

Dimensional Descent - Chapter 9

Leonel felt a slight dizziness that soon disappeared. He could vaguely feel that his quick recovery was anything but natural, however he didn't have much evidence to back this.

He found himself in a long corridor, dimly lit by flickering torches that hung from the walls. Large irregularly shaped stones formed the bricks that built the surroundings, giving the place the feel of an ancient tomb.

Just as Leonel was about to take a step forward, something completely unexpected happened.

[Subject detected. Leonel Morales, 17]

[Credit: First to enter Sub-Dimensional Zone. Accomplishment recorded]

Leonel stared blankly at the wrist watch on his arm.

[Earth is currently in a state of metamorphosis, ascending from the Third Dimension to the Fourth. Its present state is that of an In Between Dimension. To complete the evolution, certain requirements must be met. The Ascension Empire will rely on its citizens more than it ever has before, Godspeed]

To someone else, maybe these words would have had a calming effect. But to Leonel, his chest tightened as he tried to suppress the desire to simmer with rage.

Leonel didn't know what was going on, but what he did know was that whatever 'metamorphosis' was happening didn't account for this oh so 'helpful' aid on his wrist. This meant that the Ascension Empire knew that this change was coming and did nothing to prepare for it.

No. That wasn't accurate. They had prepared. It was just that they felt the lives of the billions who fell from the skies weren't worthy of protecting. The Empire was capable of creating technology that worked in this 'In Between Dimension', yet they hadn't made it widespread.

Eventually, Leonel's anger turned to laughter, his grip tightening around his metal rod to the point his knuckles turned an unhealthy shade of white.

[Subject: Leonel Morales]

[Ability detected: Sensory Type]

[Ability grade: D]

[Warning, margin of error for subject Leonel Morales is outside reasonable bounds. Only 5% of DNA recognizable. Abnormality recorded. It is advised that subject not trust his life to this data]PANDA-NOVEL.COM

[Sub-Dimensional Zone detected: Mayan Tomb. Spanish invasion]

[Sub-Dimensional Zone grade: F]

[Clear requirements: Enter Chief Priest's Sacrificial Room. Save Chief Priest]

[Side Quest: Unable to detect. Scope of system too limited]

[Reward: Unable to detect. Scope of system too limited]

Leonel reined in his rage.

His initial instinct was to smash the watch on his wrist, however he knew this was foolish. His deductions told him that it wasn't normal for one who entered a Sub-Dimensional Zone to gain so much information without doing much of anything.

'If this is a process of a world evolving from the Third to Fourth Dimension, I have a hard time believing that this is the first time such a thing has ever happened. Something about this is too systematic, too planned. It doesn't have the erratic nature one would expect from organic evolution.'

Just how many instances of trial, error and failure were there in the evolution of a species? Too many to count. But something like being teleported into a new sub-dimension and having quests to clear sounded too phony. Leonel would die before believing this wasn't created by someone. And, he also had a feeling that said someone wouldn't expect its new batch of evolutionaries to have technology capable of doing such a thing.

So, Leonel concluded three things.

First, the things that appeared in his mind from his wrist watch were just guesses. They likely wouldn't be 100% accurate. But there was a good chance they would be mostly correct.

Second, if his watch was already struggling with what it deemed an 'F' grade Sub-Dimensional Zone, then it likely wouldn't be useful for very long. Maybe by the time it got to the 'D' grade, it would be completely unable to tell Leonel much of anything.

And third, since his watch was so limited, the likelihood of these changes being caused by the Ascension Empire were incredibly low. But... That didn't stop Leonel from keeping in mind the possibility that the Empire he had grown up in had saved the best 'systems' for those they deemed the most worthy. In such a case...

Leonel took a deep breath. PANDA NOVEL

'Good, then I'll let you stay for now. Once you stop being useful, I won't hesitate to destroy you.

Monitoring my movements and giving me nothing in return? I'm not so cheap.'

In the past, destroying this watch was as difficult as ascending to the top of the world. However, Leonel had a feeling that with these changes... The Ascension Empire's control was just that much weaker. Maybe they themselves knew this as well, or why else would they allow so many to die...?

Maybe they wanted a more manageable population...

The sound of footsteps suddenly shook Leonel out of his thoughts. What was he doing? He was in the middle of a hostile environment with his life on the line. It was then Leonel remembered something even more horrid.

The Spanish had guns!

'Dammit!'

Without hesitation, Leonel sprinted forward, his mind oddly clear. Every time he passed by a torch, he unceremoniously put out its fire.

'First important point, temples are always built with many false turns and dead end pathways. Second important point, guns from this time period can only fire once as long as I don't give them time to reload. Third important point, my ability is a sensory type, I'll do better in the dark than they can.'

As though greeting Leonel's thoughts with open arms, the echoing footsteps and the sounds of armor clanging bounced off the walls and into Leonel's ears.

It was a magical feeling. Leonel could almost draw a perfect map of the trajectory the sounds followed, etching a path from his position to that of the Spanish with a line of three turns. It was as though he had gained a sonar ability, but it was much more complex than this because the sound wasn't coming from him at all.

Compared to the heavy armor the Spanish wore, Leonel's sneakers were almost completely silent.

'They just split apart, good. One group is headed toward me, there are three of them.'

Leonel's heart beat wildly. He hadn't felt this way since the very first time he stepped onto a football field. The way his sweaty hands slid across his silver rod, the butterflies that flew through his stomach, how his heart seemed to want to burst from his ribcage...

Leonel slammed his back against a wall at the edge of a corner, holding his rod tightly to his body with both hands.

The path he was on was the horizontal line of a 'T', while the Spaniards were walking toward him along the vertical line. He had managed to put out all the torches through the horizontal path, but had only made it halfway through the vertical portion before he was forced to run and hide

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Luckily, he was correct about his sensory abilities. Making his way through the dark wasn't an issue at all.

Words Leonel couldn't understand entered his ears, causing him to inwardly curse. He knew how to speak three languages. English, French and Latin. He had a choice to learn Spanish, but because Aina chose Latin, he hadn't. Plus, he thought French was the language of love, so he had to learn it, right?

Who knew his hormones would come back to bite him like this?

Throwing these thoughts to the back of his mind, Leonel focused with all his might, steadying his breathing.

He heard the sound of metal scraping on metal, but it was much different from the sounds of armor he had heard before. Following this, the distinct sound of a sword being unsheathed followed.

'That first sound should have been one of them pulling out a torch from the wall...'

Leonel's jaw clenched. A faint part of him had hoped they'd be too stupid to think of this solution. But he knew that was asking for too much. Still, this put him in a better position. It wasn't possible to aim a musket if you only had one hand, let alone reload it. That was one less gunmen he had to worry about.

'Come on... Come on... Turn right... Turn right...'

And of course they turned left.

However, Leonel was ready. As expected, the one holding the torch was in the lead. Without hesitation, Leonel swung down his rod fiercely, aiming for the hand that held the torch.

A swarm of words Leonel didn't understand entered his ears, but he didn't need to be intelligent to know the torch wielding Spaniard was alerting the other two.

In order to properly wield their guns, the Spanish wore a armor that combined aesthetics of the medieval era and leather guards. Of course, these leather guards were on their hands and wrists. With Leonel's rod weighing just a bit over 30 pounds, did the soldier's wrist even stand a chance?

'The barbarians are scuttling around like rats! AGH!'

The torch fell to the ground. Leonel kicked it away as far as he could without hesitation, collapsing the T shaped pathways into darkness once more.

Though Leonel's actions were smooth and without pause, waves were inwardly flooding his heart. He was certain of it, he was several times stronger than he had been in the past. But, his ability wasn't related to the strength of his body, so what was going on?

Leonel didn't have more time to think. The sound of sharply whistling wind rang out in his senses like a blaring horn.

Without hesitation, he dove backward. The feeling of a blade just barely tearing his compression shirt and into his skin played in his head in slow motion.

Sparks flew as the sword hit against hard limestone.

Another cry of pain sounded. They were normal humans, after all. If a mortal man swung a weapon full force at a stonewall, what do you think would happen?

The sword clanged, dropping to the floor. It wouldn't be a surprise if the Spaniard who had attacked broke his wrist just like his companion. But what choice had he had? With them descending into darkness, his only chance was to swing where he had seen Leonel last.

'Two injured, one in full health. Can't let them retreat to the light.'

With a roar, Leonel didn't retreat at all. Raising his rod far above his head, he swung down as hard as he could, bashing it against the head of the Spaniard who had held the torch originally.

Every muscle of Leonel's body flexed to its utmost limit. He squeezed so hard that the line of blood that ran across his chest spurt out like a waterfall.

The sickening feeling of the metal helm bending under his rod made Leonel shudder. For a moment, he froze completely, his hands trembling.

He hadn't thought about it before. But... Were these people real?

Leonel wanted to retch, but he simply didn't have the luxury. As one Spaniard crumpled to the ground, the shifting sound of leather sliding across metal caught Leonel's attention.

'That's the sound of a musket's strap being pulled across chest armor!'

Leonel's mind had completely memorized the appearance of the Spaniard's in the split second the torch had lit them up. He remember instantly that they had all had their rifles strapped to their backs.

It was the only thing he could associate this sound with.

'I can't sweep my rod from left to right, I'll end up hitting the wall first...'

Leonel immediately dropped to the ground.

He choked up his grip on his silver rod, sweeping it upward through a pair of legs and turning it like a corkscrew. In a moment, the rod had swept across the back of one knee and the front of another.

As the Spaniard that broke their wrist against the wall tumbled forward and to the ground, the last Spaniard turned to the sound of the noise, blasting their single round.

Unfortunately for him, both his partner and Leonel were on the ground, causing him to miss completely. However, the instant flash of light had allowed him to lock onto Leonel one more time.

His leg swung forward, hitting the kneeling Leonel across the chin.

Leonel's mind spun. It didn't need to be said. The feeling of a metal covered shoe kicking you anywhere wasn't very nice, but this was especially so for the face.

The sound of a sword being unsheathed snapped Leonel out of his stupor. Maybe it was due to the fear of death being too great, but Leonel felt it was something else. When he was transported here, hadn't he recovered from the dizziness incredibly quickly as well?

PANDA-NOVEL Leonel's mind worked quickly. His rod was still trapped between the legs of the fallen Spaniard, he didn't have time to pull it out. Plus, pulling it out would bring him closer to the rampaging Spaniard.

Using the momentum of the kick, he allowed himself to fall backward, landing near the sword of the Spaniard who had broken his wrist against the wall. The vivid image of it clanging against the ground had already been mapped in Leonel's mind

Leonel accidentally grabbed the blade, but he could only suck it up.

Flipping it in his hand to the handle, he ran it across the neck of the of the Spaniard he had tripped with his rod. The latter was confused about how he died even as he breathed his last.

In that moment, the last Spaniard was swinging wildly. He knew that Leonel had to be in front of him.

If he kept going, he was sure that he'd hit him.

However, his swinging arm suddenly stopped.

Completely shocked, he looked down in the dark, visualizing the sword he knew must have just gone through his heart. Till the end, he had no idea how Leonel had done it through his wild swings. How could he know that every time he swung, he was giving Leonel more and more information about his position...?

Leonel collapsed to the ground, looking up at the darkness of the ceiling above him.

He slammed the back of his head repeatedly against the sturdy stone walls as though trying to forget what he had just done.

His hands fiercely trembled. Even in the dark, he could feel the sticky liquid substance coating his palms. But, there was nothing he could use to wash it off.