

Descent 1361

Chapter 1361 Archetypes

Aina couldn't have been more right. In fact, she was so right that Leonel almost regretted not having asked this question earlier. All of his tendencies, she had gotten down to an exact science.

Leonel rarely, if ever, went all out in battle. Sometimes it wasn't even as Aina said and that he just felt there was a more efficient way to win, sometimes it was just because he liked having trump cards in his back pocket to prepare a perfect counter attack given the situation.

The style of battle Leonel liked to use was one that withheld as many cards as possible until it was the most advantageous moment to use them. There was even a very long time in his life where he didn't even use his Speed Branch of his Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor because it was so much more beneficial to have his enemies believe him to be a slow, bumbling, spearman.

And this was just one example, Leonel could think of countless others Aina hadn't mentioned, like his Wisdom Branch, his Gravity Domain, sometimes he even neglected to use his Radiant Force despite the fact Fire Elemental Force was quite literally one of his most powerful weapons.

Then there was the most glaring one: His Bow Force.

It was fine if Leonel saved his Bow Force as a trump card back when he could only use it two or three times in battle before collapsing. But now that he had a Quasi Life Grade bow, he quite literally didn't have this problem at all, it had been entirely negated.

Yet, Leonel was content to keep this card in back pocket, waiting for the moment he had to use it.

But, all of this was fine until Leonel considered the words Aina hadn't spoken...

A true warrior brought out their greatest strength and forced their enemies to meet them on their terms. They didn't care about the retaliation of their enemy because they were already confident that their greatest strength would trump everything. Compared to this ideal, Leonel was sorely lacking. In fact, his battle style could even be said to be directly opposing to valiant.

In some way, he had been aware of this. That was why during his battle with Myghell, he had chosen not to use his Ability Index at all. Leonel was far too confident in his ability to win with his mind. Even the likes of Myghell would only be a matter of an added bit of effort.

If Leonel was honest, though, let alone a valiant warrior, his method of battle definitely didn't feel like the way of a King either, and that was just the honest truth.

Leonel fell into his thoughts, not quite sure of what direction to go in.

He didn't want to become a brute who only thought of honor in battle. That wasn't him, even though he liked to dabble in it from time to time. He would never act that way during a battle that really meant something. At best, he had seen Myghell as a bit of fun...

But, he felt that Aina's words had great merit as well. What use was his training if he threw it all out the window the instant he entered a battle? It was no wonder why he could never settle on a Style, he was constantly going his own way and making up his own path.

'Style...'

Leonel's gaze suddenly flashed.

'Create new Ability sub-category. Call it Dream Class. Set parameters. Archer. Spearman. Fighter. Mage. Set sub-parameters.

'Sniper Archer. Explosive Archer.

'Strong Spearman. Flexible Spearman.

'Mixed Fighter. Speed Fighter.

'Fire Mage. Defensive Mage. Combat Mage.'

Leonel's mind went into overdrive, formulating a new ability, splitting it into four sub categories and then further into nine sub, sub categories.

Dream Class was an application of Leonel's Tier 4 Control. Leonel saw this situation just like he had his spear dilemma. He could never decide whether to focus on instinct or calculation, until the day it all snapped into place and he felt he could subtly grasp the intricacies of both.

This would be no different.

Leonel had four main archetypes. Archer, spearman, fighter and mage. Depending on the situation, he tended to rely on one or the other, sometimes mixing and matching.

This time, however, he would do so far more deliberately. By shifting these four Archetypes into a Tier 4 Ability, he was essentially honing all the skill his body had in a certain path and fine tuning it to maximize his strength in this category.

For example, if Leonel ran into an opponent he thought would best be dealt with as an Archer, the first thing he would ask himself is if he should be a Sniper Archer or Explosive Archer. The Sniper Archer archetype focused on long ranged, unmoving assault. It was a relentless pinning of an enemy from a distance. Explosive Archer involved movement. The power output was less than that of the Sniper Archer, but its flexibility benefited from it.

Once Leonel made the decision of which to go with, he would activate Dream Class. Once Dream Class was in effect, everything about Leonel's very being would shift to optimize this archetype.

If he chose Explosive Archer, he would hone in on Light Elemental Force, movement technique conducive to evasion and firing at the same time would be prioritized, and he would focus on rapid fire rather than powerful shots.

If he chose Sniper Archer, his Element of choice would lean more toward Fire. He would root himself in place, focusing on heaviness and power. Every strike would be aimed toward maximizing strength and quality of shot.

'Organize all techniques and abilities, categorize into archetypes, deduce strength...'

Leonel began to organize everything he knew one by one. Some abilities fit into multiple archetypes, but he didn't mind, duplicating them as he saw fit. Soon, he had finished tabulating the result and had come to a conclusion.

'Sniper Archer – 0.58

'Explosive Archer – 0.31

'Strong Spearman – 0.13

'Flexible Spearman – 0.11

'Mixed Fighter – 0.07

'Speed Fighter – 0.07

'Fire Mage – 0.18

'Defensive Mage – 0.11

'Combat Mage – 0.10.'

Leonel realized that of all the archetypes he could fit into, only Sniper Archer was even close to meeting his maximum output while relying on his Ability Index. All of the rest were severely lacking.

Chapter 1362 Efficiency

Though Leonel had subconsciously always known, seeing the numbers laid out before him now was... depressing. It only put into perspective just how right Aina was.

The numbers were fairly straightforward. 1.00 was a theoretical maximum that Leonel could reach. This maximum was decided by the maximum strength Leonel could match by using his mind, this theoretical limit thus became his ceiling.

It was difficult for Leonel to put a real Tier or Dimension on this max strength of his because the numbers were all so variable. No two Tier 9's were the same and depending on talent, Ability Index, Lineage Factors, and a host of other variables, the strength of two individuals could be wildly different. This was why Leonel could use tricks and his mind to defeat Sixth Dimensional existences of lesser Galaxies, while here, it hadn't been rare for him to run into Fifth Dimensional existence he had to put in quite some effort to defeat.

Even now, Leonel didn't believe that he had met the theoretically strongest existence within the Fifth Dimension yet. That Tier 9 Runed Rapax he had just defeated was only of a particular grade and according to Wise Star Order, there were definitely far more powerful Runed Rapax.

This was all to say that assigning a value of 1.00 to his adjusted strength output was the best that Leonel could do. This was the value that took in a combination of everything he could do, his mind, his thinking speed, his quick reaction times and deduction abilities, and put them together to formulate a certain ceiling of strength.

When things were looked at this way, the numbers became far more depressing. Sniper Archer was the best, but even that could only bring out 58% of Leonel's true strength. A step down from that was

Explosive Archer, but it plummeted 27 points down to 31%. The rest were even worse, Leonel almost couldn't help but chuckle.

'It's not accurate to say that this is 58% of my true strength, but it's more like a measurement of efficiency. The closer I am to 100%, the more exponential the increase in my output, with a massive watershed occurring probably at least once per 20 points. That means I'm a lot further away than just 42% away... And that's just with one.'

Sniper Archer being the strongest wasn't a surprise to Leonel. Bar none, Leonel's strongest strength currently was his Bow Force. So long as he could be rooted to a singular spot and shoot to his heart's content, his power output would be devastating. However, the rest was far worse.

Fire Mage was a bit of a surprise at 0.18, but this was likely due to Leonel comprehending the first Rune of his Scarlet Star Force. Just that comprehension alone had closed the gap between his Bow Force and his lesser Dimensional Fire Force by a great measure.

'Hm, what if... Calculate... Scarlet Mage.'

'Scarlet Mage – 3.19.'

Seeing this number, Leonel sighed. It seems that even his mind couldn't make up the gap of his inability to use Scarlet Star Force freely. 319% was a value that he found difficult to compute, especially since the scale he was using was exponential. If he ignored everything and was content to end his life here and now, it might not be impossible for him to kill even a Quasi Seventh Dimensional existence.

After finishing these calculations, Leonel explained them all to Aina. After she looked at him a bit weirdly for a moment, she opened her mouth to speak, only to be stopped by Leonel's chuckle.

"What is it?"

"Do you... always break down your abilities with such raw numbers?"

"I used to do it a lot more frequently, but the system was flawed when I used it on others because there were too many variables to account for. It's 100% accurate when I use it on myself, though. It's just that there's no real point in doing so."

"Well... Honestly, I'm not sure how these numbers would translate in the future. If you increased the efficiency of each individual Class, what would happen to your overall strength? How would you calculate it if the goalposts kept moving?"

"Instead of moving the goal posts, I could just put a stake down as a checkpoint. That way, there will be a version 1 of 1.00 and a version 2."

"Sure, you could do that, but then what would be the point? If your individual Classes would also be behind whatever version 2, 3 or 4 there was, then it just goes back to the idea that you should be focused on your mind anyway."

"Maybe... Unless I have a different sort of end goal."

Aina's brow raised, waiting for Leonel to continue.

"Technically, given a number of factors, I could probably make a lot more than just nine Classes. If I mix and match, I could make Classes like Spearman Mage or Fire Archer, or any other number of things. The reason why I chose these exact nine, though, was because they are the most foundational. Everything else grows outward from them.

"However, it's because it's all so disjointed that I'm probably having such issues to begin with, right? But, if I can increase the efficiency of each one, then my ability to tell exactly what should be used in battle skyrockets as well.

"I tend to use as little as possible in battle, in one part to keep trump cards, but another reason is because it's easier to perform high level calculations when the variables are minimized. Oddly enough, the reason why Sniper Archer is probably highest isn't only due to my Bow Force, but it's also by far the simplest of all the Classes.

"If I can raise the efficiency of each class to 60, 70, maybe even 90%, or a theoretical 100% in the future, then how well I can shift from one style in battle to another also increases. Then, the day that I can use them all seamlessly and form a unique Style of my own will be in reach."

Leonel smiled. This was what he wanted. A fusion of instinctual combat given by individual Classes and his mind's calculative abilities. The results would definitely be beyond imagination.

"Hm? We're out of this hive."

Chapter 1363 Escape or Gamble?

Leonel came to a pause, his gaze sharpening. His makeshift spear was gripped in his hands and his senses were primed.

Their journey through this hive had been too smooth. Remembering back to the map Little Blackstar had gotten them, there was only one more hive to go through before they could escape this part of the Void Battlefield. But, it was all too convenient.

Little Blackstar had managed to move fast enough to avoid the initial lock of senses that could have gone poorly for them. However, he had still ended up being detected by the Shadow Sovereign Rapax. Knowing this, the fact that they had only been hounded by a single Tier 9 Runed Rapax was too odd.

Then there was something else to consider. From Little Blackstar's memory, the Shadow Domain of the Shadow Sovereign Rapax had been far smaller than it should have been while deployed. In fact, it was only two or three meters in diameter, a size when compared to the scope of this network of Nests was like a needle drifting through the ocean. If it wasn't because Little Blackstar was trying to blanket everything, it would have never been a problem.

One might not understand why this was so odd. Given the fact that maintaining a Shadow Domain was so taxing on the user, wouldn't it make sense to keep it as small as possible to begin with? Since the Shadow Domain followed its deployer as its epicenter, it was much more convenient to maintain a small Shadow Domain, especially for a hand to hand combat race like the Rapax. So long as they were fighting an enemy, three meters was more than enough to keep their target within frame.

Leonel had, of course, thought of this as well. But, he still felt that something was off.

For one, a Shadow Domain wasn't under constant deployment. It required active thought and action to use. That meant, if one was focused on maintaining your stamina, you wouldn't deploy it at all.

Secondly, if under normal conditions you wouldn't deploy a Shadow Domain, that would mean that there were very few instances where you would. One such instance was for the purpose of what Little Blackstar had tried to do by helping Leonel and Aina. However, another one should be battle.

The issue was... Neither of these reasons made sense. Why would a Rapax be fighting in their own Nest?

Of course, this was an odd thing to say considering they had been invaded by the likes of Leonel and the others, but the problem here was that a Rapax of such status wouldn't personally help deal with what amounted to small fry in their eyes.

'Something about this just feels... off. This sort of trial is too dangerous to begin with. Thrusting us all into enemy territory like this without an easy way to come back just makes no sense. This feels like a stealth mission, but Void Palace isn't a place that grooms assassins. There might be one or two Factions within that cater to that demographic, but definitely not enough to throw an entire generation under the bus like this.

'I would understand if we were just thrown onto the Battlefield itself and it was just a matter of survival. But a Rapax Nest? That's more than a little excessive.

'Plus, from mom's story about her relationship with dad, she wasn't even allowed to step onto the Void Battlefield until she became a Galaxy Ranked disciple. And even then, she had dad as a supervisor to protect her.

'Did things really change this much? Is there new management? Is it possible that I'm being targeted? Or is it because this generation is more talented than others?

'But if it's because we're more talented, even if you upped the difficulty by a margin, was it necessary to react to this good news by throwing us into a fiery pit of hell?'

Leonel didn't even know what to think. Still, everything seemed to point toward this matter being a special event of sorts. If he was correct, then the odd coincidence of the Rapax he had met until this point being so manageable might not be such a coincidence at all.

Leonel explained his thoughts to Aina.

"... So you think that the Rapax are occupied by something, which would explain the oddity of the Shadow Domain that hurt Blackstar?"

"I think so. It would both explain why this Shadow Sovereign hasn't come after us yet and why we've only run into manageable enemies. In fact, the only Sixth Dimensional Rapax we ran into was due to the fact I forced us to teleport together. If we had teleported individually like was intended, I have a feeling that we wouldn't have had to deal with even that."

"If it really is a special event like you said, then there's two possibilities. The first is that we're supposed to take advantage of this lull in security to escape as fast as possible. Or..."

"Or we're supposed to go to the center of the Nest to begin with," Leonel finished.

In truth, Leonel should have thought of this long ago, however, his life experiences had skewed his bias too far.

Someone who innately trusted organizations might have already thought that there was no way the Void Palace would send their students to their death. As such, they would conclude that this couldn't possibly be an impossible task and that there was either a hidden challenge here or the Void Palace had made it easier to escape.

Leonel, however, who always seemed to have terrible luck with organizations, only really trusted himself. As such, he had little to no expectations of others helping him to remain safe at all. As such, in an irony of all ironies, Leonel, who had one of the sharpest minds of this generation, was actually one of the last to figure out something so simple.

"What do you want to do?" Leonel asked. "Escape or gamble?"

Aina smiled. "Let's have fun."

...

As expected, Leonel was correct. The greatest geniuses of this generation, a group that would have been Amethyst in almost any over Selection year, had already begun to converge upon the central Nest.

Chapter Stumbled

After stabilizing Little Blackstar and placing him within the Segmented Cube, Aina and Leonel broke out into a dead sprint. No longer worried about being found out and being more confident in the sort of trial they were currently taking part in, they took smaller measures toward protecting themselves in such a fashion.

However, even as they ran, Leonel didn't forget to check all his bases. This sort of thing... It was still leaving an odd taste in his mouth.

This matter seemed to require precise timing, but it had to be remembered that Leonel's actions had stalled the True Selection for several months. Of course, it was possible that this event could take place over a long period of time, which was why the elders of the Void Palace would feel confident in allowing this to happen in the first place, but there was no way for Leonel to tell immediately.

Luckily, he had a trusty encyclopaedia of sorts.

'Old man, what do you think about this?'

Leonel reached out to Wise Star Order. But, surprisingly, he didn't get an answer. He tried again, but was once more met with more silence. After a while, Leonel chuckled.

'You don't need to be scared old man, my dad isn't here anymore. You can stop hiding... Not that it would do you much good to begin with.'

A light coughed resounded in Leonel's ears. It seemed filled with a hint of embarrassment and another part righteous indignation as though he was offended by the accusation. Unfortunately, there was no hiding it.

When Velasco had appeared, Wise Star Order thought his life was forfeit. Though Leonel had vouched for this odd relationship of theirs, when a father wanted to act, what could a son do? This was especially so with Velasco considering anything Wise Star Order did in front of that man felt all too easy for the former to see right through.

Luckily, he had left without doing much more than glancing in his general direction. However, Wise Star Order was still suffering from cold sweats.

'Just tell me, is there any ritual the Rapax might undergo, maybe something that is predictable, that would also last for a very long time? It should also be something that others might be able to benefit from, because I don't see why the Void Palace would allow this unless there were benefits to be gotten...

'Oh, and these benefits probably shouldn't be enough to move Seventh Dimensional existences. Or, at the very least, they should be useless to Seventh Dimensional existences, or else it wouldn't make sense for them to leave this opportunity to us rather than taking advantage themselves.'

Leonel gave Wise Star Order a list of requirements, hoping the old man would be able to think of something. He would assume that a race like the Rapax might have many rituals and customs that could fall into such a category, but hopefully only a few that might be related to a Nest while also fitting these requirements.

However, the answer he received from Wise Star Order was outside of his expectations.

'No... There shouldn't be any ritual of the like. The Rapax aren't a race that participates in such things. They have a very strict hierarchy, they live for war, and duty is at the forefront of their minds. They're very big on cycles of life and giving, not to mention oneness of mind and purpose, it wouldn't be like them to divert their attention toward any sort of ceremony.'

Leonel's brow furrowed.

If there was no ritual, then what could possibly be happening?

'Then what about something that would require a large amount of precise control? There's a Shadow Sovereign Rapax here whose Shadow Domain was shrunk to a suspiciously small area. The only reason I can think of that such a thing would be necessary is if they needed extremely fine control over a given area, but that much is far too broad...'

A Shadow Domain allowed a Shadow Sovereign to bend reality to their whims within certain limits, of course depending on Dimensional level. The larger the Domain, the more stamina it took. So, Leonel assumed that if the Shadow Domain had been shrunk, and it was unlike the Shadow Sovereign was in a heated battle, then it must be trying to control something or the environment around something.

'The Rapax birthed a Shadow Sovereign?!'

The shout reverberated through Leonel's mind, almost causing his feet to stumble.

Aina quickly reached out a hand, stabilizing his shoulder with a worried expression on her face. Her first instinct was to think that what had happened before still had lingering effects on Leonel.

'What the hell old man?!'

In his shock, Wise Star Order had done the equivalent of violently shaking Leonel's soul. That felt no different from poking and prodding at an open wound. This wasn't because Leonel's soul was injured, but rather because it was like tender flesh in its current state, it was incredibly sensitive to outside pressures.

'Shut up, brat, you have no idea what this means!'

'Obviously not! That's why I'm asking you!'

'I told you before that the Rapax don't really have any culture or rituals, this much is true. But, they do have certain legends that they abide by. The birth of a Shadow Sovereign is akin to the birth of a King for the Rapax. A Runed Rapax with the abilities of a Shadow Sovereign is like a real Dragon. Upon reaching maturity, such an existence would be practically untouchable.'

'Why do you keep saying birth?'

'Because it hasn't been born yet, idiot! It's definitely still within its egg!'

'How the hell do you know that?'

'Common sense! You keep thinking that the Domain is too small when in reality it never shrunk to begin with, that's just its original size.'

'That's impossible. Little Blackstar wouldn't lose to a newborn.'

'It's not just a newborn, fool. Like I told you before, the Rapax have a tradition of using fertilizer for their newborn. But, when a talent on this level is in the process of being nurtured, they go several steps further. Even living Rapax pour all of their strength into it. This baby, under the Rapax's care and nurturing, would be born at Tier 9 of the Fifth Dimension instantly.'

'Wait...' Leonel suddenly thought of a possibility.

'That's right. All the Rapax here, especially those of the highest levels, are currently severely weakened because they've given everything to this newborn. That's likely why the Void Palace saw fit to send you all in.'

'But that isn't enough of a reason for you to have screamed in my ears like that.'

'Of course it is! Rapax are the only humanoid species born from eggs! In that state, they're not only very vulnerable, but they're basically just like enormous Beast Crystals! Except unlike Beast Crystals, swallowing the Essence of a Rapax Egg that has been prepared in this fashion comes with its own supporting vitality!

'What I'm trying to say is that regardless of your Ability Index, if you swallow the Essence of a Rapax Egg that's had so much vitality and Life Force poured into it, you gain its Ability without any side effects or impact to your own Ability Index!'

Leonel almost stumbled and fell again. This time, it had nothing to do with Wise Star Order yelling in his ear.

Chapter 1365 There was a Reason

Leonel was stunned, not knowing how to take this news. Even the Silver Tablet couldn't do this.

When the Silver Tablet erased the personality of a previously held Ability, it could be absorbed. But, one still had to be very careful about doing so. This was because when absorbed, both Abilities would combine and an average of the two would be taken. This meant that if you absorbed an Ability completely incompatible with yourself, you would essentially be crippling both Abilities, and by proxy, yourself.

However, according to Wise Star Order, absorbing the Essence of this egg would be like gaining a second Ability without the side effects. The weird thing about this though was...

Why was it that the elders of Void Palace didn't want this? Why would anyone be opposed to something that essentially broke the fundamental rules of the Dimensional Verse?

'Why?' Leonel asked. 'Are they really so kind hearted to leave this to us?'

'Kind hearted?' Wise Star Order snorted. 'The Rapax aren't fools, do you think they would leave themselves in such a vulnerable position just because? This entire hive is blocked off from existences above the Sixth Dimension. In fact, it's not just this, but even higher level Sixth Dimensional existences have been completely blocked off. You lot are about the only ones that can enter in the first place.

'Secondly, did you not hear what I said about vitality? It's the copious amounts of vitality within the Rapax egg that tricks the Regulator into believing there are two people, not one. This, as a result, allows the birth of two Ability Indexes within the same person.

'However, this vitality must be above or, at the very least, near your own. Like I said, the baby Rapax will be born at Tier 9 of the Fifth Dimension using this ritual, that means you can't be much stronger than this or else your vitality will be too great.

'If your vitality is too high, the Regulator won't sense two lives, it will only sense yours. Once that happens, your two Abilities will fuse instead of remaining separate. That means that it's impossible for anyone that's too high Tiered to absorb this egg at all.'

When it all settled in, Leonel let out a breath. So things were like this... The elders of the Void Palace couldn't absorb this boon even if they wanted to.

"Aina..."

Leonel quickly explained everything Wise Star Order had explained to him. After taking it all in, she seemed to sigh a breath.

"So that's where that feeling was coming from..."

When they had first landed here, Aina had said that there was something incredibly nutritious nearby. She had assumed, along with Leonel, that this came from the eggs and the 'fertilizer' used to upkeep them. And, she was most definitely correct. It was just that she couldn't have imagined that things would actually be like this. This was more than just a little nutritious, it was absolutely game changing.

There were very few things in the Dimensional Verse that could break the balance of rules set.

At the same time, though, this was odd. The Shadow Sovereign ability seemed perfect for Aina. But, if it was really so perfect, her Ability Index would have violently tugged her in that direction. Much like how she always knew the best meals to prepare for herself and the best training methods to use, she would also know when a great opportunity for improvement was nearby.

If things had worked out as they should have, she would have figured out the use of this egg long before Leonel did and given him this information. Knowing this, Leonel would have drawn the appropriate conclusions long ago.

"This is perfect for you." Leonel said. "Your battle style would fit seamlessly with this, I would think. It would also greatly boost your Darkness affinity."

"No, I think it'll be best if you absorb it." Aina suddenly said.

"Hm?"

Leonel rose an eyebrow. It wasn't that Shadow Sovereign wouldn't be useful to him. Given his mind, technically speaking, any additional strength he gained made it less likely for anyone to defeat him. The more tools he had at his disposal, the more options he had to react in battle.

However, Leonel wasn't too eager for this at the same time. And, there was no point for Little Blackstar to absorb the same Ability Index again. That left Aina as the best candidate.

"My body... doesn't seem to want it." Aina said after a while. "I'm not sure why, but the more I think about it, the stronger my revulsion toward it grows. This is the first time I've felt this way. Usually I feel either nothing or positive emotions. I've never felt a negative emotion before. I feel that it would cripple me."

Leonel's gaze flashed. He couldn't quite understand why Aina would feel this way, he didn't have a proper understanding. But, regardless, he trusted her judgment for herself. It hadn't failed her before and he didn't see why it would start now.

"Plus, you spoke about your armor and your goals for it, right? A high darkness affinity is something you'll need if you want to find a way to counter your Scarlet Star Force with Void Star Force."

Leonel fell into silence. Aina wasn't wrong, it was just that he had another solid method of raising his Darkness Elemental Affinity to great heights. But, now that she mentioned it, this method... This method just might be the easiest.

Leonel didn't know much about these Sovereigns, but he thought that it was about time he learned more.

"Alright." He nodded. "Rapax."

Aina's thigh suddenly grew a size as she stamped a foot down hard. She blasted by Leonel, her battle ax shimmering.

By the time Leonel rounded the corner, the Rapax in question had been split into two. However, it was what lay beyond that truly caught Leonel's attention.

The good news? They had made it to the core of the network of Nests like they wanted to.

The bad news? Well... There was a reason they had run into so few Rapax during their time here.

Chapter 1366 Muted

Leonel took a breath, his grip on his spear tightening slightly.

They were everywhere. Or, at the very least, it truly felt like it.

The center of the Nest was an enormous, perforated, ball of rock. Pathways of all shapes and sizes, winding in all sorts of different directions, jetted out from the perforations.

This perforated ball of rock hovered above what looked like a green sea. This oddly discolored sea gave off a strong, pungent smell that seared one's nose hairs and tingled the skin. It looked like a vat of acid and Leonel wasn't convinced that if he took a dip, that it would react any differently from one either.

The number of Rapax that moved through this construction weren't small. But, there was something odd about their movements. Despite the fact Aina had just killed one of their own and they were in fairly clear view of them, none seemed to react.

That was when something that should have been obvious all this time clicked for Leonel.

'The Rapax are blind.'

Leonel had never noticed any eyes on the Rapax. In fact, their pill shaped heads were covered by their metallic carapaces so he had just assumed that their eyes were underneath and they had a method of seeing through the metal casing. However, now Leonel realized that that assumption had been stupid to make. He was still trying to see everything the Rapax did through a human lens when they were decidedly not human at all.

The Rapax must have used a different method to track their prey, and since they had no reason to lock onto this particular location, they wouldn't react immediately.

However, Leonel was no fool. He didn't believe that the Rapax would be so inept. There was a large distance between the location he stood upon now and the perforated spherical rock that hung ahead. There was no pathway that connected it to where Leonel and Aina stood. If Leonel had to describe it, it was like they were standing in a window, looking through it. If they wanted in, they would have to find a doorway instead.

Leonel had a feeling, though, that if they truly did find a doorway, the reception wouldn't be nearly this benign. In fact, they would likely find themselves swarmed.

Leonel fell into silence alongside Aina. The pair slowly backed away and retreated to the corner they had just wrapped around. Only then did they sigh a breath of relief and calmly assess the situation again.

They currently stood within a hallway, but there was a dead end on one side. It made Leonel a bit skeptical about how the Rapax had engineered this place. It seemed that this 'window' was actually a designed lookout. But, it was obviously not a lookout for enemies, but rather a lookout for observing the work of the other Rapax.

If Leonel was correct, this confirmed one matter: the Rapax did have methods of seeing things at long distances. And, secondly, it likely wouldn't be long before the Rapax they had killed was noticed to be gone.

Leonel wasn't very worried about the second possibility mostly because at most it would just expose that there were enemies here, something the Rapax were already aware of. It was also possible that it could reveal their location, but Leonel was confident that they would have made a move by then.

"So it's an observation station?" Aina concluded the same thing Leonel had.

"I think so."

"Then we'll need to find another entrance. But, even if we do, it'll be very difficult to handle."

"I can reverse engineer a path to a suitable entrance. I've already memorized the layout of that spherical hive hovering in the center of that acid lake. The issue isn't that, it's just... What would we find on the inside?"

"If the inside is another maze, we can work with it. If it isn't, then we'll end up surrounded from all sides without a simple way to retreat."

"Did you notice, by the way?" Aina suddenly asked.

"Hm?"

"The Anarchic Force. It's still strong, but there's something oddly mutated about it, as though it feel more malleable and less aggressive. It's like a beast that's been tranquilized."

Leonel's brows shot up. When Aina spoke those words, he too realized it. After a moment of thought, he felt like he had come to a conclusion, but he still reached out to Wise Star Order.

'... Anarchic Force is the antithesis of life. It's one thing for the Rapax to force their young to be born in such an environment, but it would be another thing entirely if they just allowed the Anarchic Force to kill them. The girl is sharper than you.'

'The heavy Life Force in the air, caused by the fertilizer, has a sort of muting effect on Anarchic Force. This isn't because Anarchic Force is being suppressed, but it's rather because the Anarchic Force would rather target this pure and high level Life Force than target weak and unsavory babies.'

'That vat of green is where it all is. The toxicity is concentrated in the top layer because that's where all the Life Force and Anarchic Force are fusing. The result of their combat is something high poisonous to life.'

Leonel nodded. He wasn't shocked Aina noticed before he did, her Life Force affinity was off the charts, it was only right.

But, this changed a few things about how Leonel could approach this.

Firstly, muted Anarchic Force meant that he could use more Mage tactics and that his Bow Force's range would be much longer.

But, most importantly... He just might be able to draw a teleportation Force Art that could get them out of here so long as the Anarchic Force continued to be so docile. The formation wouldn't be enough to take them far. But, at the very least, it would be able to get them out of the center of this Nest and toward an exit.

There was no doubt that once they stole the egg, the Rapax would be livid. By then, their main focus should be on running for their lives.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Leonel's gaze narrowed, the sudden series of sounds making him peek his head around the corner once more.

There, on one of the winding paths, a group of youths charged, battling the Rapax that stood in their way.

Chapter 1367 Wild Abandon

The moment that group acted, it was as though a chain reaction had been set off. Several roars resounded and several more groups charged out, each claiming a path for themselves and cutting toward the perforated Nest.

Leonel chuckled. It seemed that his worries about being found out were unfounded. The cascading effect of the movement of one suddenly unleashed a barrage of assaults from all sides.

"Shall we?" Leonel asked.

"But we haven't found a doorway yet."

Leonel grinned. "You didn't know? Your boyfriend can fly, I'm basically Superman."

Aina hardly got to respond before she found herself squealing. Leonel swept her into his arms and rounded the corner once more.

He crouched into a powerful squat, his thighs bulging and calves compressing until they were as hard as steel. In that moment, his aura flourished, a blinding golden light enveloping his body as he was covered in head to toe by tiny white-gold scales.

BANG!

Leonel unfurled himself all at once, slicing through the air like a speeding bullet. Almost instantly, he appeared above the green lake, a singular dot in the skies amidst a commotion. But, even then, he somehow managed to be the center of attention.

Steam rolling into battle, a beauty cradled in his arms, and wings spreading to his back. In this bleak world, he was like the only ray of radiant sun, the majestic sight of his very being attracting attention from all sides.

Leonel soared, feeling his Snowy Star Owl blood rolling through his veins. He could feel it pressing against its very limits, the breakthrough in comprehension he had made in his Scarlet Star Force stimulating it all to the absolute extreme.

Leonel let the feeling roll through him. He didn't move, he simply let the air whip against his skin, his eyes closed and his expression peaceful. His skin began to radiate a delicate golden color that quickly became fiercer and fiercer. In those moments, everything around Leonel was so pure that even the foul stench of the Rapax Nest couldn't approach him, the refreshing scent of a dawning day, delicate dew drops and life wafting around him.

There didn't need to be a check, nor a guess. Leonel's mind bloomed like a flower, stepping past the barriers of the Fifth Dimension and sweeping into the Sixth.

At that moment, Leonel's Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor had reached the pinnacle of perfection, unsealing all three Branches to the Fourth Awakening.

BOOM!

Leonel flapped his wings a single time, his already fast speed suddenly doubling, a violent clap of wind shredding the air to his back as he cut through it all even faster.

BANG!

Leonel swung his feet forward, their soles smashing into the head of a Rapax and crushing their silver skull. He landed heavily on a winding platform, already having covered more than half the distance.

The Rapax crumpled beneath his feet, a heavy domain pressing down and shredding it to pieces.

Aina jumped from Leonel's arms, her battle ax in tow. A single sweep seemed to sever the world itself, the Rapax in her path finding themselves experiencing just the same fate.

"SKKKREEEEE!"

Leonel's mind felt as though it had been injected directly with adrenaline. Everything was so clear, not just through his Internal Sight, but through his eyes especially. He could see further, even the slightest bits of detail were laid bare before him.

In that moment, things that Leonel would usually rely on his Internal Sight to pick up on suddenly didn't need it at all. And, just like that, the advantage the Rapax had had over him vanished in a puff of smoke.

Leonel took a step forward, his figure crossing tens of meters in a single bound. When he appeared again, he had seemingly already chosen the perfect position to dodge a coming kick, his makeshift spear stabbing outward and ripping through a gap that felt infinitesimally small in its plate armor.

Right then, the Rapax crumbled, but so too did Leonel's makeshift spear, combusting to ash in his palm. Leonel immediately knew why that was. It seems he had gotten the Spear Domain to acknowledge him enough to hold a spear without destroying it, but he still hadn't gained enough acknowledgement to be able to make it acknowledge one of his creations just yet.

However, this wasn't enough to make Leonel slow in the slightest. If he couldn't use a spear, then he would just use his fists.

'Dream Class. Speed Fighter.'

Leonel's steps shifted, his body flickering and his speed reaching nigh untouchable levels. He left afterimages in his wake. Whenever he appeared, another fist would jet outward, blasting a hole through yet another Rapax.

His eyes darted back and forth. It felt like there was nothing he couldn't see, nothing he couldn't observe.

The twitch of their muscles, the shift in their weight, even the slight change caused by a rush of their blood was all picked up by him.

Numbers seemed to float in his vision. Speed, weight, power, distance, it all branched off one after another. It was as though Leonel's Dream World had manifested into reality, layering atop what was with an objective measure of what is.

It would be a very long time until Leonel realized that this was the first instance of his Dream Force working as it should, his consciousness projecting into the world and effecting it. This is what it truly meant to have high Dream Force affinity.

A wild grin spread across Leonel's face. Every swing of his fist and every slice of Aina's ax only made him smile all the more wildly. This feeling... it was exhilarating!

Leonel shifted around another Rapax, sidestepping the tail of another as his hand reached out, snatching the curved blade with his bare palm and squeezing down.

CHII!

The metallic tail crumbled, wild Bronze Runes racing beneath Leonel's scales.

Leonel gave a strong pull, causing the Rapax to suddenly find itself flying in his direction, only to be met by a fist that crushed its head.

He stepped over the corpse, his body swaying to one side to dodge a kick. His wing slapped outward, causing the balance of the Rapax to falter and spin.

"HA!"

Leonel took a strong step forward with one leg and sent the other shooting straight up. His heel connected with the chin of the Rapax with such force that its head was ripped from its body.

Leonel's roar bellowed through the Rapax Nest, his blood flowing with wild abandon.

Chapter 1368 0.15

Leonel left a blazing trail in his wake. Sometimes, it would feel as though he was attacking three different places at once, his speed so fast that it was almost impossible to keep up with.

The First Awakening of the Speed Branch merely allowed Leonel to access Light Elemental Force in a fashion that could boost his fast twitch capabilities, not much unlike an Elemental Speedster, but on a much smaller and more controlled level.

The Second Awakening gave Leonel access to the Star Road. It was the road of stars that appeared beneath his feet. Stepping onto the road made Leonel feel lighter and also seemed to weaken several forms of friction, making gliding through the air feel all too easy.

The Third Awakening was primed for Awakening with the appearance of Leonel's illusory wings and came into true being once Leonel's wings gained physical form, spreading out from his body both powerfully and majestically.

The Fourth Awakening, however, was the most profound of them all. Leonel felt Light Force fuse with his very bones and flesh, suddenly making him feel as light as a feather. The difference was so drastic that had it not been for the increase to his Wisdom Branch simultaneously, Leonel might have had to artificially slow himself just so that his mind could keep up.

Now, Leonel suddenly had a body as sturdy as any Tier 9 forged weapon, and yet instead of being weighed down, he was as light and free as a breeze of air. Golden Runes shaped into delicate feather patterns danced between the Bronze Runes that were deeply carved onto his bones, making him feel as though he was gliding through the air as opposed to running on ground.

In that moment, Leonel could feel the exhilaration of a speedster, a hearty laughter almost leaving his lips.

The Morales family Lineage Factor was always known to be the cream of the crop because it circumvented the usual pitfalls and weaknesses of defensive Abilities in ways most others could not. Despite having skin as tough as metal, Leonel hardly lost any flexibility or speed. However, when a Lineage Factor that was already so amazing to begin with was suddenly stacked with another that not only erased its minor weaknesses, but even turned them into strength...

Well. The results spoke for themselves.

Leonel vanished, suddenly appearing above a Rapax that had just swung down a kick at full force. His toes lightly tapped the Rapax knee, causing a strong surge of Golden Spear Force infused with Snow Force and Destruction to slice downward.

The Rapax immediately found its leg severed at the thigh, its weight falling forward as it lost its balance. It had already been leaning forward to begin with after its attack missed, but now it seemed that it wouldn't be able to do anything at all as it fell toward Leonel.

Leonel used the light touch of the tap of his foot to skip upward, his body spinning and a vicious kick landing on the side of the Rapax's pill shaped head.

The sound of metal crashing against metal resounded for just a moment before one side crumpled and collapsed. The Rapax's head was ripped from its shoulders, its head being sent spiraling into the green lake below.

Leonel landed on the ground for just a moment before he vanished once more, a spiraling circle of wind being left in his wake. Everywhere he passed, arcs of light would follow his swinging kicks and fists. The outline of a beautiful dance was marked, a gorgeous white gold painting the otherwise grotesque atmosphere.

'0.15.'

Leonel could feel the shift in his Speed Fighter Class. The Fourth Awakening had caused his original 1.00 rating of himself going all out to increase, resetting the entire scale. However, even on this new scale, speed had become a relatively greater strength, causing his weakest Class which had sat at 0.07 just a moment ago, to more than double in efficiency.

'There are diminishing returns to such speeds. It was no wonder that even with such an enormous speed boost after reaching the Fourth Awakening that the Snow Star Owl would still only be a Sixth Dimensional beast.

'More speed equals more power, but that's only if weight remains constant. This Lineage Factor gives me what feels like even more than a ridiculous tenfold increase in speed, but it does so by lowering my weight and by extension my momentum.

'If not for the fact I can rely on my Metal Synergy Lineage Factor, I would have to be very careful with how I used this speed as well or I would end up hurting myself.'

This made perfect sense. This Lineage Factor was rooted in the blood of a bird. Birds were known for their hollow and fragile bone structures. This should have been something that Leonel had expected.

However, he wasn't disappointed. Right now, this boost was exactly what he needed. He was already confident before that no one would be able to stop him from getting this egg as he always had confidence in himself. But this only made him more assured.

Leonel quickly cleared the Rapax. Because he and Aina had landed in the middle of the platform and had not started at the beginning like everyone else, they were far ahead. But, that came with its own problems as well. If they weren't fast enough, they would end up pincered from not one, but two sides. By then, what advantage they had gained wouldn't be worth it.

However, Leonel had his own plans for this.

Aina raced after Leonel, managing to keep up because of how often Leonel had to stop to battle. Any stragglers he missed were unceremoniously cut apart by her.

The moment Leonel reached near the end of the platform, he released a low shout, his feet stamping down hard.

A flickering golden Rune lit in Leonel's irises, a searing heat dancing above his right hip.

"Destroy!"

A raging crimson aura erupted from Leonel.

Chapter 1369 Easier, Not Harder

Leonel's Spear Force came out marked in crimson. As though his blade had been marred by dripping blood, it left streaks of rouge in the air, drawing hard lines into the pathway just as Aina rushed over.

"Jump." Leonel called out.

Aina complied, leaping into the air. She looked down wondering why it was Leonel had asked such a thing, only to find that the last point her foot had touched had already begun to crumble.

Leonel's gaze flashed, his foot stomping down hard. He tugged at his Variant Earth Affinity, hard. He knew well that manipulating Earth in a Seventh Dimensional Plane like this one was impossible, it was far too hard. Maybe only when he formed his Sixth Dimensional Metal Body would he have a slight chance at effecting this environment to any large degree capable of helping in battle.

But, right now, Leonel didn't need a large change, he just needed a small nudge, just enough to get a chain reaction going. And that, he most definitely did.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The pathway crumbled. In one moment, there was just a small section of cracks. In the next, there was an entire network of crumbling rocks, falling down in a rain that pelted the surface of the green lake below.

Aina landed lightly to Leonel's side, her expression flickering. Even the most benign earth in a Seventh Dimensional world was probably stronger than even the most refined material of the Fifth and even much of the Sixth Dimension. What Leonel had just done was no small feat.

She looked to Leonel's side profile, only to find him breathing quite hard.

"Are you okay?"

Leonel turned back, facing the entrance to the perforated entrance.

"I'm fine, just took a lot more out of me than I thought it would."

Leonel took a deep breath, suddenly causing a large surge of Force to rush toward him. With a thought, he flipped a palm to reveal a Pure Force Crystal, feeling that it wasn't enough. This was among the batch that the golden scaled koi fish had helped create. Even now, the little guy was still at work, which was excellent for Leonel because this was without a doubt one of the best ways to replenish oneself.

Aina's lip twitched. "You..."

Leonel grinned. "I'm superman and I'm filthy rich, aren't you very lucky?"

Aina was speechless for a moment before she rolled her eyes. Wasn't he getting a little bit too cocky?

"Let's go."

There was already another surge of Rapax coming through, but now the two didn't have to worry about any coming from behind them, at least not for now. Up ahead, there was an entrance to the true center of the Nest lay.

'That really did take a lot, the cost might not be worth it outside of very specific circumstances.'

Just now, Leonel had drawn the single Rune he had comprehended. However, what he hadn't expected was the heftiness of the backlash resulting from drawing it without Scarlet Star Force. Well, maybe backlash wasn't the appropriate way to describe it, but the cost was definitely great.

The Rune seemed to dislike being drawn with other Forces, even the somewhat compatible Radiant Force Leonel had ended up having to infuse his Spear Force with.

Leonel could tell that if he had used Scarlet Star Force instead, he would have needed not even a fraction of the Force he ended up using. But, because he didn't want to harm his body when they were in the beginning stages of such a dangerous mission, he had chosen this route instead.

Luckily, everything worked out. But, he would need to keep this in mind for the future. Drawing the Rune was the most effective way to stoke Destruction, but the cost wasn't worth it if it wasn't done with Scarlet Star Force to begin with.

But, that gave Leonel another scary realization. This meant that what he understood about his Scarlet Star Force was just the tip of the iceberg, there was actually room for it to get stronger.

'Idiot. Don't you have a second Innate Node perfect for this?'

Leonel's expression flickered as he fought through the last line of Rapax.

'You mean?'

'Comprehending a Rune is supposed to make things easier, not harder on you, or else what would be the point in comprehending it at all? If things just got worse, then you might as well give up and wait for death.'

'So it's not enough to use my Innate Node as is?'

'No. One Rune is far from enough to use the one inside you, but it is enough to use the smaller one with minimal effort.'

'Do I need to implant it into myself?'

'If that's what you needed to do, I would have already told you to do it. You can't. The moment that Innate Node enters your body, it'll be triggered into undergoing the same growth as the one you have right now. It was only growing so slowly in that other brat because it wasn't his Innate Node to begin with.'

'Then how do I use it?'

'This isn't rocket science brat, just grab a hold of it and take control of it.'

Leonel's gaze glowed. His second Innate Node was only in the Fourth Dimension. However, it was precisely because of this that he could somewhat use it.

He had been putting off finding a Spiritual Medium compatible with his comprehension of Camelot's Magic System. In fact, he had concluded that the best Medium was his very own body. However, what was more compatible with his own body than his very own Innate Node?!

Leonel's split several minds to think about this matter as he and Aina burst through the final line, opening themselves up the true center of the Nest, becoming the very first ones to step foot inside.

What lay before them was another elaborate network of mazes but this time, extrapolated into three dimensions.

The obvious choice was to try to race to the center of this spherical maze, but Leonel's gaze sharpened, his Dreamscape letting off an arc of lightning.

'Wise Star Order said that the green lake's true purpose is the accumulation of Life Force. The only reason for the toxicity is its interaction with Anarchic Force. If not for this, it would practically be a wellspring... That means that the destination isn't the center of this maze... It's the bottom.'

Leonel's gaze shifted downward.

He could use his mind to map out this region and eventually find a path. Or...

"Let's blast right through."

Leonel's demeanor shifted, his heart rushing. Excitement bubbled up within him.

Chapter 1370 Baffling

"Blast through?" Aina's expression changed. She looked at Leonel as though he was a madman.

She could tell that Leonel meant that he wanted to speed things up and rush through the maze by breaking through the walls. But, if that was so easy, everyone would be doing it. They just witnessed together how hard it was for Leonel to deal with that platform, and that had been a thin walkway to begin with. What kind of effort would it take to blast through reinforced walls?

The Rapax obviously hadn't built their Nests like mazes for fun, there was a purpose behind it. It made it far easier to defend and gave them an added buff toward enemies. The fact it had taken so much effort to get here in the first place was a testament to that.

However, toward Aina's words, Leonel only grinned.

"Cut them down for me. I need a bit."

Aina met Leonel's gaze for a moment before she nodded. She would just have to wait to reprimand him for not explaining another time. This situation was even worse than before with Rapax still streaming in. So, she had to prioritize their safety first.

The moment Aina stepped in front of him, Leonel took a breath and settled his mind. This region seemed flooded with nothing more than Fifth Dimensional solider Rapax. He hadn't even seen a Runed Rapax yet, which was part of the reason their fight until now was so easy.

Thanks to this, he didn't have to worry about Aina's safety at all. He could focus his everything on this.

With a flip of his palm, a fingernail sized gemstone appeared in his hand. It seemed almost inconspicuous, but the moment it touched Leonel's palm, it was as though it had been lit on fire. Even when Leonel squeezed his hand shut, radiant light spilled out through the cracks, causing rays of red-gold to splinter off in all directions. But, he remained silent, his mind soothed and calm.

The feeling was a bit exhilarating and Leonel even felt a hint of excitement bubbling up, but he forcefully repressed it. For at least the first time, he needed it to be absolutely perfect. That way, he could replicate it through his absolute control and achieve the same result again and again.

The Camelot Magic System had always required a Spiritual Medium. This was why they used wands and staffs. Some of Modred's most powerful spells could only be cast with the help of her wand.

Usually, these Spiritual Mediums were carved out of what the people of Camelot called Spiritual Trees. But, in Leonel's understanding, these so-called Spiritual Trees had just been Quasi Fourth Dimensional trees capable of withstanding the amplification of Force.

Through his study of the Natural Force Art left behind by Merlin, Leonel was able to learn that the best Spiritual Medium of a mage was actually their own body and this was where magehood and knighthood intersected. This realization was what led to the birth of Leonel's Mage Core.

Ironically, if one looked into Leonel's Ethereal Glabella now, his Mage Core had sprung up and looked a lot like one would expect a Spiritual Tree to look. In that way, everything seemed to have come back around full circle.

The petals of Leonel's Mage Core each represented a separate Element. One for Fire, another for Space, and more for Light, Variant Earth, and now there was even one for Water. As Leonel improved, these petals grew more detailed and his Mage Core grew, allowing Leonel to pull more and more atmospheric Force toward himself.

Like this, he became his own Spiritual Medium, allowing him to cast large scale spells with great effort on his part as he could rely on Force outside of his body.

But, if one thought about it... Didn't the petals of a Mage Core sound and feel a lot like an Innate Node. In fact, the more Leonel thought about it, the more he loved the comparison. In fact, an Innate Node was just an even more intimate part of Leonel than even his Mage Core could be.

This Innate Node in his palm right now... It was his, it was the very same Innate Node he had been born with as a child, the very one his mother suffered to birth with him, the very one that called down the Phenomena upon his birth. The intimacy he had with it, even after so long had passed, transcended almost anything else he had ever experienced in life.

SHUUUUUUU!

A strange vacuum seemed to form around Leonel. In that moment, his eyes snapped open, a wild red-gold light shimmering within his irises even as a similarly colored fog began to waft from his body.

'Junior Scarlet Mage.'

Leonel exhaled a breath, the temperature around him skyrocketing more and more with every passing second. And yet, he had never felt better in his entire life.

His scales lit on fire, his wings following suit soon after. He was bathed in a red gold flame, a moan almost escaping his lips as the intoxicating feeling spread throughout his body.

And then... he tapped his foot to the ground.

A rushing line of flames spread out from his, quickly drawing a majestic magic circle that surrounded him in the blink of an eye. Each line of fire seemed to race against one another, quickly completing their patterns one at a time.

"Aina. Follow me."

Aina's ax swung down once more as Leonel stretched a hand out. In quick succession, several fire balls formed and shot past her, the heat making even her tough skin tingle.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Aina's eyes widened as she watched the tunnel collapse. When she looked back, she found a hole where Leonel had been, her heart threatening to beat out of her chest.

Aina quickly pursued, the sound of rumbling explosion resounding beneath her. No matter how fast she fell down each hole, she couldn't seem to catch up, causing the astonishment on her face to only grow.

She knew that these walls were actually fragile compared to normal Seventh Dimensional rock. After all, this Nest had to be built by hand, so it couldn't be too difficult. As such, they were the equivalent of dried mud in the Third Dimension, within the Seventh Dimension.

Still, despite knowing all of this, Aina couldn't help but be baffled. Her ax... It could barely leave a small nick on these 'mud walls'.

Suddenly, a rush of light flooded Aina's vision and she realized the BOOMING sounds had calmed to a halt. When her vision cleared, she found Leonel standing before her and a vast underwater cavern before them.

Streams of vibrant green waters snaked all around and several waterfalls pooled in from the sides. Toward the center, a delicate stack of heavily Runed eggs the size of a human lay, each booming with a clear heartbeat that rocked the soft bed of soaked soil they sat upon.

In the very center, there was one egg that was not only by far the largest, it was the only one half submerged in a pond of green liquid. While the Runes of the eggs around it varied from Black to Bronze, to Silver and even Gold, its Runes was a bright green color, radiating its own light.

However, this wasn't the most shocking part of the cavern. There was already a battle raging on and it seemed to have been going on for a while. A liter of Rapax corpses lay, and at a single glance, it was easy to tell that each of them had been at the Seventh Dimension with only a rare few having been at the Sixth. It was a deduction enough to leave one frozen in shock.

Still battling several more Rapax, a singular young man with simple black hair stood with nothing more than a sword in hand.

When Leonel laid eyes on the young man, though, his expression went as cold as ice despite the star-like temperatures he was radiating.

The Sword Deity.