this, he had continuously tempered his body, rooting

the Innate Node in the Third Dimension and above, but he had never worked his way backward.

But now, he would...

-A Union of Light and Darkness will reveal the Twelve Pointed Star-...

Light and Dark could mean so many things. It could refer to them literally, it could mean a balance of yin and yang, and in this case... it could mean a cycle.

The last time Leonel had thought of this prophecy he had been in the middle of Crafting treasures for the Fawkes and he felt that he had grasped onto something faint that would change his perception of Crafting forever.

But the distraction of the matters that came afterward made him have no choice but to abandon those thoughts before he could delve too deeply into them.

But now he truly understood as well.

His Spear and Bow... they were missing the support of his Dream Force. By rooting them in one part of his body and another part of his soul, he could complete the cycle of the Weapon Force, crafting a power that could truly be pushed and pulled by his mind without relying on an external source at all. He was well and truly free.

And for his Crafting... maybe the Life Grade and the Self Grade weren't truly striated differences either. But it wasn't that simple either.

The Life Grade was the process of using resources and their Paths to create a single Path that all of them would follow together. This holistic approach to Crafting made Treasures orders of magnitude more shocking than normal.

The Self Grade was the overriding of those preferences, using the more fundamental aspects of Forces and ignoring their overarching "personalities," and instead imposing what you wanted onto them yourself. It was similar to a Path of Sovereignty where you tweaked what a Force could do to match your wants and desires more. The more Leonel thought about it, the more similar these things seemed.

In the past, Leonel had also thought that the Life Grade was just the upgrade over Gold Grade treasures, only to eventually realize that any Grade treasure could be Life Grade.

So why couldn't any Life Grade Treasure be Self Grade?

Much the same way his Weapon Forces could be rooted in the physical dimensions and the mental ones... why couldn't his Treasures be the same, striking a balance between what was and what he wanted them to be?

When he found this stroke, and a perfect balance was struck in his mind, his Dharma began to change once again...

The Spear and Bow shifted, moving to the side to make room for a third...

The Force Quill.

Chapter 3215: Quill

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The Crest Dharma morphed and changed, swirls of purple, red, and gold surging as it warped from the shape of a royal crest to that of a Twelve Pointed Star.

Leonel savagely suppressed it from becoming an Idol, but he could feel the power in his body practically overflowing.

His Innate Node greedily swallowed up three Forces from the surroundings.

The Spear and Bow Forces were no longer just golden in hue, but carried underlying tones of violet and red as well. As for what this violet and red was... it was none other than Leonel's soul.

And the third Force...

Quill Force.

This was a Force that had never existed before because it wasn't seen as necessary to exist. Many, when they used their Force Quill, poured their Dream Force in. That was what allowed them to communicate with the world around them and give their Force Arts power, thus permanently etching whatever abilities they wanted into their Crafts.

However, if Leonel was going to create Weapon Forces that were rooted not just in the world around him, but within himself...

Why wouldn't he do the same for his Force Quill?

This Quill Force wasn't just a casual add-on. It maybe embodied the root of what Leonel's

breakthrough was all about even more than the Spear Force that had allowed him to comprehend it all in the first place.

His Quill Force would allow him to bestow the world with the greatest Crafts ever forged and created. At this moment...

There was not a single doubt in Leonel's mind that he was the greatest Crafter in Existence.

He held out his broken spear and carved a line through the air. Quill Force surged in a bright rainbow light that contrasted it from his other Weapon Forces, and in an instant, he seemed to have written into the world itself.

At that moment, the laws of the Zone were overridden as Leonel took precedent.

The Force Art before him grew larger and more complex even as his Dharma did the same above his head. Each shone brighter and brighter, and a gorgeous magic circle of dancing runes appeared before Leonel.

The only question that seemed left in all of this was... how had Leonel done it?

That tinge of red wasn't a coincidence.

The first time Leonel had come across that red it was when he almost failed to awaken his Metal Synergy Lineage Factor. He had been young, and he overextended himself, not preparing properly. Ultimately, he almost suffered for it.

The second time he came across it, he realized that it was in his own mind. An odd secondary Lineage Factor of the Dream Asuras that he still didn't quite know much about had been birthed within him. This secondary Lineage Factor manifested his soul into humanoid form, and it was chained and locked up within his body, seeping in a pool of blood.

This blood had the very same crimson hue to it, a perfectly identical color with not even the slightest

shade or hue off.

The third time this crimson appeared was when he began to use his "Destruction Sovereignty" to its greatest extent, and he finally began to learn to use and manage his power properly.

When he realized that he had actually been a Creation Sovereign all this time, his aura turned to violet and he abandoned the crimson entirely, thinking that this was the right path.

But it wasn't until he was in his most desperate need of something, anything, that he recalled this crimson energy...

Back when he found himself on the other end of Ger'Ain's spear, he had truly had nothing left to give. He had pushed his body as far as it could go and he literally could not move. It wasn't a matter of willpower; his brain simply had no more energy to fire his neurons, his muscles didn't have the ATP it needed to contract, his body had been, for all intents and purposes...

Dead.

The only thing keeping him going was his soul and the fact the one thing the Regulator couldn't suppress was his Dream Force. But even that had become useless.

In those last moments, the only thing that was able to save him was this crimson energy...

And he finally knew what it was.

It was what his Creation Sovereignty became when it overextended itself. It was the dividing line between Creation that Created and Creation that Destroyed.

And the latter of the two represented taking from what didn't have anything more to give, forcefully borrowing from a future that was promised and crushing it beneath your feet.

With this explanation, it was clear then why Leonel had just so suddenly been able to move when he couldn't move a single inch before, and with that...

His comprehension of his Creation Sovereignty had soared up, surpassing his Destruction Sovereignty so thoroughly that it could no longer be described in mere terms of Silver or Gold; it stood above all on its own, peering down from the skies with a mighty momentum.

And it was with that Creation Sovereignty that he would undo this world.

He buried his fury deep within his heart. He would make that Regulator pay, and dearly at that. However, there was absolutely nothing more important to him than his wife right now, and she was dying because her body was too weak to birth their child.

Thinking about how the Regulator probably knew this would happen, how it wanted to use his wife's death to instigate his own death, he could feel that slumbering madness bubble up within him.

He didn't try to force it down like he had before; that wasn't good enough.

A King didn't always need to make the rational decision, and they didn't need to always maintain a level head either.

However, their madness had to be controlled, their rage had to become their fuel, their fury their war banner.

SHUUUUUUUMMM!

Leonel completed the last stroke and the world lit ablaze.

But he had already vanished.

Chapter 3216: Help Me

Leonel appeared in the midst of the panic. Elaine and her daughters-in-law were rushing around, doing everything they could, but Aina seemed to have reached the end of her rope.

Leonel was a mess himself, caked in blood from head to toe. But at the very least, his torso was no longer hanging in two pieces, and he had his arm back.

One of the many benefits of his Spear and Bow Body was that he could absorb Weapon Forces to heal himself, and just now, he had absorbed plenty of an extremely high caliber, and that was all before he undid the suppression on his Dimension. So he was even easier to heal than normal. However, despite how dirty and caked in blood he was, it didn't stop him from taking a step forward and carefully propping his wife's head up.

It had sagged onto the blood-filled wooden tub, and it seemed like she was completely out. Anyone else who saw such a scene would think her dead, and considering the tears of the women around and how none of them tried to stop him, they probably thought she was already dead as well. Leonel tuned their cries out, trying to loosen the tight clench of his jaw to no avail.

This was a fury he couldn't seem to control at all... but he had no choice.

He gave Aina a light kiss on the forehead, a subtle spark of Dream Force shaking her mind awake. His wife was strong, he knew that. She was holding on with everything she had, and her consciousness was still faintly awake. He could even sense her pelvic muscles contracting, although extremely weakly, just to give their baby even the slightest chance to survive without her.

Aina looked up to find her blood-caked husband standing over her. Seeing the blood that had dried down his chin, she weakly reached up and touched it. Through that soft touch, she seemed capable of seeing everything that Leonel had been through... how he had been willing to become a demon for the sake of her and their baby.

She leaned forward, pressing her forehead against Leonel's head as she felt her strength slowly returning to her.

'I love you...'

They spoke at the same time, their words spinning into a mixture of feminine and masculine cadences that still somehow sounded like a single voice.

The light in Aina's eyes grew brighter as her strength returned finally. She could feel that Leonel had somehow written over the rules of the Zone, causing it to be unable to suppress her any longer.

And now that she had her full array of abilities...

Would there even be trouble any longer?

Leaning against her husband, Aina began to push once more. This time, she wasn't focused on just trying to get their child out and having them survive; she even had room to help make the experience more comfortable for them as well.

She poured her heart and soul into the process as though she was already caressing her child.

"Catch him for me," Aina said with a light smile.

'Him?'

Leonel seemed to have caught a case of idiocy because he was so enraptured by Aina's words that he forgot the task she had given him.

When he finally recalled, he scrambled over to the other side of the bloody tub; he almost looked like a bumbling fool.

Aina released a beautiful laugh as tears fell from her eyes. They weren't tears of sorrow or pain... just pure, unbridled happiness.

She had never had a happier day in her life.

Leonel reached in and brought their child out of the blood waters.

A cry filled the air, and it was accompanied by a Force that rocked the Zone.

If the foundations of the Zone were already shaken before, it was even more exaggerated now. Leonel didn't even have a chance to check if there was an umbilical cord or placenta he had to deal with because their baby began to shine almost as though he was holding a nuclear bomb rather than

his son.

His son.

It was a word that shook him to his very core, so much so that he looked at this bundle of light with a dumbfounded expression. He hadn't even seen the child's face yet, and yet he felt a welling up of pride accompanied by an even heavier weight on his shoulders.

Pillars of light destroyed the roof of the small home, and Leonel had to somewhat absentmindedly destroy the remaining shards so that Elaine and the others, who were stuck in a state of shock, didn't die warrantless deaths.

Was this what it felt like to be a father?

No... he had already felt what it was like. That weight on your shoulders, it would never disappear. But for this little bundle in his arms, he swore with everything he had that he would carry that weight. No, he would carry ten times, a hundred times even, if he had to.

No one would ever make his boy suffer...

Other than himself, of course.

Leonel grinned a silly smile, the tears brimming in his eyes as he still didn't quite know what to do with himself.

And that was when his wife dropped another bombshell on him.

"Catch her too," she said softly.

Leonel looked up from the bundle of light in his arms for the first time since he caught his baby boy. The light was so bright that most people would be blinded by it, but his own eyes seemed to be able to look right through and see the amused and loving gaze his wife was giving him.

"I couldn't decide..." she said in a cute voice that made Leonel want to marry her all over again. Either that, or maybe they should get started on baby three right away.

Leonel snapped out of his daze and hurried forward, gently picking out a second little bundle. He held one in each arm, feeling as though his heart was about to explode.

Chapter 3217: Speechless

The world was practically collapsing around them, but all Leonel could look at were the two bundles in his arms. He couldn't see them, but he could feel them all too clearly.

They were slippery, soaked through in water and blood, but they were so soft and supple to the touch, so delicate that he felt that if he pressed on them even a little bit too hard, he might accidentally break them.

He could feel their little wiggles and their strong heartbeats, their attempts to cry out. That were somewhat suppressed by the Force swirling around them.

But he could also feel their closeness to him. Their reliance, their inherent trust and security.

The tears brimmed in Leonel's eyes, and he found that his heart was overflowing. Seeing her husband in such a state, Aina couldn't hold back her own tears. They had already been there, but they flowed even faster than before.

Neither cared very much about what was happening in the outside world, or what kind of commotion their babies were triggering. All they cared about was the fact they had been born spry and healthy, two little cute, adorable bundles of joy that made one feel as though they were gushing with love.

Elaine and the other wives had to stumble away, the pressure of their babies' birth being too much for them to handle. This sort of Force momentum was unlike anything a Third Dimensional existence would ever face; even a Fifth Dimensional existence would feel wholly inferior. It was only right that they try to make some distance and separate themselves, lest they accidentally die from one of their babies' cries. Leonel shook his head, not having the hands left over to wipe his tears away. But he had to force himself to focus.

He didn't know exactly what was happening to his babies right now.

According to his own parents, he had had a phenomenon manifest during his birth, but it was related to his Scarlet Star Innate Node. As far as he was aware, there weren't any other phenomena related to birth at all.

But it didn't feel like it was just an Innate Node being formed either. At the very least, the momentum shouldn't be so great even if it was one.

Leonel's current senses couldn't be described in just a few words, and after his recent breakthroughs, his ability to see through the world was on another level as well.

He trusted his judgment. But it still felt murky for now.

There was definitely something odd happening.

He could sense Weapon Forces swirling in the air, but as far as he knew that didn't make sense.

It wasn't possible for Innate Nodes to be inherited in the first place. And even if they could be, he had only formed his Weapons Innate Node after he impregnated Aina and entered a century-long seclusion.

So even if there was something to be inherited, his babies wouldn't have been able to. But he couldn't have been more certain about it.

His son was quickly forming a Spear Force Innate Node.

His daughter was quickly forming a Bow Force Innate Node.

He thought that might be the end of it, but then Ax Force descended... and then Fist Force...

Leonel's lip twitched. What the hell was going on?

His son and daughter were forming a full array of Weapon Forces in their bodies, and it was leaving him completely speechless.

But then he caught a subtle twinge of something in the air that made his gaze sharpen.

'So that's it...'

His son and daughter wouldn't just gain his own Lineage Factors, but that of Aina's as well. But there had been a mutation in the Brazinger family Lineage Factor.

The Berserk War God Lineage Factor was one that allowed the Brazingers' natural control over weapons. It was part of the reason, aside from her Ability Index, that Aina was able to seamlessly use so many weapons over the course of her life. Though she always focused on the ax in the end.

Somehow, Leonel's breakthrough in the formation of the very first Innate Nodes in Existence had allowed this to happen.

... Dream Force...'

Leonel finally understood.

After what happened to their babies and how the Brazingers almost took over their psyches, Aina had put a lot of effort into nurturing their souls and bolstering her own Dream Force control.

But around that time was when Leonel grasped King Force and had a breakthrough in his Dream Force.

The breakthrough in his Dream Force allowed him to surpass timelines, grasping things from lives he hadn't lived personally and incorporating them into his combat strength.

The breakthrough in King Force had allowed him to gain the ability to rewrite the past with new rules, like how he had used his King Force to break into the Seventh Dimension in a single bound by making it seem like he had always had King Force by his side.

King Force could rewrite the laws of causality, breaking the rules of the world, tweaking a rule, and then applying it as though it had always been ironclad. When these factors all came together, their babies forged an entirely new path, forming ten Innate Nodes of various weapons and martial forms in a single bound. And then, as though that wasn't enough, both formed a King Force Innate Node, something that even Leonel didn't technically have. It took shape right in the place of their Ethereal Glabellas, and the difference between their Ethereal Glabella and the Innate Node was next to nothing... In fact, in a shocking change, they seemed to be one and the same.

And then the Morales Lineage Factor took root, "Metal" Body triggering all on its own and changing their Constitutions to ones that matched Leonel's own.

This should have been enough to end it all.

But then... they gained their mother's Soul Clairvoyance Lineage Factor. Although they didn't gain the Ability Index to match it... did it matter when they had King Force?

Chapter 3218: Their Father.

Leonel was truly speechless about what he was sensing. The more he grasped, the more shocked he became.

He and his wife had always been two of the greatest talents they had ever seen. Even when they came to the God Realm, not much of anything had changed. They were simply on a level all to their own.

But now, in front of their own children, it felt like those thoughts were more of a joke than anything else.

Still, all Leonel was happy about was the fact his children wouldn't have to be weighed down by the Dream Asura blood that once ran through his veins.

The Demoness had taken it from him and killed him in the process before being the reason his mother was no longer here, but in the end, at least in this instant, she had done him a favor.

His babies would never have to watch such a guillotine loom over their heads ever, and he couldn't be happier about it. Even as he was being shocked by his babies, he was still grinning ear to ear.

He had no idea how his children would make use of so many Weapon Force Innate Nodes, but they would figure it out. He had that sort of belief in them. They were his babies, after all.

The anticipation in Leonel's heart grew as the light began to fade. The pressure in the surroundings calmed, and though he was sure that his babies probably had other shocking talents that he hadn't looked into yet, he couldn't be bothered to give them any attention right now.

His babies could have been the worst talents in the world, and he wouldn't have cared. All he wanted now was to see their little faces.

Aina was a cheater. She definitely had seen them already. She had been observing their growth all the while, and she had even hid that she was holding twins from him. He would definitely have to teach her a lesson later for that.

But right now, it was his turn to see them.

And then he finally could.

The last of the light faded, and the tears began to fall from his eyes uncontrollably. He tried to do his best to keep them at bay, but he realized quite early on that it was all useless.

The little bundles of joy were covered in bloody waters, but he could still see their features well. They looked like babies that were already a month into their lives, with large golden eyes that stared up at him curiously, and little strands of wispy violet hair that seemed half corporeal and half formed of dancing force.

They both had little button noses and little plump pink lips that quivered with curiosity.

His son reached toward him with his chubby little arms. Leonel couldn't help but reach forward, only for the little guy to forcefully grab his bottom lip and tug with all his might.

Leonel laughed through his tears as his daughter kicked at his son as though to try to get him to stop.

The two tussled in his arms, their liveliness making Leonel's heart feel full.

With a step, Leonel entered the bloody wooden tub with Aina, lowering the babies until they were between them.

The two cuddled together in silence, ignoring the commotion of the world as they looked at the lives they created together. There had simply never been a happier moment in their lives.

"Did you decide on their names?" Leonel asked softly.

Aina smiled, her golden eyes sparkling with a beautiful light that could only come from motherhood.

"Leo and Leah."

Leonel found his heart skipping a beat for some reason. He didn't know why, but the moment he heard their names, he felt even closer to his children.

The couple sat there, both bloodied for completely different reasons, and yet seemingly not caring at all.

Their babies splashed around in the water, spending half their time fighting for supremacy and another half trying to gain affection from their parents.

It was a scene that should have been eerie, the kind that should only appear in a bloody, murderous battlefield. The splashes of blood that flew around anywhere were enough to make almost anyone else feel sick to their stomachs.

And yet, this family of four felt at peace, as though this was their natural state, as though there wasn't anything else to consider but this moment right here.

Leonel couldn't believe it had taken him so long to agree to have children. This sort of happiness wasn't something that he could describe in a few words, and even if he had a lifetime, he couldn't do it.

At the same time, he felt a welling up of strength in his body that completely overshadowed anything he had ever experienced before. He felt that even if he was asked to sever the Northern Star in two, he could do it.

There might never be a moment that would be better than this one for him.

His son and daughter were alive, they were healthy, they were vibrant and lively. They were two bundles of soaring happiness that knew nothing of the world and wouldn't have to for as long as he could allow them that freedom.

No... he would allow them that freedom.

Maybe there would come a day when he would train them hard, where he would push them to extremes so that they could become the best versions of themselves, where he would teach them the value of Respect and Persistence.

But today wasn't that day, nor would it be tomorrow.

This coming battle, he would clear the challenge for them. This enemy would be his own to slay. He didn't care how talented his son and daughter were... this wasn't their

burden to uphold.

It would be his as their support, their anchor...

Their father.

Looking at his children, Leonel's grin faded into a soft, genuine smile that came from the bottom of his heart.

Chapter 3219: Own World

Leonel didn't know how long he basked in the moment. But he only snapped out of it when the two little guys started crying.

Unlike usual new parents, though, Leonel could tell what was wrong immediately. And through him, so could Aina.

Once Aina started to breastfeed them, their unhappiness went away and they started suckling away madly, their large adorable eyes blinking away as they begged for more. Leonel laughed seeing just how much they were eating. The sort of high-density food Aina could produce would probably put a grown man out of commission for three days just from a single mouthful, but these two demons practically had little bulging bellies by the time they were finished.

Then, they fell asleep with happy smiles on their faces.

Leonel and Aina looked toward one another, a gentleness in their eyes. They had had the thought more times than they cared to count by now, but they had truly never been happier.

Standing to his feet, Leonel helped Aina up. It was probably about time that they get cleaned. Although they didn't mind all the blood, they couldn't allow it to continue for too long.

There was no easy method of getting clean here, and Elaine seemed to realize that as well. But Leonel just waved her away.

With a step, he vanished with his wife and children.

When they appeared again, they were in the middle of nowhere, a calm lake lying before them and a line of trees surrounding them from all sides.

Aina's body was still a bit frail, especially after Leo and Leah sucked up so much, so Leonel gently held onto her waist, helping her in.

The two took turns washing one another and then helped their babies get clean.

"I made so many clothes..." Aina said, feeling somewhat sad.

Unfortunately, most of them were still in the Segmented Cube and Leonel hadn't regained access to it just yet.

"That's okay."

Leonel drew a finger through the air, in one part drying his two sleeping children, and another part clothing them in soft fabrics that nurtured their souls and deepened their rest.

Aina smiled and the two walked out of the lake together. With a slight rush of wind, they were clothed as well.

Aina now wore a harness that held Leo and Leah to her chest, the giddiness in her eyes practically overflowing. Her gown flowed through the air as she moved, her strength returning to her rapidly as she inhaled the Force around them.

Leonel took her hand, grabbing at the air and forming a spear that rippled with gold, red, and violet. With his wife and children by his side, he felt that he had an endless supply of jet fuel injected into him.

Every time he looked over and saw Aina's happy smile, he would know that he made the right decision.

Who cared about the end of the world coming?

No...

With this sort of strength at his fingertips, why couldn't he stop the end of that world?

The world crumbled around them and Leonel slowly shook his head. He knew that this would happen.

Unfortunately, he didn't get the chance to see his uncle, but he bet that it wouldn't be long before he did.

"Piss off," Leonel growled, rage flaring in his eyes again.

He could feel that the Regulator was trying to separate him and his wife again.

His spear slashed out just a single time, and it was like the world was truly split in two. A rippling wave of gold, violet, and red soared forward, shredding everything it came across into nothingness.

The invisible hand of the Regulator was minced to pieces and its attempts were thwarted.

"Hey, you can't say words like that anymore," Aina said sternly.

Leonel coughed. "Yes, ma'am"

Aina nodded in satisfaction before sweetly grabbing onto Leonel's arm.

The two took a step forward and when their vision cleared, they found themselves in a familiar hall. Well, at least it was familiar to Leonel who had been here before. This region was none other than the very same place the spear masters had gathered.

But this time, there were only a small number of them, even compared to before. The number that had entered the Idol Battlefield had already been cut down significantly, to the point where there were only five people present... and that included Leonel, Aina, Leo, and Leah.

The only other person was none other than Leonel's uncle. He was the one and sole survivor of the Spearman stream aside from Leonel himself, and quite frankly, Leonel found this shocking.

Why had so many died?

He had done a lot of killing, but that was mostly of the existences that had spawned along with the Zone. In terms of actual candidates that Leonel had killed, there were only about 12.

But now that Leonel thought about it... that was quite a number of those that had been here.

The only reason he even faced that many to begin with was because the Regulator had been personally targeting him. Now, however, it obviously lacked such an ability. At the very least... Leonel had a lot more capital to protect himself because the Regulator had rules that it, itself, had to abide by.

Leonel stared at his uncle for a long while. The man looked toward him as well, somewhat confused about why there was a woman with children here. If Aina had been here before, he wouldn't be confused, but she hadn't been.

Also, the Zone had only lasted less than three months, compared to the years it was supposed to take instead.

For experts like them, it usually took longer to conceive, not less time. It didn't make sense for two babies to suddenly pop out.

And why did he feel so uncomfortable looking at those children?

Confusion colored his face and he didn't know what to make of it.

In a shocking showing, though, Leonel didn't say anything. He found a corner to sit with his wife and they lost themselves in their own world.

Chapter 3220: Timely

Leonel didn't seem to notice the time flying by. He assumed that if the Zone was meant to last years, and he had destroyed the Zone so soon, then they would probably have to wait at least that long for everyone else to finish theirs.

And he didn't mind one bit.

Originally, he came here ready to miss the birth of his child and their formative years. But now, he had not only gotten to witness the birth of not just one, but two of them, but he also could watch them grow as well?

What more could he ask for?

Every day, though, his babies seemed to surprise him in new ways.

After they woke up from their first meal, they were already crawling around without any help at all.

Leonel formed some toys out of thin air and stoked some of their competitive spirit. much to Aina's dismay. She didn't want to trigger some sort of sibling war, but Leonel was here for it.

The two of them found a way to fight one another no matter the circumstances. There was even a time where Leah tried to monopolize both of Aina's breasts for herself, kicking her older brother away.

It was a funny sight, watching her little head bob back and forth as she tried to suck on both nipples. Leonel could practically see the gears churning in her noggin as she tried to figure it out.

Leo came back with a fierce vengeance, and Aina could only helplessly watch as the twins jostled for position when she clearly had more than enough room for both.

She looked to Leonel for help, only to find that he was laughing his ass off.

On the third day, the two of them were already walking, and by the second week, they were already running.

It was amusing to see their little bodies try to complete ridiculous maneuvers time and time again. They seemed to be very good at coordinating their bodies, but the problem was that while their brain and cognitive development was especially fast, their bodies grew at the same rate as other children.

As such, even if they could walk and "run"--which was actually much more like a fast waddle Leo picked up after snatching Leah's toy--they didn't have the body proportions necessary to make it effective.

Their stubby little legs couldn't even quite extend properly, and they were very top heavy, causing them to fall back on their bums all too often.

It was also probably because of this that their first words weren't until over a month later. Funny enough, they neither said mom nor dad. Instead, they each said one another's names first.

Leonel got a real kick out of that one. That was because it was definitely Aina's fault for calling out to them so often. Those two words were practically the only ones they knew.

It was hard to describe how it felt to watch them grow day by day. From happiness, it became pressure again soon enough.

As funny as it was to watch the two lock heads every day, Leonel knew that Aina was right. They couldn't allow it to go on forever.

It might be early, but it was probably about time to start teaching them about some matters of discipline and self-control. If their babies were going to grow up so fast, then it was only natural that they push things forward as well.

Soon, Leonel was basking in the not-so-fun part of being a parent, trying to delicately guide his children down the right path.

It didn't take long before he understood his father's approach to things. Sometimes, even pretending that you didn't care for your child as much as you did was the most effective.

However... Leonel and his babies were different.

Leonel was a person who could have rightfully ended up on the Cloud Province of the Ascension Empire, jailed together with the rest of the Savants because of how his brain worked.

Because of that, when his father was "cruel" to him, he never really saw it that way. He had always analyzed things from a more rational foundation.

But that didn't mean that Leo and Leah would be the same. They might need the warmth and affection that Leonel had never really needed.

It was hard to get a perfect grasp of their personalities as they were changing every day, but he already knew that his children were different from him.

They had his desire to win in all things, which was why they clashed so much, but beyond that, they might as well have not been related to him at all.

However, Leonel and Aina didn't just start with harsh lessons and reprimands. Instead, they started with stories, fairy tales that they wove from things they had already read and things they had experienced themselves.

Since they were trapped within these walls, they wanted their babies to experience the world in other ways.

Sometimes they would fall asleep in the middle of the story as Dream Force wrapped through the air, forming one image after another for them to gasp in shock and awe

about. But Leonel and Aina didn't wake them, instead allowing them to rest their minds and digest what they had heard before picking things up later.

Slowly but surely, the two grew.

After a year ticked by, Leonel already couldn't hold back and gave them their first weapons. Now that they understood more about values and morality, it was the right

time.

Their bodies were still disproportionate, but the moment Leo got his hands on a spear and Leah touched her first bow, it was like their eyes had come alive.

"Nope," Leonel shook his head. "Don't even think about adding your own flare to it

until you can beat him."

"But dad! I already beat it!" Leo protested.

"Lucky shot," Leonel said with a grin.

Leah laughed from a distance, dancing around as she tried to get used to firing arrows off-balance.

"It was not lucky!" Leo said somewhat embarrassed.

Leah laughed harder, Leo had only gotten a shot in because mom was scolding dad, and dad was too busy flirting.

In truth, Leonel had allowed Leo to get a win in on purpose. How could he slip up like that?

It was all for this moment.

Leah was too busy laughing and lost track of her steps. She stumbled over and slipped off of the wall, landing nearly in Montez's lap.

Leah froze, looking up at the scary man who had not said a single word in over two years.

Tears brimmed in her eyes as she suddenly didn't know what to do.