

Descent 411

Chapter 411

The detonation was deafening. To those within the walls, it felt as though another doomsday was descending. The cacophonous blasts were no less haunting than the day the Paradise Islands fell from the sky.

Miles felt the ground beneath his feet buckle and collapse.

What did it sound like for millions of tons of steel to bend? What did it sound like for a mountain of metal to collapse?

Well, it was uncertain if many could tell you because that day, those noises weren't what stood out at the forefront. What they would instead remember was the sight of the wall that had protected them for over a year splitting and the flood of Invalids that crawled out from the billowing smoke and endless fires.

It was a sight right out of hell.

These creatures didn't know pain, they didn't know fatigue, they didn't know mercy. Even while climbing over the charred corpses of their own comrades, they didn't pause for even a moment.

Their only thoughts were of the humans they could sense. Those were the people lucky enough to succeed where they failed, they were the nutrients they could use to evolve once again and change their futures.

Miles clung onto anything he could to not fall to the ground below. He pulled himself up, crawling toward where the walls were still level. But, there were no small number of soldiers who weren't nearly as lucky as he had been.

The chain of command completely collapsed.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The tanks of the Slayer Legion continued to roll forward. Their barrels aimed upward, firing toward the tops of the walls.

The chaos was already enough to almost guarantee that no one would be able to target the Fort's canons toward them. However, Joseph left nothing up to chance. Without caring for casualties, the tracks of their tanks crawled through the battlefield, firing in a rhythmic manner.

Within the city, chaos had descended. With the intelligence, or lack thereof, of the Invalids, they didn't even seem to realize another party was approaching from the back. They all shot forward, entering the outer limits of the Fort.

By now, within the inner city limits, the nobles had become aware of what was happening.

"Dad, what should we do?" James entered his father's office with a panicked expression.

"What exactly are you panicking about?" James' father responded casually.

"The city, it's being overrun by Invalids! I'm sure that if even I've heard about it, you also know that the Slayer Legion made its move."

"..." James' father placed down the tablet he was reading from. "And?" PANDA NOVEL

James was stunned.

He didn't really understand what was happening. Even if his father didn't care about the commoners, shouldn't he at least care about his own safety? If the city was overrun, they would be finished.

James' father shook his head.

"Use your head, James. The Royal Blue Fort is one of the only eight on Earth. Even if most of The Empire's strength has been concentrated in the Capital, do you really think the walls of such a Fort should be so easy to take down...?"

“You...”

James was stunned.

He suddenly understood. This was meant to be a Fort built by the hands of the foremost experts of the Royal Blue Province. How could it only last a few hours under siege? How could it only survive a single ‘well-placed’ explosion?

This Fort was meant to represent the consolidation of much of Earth’s power. How could a ragtag squad of rebels possibly take it down so easily? ρ??(???????)

It was only then that James remembered... the inner city had always been under an illusion cast by the Junior Governor Duke.

From the outside, it seemed like a normal doorway and gate... but was it?

James shivered as he grasped the situation. The walls on the outside were always a casual façade. Why would these nobles spend resources on protecting an outer city of peasants when they could pour all their resources into protecting an inner city built for themselves?

Now that James thought about it, other than Miles, no other nobles went to the wall. In fact, Miles could be considered to be the one with the greatest ability.

“... Dad, you’re abandoning the Junior Governor Duke?”

James’ father sneered. “Do you think that he’s a person we should still follow? Why? So that we can sink along with him?”

James didn’t know how to respond.

He had lost the greatest friend he had ever had for the sake of pleasing Miles. Now they were abandoning him so easily? For some reason, this made his insides churn even more than that look Leonel had given him that last time they stood face to face...

He threw the game for Conrad, but now he was dead. He tried to betray Leonel for Miles, but now he might very well be dead as well. How many more sacrifices would he have to make? How many more of them would be just as meaningless?

“You’ve done good though, James.” James’ father rose from his seat. “That Miles contacted me about communicating with the Siegfried family. He wanted me to expose that the death of their son was related to the Brazinger family, correct?”

James nodded stiffly. He had reported this to his father the other day and it seemed that Miles contacted him not long later.

“You will go to the Siegfried family to represent the Bennett’s. When the time comes, reveal to them that the one who did the deed was Leonel Morales.”

James froze.

He couldn’t understand. What was the purpose of this?

“Wh –”

“Don’t ask why, just do as I say.”

The sound of the bombardment felt like a low rumbling at their location. But, slowly but surely, the rumbling dampened and eventually, they couldn’t hear anything at all. It was as though they had been completely cut off from the outside world.

James gripped his fists tightly, looking toward the ground as the voice of his father drifted to his ears once again.

“... The title of Governor Duke belongs to our family. Unfortunately, your great grandfather trusted the wrong people... Remember that the sole purpose of your existence is to lead a path toward the rebirth of this family.

“Go.”

...

In the outside world, the rumbling had obviously never stopped. While the inner city had regained a peaceful calmness, the cries of those without status continued to ring.

But, it was in that moment that a figure appeared before the crack in the steel wall, his irises flickering between a violet-red and a pale green.

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Screams. Blood. Carnage.

As many things as Leonel had seen in the past year, he still wasn't ready for this. The genocide modern technology wrought was far beyond his imagination.

With his senses, every instance of fear, every tear that was shed, every heart that ceased beating' | It was all in his range to feel, see and grasp.

However, the Slayer Legion tanks continued to roll forward, the inner city of the Fort remained unmoved, the Invalids never stopped.

Leonel had already moved before he could even register his own thoughts. He faintly heard the voices of his teammates screaming for him to come back. What could a single man do against such an army? As powerful as he had become, it most definitely wasn't enough to cover the sky with a single hand. What could he possibly hope to accomplish?

But, he moved anyway.

That said' | He didn't move alone. The little mink, seemingly sensing his agitation, jumped forward, skipping across the air.

Aina stood, her steps pausing for a moment.

"You all stay here. You're not strong enough."PANDA-N0VEL.COM

Her words were simple and plain. Her gaze carried the same look she had when she took Conrad's life. A cold, silent indifference.

Leonel's teammates gripped their fists, but they didn't move in the end. They knew that Aina's words were true. If they moved now, they would only get in the way.

Wielding her great sword, Aina launched herself from the side of the collapsed building.

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"Fire!" Joseph's cold voice rang in the cockpit, his gaze growing colder and colder.

Every command he barked, every shell that fired, every life his actions reaped seemed to make him more and more detached. Eventually, he felt like a bird observing things from the skies, a passerby in history that didn't have anything to do with what was happening before him.

"Joseph," Damian spoke, huffing and puffing from his previous exertion, "The gap in the wall will only allow two tanks through at once. Should we pause the charge and make a larger passageway?"

Joseph's steely gaze locked onto the path ahead. PANDA N0VEL

The steel alloy walls had collapsed on their destroyed foundations. It splintered down at that point, creating a semi-triangular passageway nearby where the gate had been.

Many Invalids had already recovered and were pouring through that hole. Those that couldn't fit through took advantage of the crumbling imperfections of the wall as grips to climb up and over.

The city was slowly becoming completely overrun.

“Send two vanguard tanks through and execute Plan B2.”

Plan B2.

It was too difficult to predict the result of their explosion, there were too many variables despite the fact they had simulated it many times. Plan B2 was to be used when the walls were damaged but the Gates remained functioning.

They would send a unit in to open the Gates from the inside. By now, it should be impossible for The Empire's soldiers to still be manning the Gates. And, even if they were, they should have a lot of their own problems to deal with.

Joseph's orders were relayed quickly. $\rho\omega\sigma\tau\upsilon\phi\chi\psi$

At the vanguard, a tank with catwoman rolled forward. They trampled over Invalids with impunity. It seemed that any Invalid below the A-grade wasn't even able to dodge their advances while those above that threat level couldn't even hope to damage them. Maybe only an SSS-grade threat would even be able to think about slowing them down.

These tanks were Joseph's trump cards. All the resources he earned over the years were poured into them, forming a squad of 20 he deemed unstoppable.

Catwoman was dressed in her full leather suit as usual. Hearing Joseph's orders, she was already prepared to move out. With her ability and pre-Metamorphosis expertise, she was definitely the most suited to this task.

“No worries Commander, those Gates will be opened within 15 minutes!”

Catwoman didn't care about military law. In her eyes, Joseph deserved to be Commander so she called him as such.

“Forward!”

What none of the Slayer Legion could have imagined was that someone would actually stand forward to stop them at this time. But, what they couldn't understand all the more was that it was just a single young man.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

He stood before a horde of charging Invalids and a fleet of rolling tanks, his expression furious.

Even amidst the billowing smoke, the rising flames and the rushing blood, he stood out like a blinding light in the darkness.

“STOP!”

The roar of a single person shouldn't have been so resounding. Yet, even beyond the sealed defenses of the inner city, it resonated, shaking the earth, the walls and the skies.

Several C and B-grade Invalids collapsed before the young man's rage, their minds shattering beneath his might.

He brandished a black spear, his irises flickering back and forth between a violet-red and a pale green.

Everyone heard that young man's voice. It traveled over several miles, reaching the ears of even those it shouldn't have. Despite being within the cockpit, even Joseph heard the voice laced with rage and indignance.

The young man continued to stand amidst the crack in the wall. Beneath his feet piles of rubble and Invalids corpses lay. Behind him an overrun city trembled. Before him, an army of thousands stood.

Amidst it all, he looked like an ant trying to stop the momentum of a towering mountain. But, he stood their nonetheless, his fury billowing.

The young man brandished his spear, slashing a line before him.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

The Spear Force cut through the Invalid corpses, through the piles of rubble, through the collapsed steel alloys, piercing through the ground and not stopping for tens of meters.

“Cross this line and die.”

His words were undeniable. Like a higher judgement passed down from a god on high, it caused the hearts of all those who heard it to tremble.

The flickering of his irises finally settled on a blazing violet-red, his skin suddenly lit with endless bronze runes as a halo appeared above his head.

His bronze hair billowed. It was so long and sturdy that it sounded like cracking whips in the wind, slicing apart anything that even remotely came into contact with it.

When the shock of those who heard the voice calmed, it was only then they recognized who it was had spoken.

“Leonel!” Joseph's gaze reddened, his reason leaving with his humanity.

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“Grind him to dust!” Joseph roared.

To anyone who knew why Leonel was here, it was just a simple matter of him protecting the citizens of this Fort. However, how could Joseph and Damian know this? In their eyes, not only was Leonel responsible for their demotions, but he had even returned to The Empire and was standing in their way again.

Usually when people felt hatred, they would never consider what they might have done wrong. And, in this case, the most exaggerated result was practically guaranteed.

Catwoman glared at Leonel through the cameras of her tank.

“Run him over.” She said coldly to her driver.

Catwoman remembered when she first met Leonel. She had had a good impression of the boy. But, the loyalty she had for Joseph was far beyond this.

For a person to join the rebel army in a society where there was only one true ruler, it would be no surprise for their background to be lengthy and complex. Catwoman was no different and to her, Joseph was a brother, a father, and the only family she had. Even if Leonel hadn't been the reason Joseph fell from his tall heights, she still wouldn't allow him to block her path.

Leonel watched coldly as the two vanguard tanks continued to roll forward.

In all their fury, they didn't seem to notice that the Invalids had long since stopped pouring into the city. They seemed frozen in space, completely unable to move. Their white, indifferent irises were all locked onto Leonel. Yet, he hadn't spared any of them a single glance.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

“Chain Domain.”

PCHU!

The heads of several Invalids exploded. Illusory chains wrapped around their bodies, severing their limbs and crushing them into bloody pulps.

One after another, they disappeared into motes of light, fusing into Leonel’s body.

‘Little Tolly.’ Leonel called out.

Blackstar had followed Aina, but Leonel had taken the little Metal Spirit with him. Since they dared to disregard the lives of the common people just for their own goals, Leonel would make them pay a price.

The tanks continued to roll forward. Though all Leonel could see were their barrels and their sleek black exteriors, it was as though he was peering into the souls of those within them. PANDA NOVEL

“Dream Sculpt.”

Leonel stared down the tanks, their every piece reflecting in his mind.

Without the complexities of Fourth Dimensional pieces, it took Leonel not even a few seconds to complete it.

The moment it completed, Leonel arranged its every piece into a Dreamscape of its own. In two steps, Leonel already grasped the strengths and weaknesses of the tank even better than the engineers that designed it.

‘Metal Synergy’ !’

Leonel felt his bloodline tremble with excitement. To this point, the greatest use Leonel had gotten out of his Lineage Factor was the strength of his body. But, if that was all there was to it, it would be called the Metal Body Lineage Factor, not the Metal Synergy Lineage Factor'!

This bloodline didn't represent a strong body. It represented dominion over the earth!

Scraps of steel alloy that had fallen to Leonel's feet trembled, rising into the air. ρ??C??????

At that moment, Little Tolly had separated into ten spherical balls, floating before Leonel and resonating with his thoughts.

After entering the Fourth Dimension with his mind, Leonel no longer needed direct contact to control Tolliver. His free hand moved as though he was composing a piece across the air, tapping with a speed and dexterity that was beyond the normal limits of humans.

In his right hand, Leonel controlled a Chain Domain. In his left, he controlled a Metal Domain.

When he said he would kill anyone who crossed the line he drew'! He was serious.

Little Tolly responded to Leonel's commands. One of its ten spherical bodies shot forward, enveloping a rising piece of steel alloy.

In the blink of an eye, Tolliver had finished. From a single piece of steel alloy, dozens of foot-long needles appeared. Their ends were so sharp that even the small rays of sun that rebounded off it were sliced apart.

The rumbling of the tanks grew ever closer.

From within the cockpit, Catwoman glanced at the line Leonel drew with a sneer. Her command still stood. Leonel's words and actions hadn't changed a thing.

Roll him over.

Leonel's gaze sharpened the moment the barrel of the first tank crossed it. He didn't wait for its tracks to do so. He didn't wait for the entire tank to cross over either.

Since they couldn't show mercy to those weaker than them, he wouldn't show them any mercy at all. Since they felt that they could do as they pleased because they were more powerful, he would show them what it truly meant to be powerful.

Leonel's surroundings suddenly felt a rise in temperature. At first it was subtle, but it grew unbearable very quickly.

The Invalids that had managed to survive the constriction of Leonel's Chain Domain imploded into a rain of fire and ash.

The Fire Element gathered around him at inconceivable speeds. In one moment, the foot-long steel needles were an ash gray that matched the tall Fort walls. But in the next, they had suddenly begun to glow red.

'Die.' Leonel thought coldly.

Leonel's halo glowed. As though receiving a command from its King, the metal needles shot forward at inconceivable speeds.

From the vantage point of Catwoman, she couldn't even see them. The speed was simply too much for the cameras to pick up.

Even to the last moment, she wasn't aware of just what was about to happen to her. The last emotion on her face was a frozen sneer as she suddenly heard the blaring warning sirens of the tank.

She looked back toward the camera and toward Leonel's indifferent expression. That look was seared into her mind as her final memory.

She remembered that look. It was the same cold expression she had as they blew up the Fort's foundation. It was the same cold expression she had as she watched the Invalids swarm the outer city. It was the same cold expression she had as she heard their innocent screams and watched their guiltless blood flow.

BANG! BANG!

The two tanks imploded into a rain of metal, fire and ash. In one moment, they were barrelling toward Leonel, and in the next, they exploded from within.

Leonel felt the heat of the explosion blast against him, kicking his hair up in a storm of its tumult. But, he continued to stand there indifferently.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

One hand brandished a black spear. The other's fingers danced across the air like a composure that plucked the strings of the battlefield.

His hair billowed in the air, ten spheres of silver and dozens of foot-long needles hovering before him.

He was just a single man blocking a flood from all sides, but he still stood tall.

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Leonel was like a blazing sun. It felt and even looked as though he was the central star of a world. Even the splintered steel walls around him began to turn a fierce shade of red, causing those Invalids who still tried to climb it in his presence suffer a fate worse than death.

This was none other than the manifestation of the female fire mage's domain. However, Leonel had come to understand that this couldn't be considered to be a true domain. The difference between it and his Chain Domain was subtle, but it was there.

From his communication with the dictionary, Leonel learned that this went by many different names. Some worlds called it a 'Style', others called it 'Martial Arts', some called it a Dogma or a Dao' ;

Ultimately, this was the final branch of what Leonel had categorized as this new world order's power system.

While there were many different magic systems with countless branches in between them, Leonel had ultimately broken down the over arching power system of the Dimensional Verse into just a few categories.

The first was one's ability. This existed outside of everything else and could often be considered to be a unique talent. In many cases, one's ability provided one with an affinity, but there were some cases where it didn't have to either. It was a special category that could often make or break one's level of talent.

The second category were Lineage Factors. This could be passed down to one from their parents or be a product of the future influencing the past.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

The third category was Force. This category included neutral Force and Force Strengthening Deviations. There were countless methods of utilizing Force whether that be in hand to hand combat or even in Mage Arts.

The fourth category were Universal Cycles. This branch of the power system used the Universal Force to give an overall boost to one's fighting ability.

The fifth category was Soul Force or the mind while the sixth category was the strengthening of one's body, both of which Leonel had dabbled in.

From Leonel's current understanding, this 'Style' or 'Martial Arts' or 'Dogma' could be considered the seventh and final category.

This was a comprehension that could fuse one's power systems into one, boosting it and helping one execute it all to the greatest possible extent.

For example, Jilniya's 'Falls Style' was one that emphasized a relentless attack. When this Style was mastered, Jilniya was able to tailor her battle sense toward this particular Style, allowing her attack, defense and movement to display themselves as one seamless whole. PANDA NOVEL

If the first six categories were branches, this seventh category could be considered one's foundation, the very roots that held it all together.

There were a countless variety of Styles.

The winged swordman's Style was one that emphasized the fluidity of motion, the fusion of one's steps with one's attack and retreat. It placed particular importance on speed, swiftness, flexibility and agility.

The bowwoman's Style was very similar to what Camelot knew as the General Star. For ease, Leonel referred to it as the General Style.

It was calculating and considered every point in battle as a piece of the whole. Every step, every breath, and every thought one had was meant to bring one closer to victory. This Style had no wasted energy and maximized efficiency.

The final Style, the Style of the female fire mage, was one that brought one to the extremes of heat. This person embodied flames to such a great extent that all the Fire Elements in the surroundings couldn't help but surround them. PANDA NOVEL

In this way, it functioned more like the spell [Light Domain] rather than a true Domain. However, much like the Falls Style caused the sound of crashing waters to fill the surroundings, the Flame Style preyed on a sense as well, except this time, it was of one's touch rather than one's hearing.

The variations between Styles was endless and all encompassing. But, one thing that was true is that regardless of the Style, only a single one could be used at a given time unless they were fused together into a new comprehension.

This made sense. After all, how could one follow multiple Dogmas at once? One couldn't possibly have the Style of an office worker and an athlete at the same time, right?

At least that was the case for those who couldn't split their minds' ;

Still, despite the fact Leonel could break this rule, he didn't feel a need to. It drew too much on his Dream Force to do so. Plus, for such a situation' ; he didn't need to.

He continued to stand at the broken entrance of the Fort, his battle intent blazing. He had not a single intention of letting anyone through.

Joseph's gaze went blank.

He stared without words at his screen, watching as the two tanks fell into an explosion of fire and shrapnel. His heart felt as though it was being torn out of his chest.

“CAT!”

Joseph's devastated roar resounded through the cockpit.

The eyes of several of the drivers went red. Their canons aimed toward Leonel, their fury reaching untold heights.

They were all a family. Many of them came together when they were at a vulnerable place and had learned to lean on one another.

Cat wasn't just a woman, wasn't just a colleague, she was their sister. The same way Joseph was a father to her in many ways, she was a mother to others.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

Leonel's gaze remained blazing. He brandished his spear, drawing another line across the ground.

This one was even further ahead and was even deeper. He didn't speak this time because there was no need to. His meaning couldn't have been clearer. If they dared to come any closer, he would only kill more!

Joseph saw red. To his side, tears streaked down Damian's face. Though he didn't say a word and had clenched his jaw shut tight, the fury in his heart was no less than the others.

“FIRE!”

Leonel's gaze flashed with a cold light.

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Leonel might have reached the Superior Stage in his Metal Body, but he wasn't infallible. He was under no delusions that he would survive such an onslaught. And, even if by some miracle he did, he doubted that he would still be in position to fight.

However, he didn't intend to allow such a thing to happen.

His mind was on a completely different level. He could see everything before it happened.

Joseph's order to fire. The spinning gears as the final tweaks were made to their aim. The slight scent of gun powder. The touch of heat that graced the barrels.

Leonel felt it all as if he was right there in the cockpit with them all. Which tanks were firing, where they were in relation to him, exactly when their shells would exit the nozzles' † He saw through it all.

And that, exactly that' † would be their downfall.

Leonel's raised hand trembled slightly. It was only the slightest flick, yet seven foot-long needles shot forward at impossible speeds.

They tore through the air, leaving a streak of smoke in their wake. Then'

The sound barrier shattered. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

In one blink the needles were floating by Leonel's side. In a second blink they had appeared before the nozzles of the seven firing tanks. In a third'

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Joseph's heart trembled.

"No! No!"

It was almost as though he knew exactly what would happen the moment Leonel's fingers moved.

The shells never got a chance to exit their barrels. The timing of Leonel's attack was so perfect that the needles met the projectiles within their nozzles. And the result' was even more devastating than the first time.

Joseph slumped into his chair, staring at his monitor with a pale expression.

There was nothing he could even do. Despite the fact he had a high rank, he only had a healing ability. Even if he wanted to fight it out with Leonel to the death' was that even possible? PANDA NOVEL

At that moment, a mournful cry came from Joseph's side. Before he could even react, his younger brother had exploded through the roof doors of their tank.

Damian saw nothing but red. The ground beneath him reacted just as violently, becoming a massive wave that shot him into the skies.

He didn't have time to think of logic. He didn't have time to realize that his actions were futile.

In the past, before even completing his Force Nodes, Leonel had already defeated him. Back then, Leonel was nowhere near the monster he was now. How could there even be a contest between them?

Of course, Damian still felt that these matters were different from what they had once been in the past. His ability had improved and his ability to use it had likewise improved.

But' | Could his improvement match with Leonel's?

The ground rose like a tsunami, trying to envelop Leonel completely. And, at the very least, its shadow succeeded in doing so.

The sun was completely blotted out. All Leonel saw was a wave of earth and the man who stood atop of it, completely enraged. ρ??(???????)

Unfortunately for Damian' | He used his flow ability on earth.

Leonel spread out his hands, facing his palm toward Damian.

“[Earthen Shackle].”

Damian suddenly jolted to a stop. The earth he had always been able to control at a whim suddenly became like a steel behemoth unwilling to heed his calls for help.

His body was almost thrown off due to his forward momentum, but that was when he suddenly found his ankles and wrists had been caught, shackled down without even a chance to escape.

Damian's attempts came to a grinding halt before he could even get close. Though he was the one in the air now, shackled by earth that had once been under his control, he still felt as though it was Leonel who was looking down on him.

The world fell into an odd silence for a moment. The screams and blood had come to a stop within the city, the rumbling tanks never even made it to the gates and even the Invalids that had approached close enough to do anything had been slaughtered by Leonel just as quickly.

At that moment, Miles had managed to crawl his way back up to an undamaged section of the wall. Heavy breaths heaved his chest as he sat slumped to the ground.

He had no idea what happened below. The only slight clue he had was Leonel's familiar voice roaring through the city. But, he had yet to confirm if that voice that haunted his nightmares was really the same person who had spoken just now.

But at this moment, he simply didn't care. He had managed to survive and that was all that mattered.

A growl suddenly caught Miles' attention. He looked over to find that he had managed to crawl back up to a section of the wall where the white wolf Variant Invalid had been caged.

They had been planning on bringing it down the wall and into the inner city. But, obviously, the Slayer Legion had ruined those plans.

The blue-eyed wolf continued to growl at Miles, but it didn't lunge forward. It had learned its lesson about this cage a long time ago. Despite its massive body, this prison treated it no differently from an ordinary house dog.

Miles looked away from the white wolf and stood. Seeing that it was still imprisoned gave him a sense of confidence. By now, this white wolf had become his greatest trump card.

With Miles' intelligence, he could tell that he had been abandoned. He, of course, knew about the greater security of the inner city. After all, he was the one who deployed the illusion that kept it hidden. But, he had never expected to be hung out to dry like this.

Miles chuckled silently to himself as he stood. Maybe this was the first time he truly understood the world he had been born in.

The worst part was that even if he returned alive, he would have to pretend as though he didn't know a thing. He was a man without power, did he even have the right to feel aggrieved?

Feelings and fairness were commodities reserved for those with strength. Trying to bring balance to a world without power was no different than asking for death.

Miles took a deep breath and calmed his beating heart, a resoluteness in his gaze. There would come a day where he ""

PCHU!

Miles looked down, only to find a bloody hole the size of a bowling ball in his chest. His final thoughts couldn't even finish before he collapsed to the ground, his vision swimming.

"Shh, shh. It's okay Little White, I can't believe these bastards locked you up either. It's fine, it's fine, don't be mad at me, you know why I had to let you suffer a bit. We'll pay them back a hundredfold soon."

These were the last words Miles heard before his life faded from the world. Unfortunately, they were spoken in a language he couldn't comprehend.

As for his last sight? If one found his soul and questioned it, he would swear that it was a pair of white irises.

Chapter 416

Leonel clenched his fists, causing the mountain of earth Damian was chained to, to collapse to the ground.

His fingers flicked out once again. This time, however, instead of steel needles being shot out, Little Tolly's spherical forms tore through the air, appearing about the remaining tanks.

In the blink of an eye, through Little Tolly, Leonel not only sealed the barrels of the tanks but also the roof doorways. Beyond that, he also sealed a hidden escape hatch. With his understanding of the tanks, how could he miss something like that?

From start to finish, those of the Slayer Legion didn't dare to move. In truth, after Leonel moved again, they thought they would die. But, even after realizing that they would keep their lives, a bout of despair overwhelmed them.

To a rebel, being captured by The Empire meant that their lives were all but over.

Earth only had a single prison located on the ninth ranked province, the Dark Cloud Province. It could be said that though the monitoring bracelets were a huge invasion of privacy, they did their job. The crime rates were exceptionally low.

Beyond this, the rehabilitation of criminals was also excellent. For those who committed petty crimes or lower level felonies, they received ample help to get their lives back on track.

However, those who were deemed irredeemable were all sent to Dark Cloud Prison. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

This wasn't a typical story of prison horror. There were no tall tales of torture or terrible living conditions. In fact, The Empire had allowed reporters and activists into this prison many times before. It could be said that for an Empire willing to let 99% of its population die, The Empire was ironically humane in other ways.

However, everyone knew that no one who ever stepped into Dark Cloud Prison ever took a single step out.

There were only two greatly protected regions of Earth that were perfectly prepared for the Metamorphosis. One was the Capital and the second was Dark Cloud Province. Even after the Metamorphosis descended, not a single person managed to escape.

Those of the Slayer Legion slumped into their chairs. They knew that as of now, their lives were over.

Leonel lowered his hands, his chest heaving.

Using his ability to analyze and scope out the situation had been easy. Commanding Little Tolly's actions had also been easy. But, using his Chain Domain made him feel as though he was squeezing what remained of his life out.

Before, Leonel had only used his Chain Domain for a split moment against that mental mage. Plus, back then, his Chain Domain had been incomplete and imperfect. PANDA NOVEL

Now, however, his Chain Domain was perfect. It took far more out of him to use, especially as violently as he had just done.

Restraining a target was one thing, but constricting them to death was an entirely separate matter. Unfortunately, since his hands were tied, Leonel had no choice but to use this method.

'If my Spear Force was in the Fourth Dimension, it wouldn't be nearly as taxing, but!'

Leonel sighed and shook his head, revolving his Three Stars to recover quickly. He knew he couldn't breakthrough into the Fourth Dimension until he comprehended the Four Seasons Realm. But, in truth, he hadn't even begun to try just yet. He wasn't quite sure how to.

What Leonel didn't know was that there wasn't necessarily a 'how'. Those who comprehended the Four Seasons Realm on their own relied on sudden enlighten and meditation. But, with how Leonel's life never allowed him a moment to rest, whether or not he could succeed in this matter was still unknown.

'What do I do now! ?'

Leonel felt a sudden headache coming on. He had come here to take the Fort down, he had never expected to be the one to save it! ρ??C??????

'Hm?'

Leonel's gaze sharpened.

He looked to his back, only to be slightly shocked as the illusion around the inner city began to slowly collapse.

The truth was that this illusion was never able to hide itself from Leonel's eyes. But now the Dream Force around it was dissipating, making it possible for everyone to see the hidden truth.

It was a massive metal dome. It stretched in length and width for at least ten kilometers. As for its height? It completely dwarfed the 20 meter tall or so walls of the outer city. It rose up at least a kilometer in that aspect alone.

It could only be described as a behemoth.

With the illusion gone, the true size of the city seemed to become obvious. The outer city was just a small ring around the outside compared to the monstrosity that took up the center of all of their lives.

Seeing such a sight, Leonel felt the rage he thought he had calmed in his chest flare up again.

With such a large space, was it really so impossible to allow everyone in? Did they really disdain to do so this much?

The worst part about it all was that the alloys used to form this dome couldn't even be breathed in the same breath as those that built the outer wall. It was infinitely close to a Fourth Dimension metal. In fact, this was simply because it was formed of a collection of Third Dimensional metals. In terms of strength alone, if Leonel's analysis was correct, it put many Fourth Dimensional metals to shame.

Yet, the outer wall was only considered to be strong within the Third Dimension. The difference was so striking that one almost couldn't help but laugh.

Leonel didn't have the time to care why the illusion had faded. He wanted nothing more than to charge over and flatten the dome he saw before him.

“Yip! Yip!”

Just when Leonel was about to do something stupid, a little mink pounced in his arms. This small action seemed to snap him back to reality.

Leonel looked up to find Aina following after the little mink, her great sword seemingly unblemished by battle.

“They’re clear?” Leonel asked.

Aina nodded.

While Leonel’s job had been to stop any more from leaking in, Aina had teamed up with the little mink to take out any that had managed to make their way into the city.

Leonel sighed. He really wasn’t sure what to do.

He shook his head. ‘Maybe I should just try to repair this wall first’ | Can I do it alone, though?’

‘Hm?’ Leonel frowned, his gaze focusing back on the little mink.

What were these little faint black balls floating around Little Blackstar?

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Leonel put his spear away and raised the little mink in his arms, observing the little guy curiously.

When he focused in on the blobs of black, Leonel realized something astonishing. Each one of them had a different character to them.

Those with stronger presences were larger while those with weaker ones were smaller. But, it wasn't just this either. Each seemed to have a different feel.

The largest of them carried a biting cold to them. There were two of them in total. One seemed to want to completely envelop you in an avalanche while the other was sharp like a thin, cooled knife slicing into your body.

Leonel felt like he remembered them from somewhere'!

'Those 12 ice guards, two of them reminded me of this feeling!'

Leonel's eyes widened in realization. These blobs, they were the shadows of the enemies Little Blackstar had killed.

'Blackstar can't absorb them?' Leonel thought, confused. " | They're disappearing too.'

Leonel seemed to realize two things immediately after understanding what he was dealing with. The first was that Blackstar didn't seem capable of swallowing these shadows like he had the shadow of Simeon's numbered warrior. And the second was that they were slowly fading. The more powerful of them seemed to linger on for longer, but the weaker ones were already collapsing to the point Leonel could hardly sense them.PANDA-NOVEL.COM

'There are two potential reasons for why Blackstar can't absorb them. It's either that he had an affinity limitation or it's that he can only take in one at a time. If it's the latter, then that means the only way he could take on a new ability is if he gave the one he has already'!

Leonel frowned, sinking into his own thoughts.

The ability Blackstar could mimic now came from one of Simeon's handpicked warriors. From Leonel's comprehension, it was an S-grade ability at worse.

That said, the ice guards were SSS-grade Invalids, so their abilities obviously likewise followed suit.

The true issue was that the sharpness ability of that numbered warrior was very useful to Leonel. When he and the little mink worked in tandem, Leonel could gain an extension of this ability. This was what had allowed him to threaten Jilniya's life back then. Of course, at the time, Leonel had also relied on many other things like the General Style and his Dreamscape Battle Sense. But, it was still an important factor.

Leonel curiously reached out a hand toward one of the shadows. He didn't seem to realize that Aina was looking at him from the side with a confused light coloring her eyes. It seemed that only Leonel and Little Blackstar could see these floating shadows.

'Huh?'

Leonel shot his hand back, his heart beat quickening. PANDA NOVEL

"What's wrong?" Aina finally couldn't hold back, a slight tinge of worry in her voice.

The little mink had charged over here after sensing Leonel's agitation. So, she had already appeared realizing she might have to calm Leonel down from doing something stupid again. But, this was completely out of her expectations.

"! !"

Leonel took a deep breath and explained things.

"! I felt as though something about myself would fundamentally change if I absorbed it into my body."

"You're saying others can absorb them?" Aina's expression changed.

Such a thing was inconceivable. If this was true, then the value of such an ability would be impossible to calculate.

Aina couldn't help but look toward the little mink with a new light in her eyes. PANDA NOVEL

The little mink crawled up from Leonel's hands, up his arm and stood proudly on his shoulder as though showing off. Such a scene pulled out a smile from the depths of Aina's heart.

"I don't think it's so simple." Leonel said slowly. "It's hard to explain, but I felt as though absorbing that shadow would take something away from me, almost as though it was taking an average of my shadow and this one to form an all-new shadow."

Leonel's senses were incredibly sensitive. On top of that, his memory was impeccable. He was able to simulate that exact moment again and again in his Dream World.

'What if?'

Leonel closed his eyes. With Aina around him, he didn't have to worry about anything else.

In his Dream World, a new Dream Clone appeared. But, this time, it wasn't himself but rather a perfect replica of Joel. Everything from his height, to his mannerisms, to his ability were perfectly reflected.

After breaking through, Leonel's simulations within the Third Dimension had a 99% accuracy rating. He could practically reflect the world perfectly in his mind.

Over ten minutes later, Leonel opened his eyes, his gaze blazing.

Aina, who had been watching over Leonel this whole time looked to him with a half annoyed, half curious look. This really wasn't the place to suddenly be taking a nap.

By now, the shadows had all faded away into nothing, but Leonel didn't mind one bit. To him, the information he gleaned from them was far more important than the strength they could provide him.

This matter was life changing. He couldn't just casually take action without testing out every parameter he could.

In that time, Leonel learned a few things.

First, the limitation on the little mink wasn't affinity related, it was a limitation of quantity. In the little guy's current state, only a single ability could be absorbed by him.

Second, anyone could absorb any shadow as long as they had the little mink as a proxy. However, it wouldn't be a simple addition to one's ability. Only the little mink had the benefit of absorbing abilities without consequences, everyone else had to weigh the pros and cons.

One had to treat the shadow like one's soul. Randomly absorbing the shadows of others into oneself would be like changing oneself fundamentally.

If someone with a strong ability absorbed a weaker ability, that someone's overall strength would become an average of the two. In addition, if the two abilities weren't compatible, it could lead to a disharmony that could cripple a person entirely.

Even beyond this, there was the matter of oneself. It was very likely that absorbing a shadow could influence one's personality in ways one would never even expect.

All of this made Leonel realize that this ability would be useless for him. Where could he find an ability comparable or better to the Quasi Silver monstrosity that was his own? And, even if he did, where would he find one compatible with something as outrageously rare as Dream Force?

But Leonel didn't care. He felt that he was talented and powerful enough. He had yet to find his match in that regard, though that was obviously in part due to the fact he had yet to reach higher Dimensional worlds.

What Leonel really cared about were the benefits his teammates might gain from this. If they had more strength to protect themselves, it would be for the best.

Leonel kept getting this nagging feeling that something big was coming, but he couldn't completely finish connecting all the dots. This left him feeling uneasy. Unfortunately, all he could do was prepare to the best of his ability.

Still, he had to consider the problem of warped personalities. If the friends he had grown up with all his life suddenly became completely different people, then who had he saved, exactly?

Leonel sighed and rubbed the little mink's head, its little whiskers twitching.

At that moment, the grinding of loud gears caught Leonel's attention.

'Oh!' So they want to open the inner city now?' Leonel's gaze suffused with a cold light.

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Leonel watched as the doors gates open. Despite being several kilometers away, due to the size of the dome and his own senses, he might as well have been right in front of it all.

"We should go." Aina said softly.

If they stayed here and were subject to the same technology the Invalid horde had been, they would definitely suffer. There were just two of them, no matter how powerful they were, they still weren't prepared to take down such a behemoth alone, at least not without proper planning.

Since Leonel had already met his goal of securing the safety of his friends, there was really no need to keep risking themselves here. It was a pointless endeavor.

"... I can't leave without killing the Junior Governor Duke." Leonel said.

Aina sent a glance over to Leonel.

She still remembered that over a year ago, Leonel couldn't even stomach killing a human. But now he was going out of his way to make sure one in particular felt his wrath.

She couldn't say that she was opposed to this. This was a realization she always hoped Leonel would come to. But, at the same time, she liked Leonel's innocence and naivete. Though this was a much better mentality for Leonel to have in such a world, she still felt like she was losing something.

"... They wouldn't release the illusion over the inner city without reason. He might already be dead."

Leonel's brows raised. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Now that he thought about it, that was true. Miles had been on the wall when the explosion suddenly went off. The possibility of his death was quite high, especially since his ability wasn't physical.

Leonel released his Internal Sight. He had been completely focused on the battle with the Slayer Legion originally, so he didn't have the mind to care for other things. Though the battle had seemed simple and easy, had Leonel not been able to calculate every minute detail, it was very possible that he could have been the one that ended up dying.

'Huh?'

Leonel's eyes sharpened.

"What is it?" Aina asked.

"... He really is dead."

Aina nodded. "Let's go, then. There's nothing else to do here."

"It's... not that simple. Someone killed him."

"One of the Invalids?" PANDA NOVEL

“I can’t be sure. Normally an Invalid would want a human’s Ethereal Glabella, but his skull is intact. There’s only a hole through his chest.”

“Then isn’t it obvious?” Aina asked. “They closed the inner city without sending someone to save him. Someone plotted against him for whatever reason, it might have something to do with his choice to bomb the Fort back then.”

“Maybe...” Leonel’s eyes narrowed.

At the moment, his senses locked onto an open cage. He remembered that this was the same cage that held the white wolf Variant Invalid before. But, this cage only had damage from the outside.

Someone released that beast?

Sparks continued to fly within Leonel’s Dreamscape, but he still didn’t have enough information. He had no idea what was happening.

“Young Miss!”

A sudden voice cut off Leonel’s thoughts.

Aina’s expression changed. Suddenly, Leonel found his hand being pulled by something soft as he was dragged away. ρ???(?????)

He looked back over his shoulder to see Yuri hiking up her dress and chasing after them.

‘This feels... oddly familiar...’

Leonel’s train of thought was interrupted as he laughed.

This was the second time he and Aina had run away from Yuri. He didn't know why Aina wanted to avoid her so much, but he had to say he didn't mind holding onto such a soft hand.

Leonel couldn't be certain if Aina's scars only impacted her face, but what he was sure of was the fact her hands were perfect and without flaw.

'Is it creepy to be attracted to a slender hand?' Leonel thought to himself.

"Young Miss! Stop running!"

Unfortunately for Yuri, compared to the past, Leonel and Aina were even faster.

Eventually, she could only stop running as they disappeared into the distance. In the place of the running couple, Leonel's teammates suddenly appeared once again amid dim flashing lights, hints of confusion on their faces due to the unexpected teleportation.

Miles looked toward Joel and Raj, then all three met gazes with Yuri. They all had the same abandoned look in their eye.

"First time?" Yuri's chest heaved as she tried to catch her breath, a hint of sympathy in her voice.

The three nodded like wounded children.

Yuri rose to her tippy toes and patted their shoulders.

"You get used to it."

**

While the Royal Blue Fort had been attacked by an unknown entity, the capital was coming up with ways to deal with the addition of a second moon.

Under this second moon's influence, it had been difficult for Earth to get a moment of peace. But, as though this wasn't bad enough, their world's evolution had been accelerated, causing an epidemic of Force Surges to erupt.

The activity of beasts and Invalids alike grew as a result, making the environment far more volatile. Instances of beast and Invalid hordes were taking the infantile world by storm.

It was amidst these challenges that news of this second moon was finally disseminated and reached the ears of the most powerful men and women of Earth.

The appearance of a Kingdom within the territory of the Ascension Empire? It was unacceptable.

The instant these matters were learned about, The Empire sounded the war drums. For the first time in centuries, a true threat had appeared within their territory.

For the vast majority of Earth, even getting access to the normal tech they had was impossible. But, in the past year, The Empire hadn't been sitting on its laurels. With the resources it had access to, the Capital had quickly become a place no less prosperous than any other Fourth Dimensional world.

In addition, even without access to technology, it was a simple matter for those of the Capital to exchange for treasures that would allow them to travel to this second moon.

War drums beat. War flags rose. A patriotic aura thrummed throughout the Capital.

As for the chosen leader of this expedition?

Prince Noah Fawkes.

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Aina dragged Leonel along until they were easily over five kilometers away. For the two of them, crossing this distance only took a handful of minutes.

When Aina finally let go of his hand, Leonel couldn't help but laugh. He laughed quite heartily at that.

With the snow falling from the skies and abandoned buildings all around them, it felt as though they were in their own world.

Aina pouted slightly. She realized that this was the second time she had run away from Yuri with Leonel like that. She didn't really know why, it was just an instinct. She should have just run away alone, at least then he wouldn't be laughing at her like this.

"Why do you always run away from Yuri like that? She's probably been waiting months to see you again and was definitely happy to see you."

Leonel finally found this to be quite odd. The first time he hadn't really thought much about it. But, he hadn't expected it to be a pattern.

"Uh..." Aina hesitated.

"It's fine if you don't want to say." Leonel waved her off.

Aina didn't really like speaking about her past. He didn't want to press her for information and end up pushing her away further. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

"No... I mean... Yuri was sent to look after me by my father."

Leonel froze for a moment.

Aina's father? After he heard of her hatred for the Brazinger family, Leonel thought both of Aina's parents had died. But, now that he thought about it, Aina's exact words back then had been...

~" ... The short of it is that I don't have a family. I had a mother, and my father... is no longer with me."~

Aina had made it clear that her mother was dead, but it seemed that even she wasn't quite sure of the current status of her father. Maybe Yuri being sent to her was also a surprise on her part.

Just from looking into Aina's eyes, Leonel could see a swirl of emotion. Hesitancy, sadness, resilience... resentment...

Even without Aina explaining anything more, Leonel could extrapolate quite a lot. It was likely that Aina believed her father had been dead too until Yuri suddenly appeared. Then she must have wondered why her father would leave her alone if he had been alive all along.

Leonel didn't want to read into it too much, but he must have felt quite similarly until Dream Force had allowed him to remember those forgotten memories about his mother... PANDA NOVEL

Truth be told, Leonel had never thought about what it would be like to meet Aina's parents before. He was a sociable person and wasn't very nervous about the prospect. But, hearing that Aina's father was alive made him frown.

In the end, he chose not to judge without understanding the full story. But, if there came a day where he learned that her father didn't have a good reason...

Aina shook her head as though pulling herself out of her own thoughts.

"It's not a big deal, it isn't as though I hate her or anything..." After saying this, Aina fell silent once again.

Leonel smiled. "Your birthday is soon, right?"

Aina was stunned by these words. "You..."

Leonel shrugged. "It's kind of hard to keep up with what the date is with all the changing timelines we've been traveling through, but I think I have a pretty accurate grasp of it. My birthday wasn't long ago, so I know yours is soon."

"Yip! Yip!" 𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂𐄂

Leonel wasn't certain if the little mink understood what he was saying or not, but it excitedly hopped up and down. It seemed to at least understand that a birthday was a nice thing.

Now that Leonel thought about it, his last two birthdays had been quite depressing. One was spent within the Mayan Tomb and the next was spent training in Brave City.

Usually, during that time of year his father would give him a gift. Funny enough, usually that gift ended up being more of a present for his dad than himself. Most of the time it was some vintage DVD with some anime from hundreds of years ago.

Thinking of this, Leonel couldn't help but smile and shake his head.

"What do you want to do for your birthday?"

Aina seemed stunned by the question. Celebrate a birthday? Now? Was he crazy?

In the end, without an answer to give, she ended up glaring at Leonel. Why was he always so immature?

Even seeing this, Leonel's smile didn't fade.

"Fine, since you don't have an answer, I'll surprise you."

"You..."

Looking at Leonel's grin, it seemed like he had no intention of listening to her words. In fact, her glare, which was usually quite effective, seemed to have hit a brick wall this time.

"Huh...?"

Leonel wanted to tease Aina some more, but his gaze locked onto a bird in the sky. The beast quickly descended, approaching the pair with a blazing speed.

Leonel almost attacked it initially, but after a while, he became fairly certain that it had no ill intentions.

'This message method... Camelot?'

Leonel couldn't be 100% certain, but this mode of communication shouldn't exist on Earth. But, regardless of where the message itself came from, Leonel had no idea who would be contacting him at all.

The bird descended, landing in Leonel's palm.

"Hello handsome little boy. I placed a small tracking spell on your necklace treasure, I hope you don't mind. I know you have a kind heart, so I thought I would reach out to you now. My Demon Empire needs some help, we're currently being attacked by those we assume are your people. I hope you can help us communicate with them. In return, Big Sis has plenty of rewards for you~."

Leonel coughed violently hearing this message, his head slowly turning in Aina's direction. But, all he found were blinking, curious eyes and a light smile.

Leonel easily recognized that this message was from Mordred, but he couldn't help but lament her timing. Why now? Couldn't she had picked a better moment?

Smiling an ugly smile, Leonel squeezed out a dry laugh.

"I didn't know you had an elder sister." Aina said, her smile never fading.

Leonel had no idea why, but these words felt like a fatal blow.. Legends say one could hear the whimpers of a young man that day beneath the heavily falling snow.

Chapter 420

After Leonel was settled in, he became shocked by this sudden change. The Empire was attacking Camelot?

No, maybe he wasn't so surprised about this much. This was the way of The Empire, ever since they had taken power, they had never allowed any true threats to their sovereignty to survive. Maybe only the Slayer Legion could accomplish such a feat, but even then, they had only been able to do so by hiding away and tucking their tails for decades on end.

However, compared to the Slayer Legion, Camelot's location was laid bare for all to see. There was no chance to hide or be covert, and maybe even they weren't aware of why they had to do so either.

As far as citizens of Camelot were concerned, they were in the same location as they'd always been. As for their rulers, many of them might have an inkling, but only Mordred knew exactly what was happening thanks to the trial grounds she shared with Leonel.

So, what Leonel was maybe truly surprised about was the fact Mordred had reached out to him at all. Though it couldn't be said that they were enemies, a few months ago all of Leonel's thoughts were filled with how to kill this woman. It was only after seeing her backstory and sympathizing with her that he couldn't bear to do so any longer.

Leonel couldn't help but hesitate.

The Empire was attacking Camelot... was this really something he should be interfering in? What could he even do?PANDA-NOVEL.COM

He felt that Mordred overestimated him due to his talent. Let alone the fact that Leonel had yet to meet the other talents of Earth and wasn't exactly certain how he stacked up to them, even if he was far beyond what they could match it simply wouldn't matter.

None of them even knew his name. And, by the time he proved he had strength and should be listened to, he'd likely be an enemy of them all. This was The Empire they were talking about, they weren't exactly great listeners.

On top of that, Leonel didn't owe Camelot anything. If anything, he had saved them. What reason did he have to protect them?

If Leonel placed his bias against The Empire aside and looked at the bigger picture, if the people of Camelot were under the rulership of the Ascension Empire, they'd be much safer...

'Ha, did I really just think that? How safe were the people of the Fort when the nobles decided to abandon them...?'

Leonel sighed and shook his head. 'Whatever, it doesn't matter. It wasn't Camelot that asked me for help but the Demon Empire...' PANDA NOVEL

That was right, most of the reasons Camelot was such a bad place to live in, in the first place was because of the existence of the Demon Empire. It would be quite ridiculous if he went to save the demons that made their lives a living hell to begin with.

Aina watched from the side, her expression far less playful now. She could almost see the struggle on Leonel's face as he wrestled with whether to do something rational or foolish.

"... How do you feel about The Empire?" Aina suddenly said.

"I don't like it." Leonel replied absentmindedly.

"And why is that?"

"They don't value lives. They treat their citizens like they can be plugged into risk assessment equations and deleted whenever they've overstayed their welcome. They don't keep tabs on the corruption of

their nobles, letting them do as they please. They monitor the every movement of their people as though they were cattle rather than human beings –.” ρ??∪???????

Leonel rattled off his thoughts almost like a machine.

Compared to people who didn't normally understand what they were feeling and why, Leonel's ability practically didn't allow him to do this. His every thought had a very logical reason behind it, at least logical to himself.

This was why his feelings for Aina were so incomprehensible. They were the one thing about himself that he truly couldn't explain. And, it was ironically the one thing that he didn't try too hard to explain either.

“Isn't the answer simple, then?” Aina said with a smile. “Who cares about anything else as long as you're standing in their way?”

Leonel snapped out of his rant, his eyes brightening as he shot a glance toward Aina.

“You're right.” Leonel grinned.

The bird in Leonel's palm had an amulet around its neck. Leonel didn't need to think much about it to understand what it was.

On the amulet, there was a key of some sort. Of course, this key wasn't physical but was rather drawn as an Art. This key represented the location coordinates of a teleportation reception pad.

If Leonel used this key as the core of a large scale teleportation array, he would be able to go directly toward where Mordred was.

‘It will take me quite a few hours to finish drawing this array, let's find a secluded place.’

Aina followed after Leonel quietly.

Though Leonel's reasons for doing this were quite simple and pure, Aina's couldn't be categorized as such. In her mind, the more chaos her world was in, the more battles she would be able to participate in and the faster she would be able to strengthen herself. This was what she cared about the very most.

Plus... she was absolutely certain that if The Empire was making such big moves, it was impossible for the hidden families to not be involved.

**

Earth's second moon, dubbed Camelot, was still the very same mess of torrential rain it had been when Leonel left it. However, this time, it had been splintered in a large scale war the likes of which it had not seen in a very long time.

After scouting out the moon, The Empire concluded that the best target would be the Demon Empire. From their understanding, Camelot's Kingdom had greatly weakened after losing six Knights of the Round Table and two Three Star Magi.

In such a vulnerable position, if The Empire swooped in and eliminated the threat that had been plaguing them for centuries... how many would willingly choose to leave the rulership of King Arthur?

Gazing toward the no-man's land of Camelot, a familiar young man with white-gold hair and shimmering emerald eyes stood amidst the heavy rain. However, every drop that approached him rebounded off of a golden barrier, becoming sparkling motes of light as they scattered.

Compared to when he was in the presence of his grandfather, Noah's demeanor was far more level headed and peaceful. Though he lacked the arrogance one would expect from a prince between his brow, he had a natural air of superiority about him, one ingrained down to his very bones.

"The meeting is beginning, Your Highness."

Noah nodded and made his way to an elaborate tent covered in soft, black bear fur.. It too seemed unblemished by the rain.

