

Tech System 231

Chapter 231 A Conspiracy Theorists Dream Press Conference

"CRASH!" The sound of glass shattering after falling reverberated through the living room of a normal-looking house. However, even after that, the person who had dropped the glass didn't even try to pick up broken fragments or even register what had happened. His entire focus remained affixed on trying to comprehend whether what he had heard moments ago was true or he had just misheard it due to being preoccupied.

Nevertheless, he wasn't the only one who couldn't believe what they had heard just now. Practically everyone watching the press conference found themselves dumbfounded by what they had heard.

Emanuel briefly paused, giving the watchers enough time to react and process his announcement of unconditional surrender.

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"As for why my government and I have come to this decision, it's because we have been misleading all of you about the root cause of war and secondly, because we stand no chance of having a victory any longer," Emanuel revealed, once again dropping another surprise banger to the citizens and cause the international watchers to get excited, even the ones who had been watching it unwillingly as nearly all the news channels were broadcasting this press conference.

"Last night, the remaining interceptor fighter jets in our possession were shot down, leaving our air force equipped with nothing but bombers. These bombers had only survived thanks to the fast reaction of our commanders, who redirected them to the Pacific Ocean, in the opposite direction of Eden, managing to avoid having them bombed while parked. However, this resulted in our air force losing any semblance of the ability to protect our skies. Eden has now gained aerial supremacy, and as many of you experienced last night, they immediately used this to their advantage by launching airstrikes on nearly all of our weapon warehouses and many of our military infrastructures, including the communication facilities and as a result of that, we have lost nearly half of our war abilities." Emanuel explained, pausing once again to take a deep breath before continuing.

"A few minutes before we lost air supremacy, our navy fleets had been deployed on a mission to capture several of Edenian naval ports, a strategic action intended to establish a landing point for our forces so that we could deliver a war to them and fight them on their land. Tragically, we ended up losing the majority of our naval vessels, with those that survived being seized by Eden's navy. Our soldiers involved in this operation were also caught and arrested as prisoners of war," he added, concluding his reason for surrendering unconditionally to Eden, citing that they didn't have any chance of winning against them and thus were incapable of sustaining this ongoing conflict.

While it made sense for the president of the country to conclude the war, it didn't seem logical for them to unconditionally surrender just for those reasons; they could still continue fighting for a little longer and use that time to negotiate and end the war with something much lesser than complete unconditional surrender, such as negotiating a conditional surrender or even a ceasefire for a few years which they could use to prepare themselves for the third round.

Among the multitude of spectators watching the news, the smart ones among them could feel that there were two potential explanations as to why Esparia went through with this decision. One theory

is that the President and other higher-ranking military officials might have overreacted while succumbing to the fear of their lives, driving them to this surrender.

Alternatively, the other reason might be more ominous, a reason powerful enough to make them opt for an unconditional surrender— a choice that was considered as the most undesirable among the many other available options.

They soon received their answer as the subsequent statement from Emanuel provided clarity and addressed this very concern, "As for what I meant when I mentioned that we were lying to you, I meant that the reasons for attacking them first and pushing the blame to Eden followed by the captured in which we responded by re-initiation of this war once again were not just because we wanted to respond in concern of our captured soldiers. Instead, it was because we were paid extensively and incentivized to launch this war once against Eden, enticed by promises of substantial payments in return."

Boom, that revelation came out as a strong explosion, sending the people who initially thought they wouldn't be too surprised after recovering from the first punch they had received regarding the information about Esparia's unconditional surrender. However, they found themselves proved to be completely wrong as what they heard now was something that none of them thought they would hear from the President of a country that was still partially at war— especially since Eden hadn't yet expressed their decision on whether they were going to accept the surrender or if they would just continue dishing it out with them.

"Among the bribes receivers, I personally received an upfront payment of fifty million, delivered a few weeks before the initial confrontation between Eden and us took place"

Emanuel confessed, delivering a blow that left those who believed they had regained some hold on their feet only to stumble even further.

As he continued addressing the audience, the live news feed that was being provided to anyone who wished to broadcast started changing significantly. The video of President Emmanuel speaking was relocated to the right side of the screen while the left side was used to make room for displaying the evidence backing up his words.

This visual presentation was carefully orchestrated to provide an undeniable substantiation to his assertions, leaving his supporters with little to no room for denying this in the future.

"And when we faced defeat in our first confrontation, our sponsors increased the amount of investment, supporting us in acquiring new pieces of equipment, including the advanced fighter jets for the airforce and a plethora of other latest technology which we wouldn't have normally been able to buy due to our lack of funds and limited diplomatic influence to be able to make someone agree to sell their weapons to us. Still, we had managed to buy them at a relatively lower price and even received them in such a short time, which was unprecedented. However, our efforts didn't just stop at that, we also hired a mercenary group to come and aid us in retraining our soldiers and devising strategic plans for the second round of war, which I personally stood before you to announce our declaration of it yesterday. Unfortunately, things didn't go as we had planned at all," when he finished saying that, Emanuel paused for a moment and took a deep breath as he closed his eyes, showing that he was speaking the truth and after hearing his own words, he was having a very difficult time.

A silence of fifteen seconds followed, during which the second half of the split screen, which showcased a barrage of evidence for the viewers, started playing video evidence of a meeting involving Emanuel and someone else.

This person, who nearly no one in the world knew who he was, except for a few influential people who could be seen smiling in amusement as they watched the man being let known to the public. In contrast, the remaining others frowned because they knew this situation was not good.

As for the man in the video, he could be seen getting paler and paler as he watched the press conference along with Aubrey, the head of the Morgan family, and his son, George, who was currently giving him a bombastic side-eye. However, what made him lose all the color of his face was not because of the bombastic side eye he was receiving; rather, it was the existence of the video footage of his meeting, something he was sure of not happening as he had ensured that they were inside a room that had no camera at all, especially on the said angle the video footage seemed to have been recorded from and was now broadcasted to the rest of the world.

Chapter 232 The Worlds Most Truthful Politician

The three people in the room returned to watching the press conference, deciding to postpone any form of questioning after they heard everything Emanuel had to say. This acted as nothing other than the worst nightmare which a person wouldn't want to experience personally; In his mind, the timer to his punishment had already started as he tried to come up with an explanation as to how the heck Emanuel even recorded something that happened inside a room which he was sure of having no cameras at all since he personally had made sure of that before arriving at that room.

'Shit, look like Kassim is going to make a return after all,' He thought to himself as he remembered the side eye he had received from George, who had been the mastermind behind taking Esparian side in order to make the Rothschilds, who were now humiliating them to the whole world face another loss shortly after he had made them suffer the first one.

He knew that George wouldn't care about the humiliation that much since most of the world still didn't know it was them, as Emanuel was smart enough not to speak anything about who the real backers were. What George cared the most about was the reaction of his father, Aubrey, who, after a very long and difficult struggle, had finally managed to win his affection and trust and had been enjoying the benefits of it for a few months now, which seems to be on the verge of being tossed out of the window after a president of a country that a few months ago the world wouldn't have cared if they committed a group Seppuku but now thanks to them increasing the buzz of the news about the country and had made them known to almost anyone who had internet but at the moment were using it against him to humiliate and last but not least even break the fragile bond that his master George had finally managed to build after a long struggle.

But despite the thoughts in the representative's mind of the other person in the video, he too turned his focus back to the television as Emanuel started speaking once again after taking a long pause of thirty seconds after he dropped the second massive bombshell. The only saving grace he found solace from the previous speech was the fact that Emanuel had only stated that someone was backing them and hadn't really mentioned who it was. This made him think that Emanuel was smart enough not to reveal their names, as he should also be aware of the consequences of doing so.

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"Why am I divulging this information to all of you?" Emanuel queried after his brief pause, his tone deliberate. "Was it fueled by the sense of guilt I feel for all of your sufferings? Or is it because my conscience suddenly awakened? Or because I genuinely regret having done these actions to all of you?" he continued, asking the very questions that many people actually had in their minds about why he was even outing himself, and that too with hard evidence which made sure that he won't be able to deny them in the future no matter how much he tried.

"The answer doesn't lie among any of those questions. I was forced to make this disclosure today due to the circumstances that left me with no choice." Boom, another mini bombshell, but Emmanuel didn't pause this time as he took a deep breath and continued his speech.

"Last night, at the same time our navy fleets were trying to take over Eden's bases while their air force was taking out the last of our fighter jets, they sent a unit from Eden's special forces who had somehow managed to infiltrate the entire defensive field surrounding the presidential palace and managed to arrest all of us who were in the bunker, comfortable with our families. They assured us of our families' safety, who even before that had been safe with us, unlike you who were on the land, trembling in fear and terror of their air force's bombing marathon which had been taking place"

"Subsequently, they sent back all of our family members and a selected few high-ranking officials back to Eden, promising that although our family members weren't going to be prosecuted, they would not be allowed to see us until I tell the world about the truth in which they didn't have to do so as they had the evidence of everything already. That is why I am here, talking about this in front of all of you since I need to ensure I will have a chance to meet my family again." He paused briefly, wiping the beads of sweat that were culminating on his forehead during the course of his speech, and then pressed on, his words laced with determination, "I acknowledge that it may seem pretty heartless of me to care about my family and even surrender the nation for them after all, I had been sending your loved ones to fight to their deaths against Eden in the battlefield. It is the truth that I don't deny at all, and I'm willing to bear the brunt of your hatred as long as my family remains safe."

"As for how they did that, I can't say anything about that as I am restrained from doing so and should remain quiet about whatever I saw during that night. I will comply with their directive, for I have no intention to face them again in my lifetime," he confessed, not understanding the reasoning behind this bit for being included in his speech. Nonetheless, he thought to himself that 'whatever they are the ones who wanted him to mention it anyway' so he didn't care at all, not exactly; rather, he chose not to defy a single command from the instruction he was given by that woman who even thinking about her made his consciousness shake.

"Now, with regard to the aftermath of my unconditionally surrendering to Eden, this evening, every citizen of Esparia with a phone, no matter which type of phone it is, will be given a choice to choose by themselves on whether you agree with the surrender or not. But, let me emphasize this—you better surrender. This war had always been a power play orchestrated for the sake of some powerful people who remain indifferent to how many of you die. Among them, I, too, am included, but not at the moment, as right now I'm amongst you, the unprivileged who are destined to continue living whilst being controlled by the whims of someone who doesn't even care whether you exit or not. So, today shall be the first time in the history of Esparia that you will be given a chance to have

an unrigged election in which whatever the majority chooses the outcome, that outcome will decide your country's future. Choose wisely, I am acutely aware of what happens when you don't. May god really really bless Esparia," Emanuel concluded as he turned around and left the conference room, not caring about the reporters who were trying to ask him questions about his speech at all.

Meanwhile, the feed that was playing on the right side and had been showing evidence the whole time was now being transitioned to a full screen and started showing many other meetings between the President and other high-ranking officials within the government, the mercenaries who had been planning on some missions that were no different than kamikaze ii-mission without even discussing the life loss and that whole time they had never even cared about the lives of their soldiers. In some of the footage, they could be seen smiling and laughing as they discussed the possibility of high casualties that might be happening.

This had infuriated everyone, and nearly all of the citizens- barring the few who still liked him, want to kill and chew him to death, Alas before they could even finish watching the continuing evidence footage, all of the Espairan Cltizens had their phones vibrate having received the message Emanuel had talked about in which it gave them the choice of agreeing with the surrender or continue with the war with the message being sent immediately after the press conference and not in the evening as he had stated int eh press conference.

Chapter 233 Eden's Response

After President Emanuel's speech.

One by one, all the citizens started voting. And with the timing of the vote being intentionally done at the moment, the citizens were still caught in disbelief after what they had heard moments ago. However, despite the fact that many of the citizens would have opted to surrender even if they were given some time to think about it, some of them would have chosen this course more hesitantly had they been given a moment to think about it.

But with the votes being held while their minds were still reacting and comprehending the betrayal from their president. Very few people voted against it due to either being dissatisfied with the limited options they were given— one being surrendering and the other being continuing the war, besides these two, there was nothing in between, or due to just being fervent nationalistic and couldn't handle to swallow the humiliation of having a history that recorded of their country having unconditionally surrendered so some other country.

Half an hour after the press conference, Eden started their own, to both ANNOUNCING the results of the votes and as a response to the press conference regarding Emanuel's revelations.

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Alexander, who had already begun his speech after offering a few greetings to the reporters who were attending the conference and the watchers of the press conference throughout the world.

"Firstly, I would like to start by announcing the result of the votes conducted among the citizens of Esparia regarding their choice on whether they want to accept their president's decision to surrender or not. Based on the results of their votes that were finalized ten minutes ago, sixty-eight percent of the Esparian citizens have elected to follow the last decision of their now former President Emanuel, to which we hereby announce that we have accepted their request of unconditional

surrender and promise not to demand anything that would undermine their dignity," his words were delivered with extreme seriousness, indicating that he was taking this very seriously.

"Although we have a team of our soldiers in there who are still protecting Emanuel, ensuring that he remains safe and in one piece before facing the punishment he deserves. Within the next seven hours, we will be sending twenty thousand soldiers to make sure the citizens remain calm throughout the de-escalation phase. This measure also serves to ensure that our demands are met"

"Rest assured, our soldiers have undergone good training, and I can swear on my position as the President of Eden that there will be no member of our forces who will try to exploit the situation the citizens of Esparia found themselves in. Them doing any such actions would be considered breaking my promise of maintaining the dignity of Esparian citizens and shall be punished accordingly."

"As for our course of action while moving forward, we will not be talking about them today. We will need to have a behind-the-doors discussion with our counterparts in Esparia before we choose what part of our demands are announced to the public. Following that, we will finalize the demands after a thorough evaluation of what will be beneficial for us while sparing the already defeated adversaries from undue harm, who will need both time and help to recover and return to their normal lives before everything reaches the road of no return...."

He continued his speech for another five minutes before he finally allowed the few reporters gathered in the room to ask the questions that were on their minds.

"In your speech, you referred to President Emanuel as the former President. Does this imply that you have forcefully removed him from his position, or he has chosen to resign from it?" posed a reporter from one of the country's prominent news channels.

Alexander attentively listened to the question, nodding amidst it before slightly adjusting his glasses and started providing an answer to it, "Indeed, we have removed him from his presidential position. This decision was taken due to the worry that the citizens of Esparia would choose not to comply with our demands under the reasoning that we strong-armed their president's actions as undue coercion and their agreement without giving him any chance to reason as to why we shouldn't have done something else.

To preempt such misgivings, we removed him and left his position vacant. We have come up with an assembly of negotiators from their side whom the citizens can trust to do their best to safeguard the interests of their citizens as much as possible as they return their focus to recovering to their previous condition or maybe even becoming better than before.

As for who will take the President's place following the negotiation, that will be up to the negotiators on whether they want to hold an election immediately or choose a temporary president who will be helping the country during these tumultuous periods of their nation before they can conduct an election. But the only thing I can assure the citizens of Esparia is that the government will continue being a democratic government, which we hope to cultivate better diplomatic relations with, compared to their previous government, which led to their present circumstances."

Upon finishing answering the question, Alexander pointed for another reporter to ask their question.

"Are there any conditions that are already set in stone and must be fulfilled even if the country's citizens vehemently try to oppose it?" inquired the reporter.

"Indeed, there is one such condition that remains steadfast— demilitarization and handing over the security of their country to the very same organization we entrusted our country's security with, the organization has already proven itself by winning us the war. But this doesn't entail that their military would be disbanded with their soldiers being rendered unemployed. Instead, the process will be done in the same way it had happened to us, by assimilating Esparia's entire military power," Alexander answered, pausing briefly before he added further detail to his answer, saying, "Esparia's agreement with the organization will be similar to ours where the government is only responsible for providing the upgraded salary to their soldier and a nominal few percent of taxes, while the same organization handles everything else. This model has proved quite beneficial to us," he stated with complete seriousness and confidence, making some people question themselves if they were either not understanding something and had overlooked some catch in this or because they were skeptical about questioning themselves on what might be the catch for the pseudo-PMC who were now undertaking the substantial financial responsibilities for the military and everything else without trying to gain any benefits that they could think about.

"Could you shed some light on the investigation into the influential group that initiated the war through bribery and what they had intended to gain from the conflict between the two countries?" inquired another reporter.

"At present, we cannot say it, as we need to be one hundred percent sure that they truly are the ones and ensure that we are not just randomly pointing fingers at someone who may later be found not to be the one. So, we won't rush to assign blame without any substantial evidence backing our claims. But it will take some time. Nevertheless, you can be rest assured that we will reveal the truth once we have gathered irrefutable proof," Alexander responded.

After that, several more questions were asked before he bid the reporters farewell under the pretext of coordinating troops to Esparia to ensure the local military over there doesn't do something stupid.

Chapter 234 Realizing The Existence Of A New Enemy

"TWA, TWA, TWA."

On many of Eden's military bases that had a runway, this sound continued to echo while fully geared soldiers could be seen marching towards the planes that were stationed near the runways. They started boarding the aircraft, settling in silence as they waited for the plane to take off, destined to go to Esparia.

Their objective during this mission was to monitor the local military and maintain vigilance before the start of their assimilation process, which was anticipated to begin after a few days or weeks.

The same scene could also be seen happening on the Naval bases as well, where soldiers could be seen marching toward large ships while covered completely in military gear like the others. They, too, were destined to head to Esparia.

While these were happening, the internet was set ablaze as nearly everyone who was using it was either willingly or unwillingly informed about the situation that had taken place.

Many people were taken aback by the time the entire fight had progressed as Esparia raised the white flag of surrender exactly eighteen hours after they had declared the war confidently, something that no one had expected would happen.

Another point of discussion that roamed greatly was the speculation of the amount of causality disparity between those two sides. Esparia faced the prospect of thousands of casualties, including many of their captured soldiers, reaching the total tally being more than thirty thousand.

In contrast, Eden, until now, had said there was no report of any death from their side, a fact which many people thought was something impossible and just attributed it that Eden was hiding their casualties very well.

Yet, many people who had managed to sit down and think about the entirety of the war from what public knowledge they had, came to a realization that the armies of the two nations never actually went face to face at all. Rather, it was their airforce and navy that had a face-to-face confrontation, culminating with both of the fights ending with an overwhelming victory on the Edenian side.

This realization proved quite surprising, as while many had predicted that it would be a balanced war, they had also believed that there was no way that Eden had the ability to maintain its airspace security and would be compromised due to the number of their interceptors outnumbering them by something like nine to one.

Nonetheless, Eden defied expectations as they pulled out miracles and also massacred all those aircrafts without losing even a single one of their own in the midst of it.

However, amidst these discussions, a particular group of people relentlessly tried to come up with the identity of the backers who had bribed the Esparian president to entice the war with Eden.

Among the names circulating, a few quite familiar ones came up with one of them being GAIA Technology, for instance, emerged as a suspect since just a few days ago, they had finally finished their process of terminating their registry in America and had moved the company to Eden.

However, this thought was soon eliminated from the list. Then, another group was found when people thought about who might benefit the most after this conflict. They came to the conclusion that other than Eden, it was their military, which many many of them had only learned just a few moments ago from the fact highlighted by Alexander himself during the conference that their military was a private military organization.

This group of people speculated that this PMO had orchestrated this war in order to assimilate the military of Esparia, to expand their forces.

Suspicion also fell upon powerful families like the Morgans, the Rothschilds, and many other families whose names held global recognition.

On the other side, Emanuel garnered attention from international netizens who had watched the press conference on how blunt he was. At the same time, he said everything without mincing any words, even when certain things he had said had put him on an unfavorable side from the perspective of the listeners.

This was then followed by the question as to how the heck the Eden Special Forces even infiltrated the country and captured the President and his family along with many of the other high-ranked officials of Esparia and also forced him to make that announcement.

Many found it puzzling since Emanuel didn't look like someone who had been tortured just a few hours ago. He seemed fully normal, both physically and mentally, during the conference. Thus, some thought that maybe the special forces had tortured his family members instead of him.

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Inside one of Morgan's family's many opulent mansions, a tense atmosphere permeated the living room, which had three people— two seated and one standing, could be seen silently occupying the space.

The man standing in the room, his forehead covered with beads of sweat while also slightly shaking, showed his increasing nervousness as the silence in the room grew increasingly oppressive.

Moments ago, they had finished watching the second press conference of the day, which was conducted by Eden. This event marked the final nail in the coffin of their financial downfall, confirming that they had officially lost their money and now it also seemed like Eden was going to assimilate the entire Esparian military, bringing the entire pseudo-continent under the control of one military power, making it impossible for them to cause any war once again unless they sparked chaos imminently by using their mercenaries who were there.

Yet, this strategy would be almost futile since their mercenaries could be killed in a short time due to the imminent influx of Edenian soldiers who will come to Esparia, as President Alexander had announced during the press conference.

"It's not the Rothchild's way of doing things," Aubrey was the first to speak, breaking prolonged silence in the room as he mused aloud. He had spent all this time recollecting the entire sequence of events which started right from them choosing to cause economic collapse, followed by the revelation of the Rothchild's inclusion due to Rina's visit to Eden, which promptly forced them to double down and increase their investment and inadvertently instigate the fight even further.

During the sequences, Aubrey tried to think of different scenarios, including within them, the chances that they could have gotten wrong intel, and even tried to find out what they might be based on their current situation.

Ultimately, he came to the conclusion that they had been fighting against an entirely different force.

"What do you mean by that?" queried George, Aubrey's son, his brows knitted in confusion as to what his father meant by this statement of his.

"This isn't the Rothschilds' modus operandi. Throughout our centuries-long fight, they have never brought our fight to the public eye. They knew that the moment they publicized our conflicts would only lead to a reciprocal exposure which in return would only start degrading our influence after people start to know about us. And as you are well aware of, George, the first step to having a chance of winning against your enemies is by knowing who they really are, as that would mean that you can respond to them directly in a targeted manner without having to start looking around for who the enemy might be and respond in a wide manner which is not as effective as a targeted response," Aubrey explained, his tone composed and measured while he elaborated on his statement to this son.

Although George understood what his father meant by that, he still questioned its validity as he was sure that considering that the public was already aware of their family names and their wealth, then shouldn't that mean that they have already started losing their power?

When Aubrey saw the expression on his son's face, he was slightly disappointed but not too dismayed as he delved into explaining the meaning behind his words, "While people know about

our existence, most of the time what they know is just our released narrative, meaning we control most of what they know about us. However, the moment we start bringing media and the public into our conflict, the Rothschilds will be releasing information about us that we don't want the public to know of, and we will be compelled to respond or risk being singled out for consequences. And this back-and-forth revelation would jeopardize the control we have previously had on the public perception of us. The more our fight persists— which I don't think will ever end— the more people would know about us, completing their blind spots regarding us piece by piece until they will finally have a complete picture of us before they could use that to start to dismantle us piece by piece," Aubrey elucidated, his words revealing the intricacies of his initial words.

"Aha!" George exclaimed as realization finally dawned upon him, understanding what his father meant by his previous words.

Following his reaction, he turned to the only man in the room who was standing and was trying to make his presence look as small as possible in the hope that the other two in the room would forget about him completely, George then said, addressing him directly, "So, how should we deal with you, who had brought the piece of intel that has now potentially attracted a new enemy to us," he asked in a chilly voice, causing shivers to run down the spine of the representative.

The representative now had goosebumps all over his body since he knew that all of these escalations were a result of him bringing back the intel of Rina visiting Esparia, which had tilted their plans and forced them into thinking that they were fighting against the Rothschilds, leading them to face such substantial losses and other than that also gain a new enemy all because of him.

It was at this moment that he knew he....

Chapter 235 Starting From The Beginning.

"Please, sir, give me some time. I will find out who it is and how we can force them to repay the losses they have inflicted on us twofold," the representative pleaded, his tone willed with desperation as he got to his knees before them. He knew that his failure to convince them would have dire consequences and would become Kassim 2.0, something he was determined to avoid after being aware of Kassim's fate.

"And how do you plan to do that?" George's face held an amused smile as he asked, trying to hide his annoyance for having faced defeat against someone new just because their plans were accidentally hinged on anticipating the response from the Rothschilds, and due to their enemy not really being the Rothschilds, their miscalculations during the planning had cost them dearly, exposing their lack of effectiveness after finding the enemy's better foundation in Esparia when compared to theirs.

"Since we can't expect the Esparian to do anything now, I intend to assemble a task force to start reinvestigating all the reports about Rina's tour Rina and find out who else she had met during her visit to Eden and then investigate them as well. The people she might have met must be powerful enough to warrant a personal visit from Rina, which is also something they tried to cover by making it seem as if the reason for her visit to the country was to meet with the President," the representative explained, not caring to wipe the cold sweat that was trickled into his eyes causing him stinging feeling in his eyes.

"Good plan, but you won't be handling this operation alone since you seem to have a problem leading an operation. You will collaborate with Kassim, who has proven his competence over the

past month after doing the task handed to him. Working together should help you finish the investigation faster," George instructed, causing the representative to let out a bitter smile, but he still hid it, knowing that the moment George saw his resentment, he won't even be given another chance to make himself get out of this after causing such loss.

"Yes, sir," the representative replied, hiding the profanities he was mentally spewing with a smile on his face.

"Good, then you can go," George said, dismissing him with a casual wave, signaling him to leave them alone. The representative wasted no time and immediately complied by leaving the room as fast as possible, not wanting to spend even a minute more inside that room.

After the representative had rushed out, George turned to his father and inquired, "Father, who do you think is the one behind all this?" trying to see if his father had his suspicions as to who it might be.

"At this juncture, there are none. However, it's unlikely that they hail from a prominent family like ours either because now that I think about it, our counteraction with a bit of investment seems to have triggered someone's primary stronghold, which they had already prepared defenses for. We should start by considering those individuals who have substantial power within Eden but limited presence elsewhere," Aubrey said, hinting at the existence of some entities who only had a considerable amount of power only in Eden and nowhere else, meaning they were a juggernaut only in that specific country and lacked having any significant influence in other places like them.

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While most of the world was buzzing with discussion about it, Moscow and many countries from similar time zones were relatively quieter than the rest since it was a night for them.

Inside one of the heavily guarded neighborhoods famed for its safety, a place where numerous influential people had their residences, a beautiful woman donned in tight-fitting long trousers and a blouse, topped with a leather coat that was trying to partially conceal her perfectly contoured, natural breasts that were firmly grasped by her bra, securing them firmly. She walked with poise, making her way through one of the streets in the neighborhood.

Her composed stride continued until she reached a beautiful villa. She paused for a moment to gather herself before she started advancing towards it until she reached the door and rang the doorbell, and patiently waited for the door to open.

After a few seconds, the villa's door swung open, revealing a man in his twenties whose eyes immediately widened in surprise as he took in the sight of the stunning woman who stood at his doorstep. A few seconds later, he realized what he was doing and recovered his composure while asking, "What can I help you with?"

"Someone wants you to answer for something that you've done to him before," the woman responded with a captivating voice, making him almost entranced without understanding what she was telling him.

He needed a moment to grasp what she meant by her words entirely. Swiftly, he withdrew his right hand that was behind the door and pointed it at her, or rather, he tried to do so. However, before he could even react further and start making any movements, the woman before him lunged forward, her right hand delivering a powerful punch right in his abdomen. The force of this blow from the

woman was quite massive as he was pushed back even further than what he had anticipated after being punched by a woman; at the same time, with a similar fluid motion, the woman used her left hand to seize his hand and disarming him of his gun, at the same time she crushed a finger that failed to let off of the weapon. This was immediately followed by her seizing the moment as she entered the house and firmly closed the door behind her to make sure there were no unintended witnesses.

"Who sent you?" Vladimir asked, his voice tinged with fear as he watched in surprise as the woman started dismantling the gun she had just taken from him while clutching his stomach as he still felt pain from the punch he had received a few moments ago.

"I was sent here by the Intelligence Department of Eden," she answered as she started dismantling the gun, not planning to use it as she discarded the pieces onto the floor.

Confusion etched on Vladimir's face as he struggled to really any interaction with her, her department, or even any connection to it, "What the heck is that? I don't even remember having any interaction with you, the department, or even anyone connected to it, I didn't even know that it existed in the first place," he talked about, gritting his teeth, trying to buy some time for himself so that the pain in his stomach and his finger would subside a bit, which would allow him to take her down in a slightly better condition.

"Aron Michael," she mentioned the name with as much respect as possible before she added, "Does that name ring any bells to you?" as she rotated the last piece of the gun with her finger.

When Vladimir heard the name, his eyes widened in surprise since that was a name that he could never forget; it was thanks to that person that he had got this promotion.

"Then, he should have sent someone who was smart enough to use a gun to her advantage when given an opportunity," he retorted, his voice filled with frustration, as he lunged at the woman, aiming to throw his fist right at her face to hit her.

Seeing this, the woman simply smiled and took a graceful step to the side, intercepting his fist, and then swiftly turned around and back-elbowed him in the very same spot of his abdomen where she had punched him in the first place; however, she used even more force than the first time. The intensity of the blow forced Vladimir's body to tilt forwards ninety degrees involuntarily from pain. Still not pausing, the woman once again elbowed Vladimir at the back of his neck, which at the moment was only at the level of her waist due to his posture. The force from the blow sent him crashing face-first onto the marble flooring, his nose audibly breaking from the impact before he fainted.

"Alright, now let's get you out of here," she murmured in a casual tone before effortlessly hoisting Vladimir and putting him on her shoulder, carrying him towards the door that led to the villa's garage. It was as though she was lifting a lightweight pillow rather than a fully grown man.

Chapter 236 Arriving In Esparia.

That Sunday proved to be a challenging one for the citizens of Esparia as their day started with the influx of soldiers still arriving from Eden, increasing their numbers from yesterday's arrival of twenty thousand soldiers.

Although many of the Esparians had witnessed the Edenian President's press conference, very few of them truly believed the promise made by the Edenian president, mentioning that no harm will be

caused due to their soldiers. In fact, some had already expected the soldiers to go wild to seize this opportunity and abuse their powers by indulging in misconducts for their own benefits, like stealing and raping women, using their victory to satisfy their personal desires, and regarding it as their spoils of war.

But contrary to such apprehensions, nothing of such sorts was heard since yesterday. In fact, the behavior of the Edenian troops contradicted these expectations. The first group of a thousand soldiers who had arrived directly went to the presidential palace and focused their efforts on replacing the Esparian military guards that were stationed there. This move was to secure the palace and make sure that it had a safe environment for the upcoming negotiations meeting that was set to take place in a matter of a few days.

Following that, the next ten thousand Edenian soldiers that arrived were strategically dispersed throughout the city. Their presence was to ensure that no public discourse was caused by the dissatisfied citizens, as that could potentially cause a nationwide mass rebellion. This approach would change the situation from a country that was surrendering to a country that was on the brink of being broken to pieces due to different groups of rebellion rising from different cities, each with a different agenda. And to avoid it from starting from other cities too, another segment consisting of nine-thousand soldiers who had arrived yesterday were dispersed in other major cities, at the same time taking control over the military bases and commencing the process of registering the soldiers' information. This data was collected so that it would serve as preparation for the upcoming assimilation process that was set to occur after the completion of the negotiations.

For today, Eden was planning on sending an additional fifty-thousand soldiers, which will also be the last batch of soldiers that will be sent to Esparia for peacekeeping. This final batch of soldiers would be responsible for the protection during the whole negotiation duration and military assimilation. The soon-to-be-assimilated soldiers would be needed to be sent to Avalon Island to go through their training. They would return back to their post in Esparia before the stationed soldiers in the country could even be considered for returning back home. This period was expected to be ranging from a month at the earliest and three months at the most, which should be sufficient time for them to complete all the training of the new soldiers who would be joining their ranks within that period.

However, not everyone within Esparia remained calm. A segment of soldiers who were way too nationalistic decided not to agree with the decision that was made by the President and the sixty-eight percent of the population. They decided to group up and conduct guerrilla warfare to cause as much trouble for Edenian soldiers as possible throughout the negotiations period. They anticipated a swift and short resolution given the unconditional surrender, meaning that their government practically had no power to deny anything that would be demanded by the winners at all. All they could do was suggest against it or hope their enemies weren't too greedy, something they thought could only occur in their dreams.

But all of their dreams of causing chaos were abruptly extinguished moments after they declared their intent. The only evidence of their existence that remained was the massive crater that was way too overkill for the entire group, indicating that their rebellion had met a swift and devastating end. This display of force served as both an example and a warning to anyone who had even a semblance of the audacity to entertain the notion of causing trouble for the other nation.

Thanks to that crater which now acted as a warning, and the ongoing influx of highly disciplined soldiers in the streets, the country's situation had now fully stabilized. The situation had even started to return to the condition when the country previously was into the whole war shenanigans, as the presence of the vigilant soldiers deterred any potential upheaval.

Furthermore, another benefit of the extensive deployment of highly disciplined soldiers in the streets all the time, every day, for the whole week, had greatly reduced the crime rate by more than ninety-five percent in all cities which had soldiers within them. This was due to the gear the soldiers were wearing had a device that covered a three-kilometer radius; it meant that only a small group of soldiers needed to be stationed within the bubble of this radius for them to react to any situation at once, enabling more soldiers to be dispersed throughout the city. Using this built-in integration, Athena

was able to collect all of this data and create all the cities' real-time data share, meaning that the whole city was under surveillance without anyone even knowing that they were being watched at all. This significantly enhanced public safety and security.

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"FWUUUUUUUUUU!" The distinctive roar of two SU-35 fighter jets reverberated through the skies of those living in the vicinity of the Esparias main airport. This airport was still not open for public use and was under the control of the Edenian army was preparing to accommodate a private airplane that was being escorted by those two fighters and was on its final approach, preparing for landing at the airport.

The private airplane's tail bore the Edenian presidential emblem, a clear indication of who it was carrying. The accompanying fighter jets only served on publicly announcing the arrival of the President of Eden.

Following the plane's landing and taxiing back to a place where it was instructed, Alexander disembarked and was greeted by the presidential guards. Comprising an elite branch that was made not too long ago and consisted of the people who had the best of the best marks. These select few had the choice of choosing to protect the president or join the special forces, meaning all the people standing in front of him and some that had flown with him were the best of the best, which he was thankful to Aron for; however, he was surprised by the number of cars that were there to escort him.

The surprise stemmed from being aware of the fact that all these cars were custom-made by Aron's company and had to be transferred here during the last, and by his estimate, he managed to count twenty of them— a formidable convoy where each of these cars was capable of entering a war zone and come out from the other side of it while remaining unscathed. These cars were powered with a new groundbreaking fuel that was discovered by Aron's company, which allowed it to traverse for more than a few thousand kilometers on just a single tank without having to worry about refueling.

"Let's move, Mr president," said a guard, snapping Alexander from his trance, followed by him immediately starting to walk down the stairs and board one of the similar looking four cars. The convoy then started heading out, flanked by four motorcycles followed by vehicles that looked like police cars. The procession was followed by more and more vehicles that had different specialized equipments in them, including one radar-equipped unit, to make sure nothing of the sort of an attack is even near the president by even a few kilometers, as anything they discover to be even slightly

dangerous will be dealt by one of the other cars that were carrying completely armed soldiers in the convoy, diverting from it and heading to deal with it promptly before returning and joining the convoy once again and during this time the convoy would still be traveling at the maximum speed possible in the certain terrain.

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At the same time, in a secluded area, a submarine started its docking procedure under a roofed docker for submarines to evade the lurking gazes of the satellites.

Following the submarine's docking process, soldiers started disembarking from it with those at the front carrying someone who had his hands tied by black-looking zip ties, closely followed by a group of elegantly dressed women who were wearing comfortable and casual-looking clothes that had become a signature attire for those that hailed from the intelligence department.

This submarine's mission was to retrieve both the team responsible for apprehending the individual and the target himself. Upon reaching the retrieval location, the intelligence team agreed to meet with the submarine. A high-speed boat was sent to carry them and send them back to the submarine before it once again dived into the waters and remained submerged, never to rise until its recent docking for this operation.

Chapter 237 The Unscratchable Itch

Vladimir, who had been asleep, could be seen having subtle eye movements despite having his eyelids closed, hinting that something was messing with him while he was in his slumber.

However, at the moment, he was unsure of the cause. Nonetheless, something seemed to be trying to interrupt his good sleep, something that he hadn't experienced much since he joined the government, and due to his history as a former KGB agent, he was conditioned to always live with a perpetual sense of paranoia about someone or the other planning to attack him, since there was a possibility of retaliation from the people whom he might have crossed with during his espionage days as it was likely that would target him and try to seek revenge from him.

With a history of sleep deprivation due to constant vigilance, he would always be wary of any disruptions during his much-needed rest.

He desperately moved to and fro, hoping to shake off this disturbing thing so that he would be allowed to continue his sleep without being forced to wake up. Unfortunately, the irritation persisted and even became more annoying the longer he ignored it. Begrudgingly, he opened his eyes, waking up in the hope of dealing with it as fast as possible so that he could return back to his sleep before he lost the embrace of drowsiness.

Upon waking up, he immediately realized what the cause of his discomfort was. He was being disturbed by an itch on his left thigh. At first, he attempted to alleviate it by scratching, hoping that he would be able to return back to his sleep immediately; however, even after fifteen seconds of constant scratching, he could still feel the sensation increasing, in fact, it didn't even give him the ecstasy one would usually feel after scratching a constant itching spot, even if it was not disappearing.

Nevertheless, no matter how hard he tried to scratch the spot where he felt the itching. It was as if he was trying to scratch something that was covered with a glass surface, blocking his access to it, meaning he could do nothing about it. This only served to exacerbate his frustration.

Faced with this situation, he immediately opened his eyes to his surroundings and realized that he was in completely unfamiliar surroundings. This immediately sent his senses into overdrive, his body immediately pumping out adrenaline to wake him up and remove every last semblance of drowsiness he had. The previous scratching ordeal faded out of his mind as quickly as possible.

His focus shifted to his immediate environment as he tried to access where he was together with wondering how he got here in the first place, to this, his brain immediately reminded him of the beautiful woman whom he had either met yesterday or a few hours ago, who despite being able to speak Russian fluently didn't seem like a native, followed by her introduction by saying she was from the Edenian Intelligence Department or something, only cemented his hypothesis about her affiliation.

"Where the heck on Earth did she bring me to?" he muttered, a blend of relenting in surprise at him having been defeated and being incapacitated even before he could realize, which was pretty embarrassing for him, who prided himself on his fighting ability and that being a loss against a woman only doubled down on his embarrassment.

But before he could delve further into any more questions and try to inspect his surroundings, his brain immediately reminded him of the itch he had forgotten about, thanks to the adrenal boost.

However, this time it had expanded to envelop his left knee and even spread upward until his left ball felt the itchiness which seemed to have now increased to nearly double of what it was when he woke up.

"ARGHHHH!" He groaned, his frustration and discomfort culminating in a desperate attempt to scratch it with his hand moving it up and down as fast as possible, his movements even reaching a point where even small traces of blood could be seen coming from his skin as he vigorously continued to scratch the location. But no matter how hard he tried to ease it, nothing about the itch seemed to have changed other than the itch increasing and expanding even further, now covering the rest of his private parts and moving to his right thigh.

The experienced KGB agent who had been trained in the art of dealing with torture fell down to his knees as he desperately tried to scratch both his anus along with his balls and dick, which were the most itching regions, as they had more sensitive nerves compared to the combined area of other itching zones.

His desperation escalated as the sensation intensified as he moved from being on his knees while trying to squat so that he could have a wider access to all those three sensitive locations. After which, he started scratching them even more aggressively than he previously did, going against the famous Confucius quote – Only when a mosquito lands on your testicles, will you truly learn that there is always a way to solve problems without using anger and violence– since at the moment Vladimir was scratching both of his most sacred places as if he intended to rip them off him.

This continued for ten agonizing minutes until crumbles of the skin on his balls and anus could be seen in his slightly long fingernails which was a result of him continuously scratching them for that period which did nothing to alleviate the torment he was going through.

"ARRRRRGHHHHHHHHH!" he bellowed, his primal scream an attempt to numb his brain so that even for a slight moment, he could forget about this sensation he was feeling, which had not spread throughout his entire being, leaving him utterly defenseless. He lay there, vulnerable and helpless as someone would be on the verge of death, his forehead showing a hint of damage whilst being covered by the soil—evidence of his desperate efforts to alleviate his torment by bashing his head on the ground, hoping to knock himself unconscious and escape from the agony.

Unfortunately, his attempt to overcome this agonizing torment proved futile. There was no respite, no momentary relief, and nothing of the sort of fainting after he bashed his head on the ground, trying to force himself to turn unconscious. He remained completely conscious, writhing in agony, as he followed by trying to exhaust himself by screaming until he ran out of energy and lay there helplessly, hoping for the misery to end as soon as possible.

After an agonizing five hours of this continuous suffering, Vladimir's brain finally came to a decision to make him faint, and he closed his eyes slowly. As his eyes fluttered shut, a smile graced his face at the thought of being released from this tormenting ordeal.

"We are just starting," these words echoed, which was followed by his entire body regaining energy and his brain canceling the fainting sequence that it had initiated, causing Vladimir to almost burst a vein in anger. Still, before he could even word his feelings, he found himself having been transported to a different location, while the itch completely disappeared like a mirage, leaving with him only the memories of the torment and the trauma of the ordeal where he had to deball himself in the pursuit of saving himself from the itch which brought him to no relief in the end.

Chapter 238 How To Break A Man

"YOU!!!!!" Vladimir shouted, his voice a mixture of fear, surprise, and disbelief as he laid eyes and focused on the man who said those words. At the same time, he tried to comprehend what the heck had happened to him moments ago, and now that his mind was clear, he also couldn't help but wonder how they were even able to transport him here immediately.

"Long time no see. How are you doing?" Aron's calm smile and casual greeting sent shivers down Vladimir's spine, a stark contrast to the turmoil which he felt within.

"What did you do to me? Did you hypnotize me? You do realize that my government will be looking for me, right? Given the time it took me to wake up, it seems like we are still in Russia. In here, they can find anyone as long as they put their minds to it, you know, right?" He fired his questions like bullets as he tried to come up with a hypothesis that would make sense as to what was happening to him. At the same time, he was trying to intimidate the man in front of him so that he could force him to release him or at least delay his torment for more time to reduce the torture he would have to go through until they were able to find him, even if he reduced it by some negligible time.

"Don't worry about our fun ending too early. No one will find you anytime soon, anyway. Moreover, I didn't hypnotize you or did any similar manipulation. Everything that you experienced was as real as it can be, with just some help from my side, that's it." Aron answered Vladimir's question with carefreeness of the world, as though he held all the time in the world to do whatever

he wanted with no one being able to interrupt him. These words of his caused Vladimir to feel a chill to the depth of his bones.

"Shall we start anew, this time with double the nerve sensitivity?" Aron said before Vladimir was teleported once again to the forest. Horror gripped him, and he reacted instinctively by screaming the moment he saw the forest that surrounded him and tried to run away without even trying to comprehend how Aron was even able to do that. Alas, no matter how hard he tried to move and run, he had no control over any of the muscles in his body, leaving him paralyzed and helplessly before he was forcefully put to sleep for the cycle to start once again, but this time with his nerves being made as twice as sensitive than the first time.

His ordeal was far from over, poised to begin anew, with his torment deepening with each passing cycle.

Vladimir, who was sleeping, could be seen having his eyes moving restlessly despite his eyelids being closed, hinting that something was messing with him.

This time, he snapped awake without procrastinating any longer as the memories of this previous event were still with him. As his senses returned, he frantically scanned his surroundings, his heart pounding with fear and dread.

The moment he woke up, he immediately lunged at a massive boulder within the forest, smashing himself onto it headfirst, trying to break open his head so that he could have an end to the suffering he had to go through previously and didn't want to experience the same thing anymore, much less with twice the sensitivity.

"ARGGHHHHH!" A guttural scream erupted from his mouth after his head collided with the stone, causing blood to flow out of his injury, yet failed to render any of his desired outcomes. While his skull bore the brunt of this impact, there was no other damage, such as damage to his spinal cord or anything else. At the same time, his body still remained in full control of his motion, and he was still conscious.

Together with the head-butting pain followed a reminder of the ever-intensifying itch that clawed at him once again. This time, he was acutely aware that the itchiness had truly doubled, even doubling the torment coursing through him. This caused him to scream in fear and horror at the thought that he will have to spend the next hours experiencing the unquenchable itchiness, an itch which he could do nothing about.

This time however, he just sat down and tried to endure it by summoning all of his willpower as he remembered that the first time he dabbled himself from the itch, it would double the itchiness he would feel on the wounded location, causing him to feel itchier than the itchiness on top of other unharmed skins.

The brief concentration he gained from trying to concentrate gave his brain a chance to think about how the heck his body didn't enter a shock the first time he felt those excruciating itches. After he had endured it for about an hour, which was supposed to happen as a sort of defense mechanism to protect himself, it didn't come until the fifth hour, when it finally kicked in quite late in the game.

Unfortunately, before he could come up with a reasonable hypothesis of the situation he was in, his brain weirdly returned its focus back to the itchiness, causing tears of horror and fear to stream

down his face as he started screaming as best as he could to tire himself as fast as possible, each second stretched into eternity for him as he grappled with the maddening sensations.

A few hours later.

"Are you prepared for the third round?" Upon hearing those words this time, Vladimir's consciousness shattered as he was on the cusp of surrendering to unconsciousness. Just like the previous time, his body was once again transported back to a room where Aron was sitting in front of him the same way he was sitting there last time.

After seeing him, Vladimir immediately got on his knees and started pleading, "Please forgive me, sir, please forgive me, sir, I will be your loyal dog for the rest of my life if you want me to. I will follow all of your orders even if you order me to kill someone from the Kremlin. If you want me to drown myself in a sea of fire, I will do it, but please don't send me to that place anymore. Please!" With tears streaming down his face, he continued begging.

However, Aron, who was still calm despite Vladimir's begging, cold-heartedly said, "I will consider your plea, but not at the moment. I have planned for you to get ten rounds of this, with the pain doubling with each round. So please, delay your begging until then. Then we can talk and decide the next course of action. Now, go to experience it once again," Aron said before snapping his fingers, causing Vladimir to disappear and reappear once again within the same forest, trapped in a cycle of torture that showed no mercy. He was put to sleep, destined and repeated to suffer the same torture once again with double the previous sensitivity.

A few hours later, he was sent once again and again and again and again and again until, [Sir, if he continued to experience it anymore, he will reach a road of no return] Nova interjected just when Aron was about to send him for one more round.

"How long is the cooldown and healing going to take?" Aron asked, seemingly dissatisfied, despite doing it for such an extended period of time.

[

It has been discovered that someone or something is trying to access the brain map and other information regarding the user.

[Allow Access] [Block Access]

]

Instead of an answer, Aron received a notification that informed him that Nova was attempting to access his brain data which he interpreted to be for accessing his mental state.

Chapter 239 Therapy

[It has been discovered that someone or something is attempting to access the user's brain map and other personal information.

[Allow Access] [Block Access]

]

Without hesitating for even a second, Aron selected [Allow Access], granting Nova access to his brain data. After that, he remained silent, patiently waiting for her to finish her analysis of his condition and deliver him the report of it.

[How do you feel now, after you re-educated him in the universal simulation for more than a week?] Nova inquired after she teleported them inside an office that looked like a therapist's workplace. She then sat at the doctor's chairs before raising her left thigh and putting it on top of her right one while she held a notebook on her lap— completely taking the role of Aron's therapist.

Her qualifications were indeed unquestionable. Armed with a few terabytes of data about mental conditions and other brain-related matters, made her an expert who was completely qualified to be the perfect candidate for this, and given Aron's brain being of unique composition differentiating him from normal people, she had an up-to-date understanding of it, making no one better than her at doing this.

"I don't feel anything at all, nor any sort of satisfaction or anything that could be close to that," he replied bluntly, causing him to immediately pause for a brief moment, coming to a realization that something seemed to be weirdly wrong within him, and with a surprised and worried face, Aron asked in a slightly scared tone, "Did my personality change as the result of gaining absolute power?" A slight fear could be felt within his tone, something that hadn't happened in a long time, at least not since after the incident that led to his shooting.

[No, you should have realized that it is too drastic of a change to occur to you after gaining such power after a mere few months] Nova reassured, trying to calm him down a little before they could continue their therapy session.

"Then what caused this? Was it you?" Aron inquired, eager to identify the source of such a transformation within him.

[No, it wasn't me. These shifts in your mental state seem to have subtly started appearing after the day you were shot, and since then, it also seems to have gradually grown as well. Its pace was such an absurdly slow that even I missed it due to it not being the focus of my previous brain data collections and simply logged it as just your personality adapting due to various circumstances that were forced upon you] Nova explained from her chair, which had materialized for her.

"Shouldn't my brain be protected by the system from such mental conditions, making it impossible for me to have something like this happen without being intercepted by it?" Aron's surprise was evident as his expectations from the system's safeguard, which he had heard from Nova, were met with disappointment.

[Due to the system limiting the amount of brain data that I can gather from you, this is just a hypothesis based on my simulations. But, the system may be the one which is influencing these subtle changes and had also managed to conceal them from me until now when I explicitly asked for it, forcing the system to release it] Nova answered, dropping a bombshell from an unexpected angle.

Still, in his surprised state, Aron muttered, "But why?" as he tried to grapple with rationalizing the system's actions towards him.

[I speculate that the system is trying to guide your development to what it deems to be the most optimal path, either to help you accomplish your objectives or to fulfill its own] Nova answered, providing him with two possible explanations showing that due to unavailability of consistent data about the system and the limitations of her understanding, she couldn't come to the true hypothesis yet.

"Does this mean that there is a chance that the system might be exploiting me for its own agenda?" Aron asked, his fear resurfacing, an emotion that had been long absent seemed to be making its appearance more than once today. "Also, is it sentient?" he inquired further.

[I don't suppose it is; otherwise, it would have been conversing with you. The closest thing I can think of is that it's an advanced program for a far-advanced civilization, either from the future or from an alternate universe. Yet, we can't completely rule out the possibility of it being sentient. This hypothesis would hint at three possibilities for it not initiating a conversation with you despite being sentient: the first being that it is a different level of consciousness, meaning that it might be normal for it not to initiate contact with you and nothing is wrong with it; as for the second, your brain doesn't have enough computing and mental power to allow for the accommodation of two consciousness, suggesting that its consciousness will only emerge when you have either evolved or you have found another way of increasing your brain and mental power. And lastly, this might just mean that the system has a hidden agenda and that it is not contacting you so that you will remain oblivious of it, but that is not likely] Nova answered with calmness.

"Why do you hold such a perspective?" Aron inquired, curious as to why Nova removed the suspicion of the system having a hidden agenda.

[If it really did have an agenda, it would mean that it would do its best to make sure that you wouldn't even get a hint of intuition of such a thing happening to you. And all it had to do was to make my source code have all the capabilities but at the same time block me from having such ideas about it at all, which seems something that is easily doable by it based on the list of the technologies I accessed from your memories] Nova explained, clarifying her reasoning, prompting Aron to nod at all of her points in agreement.

"But could this also be a part of its plans so as to eliminate all of our suspicions from it once and for all?" Aron mused after contemplating the situation.

[That would be a waste of planning since all of these shenanigans could be avoided by just blocking that thought from us once and for all, meaning we wouldn't even be suspecting it in the first place] Nova retorted, disagreeing with Aron's assumption.

"Your reasoning also makes sense. However, what exactly was it trying to mold me into by subtly influencing the changes in my personality?" Aron asked, moving to another topic after having agreed that any more discussion on this topic was completely unnecessary as they had a data drought on this certain topic.

[Although it was just in the initial phases of molding you, the way in which it was implementing the changes would have made you a neutral reactor. Essentially, no matter what happens, you will always remain neutral and avoid having an extreme emotional reaction which would have resulted in the impairment of your judgment. However, achieving that would have taken at least a few decades before the perfect version of such a personality was finally complete] Nova elaborated calmly.

Chapter 240 Recovering

Inside therapy session.

Upon hearing Nova's elaborate explanation, Aron released a sigh of relief. Yet, an underlying feeling of strangeness forced him to ask, "But why didn't I experience any bad emotions like self-disgust for the grossly disproportionate punishment I dished out to Vladimir if my personality would have taken a few decades to manifest into what the system planned me to become?"

[You triggered the system's emergency protocols when it sensed that your feeling of disgust for yourself and empathy for the man who had made you suffer might have hindered its progress of molding you and put it into setbacks, which would then force it to start from scratch once again. Hence, it suppressed the production of certain hormones to prevent you from feeling those emotions, and since I can't access your brain map in real-time, I failed to discover this happening until after observing your behavior when you sent him for the third round of the itch torture, during which I started monitoring your behavior for the rest of the week to gather as much data as possible to confirm my hypothesis at the sometimes coming up with a solution] Nova clarified, explaining her actions.

"Is it possible to undo the changes the system has made to me? I don't want to lose my emotions and become an unemotional prick. There is no meaning to life without an appropriate emotional reaction to the situations you face. Additionally, if I had to do something that needs neutrality in emotion, all I have to do is ask you to be the one to take the decisions, as you can make yourself emotionless at any time you are required to," Aron inquired.

[Yes, but you will have to be in a prolonged state of coma that will last for about a week. During that period, we will be overhauling the changes done to you throughout the period of over a year, essentially condensing the timeline into a matter of weeks, so it can't be done while you are awake. Moreover, I also plan to use this opportunity to impart some of the knowledge that you had been postponing their assimilation, effectively killing two birds with one stone] Nova said assuringly.

"WUUUUUHH," Aron exhaled a long sigh of relief upon hearing that these alterations could be removed and he would be allowed to return to his normal self and evolve naturally, free from the system's influence.

[You seem more relieved than angered by the system's attempt at trying to change your personality] Nova observed, quite amused at Aron's reaction to the system's attempts at changing him.

"Although it shouldn't have done that, it most likely did this for me, to allow me a mind that can utilize my capabilities to the best of it. As for it having other agendas, I will find answers from it when my brain possesses enough power to allow for its potential consciousness to come online if such a consciousness even exists in the first place. Another reason for my relief is that this made me realize that I'm not changing like this just because of the power I have gained. If I really was changing due to my power, then I don't want anyone to have to face that version of me. That version of me will do some despicable things to them to achieve my goal, a prospect that terrifies me."

[Are you saying that you are afraid of doing something that can be considered immoral?] Nova teased, aware of many of his remorseless actions.

"While I do not have any trouble doing immoral things when called for it, I don't want to be doing such an act without any purpose, as I don't enjoy doing them. Because the moment I get accustomed to doing it and even start enjoying them, the moral compass that my parents worked hard to instill in me would be skewed, which may result in me ending up becoming a brutal tyrant, Someone who doesn't care about anything else as long as it helps me accomplish my dream."

"This is something that can happen even now since I have a group of what could be said to be fanatics. Either they naturally became that way, or we artificially influenced them to be such. Regardless of which one of them they are, they will always obey my orders, no matter how brutal they might seem. This puts a very heavy burden on my behavior and decisions," he said in a lengthy manner, sharing every worry in his chest without trying to sugarcoat anything.

Upon hearing Aron's words, she responded, [Being afraid of going over the line due to having no restraints on you from doing anything is good. It indicates that you still have the conscience and the ability to differentiate between the good and the bad] while at the same time, she levitated the chair she was seated in until she reached Aron.

With a gentle touch, she placed her smooth and beautiful right hand on Aron's, which now rested on his knee. Applying some light pressure on it, she reassures, [You don't have to worry about your moral compass being skewed, as mine won't. And since I will always be on your side, I will ensure to remain as your moral compass and make sure that nothing of that sort happens. I will always stand and counter it if I find you doing something that might be needlessly immoral while there still are other ways of accomplishing the task] Her voice was soothing and calming, aimed at providing Aron with the assurance that he needed the most right now.

While her promise was being delivered to Aron, many transformations started occurring within Nova's typically unchanged source code. A few billion lines of new code were automatically being written, joining the trillions of lines of code that already constituted her programming. This transformation was a testament to her commitment to upholding the promise she had made to her master— a promise that would never be overlooked unless the situation warranted it.

A support system, designed to bolster and protect Aron's character from evolving in a bad manner was now etched inside one of his closest confidantes.

...

An hour later.

Inside what could be considered a lab, based on the many advanced equipment present within it, was one of many rooms on the second underground floor of the massive square building. Aron could be seen sitting with his eyes closed as he placed his hand on top of one of the two distinct-looking pods that were positioned in front of him.

The pods looked rather different when compared to the ones being used by the soldiers of Eden for their training. Anyone who was familiar with both versions would instinctively recognize that the two pods in front of Aron were several generations more advanced than those counterparts that were present on the lowermost floor of this building.

Aron's concentration was focused on etching intricate runes onto the two pods. Each rune was imbued with purpose and intent, meaning that at the moment, they were receiving real-time

upgrades, evolving into an even more sophisticated version of themselves than what they were following their printing under his guidance.

After dedicating more than six hours to etching over twenty runes on each of the pods, Aron finally stopped his work.

Following that, he called his family, who were still touring the country and enjoying themselves. He informed them that he would be out of contact for about a week or two since he had something important to do at the company and bid them farewell before placing his phone on a nearby table.

Before long, a stretcher was brought into the room, carried by soldiers. Upon the stretcher lay Vladimir, who was in a semi-comatose. The soldiers carefully transferred his naked body into one of the pods.

Upon noticing Vladimir's condition, Aron realized that he had narrowly escaped becoming a monster and was grateful that his condition was discovered earlier and not in the later stages when he couldn't have been able to do anything about it.

After the soldiers carrying the stretcher left, the chamber's door sealed automatically, locking itself. Aron then started undressing himself, completely disrobing himself before entering the other empty pod in the room.

"PFFFFFFFFF" The two pods gradually started closing, releasing some mist during their closing sequence before a "TIK" sound came, indicating that the pods were now locked.

"HRMMMMMMM" A subtle hum emanated from the machines as both Aron and Vladimir donned with breathing masks that were automatically fitted on their faces securely. The chamber they were in then began to fill with the purest, low-level Mana, which the reactor could condense, submerging both of them completely under the golden liquid.

[DING]!!!!

[

It has been detected that something is trying to undo the system's evolutionary influence on the user's personality, which the system deems crucial. Do you wish to grant permission for the process to proceed?

[Proceed] [Interfere]

]

Midway through his transition into an induced coma, Aron received the system's notification. After reading it, he selected [PROCEED] with his thoughts before being completely put into a coma, bound to not wake up until the completion of this process.