

## Descent 1371

### Chapter 1371 Deliberate Steps

Aina frowned. Looking toward Leonel's back, she could feel that something was off. However, she didn't know about what had happened between Leonel and Amery as she had already left before them. There didn't seem to be anything too drastically different about Leonel's expression, but she could just sense the shift. It wasn't really something she had ever felt from him before, at least not in such an obvious and large quantity.

Her gaze turned back to Amery, her brows furrowing deeper. Someone had gotten here before them and by the looks of it, they had already been here for a long while, even to the point of fighting all of these Rapax alone.

The Seventh Dimensional Rapax that had fallen had clearly been severely weakened. However, even with that being the case, their strength was still beyond what normal Sixth Dimensional existences could match. And yet, somehow, this singular young man had taken them all on without the slightest hint of help from others.

'Sixth Dimension? He's in the Sixth Dimension? But...'

Aina had assumed that this young man was part of the True Selection, and likely even the one other Amethyst Token wielder everyone was talking about. But, everyone in their generation should still be within the Fifth Dimension, no? Void Palace didn't allow anyone who had crossed that barrier in because they only raised students who had taken the God Path.

Unless... Unless this young man managed to step onto the God Path without the help of the Void Palace?

Aina wasn't sure what such a thing would entail, but her intuition told her that such a feat wasn't normal by any stretch of the imagination, even if you had a powerful family backing you.

"You know him?" Aina asked Leonel, treading lightly.

Leonel didn't answer immediately, his breathing calmed and his heart returned to its steady beat.

"Let's just say I have a few things to pay him back for." He said evenly.

From start to finish, Amery didn't look back. There was simply no way that someone who was battling such a large number of Rapax could possibly have such dull senses, so the only explanation was that he had sensed them and he simply didn't care to divert his attention.

Without a word, Leonel plopped down and crossed his legs, closing his eyes. Aina, who obviously witnessed this, had an odd change in expression. She could immediately sense that Leonel's consciousness wasn't in the present any longer, as though it had been sucked up elsewhere. He must want her to look over him, but this situation was a bit...

Unbeknownst to Aina who was perfectly correct in her statement, not only had Leonel's consciousness vanished, but it had entered the Spear Domain world, his piercing eyes gazing over the horizon.

When Amery defeated and quite frankly humiliated him what felt like a lifetime ago now, Leonel hadn't actually been angry. Or, more accurately, he hadn't reacted like he might have otherwise.

Granted, part of the reason for this was because he was more focused on saving his own life than anything else. Being enraged at that time would have only brought him closer to his death, not further away.

Still, even if Leonel hadn't been so close to death's door that day, his rage still wouldn't have shown on his face. He just wasn't that kind of person. He might choose to entertain an outward display of rage when it was related to someone close and dear to him. But, when it came to his own ego, he preferred a much more quiet, brewing storm.

Leonel's father had taught him a lot of things in his life. The ones of main importance were Respect and Persistence. He carried it wherever he went and one of the rare times he could find his father being serious about anything was when he spoke of them.

However, there were many other lessons that Leonel had learned without being explicitly told. His father's casual demeanor, hiding a lurking, slumbering beast within, was one of those things. A large part of the reason Leonel preferred to handle things himself was because he had observed these matters.

A betrayal of his friend? He took it with a placid expression. A betrayal of his lover? He simply cut ties and let the relationship rot. A betrayal of his strength? He let it sit and fester, a small, disguised reminder at the back of his head, waiting to be awakened and remembered.

Leonel took a step forward.

The darkness of the Spear Domain hadn't changed. A countless, endless chain of mountains, a dark and black sky, even the cracks of thunder and lightning didn't shed much color at all.

Leonel walked down a winding path, regions that used to pressure him greatly rolling off his shoulders as though they weren't there at all.

It had been a while since Leonel tried to claim a spear. He had stopped at the Quasi Silver Spear Peaks because it simply wasn't smart to go on.

Surviving in Spear Domain required a powerful Spear Force, but Leonel had always gotten away with far more because he had a powerful mind to offset his weaknesses. However, now, not only did he have a powerful mind that had recently entered the ranks of the Sixth Dimension, but his Spear Force had evolved to a level it had never touched before...

A strong barrier of separation lay between the Quasi Silver Ranks. As though wading through air as thick as crass black oil, Leonel was forced to push through, his light steps becoming heavier and even his skin beginning to weigh him down.

However, he pushed through. A shroud of golden Spear Force surrounded him and pierced forward, shredding the curtain that lay ahead and allowing him to step through.

The moment he did, the overwhelming pressure collapsed in from all sides. Leonel's bones creaked and sweat fell from his brows, but he continued to walk forward, one deliberate step after another.

## Chapter 1372 Spear Domain

The spear graveyard in the Black Grade region of the Spear Domain had truly felt as such. However, as Leonel walked forward and crossed from the Bronze Grade region into the Silver Grade region, he felt as though he was entering a whole new world.

The number of spears littered in the surroundings were just as numerous and, quite frankly, actually seemed to be far larger in number. The Bronze Grade region had already been twice as large as the Black Grade region, and despite just stepping foot in the Silver Grade region, Leonel could feel that the scale was even larger, at least ten times that of the Bronze Region.

One would think that the more powerful the spears became, the less of them there would be. But, the Spear Domain seemed to throw this logic out of the window, and Leonel felt that maybe, just for this case alone, it made sense.

Leonel didn't know anything about the origins of the Spear Domain ring, but what he did know was that every spear here had been acknowledged by it. The Spear Domain wouldn't allow unworthy spears to enter its ranks.

Just by this logic alone, it would make sense that those with access to higher quality spears would be the largest pool of powerhouses whose tales could be found inscribed here.

It made Leonel think, though. What was he missing out on?

If his logic was sound, then that would mean that the spears in the Black and Bronze Regions were far more impressive for having made it so far. To take less and make more of what they had, the spearmen and women of those regions had to climb a far taller mountain.

The thought made Leonel wonder if he was missing out on the best experiences the Spear Domain had to offer. Ever since he claimed his first Spear Peak, he had been treating the spears at the bottom of the hills as mere stepping stones. He only observed them for long enough to grasp their essence and bolster his understanding of the Domain that ruled over them all.

Leonel took another heavy step forward, his chest heaving.

In the future, he would definitely have to observe the Spear Domain for longer and see if there was anything he had skipped over and missed. He would also definitely have to ask Wise Star Order about what he might or might not know about it. But for now...

He needed a Quasi Gold Spear.

Leonel didn't just want to beat Amery, he wanted to defeat him with a spear. Whether that was realistic or not, he didn't know. And, for now, he didn't care.

Back then Amery had tried to take his Spear Domain ring away. There was no doubt in Leonel's mind that Amery was well aware of what family he came from and what the origins of it were, but he simply did not care.

It was obvious that Amery both didn't fear the Morales family, and actually just might be enemies with them.

Such a victory, Leonel didn't just want to claim for himself, but also the Morales family. Of course, this wasn't because Leonel had suddenly become a loyal to the core Morales family member. It was rather because, as far as he was concerned, this family would be his to control in the future. If he didn't put his best foot forward now... When would he?

"Ha..."

Leonel pulled himself up the hill. By now, in the outside world, his body was completely drenched in sweat. A worried Aina watched on, but there was nothing that she could do. She had to protect Leonel from the front. She hadn't forgotten that they were in the middle of a battlefield right this moment. If it wasn't for Amery, they would have already been swarmed. But, it was clear from Leonel's reaction that Amery was most definitely not an ally.

The time continued to tick by an eventually an entire half hour had passed. The sweat drenching Leonel's body had only gotten worse. If Aina didn't know better, she would have thought that Leonel was being boiled alive, but what could possibly force someone with maybe the greatest Fire Elemental Affinity in the Human Domain to sweat like this?

Aina could only be baffled. Leonel's Force didn't seem to be circulating and his strength seemed stagnate as his stamina plummeted. None of it made sense.

Aina's head suddenly snapped up, her gaze narrowing. She had expected this to happen, but when it finally did, she still couldn't help but put her guard up.

Several groups of youths poured in, having been delayed by going to the wrong location. When they saw the situation, many didn't quite know or understand how to react. And, the few that recognized Amery, gave themselves a long pause, apprehension growing in their hearts.

Conon of the Lio family, Simona of the Pyius family and the large Armand of the Tarius family were all present. However, they only represented the geniuses of just their foggy lake. Aina could tell instantly, just from her instinct alone, that there were at least six or more others that carried that same level of danger in the way they carried themselves.

Leonel and Aina didn't go unnoticed, and it made those that recognized them frown. They could accept Amery getting here before them, but Leonel and Aina were a different matter entirely.

Among this number included a familiar group of three. Or, rather two... It seemed that the third of their trio hadn't made it.

The atmosphere immediately became odd. In the center, there was a singular young man fighting dozens of elite Rapax on his own. The effort on his part wasn't small, but it was clear that he was reserving himself, waiting for something.

Around this battle, several groups formed, among which was Leonel and Aina. Many of them eyed the egg, unwilling to take their eyes off of it. Not everyone understood exactly what was at stake here. In fact, the majority were ignorant. However, it didn't take a genius to understand what the most valuable thing here was.

Aina's grip tightened around her ax, her eyes remaining focused as she protected Leonel to her back.

## Chapter 1373 I'll Explain

The hilt of Aina's battle ax slammed against the ground with a dull thud, a light breath leaving her lips. Her posture straightened and her eyes partially closed. Her aura seemed to steam and bubble, the dangerous air coming off of her multiplying several times every second even as the subtle patterns of a black panther crawled up her skin, highlighted by a faint crimson glow.

Her hair was gently lifted into the wind before settling down, its length so long that it almost graced the ground with its presence. Though she didn't move or say a single word, her entire demeanor screamed danger. If anyone took even a single step toward Leonel, she would lash out.

The gazes of several of the geniuses narrowed. Everyone had the feeling that this situation was only growing more complicated with each passing moment and it was difficult for them to tell exactly where their place should be.

It was difficult enough for the absolute geniuses who would have been Amethyst Token wielders in other years to decide how to act, but the stragglers that were Golden Token wielders at best were even more lost, suddenly feeling that it was a mistake to come so far.

At that moment, completely out of everyone's expectations, Leonel's eyes suddenly shot open.

A ring of light violently expanded outward, causing a wind to kick up and a wall of pressure to push outward. Some of the weaker individuals found themselves almost lifted up from their feet, their bodies being sent stumbling backward.

"Ha..."

Leonel exhaled a long breath, his body slowly rising. He reached out with a hand, sweat dancing down the contours of his shredded physique. As his Metal Body progressed, it only seemed to make every fiber more defined, every peak larger and every valley deeper, only for it all to be tightly compressed into a lean, thrumming engine.

A spear seemed to manifest from motes of light in the air at the behest of his fingers. The lights grew more numerous before concentrating into a solid weight that fell with the heft of a mountain into Leonel's grip.

For a moment, there was nothing more than a blinding rod of light, too bright to see any of its individual features. However, when its coat of light began to flake off, dancing in the air like twinkling stars, what was left was a spear too stunning to even be properly described in words.

Its length was about two and a half meters from tip to tip, its minor details more beautiful and gorgeous than the last. Its shaft took up most of its weight, designed with white hexagonal plates of metal. In between the gaps of these white hexagonal plates, radiant golden lights were hidden within, giving off an air of unmatched purity.

The spear's blade was a mixture of lethality and astounding design. It had the shape of a harpoon, one side of its blade edge being as flat and smooth as a sword's edge and the other forming three menacing curves that looked like a shark's teeth.

The blade was almost two feet long alone and was a blinding golden color. Sometimes it would appear to be as solid as a finely worked piece of metal, and at other times it would appear as intangible as light itself, dancing between the two dichotomies with a deft ease.

Leonel's grip tightened, his arm flexing as he casually swept his spear to the side in an elegant arc.

BANG!

The ground was sliced in two and immediately lifted beneath the wind pressure alone, a slab of rock rising up and crash into an opposing wall.

The spear made the Seventh Dimensional terrain look like nothing more than playdough, its prowess shining through with a healthy arrogance.

Leonel's free palm still held onto his original Innate Node. Without much of a thought, he slid it into his mouth, allowing it to rest beneath his tongue. The familiar heat coursed through his body, making him feel free and alive.

His glance swept over Aina. She seemed primed and ready, but he simply smiled. Taking a step forward, his arm wrapped around her waist, pulling her into his embrace.

Aina, caught off guard by the sudden showing of affection, faltered slightly. Something about Leonel's sweat after so long consuming Cleansing Waters everyday was particularly refreshing and almost oppressively masculine. It was the kind of smell that left her eyes a bit hazy without her knowledge.

"You like when I explain what I want to do, right?"

Aina looked up and toward Leonel's side profile, her gaze suddenly blinking expectantly.

"Then I'll tell you." Leonel's grin only widened with every passing second.

He swept his gaze over the growing number of groups before his gaze landed on Amery.

"You see that guy over there," he pointed with his spear, "before we leave this Nest today, I'm going to kick his ass. But you see, it's kind of unfair, and I'm not a fan of giving my enemies excuses. So, first, I drained most of my stamina claiming this Quasi Gold Spear."

Leonel's gaze shifted from Amery's back, rolling through the crowd of people once more, his voice being the only sound amidst the battle cries and clashes of the Rapax and Amery.

"But, I don't think that's enough, honestly. I've also heard that there are a lot of people who think my Amethyst Token shouldn't be in my hands."

Leonel released his grip on Aina, taking slow steps forward. His palm flipped over, an Amethyst Token appearing within.

With a flick of his thumb, the Token barreled forth before being firmly stuck in the ceiling above Leonel's head, unmoving.

"So, I thought that I would deal with that first."

At that moment, Leonel's eyes locked onto Armand. The image of the latter's disdain due to his bloodline's reaction was still seared into his memory. Since that moment, he had had every intention of defeating this person using the Luxnix family's Lineage Factor.

"You. I don't really care if you all come together or one by one. Either way, you'll fall beneath my blade first."

Chapter 1374 Monster in Beast Skin

A stunned sort of silence gripped the young geniuses, their eyes suddenly all focusing on the Amethyst Token vibrating in the ceiling. They had never thought that such a thing would happen, let alone in this sort of situation.

[Author's Note: Big booboo on my part. I keep saying Armand is part of the Tarius family but he's actually part of the Taur family. This is an important distinction you guys will learn about in the future. Sorry for the continuity error]

Armand's eyes narrowed, his bare torso rippling with strength. Leonel was only just over two meters tall, but he stood at two and half meters, making the difference between them more than just a single head. With the two enormous axes by his side, one to each palm, he looked to be a giant.

WHOOSH!

In that moment, a figure suddenly flickered and vanished, their speed so blindingly fast that it was almost impossible to track with the naked eye. Their body seemed to lengthen into a thin string, their body breaking the laws of physics and reaching warp speeds. Even if one tried to blink during their movement, completing the action wouldn't have been possible.

The knife appeared before Leonel's neck almost the instant after the figure moved.

The blade shot through the air, its speed whipping by Leonel.

When it finally came to a halt the figure that had wielded it had already passed Leonel, also coming to a stop. The sight of a young man drenched in black and red came into view. His body was lanky to an extreme but filled with a lean sort of explosive power. They weren't too tall, but they weren't too short either. Everything about them seemed to scream power.

However...

"You're slow."

Leonel's words drifted into his ears. The young man's gaze shifted from empty space to his blade, only to realize that there wasn't the slightest hint of blood on it. When he looked back toward Leonel, he found that the latter had moved just half a foot to the right at a completely unknown time to him, just enough to dodge the blade by what would have been nothing more than a hair's breadth.

At that moment, a strong stomp shook the earth and caused the connecting rivers and waterfalls of green to ripple outward.

Armand took another heavy stomp forward, causing a second quake to ripple outward. By the time he primed himself for a third, he was already in a charge, his tall, lumbering figure building up a deathly sort of momentum.

"I advise you stay out of my way, Rowan Cancer. This bug to squash is mine and mine alone."

Rowan stood in silence. He didn't seem to react to anything, whether it was shame for having launched a sneak attack, nor his miss. It was as though none of it had to do with him. But, he continued to stare at the blade without a single word.

"To insult the Taur family, will be the last thing you ever do."

Leonel didn't respond. It seemed that this man took pointing a spear toward him as an insult. But, that was fine by him. Today, he had a few points to prove.

On the outskirts of the battlefield, within a group, a young man chuckled.

"All this fighting when there are two beauty amongst beauties here. I really don't know which one to choose. Choices, choices."

The gaze of the young flickered back and forth between Aina and Simona, truly unable to decide which one to linger upon more. He had a feeling that this sort of matter would be dragged on for a very long time. And, judging by the situation, everyone was waiting for an opportunity to snag the biggest prize.

Once Amery was tired out and had gracefully defeated all of the Rapax for them, there would be a chance to snag the highest prize amidst all the chaos. As far as he was concerned, fighting now would be nothing more than a stroke of the ego. It would waste his time, his stamina, and ruin whatever timing he had. Chasing beauties, however... That was a very different matter.

He, Jon Virg, could always make time to chase women. His mouth would never run out stamina, whether it was for talking or other things—.

**BANG!**

Jon looked back from getting his fill, only for his pupils to constrict.

A very familiar figure slid along the ground, their heavy body grinding to a halt at his feet.

Armand's hands trembled, flames licking at his arms that threatened to burn them to ash.

Jon looked up from Armand to lock gazes with Leonel. Even without the latter saying a word, the warning seemed to be clear: 'watch where you're looking'. Even while in the midst of battle, it seemed Leonel was well aware of his surroundings. Maybe far too aware.

Armand slowly stood from the ground, his pupils constricting as he looked at the state of his forearms. For now, these injuries were only superficial and at most skin deep, something that wasn't a problem for a warrior on his level. However, there was something about these flames that instilled a deep fear within him. If it wasn't for his own Force eventually countering it, he felt that he could have already been burnt to ash.

"... Scarlet Star Force..."



The words Armand spoke seemed to cause the atmosphere to freeze once more. Even Amery, who had yet to turn back to face even a single one of them, had a slight pause in his movements. The weight of such a Force was not small by any stretch of the imagination.

In one moment, Leonel had gone from someone they were all certain had relied on his connections and nepotism to gain an Amethyst Token, to a monster in beast skin.

The fiery light danced along Leonel's skin, making him look like a Roman God bathed in Ambrosia. A steam wafted from his spear, the temperature around him skyrocketing.

"Is that it?" He asked lightly. "If this is all my generation has to offer, don't you think it would just be better if you all follow me instead?"

Leonel grinned.

### Chapter 1375 Shadows on the Other Side

Leonel with an ability to use his Scarlet Star Force, even at just the Fourth Dimensional level, was like giving wings to a tiger. Facing nothing more than a group of Fifth Dimensional existences only a Tier or two higher than him, it made the prowess of the number one flame in all of existence shine through all the more.

Leonel's words seemed to stoke a flame in the youths.

"So that's what this is about? I heard that the Littlest Nova is late to the party, but I didn't expect you to be this desperate. Do you even understand the dynamics between our families to be asking such a question?"

The one who spoke was surprising Conon of the Lio family. Despite his usual personality, he had become frighteningly reserved after seeing Amery present. He might have been the first to act had this situation not been so odd to begin with. The Rapax were so focused on trying to take down Amery that they hadn't even splintered off a single one of them to try and wipe out what remained of their threats.

Conon's words, despite his brutish nature, actually sounded quite smart. And, despite seeing Armand, a man he could at best match evenly in battle, thrown back like a ragdoll, he hadn't reacted to this very much either.

"You can claim an upper hand for now. True State Force isn't something that can be countered easily. But, we'll all soon be in the Sixth Dimension, the level where true dividing lines and separations will happen.

"You're quite confident in your Innate Node, but do you know why Innate Nodes are rare amongst humans to begin with? Most people born with them end up dying before reaching their primes because they'll be consumed by them. Innate Nodes are the path of the Spirituals. They're the only race capable of coexisting with such a burden.

"But for you, not only will our God Paths be able to counter your Scarlet Star Force in the future, but you might very well die in a few decades anyway.

"So don't you think you're too arrogant?"

Leonel tilted his head to the side, observing Conon from head to toe. He found it somewhat amusing that the man wearing radiant white gold plated armor was the one calling him out for being too arrogant. It was even funnier because he could feel something quite similar to his King's Might coming off of Conon, making him quite sensitive to just how prideful this young man was.

That said, Conon was right about one thing he said. Leonel didn't know the dynamics between the families. For all he knew, asking this of these youths was asking them to betray some ties they had already formed or in the worst of cases, betray their family themselves. However... That wasn't what Leonel had meant.

"I think you've misunderstood me. When I said to follow me, I meant in my shadow. I've heard a lot of complaining about my Token, but now that I'm here, no one seems to want to prove or falsify anything. I'm just disappointed.

"As for what you have to say about my Innate Node..." Leonel's smile faded. "... Don't assign limits you to do to yourself to me."

Conon's gaze narrowed, his expression turning dangerous. No one dared to speak to him like this, no one. But, the oppressive might coming off of Leonel seemed no lesser than that of his own. No... It even felt like it faintly surpassed it.

Conon's brow couldn't help but furrow. Was there a Lineage Factor that could match his family's in such a field? Why had he never heard of it, then?

Aina, though, found a very different problem with this situation.

'Leonel... Isn't usually like this. Something feels off.'

She found it hard to describe. It wasn't that Leonel wasn't being himself, but it was rather that he was... being too much of himself? He might normally think these things in his mind, but it was rare for him to verbalize them.

Everything from how he started this matter to how he ended it felt weird. First he wrapped his arm around her waist, then grandly told everyone his plan, and even after all of that, he didn't seem to actually be taking tangible steps toward that goal. Everything had seemed overly showy and arrogant, even down to showing her off and claiming her grandly. But there was ultimately no substance to it all. Leonel wasn't like that.

Sure, he had knocked Armand down with a single blow and asserted his dominance. But, the Leonel she knew was less of a talker and much more a doer. He preferred to show his arrogance through actions rather than words. If he could do something quicker by punching, he wouldn't bother wagging his tongue. And, when it came to matters related to her, he was especially sensitive.

Aina had definitely noticed Jon's looks. She hadn't done anything because she felt that this was Leonel's stage. Under normal circumstances, he would have already lashed out. And yet...

It was odd. On one hand, Aina thought that Leonel was being far more aggressive than he usually was. But, on another, he wasn't being aggressive enough. To an outsider, it sounded like she was asking for the impossible. However to Aina, without intimately she understood Leonel, she knew something was off.

There were only two possibilities. Either this was his Scarlet Star Force already making subtle changes to his personality, or...

Leonel's gaze sharpened. 'I knew it.'

The actions of Amery were odd enough. However, the actions of the Runed Rapax elites bordered on absolutely ridiculous. If anything, the Rapax felt like a race of incompetent, bumbling buffoons with how they had handled everything up until this point. They had practically allowed a group of children to run rampant in their territory with barely any repercussions at all.

This egg represented the pinnacle of their race, the future leading expert of their people and an investment they had poured practically everything into. Would this really be all the showing they had for such an important thing?

On the other hand, Amery's lack of a response to everything could be taken as a sign of his arrogance, but his pace was still too leisurely and his demeanor far too casual for what he was trying to accomplish.

There was only one explanation for everything. It wasn't just Amery that was waiting for something... The Rapax were waiting for something too.

On one side there was the Rapax. On another there was the Void Palace. And now, there was a third party.

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

An entire segment of the underwater cavern collapsed, causing a wall of green water to rush in.

It was then they appeared, sinister devils shrouded in darkness. The moment Leonel laid eyes on them, a deep revulsion from the depths of his soul took hold of him, a revulsion he could immediately tell was rooted in his Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor.

He thought back to Wise Star Orders words. There were six Lineage Factors in the lights... And there were six in the dark...

'... They're the shadows on the other side...'

Chapter 1376 Shadow

Leonel immediately shot backward, landing by Aina's side. He crossed the face of Rowan without even glancing his way, his eyes still locked onto the surging waters and flickering shadows.

These newcomers seemed to move slowly, but their speed was exceptionally fast. They almost instantly split into two groups, one converging onto the Rapax and the egg, while the others fanned out, clearly wanting to deal with the youths of the Void Palace.

Almost the instant they did, Leonel felt an odd shift in the atmosphere. Several heads turned in his direction, their faces obscured by the shadows to the point even their body shapes were hard to make out. Whether they were male or female, fit or slim, even their heights seemed to wildly fluctuate, making Leonel's calculations reboot every other second.

A chilling wind nipped at Leonel's neck, but his gaze only became colder. What was immediately obvious was that these individuals couldn't break the rules of the Rapax either. They were all most definitely either within the Fifth Dimension or the low Sixth Dimensional Tiers.

Leonel's gaze sharpened. He couldn't afford to use this as an experiment any longer. This wasn't the time to train. It was a time to focus on survival.

"Aina."

"Yes."

"Go all out."

BANG!

Both of their auras skyrocketed, intertwining in a blazing pillar. One side of blinding white gold and red. Another side of dense black and crimson.

A shadow appeared before them both, only to be met with two blades simultaneously.

BOOM!

"Mature Snowy Star Owl? What an unexpected find. Be a good little boy and tell me where you got your Lineage Factor."

The shadow's dense fog seemed to morph, becoming two glistening bat wings that reflected hues of silver from time to time as though it had trapped the rays of the moon.

Leonel's lips upturned, forming a sneer. "I'm pretty interested in where yours came from too."

The shadow seemed stunned for a moment, its wings slightly trembling as one half blocked Leonel's spear and the other handled Aina's battle ax. Even facing the two of them, its feet dug into the ground, its powerful legs pushing back without losing out in the slightest. However, it soon burst into a fit of laughter that grated on the ears, making Leonel feel as though a fork was scraping against his eardrum.

"You want to know where mine comes from? I have not met a boy so arrogant and ignorant in my life! Do you believe that even if you did know, that you could do something about it?!"

The wings of the shadow flexed. An uncontrollable strength pulsed down Leonel's arms. He immediately found his balance shifting, his attempts at forcing down and fighting back against the feeling failing. Without suspense, both he and Aina were forced back, their bodies sliding against the ground.

Leonel's blood rumbled, immediately allowing his wings to unfurl from his back once more. He realized in that moment that there was no sense in holding back against these people.

Scales of white gold erupted across his skin, hiding the dense Bronze Runes that formed beneath them.

In that moment, his speed skyrocketed, the golden blade of his spear shimmering with an added flare as he struck outward over a dozen times in quick succession.

Aina's pupils elongated and sharpened, her canines growing and the black fog that came off of herself becoming all the more prominent.

The pair shot forward in unison, their blades practically intertwining and leaving wild streaks of shimmering, sharp Force in the air.

Leonel's figure flickered, his Spear Crown erupting. Radiant light followed his every movement.

Aina's strides were long, her attacks wild. Each movement carried with it an explosive power.

The dichotomy of fast and swift versus powerful and purposeful almost instantly overwhelmed the shadow. Leonel was able to calculate Aina's next move even before she did it and Aina was able to instinctually react to every action Leonel took. Despite it having been over a year since the two fought with one another, it felt as though they had never missed a single day.

Leonel's spear flickered, appearing before the shadow's throat, only to instantly find a wing in its path. However, as though he had expected exactly this much, he had already moved, his figure vanishing and appearing to its back. His spear snaked forward as though its trajectory had never changed, piercing toward the back of the shadow's skull.

Aina appeared to its front, her stance firm and her battle ax swinging in an upward arc. The momentum of her swing was so fierce that its polearm warped and bent, the crashing sounds of wind pushing against its blade making one feel as though their eardrums might burst.

The snarky voice of the shadow had long since faded. It was impossible to tell what sort of state it was in or if it had even bled once since this battle began. However, its lack of a word seemed to speak volumes all to itself.

The shadow dodged Leonel's spear by tilting its head to the side, but almost immediately crashed against Aina's ax as a result of its efforts.

It stumbled backward in time to find that Leonel had already retracted his spear, his heel slamming into the back of the shadow's knee as it retreated.

The shadow's heart skipped a beat. With how ethereal its form was currently, it couldn't understand how Leonel had managed to pinpoint its joint so precisely. But, by the time it had finished this thought, it was already too late.

Aina's ax descended from the skies, carrying with it the momentum of the original upward swing and slamming downward with a piercing wind pressure that made the shadow feel as though it was about to be split in half without even feeling the touch of the cool blades' edge.

Leonel's gaze sharpened, a dense fire lighting within. He had been careful to not use his Scarlet Star Force to not harm Aina, but now was the perfect time.

Flames erupted on the tip of his blade, fusing with his Spear Force in the blink of an eye.

CRACK!

Leonel's expression flickered when he heard this, but his strike remained true, timing it all perfectly. Their teamwork was simply too seamless.

However, at that moment, his eyes widened.

"Retreat."

## Chapter 1377 Tell Me

Aina didn't need a second warning. Her gaze flickered, her muscles reacting on instinct. Her mind flashed back to the flick of Leonel's father's finger. A single action changed the trajectory of an attack that had her everything behind it with what was seemingly minimal effort. The key wasn't to try to reverse everything at once, but rather to apply pressure in a new, easier direction.

Well, maybe this was how Leonel would have broken things down. But to Aina, she only needed to see it once and it was already seamlessly incorporated into her battle style. She didn't need to think, she only needed to react.

Her ax's arc shifted only the slightest bit, missing its intended target and swinging down and back. In one smooth motion, all of her forward momentum was suddenly pushed in a new direction, sending her body retreating even faster than it had been coming forward.

Aina's pupils constricted as a palm enveloped by shadows and darkness just barely missed her chest. If she was just a moment slower, the result would have been devastating.

At that moment, a strong wall of wind slammed against Aina's body. But, this wind wasn't from the palm, but was rather from a flap of Leonel's wings that had just reached her. Her backward momentum shot up, causing the palm that had still been pursuing her to fall out of range, coming to a halt.

Aina immediately recovered, shifting the momentum of her battle ax once again and crossing it before her chest. Her grasp on impetus and motion seemed to have touched an otherworldly level, seamlessly loosening all of the pressure she felt from sudden changes in movement.

Still, her heartbeat couldn't help but slow to a crawl, each individual pump becoming more and more powerful. Right then, that attack had come out of nowhere. She would have been a step late in reacting if not for Leonel, something that was shocking to her.

It was clear that this individual had tried to get rid of her first and quickly. While Aina was sure that she would have managed to come out without dying, there was no doubt that she would have been injured, maybe even heavily.

Just like that, Leonel and Aina found themselves separated by a few dozen meters, there now being two shadows in between them instead of one, the second seemingly having appeared from thin air. However, Leonel knew better.

They hadn't appeared out of nowhere, they had folded space. It was yet another Shadow Sovereign, a third one had appeared.

"They're a Shadow Sovereign. Be careful." Leonel said, pushing his senses to the absolute maximum. He almost hadn't noticed the change. Luckily, ever since he ran into the Umbra family, Leonel had a habit of not only scanning regions, but also checking for shifts in Force concentration, a task he assigned to one of his many split minds.

The Umbra family had a strong concealment ability that was difficult to detect. The only method was by checking for the shift in Dark Elemental Force Concentration. Just then, Leonel had sensed a random and

sharp spike which made him realize that there was something wrong. He chose to retreat first and not get greedy.

"How do you detect them?" Aina asked.

'Feel for Dark Elemental Force.' Leonel responded, using his Internal Sight this time. Though he wasn't sure if there was a way for Shadow Sovereigns to hide their tracks, but he would rather not let an enemy know that they had to do so. This way, they'd still have a leg up.

With just a short exchange, Aina understood. Her Dark Elemental Affinity was high to begin with, this wouldn't be a problem. She wouldn't need Leonel's sharp senses to sense it. After being told once, that was all she needed.

The second shadow slowly retracted their palm. It was impossible to see their face, but Leonel still felt uneasy to the point he felt that it was too optimistic to believe that it currently had a surprised expression. This second shadow... Was far more of a problem.

In the short lull, Leonel quickly scanned the battlefield. He realized that the number of shadows wasn't enough to overwhelm them, but they were extraordinarily powerful. If not for Leonel and Aina working together to defeat the first shadow, it would have taken either one of them far more effort. Their battle prowess fighting together was greater than the sum of their individual strengths, something Aina would most definitely remind Leonel of at a future date.

Even while being outnumbered, the momentum of the battlefield had taken a large swing. In fact, many youths from the Void Palace had already fallen, never to rise again. Their numbers had already been cut by a fifth, and it was only getting worse with each passing second.

To make matters worse, the flood of water the shadows had allowed in was slowly overwhelming the land. Leonel could already feel the moisture at his feet and maybe soon they'd all be wading in it.

Things were fine for now because this water was filled with Life Force and could actually be greatly beneficial if they saved and stored it away. However, what about when the Anarchic Force poisoned layer began to flood inward as well? That level of toxicity wasn't anything they could combat alone, even Leonel wasn't sure if he would be alright.

"Get up."

The second shadow spoke to the first, a harsh disdain in their voice. The first shadow was the only one to have come so close to losing their life so quickly.

Despite its usual snarkiness, the first shadow didn't say a word as it complied.

"This kid..."

"I'm aware. Go support the others. All the information he has will soon be mine. We don't have a lot of time before the Rapax try to close the cage of this trap they think they've sprung on us."

"Yes."

The first shadow flickered and vanished, its wings only needing to flap once to take it across the battlefield and toward its target.

The palms of the remaining shadow flipped over, revealing two slender shadowy swords.

It turned toward Leonel, its head seeming to tilt.

"Why don't you tell me where the Lineage Tablet is?"

Chapter 1378 Counter

Leonel's gaze narrowed.

Of all the things he could have expected to happen, this was the last. He didn't think that just existing would end with such people on his tail. He couldn't help but wonder how it was the Luxnix had remained safe for so long. From what Leonel could tell, these shadows definitely came from an organization far more powerful than what the Luxnix could hope to match.

Leonel exhaled a light breath. The obvious conclusion was that this was thanks to Wise Star Order. The old man had remained silent even up until this point despite the fact Leonel was quite certain he was paying attention to the current situation.

It suddenly felt obvious to Leonel that the old man had more reasons for forcing the Luxnix to lay low for three generations than he was letting on. However, Leonel had absolutely no intention of selling out a family he planned on taking over personally very soon. And, even if he hadn't had such intentions, exposing them would put his mother, grandmother and cousin in harms way.

If they wanted such information from him, they would have to try harder than this.

Leonel's body relaxed. The toned outline of his scale covered body seemed to lengthen somewhat, his tense muscles loosening.

Almost the moment he did, spiraling flames seemed to erupt around him as though this was simply his most natural state.

"I've never fought a Shadow Sovereign before, how about you enlighten me?"

The shadow didn't respond. Instead, it flickered and vanished. This time, however, this wasn't an illusion of speed. Leonel could almost impose the image of Little Blackstar onto this person. Whether it was vanishing in a puff of black smoke, walking through the air or the heavy domain that almost instantly sunk around Leonel, it was all the same.

Blood shot up from Leonel's chest, a line being drawn from the middle of his torso up and out his collarbone. The strike was fierce and swift, leaving him almost no room to maneuver. However... It was also shallow.

The shadow seemed taken off guard that Leonel hadn't even tried to dodge, but was even more shocked by the fact that their blade hadn't sliced him in two. Unfortunately, as shocked as it might have been about these two things, the spear running through its chest was without a doubt the highest priority.

**BANG!**

A surging tide of Scarlet Star Force tore a path out of the shadow's body.



Leonel's gaze narrowed. But, almost in directly opposing fashion, a sneer spread across his face. He had spent everyday of the last several years of his life with a Shadow Sovereign by his side. Not just this, but his mind was connected with one.

Seeing this sneer, the shadow, who had just been preparing to attack again even with a spear running through its chest immediately chose to retreat instead. However, under what was the astonished gazes of many spectators, Leonel rushed forward to match its backward momentum.

The shadow darted from the left and right, shooting in the skies and even rushing back down to the ground. But, as though he could read the future, Leonel matched it beat for beat, his spear still running through its chest.

As expected, the shadow had gone incorporeal, much like Little Blackstar could. While Leonel's spear had, indeed, run through its chest, it had hit nothing but empty air. However, this was exactly what Leonel had been expecting.

Caught off guard and unable to react, the Shadow Sovereign reacted on instinct, dodging Leonel's strike using its greatest evasive ability, and it was exactly this that had caused it to fall into Leonel's trap.

While in this state, the Shadow Sovereign had no ability to attack. If it wanted to counter Leonel, it would have to become corporeal, but doing such a thing would be like driving a spear through its own chest.

Leonel remembered very clearly that Little Blackstar had once saved his life by bringing him into this incorporeal state. The little guy had been so tired after doing this that he couldn't even bring himself into the incorporeal state for a long while.

This told Leonel one thing. There was most definitely a limit to how long the shadow could keep this up. Maybe it was a few minutes, maybe it was a few hours, but there was definitely a limit. And, if Leonel was correct, it was definitely on the lower end or else it wouldn't be moving so erratically.

The first shadow that Leonel and Aina had fought together saw this scene and had no idea how to react. The sight would have almost been comedic if it wasn't so blatantly obvious that they were suddenly toeing the line of life and death.

"Shit." The first shadow immediately turned back, only to find Aina in its path. "Get out of my way!"

Aina didn't say a single word, swinging her ax down.

Leonel's gaze continued to flicker and calculate. He could already think of several methods the Shadow Sovereign could use to get out of this fate. It simply had to go somewhere Leonel could not. But, for every second it didn't take one of these options, the more certain Leonel became of a few things.

First, the Shadow Sovereign was already running out of time. And, second, it seemed this incorporeal state didn't allow absolute freedom.

At that moment, the shadow suddenly came to a grinding halt, but Leonel was prepared, stopping just as quickly. However, what he wasn't prepared for was the Shadow Sovereign to suddenly hack up a mouthful of blood.

In one moment, Leonel felt like he was piercing through air and in the next, the weight of flesh pressing around his blade was all too obvious.

This should have been a good thing, he should have just found the limits of the Shadow Sovereign. But, Leonel's instincts told him different. The Shadow Sovereign had chosen to do this on purpose.

On cue, twin swords crossed around Leonel's neck. It seemed the Shadow Sovereign had chosen to use the same trick as Leonel. Exchanging injury for devastation.

#### Chapter 1379 Yin-Yang

At that moment, hanging on the verge of life and death, a twin pair of swords ready to sever his head from his neck, Leonel was calmer than he had ever been. In fact, he was frighteningly so, to the point one would have thought that he was watching a movie play out before him rather than experiencing this himself. But, the difference was that even while watching a movie, an observer would have shown more of an expression than he did.

In that instant, his irises flashed with a pair of golden-red Runes, his hidden Bronze Runes suddenly becoming lit ablaze as a crimson light raced across them and up his neck.

CLANG!

This time, Leonel was certain. Even without being able to see its face, he knew for a fact that its expression had been warped in shock.

The twin pair of swords clanged against Leonel's neck as though they were meeting two sides of a steel wall. All of the Force that had once coated them crumbled, being destroyed by an odd forcefield that filled one with an impending sense of danger.

Who said Destruction could only be used for offense?

Leonel's spear ripped upward, slicing through the shadow's body. He showed not even the slightest hint of mercy, his gaze remaining cold from start to finish.

Just as he finally managed to slice its skull in two, the Spear Force he had been forcefully holding together shattered into motes of light. But, the resulting explosion also took with it the head of the shadow, causing its skull to also explode.

Leonel looked toward this scene and shook his head. He had heard the crack before, but it was truly unfortunate. His Spear Force was the most powerful when his Scarlet Star Force was infused into it, but it couldn't retain its structure. It had only lasted a few minutes before shattering, a time that would have been even shorter had Leonel actually been clashing with it instead of just leaving it in what was ultimately thin air considering the shadow had spent most of its time incorporeal.

Still, this result was satisfactory. He had managed to overwhelm the shadow with his mind and take it out with minimal effort. This was definitely a good thing because this shadow seemed to be a top three threat amongst them all. Taking it out now removed a huge burden from his shoulders.

'My Spear Force seems to still be lacking. I don't think it's a problem of its level.. If it can't handle Fourth Dimensional Scarlet Star Force now as a Fifth Dimensional Blade Force, then it'll never be able to handle it in the future. It needs to evolve beyond its current means without reaching the Sixth Dimension...'

This thought made Leonel wonder if he had progressed his Bow Force too fast. Was there anything he had missed in that time?

Leonel retracted his spear, spinning on his heels and rushing toward Aina. She had been blocking the first shadow for him all this time and though she was doing fine, it would be best if they could team up and take out yet another shadow.

From what Leonel could tell, he was the only one to have killed a shadow at all. If things continued like this, it would become troublesome.

Conon, his cousin Gunter and Simona, along with their subordinates, had already formed one resistance group. Armand and Jon had formed another. Finally, Rosen and a few others formed the last.

A balance seem to have been struck, but it had once again entered a lull that made Leonel uncomfortable, especially after so many gazes locked onto him. The moment the Shadow Sovereign had fallen, piercing auras threatened to rip Leonel to shreds.

**BOOM!**

Leonel stomped a foot down, hard, his head suddenly snapping backward.

What remained of the Shadow Sovereign shadow had shattered like dry ice falling to the ground. Tendrils of darkness spread out wildly, scratching and clawing at the earth and lapping up the slowly moistening ground.

Leonel's expression became a fusion of slight shock and confusion. Was there possibly an Ability of the Dimensional Verse capable of bringing someone back from the dead? Or was it really possible that his attack just now hadn't killed this person?

Leonel might have been able to accept something like that if he had just used normal Spear Force, but he had used his Scarlet Star Force as well, and it had even exploded, taking the shadow's head with it. How was any of this possible?

The tendrils of shadow suddenly shot together, forming a large ball of black that burst in the next instant, revealing a figure Leonel understood even less.

It had short legs and arms and seemed to be covered by incorporeal fur. It had a round, sturdy belly and it stood at over three meters tall. Its two eyes were surrounded by an abyss of black along with its ears, but much of the rest of it out of its limbs shimmered with a sparking white.

'... A panda?'

It felt like more than a panda. If there was ever an Emperor of Pandas recognized by all, this would be it. This creature felt almost too majestic, to the point that Leonel almost mistook it for being real for just a moment.

He could tell that this was just an illusory panda, it didn't have a tangible form. In fact, it was a lot like his beast constructs when he used the Luxnix family Force Arts.

'The Luxnix Force Arts and much of their techniques should come from the Bronze Tablet, are these things related?' Leonel's pupils constricted.

The shimmering white fur of the panda glowed brighter and brighter, the moistness of the ground suddenly vanishing as it was all swallowed. It was clear that the Shadow Sovereign was using this to heal itself. But, that wasn't the problem.

Leonel had already accounted for this possibility, but the injuries he had left behind should have been far too devastating to even think of doing something like this.

"Yin-Yang Domain."

The oppression of the Shadow Domain around Leonel suddenly increased by tenfold.

Chapter 1380 Realization

Leonel's expression changed. It wasn't because of the pressure, but rather because he felt as though his control over the Light Element had practically just vanished. To make matters worse, that extended to his Scarlet Star Force as well, leaving him baffled.

The majestic panda swung a paw. It was a simple action, with hardly any effort put behind it, and yet it almost instantly felt as though the entire world was falling onto him from above.

'Shit.'

Leonel dove out of the way, his wings flapping once when he was already out of the way.

BOOM!

The entire cavern quaked, the location where Leonel had just been standing suddenly gaining a paw print that was easily a meter deep.

Leonel's expression flickered. That level of strength was ridiculous. Slicing the earth apart or destroying it was one matter, but compressing so much when it was already so sturdy? That was absolutely ridiculous. Had that attack landed on him, unless he used his Destruction to flood his Runes again, he didn't think a single bone would survive being shattered.

'Old man, don't you think you've been quiet enough? I know you know something. Is this shadow just unkillable? Should I run?'

Leonel had never seen an Ability allow someone to survive having their head explode. He had no way of telling how many more times the shadow panda could repeat that sort of action. The situation was already precarious and he was pushing it by remaining here instead of finding a way to run. If things fell any further out of their favor, Leonel wouldn't care about what benefits they could get here any longer. He would take Aina and run.

'It's an Aurora Black Panda.'

Leonel's figure flickered. He tried to approach the panda but it felt as though the laws of nature itself were stopping him. Every step closer he took to the shadow panda, it was like his weight would double, his feet becoming filled with lead and his blood running cold. To make matters worse, his control over Force would also be slowly ripped away.

'What does that mean?'

'The Aurora Black Panda is the third in the Shadow Line of evolution. It's the equivalent in strength of the Starry Tailed Fox in our Lineage.'

'So it's a Lineage Factor at the pinnacle of the Seventh Dimension...'

'Yes.'

Leonel diverted his attention back to Aina to make sure she was fairing alright, and he was pleasantly surprised to see that she was actually winning. The longer she battled, the more of an advantage she seemed to gain.

Seeing this, Leonel turned his attention away from her entirely. He couldn't afford to keep diverting his brain power, he really did just need to trust her.

'But it shouldn't be so strong, why is it so strong?'

Leonel's Metal Synergy Lineage Factor was also considered to be at that level, if not beyond when the fifth door was taken into account, but he couldn't bring out nearly this much power. Of course, that was because most of its strength should be gatekept behind the doors he had yet to open. But, still, this Aurora Black Panda Lineage Factor should be similar. The Metal Synergy Lineage Factor had doorways and the Aurora Black Panda Lineage Factor should have Awakenings. This was the tradeoff.

'It's not powerful, you're just weak.'

If it wasn't for the situation, Leonel would have truly rolled his eyes. Couldn't this old man go a single day without spewing this nonsense?

The shadows seemed to still be waiting for something. The trump card of the Rapax had yet to be sprung. And, Leonel didn't believe for a second that Amery didn't have the ability to at least 'kill' a shadow just as quickly as he had, and yet despite paying keen attention all this time, he had yet to see anything of the sort.

Leonel realized that he was running out of time to decide whether or not he should run, yet this old man was insistent on playing games.

'I'm not saying this just to say this, it's the truth. I have limited knowledge about the Shadow Lineage Factors as I didn't spend much time studying them for various reasons. But, I know enough to be considered to have surface information.'

'The Aurora Black Panda's Awakening levels are the Healing Branch, the Strength Branch and the Wisdom Branch. Its Healing Branch works differently from the Light Lineage Factors as it functions similar to life steal. Its strength speaks for itself, you've already seen it. As for the Wisdom Branch, it also manifests differently. Well, at least differently from your Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor.'

'The Wisdom Branch of this third level manifests a Domain and unfortunately for you, the Yin-Yang Domain is like steroids to a Shadow Sovereign, and that's especially so to you considering the Light Element is one of your strongest assets.'

'Just explain, I'm running out of time.'

'The Yin-Yang Domain grants control over the balance of two elements and is especially strong when these two elements are on entirely opposing sides. The rise of one leads to the fall of the other. In addition, as the latter falls, it becomes fuel for the former.'

'This Domain is basically sucking away all of your Light Elemental Force and converting it to Dark Elemental Force. This not only makes you weaker, it makes all aspects of the Shadow Sovereign's abilities stronger.'

Leonel's jaw set. Maybe he really should run, then. He doubted that the Shadow Sovereign would be set on following him, at least for now. Considering he had exposed himself to be a Void Palace disciple and a Morales family Heir, they knew they could find him again, so they didn't need to take him away now for the sake of the Tablet.

'Dammit. That's a pretty useful Domain and it's Seventh Dimensional too so I don't have anything that can easily counter it...'

Leonel looked at his spear. It had a Domain he was looking forward to using, but it was only at the Pinnacle of the Sixth Dimension. It could be possible to counter this Shadow Sovereign with it since he doubted the Shadow Sovereign had perfected the Aurora Black Panda Lineage Factor it wielded yet. But...

The situation was becoming too volatile.

**BOOM!**

The panda swiped again, its figure vanishing and reappearing to Leonel's back. Its paw descended like a mighty avalanche, the weight of a mountain crashing down toward Leonel's head.

'Fuck, if only I had a Domain like this.'

'You will. What do you expect? The Shadow Tail Lineage Factor, the equivalent of your Snowy Star Lineage Factor to them, doesn't have a Domain either. Who asked you to spend so much time at the lowest levels because you didn't like the next level?'

Leonel froze, his steps coming to a grinding halt. '... What did you just say?'

'What are you doing, brat?! RUN!'

The paw descended from above, ready to squash Leonel into minced meat.

'... Did you just say Shadow Tail?'

Shadow Tail. The Umbra family's Lineage Factor. The very family that had run away from the Three Finger Cult.

The Shadow Tail Lineage Factor was the first in line of the Shadow Lineage Factors?

The paw continued to swing down, the wind pressure alone making Leonel's knees creak. And yet, he remained unmoving, as straight as a javelin.

His father's rage and sadness flickered through his memories. He had never seen his dad make such an expression, one of such hurt and fury...

This was the Cult that had killed his grandfather.

Leonel saw red.

"I'll kill you all."

BOOM!