

Descent 151

Chapter 151

Leonel surged toward the towering beast.

With his improvement to his treasure shoes, even without activating its formation, his leaping ability was now beyond the realms of reason. Even jumping 20 to 30 meters into the air was no longer impossible. In a flash, he had already appeared above the creature, his palms flipping over to reveal two pistols.

'Wow...'

Despite the fact his goal was to kill this creature, Leonel couldn't help but hesitate in the last moment. It was simply too much of a work of art. Before the Metamorphosis, seeing such a beautiful creature was too difficult. Or, even if they did exist, they were on a much smaller scale than this.

He could immediately tell that this creature was some kind of mutated coy fish. Its scales were various shades of blue, varying from what was almost a deep black to a sky blue. Its fins shot through the air almost like a pair of wings and its tail fin, especially, flowed almost like the hair of a gorgeous woman.

If there were any hardcore environmentalists here, there was no doubt they'd rip him apart for even daring to have thoughts on such a creature. But, at this point, the dye had been cast. If he didn't shoot not, he would be the one in danger.

'Sorry big guy.'PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Leonel fired a series of shots, unrestrainedly concentrating his shot on the eyes of blue coy fish.

KKKKUUUUUUUAAAAAAAA!!!

The bullets of white left spiraling trails of spinning wind in their wake, tearing a path through the raining water that shed reflective droplets in every which direction.

The damage was undeniable. A spray of violet blood leaked from the blue coy's eyes as its body tried to flop back down to the river. But, would Leonel allow this?

A layer of green enveloped Leonel's right sole. He launched himself forward, sending a strong kick toward the massive fish that knocked it toward the land.

Without pausing, the sole of his other shoe lit, stopping his rebounding force and sending him back toward the shore. PANDA NOVEL

Leonel thought it would all be over at this point. A fish out of water, no matter how large it was, was just a fish out of water. It was self explanatory. In fact, it was even more exaggerated considering how injured it was now.

But, Leonel had forgotten to consider one important thing. Just what was this coy fish's ability?

Just when the blue scaled coy fish was about to land on solid ground. A shocking change took place.

It took a dive as though it was going into water.

At first, Leonel thought that this was simply because it was blinded. Maybe it was in so much pain that it hadn't even registered the fact Leonel had just kicked it. But in the next moment, Leonel was left speechless.

The ground the coy fish should have landed against suddenly became as fluid as water. No... That wasn't it. It had actually become water! PANDA NOVEL

Leonel could only watch as what once was solid land suddenly became a lake. And then, as the fish rampaged, completely blind to its surroundings, it became a winding river.

Suddenly, everything made sense. The odd structure of this island, the seemingly fantastical ways lakes and rivers appeared, the random and impossible to explain waterfalls... It was all the doing of this fish!

Leonel's eyes widened, realizing that blinding this beast was maybe one of the worst things he could have done. Now it was blind, in pain and enraged? On top of having such an ability?

"Run!" Leonel roared.

From start to finish, the youths of both Lookouts had been watching with shocked expressions. Leonel's actions seemed to get more and more wild with each passing moment.

Leonel fell through the air. The process was completely out of his control. He had already used both platform jumps of his treasure shoes, and though he had improved them greatly, the cool down time was still 30 seconds.

Where there was dry land below him before, there was suddenly a vast and steadily growing lake. Well, maybe calling it a lake wasn't accurate because the erratic movements of the coy fish made it look like a toddler had randomly scribbled onto a page.

However, Leonel wasn't worried. If it was before, he would fear a battle on the water. But, after he observed Old Hutch's use of Force, he was able to glide on the surface of the lake.

As far as he knew, there were no Invalids on this island. Maybe they had already been weeded out by the beasts or maybe they taken out by the overseers of Project Hunt. Even if this wasn't the case, the Invalids who would appear here would all be beast types, so they wouldn't be interested in Leonel to begin with. So, he wasn't shy with using his Force at all.

Leonel landed heavily on the surging waves below, his body sinking in to the point his hip were submerged before the bouyancy of his Force sent him shooting back up.

'This is difficult.' Leonel thought, his jaw clenched.

He had used this ability to run from the boat that brought him here to the island. But, back then, the ocean had been fairly calm. He hadn't thought that it would be so much more difficult when the water was agitated.

'I need to end this quickly with a Light Elemental shot...'

Had Leonel not been too conservative in his approach before, he most definitely could have ended this earlier. But, it was impossible, even for him, to predict everything.

"Haha! Dealing with such a beast is what I'm built for!"

At that moment, the quiet and stoic King of Seas suddenly became a totally different person, charging forward in his brass speedo with trident in hand.

Leonel frowned but he didn't say much. If there were others with water abilities, it really could be useful. Those without them had already heeded his advice and retreated by a long measure. The only exceptions were those who were seemingly able to use Force just like him.

'The Slayer Legion has Force users...?'

Leonel felt that maybe he had to reevaluate this group of rebels again.

While his mind was half wandering, half focusing on the battle before them, their movements had caught the attention of the beast toward the center of the island. Their intelligent eyes flickered with a peculiar light.

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Leonel's eyes madly scanned the body of water beneath him. Since his Internal Sight was so limited upon entering liquids, his best reliance was his eyes.

Though it was true that this coy fish's ability was troublesome, there were some benefits to it as well. For example, the bodies of water it created were perfectly clear and without impurities, making it much easier to see through. The only thing that could disrupt Leonel's vision was the agitated water. But, wasn't this agitation perfect for telling exactly where that massive fish was?

At that moment, King of Seas soared into the air, diving down. Leonel faintly caught the sight of his skin growing greenish blue scales just before he entered the water.

Leonel didn't stop him. With such an ability, King of Seas was indeed a good candidate for taking the vanguard. The trouble was that Leonel was certain this fish was far stronger than King of Seas judging by his stats.

However, King of Seas had two advantages. Firstly, Leonel had already blinded the coy fish. And, secondly, Leonel had yet to get a clean look at his stats after his transformation. It was possible that Leonel had underestimated him.

Pisces shot a look toward Flowing Wind. But, after a brief communication with their eyes, the latter shook her head no.

Pisces immediately understood. It seemed that Flowing Wind's scouting ability was useless in the water. After confirming this, she shot forward along the green grass while Flowing Wind rose into the air, stepping on the wind as though it was solid ground. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

As though not to be outdone, Chasing Wind soared into the air as well, followed quickly by Thunderous Clap.

Roaring Black Lion hesitated for a moment, but chose to stay back. That said... It didn't mean he would do nothing. He quickly morphed into his humanoid beast form, filling his chest with air and billowing out with a roar that shook the surroundings.

Leonel had been right. Roaring Black Lion's ability wasn't as simple as a transformation and a strength boost. He had a suppression ability he called King of Beasts. Though it worked on humans, it was especially effective on animals and had much more room to grow.

In this sort of situation, even though he couldn't partake in the fight directly, his role was still invaluable.

After his roar, the wild movements of the coy fish slowed considerably, allowing King of Seas to catch up and land a resounding strike with his trident to its side.

A tornado of water blasted forward, sending the coy fish upward with an unquenchable momentum.
PANDA NOVEL

Pisces reacted quickly. Droplets of water seemed to form around her like sparkling lights as her dress and hair fluttered. Though she could be looked down upon for actually wearing a dress to such an occasion, one could only admit that she looked amazing doing it.

Flowing Wind and Chasing Wind reacted at that instant as well, causing the wind in the surroundings to kick up a storm that fused in the rising tornado of water.

KKKKUUUUUUUUUAAA!!!

The coy fish shot higher and higher into the air, unable to extricate itself. It was completely helpless.

“HAHA! This kill will be mine, King of Seas!”

King of Seas controlled the water around him, forming a miniature tornado of his own to shoot into the skies after the coy fish. ρ??∪???

When he appeared, many couldn't help but be stunned.

Greenish blue scales covered him from head to toe. Odd fish-like membranes snapped closed and open over his eyelids. Fins jettied out the side of his face and webbing coated the distance between his fingers and toes. Anyway you looked at him, he was a fishman of legend.

He grinned a savage, jagged grin, a sharp row of teeth shimmering beneath the sunlight as he soared into the air.

Pulling his trident back, he mustered all his strength, using the water tornado beneath him to propel him forward and bring more power to his strike.

He could almost see it. The sight of the fish being skewered.

Whenever he activated his ability and entered this form, his blood would boil. As though he had a long lineage of Ancestors who lived for battle and blood, an excitement the dug deep into his bones would take hold of him. Because of this, a young man who was usually quiet and stoic would now have these outbursts where he had to kill. His trident needed to taste blood or else he wouldn't rest.

Who knew that in all his confidence, his trident would rebound off of the coy fish's scales as though he had smashed into a steel plate?

His savage expression changed as a jarring pain assault his arm. The rebound force was so strong that he felt his shoulder almost dislocate completely. And, despite the fact it didn't, he could sense a few micro tears pulling at the muscles in his arms.

The coy fish was sent flying toward the ground again, but this time, no one seemed happy about it. They all knew what would happen. The ground would turn into a body of water once again, and who knew if they'd be able to catch that fish again?

But it was at that moment that a young man who had been doing nothing but scanning the lake's surface this whole time suddenly moved. It was too bad for this coy fish but... 30 seconds had passed.

The water beneath Leonel's feet bubbled as his Force surged into his legs.

BANG!

The surface beneath his feet exploded as he launched himself into the air. Due to losing some of the momentum, he only managed to jump ten meters, but to Leonel, he felt that this was more than enough.

The moment he felt his momentum faltering, another green light blossomed beneath his sole. This time, he jumped over 20 meters, appearing above the flopping fish, two pistols in hand.

He didn't hold back this time around. Both pistols were outfitted with a bullet that jetted out from the nozzle like an arrow. In fact, instead of calling it a bullet, it would be more appropriate to call these loaded pistols harpoons.

If it was a regular shot, Leonel could shoot 20 to 30 times. If it was a Light Elemental Force shot, Leonel could shoot two to three times. But, if it was this harpoon modified from his darts... he could only shoot once.

There was a good reason for that.

BANG!

KKUUUUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

The coy fish flopped to the ground with a resounding boom. But, this time, there was no new lake or river to speak of.

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Leonel landed on the coy fish, exhaling a long breath. At the same time, a bit of fear couldn't help but creep into his heart as well as a bit of anticipation. This coy fish's ability was really too sinister. If he had been fighting alone, it could be said that he would have had a much harder time even if it ended in his victory. As for why he was filled with anticipation, it was of course because if he could refine the ability into a treasure, the potential applications were tantalizing.

Leonel most wanted this ability for its application in escape. He could tell that the coy fish wasn't creating water, but was instead transforming earth into water. If this was a treasure instead of an ability and it was tweaked a bit, wouldn't it be possible to escape through the ground?

There was another type treasure Leonel was thinking of making, but for now, he lacked the skill. Of course, he hadn't forgotten about Xinghai. If he could turn Xinghai's 'blink' ability into a treasure, his combat prowess would take another leap. But, Leonel neither had the necessary materials, nor the skill to do anything with this idea.

Any such treasure would be of, at the very least, the Quasi Bronze Grade. Obviously, this was beyond him.

Leonel sighed, looking at the pistols in his hands. The nozzles had exploded from the inside out, leaving them useless. Unfortunately, now was definitely not the best time to repair them, so he could only continue from here with eight nozzles remaining. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

After putting them away, Leonel made his way to the wound in the coy fish's eye and coated his arm in Force. Reaching inside and relying on his Internal Sight, he was able to dig out the beast crystal with ease.

The beast crystal looked like a smooth blue pearl, emitting a faint watery smell. The kind one would experience by a freshwater lakeside.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Leonel frowned, turning back to see King of Seas looking toward him with an unfriendly gaze. He had already dismissed his ability transformation, but judging by the red in his eye, he was still suffering from a bit of blood lust. PANDA NOVEL

It was immediately obvious to Leonel that he was looking at the beast crystal in Leonel's hand. It was only now that Leonel remembered that to the other Promising Youths who had come with him, the Beast Crystals provided an opportunity to evolve their abilities.

Even if Leonel discounted King of Seas, there was still Pisces as well. How could they not both want a Beast Crystal from such a powerful water-type creature?

What Old Hutch had neglected to tell Leonel was that if one ingests a Beast Crystal from a creature with similar abilities, there's even the possibility of mutating and improving one's ability as well, making it even more desirable.

This beast was at least of the SS-grade in the eyes of these youths. Just how much would their abilities improve if they were to ingest it? ρ??∫???

King of Seas was especially looking forward to the potential defensive boost to his scales if he ingested it. Back then, his trident hadn't even left a scratch after his full powered attack.

As for Pisces, she was especially fond of the water transformation ability. As things stood now, she could only pull water vapor from the air when there were no other sources around. This was the source of all those beautiful sparkles floating around her when she attacked.

If she was able to evolve her ability in this way, it could be said that she would instantly become one of the most powerful on Earth, let alone her generation.

Regardless of who it was between them, it held lethal allure.

“Hey, you ungrateful bastards from Eastern Lookout. Indomitable got the final kill, don't you think you're a bit too shameless asking what he's doing? Obviously he's taking his spoils.” Roaring Black Lion didn't back down even a step.

“Taking his spoils?” Pisces asked indifferently. “It was all seven of us who worked together to take down the fish, yet he didn't say a word before digging out the Beast Crystal himself. Even if he deserves the largest share, something that's still up for debate, he should at least discuss it with the rest of us, right?”

Those from the Southern Lookout frowned. What was up for debate? They all saw that King of Seas couldn't even scratch the beast's scales with his strongest strike. As for the rest of them, they only played a part in launching it into the air, something Leonel already proved would happen regardless as long as they were a bit more patient.

It could be argued that Leonel could have taken the beast out without help at all. The only reason those of the Southern Lookout stepped in was because they didn't want to remain idle while the Eastern Lookout youths acted.

Roaring Black Lion sneered. "Don't say I didn't warn you. He's not a person you can deal with just by ganging up like you did with me."

Flowing Wind and Chasing Wind descended from the skies. Since Flowing Wind didn't need the Beast Crystal as he ability had nothing to do with water, she didn't join in. As far as she was concerned, this wasn't an Eastern versus Southern Lookout issue. This was purely a fight for benefits. There was nothing personal.

She felt no need to put herself in any potential danger for the sakes of King of Seas or Pisces even though they were teammates.

Toward Roaring Black Lion's words, Pisces and King of Seas sneered.

"Can't deal with just him?" King of Seas laughed, the red in his eyes brightening a bit more.

If Leonel's guns hadn't broken right before their eyes, they might still fear him. But they all saw for themselves how they splintered and exploded. Of course a weapon capable of killing an SS-grade threat was enough to make them fear, but wasn't this weapon destroyed now?

Of course, these two simply had no idea that Roaring Black Lion wasn't referring to Leonel's treasures at all. How could they know? By now, they had already assigned the loss of that Eastern Lookout group led by Ruptured Artery to Leonel's guns. Now that they were out of the picture, there was nothing to fear.

Leonel scanned King of Seas and Pisces, his gaze expressionless.

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The Leonel of the past might have really been surprised by this turn of events. In the world he was used to, even if people held such greed in their hearts, they wouldn't display it so openly. But, after his run-in with Thunderous Clap, he had already come to accept it. This was his new world now.

"I will be taking this Beast Crystal as it's useful to me. I'll also be taking a few of its scales and meat as well, but with a beast of this size, there's more than enough to go around for us all."

Leonel said words he was planning on saying anyway before King of Seas spoke. If he really wanted to slight these people, he could easily take the entire beast into his Segmented Cube. With his strength and means, would any of them even be capable of stopping him from doing so?

The fact he hadn't was already an act of kindness.

In Leonel's mind, the most important thing to him now was getting back to Aina. In order to do so, he needed to have adequate strength. It was impossible to tell what might be going on on Terrain.

When it came to matters related to Aina... He had no patience for nonsense, even if half that nonsense came from a beauty.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

A suffocating aura bloomed from Leonel's body.

He had never been able to control this aura, but whenever his emotions became especially focused, it involuntarily leaked.

Toward this change, it wasn't just King of Seas and Pisces that suddenly found it difficult to breathe. Even the youths from the Southern Lookout could only look toward Leonel with ghastly pale expressions.

They had never sensed such a thing from Leonel, and how could they? That day, Leonel had been so tired. How could he possibly focus his emotions? Had he been able to focus on the task at hand like he usually did, they would have long since been drowned out by his aura.

In that moment, the red in King of Seas' eyes completely retreated as though it had met something it feared. PANDA NOVEL

Leonel hadn't done a thing. He simply stood there and spoke. But, even if he told others that he wasn't purposely trying to suppress them, who would believe him?

All the youths from the Southern Lookout only looked toward Leonel with more fear. Could it be that he had really held back that day? Or had he really been tired? That hadn't been a joke?

After realizing what was happening a flash of embarrassment and anger appeared on King of Seas' face. However, but he could do anything about it, what happened next left him stunned.

The very guns he thought were already broken were taken out by Leonel once again. They could only watch as he calmly twisted the broken nozzles off and replaced the with new ones as though nothing had ever happened.

King of Seas and Pisces couldn't help but gulp. PANDA NOVEL

This was already Leonel's final warning to them. If they really insisted on continuing, then he wouldn't mind teaching them a lesson. The last group that tried ended up in a tree for a few days, Leonel had no problem doing that again.

Though there was now hesitation in the eyes of the two water ability users, Leonel could see that their resolve was slowly growing firmer.

This sort of opportunity, it came once in a lifetime. Most of the water ability beasts could only be found in the ocean, but who dared to venture into it? The waters were simply too dangerous and who knew what beasts evolved down there out of their control?

In addition, just being an aquatic beast didn't guarantee a water ability either, and even if it did, it was unlikely to be as good as the one in Leonel's hands right now.

Even with all this being said, there was another, maybe even more important, reason they had to do this. This place was one where they would be the strongest. And, they could tell that Leonel wasn't comfortable with battling inside of water. If they tried to take this battle elsewhere, their strength would be greatly diminished.

There was no better place for them to battle than by all of this water.

KKKKKKRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!

Just when everyone was preparing for battle, the sound of a raging beast came from the distance.

Leonel's pupils shrunk. 'It's not just one beast.'

BANG!

An explosion caused many of the youths present to feel their ears rupture and begin to bleed. At first, it was impossible to tell exactly where this explosion had come from and what had caused it. It was simply too loud. But, a moment later, a raging pillar of billowing white steam shot into the air in the distance.

The pillar was so thick and vibrant that it could be seen from over ten kilometers away with a clearness that made it feel as though it was right before them all.

'Force?'

Leonel's eyes widened. That pillar, he could feel it. It was a flood of Force with a level of density he couldn't fathom.

'Is that the Force Crystal mine Old Hutch was talking about? Is it supposed to explode like that?'

Worry began to bubble up in Leonel's heart. Before, he was freely using his Force because he was certain that there weren't any Invalids on this island. With his density of Force, the Invalids that could

threaten him were too far away. Plus, they would all be creatures of another species, so they wouldn't bother with him either.

But, this density of Force was on another level. In addition, if it really came from the Force Crystal mine, that meant it didn't come from any one species and might very well attract creatures of all kind.

If this island was suddenly surrounded by an infestation of aquatic Invalids, what could they do? How the hell would they get out of this place?

Leonel's blood ran cold.

Chapter 155

Leonel was likely the first to realize the problem, but he most definitely wasn't the only one. In the recent battle, many of the youths had displayed some level of Force manipulation, whether small or big. There was no doubt they knew exactly what the geyser in the distance was.

'This isn't good....'

Not only would this geyser cause the island to be quickly surrounded by aquatic creatures, but there wasn't any guarantee that these creatures wouldn't come inland as well. It was wishful thinking to hope that they wouldn't. Leonel had already learned that lesson once before.

'The only way is to quickly stop that thing.'

After making this decision, Leonel aimed his pistol at the fish corpse beneath his feet, powering it with lethal Light Elemental Force, and firing.

His sudden action caused many who had been paling under the stress of the sudden change of events to whip their heads toward him. However, by then, Leonel's purpose had already been accomplished.
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He had perfectly aimed his shot toward a vulnerable point between the scales of the coy fish, causing them to bend at that point. Then, he reached down and pulled up with all his might, ripping the scales free from the dead beast's body.

He worked quickly. In what felt like the blink of an eye, he had already pulled off over ten beautiful blue scales, each of which was over a foot in length and about half of that in width.

When he had about 20 in his possession, Leonel stopped, having stored them all within his spatial ring. Then, he looked off into the distance.

"If you all want to survive this, I suggest we put aside petty disputes for now and head over there. If we don't stop it, we're finished."

Leonel's calm voice had a magnetic appeal to the youths around him. They couldn't help but instinctively want to listen. PANDA NOVEL

"Going over there? Are you insane?"

Of course... How could everyone be of one mind. Where there were those with one thought, there would always be those with the opposing. This was just the way of the world, the way things worked.

The person who spoke was none other than Ruptured Artery. Despite his history with Leonel, he hadn't spoken out of spite. Instead, he spoke on instinct. How could that place not be dangerous.

This coy fish was the very first SS-grade threat they had ever met, and they all very clearly realized that they couldn't do anything to it. If it wasn't for Leonel, they would have forever been unable to cross this region toward the center of the island.

Knowing this, it was obvious to them that there was likely more than one such creature like this here. And, this also explained the scarcity of beasts as well. If they linked all of these points together... there was most definitely a hoard of dangerous beasts maybe no less powerful than the fish beneath Leonel's feet ahead. PANDA NOVEL

After thinking to this point, how could they possibly dare to continue forward? The best choice was to wait for their overseeing Commander to come back and retrieve them.

“I will only say a few more words to convince you. If they fall on deaf ears, I won’t be responsible for what happens to you after this.

“One, you’re not the only one’s in danger. Your Commanders, waiting off shore for you all, are in even more danger than we are. There’s nowhere to hide on the open ocean.”

Leonel had hardly begun when the youths turned several shades more pale. Having thoughts that their Commanders were infallible would be utterly stupid. The Metamorphosis just began. Even though higher ranking officials could be said to have far greater combat experience than them as youths, the truth was that there wasn’t a large power disparity between them and their Commanders.

There were very few exceptions to this. Geniuses like Old Hutch who could make progress even in a Third Dimensional world, then explode with all their potential now were incredibly rare. Simply put, there were most definitely no such people amongst the Commanders.

“Second, time is of the essence. Even if the Commanders could deal with the initial wave, could they survive a second, a third, a fourth? If you want any hope of making it off this island, the quicker the geyser is dealt with, the better.

“And third... you really don’t have much of a choice.”

Leonel looked into the distance with a solemn expression. The direction he was looking at was surprising. In fact, he was looking toward the complete opposite direction of the Force geyser.

The dense forest of trees began to rumble and quake.

First, it was subtle. It was an ever so slight swaying of the grass or rustling of the leaves. Then, it felt as though the ground itself was trembling. Soon, even the thick trees themselves began to swing to and fro as though made of rubber.

The Promising Youths looked toward their backs with an eerie cold permeating their hearts.

They suddenly understood what Leonel meant. Though the number of beasts in the forest was less than they imagined there would be, there were still many there. It was enough for Leonel to have killed over 20 in just his first few moments on this island. Even if the number was lacking... If they were all to converge on this point...

They really didn't have a choice but to continue forward. If they tried to fight against the tide of beasts... wouldn't they be swallowed whole before even realizing what happened?

Having said what he needed to say, Leonel didn't hesitate to dash into the distance toward the geyser, thinking to himself that he most definitely needed a treasure capable of transportation soon. But unfortunately, that would require crafting something much larger than he ever had before.

In Force Crafting, difficulty wasn't just decided by the overall grade of the treasure, but also the size of it. A craft that was extremely small or large was definitely much harder to craft even compared to a craft several levels higher in grade.

However, now wasn't the time to think about such things. Leonel could only lament his bad luck. This was supposed to be an easy trial he could place first in with a minimum amount of effort. Why had it suddenly become a life or death situation?

Something about all of this felt off. Things weren't so simple as they seemed.

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Leonel crossed lake after lake and river after river. He knew that the youths were quickly following behind him, hoping to put some distance between them and the beast hoard coming from the dense forests.

The wild, thunderous roars and booming tremors seemed to be getting closer and closer.

Leonel's Internal Sight remained vigilant, but his expression was only growing more and more solemn. He noticed that his senses were growing less sharp. It was almost as though something was interfering with his ability to see the whole picture clearly.

'It must be the increased density of Force, or maybe its the fact that Force is so unrestrained and volatile...'

Leonel didn't have a perfect answer, but this was his best guess. However, he didn't get a chance to think of any more examples because his footsteps suddenly came to a grinding halt. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

His heels dug into the ground in an exaggerated manner, it was to the point he almost fell backward.

Just now, he had reached the top of the largest hill in this stretch of land, only to find a sight that his heart plummet.

Though this was an island with a relatively circular shape, there was just a single path toward the center of it. This was precisely why the actions of the blue coy fish had stalled the youths for so long. With it taking control of the single path forward, they had to either find a way to bypass it or kill it the very same way Leonel had.

The reason that there was just this singular path was because entrances from all other angles were flooded with deep valleys that seemingly had no entry points. Together, they became deep pits with unfathomable depths. [PANDA NOVEL](http://PANDA-NOVEL)

Flowing Wind and Chasing Wind had already considered the idea of simply flying over these valleys. But, for whatever reason, that still ended in failure. As for exactly why, maybe only those two women knew.

At this moment, those valleys became those eerie death pits once more, trapping them. The trouble was that they weren't trapping them outside, but rather, inside this time around...

However, just this alone didn't warrant this reaction from Leonel. He had already known about the deep valleys that blocked the path to the center of the island. After all, he had been here for half a month, how could he not think of venturing further in to find more targets?

Its body was covered in a faint transparent light that seemed to reflect the vision of an armor, but it would often flicker and disappear as though lacking the ability to maintain its own form.

These six creatures were easily the most powerful. However, what truly shocked Leonel were the orderly 'soldiers' to their backs.

Each of them had a troop of their own, neatly arranged as though they truly were an army of humans rather than beasts. Each took control of their own species, wielding absolute authority.

The golden brown bear had a troop of bears. The red-gold striped tiger had a legion of tigers. The black-scaled snake's troop filled the air with endless hissing... Each had their own centers of power. Even the bone ape had a legion of apes, though their flesh and blood was intact.

Leonel quickly tried to calm his breathing. However, any hopes he had of not being noticed had already long since been thrown out the window. The instant he had made it to the top of the hill, he found six pairs of eyes trained on him.

The bestial, murderous intent made it feel as though a bucket of ice water had fallen onto his head. His heart beat involuntarily slowed.

At that moment, the brownish gold bear roared and turned its head toward the spider legion. To Leonel's dismay, the spider's numerous beady red eyes landed on him once again, its mandibles snapping together in what looked like a response.

Chapter 157

The youths who charged forward with Leonel paled. Their legs grew weak to the point some of them all but collapsed. There was even a good portion of them that wanted to turn and run this very moment. But, when they thought about the horde of beasts to their back, they realized that there really was no place to go.

Were they really finished? Just like this?

Some of them were here for a chance to enter an SS-grade Zone. Now that they thought about it, just how foolish were they? A single SS-grade threat like the coy fish had stumped them for so many days already until Leonel came, wasn't it too much of a joke to be striving for such a quota?

The more they thought like this, the more they disparaged themselves, and the greater their fear grew.

In the distance, the horde of spiders was swiftly moving forward, their eight limbs shimmering beneath the sunlight and slicing through the wind. They could only imagine what it would feel like being pierced by one of those things... How horrible would their deaths be...?

Though these youths were part of the Slayer Legion, their childhood's weren't much different from Leonel's. Fights between the Empire and the rebels were much rarer in those days compared to after the Metamorphosis. It could only be said that they were marginally more prepared than other youths since they received military training. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

But now... they froze up. Facing a beast one on one was one thing, but suddenly facing over a hundred charging forward like this made them feel as though their lives were already finished. This would really be their last day on this Earth.

"Hey!"

Leonel suddenly roared, shocking them out of their thoughts. His voice was so loud that it traveled over a mile, even overshadowing the rushing sound of Force surging out from the geyser up ahead.

"If you don't want to die, pull yourselves together! You see over there, there's a network of caves. Our goal is to cut through here and make it there. Then we might stand a chance. I'll take the vanguard, don't lose sight of my back!"

They all saw what Leonel was pointing toward. PANDA NOVEL

After the rolling hills of green the blue coy fish had called home, the land suddenly became bleak and desolate, filled with grayish black gravel-like land. This bleak land was connected to the valley system that blocked their entrance from other regions. Without any context, it looked no different from a land of death.

Nearer toward the center of this land of death, there was another hill. Though this hill wasn't as tall, it was very wide. It was made completely of dull grayish black stone and had numerous holes of varying sizes dotted across its surface. In truth, it was more accurately described as a hive rather than a hill.

The geyser of Force, still jetting out into the skies, came out from this very hive, out of a hole at the very center of it all. Leonel could also tell that the origin of this geyser was incredibly deep underground.

Thinking of the deep valley system, Leonel couldn't help but think that they were connected in some way. But, even though he intuitively felt this, he didn't have the time to put his brain power toward trying to figure it out. The spider legion was already closing in. In the beginning, they were over half a kilometer away, but now, they were already less than half of that.

'We have the high ground right now, but trying to maintain this position is stupid. Those beasts seem to have intelligence, so if they see that the spider legion is losing, they won't just sit idly by. ρ??∪??????

'The good news is that they only sent one of the six groups after us, leaving a gap in their defenses we can take advantage of. The bad news is that we still need to make it through the spider legion and those other five legions if we want to seek refuge in that hive.'

Leonel gritted his teeth. He knew they needed to charge, there was no other way.

The truth was that turning back to pierce through the horde of beasts toward their backs would be easier. They had far less organization and would definitely be weaker than this threat up ahead. But, if they did that... then what?

There were definitely even more beasts headed here from the ocean, having sensed the surge of Force. If they couldn't deal with this problem in front of them, they would be finished.

Leonel flipped his palm, a familiar spear appearing in his hand. Compared to the last time when its spearhead had been split by Hutch's blade, it had already been repaired.

How could he come here without first comprehending Spear Force? After Leonel did this, the dictionary unlocked a lot of information about the Spear Domain ring for him. There were many useful things, but

what was most important to him now was the fact that spears acknowledged by the ring can be repaired!

Unfortunately, he had left the primitive man's spear outside for too long, causing its consciousness to dissipate. As a result, the ring no longer acknowledged it and was unable to repair it. But, this primitive woman's spear was different. Not as much time had passed and since it was just a low level spear of the Spear Domain, it didn't even take an hour to repair fully.

Leonel's aura completely changed, becoming even sharper and more violent than before.

Seeing this, the youths inexplicably felt a sense of calm. Before, when the aura was aimed toward them, they found it difficult to even breathe. But now, having experienced the aura of protection Leonel's teammates had for so many years already, they suddenly felt their strength surging.

Leonel took out the dictionary and slipped it into his pocket. With the situation like this, he couldn't afford to keep it hidden any longer.

“What's the weakness of that spider king?”

Leonel's sudden words caught the youths who had just regained their bearing off guard once again. But, they were even more shocked when there was an actual response.

[*Ping* Replying to Seed, the seam between the head and body is a vital point.]

Leonel didn't even turn back after hearing this.

“Follow me, I'll carve out a path.”

He could feel his blood boiling. He understood that this was his true state. The state his Lineage Factor was meant to be in.

HONG!

Leonel took a strong step forward.

[Leonel Morales (Force Amplified)]

[Strength: 2.59; Speed: 2.38; Agility: 2.43; Coordination: 2.61; Stamina: 2.73 (+0.05 – nullified);
Reactions: 2.63; Spirit: 2.92; Force: 0.60]

The grass beneath his feet swayed wildly, being pressed down by his momentum as he took yet another step forward.

HONG!

[Leonel Morales (Force and Spear Domain Lineage Factor Amplified)]

[Strength: 2.85; Speed: 2.62; Agility: 2.67; Coordination: 2.87; Stamina: 2.73 (+0.05 – nullified);
Reactions: 2.90; Spirit: 2.92; Force: 0.66]PANDA-NOVEL.COM

With Leonel as the center, billowing winds spread out, leaving a trail of concentric circles as though a helicopter was descending from above.

At that moment, Leonel smiled lightly. 'I haven't gotten back to Aina yet, I have no intention of dying in this place.'

"I'm sure you all heard that." Leonel said without turning back. "Aim well."

Leonel dashed forward, his speed so swift that it almost looked like his feet weren't touching the ground.

To his back, the youths clenched their jaws. By now, in the chaos of the moment, those of the Eastern and Southern Lookouts didn't have the luxury of continuing to remain separated.

King of Seas and Pisces were still fuming over what happened earlier, but did they have much of a choice? If they didn't band together now, wouldn't their slim chance at survival become even slimmer than it already was?

Still, despite the situation, those of the Southern Lookout had complicated feelings of their own. They couldn't help but feel odd about Leonel's actions to this point. Wasn't he supposed to be arrogant and insufferable? PANDA NOVEL

Someone with those kinds of personality traits would probably use their superior power to force them to act as meat shields. If it came down to it, and Leonel forced them to take the vanguard, would they even be able to say no? Where would they go? Without a pillar of support like Leonel, what were their odds of survival?

Leonel crossed the last line of grass and stepped onto the gravel-like land of death. To him, it simply didn't matter whether those to his back followed him or not. He was a person with a soft heart. This was precisely why he had taken on the role of their vanguard. However, it was impossible for him to put himself in anymore danger should they choose to hesitate.

The loose land beneath his feet was kicked up into the air as his hair whipped about wildly. There was something freeing knowing that all of his opponents were just beasts, as though an inhibition on his heart had been removed and he could finally let loose.

At that moment, a familiar roar sounded behind Leonel, causing his lip to curl into a more prominent smile. It seemed that they had finally decided to follow.

'[Call of the Wind]'

The ease with which Leonel used this technique simply couldn't be compared to the first time he had done so. It looked as though he had only casually flicked his wrist a few times, yet several lines of white curled in the air, finding the gap between the head and thorax of several spiders in the blink of an eye.

His hips spun as he fired a single shot.

In the distance, Precious Moment had fallen. She scrambled to pull back, ignoring the hard gravel scraping across her palms and bottom as she hurried back. The mandibles of a mantis-like creature snapped toward her, not caring for the tears and snot running down her face.

“Emilia!”

Seer roared from a battle to her side, but he knew he wouldn't make it in time. Disregarding himself, he pointed his staff toward the mantis, blowing it away. But, before he could sigh in relief, he realized the spider he had been fighting was now free to attack him.

A leg glistening like steel shot toward his chest. He could almost see the scene of his chest being pierced right through.

However, he could have never expected a single shot to find its mark at that very moment.

The spider had hardly raised its legs before it fell limply to the ground, unable to get up again.

Seer looked toward the direction of the shot, only to find Leonel's back looking back at him. A feeling of gratefulness welled up in his chest.

‘He fired that shot even before I saved Emilia... Just how did he predict what would happen...?’

Unfortunately, this wasn't the time for him to ask this question, because his savior was facing his own problems now. After seeing Leonel take out so much of its own, the spider king which had been taking a backseat suddenly couldn't any longer.

Leonel's jaw steeled. “Give me a rundown of this spider's abilities.”

Chapter 159

[*Ping* Evolved life form detected.]

[Kingdom: Animalia]

[Phylum: Arthropoda]

[Class: Arachnida]

[Order: Araneae]

[Infraorder: Mygalomorphae]

[Family: Theraphosidae]

[State: Evolved]

[Abilities: ... *Ping* Generating nomenclature...]PANDA-NOVEL.COM

[Venomous Touch: Tier 8 Black Grade venom detected. This venom has been infused with every fiber of this creature's being.]

[Rebounding Web: Spider silk with astonishing elasticity.]

[Sturdy Web: Spider silk Tier 7 Black Grade toughness.]

[Weakness: Between head and abdomen]

[Evaluating power... *Ping*]

[Evolution Stage: Elite Tier 7 Black]

Leonel's brow furrowed. He had been very worried about the webs of these spiders when he charged, but he didn't expect that the matter would be even more troublesome than he originally thought.

To make matters worse, this still wasn't considered an SS-grade threat? Tier 7 Black, that translated to S-grade. But, what was with the 'Elite' tag, what did that mean? Now that he thought about it, Leonel remembered that the octopus was classified as Peak Tier 7 Black. So there were separations like this?
PANDA NOVEL

No matter how curious he was, Leonel knew that this wasn't a time to ask this question. All he needed to guess was that this spider was a greater threat than the octopus. Knowing this, he had to ask questions that could help him keep his life.

"Can my chain necklace block the toxicity?"

[*Ping* Replying to Seed, the energy shield can block about 80% of the venom's toxicity.]

Leonel's frown deepened, but his footsteps didn't stop.

He dashed toward the spider, but when it seemed they would clash, he suddenly changed directions, headed off to the side with all the might he could muster. He knew that the spider would chase after him because all along the way, his spear had never stopped. He continued carving a path forward, out pacing the spider by a measure.

Leonel could tell by the spider's stats that its speed was actually much higher than his own. However, its agility was very low. Making it navigate a battlefield like this, especially when it had to be careful not to poison its own legion, was about the best thing Leonel could do at this moment.

"Is there no other way to deal with the spider's venom?"

Leonel knew he needed to be incredibly specific when asking questions to the dictionary. It wouldn't simply offer him up answers based on the situation. So, Leonel had slowly learned to keep an open mind and ask things he might not usually ask. p??J??????

In his mind, he didn't have anything else that could deal with venom. But who knows if this was really true?

Outside of his expectations, it seemed he was correct to ask.

[*Ping* Light Elemental Force has a strong healing effect and is the bane of many toxins. Seed's Light Elemental Force is still too low to be considered immune.]

Leonel's eyes widened. "Too low? There are levels to Light Elemental Force?"

Leonel really didn't expect this. He thought that a Force Strengthening Deviation was as advertised. He didn't expect for there to be more.

[*Ping* Yes.]

Even in the midst of the battlefield, Leonel couldn't help but curse under his breath. Couldn't this damned dictionary be a bit more forgiving? Why did every answer need to be so short and to the point. It really never touched on anything he didn't directly ask it, Leonel couldn't help but wonder how many things he had missed out on because of this.

'Forget it, now isn't the time to ask this. That damned spider is hot on my heels.'

Leonel knew he couldn't put too much effort into running away from this spider. Though he felt he could escape on his own, he was meant to be acting as a vanguard currently. If he strayed too far, instead of opening up a path, he would be allowing the other youths to get swallowed up.

The youths who had come to this Hunt still number about 80 or so. With such a number, even though they were still vastly outnumbered, it was definitely better than going in alone. Leonel needed them as much as he didn't have the heart to leave them here to die.

Leonel immediately recognized that this was the spider's true ability, he had wrongly accused the dictionary this time. Venomous Touch was described as a venom infused into every fiber of the spider's being... that would include its breath!

'Damn...'

Leonel rolled out of the way in a sorry state, just barely managing to dodge the bullet of silk. But, the insect beast behind him's cry of pain made it obvious that it wasn't so lucky.

Leonel turned back to find it quickly turning purple, then black, then erupting into a cluster of dark fog and ash. If he didn't know better, he would think that it had been burned in a furnace...

It was now that Leonel suddenly realized that maybe the other five legions of beasts hadn't made a mistake just sending the spider king here.

Chapter 160

Leonel's expression grew dignified.

He was reluctant to use his Light Elemental Force. It wasn't because he was trying to hide it, but because the consumption was too great. Not only did it drain his spirit, but it also drained his Force at a much faster rate. Though his Spear Force also had the same impact on him, it wasn't nearly as exaggerated. But, this also made sense since his Spear Force wasn't as powerful either.

But, at this point... What choice did he have?

HONG!

The dull color of Leonel's eyes suddenly lit brightly, a blinding glow shooting out from within their depths.

'Come on, you damned bug.'

Leonel flashed forward, leaving a streak of gold in his wake. He looked like a shooting star streaking across the battlefield, catching the eye of several of the youths battling for their lives. Their blood couldn't help but boil watching Leonel face up against this spider king on his own. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Was this his ability? They all seemed to have this thought.

Leonel crossed into the foggy venom domain of the spider king, sending several piercing strikes forward at once.

The spider king's response wasn't slow. Its sharp steel-like legs deflected the first few as its mandibles chopped at Leonel.

When it saw Leonel retreat out of the way, another streak of silk shot from its mouth, heading directly for him.

Shockingly, Leonel didn't dodge this time, facing the strike head on as a pistol appeared in his hand, already loaded with a dart.

BANG! PANDA NOVEL

CH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!CH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

"Ugh..."

Leonel was sent flying. It felt as though the spider king's projectile was a javelin crashing into his chest.

His face turned red and bulged, only for a projectile of blood to fly from his mouth.

The enraged and pain filled roars of the spider caught the attention of the other legions of beasts, but they all hesitated to come forward. There was a reason they were still standing outside the large hill-like

hive. They were waiting for the right opportunity to charge in and gain benefits for themselves, if they really left now, who knows what could happen?

These beasts were obviously not stupid. Since this place had such a large pull toward them, it obviously had a massive pull toward others. This was why they were standing in this position. But, despite having evolved, their thoughts were still relatively simple and straight forward. It was difficult for them to respond with great flexibility. ρ???(???????)

Before they could even make a decision, the situation changed again.

The rumbling of beasts that came from out of the forest suddenly sounded much closer. They could only look over to find hundreds of wild beasts charging over the hills, barreling through and crossing into the gravel filled lands.

Compared to the beast legions with their respective kings, it was clear that these beasts had much less intelligence. Their tongues hung out from their mouths, a red tint coloring their eyes as though they had lost their minds. They wanted nothing more than to find the source of all this rich Force.

Another sharp crack rang out in Leonel's ears as he slid across the ground. He was very much familiar with this sound. He knew that his chain necklace had suffered another break.

Sweeping his Internal Sight over it, his expression somewhat paled. The first break had caused its efficacy to drop by 10%. This time around, the treasure only had 70% of its initial strength left.

Leonel didn't even have a mind to care about his current situation. This treasure had saved his life too many times already. If it really broke completely, it would be too great of a loss to swallow.

He grit his teeth, glaring toward the screaming spider who seemed to not even have a mind to organize its own troops.

'I should have pierced its brain with that strike, but maybe I was too optimistic. I don't know anything about the anatomy of a spider... or maybe it didn't pierce that deeply?'

Leonel shook his head hard. "RUN!"

He snapped the youths who were too focused on battle out of it. They needed to take advantage of his beast tide to apply pressure on the other beast legions. If they were to get caught up in it, their last chance would go up in a puff of smoke.

Leonel grit his teeth, ignoring the pain racking his body to stand.

He sent a glance across the battlefield, sighing a faint breath of relief when he saw that everyone had managed to barely keep some forward momentum and, most importantly, stay together.

Under Leonel's lead, they bolted toward the legion of beasts, their trail being followed by a tide of wild beasts. The spider legion didn't seem to know how to react with their leader screaming out and writhing in pain. They were soon swallowed by the beast tide.

Leonel's heart almost beat out his chest with his every stride, once again swearing to himself that he would most definitely get some sort of transportation treasure.

As he ran, Leonel looked down at his chest with a solemn expression. A web spread out, covering half his chest and his shoulder. With every passing moment, it ate into his energy shield, causing the cracks across it to grow.

'Dammit...'

Without a choice, Leonel took off his tight, black compression shirt before it could continue to corrode the energy shield. He coughed violently, unable to mind the state of his body as he ran.

He really couldn't believe it. He thought that by now, facing even an SSS-grade threat wouldn't put him in too sorry of a position. But now he had suddenly found out that there were still S-grade threats that could push him to this state. At a time like this, he couldn't help but lament that his ability was auxiliary and not attack based.

Leonel shook his head as the distance between him and the five legions closed.

He once again heard Roaring Black Lion's roar sound out from his back. He didn't need to look back to know the beast tide had slowed somewhat because he could clearly see that even that beasts up ahead were greatly affected.

Leonel didn't have the mind to care about anything else. All of his being was focused on charging through the gap left by the spider legion. He wouldn't let anything stop him.

His oppressive aura involuntarily shot out from his body, covering the lands before him in a layer of oppression.