

Dimensional Descent

Chapter 2321: Goggles

Leonel thought about it for a long time, longer than he wanted to admit. Considering his speed of thought, he knew the right answer immediately, but there was a sort of thirst for power that was pulling him in the opposite direction of the smart choice.

He knew well that it didn't make sense for him to take this risk right now. If his Ability Index changed too much out of his expectations, he would be screwed. He had relied heavily on his Ability Index to get to this point, he had spent years constructing abilities around it, even the strength of his Spear Force, one of his greatest offensive cards right now, was built with his Ability Index as its foundation.

If not for Dream Class, how would he have mastered his grandfather's way of the spear so quickly? And if he no longer had Dream Class, would his insights hold well? He actually felt that he would be fine even without Dream Class because his comprehension had already solidified, but what about into the future? Would he make his path of the spear easier or harder?

There was another reason that Leonel was so hesitant as well. Thinking back to his battle with Myghell, the latter had used words to breathe strength into his swords. In fact, his grandfather's methods did something similar with poetry, pulling strength from imagery drawn by word of mouth.

This was obviously nowhere near what Alexandre's abilities could do, especially when they were scaled down to the Fifth Dimension. However, what it did say was that an Ability Index wasn't the only way to access this power.

There was some overlap between Ability Indexes and other power systems, that Leonel was certain of. If there wasn't, then how could an existence like King who could be considered to be near the bottom rung of greater Existence, be capable of converting Abilities Indexes into Force Arts and gifting them to people?

There was a wider tapestry out there that he was just barely missing out on, and the thought made it easier for him to set aside the idea of fusing with a relatively unknown ability now and rolling the dice.

Leonel managed to settle his impulses and looked toward Goggles. Almost immediately, the latter shifted into a position that displayed his absolute attention and Leonel couldn't help but chuckle. Even when this brat was nervous, his antics were still just as amusing.

'When'd I start thinking like such an old man?' Leonel rubbed his nose.

Goggles was young, about 19 or so years old if memory served. When Leonel first met him, they were about the same age. But now that they were meeting in these circumstances, it felt like a lifetime had passed. Leonel had matured... well, he had at least aged, and it made him look at Goggles like more of a little brother than anything else.

Leonel chuckled to himself again, wondering if Goggles' infatuation with Rollan's wife was still the same now that so much had changed.

'Is this guy cracked in the head?' Goggles thought, watching Leonel laugh to himself for no reason. He inched away, wondering if the man was thinking about all the evil things he'd do to him.

"Li-listen, boss," Goggles stuttered, "I love the attention, but I'm a strictly woman loving man. If you must have me... at least be gentle, okay?"

Leonel's lip twitched. Was that the kind of aura he radiated?

Well, to Goggles, who had a somewhat gruff appearance despite his lankiness, and whose idea of fashion was the pain of goggles stuck to his forehead, the shimmering silvery suit that Leonel was wearing did look like only something a man too obsessed with her personal appearance would wear.

"I've heard that you have a powerful ability?" Leonel asked instead.

"Ah? Who'd you hear that from? Who's spying on me?!"

Leonel smiled, getting a bout of dejavu. When he originally met Goggles, their first interaction was like this as well. The difference was that back then he had been trying to catch a thief who seemed capable of evading him with ease that was far too great.

He only managed to catch Goggles after several months of effort and then recruited him to his cause. Or, rather... Rollan's wife had. Leonel could never seem to convince this brat to do anything or take anything seriously.

It made sense, though. Goggles was like an orphaned child with too much street smarts for his own good, except he also had an Ability Index that made him fit that character times a thousand.

He always looked out for himself and was always looking for a way out, Leonel almost felt it was a shame that Rollan's wife had fallen for him instead of Goggles, but he wasn't going to do anything to change that.

There were other ways to get Goggles on board. Plus, the kid had his heart in the right place, and that was all that really mattered to Leonel.

"Isn't it obvious?" Leonel asked, with a raised brow. "Your exploits are well documented, including a case of sneaking through a particular open window to take a looking at some hanging-"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!" Goggles looked around, his heart beating out of his chest.

At the moment, they were all still within the Silver Tablet, and there were two nations worth of people in here who didn't dare to make a peep. He couldn't allow secrets he wanted to take to the grave to be doled out like this.

Leonel smiled. "Oh, you want to cooperate?"

"Yes, yes! Whatever you say!"

"Call me Leonel in private, Patriarch Morales in public."

"Yes, Patriarch Morales!"

Leonel's smile grew.

Goggles had a unique Ability Index, one that Leonel hadn't seen documented anywhere else, much like Anna's own. So, he chose to call it the Oracle Simulation Ability Index.

With enough background information and context, Goggles could naturally predict a series of events with absolute accuracy and avoid any unwanted outcomes.

If there was any trump card he would need to save his father, wouldn't it be Goggles?

Chapter 2322: Mass Murderer

Leonel believed that there was still more he didn't understand about Goggles' abilities, and maybe even things that Goggles himself didn't understand. That was because the parameters of background information and context that Goggles needed were quite... broad.

When Goggles had been working for him, it wasn't just information that helped him out, but rather an intimate relationship with the events in question. For example, after Goggles bound himself to the army that Leonel led, he had been able to predict certain things about the outcome of various battles. However, Leonel had realized the more specified Goggles' target, the more accurate and clear his predictions became.

So, Leonel scaled down Goggles' "binding" from the army to just a small squadron that had carried the elites of his army, including himself, Rollan, Gertrude and others. After doing that, Goggles' prediction ability skyrocketed, and he began to make them more frequently and with more clarity.

As such, there were two necessities that bound Goggles: information and/or relationship ties or bonds. But this didn't exactly seem to just be a simulation. It seemed to allude to that mysterious Force El'Rion spoke about, the very same mysterious energy that was the reason why El'Rion didn't form more Innate Nodes than he needed, and also why stealing Innate Nodes wasn't something the strongest did.

There seemed to be faint ties between the two, and it fascinated Leonel. It also meant that Goggles' ability delved into a Force much deeper than what it seemed to on the surface.

When Leonel first learned of the ability, he had likened it to his own attempts at simulation. But he was very much wrong about that; Goggles was on an entirely different level. Leonel believed that if Goggles had read through the entire library of the Void Palace, he might be capable of doing something similar to Aina in that he could seek out the perfect path for himself.

Even then, the Void Library was limited in its information compared to wider Existence. If he fed Goggles this kind of information, just what kind of monster would he become? After all, if stronger relationships and a more focused lens made Goggles' oracle-like abilities sharper and more accurate... What better target was there than Goggles himself?

Leonel's gaze became a bit more gentle as he swept a gaze through everyone present.

"You all may not know me, and rightfully don't trust me very much. You've spent years beneath a tyrant, and those with power aren't exactly the ones you would be willing to put your own lives in the hand of. So, I will give you all power of your own.

"Grasp the chance I give you, and the King Alexandre, the supposed Apex that barred your path for so long, will be nothing more than a stepping stone in your path.

"You don't need to trust my words now, nor do you need to show me some undying loyalty. You won't believe it, and neither would I. Instead, I'll allow you the time to see for yourself."

The approach that Leonel took with this batch of people was much different than he did to those of the Morales, or the Constellation families, and definitely far different from the treatment he had given the Spirituals Religion and the Suiards.

He felt like he owed these people, and for the first time in a long time, he felt like Leonel. Not the Leonel he truly was, but the Leonel he had idealized himself as, the warm-

hearted, caring person he tried to pretend to be... and seeing the visible relaxation of those here, he felt an unexpected warmth.

In the midst of that crowd, though, there was a blazing fire as well, and none were more fiery than Goggles himself. The passion in his eyes would practically rival that of stars, but it wasn't toward Leonel. It was instead toward what Leonel could provide.

When Leonel returned, he half expected to find the Morales territory on fire. But it seemed that the other powers were both more cautious and cowardly than he had thought them to be.

If they were smart, they would capitalize on the righteous indignation to bolster their morale. Well, it wouldn't work, but it would still give them a better chance. Of course... unless that mysterious figure was planning something else.

Leonel gave the odds of that pretty high. Though, without more information, he wasn't too sure of the motive of this person, or if they were even human to begin with.

What he was most concerned with wasn't the intelligence of this person; he didn't feel that anyone could deal with him on this front. The main issue was that their range in the Dream Plane seemed unlimited.

Even if Leonel was more intelligent than this person, if they could gather more information than him, and affect change on a larger scale, he would still be at a disadvantage.

But that was precisely why he had chosen to have this final battle on his own home turf. By then, any preparation there was didn't matter. Leonel suddenly smiled before it even happened.

"Seventh Nova!"

The voice was booming.

'Oh my, not even calling me Littlest Nova anymore. That's not very endearing.'

Leonel walked forward as though he hadn't heard a thing. His current location wasn't the Morales Palace, but rather his personal abode. The residence of the Patriarch was one of the many moons that surrounded the Capital Planet of the Morales, and he actually had the entire small moon to himself, not that he used most of it.

This voice was definitely Ancestor Issa's though he could already sense the auras of many others. They had actually invited themselves into his home all on their own; it seemed the Ancestors were still the Ancestors.

However, he could also sense the old Overlord... and there were actually three others that gave off the same overwhelming pressure.

How fascinating. Even the Spirituals Religion and the Suiards only had two Overlords a piece. Though, Maxx was on another level even compared to other Overlords. But the Morales actually had four.

Leonel strolled into his home, finding that the elders of his family had already made themselves comfortable.

Splintered wood flew in all directions as his dining room table was blown to bits, shattering even further even as they flew through the air.

"How dare you put such a stain on the prestige of the Morales?"

"Ah, so that's what this is about."

Leonel nodded. Seemed they were mad he murdered the Void Palace down to their last man.

Chapter 2323: Terrible Grandmother

Leonel walked in with a smile. "What a pleasure. I always love seeing people invite themselves into my home, it's one of the finer things in life."

Issa felt her momentum stiffen, as did her face. It was indeed true that it was unbecoming of existences like them to ignore the rules of etiquette so blatantly, but usually when they did so, no one would dare to say much of anything about it. Leonel, though, clearly didn't have this sort of filter.

Overlord Morales, or rather the very man who had once held the Morales World Spirit shook his head and sighed. In truth, he was the one who had cosigned to Leonel's actions, but he didn't expect things to go this far. It was hard to defend. Even in war, there were bottom-lines that you didn't cross, that you couldn't cross.

On the one hand, Leonel had made the Suiards the slaves of the Morales, along with the Spirituals Religion. On the other, he had massacred the future of the Human Domain. Although the strongest of the elites in the youth no longer attended the Void Palace, just how close had they all been to being there? Leonel's actions were simply unacceptable. Was he trying to make them an enemy of the entire world?

"Is that all you have to say for yourself?" Issa growled. Her temper was just as fiery as any other Morales, but it was especially so now. "You use demons as an excuse to kill

Third Nova, your own blood brother! But now you use demons yourself? Even if you didn't use demons, just your actions alone prove what's in your heart. How dare you?!"

"Oh, so it's the moral grandstanding. If that's what it's about, I have all of their Ethereal Glabellas stored, I can revive them whenever I want. Is it really the same when I have the ability to bring them all back? At worst, they'll just be a little traumatized.

"As for the demons, so what? I used that as an excuse to get you all off my back. I think you know best the real reason why I've kept Third Nova hidden, and now I'm too bored to keep it a secret, would you like to investigate the matter?"

Issa froze. This kind of attitude... The problem wasn't what Leonel was saying, but rather that he was the one saying it. It showed disregard, it showed a sincere lack of respect for them, and most importantly, it showed that even if they turned on him right this moment, he would care because he could simply subdue them all.

At that moment, it was another Overlord who spoke. She was significantly younger than the old man, but this was something that Leonel already expected. The World Spirit could only be used to extend the life of one Overlord at a time, and that had to mean that if the others were sitting here just fine, their age was clearly much less of a factor.

Even so, she was still an older woman that looked to be in her fifties. She had buzzcut hair that made her look somewhat like a monk, and this was only exemplified by the thick prayer beads that hung from her neck and the even thicker rope around her waist.

Leonel smiled toward her even before she finished pronouncing her first words, and it made her shudder. Even so, she was an elite and regained her composure immediately.

"None of us here are your enemies, Seventh Nova."

"When did I say that you were?" Leonel asked. "As I see it, our relationship could go one of two ways. I could treat you all like the grandmas and grandpas I want you to be, or I can treat you like the elders of a power I need to wrest control from. Which path we take will be up to you."

The old woman looked at Leonel deeply. "Your words exude a confidence that doesn't match your age."

"I'm sure you've met my father before; I guess it just runs in the family," Leonel replied.

"Indeed. But neither you nor your father understood our sacrifices. Neither did your grandfather before him. Are you insistent on following their path as well?"

"I won't be following my father's path, but only because I would like to help the Morales family to rise up with me. If, though, I have to fight and pull for every inch from you all, I would prefer to not.

"I'm sure you understand that the only tie I have to the Morales family is my father, and I guess my uncle. Other ties, I don't care much about, and it's becoming very tiresome to have to coddle your feelings especially after I've already accomplished so much.

"I've said it once before and I'll say it again. I don't like to explain myself, and I certainly don't like to repeatedly explain myself, so it could be said that you guys are getting very special treatment.

"I am infallible within Morales territory. If they attack this place, they die. It's really that simple.

"The Constellation families have fallen. The Suiard family has fallen. The Spiritual Religion has fallen. The Void Palace has fallen. Shield Cross Stars has been crippled. Is this still not enough?"

Silence fell.

"Even so, I think it's good that you all are here because it saves me the effort of having to go out and look for you all. In the past, I was a bit cautious with exactly how to proceed given that there's clearly a hidden faction within my Morales family, but now I'm much more confident.

"How about I give you all a chance to step out on your own?"

The old man seemed to have aged considerably when Leonel said these words. Was he still too young? Had he been too confident in him?

"Ah, how interesting." Leonel's eyes suddenly lit up. "So, you, you, you..."

Leonel pointed out over a dozen individuals instantly, and every time he did, especially from the third one on, the temperature in the room seemed to drop.

"So, tell me. What did my terrible grandmother promise you all?"

Chapter 2324: Manipulation

Leonel's smile didn't fade even as he said this. The truth was that the difference between now and the matters of the past was his breakthrough in Dream Force. With the Dream Plane, his senses had sharpened considerably. Maybe on a Complete World, experts at this level would be more adept at hiding their emotions even in the Dream Plane, but on this world, they were entirely incapable.

It made sense, in a twisted sort of way. Leonel had already made a guess that the Demoness was responsible for the hidden faction of the Morales. He didn't know why, if

there was some larger plan, or if she just found it interesting. But what he did know was that wherever she was, it was easier to manipulate the happenings in this place if everyone was as ignorant of the Dream Plane as possible.

They were practically an open book. He couldn't read their minds, but with his intelligence, sifting through their emotions and figuring out exactly what they meant was as easy as breathing. They simply couldn't hide anything from him.

He had known that he would be able to expose them so easily, so why should he hide the true extent of his knowledge? Seeing them react like this, he almost felt a childish sort of satisfaction.

His rage toward that woman had been buried deep, but it hadn't vanished. Knowing that there were existences here that were her pawns really made him want to do something he knew he would regret.

No matter what Leonel did, the truth was that he didn't want to be surrounded by enemies. It was tiresome to have to plot and scheme everything. He missed having Aina by his side... she was a partner he had never felt the need to question, a woman he trusted without hesitation.

At the very least, he still had his mother. She wasn't here now, but Leonel knew that she was likely not far away. If he really needed her, she would be here. It was just that her presence wasn't necessary, because as he had said... he was undefeatable in Morales territory.

"Nobody wants to say anything?" Leonel shook his head, pulling up a seat between his legs and leaning his chin on its backrest.

The old Overlord looked toward Leonel deeply. Has he underestimated this boy again? Judging by the reaction, it seemed that he hadn't just picked out these people randomly, but how had he done it?

Suddenly, the Overlord sensed something familiar and his pupils constricted. That ability... the last time he had seen it used was Velasco. But the difference was that Velasco didn't care enough to do anything about it. Velasco didn't like his mother, but for whatever reason he didn't carry actual hatred for her. Others might not understand this, but Leonel definitely did.

Back when Alienor was nothing more than a vague figure in Leonel's mind, he hadn't thought about her, he hadn't pined for her, he hadn't even cared to meet her. Part of this was because of his own personality, but there was another reason that he never really put into words.

His father was his hero, the strongest man he knew and a mythical figure in his mind. The idea of a woman leaving him wasn't something he even wanted to confront, so he simply didn't.

In all likelihood, Velasco was the same. He was willing to give up so much just to take down the man responsible for his father's death. Even if he never said it in so many words, it was clear that Leonel's grandfather's place in his father's heart was the same as his own father in his own.

There might be other reasons, but this was the explanation that Leonel vaguely accepted. It probably wasn't something that most would immediately jump to.

"... Your grandmother?" The old woman spoke slowly.

"Oh!" Leonel's brows shot up. "Now this is much more interesting; you actually don't know."

The old woman went by Overlord Guiliana. She was known for her poise and calm, but this situation was making it difficult even on her.

"I've been wondering for a long time how all this worked, what was your goal, what purpose this all had, so I'll get a few guesses out of the way. The least you guys can do is listen to my thoughts, right? After all, you already invited yourselves into my home."

Leonel continued without waiting for their response.

"A long while ago, I ran into two interesting families. Well, three, technically, though two are basically attached at the hip. They call themselves the Radix, the Midas, and the Florer families. Each one of them had a Lineage Factor that was fascinating to me.

"One of them could breathe life into ores, making them react more like organic matter than inorganic.

"One of them could eat fire much like we can eat metals, incorporating them into their strength and gaining strength from them.

"And the final one had an extraordinary amount of vitality that could be applied in all sorts of unique ways."

Leonel's palms suddenly flipped over.

A chalice, a ball, and a flickering, undying flame. They radiated much weaker auras now than they had in the past, a consequence of passing the Lineages to so many. But even so, within the walls of the Morales territory, they seemed to explode with life once more, gaining a second and even third wind. Of course, this was because Leonel had helped them along with the Morales World Spirit.

All of the Ancestors present felt themselves stir, particularly those that Leonel had pointed out.

"These Lineage Factors didn't seem to have much to do with our own, but I kept feeling this nagging sensation, a sensation that made me feel as though they were linked, that they might even be one in the same."

Leonel shook his head, putting the items away.

"Now, I know that these weren't really my own thoughts. At the very least, I didn't experience them so boldly, it was at best a kernel of suspicion I had.

"No, the real reason I was so certain was because someone had manipulated me into believing it was so."

Chapter 2325: United

Leonel scanned the room calmly. "I thought long and hard about why it was that an existence like the Demoness would care so much about this matter, but then someone told me a little story, a story about Godlike beings finding the Human Race to be extremely convenient test experiments for their paths.

"Then it all clicked for me. The Morales were convenient lab rats, and my grandfather was probably a man who broke through certain barriers that the Demoness was looking for. So, she chose to sire a child, a child who ended up being quite a success in my father, and she even managed to reproduce the success with my uncle.

"But it was all so very curious. My uncle was clearly far less powerful than my father, so why was that? Why would she purposely seal away one of her sons and only allow one of them to thrive?

"I didn't know the answer to this one either, at least not initially. But then..." Leonel laughed, letting his words hang for a bit. "I bet you're seeing a little bit of a pattern here, aren't you? I don't know something, and then I suddenly conveniently do. It's enough to drive you crazy. Is it really because you're so smart, so intelligent? Or is it because I'm being manipulated again?"

Seeing the glare he was getting, Leonel's smile deepened, and he didn't seem to mind it. The charisma that exuded from him was palpable, but all these Ancestors could feel was that uncomfortable uncertainty that they too were being manipulated.

"But then," Leonel continued, "I learned of the Dream Plane. It is worse than a two-way street, it's a street of infinite lanes and paths, ones that can be used by a countless number of people. I wondered if the Demoness was making so many moves in this

small world, just how many of them could be hidden? If she could even sense her name being spoken, what could bad actors sense should they wish to do so?

"So, she took precautions. She only allowed one of her sons to thrive. She didn't take action when her sperm donor died. And she even split the Lineage Factor she was working on into several pieces until the time was ripe.

"She buried much of her influence into the psyche of the Morales, keeping many of you in the dark, splitting you into factions, stirring the confusion to the point that even you all thought you were on different sides.

"And now, she expects me to pick up the pieces. After all, I was the one that fused her precious Lineage Factor into one, and I'm also the one that needs to succeed in the trial the Cataclysm Zone has planned for us so I can deliver myself to her in one piece.

"She can't have any scratches getting on me, now could she? I'm her precious lab rat-I mean, grandson. She also can't let me risk my safety anymore than I already have, so how could she let me use my bloodline freely? That would make it possible for her enemies to sense me and that would ruin my chances of staying alive until I fell into her clutches."

Leonel's smile was still there, but it was decidedly dark and cold. The chill in the room now had far less to do with the Ancestors, and those that had yet to meet Leonel before only now realized just the level of horror they were facing.

The entirety of the Morales Sector seemed to bear down on them. It was the kind of heart-rending pressure that made them all want to fall to their knees.

Leonel waved a hand, and at that moment, a startled Third Nova appeared, causing Issa's expression to change several times. First came astonished relief, then confusion, then a hint of embarrassment, then rage, before it all came crashing down into a helpless sigh.

He really played them all.

"Regardless of what you all think of me, I am not a bloodthirsty person, especially not toward my family. You say that I turned the Human Domain against you all, but I'll say it again. The Human Domain is already against you all. There has been no room for negotiation ever since my father died. He was far more of a deterrent than any of you all know.

"I would like our family to be a united front. But if you can't trust me to do what I need to do, even after all I've already accomplished, then say so now. Because if I learn of it later-and trust me, I will learn of it-my reaction will be as cruel and ruthless as what all the others have experienced.

"If you want to be a separate faction then, then I would allow you to be a separate faction, and I would also treat you as such."

Third Nova stood blankly, not quite knowing what to say or so. He didn't understand what was going on, but judging by the situation, Leonel had succeeded in becoming Patriarch. But Leonel's standing as Patriarch seemed to be far beyond anything he had ever seen before.

Just why were so many Ancestors gathered here, just what...

He felt his heart tremble.

"You... where...?" Leonel gave Third Nova a glance, and the latter froze in place. He regretted that he had spoken immediately. He had wanted to ask about his demon companion, but... just what was this presence?

Leonel's gaze suddenly flickered as he looked up.

"It seems that our time has come to an end. By this time tomorrow, the Human Domain will be united as one. I hope that in that time, the Morales will also be as united, or else I'll have to shed the same blood here as I have outside."

Leonel stood, a halo of light descending toward him as he vanished, leaving a stunned Third Nova and a group of elders without the words to speak.

Chapter 2326: Wrong Path

When Leonel walked out of his residence, a shadow of swirling dark energies appeared over his shoulder. Little Blackstar's body was almost a meter long by this point, but he still insisted on acting like he was still an infant. Even so, his antics brought a smile to Leonel's face as he patted the little guy on the head.

"How about it? Did it help you out?"

"Yip!"

Leonel smiled. Little Blackstar still couldn't and probably would never be able to speak human language, but that didn't mean that the little guy hadn't matured. Leonel could sense his thoughts becoming more complex and what he wanted to express was likewise much more complex.

The little guy was bragging again, but Leonel knew the truth. Little Blackstar hadn't made much progress at all. Though, he had already expected this.

Little Blackstar had ignored the corpse of the Shadow Tail and had instead focused on the Void Beast carcass against Leonel's recommendations. The little guy wanted to take a large leap immediately rather than taking one step at a time as was only natural.

It seemed that Aina wasn't the only one consumed by wanting to keep up with Leonel. In the past, if one were comparing talents alone, Little Blackstar had thought that he was even beyond Leonel. After all, those days where they had first met, Little Blackstar had actually almost killed Leonel several times.

Of course, the little one hadn't really understood what he was doing back then, but the truth was still the same. If one had to power scale Leonel and Blackstar back then, the latter would have been far superior.

Since then, the reverse had become true.

What was most amusing about it all was that the way their relationship was formed, Leonel was technically the beast to Blackstar's master. They hadn't formed it normally, and as a result, Blackstar could sense Leonel's state far clearer than the latter could do the reverse.

Blackstar watched as Leonel got further and further away every day, and as his thoughts grew more complex, that sort of dissatisfaction he would feel and then lash out toward Little Tolly with had become a strong drive to be better instead. It only made it worse that Tolliver had returned with such a great boost to his power as well.

Why should he have to take one step at a time when his rival had taken such a large leap immediately?

Leonel smiled somewhat bitterly.

In the beginning, it was true that Blackstar could feel his state and hear his thoughts far clearer than he could do the reverse. Back then he was so pathetic that he couldn't even stop this troublemaker from turning him into his beast companion.

But how could it still be the same now? Blackstar's mind might as well have been an open book to him.

"Just think about it, Blackstar. You have the bloodline of a Void Beast within you, and I have a feeling that I was far too hasty back then, forcing you to swallow that kind of strength. You could have very easily died.

"I'm happy that you did, but I have a feeling that I stalled your progress as a result. Absorbing too much too early, instead of supplementing you, just buried what potential you had. That's my fault as your companion, but don't let my mistake be what keeps you anchored for so long.

"I want you to follow me for a lifetime, so do as I say and not as I do, okay?"

Little Blackstar's large black eyes, reflecting like two beautiful marbles, blinked. His whiskers drooped a bit and his large body seemed to sink into Leonel's shoulder.

"Yip..."

Leonel smiled bitterly.

From what he had learned in the Void Library, beasts progressed easier than humans, but time worked differently for them as well. Little Blackstar was an infant when Leonel met him, and even after experiencing a 20-plus year time dilation, he was still an infant. Little Blackstar might have to turn a century old before he could transition into adolescence.

Leonel realized that he had been too hands off with the little guy.

If he had never done anything to alter Little Blackstar's path, he could continue to be. The problem was that he had pumped Blackstar full of a bloodline that wasn't his own, causing the usual instincts Blackstar would have had toward his path forward, something innately born to him as a beast, to dull considerably.

It was all Leonel's fault. He had messed with things he shouldn't have when he was far too ignorant to do so, and now Blackstar was suffering the consequences.

Somewhere within Blackstar, there was talent and potential strong enough to consume Void Beast blood without dying. Blackstar needed to take his time building up through the ranks, starting with the Shadow Tail, so that he could understand exactly what the Void Beast Bloodline represented.

The God Beasts of Destruction had built a perfect step by step plan on how to become one of them. The Dark Northern Star Lineage Factor was that blueprint, and Blackstar had it before him.

Once Blackstar perfectly understood what was Void Beast within him, and what was his own talent, then he could begin to properly separate them and maximize the use of both.

Little Blackstar was special, he knew that. If you could just inject Void Beast blood into a person and gain their abilities, then why was it that they had to experiment with humans? Why not just find a whole bunch of beasts and pump them full of their bloodlines?

And yet, he had done exactly that with Little Blackstar.

Suddenly, Leonel's eyes lit up. Indeed, Little Blackstar was just an infant, or maybe a toddler by this point. Why was he trying to talk to him like an adult? So, he stopped holding back, telling the little guy of something he had thought of much earlier.

As Leonel spoke, he strolled toward the battlefield as though Morales territory wasn't under threat of imminent collapse.

Chapter 2327: Today.

"... You got it? It'll make you really cool, I promise."

Little Blackstar's eyes lit up. When he thought about it, what Leonel said made sense. He had always wanted to change shape like Little Tolly. That annoying bastard always got the good stuff. But if he did things like this, he really would have a chance at finally one-upping that guy.

He was so excited that he vanished in a swirl of darkness, then came back not even a half second later to lick Leonel's face on the left, vanished again to lick him from the right, before finally disappearing into the Segmented Cube.

Leonel smiled.

What he had told Little Blackstar was based on his speculation, but he felt that it was very close to the truth.

The strongest ability of Little Blackstar, one that he had from the very beginning, was his mimicry. While it was true that Leonel had triggered it with a bloodline he had traded from his uncle, that was a bloodline that was within Blackstar from the start. The Mimicry Bat had only helped Blackstar to trigger it, different from the Void Beast blood that threatened to alter Blackstar's path completely.

This was only further proven with the ability that Little Blackstar gained after entering the Seventh Dimension. Rather than using his ridiculous offensive power, or even using the Anarchic Force he had gained control of as a defensive barrier, Little Blackstar did something that left Leonel speechless.

During the Heir Wars, Little Blackstar had used his Force to form illusions of great beasts like the dragon Leonel had ridden into battle.

Of all the methods of using Anarchic Force, this was probably the absolute worst, and the Void Beast definitely didn't have an ability like this either. The Void Beast was a God Beast of Destruction, why would it have to turn into anything else? And could it even mimic other creatures in the first place, something that was clearly a branch of creation, if it was so obviously on the path of destruction?

It didn't make sense, but it was also because of that that Leonel was more assured in his assumption of what Little Blackstar's original path was.

The Shadow Tail was unironically perfect for Little Blackstar as a result. The amorphous, flexible blobs of darkness, that endless curtain of fog that could be anything, become anything...

What could be better for Little Blackstar?

Of course, Leonel couldn't just explain things so clearly. He had been treating Little Blackstar as an equal from the very beginning, and that hadn't changed. But that had skewed his perception.

Little Blackstar was still a child, and should be guided as such. So, instead of talking logic, he goaded the little guy a bit.

Tolliver and Blackstar had had a rivalry from the very beginning. Rather than using it as a negative and trying to suppress it, he chose to do the opposite. He bet the next time Blackstar came from his seclusion, the little guy would finally show some real improvement.

'Ah, we're here.'

Leonel looked up to find death and carnage strewn all around him. But as for how much of that was the Morales, well...

Zero.

Starships of all shapes and sizes lit up the skies not with their lasers, but rather their destruction.

Leonel knew what this was, it was just the first wave. Although he had seemed to just be on a light stroll, with the strength of the World Spirit, he had already traveled to the edge of Morales territory.

There weren't any powerful Seventh Dimensional families among their number. These were just the Sixth Dimensional families, riled up by the losses of their children and then goaded into action as the vanguard of this attack.

The truly powerful ones were still watching on, but they had likely never guessed that things would be like this.

This was just the edge of Morales territory, and yet they hadn't even managed to make much headway at all. As for why, that was all too obvious.

The suppression of the Morales territory was unlike anything the Human Domain had faced off against in the past. Sending talents of the Sixth Dimension here was akin to sending lambs to the slaughter.

Not only were they suppressed, but the boost to the Morales themselves was enormous.

Even at the worst, many of the Morales fought easily three Tiers above their strength, which was a watershed in any Dimension.

Some of the more talented Morales, who could communicate with their Constellation on a deeper level, could fight upward of an entire Dimension above.

To make matters worse, the Morales was only strengthening every day.

Usually, just taking over one territory would have a slow process. But combining the slow process of over a dozen territories, two of which were on the same level as the Morales, had large cumulative effects.

Since the first attack, the Morales World Spirit had strengthened by at least 10% already, and the longer this war dragged out, the stronger the effects would be. Though... Leonel had no intention of dragging things out.

He knew that they would realize that they didn't have much of a choice. After all, if they did nothing as the Morales bided their time and grew stronger, one day they would die anyway. They would come. Once they understood that using these few Sixth Dimensional families as cannon fodder would be useless, they would attack.

So... Leonel thought that he might as well help them out.

A gentle light of silvery gold illuminated his Emulation Spatial Force Innate Node. The light wafted from the back of his neck, growing fiercer and fiercer.

He stretched his hands out and countless clones appeared, each one raising two hands into the mock form of a bow without one in sight.

Even so, the Bow Force energies of the world began to accumulate even as the clones continued to appear.

Thousands, then millions, then billions, then hundreds of billions.

If one had a mind as sharp as Leonel, it would be possible to see that he had formed the exact number of clones he needed to match the changing experts of the Sixth Dimensional families and organizations...

And then he sentenced them all to death.

The skies were washed in a blinding golden curtain of arrows and the battlefield fell into silence.

"This battle... there's no need for any more Morales blood to be shed. I will fight it alone."

This battle for the Human Domain would end today.

Chapter 2328: He Too...

The deaths came in a single, world-ending tidal wave. In one moment, the battlefield was flooded with sounds of battle, and in the next, it was like a god had descended from above, snapping his fingers and ending it all in an instant.

"If you want to challenge the Morales, I would advise you to bring the best you have."

Gravity warped and flexed, several Tier 1 Starships appearing on the horizon. In fact, several wasn't enough to describe it, there was easily a fleet of hundreds. The number was more than Leonel thought possible.

Tier 2 Starships already took up a great amount of resources. The wealth required couldn't even be counted in terms of normal numbers, and rather had to be assessed with the revenue of capital cities instead. But even then, what was required to form Tier 1 Starships was orders of magnitude beyond.

According to Leonel's calculations, the Human Domain shouldn't only be capable of producing two dozen Tier 1 Starships. This number was almost ten times that.

Leonel's lip curled. The only explanation was that the Omann family hadn't just improved the design of Tier 2 Starships, they had made a huge stride in improving Tier 1 Starships as well.

This wasn't surprising to Leonel, it was within his expectations at odds about about 60%. Why would a family like the Omann family waste their best trump card on the Heir Wars unless they had a trump card that was even better? The only reason he hadn't assigned an even higher probability was because it was potentially true that the Omann's had found his death to be a worthy exchange. He was the link between the only two Eighth Dimensional worlds of the Human Domain, after all.

But even so, this was a bit outside of his expectations. This meant that the breakthroughs of the Omanns on the Crafting front were beyond what he had thought of them.

He still believed himself to be the best Crafter of this Incomplete World, but compared to the Omanns had had spent too little time at that level. Just months ago, he didn't have the capability of improving the Tier 2 Starships like Cynthia had, he had to rely on his enlightened self to do so. Improving Tier 1 Starships was even further beyond him.

Even so, he didn't change his plans. His clones vanished in a blink and he clasped his hands behind his back, standing before the strength and power of the whole Human Domain.

At that moment, he couldn't help but close his eyes and take a deep breath through his nose. The feelings within him were complex, not because he feared losing, not because he was worried about the outcome, but because of how far he had come, and yet how far he still felt that he had to go.

With his memory, he could remember being 17 years old as though it was just yesterday. So much had happened since he was thrust into that Mayan Zone. He had bled, he had lost, and most importantly, he had climbed.

For most of it, he was aimless, without purpose and without drive. He never really felt the need to find what his drive might be either. And yet, he never really felt the emptiness that should have come from that.

Humans weren't meant to be aimless. It didn't sit well with them, it led to a pit of darkness that even the people with the greatest opinions of themselves couldn't easily climb out with.

Now that he was finally free of those chains that had bound him for so long, he really wanted to think about it. What drove him? What did he want to get up every day and do? Now that he could truly know what freedom was...

He smiled, his eyes still closed.

Was Little Blackstar the only infant here?

If he took a step back, his current mental state had probably stagnated at 17 years old as that was the day Earth left the Third Dimension and the influence of his future self descended.

If he took another step back, even if he never increased his strength, he could easily live for hundreds of years. So how old could he even really be counted as right now?

He guessed that maybe he deserved to be a bit aimless right now.

No, he wasn't aimless, not in the same sense as before. Instead, he was looking, searching with an open mind and all the potential in the world at his fingertips.

He might as well aim high, right?

'You never wanted to be a quarterback anyway!'

Those words echoed in his mind. They had been said by James all those years ago.

Indeed, he had never wanted to be a quarterback. All his life, his next step had been chosen by others. Whether it was the Genetic Assessment of Earth, his future self, his terrible grandmother, even his father to some extent.

Every step had been chosen for him or forced.

Leonel angled his face upward. Even with his eyes closed, he felt that he could sense it, the looming presence of the Northern Star. It was everywhere, and yet located in just one place...

The end of all things.

'I think... I'd like to lay eyes on that, one day. Not because I think you'd be beautiful, though maybe you would be, in a sense. I just want to understand...'

What was a common thread linking every choice he had made? At the very least, what was the underlying philosophy?

When he had chosen to be a King, it was because he couldn't understand how to value a life. When he gave up on being a King during the Heir Wars, it was because his concept of the equivalency of every life had collapsed.

Ultimately, he never really cared about life itself, he wasn't cut out to be some holy saint or savior, he was too selfish.

What guided him forward was his will to know, his will to understand, his will to grasp the truths of the world.

Leonel's heart beat once and the echo roared across the Human Domain.

He too... was a Wise Star Order.

A stream of golden light radiated out from Leonel.

Chapter 2329: Wise Star Order

Leonel felt a level of strength coursing through his veins unlike anything before. This wasn't because he had suddenly gained a large influx of energy. If anything, it was the

exact opposite of that. The energy in his body was decidedly less, or rather... the energy that he could sense and feel was.

As though greedy and finally feeling that they were being put to proper use, Leonel's cells greedily absorbed Light Force and Star Force from all directions, and then in an odd turn of events, it likewise began to swallow large amounts of Dark Force on top of that.

Leonel heard the words Wise Star Order echo in his mind, and he was surprised. He had stated himself to be a Wise Star Order even before he understood the implications. It was as though the title had been buried deep within his soul and had only been waiting for a moment to burst through.

And the instant it did, his Lineage Factors, while remaining the same, somehow also grew leagues more powerful, jumping forward in efficiency by leaps and bounds.

He had always felt that his Fire Force and Dream Force affinities were beyond all of his other talents, the latter of which was quite a measure beyond even the former. But now, he felt like his Light Force and Star Force affinities were making movements of their own, rising up until the point they actually began to match his Fire Force affinity.

Things that he hadn't been able to quite understand in the past suddenly became as open as a book, and soon afterward, his Dark Force affinity caught up as well.

Large swaths of destructive aura exuded from Leonel as he made a breakthrough in his Scarlet Star Force with a mere thought. In that instant, it stepped a half foot into the Impetus State.

His Fire Force affinity had always been nigh impossible to match by most he came across, but ultimately, Scarlet Star Force was formed of three legs, not just one. There was Fire Force, Star Force, and Light Force.

And now, with the power of all three gently bobbing in his hands, the complex runes he hadn't been able to see through took shape in his mind as clearly as if he had drawn them himself.

At the same time, a memory within himself unlocked, and he recalled.

"Ah, yes... this was a feeling he had felt before, or rather... a feeling that his enlightened self had felt. It was no wonder he was able to become a Starry Tailed Fox back then so easily, it was no wonder he had been able to draw all of those runes on his Innate Node, it was no wonder..."

His enlightened self had already felt what it meant to be a Wise Star Order, what it meant to cross that final barrier and become the man the God Beasts of Creation had bestowed the right of bookkeeping to."

It was then that Leonel also came to understand something else.

"When he first began his journey, he thought that his insane Dream Force affinity came from his Ability Index. When he learned of his so-called grandmother, he believed that it came from her bloodline instead. But now, he understood the true root.

His Dream Force affinity, his greatest reliance and an affinity he couldn't properly scale even if he wanted to... an affinity that even the God Races would likely be unable to scale, wasn't a product of just one series of factors at all. Rather... it was a combination of everything.

His Ability Index. His Bloodlines. His title. And, likely the result of his future self reaching such an unprecedented level of control in the Dream Plane that he came to benefit from it.

He was an anomaly, a series of coincidences brought to a head in a single body.

A race of Sovereign Demons. The experiments of the God Beasts. And the natural inborn talent of an Ability Index that could be summarized in a single word.

Control."

The Morales territory rumbled and began to change. At that moment, in the core of the planet Leonel stood upon, large waves of Dream Force began to take shape, taking hold of the large sums of Force, bending them and then beginning to mold them into a Force Art that any expert would recognize quite clearly...

"The protective formation of the Spirituals Religion."

The planet rumbled as dust particles began to flutter wildly, dust particles that were none other than the solidified manifestation of Force.

Leonel punched out a single time and the world froze.

"A hole the size of a planet was torn through a Tier 1 starship. The strength of the fist traveled across a distance that could be measured only in light years, and yet it didn't lose its strength in the slightest.

Leonel, who had been patiently waiting for his enemies to get into range, no longer needed to. Or, rather... his range had increased to the point that everything else was superfluous.

They had already entered his domain."

He punched out again, and then again.

"Every time he did so, the hearts of the Morales below would feel as though they were being crushed, and yet the excitement in their eyes was palpable.

When Leonel said that he would fight alone, they had hesitated, they had been wary of what this would truly mean. Was their Patriarch overestimating himself a bit too much?

But their questions were answered instantaneously.

It was far too far to hear anything, and they couldn't even feel the deaths of the families that had been their competition for millennia. But that only made it all the more surreal.

Tier 1 Starships, the greatest offensive firepower of the Human Domain, couldn't even get close beneath Leonel's might.

One after another, fireworks echoed and large shockwaves resonated. It would take several days for them to even reach the planet, but by then would it matter? What could get beyond Leonel's formation?"

Chapter 2330: Destroyed

The final sight of many was nothing more than a blinding flash of light. Never did they think that their lives would end so simply, so cruelly. And yet, this was the reality of the world.

These large families knew this. Just how many had they snuffed out just like this on their rise to power? Too many. And not a single one of them were acknowledged in the annals of their history, not a single soul.

The reality that they would become one such existence in a long line of many only barely sunk in before they were crushed.

Leonel stood high in the skies, shaking his head. He had been looking forward to this battle, but the moment he had heard that voice in his head, he knew that it was a waste of time to have cared so much.

The truth was that in Morales territory, he was, indeed, invincible. However, it was all relative.

After he gained access to the Dream Plane, his ability to control the World Spirit of the Morales and their Constellation had reached an entirely new level, and the him of then could defeat the him of before without even breaking a sweat.

Once he sensed that he was a Wise Star Order, though, the largest changes weren't to his affinities at all, or even his Lineage Factors for that matter. Rather, it was to his mind.

The cells that had most greedily swallowed the surrounding Dark, Light, and Star Force were the neurons of his brain.

In truth, by this point in his advancement, Leonel had already begun to stray away from what his body alone could provide him, at least when it came to matters of his mind. He found it much more important to strengthen his Dream Force and increase his intelligence that way, than to think about the pathways of his physical brain.

But it seemed that he had underestimated the use of the body a bit too much. There was clearly much he still had to learn.

If he thought about it, though, this made perfect sense. Why was it that separating the soul from the body was so important if the body didn't also play a great and important role?

The unfortunate part, though, was that he didn't get his battle.

While his Dream Force hadn't improved, with the sudden super powering of his mind, his efficiency in its use had skyrocketed. As a result, he was able to fully copy the formation of the Spirituals in an instant, then use the Morales World Spirit to amplify its function.

Like that, he was able to launch an attack that surpassed the bounds of their current solar system and crushed the Tier 1 Starships in its wake.

He had an inkling of what these families wanted to do. They were likely biding their time, being cautious, they probably had several more waves of warriors to send forward just to probe the situation.

Leonel also didn't believe that these families would go down without a fight. He was about as strong as his father before Velasco broke into the Ninth Dimension back then, or at least the power his father had displayed.

From Leonel's understanding, it was likely that his father had maybe used a percent or two of his strength while at the pinnacle of the Eighth Dimension. He probably had the strength to kill King without breaking into the Ninth Dimension.

The reason his father had been forced to breakthrough, and thus withstood the backlash as a result, was because his attack needed to make it through a restriction of worlds and still be strong enough to kill King on the other side.

This aside, Leonel believed that he was at least as powerful as what his father had displayed in the Eighth Dimension with the support of the Morales territory, bolstered by his King's Might Lineage Factor, the World Spirit, and their Constellation. At least this was true before he became a Wise Star Order.

The power his father had displayed back then was powerful, but not infallible. It could easily crush Overlords, and deal with a few Tier 2 Starships, but it couldn't easily deal with Tier 1 Starships. That would have required several plans and schemes on his part, not to mention a deep understanding of Crafting.

By his simulations, he would have needed to withstand the destruction of at least 25% of Morales territory before he would come out victorious, 50% if Shield Cross Stars or the Godlen family managed to take out something that really surprised him.

Of course, he still had every intention of coming out victorious and he wasn't very worried.

But even he couldn't expect that he wouldn't even need to risk so much. All of his enemies had been crushed by a sudden breakthrough.

Leonel looked up. It seemed that state of mind was more important than he knew... that and that mysterious karma-like energy El'Rion mentioned.

It looked like he still had a lot to learn.

Vast Bubble.

A young woman, with her head buried in a well of water, suddenly shot back up, gasping for breath.

She regained her calm quickly, but she still felt her heart beating out of her chest. She had only been in the water for what must have been a split second of a split second in this world, but she had experienced many months, and the result made her feel completely drained as though she had truly experienced the entire time underwater.

If Leonel had been present, he would recognize this person immediately.

Cynthia Omann. The Scorned Queen Beauty.

But what was she doing here, exactly?

"You've seen what you needed to see?" A voice came.

"My family has been destroyed."

The voice stopped, not having expected this. In truth, this was quite embarrassing. They had promised Cynthia that the warning was silly, and even gave her a chance to observe, but the result...

Cynthia slowly wiped the water from her face.

"You can begin the selection now. I would truly like to see how far he can go."

Chapter 2331: Mere Mortals

"Are you sure?" The voice asked. "I doubt that everyone in your family has perished. They will be swept up in this matter as well, especially those of the junior generation. I can allow you some time to return and handle what you must."

"No," Cynthia said, quite curtly.

She couldn't return, there would be no point. So long as Leonel had the support of the Morales territory, she would be sending herself to death.

With the experts of the various territories mostly dead, there was nothing that could be done to change the situation, and she wasn't yet strong enough to cover the skies with a hand. On top of that, the smaller the population of experts, the faster the territories that Leonel had conquered would be assimilated.

Just in this brief conversation, several months would have passed. If she took the time to send herself in, it might even be years. By that point, Leonel would be even stronger than he was now and he might have already conquered the entire Incomplete World.

If that happened, she wouldn't just be sending herself to death, she was sending herself in to be absolutely humiliated.

She had already experienced that once, she would not experience it again.

"Your family will be unlikely to be treated well," the voice continued, trying just one last time.

In truth, they felt quite bad. Not long ago, they had told Cynthia that just a single person couldn't overturn things in an Incomplete World, especially not after making an enemy out of everyone, but the situation flipped on its head seconds later.

They would prefer if Cynthia had warm and good emotions about them instead of potentially holding a grudge. But after Cynthia spoke again... she could only let the matter go.

"Those that I bring here won't be able to survive. They'll live out terrible existences and always be under the thumb of another. I, myself, am not powerful enough to shield them, in fact, I might be the reason they were instead targeted.

"Only those among them that have the strength to climb up on their own and survive the coming trial should come. The rest of them... I would have preferred if they could have stayed in the Incomplete World, but I understand that that won't be possible.

"A, hopefully, quick and swift death is the best thing I can afford those who are not prepared."

She hadn't been here for long, not even mere moments, but she had already sensed many things.

The suppression in this world was greater than even the Void Battlefield. Anyone just born in this environment would be countless times stronger.

And she was very much correct. When Leonel first entered the Vast Bubble, he hadn't even been able to defeat those that lived in the outskirts in tribes and small clans. Any one of those people, if placed in the Void Palace, would be guaranteed to become a Domain Ranked disciple.

Cynthia's words were cruel, but they were the harsh reality.

"... While you do that, though," Cynthia suddenly said when the voice thought she was finished. "This should be the Cataclysm Zone that the youths of my world were sent to, correct? In that case, you should have some information on him, no? Can I have that?"

Mauve looked out into this distance, still standing within the Godlen garden. From time to time, he would mumble something unintelligible beneath his breath and then shake his head in exasperation.

"It's time to go," Matriarch Pyius' voice drifted over.

Mauve frowned. "Are we really going to go, just like this? I've yet to teach that brat a lesson."

"How old are you?"

"Fuck you."

"I guess I should report this sort of insubordination. You've gotten too free and loose with your tongue."

"Did you just forget that I'm your elder brother?" Mauve asked with exasperation.

"You look like you should be my grandfather instead, but you act like you're my son."

Mauve ran a hand down his face. "This is what I get for volunteering to come to this godforsaken, time-dilated, shit hole."

"I would have volunteered myself if I knew you would waste our efforts like this. Come, there's no time to lose. Not every plan can go perfectly, and it's time that we return."

"You'll have your chance to get back at the child. After all, without us, even if he does defy all odds and places first among all these Incomplete Worlds, how will he survive?"

"The Dream Pavilion and the Cult have lost quite heavily at his hands. They won't let him survive without a heavy price."

Mauve's eyes lit up when he heard this. Indeed, there would be a chance after all. He barely stopped himself from rubbing his hands together when he thought about Leonel being forced to ask for his help.

Well... it wouldn't be his help, but rather the help of the Godlen family. But, that was just semantics.

Leonel shook his head. Maybe he had been a bit anxious, those Tier 1 materials could have been useful. Well, it was fine even if everything else was destroyed so long as their Fusion Cores were still fine. With them, he would be able to do everything he needed to.

And that he did. Leonel didn't know exactly what was coming, but his goal stayed the same. Once he finished consolidating matters in the Human Domain, he would march onto the other Domains.

What he didn't know was that he wouldn't even get the chance.

Not even a day later, Leonel received a message. To his shock, it was actually from his grandfather, Emperor Fawkes.

Leonel had been avoiding the topic of Earth for a while now. On one hand, he wanted to unify the Human Domain, but on the other, he didn't know if his grandfather would just hand Earth to him and he also didn't know how he felt about waging war against his own kin.

When he entered the Ascension Empire's Palace for the first time in a long while, he found his grandfather waiting.

However, he didn't even get a chance to speak before the whole Dimensional Verse rumbled as though it might split at the seams.

"Prepare for combat, mere mortals. Fight for a chance to serve the Gods."

A voice blanketed reality itself, seeping into their very pores.

Chapter 2332: Downfall

Leonel looked up into the skies and sneered. They had some nerve calling themselves Gods, but he guessed that this made sense. Their goal would be to subdue the powerhouses that came out. Unless they formed an image that would demand absolute obedience, they'd have to expend too much effort keeping them in line.

This is what those Four Great Families did best. They hid the truth, making them seem infallible when in reality, they were weak.

They had done it with the ranking system of the Demons. Leonel wouldn't even be surprised if all the demons he and Aina had come across in that world weren't even worth ranking to the true Demon Empires of greater Existence.

They had done with Force Manipulation, not wanting talents to rise up and question their rule or their methods. Force Manipulation was the way those without talent could rise up in the world and form methods of power for themselves. Keeping such methods hidden away was sinister beyond compare.

They had done so with the various Lineage Factor tablets. If not for Leonel's bloodline, how could he have ever gotten his hands on the Emperor's Might tablet?

He did, though, get a small bit of satisfaction wondering how they had reacted to this sudden change. They had probably panicked when they learned that he had taken the tablet.

But that wasn't something that he had to worry about for now. He knew how shameless those Four Great Families could be and he understood their methods quite well. It was probably because of their methods that they were in this situation to begin with.

If they hadn't suppressed their populations for so long and with such great effort, would they need to rely on the breakthroughs of geniuses of Incomplete Worlds to help them out of their predicaments?

But those fools probably didn't even see the error of their ways, and if they managed to survive this, they probably never would.

"So, old man, you've finally decided to call and explain things to me?"

Emperor Fawkes looked down from the skies, his expression just the same as always. His eyes carried a hint of a confident smile and he seemed unbothered by any and all things.

"Old man? What an endearing term. So you don't want to kill me?"

These words didn't seem like they were exchanged between a grandson and grandfather at all, but since when was the relationship between these two anything like the norm?

"Kill you? I thought about it. But then I learned some things."

"Ah, so you know I could shatter your existence with a flick of my finger. It's good that you do."

Leonel chuckled. "Even if I knew that, it wouldn't matter. If I had the intent to kill you, I'd find a way."

"Mm, maybe, or maybe not. You're not the only intelligent being in all of existence. Don't mistake these rabble you've been playing around with and anyone worthy of your attention. That Cynthia character is passable, and yet she was already able to put you in quite a bad situation, don't you think?"

Leonel's brows raised before they relaxed.

"So it was her? Mother should have killed her already. She's needlessly... well, needy."

Emperor Fawkes broke into an uproarious laughter.

"She did die. Unfortunately for you, she was revived."

Leonel didn't seem too surprised by this. If he could resurrect Seventh Dimensional existences of this world with impunity, then he was sure that someone could do the same with someone of the Eighth, especially if a golden version of his Silver Tablet existed.

Emperor Fawkes, though, shook his head.

"I'm afraid that you've misunderstood. Her resurrection wasn't at the hands of anyone. She simply returned because Existence willed it."

Leonel's gaze narrowed, but Emperor Fawkes only smiled as though he was satisfied with this explanation alone.

"Next time you meet her, I advise that you be careful. If you're as carefree and arrogant as you usually are, you'll suffer another loss. She might not necessarily need to scheme

against you either, the strength she has will only grow exponentially from here on out and I would be wary of that."

"Interesting."

Emperor Fawkes smiled. "You're no fun."

Leonel clearly didn't have any intention of asking more questions, and that left Emperor Fawkes a bit helpless. Whether it was that son-in-law of his or this grandson of his, they were both so stubborn.

But then again, wasn't he the same?

"Then, I guess as your grandfather I should tell you some things. You've met the Pluto Race, I take it?"

"I have." Leonel nodded.

"Still confident, are we?"

"I'll never lack that," Leonel said with a grin.

"Good. In this world, we humans might be lowly, but we have our own bite."

"Spoken like a true Emperor."

"An Emperor that will rule all humans one day and lead them up to the World of Gods."

Emperor Fawkes' voice was far softer now than it had been before, and yet the conviction made it ring loud.

When Leonel heard this, he realized just how much he hadn't really cared about becoming a King in the past. The will in his grandfather's voice wasn't something that he had, at least not toward this matter.

And maybe that was why Emperor Fawkes had just chuckled when Leonel challenged his throne. He had known from the very beginning that this wasn't the path his grandson yearned for.

"As you know by now, the Fawkes family was once far more powerful than it is now. We led true Empires and we were the only humans with the ability to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Envoys of the God Beasts.

"Unfortunately, we fell, and it wasn't because of the attacks of other races like you may or may not have guessed. Our downfall was far more sinister than that as we fell to none other than our own kind.

"Feeling that the Fawkes were too powerful after the fall of the Envoys, and that our existence would antagonize that of the other Races too much, leading to the downfall of the Human Race..."

"It was humans that shattered our foundations and orchestrated our downfall."

Chapter 2333: His Fate

Leonel's eyes narrowed when he heard this. The implication wasn't far off from his assumptions, but it also wasn't that close either. After hearing about humans and some of the politics that decided things in wider Existence, Leonel had always somewhat assumed that the Fawkes had fallen due to the combined efforts of other races. That might still be the case now, but it seemed that their part was more subtle and covert.

But this also meant something else. Humans, at least the humans of back then, even without the Envoys of the God Beasts, weren't complete pushovers either. That meant quite a few things, whether that meant explaining why his grandfather was so cautious, or how he'd decide to take his next steps forward as well.

"The details of that matter aren't something you need to know. I'm sure in time you'll unearth them yourself and we also don't have much time."

"Well, whose fault is that?" Leonel asked.

Emperor Fawkes chuckled. "You're still saying that after learning how the Dream Plane works?"

"Do you just spend your time spying on me, old man?"

"And why not? Can a grandfather not pay some attention to his grandson?"

"Why does it feel so gross when you say that? Like it's some sort of sick power play? It's not as though I chose who to be related to, you're a little too arrogant."

Emperor Fawkes got a good laugh out of that. This grandson of his was indeed a little too sharp. It was a bit like that... though, he doubted the current Leonel would understand why fully.

"That aside, I'm sure you understand that there's some things that are better kept to yourself, and there's also some things that you can't mention without alerting those who have the greatest karmic ties to the matter. If not for you making a sudden breakthrough in your Dream Force, I would have allowed you to leave here steeped in ignorance.

"But even if you have taken that step, it doesn't make you infallible. I still have to be cautious with what I can and cannot say."

Leonel nodded slowly, understanding. He had already understood this, of course. But this grandfather of his loved his power plays. Since he realized that Leonel wouldn't go out of his way to ask questions of him, he instead made the decision to explain things clearly instead.

It was a bit amusing, actually, because this was exactly how El'Rion had reacted as well. Was his demeanor really that annoying?

"What I can tell you is that the Human Race of Wider Existence is separated into three main powers currently, all three of which you have met. Though, soon enough, it will likely be just two as your father has cost one of them a devastating loss.

"Those three powers are the Cult, the Godlens and the Dream Pavilion."

Leonel's gaze narrowed.

The Godlens and the Dream Pavilion weren't too much of a surprise. It was more of a surprise that the Four Great Families weren't among the listed as it had seemed that the Dream Pavilion was beneath the Four Great Families in the Cataclysm Zone.

But beyond that, the Cult was the most surprising. Wasn't one of its founders a demon? And wasn't another one born in an Incomplete World? How was this one of the pillar powers of the Human Race? It didn't make any sense.

Also, how did Shield Cross Stars relate to all of this? Were they just the outward face of the Three Finger Cult after all?

But his grandfather didn't say anything. It seemed that these details were among the few that he couldn't go into too deeply.

That made sense. In the past, before he transformed his Dream Force and entered the Impetus State, Leonel couldn't even think about the Demoness without sensing her eyes drift toward him.

Of course, just the fact he could sense a hint of her attention to begin with went to show just how amazing his Dream Force affinity was, but it was still uncomfortable, feeling as though someone could take a look into your mind whenever they wanted.

This aside, if they started talking about these details in earnest, Leonel wasn't yet strong enough to stave it off entirely.

"I cannot give you more details than this: "The Four Great Families are not to be trusted. The Dream Pavilion will never be as fragile as they seem. The Godlens are the most

aligned with goals that you might describe as... the greater good. The Cult can be used. And your best chance at survival is the Dream Pavilion."

Leonel blinked when he heard all of this. It felt like his grandfather was talking absolute nonsense.

The Four Great Families weren't to be trusted? Well, wasn't that obvious? It wasn't like he would come to them with hat in hand hopping for some handouts. If for no other reason than Aina, at the very least, the Brazinger family couldn't be allowed to continue to exist.

The Dream Pavilion isn't fragile seemed like another obvious one.

The Godlens were... good?

The Cult could be used was another head scratcher, and on top of that, if the Godlens were good, then why was his best chance for survival the Dream Pavilion instead?

Hadn't King been the head of the Dream Pavilion? Shouldn't they be his greatest enemies?

Wait, how did he know that?

Leonel's pupils constricted. This matter was far more complicated than he knew, and Fawkes was clearly driving that home.

"What will happen to this Incomplete World?" Leonel finally asked a question.

"I will be taking it with me."

"And you aren't asking me to go with you because?"

"You're an annoyance."

Leonel's lip twitched. He knew that this wasn't the real answer, but shouldn't this old man be a bit more mature in this situation? Unbelievable.

"I will be taking your grandmother and your mother with me."

Leonel looked up and met his grandfather's eyes, then eventually nodded. He doubted his mother would be very happy about it, but he also doubted that she would get much of a choice in the matter too.

He much preferred things to be like this.

"Your cousin, however, will be with you. Whether he lives or dies, will be decided by his fate."

Chapter 2334: Again?

Emperor Fawkes looked toward Leonel deeply, but couldn't quite read anything on his face. This grandson of his used to be an open book, but after just ten years, he was already so closed off and guarded already. Such was the weight of existence.

"Nothing else to ask me?"

Leonel's lips curled. "There's not much to say. My gramps is a useless schmuck who can't even allow me the leisure of being a useless, second generation, nouveau riche, brat. I hope you feel ashamed."

Emperor Fawkes was speechless for a moment before he burst into a fit of laughter.

"Look at this guy, having the time of his life," Leonel shook his head. "At least give me some treasures."

"What treasures could you possibly need? The Emperor's Might Lineage is already with you, that's already the most valuable thing I can give you."

"If you're cheap just say so. Who're you trying to fool?"

"You're not going to con me out of my wealth, brat. If a man can't make his own way, what worth does he have."

"You know, that's not very progressive of you to say, and quite sexist."

"If you had your balls snipped, just say that."

Leonel didn't even know what to say to that. Wasn't this supposed to be a dignified Emperor? Now he was talking about his grandson's balls?

But Emperor Fawkes didn't seem to care as he stood his feet. His aura was quite imposing, and it was almost too easy for Leonel to forget, most because he didn't feel any of its pressure. He had no doubt that his grandfather was quite powerful, at the very least powerful enough to set out what he meant to do.

By extension, Emperor Fawkes probably wanted him to go to the Dream Pavilion because it would help the old man in whatever endeavor he was trying to accomplish.

Leonel still didn't know much about this grandfather of his, but he felt that he understood his personality well enough. He was a ruthless man, one with drive and purpose. There was nothing that could shake his resolve, even that was his very own family. In fact, Leonel had no real certainty, but he was fairly certain that even getting married and having children was no more than a means to an end for Emperor Fawkes.

As for whether that meant his grandfather was an enemy or not, Leonel didn't really know. At the very least, for now, he wasn't.

Leonel looked away from his grandfather and toward the tall ceilings of the palace. He guessed that he wanted to see more of the world, and while he was at it... he would conveniently destroy all those that had forced the hand of his father.

The Dream Pavilion was the best chance of him surviving? So what? King might be dead, but he didn't believe for a moment that he was the only one responsible.

The Godlens were on the side of good? So what? Who knew what they had done for the "greater good", how many sacrifices they had allowed, how many good people they had allowed to fall, all for the sake of their own visions?

The Four Great Families weren't to be trusted? Good enough, he would just make it so that no one could make that mistake again.

As for the Cult, that grandmother of his would get what was coming to her. It might not be in a year, it might not even be in ten, or a hundred, but one day he would look down with that same, sick, twisted smile as she watched her efforts be wasted.

Leonel looked back down to find that his grandfather was standing right before him, barely two feet.

He realized that his grandfather was actually quite tall, an inch taller than even himself who was already 6'9", and yet he didn't emit that sort of perception until it was too late.

A finger tapped Leonel's forehead before he could react and a bomb seemed to go off within him.

His mind went entirely blank.

When Leonel regained his senses, he found himself standing in a bubble. Outside the bubble, there was nothing but a vast blackness, until there wasn't. One after another, more bubbles began to appear, each one with a different person within.

'What the hell happened?'

Leonel felt that he had lost several hours of time. His Ability Index was sharp, and his comprehension of his body was great. Just by checking the energy levels of his cells, he could tell how long he had been unconscious. It was more than half a day.

As for where he was, he thought he had a pretty good guess as well. This place was the selection. The event had begun already and he didn't even have time to properly prepare.

He looked down at himself and he was wearing the same clothing. His finger still had Anastasia on it, at least, which was the first sign of good news. But even so, just what had happened? What did that old man do to him?

'Hm?'

Leonel's body timer clicked again.

This time, it wasn't that the time was too long, but rather the exact opposite. How had he gone through so many thoughts and scenarios in such a short time? His speed of thought was almost three times faster than he remembered it being.

Inside his body, he even felt like there was another realm within. Inside, there was a man in a lack of blood, surrounded by broken chains. And yet, he was moving at all.

'What the he...'

Leonel's thoughts were cut off again as his bubble began to move with lightning quickness, rushing through the bounds of reality alongside the others near him until they all suddenly popped at once and they were flung through the stars.

'Is it that?' Leonel thought.

Aina had mentioned his father had a seal of sorts on his mind, had his grandfather lifted it? Or was it something else?

'Shit.'

Leonel found himself tumbling through the skies, but worse than that, looking down at himself, he was truly at a loss for words as those that fell from the popped bubbles alongside him suddenly began to charge up their attacks.

Why was he in the Fifth Dimension again?

Chapter 2335: True Sailor

Leonel didn't know how to react to this immediately. He even assumed that his grandfather had screwed him over for a moment, before he tossed that train of thought away. Unless Emperor Fawkes had stolen his progress, what good did it do him to harm Leonel in this way?

It was possible that he wanted to use Leonel as a scapegoat, but that was such a stupid idea that Leonel couldn't even quite take it seriously. He refused to believe that there was anyone in his lineage that stupid. Least of all his grandfather who had a decent opinion of.

Plus, even with his original power, even he wouldn't say with 100% certainty that this selection event would be a breeze. He had met those geniuses of the other Incomplete Worlds during his Spear Domain trial, and they were all so powerful even though they couldn't use their various Race-related abilities.

And those were just the Spear Domain geniuses. What about the other Domain Ring geniuses? Or what about the geniuses that didn't rely on the Domain Rings at all?

They definitely weren't to be underestimated, which was why Leonel had wanted to have time to prepare, and yet he hadn't been given that grace at all!

'Damned old man.'

In addition, if the seal on him had been undone, how could he be weaker? His speed of thought was so much faster as well and he felt that everything was still in the palm of his hands.

'Maybe I should deal with this situation first...'

Leonel looked toward the attacks coming toward him and shook his head. These people were weak, pathetically so.

He understood, though. Even if there were some of the Incomplete Worlds that would be absolute monsters, the law of averages still applied. For there to be a few monsters, there would have to be quite a number of garbage dumps for wider Existence to have the poor opinions of Incomplete Worlds that they did.

That meant that the vast majority of those thrown into this life-death battle would be like the weaklings of the Human Domain who couldn't even make it into the Void Palace.

The only reason that they had attacked him so boldly was because they sensed that he was only in the Fifth Dimension and thought that he was an easy target.

He somewhat lazily stretched out a finger, ready to blast a hole through them all with a strand of Spear Force.

'Hm, but for them to be so eager to kill me, could there be some sort of point system? I wouldn't even know about such rules because of that damned old man. Maybe I should keep one of them alive just to ask...'

Leonel readied his attack and then his expression changed.

'Son of-'

BANG!

Leonel was consumed by the attacks on all sides.

...

"I killed him. All of you scram!"

One of the "experts" barked as a tally appeared above his head before blinking out. However, none of the others even paid him any heed.

Just now, they had all gained somewhat of an understanding of each other's attack strength, and no one was far above the other.

Leonel had been right, there was indeed a point system that tallied kills, and just now, above the head of the one that had just barked out these orders, a young man with horns that ran from his nose to the very top of his head and back down his spine, a flashing 1 had appeared.

However, this was just one of the benefits of a kill.

Every kill would net you a +1 not to mention the kill count of the one you had slaughtered, except for those so-called "Seeded Participants". But the true boon would be what was left behind after the death of the person.

Somehow, the Gods that had sent them here had the ability to turn the participants into quasi-Invalid type existences.

When Invalids were killed, their strength was turned into motes of light and those motes of light would, in turn, strengthen the one that had killed them.

Usually, it was said that this was a way to balance out the creation of new worlds. The newer the world, the more Invalids there would be, and thus the faster the progress of the world. This would make it so that those that had just survived the would be able to somewhat compete with the other Fourth Dimensional worlds around them and not be immediately swallowed up.

At least, this was what those of the various Incomplete Worlds had spread as the truth. Either way, these Gods were able to convert even humans in the same way, and that gave them all a chance to benefit.

The difference was that the person that had landed the kill wouldn't immediately benefit from their kill, so why would they listen to this horned young man's barks?

They all landed on the ground heavily, some in sorrier states than others. They all warily looked toward one another, no one willing to make a move. That was, until one of them suddenly felt that something was off.

This young woman, with skin the color of caramel and eyes as bright as pink diamonds felt her heart shake. She had a sensory type Ability Index and the only reason she didn't run immediately was because doing so when no one else was would draw undue attention to herself. It would be easier if she watched them fight it out, and then slipped away in the chaos.

She was sharp. That was why she noticed that there wasn't just one person that was missing among their large group of just over a dozen...

There were two.

The smoke cleared in the dry landscape, and soon they saw two corpses laying on the ground, one faced down and the other looking up at the skies, wide-eyed as though he had died with unwillingness.

But then this second "corpse" began to move, curse words flying from his mouth like a true sailor.

Chapter 2336: Don't Let Me Find You

Leonel kicked the corpse that was beside him away, the curse words still flying from his mouth. This was unbelievable, truly unbelievable.

Right when he was about to attack to kill all of these people at once, he felt a heart-rending pain tear through him. The last time he had felt that kind of pain, it was back when his Bow Force had progressed to the Sixth Dimension while he was still in the Fifth. Ironically, he was once again in the Fifth Dimension, but now whether it was his Bow Force or his Spear Force, both were in the Seventh Dimension.

The worst part was that they weren't just in the Seventh Dimension, but each one was just a step away from the Impetus State, making the gap between himself and his Forces so wide that even trying to gather them up had almost shredded him apart.

In the past, at the very least, he could squeeze out a bow strike or two and come out of it with nothing worse than some fatigue. But now he had quite literally felt that his body was about to be shredded apart.

It only made it worse that he hadn't taken out his spear and had instead tried to use his fingers as a replacement. All the Nodal Pathways in his right arm had practically been shredded to pieces and it hung limply to his side. He had no choice but to use his left arm to prop himself up, his curses still flying without the slightest hint that it might come to a stop any time soon.

If this alone was the issue, he could still deal with it. It was acceptable enough. At the very least, the chance to return to the Fifth Dimension was worthwhile at least in some respects, especially since his comprehension was all still very much intact.

The issue was that this had clearly not come without a price.

Firstly, his Scarlet Star Innate Nodes were currently both very much dormant as though all the energy had been sapped out of it.

Secondly, his King's Might Lineage Factor was likewise dormant. His mind had been powerful for long enough to see the changes that each one of his Lineage Factors had caused to his body, and the cells that made up the King's Might Lineage Factor were all dimmed as though the energy that made them up had been sucked dry.

Thirdly, his Metal Body... Leonel looked at himself, wanting to cry and yet having no tears to shed. If his Metal Body was still as powerful as it had been in the past, none of this would have been an issue. He would still be able to forcefully use his Force comprehension without losing out in the slightest.

But his Metal Body had been completely and utterly drained. He didn't even have a Fourth Dimensional body anymore. Had he let those strikes hit him, he would have died ten times over.

'Absolutely unbelievable...'

Leonel understood why these things were happening. He remembered Wise Star Order complaining in the past about how he wished he hadn't entered the Seventh Dimension so soon, and somehow Leonel got the ability to return to the Fifth.

However, having the chance to return most definitely wouldn't come without a price, and his sacrifice was likely much of the foundation that he had built up until now.

The only things that remained by his side seemed to be his Northern Star Lineage Factors and his Spear Domain Lineage Factor, or rather, the spear aspects of his now-fused Morales Lineage Factor, but it was still a depressing sight to behold.

The youths around Leonel didn't know what to say. They didn't know how or when he had grabbed one of them to be a scapegoat for their attack, and that left the smarter ones among them on edge, but if everyone was smart... no one would be.

Seeing that there was a corpse with energies to absorb and a second injured Fifth Dimensional existence that could be seen as an easy kill, at least half the group rushed forward, the other half frowning as they chose to observe the situation for longer.

Leonel didn't seem to see them at all as he continued to curse, his unhappiness clear and obvious on his face. The stupid among them even thought that he was only reacting to his imminent death.

But just when the horned young man reached him, grabbing for his head to shatter him at once, Leonel's body crumbled into countless motes of light, causing the youth to swing at air.

He only had time to frown before his eyes opened wide as the world began to spin around him. Why was the world spinning? And why was he looking at his headless corpse?

Leonel flickered with his every step. His power was weaker, but his skill was impossibly far beyond these people. Even if he couldn't use his Spear Force, the comprehension of the spear that he had achieved just by raising it to the level he had made him akin to a spear master amidst a flock of toddlers.

At the same time, even if he couldn't use his body as a conduit for his Force, did he not still have his Mage Core? And did he not also still have his mind and his Ability Index?

These people might as well have been moving through quicksand, their movements so slow and easy to track that Leonel could think of dozens of ways to kill them before they landed even a single strike.

When he finally lowered his spear, not even three seconds had passed and yet a forest of headless corpses stood before him before slowly tumbling to the ground.

The world seemed to fall into silence, the only noise the sound of Leonel's curses.

"I swear to god old man, don't let me find you--"

The instant he said this, he flickered again, appearing amidst those that hadn't moved. They tried to run, but what good was it.

The pink-eyed girl closed her eyes, seemingly having accepted her fate when she felt something ice cold press against her neck.

Chapter 2337: How Bold

Leonel looked down at the girl. Even in his enraged state, he had noticed the actions of this young woman before. His connection to the Dream Plane had been cut off in this place, but he could still read people's intentions with far sharper intent than most could.

Knowing this, he targeted this woman because she seemed smart. She would likely know about the stuff he had missed out on.

"Open your eyes."

The pink-eyed young woman trembled and bit her tongue. But after a moment, she opened them, a hint of resolution within.

She was, indeed, sharp. Among those that Leonel had killed, there were two women who were conventionally more attractive than she was. If Leonel wanted to do that kind of thing, she wouldn't have been his first choice. He didn't seem like the type to use women in that way, he would sooner kill them so that they wouldn't be a burden. Though it was possible he found her to be a bit exotic due to her oddly colored eyes, this was a small percentage chance that she didn't place more than a three or so percentage chance upon.

There was another important matter as well. The way Leonel fought, the look in his eyes when he swung his spear, it was all precise, cold and calculating. He probably had a sensory type Ability Index much like her own, and as such, he probably felt that she was useful to him for something.

But it was odd. It didn't make sense for Leonel to need another sensory ability if he had one of her own, but judging by that old man he was cursing, maybe he hadn't come here of his own will, and as such... didn't know the rules?

Leonel hadn't made any attempt to absorb the energies around him, so that made sense.

He suddenly smiled. "You're clever. Good, I don't want to waste my time talking too much. Tell me the rules of this place, don't hold anything back, or else I'll know. If you satisfy me, I don't mind letting you go."

"Yes," she nodded quickly, only stopping after she realized Leonel's spear was still pressed to her neck and she had nearly cut herself. It seemed that even she was a bit flustered in the face of death.

"Right." She adjusted her mental state. "This selection of the Gods seems to be divided into rounds. They haven't told us what the next rounds entail, but this one is a point-based system and it also seems to be an opportunity.

"You get points by killing those around you, and everyone is worth the same amount of points aside from the Seeded Participants. Killing a Seed Participant doesn't net you points, but it nets you their position as a selected seed.

"In addition, when you kill those around you, you gain a chance to absorb their energies as well. These energies will be a combination of insights and raw strength. It can be either used to push your Tiers upward, or you can gain insights on a Force that your enemy understands better than yourself."

Leonel's gaze narrowed. Was that possible? He didn't believe it for a second.

If the likes of El'Rion didn't dare to have more than one Innate Node, which was essentially a hack toward comprehension, how could you just take insights from others?

In fact, El'Rion had implied that it was bad even to create Innate Nodes yourself. The Gods clearly had a method of forming Innate Nodes naturally, but they advised against doing so.

And on the ladder of trouble, stealing an Innate Node was even worse, making your future path even more difficult.

Leonel didn't believe that the likes of the Vast Bubble had a method to circumvent these problems. In fact, if his deductions were correct, this method of refining people down into their Force insights was likely just a crude method of the God Races' ability to create Innate Nodes from scratch for their descendants.

One method was perfect, and yet inadvisable to use. So how much worse would the imperfect method be?

Leonel sneered inwardly. This was clearly another scheme by the Great Families. They wanted their pawns to be strong and also use this opportunity to get stronger, but in line with their usual history, they didn't want them to get too much stronger.

If Leonel was correct, they wanted the best among them to become extremely powerful within the Eighth Dimension, but never be able to become powerful among the Ninth Dimensional experts.

And the worst part was that the method was so subtle that even when the day came that their potential ran dry, they wouldn't even think to link it back to this occurrence, making them remain loyal to those families just for a hope of maybe, one day, breaking through.

It was a clever scheme, indeed.

The pink-eyed beauty felt her heart skip a beat when she looked into Leonel's eyes. She found it almost impossible to read anything from this young man, but she could still tell that he knew more than he was letting on.

She felt like she had to keep talking. Maybe if she proved herself useful enough, she could stay with Leonel. After all, she doubted that only Leonel would be this point. Just how vast was the cosmos? How could she just so happen to stumble onto the only monster participating? Leonel didn't even seem to be a Seeded Participant.

How much more powerful were they?

"The Seeded Participants, if you don't know, are the existences that have the backing of their entire world. They were unanimously nominated by their people to lead their batch.

"You likely don't have a Seed Participant because one of the benefits of being a Seeded Participant is spawning with the selected geniuses of your world. In addition, you'll always be able to sense your Seeded Participant no matter where you go, so you can go off to look for opportunities and always meet back together."

Leonel raised his eyebrow. "Oh? So is that what that feeling was?"

Leonel chuckled inwardly. The Dimensional Verse had chosen a Seeded Participant? And it actually wasn't him? How bold of them.

The pink-eyed young woman looked toward Leonel with confusion. What he said didn't make sense. How could Leonel sense a Seeded Participant, and yet not have spawned with them?

Chapter 2338: Dimensional Eyes

Leonel didn't know what happened to him in the last half day, but he found this result to be quite amusing. It wasn't that he was so eager to become a Seeded Participant, but it was rather that he really couldn't imagine why the Dimensional Verse would pick anyone but him.

The Human Domain might not know, but how could the other Races not understand the level of strength he had access to? He had massacred them down to practically their last few descendants. How was there anyone in their younger generation a better pick?

Of course, one could argue that was the very reason they didn't pick him, but he didn't believe that that was a good enough reason.

That was because they should know the rules just like this little pink-eyed woman should. What did they think he would do if they stonewalled him out of fear of his massacring them again?

According to what this little woman said, they should know that he would spawn with them. Why would they put another one of their geniuses in the line of fire by risking the chance of enraging him?

Seeded Participant places could be taken through killing, so only a fool would think that it was safe.

Plus, they knew little to nothing about Leonel's power. They didn't know that he could only use it for a limited time, nor did they know that he had sworn off using it to scorn that woman. That meant, from their perspective, he had actually spared quite a number of them.

He had massacred the Beast Domain and the Nomad Domain, but he had "spared" the juniors of the Nomad Domain-mostly due to his uncle's interference-and he had also not even touched the Dwarven Domain, the Spirituals Domain, or even the Rapax Domain.

On the surface, then, it seemed illogical for them to even think about picking Leonel. But if you had even a modicum of critical thinking skills, you would realize that it was absolutely foolish for them to not. If anything, they were putting themselves at risk of his ire.

That meant that there were only two possibilities... maybe three.

The first was the most obvious. Since he had appeared here, that meant that he hadn't been present for whatever gathering of the minds they had had, or maybe he had even been unconscious for it. In addition, his power had clearly seemed to have plummeted, so if they had seen him unconscious, they would have definitely never thought him to still be powerful enough to do anything.

Of course, they were wrong, but it was still semi-reasonable.

The second was that he had never been there in the first place. Something his grandfather had done had displaced him from the Dimensional Verse, and that should also be why he hadn't appeared near the others. That would be the best explanation for what was going on.

So, with him gone, there were two, maybe actually three that were potentially worthy of becoming a Seeded Participant, so it made sense that they would pick someone else if one of them managed to show some promise that cleared the others.

Of course, the three Leonel was talking about was that Rapax egg he had saved all those years ago, that Nomad youth who had been part of the attack on the Void

Battlefield, and finally, that Spiritual youth he had seen in the Bow Domain Tower who wielded the Bow Domain Ring.

Leonel had already met all three of them under various circumstances.

The Rapax, even as an egg, exuded quite the powerful aura. Leonel had a feeling that the fact that it was a Shadow Sovereign might even be the least of their strength.

The Nomad youth was the one he knew the least about and probably also the one with the greatest grudge against Leonel considering he had genocided his race. If he had become the Seeded Participant, Leonel doubted that the humans would have a very cold time at all.

A flash of coldness came across Leonel's eyes before he shook his head. He guessed that this was what they called the consequences of one's actions, but that didn't mean that he would allow that Nomad youth, Prince Gregwyn, to do as he pleased.

The last was the Spirituals youth. Leonel could still remember his aura quite firmly, and he was very powerful. But the current Leonel didn't feel the need to take him too seriously. The real question was if anything had changed since he saw him last.

Leonel looked up from his thoughts.

"Anything else?" Leonel asked.

"Ah right. They said that whoever manages to retain the Seeded Participant title at the end of everything will gain the right to choose with the God's Factions they join. The others will have to hope that they are selected, and those unworthy will become slaves."

"And I assume that means a single world can have more than one Seeded Participant, then?"

"Yes, that was implied..." the little woman nodded.

Leonel smiled, this woman was indeed interesting. She looked like a nervous wreck, but when it came to her deductions, she was fully confident in them. Leonel didn't believe that her true personality was one that was so reserved, but rather something that she had adopted so that she could seem as non-threatening as possible.

"Tell me, then, where do you come from?"

The little woman seemed to have expected this question and already had a response ready.

"I come from the Dimensional Eyes Incomplete World. We focus heavily on ocular techniques, but we are also very divided."

"Many of us only form our Nodes above the neck, so our bodies are relatively weak, but our senses and skills are excellent.

"I can be considered to be above average in my cohort, but my family's legacy, the Opaque Radiance Lineage, has been cut off and only a few remain.

"My Dimensional Eyes give me the ability to remain calm, even when I'm not, and it also enhances my speed of thought and vision."

Chapter 2339: Ocular Chaos

Leonel raised an eyebrow. This little woman was prepared, indeed. She told me a lot, and yet not too much. She didn't try to bog him down with details as though she was looking to confuse him or pull the wool over his eyes either.

She told him the most important things. The strength of the people of her Incomplete World, she told him what backing she might have and what trouble bringing her along might bring, and she also broke down her potential uses to him.

"Interesting, do you have a wielder of the Bow Domain Ring?" Leonel asked.

"Yes, we do."

"And why are they not the Seeded Participant of your group?"

"With all due respect, young sir, the ocular Lineage Factor granted by the Bow Domain Ring is inferior to our most powerful lineages. This doesn't mean that it is weak, but rather that ours are more comprehensive. Having the Bow Domain Ring wouldn't guarantee any sort of superiority, as the ocular aspects of the Lineage Factor are more supportive in nature."

The little woman felt her heart skip a beat after she said these words. She felt that she was both too arrogant in her statement, and that she had said too much. She subconsciously looked down at the ring on Leonel's finger, hoping she wouldn't see the Bow Domain Ring. She didn't want to offend this powerhouse.

But then she remembered that he had used a spear and breathed out a sigh of relief.

Leonel's lip curled. "Oh? And why do I get the feeling that your ocular heritage falls under much the same categorization, and yet I didn't feel the same sort of disdain for it as you have for the Bow Domain Ring?"

The little woman froze. She looked into Leonel's eyes warily and for some reason, he seemed much more large and looming than he ever had before. The height difference

between them was already quite large. She was barely 5'3, making Leonel a foot and a half taller than she was. But now, she felt like she was facing a behemoth of a man.

"I..." she bit her lip before sighing. "The calming effect that my eye gives is more... expansive than I mentioned. It increases our comprehension and makes it possible to see the runes that make up the Forces we utilize. As such, more than calming, our eyes and the techniques we use it with give us greater utilization and comprehension of Forces than practically any other Force. It is more than just... supportive."

The pressure upon her vanished and she almost collapsed. Her heartbeat quickened and she seemed to finally realize how much she was sweating. She felt some relief, but it also seemed that Leonel wasn't finished yet.

"But it's more than that, no? Part of your disdain came from something deeper, a hatred, no? You have a grudge with this Bow Domain Ring wearer, don't you? And if you have a grudge with him, I have a feeling that you also didn't tell me all of the rules, right? Because you partly expect to be traveling with me?"

The little woman felt her vision go dark. She barely managed to sustain herself and stop her fall to the ground, but she felt that this person before her was simply too much. How had he known?

In truth, Leonel felt that there was more to the Domain Rings. It didn't make sense for them to connect the various Incomplete Worlds with one another and yet serve no other purpose. He had even thought about getting rid of his own ring, since he no longer needed it and could forge his own spears now.

But in the end, he had chosen to keep it... mostly to get to the bottom of this mystery.

It was in the best interest of the forces of the Vast Bubble to keep their experiments as subtle and secretive as possible. However, those that had lineages who had entered the true trial of the Domain Rings before all had an inkling of what was going on. Even that human that Leonel had caught in the beginning of the trial had known what was going on, although he refused to tell Leonel what it was.

So why would they risk that?

There were only two explanations, at least given the information he knew.

The first was that the rings had a more sinister intention and would be helpful in making sure the best talents were reined in properly.

The second was that the Domain Rings were disseminated by the Dream Pavilion and the Four Great Families at all, but were rather the work of another one of the Human Factions. If Leonel had to hazard a guess...

He would pick the Godlens.

As for why, it was just conjecture. He had no certainty. But what he did know was that if it was the Godlens, then the benefit might not be entirely sinister, but that didn't necessarily mean that it was good either.

"I... I..." the little woman was close to hyperventilating before her pink eyes glowed and she seemed to calm down. "... there are two extremely powerful factions in the Dimensional Eye Verse, one of them is the Ocular Chaos Clan. They are capable of swallowing Forces of all types, storing them in their eyes, and attacking with a wild burst of Chaos Force, or so they call it.

"In reality, Chaos Force is just Neutral Force. It's an amalgamation of all Forces. The difference is that it skews ever so slightly toward imbalance, causing it to rip across everything in their path.

"In the past, the Ocular Chaos Clan was very weak and their lifespans were very short. But-

"But the Bow Domain Ring gave them the ability to expel the Chaos Force from their pupils and thus made them one of the most powerful families in your verse. And the cherry on top, I presume, was nearly wiping your family out, and this is your opportunity to retrieve the Bow Domain Ring and right the injustice, no? That would also likely mean that they're another quest related to the Domain Rings in specific, hm?"

The little woman trembled but eventually nodded.

"Having a Domain Ring will give you access to special zones. Remember the trial areas I mentioned earlier? There are many with strict requirements for who will be allowed to enter. Some require a certain amount of kills, some require a certain level of Force, and some..."

"Require the Domain Ring."

"Yes... There is a chance to strengthen your ring through these trials and by snatching the rings of others and fusing them. It's said that if you do this, you will have a chance to become a True Sovereign and gain the True Domain Lineage Factor, a Ninth Dimensional Lineage Factor!"

Leonel could see the excitement in the woman's eyes. Even the calming effect couldn't control her in the slightest. But he...

Was unmoved.

There was a catch. There was always a catch. Plus, becoming a True Sovereign? He had already done that on his own. Even so, he was interested in finding out what that

catch was. It would decide whether he would be procuring a Battle Ax Domain Ring for his future wife or not. Which reminded him...

"Does your verse have anyone with a Vital Star Force Innate Node?"

Chapter 2340: Decision

The little pink-eyed woman felt her heart skip a beat. What was that question? Well, it was obvious. This man wanted to steal Innate Nodes. Was he an Innate Node Hunter? Those kinds of people in her Verse were especially notorious, but it didn't matter. There would simply always be a market. There were probably many in the Ocular Chaos Clan who fell into this category as well.

Was she wrong about Leonel's character? What did she know about this man anyway, and did it even matter what she thought of him? Would it change anything?

Even when she tried to be cautious against him, he saw through it and cut right to the heart of the matter with absolute ease. There was simply nothing she could hide.

"N-no... Not that I know of..."

She looked to the ground, unable to meet Leonel's eyes and worried she would expose her own. She made a mental note that unless it was a matter of life or death, she most definitely wouldn't use it. In this world, where killing was already incentivized, she couldn't give others extra reasons to target her if she didn't have to.

Leonel could tell that there was something that this woman was hiding, but this time, he didn't choose to say anything about it. Her use had run out. And unlike what she was thinking, he didn't go around hunting Innate Nodes just for the fun of it.

Maybe he would have, if for no other reason than to help strengthen his brothers and subordinates. But after learning what he had from El'Rion, he understood that it wasn't as simple.

But if you thought about it, it made sense.

The Vast Bubble was middling in the grand scheme of Existence, and yet they had a method of perfectly fusing with Innate Nodes. If that method was truly so valuable, and could change a person's outlook on progress and life, why would it be in their hands? There were only so many truly valuable things a place like the Vast Bubble could have.

What Leonel was interested in, though, were the Domain Rings. He really wanted to see what secrets those people were trying to hide from him.

"Alright, you can go."

After Leonel said this, he flickered and moved, only causing a bout of annoyance to well up inside of him. He was much slower than he had been in the past. The level of Force he could circulate within himself was limited, and his body was also weaker, so his actual speed had plummeted.

That said...

Leonel's Ethereal Glabella pulsed as his Mana Core thrummed with life. He gathered Spatial Force from the surroundings and the ground seemed to shrink beneath his feet.

His speed exploded as he rushed ahead. He guessed that the first thing he should try to do would be to close the distance on that so-called Seeded Participant of the Dimensional Verse.

The little pink-eyed woman watched this scene stunned. He was really letting her go... just like that? Like it was nothing?

She almost collapsed in relief, but then her eyes drifted toward the corpses around them. Each one had an orb of energy floating above them. She didn't believe for a second that Leonel had just forgotten them. He had heard her explanation about the uses of that energy, but he didn't even give them a second glance before he vanished.

'This...'

She hesitated. This wasn't the only thing that was odd about Leonel. How had he not known the rules? Everyone knew the rules, even the weakest of them. They had it all explained to them at the same time and they were projected across the verse. Even those not participating would know the rules.

Then there was the fact he was in the Fifth Dimension and yet so powerful... How was that possible? On top of that, he came from a verse that had a Seeded Participant and yet he didn't spawn with his group? It all pointed to the fact that maybe Leonel wasn't like them. He might be ignorant about some things, but not in everything... in fact, he might know much more than most of them about the situation, maybe even more than those families who had seemed to have begun preparing for this decades ago...

After some hesitation, she grit her teeth and went with her gut. She wouldn't take the energies here. With one last look, she too shot in a direction, the exact opposite of Leonel's.

...

Leonel continued to run in the far-off distance, his Internal Sight still trained on the little woman. When he saw that she didn't absorb the energies, he chuckled.

Of course, Leonel didn't just have the task of surviving this endeavor, but he also had some recruiting to do. Although he didn't care very much about being a King any longer, there was still a nudge within him to continue to build.

There was something that stuck with him from his future self even though that vast, overwhelming pressure had vanished... and that was loneliness.

Despite his true personality, Leonel had always liked to have people around him. The camaraderie of his football team and his brothers had always been a highlight of his day. He didn't want to be alone. He wanted to experience this world that he was so curious about with others by his side.

But in a world like this one, that not only required strength but required backing. Since he didn't have backing of his own... he would just have to make it.

Leonel rushed forward, tweaking his Spatial Force use from time to time. Right now, he was at the very bottom of the Fifth Dimension. In fact, he was even at the very start of Tier 1. He could feel that if he wanted to, he could shoot right back up to the Seventh Dimension in one go. It might take a few hours, if that. But then wouldn't that waste his opportunity?

'Ah, another group of people to interrogate.'

Leonel caressed his wooden spear. It was the primitive woman's spear, faceted with a stinger-like blade. Wielding it made him feel nostalgic. He didn't think these people ahead would feel the same, though.