

Descent 491

Chapter 491

Jessica's four-armed ape fell heavily to the ground, causing the battlefield to quake.

As though it was a cue, the stalemate broke. A barrage of attacks descended from all sides. If one was looking from afar, it would be hard to imagine that such a commotion was being caused for the sake of one young girl who had long since lost the ability to move.

Aina's situation only seemed to grow worse by the moment. Whereas before the foul black blood only shot from her mouth when she coughed, now, even when she was only gasping for breath, it blocked her air ways, causing her to subconsciously grasp at her throat even in her unconscious state.

The grotesque scars traveled down her neck, swallowing it in swelling that made one's heart churn. It felt like the curse was venting its hatred for having been humiliated, lashing out with a fervor it never had before.

Aina's current mind was in turmoil. All she could feel was pain.

Her every heartbeat felt as though the walls of her chest were pressing against a cage. It took so much effort just to circulate her blood once around her body, and with every passing moment, it only seemed to become more difficult. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

As though this wasn't bad enough, the blood she was circulating seemed contaminated. It ate away at her flesh, devouring her bones, and dug into her soul. It seemed that it wouldn't be satisfied until it took away everything she had left.

Aina was completely unaware of her surroundings, completely unaware that so many were fighting for and against her sake, all she knew was pain and darkness. It was the kind of pain that made one rather end it all than suffer for another second!

Noah and King Arthur clashed once again, their blades bending and whining beneath their strength.

Despite Noah's increased size, Arthur didn't back down for even a moment.

It had been too long since the King had met an opponent he could go all out against. He had reached the limits of Camelot a long time ago, so long ago, in fact, that many had already forgotten that he was a genius of battle. PANDA NOVEL

The longer he fought against Noah, the faster and swifter he seemed to become.

However, Noah responded in kind. Every improvement Arthur made, Noah seemed to match, whether it be in talent or him having held back from the very beginning.

The truth was that Noah knew that Arthur was the key to taking Camelot under their wing with ease. If he died, then everything would become far more difficult. It would be much easier if they could subdue this King without killing him, that would be for the best.

But, at the same time, compared to the threat Aina poised, Camelot was worth far less. At least! That was what Noah thought until he began to fight Arthur in earnest.

'It looks like! I have to get serious.' Noah thought. PANDA NOVEL

In that moment, Noah's body shrunk down explosively, dodging out of the way of Arthur's last strike.

The density of Noah's skin and bone shot up. It began to reflect like diamond beneath the high sun rays.

With a hard step forward, Noah's steps shook the earth with more force than even Jessica's ape.

Arthur's eyes sharpened. With his experience in battle, he didn't need to guess to know that he couldn't take this strike head on. It was simply too heavy. It wouldn't be a surprise if he ended up just as injured as Lancelot if he tried to.

‘They held back all this time’!’

Arthur was pissed, but there was nothing he could do about it. If he was being real with himself, he too held back. How could he not? How could they possibly fight wholeheartedly by the side of an army they thought was another potential enemy?

The issue was that it was clear that Noah and Jessica had held back far more than Arthur and his men had.

Jessica flicked out several more marbles in Mordred’s direction, each morphing into a large predator beast.

A large King of Serpents, a snow-white falcon, a silver lion, and finally a butterfly with a wingspan of over a meter.

The pressure that was suddenly applied to both Arthur and his daughter multiplied several times over. At the same time, the number of enemies Guinevere needed to face rose. There was simply no one of Camelot outside a few Knights and Mages that were worthy of fighting in a battle of this quality.

Though Earth had poor foundations, Camelot had even weaker foundations. It had to be remembered that they were born of tales passed down by humans of Earth. In those tales, the main focus were just a few characters. As a result, the majority of Camelot’s strength was likewise concentrated into these characters.

Now, Camelot was beginning to break free of the constraints of those stories. But, that left them in a state similar to when Earth’s Metamorphosis first descended. In fact, even to now, Arthur didn’t dare to use his ability in battle because he didn’t quite trust it.

After decades of battle and honing his skill, how could Arthur suddenly change his battle tactics and instincts on a dime? In fact, the same went for the other Knights and Mages as well.

This mental handicap left them subconsciously hampering themselves.

The worst part was that even if they got over this mental roadblock, how could they possibly face an army of a thousand talents who had been honing their battle techniques for over a year now?

Mordred's jaw clenched, her wrist flicking as she sent out spell after spell. She felt as though the stamina she needed to cast Mage Arts had dropped by more than tenfold. In fact, the time she needed also fell drastically.

With such improvement, she didn't believe that she couldn't protect Aina. She didn't believe that she wouldn't be able to stop these people that stood before her.

Her power had always been something that caused her to be ostracized. But today, she would allow it to display its true might!

Unfortunately, as much as Mordred wanted to believe this, in her heart of hearts, her soul of souls'! The gap was simply too wide.

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Noah's blade became heavy and light at his command. The variations in his attacks reached a new level.

To swing a two handed blade like it was nothing more than a feather, but for it to still carry the heaviness of a blunt weapon'! This was Noah's fighting style.

Arthur was continuously pushed to his back foot. Despite the fact Arthur was in the Fourth Dimension while Noah was not just yet, Noah was able to use his ability that had already entered the Fifth Dimension to suppress the King with ease.

This was the benefit of an offensive ability. Unlike Leonel who had trouble bridging this gap with just his own strength, Noah had no issue doing this. This was the power of a true Variant, this was the strength of Talent.

Unfortunately, Noah's abilities were even beyond just this. While he could use them offensively, he could use them for evasion and defense just as easily.

When all of these were fused into one, Arthur could hardly find a single span to breathe, let alone counter attack.

Arthur's jaw remained locked. He relied on his white lion armor to withstand much of the pressure his body couldn't. He coated his body in the Light Element, using [Light Body] to give himself a small boost in speed and attacking quickness.

Noah's saber swung down from above. The instant before it made contact with Arthur, Noah increased its density and weight by more than tenfold.

Arthur's knees bent beneath the pressure, his two hands gripping his sword with all his might. If it wasn't for the fact Excalibur was a Quasi Bronze treasure on the brink of becoming a true Bronze treasure, it would be a wonder if it survived for so long. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

"Give up." Noah said coldly.

By now, Noah's mind had calmed considerably. Having had time to observe Aina's state, it really seemed like she might die at any moment. Though he didn't know what was wrong with her, it, at the very least, seemed that she wouldn't be able to use such strength in the meanwhile.

Noah was content to watch Aina slowly die in this fashion. As such, his battle had become less about quickly capturing her, and more about displaying the might of The Empire all while not allowing anyone to help Aina.

If she could die, that would be the best. If not, he would settle for her being crippled.

Regardless of what truly happened, there would be a greater chance of his ideal outcome occurring as long as he continued to stall.

Across the battlefield, Mordred and Guinevere were dealing with the same issue. Since even they, as the weaker party, had been able to stop Noah and Jessica from capturing Aina, how much easier was it for them to do the same?

Mordred grew anxious as Aina's breath grew fainter. Her senses had been locked onto the young girl from the very beginning, but there was nothing she could do. Not to mention the fact she didn't have any healing spells in her arsenal, even if she did, how would she have the time to cast it?

"Dammit!" PANDA NOVEL

Jessica's expression remained cold and indifferent. She controlled her beast partners to maintain a safe distance while continuously harassing Mordred.

"You all have no idea what you're doing." Mordred spoke through gritted teeth. "If that boy finds out what's happening here, he'll lose his mind."

Mordred didn't know if Leonel's name held any weight in The Empire. She had seen Leonel's life so she knew that he was nothing but a commoner in their eyes, she also knew that his Gene Analysis Exam hadn't made him out to be one of the top tier talents of The Ascension Empire. So, she didn't bother to say Leonel's name. She only hoped to find an opening by speaking nonsense.

In truth, Mordred didn't know if Leonel could make a difference either. She had no idea what was happening on the other battlefield. All she knew from Leonel's life was that '¡ the boy really hated to lose. Behind that unassuming, carefree smile, there was a wild beast he hadn't let out even now.

But, if there was one person who could cause him to unleash it' ¡

Maybe in some ways, the beast inside Leonel was the only thing that could compare to the monster inside Aina.

Jessica paused slightly at Mordred's words.

Though she didn't say a name, there was one person on this planet that she suddenly remembered she had yet to lay eyes on. Didn't His Majesty say that the second Prince should be here? But why is it that he didn't appear on such an important battlefield? p??J??????

Noah kicked at Arthur's chest.

With his knees bent and his arms completely focused on blocking Noah's saber from above, there was simply nothing Arthur could do.

BANG!

It felt as though he had been hit by a charging rhino. Noah's legs carried so much weight behind them that even Arthur's armor couldn't block all of the force.

Arthur shot back like a ball out of a canon, his body leaving streaks of whistling wind in its wake.

"Arthur!"

Guinevere's shout crossed the battlefield. But, being pincerred from all sides, she couldn't take a step forward, let alone charge out on her own.

Mordred's gaze flickered, biting down on her teeth so hard the blood almost leaked from her gums.

Arthur struggled to stand. He could practically hear the cracking of his ribs beneath his strain. But he had to stand, he couldn't afford not to.

It had been a long time since Arthur felt this way. The reality of not being good enough hadn't come crashing down around him for a good long while now.

He realized at this moment that this was what he had been missing for so many years. Another mountain to climb, another peak to cross! Only like this could he avoid becoming that version of himself his wife almost abandoned and his daughter despised so.

"Alright, come on then."

Arthur's voice came out in a growl. In fact, it wasn't even because he was enraged, he simply couldn't muster up the strength to project his true voice. Every breath made it feel as though thousands of daggers were stabbing into his lungs.

'I guess I can only use it, then'!

Noah seemed to cross the distance between them in a single step, his saber swinging down as though a part of his body.

The strike was fierce and all encompassing. Maybe it was because Noah had run out of patience, but it seemed as though he had truly struck to kill this time. Without even the strength to lift his arms or even breathe properly, what chance did Arthur stand?

"No!" Guinevere and Mordred struggled with all their might. Even Lancelot tried to push himself up from the ground, ignoring his broken legs. But, it was all useless.

It was at the moment Arthur's neck was about to be severed that his body suddenly flickered with a blinding golden light. In a mind numbingly stupid feat, Arthur threw his sword to the side at the last instant.

CLANG!

Noah's brow furrowed.

His saber clashed against Arthur's armor. But'! there was no Arthur?

A streak of golden light zipped about as Arthur's armor and Excalibur crashed to the ground. It shot around in a circle as though it could hardly control itself before landing just before Arthur's thrown sword.

In one instant, there was a streak of gold, and in the next, a naked man appeared, wielding a sword.

“Dammit.”

Arthur grit his teeth.. He was king, but now his bare bottom was exposed for all to see. How was he going to live this one down?

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Arthur concentrated, eventually managing to make his lower half a mist of light while maintaining a corporeal upper body. Only then did he sigh a breath of relief.

His ability was far too difficult to control. It wasn't because its actual activation was difficult. That alone was as easy as breathing. It already felt as though it was a part of him.

However, there were two problems. The first was that he couldn't take any objects with him when he activated his ability.

Well, this wasn't entirely accurate. When it came to ordinary objects, if Arthur concentrated, he could turn them into flowing lights as well. He could even take these items with him as he entered his 'flowing light' state. The issue was that he didn't have time to concentrate so much on a single task in battle.

Beyond that, when it came to more substantial objects, the level of concentration needed increased explosively. The larger the object and the more valuable it was, the more difficult the process became.

At Arthur's current level of proficiency, only the most mundane items from the Third Dimension could be taken with him. He couldn't even think of taking even the weakest Fourth Dimensional existences, let alone his armor or Excalibur that were just mere half steps from the Fifth.

Such a reality made Arthur's unwillingness obvious.

If he wanted to use his ability, he would need to be stark naked. And, even if he was willing to do this, he would have to abandon his weapon most of the time.

However, aside from this, Arthur knew how truly frightening his ability could be if used properly. He was practically invulnerable, his affinity with the Light Element skyrocketed to the point that maybe only Leonel was above him in regards to citizens of Earth, and even that wasn't guaranteed. Also, in his flowlike state, he could practically ignore the previous injuries to his body. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

This last part was maybe the most useful at this moment. Since Arthur's body was practically entirely formed of light particles, its individual parts were far less reliant on each other. If he controlled his injuries to entering a 'flow' state, he wouldn't feel any pain. In addition, his healing accelerated in his flow state.

Still, all of this led to his second problem';

He was too fast. So fast that he couldn't even properly control his own body. It made it almost too difficult to battle in this state.

His mind simply couldn't keep up with his movements.

However, Noah didn't need to know this. Arthur just needed an opening. Just one opening to injure the Prince enough to force him into a retreat. As long as he could do this, then they could stabilize Aina's situation and hopefully find another solution to deal with The Empire.

What Arthur didn't expect though, was that even as he was preparing to fight and even as Noah was sizing him up'; that the battlefield would suddenly freeze.

As though it had been plunged into an icy hell, their hearts all came to a grinding halt in that very instant.

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~Moments ago~

Leonel shot through the skies on his shuttle, leaving a trail of gold in his wake. The little mink snuggled cozily in his hair, a light black fog emitting from its body.

The good thing about Camelot was that he didn't need to worry about Invalids. Maybe it was because of their origin, but as the people of Camelot awakened to their abilities, none of them failed. This might very well have been another hidden reward of a Mythological Zone.

Right now, Earth was indeed in dire need of population. They hardly had a few million people remaining.

Of course, Camelot's appearance might not even double their current populace, but such an influx of talents couldn't be underestimated.

As things stood at the moment, these people of Camelot wouldn't be useful in a short time. But, if there were some changes to the overall political climate of Camelot, they wouldn't be a long ways away from becoming assets.

'The situation in the Demon Empire has been stabilized. If White City committed as much manpower as I think they did, they're likely not far away from being finished. The only remaining variable is City Lord White and her power level.'

Unfortunately, though Leonel was likely more informed about Terrain than most others of Earth, he was still lacking in such details. Though he understood how strength levels functioned in the Fourth Dimension now, that wouldn't help him very much unless he could personally lay eyes on City Lord White. ρ???)???)???)

'I should have enough trump cards to deal with the situation. But it's odd, The Empire's army' ¦ why haven't I run into them yet?'

Leonel shook his head, a light smile suddenly coating his face as he thought of something.

'Aina's birthday should be tomorrow' ¦ Just a couple hours, actually' ¦ I wonder if she'll like her present.'

Leonel's eyes glowed. He had given Aina a lot of space in the past few months, allowing her the time she needed to work through her emotions.

Though he considered himself to have high emotional intelligence, he was still new to romantic relationships. His entire mind was filled with idealized versions of love he had seen in those vintage movies his dad always made him watch.

But, those movies always ended when the guy got the girl. Why did none of them ever explain what to do after that?

‘Oh, that should be the’! hm?’

Leonel’s mind went blank.

He saw a massive battlefield, filled with corpses, many of which didn’t seem to have a single ounce of blood remaining within them.

However, this wasn’t what shocked Leonel. There were all sorts of people with all sorts of abilities. It wasn’t too hard to believe that someone might have a blood leeching ability. What shocked him was the fact that he could see what remained of White City’s armies still retreating into the distance, turning tail from the battlefield as fast as they could.

Leonel could easily pick them out even without having participated in the battle. The black robes accented by white soft armor was too easy for him to pick out with his senses.

But’! If White City was retreating, why was there still a massive battle going on down below?

Leonel’s gaze swept through, his mind working in overdrive as he tried to piece together what he was seeing.

He first laid eyes on Guinevere who had become the core of a group rebuffing what looked like a bunch of youths with astonishing strength.

Then there was King Arthur who had’! shed his armor? Where were his feet and legs? How had they become rays of light?

Mordred? She was battling another youth who seemed to be a beast master?

Where did all these young elites come from?

Leonel's gaze narrowed with understanding. As expected, according to his previous analysis, The Empire wouldn't have taken Camelot very seriously and would use it as a training ground for their promising talents.

So it seemed that they had repelled White City but broke down due to infighting in the end anyway?

But even if they wanted to fight, would they really choose to do so right here and right now? Something must have sparked it? What could have'

Leonel froze.

In that moment, the whole world seemed to vanish. In his vision, only a petite young woman madly convulsing remained.

Leonel's heart stopped beating, his breath becoming as shallow as a dead man's.

He watched as Jessica tried to direct her beasts around Mordred, forcing the Demon Empress to block them. He watched as Noah blocked Arthur's path toward healing the young woman. He watched as Nile and the others tried to press past Guinevere's troop.

And then, he saw red.

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Wild fluctuations of red-violet aura surged around Leonel. A towering tornado of Force swirled around his body, bronze Runes flickering into existence across his skin.

The little mink woke from his nap, low growls standing its hair on end.

At that moment, everyone's sights focused toward the same direction. With how high up Leonel's shuttle had been, he was nothing but a faint black dot in the sky. But, there was no denying the surge of energy coming from that direction. Even those without the ability to see so far could feel the changes.

Leonel's shuttle morphed into a surfboard, streaking down from the clouds as though a meteor crashing toward the earth.

By the time he got in range for those without sensory abilities to see him clearly, the cold stoicism on his face was all anyone could seem to focus on. It felt as though it was a dam holding back the raging waters of his fury. Beneath that placid exterior, there was a volcano on the verge of eruption.

Seeing Leonel's appearance, Mordred was among the few who sighed a breath of relief. She knew that if Leonel was here, then that must mean that the situation on the other battlefield had already been dealt with. And, judging by his current appearance, it was also clear that he already had a minor grasp of exactly what was happening here.

'Isn't he'! descending too fast, though?'

Mordred couldn't help but worry. She knew how deep Leonel's feelings for Aina were. In such a situation, she couldn't even be certain that he would care much about his own safety. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Just as Mordred was about to try to warn Leonel, his surfboard came to a grinding halt, causing her heart to stutter.

The sheering forces of such abrupt changes in speed would be no different to crashing into the ground. Was Leonel trying to kill himself?!

However, what was even more shocking than this was the fact that Leonel seemed completely unaffected. In fact, before anyone could wonder why he was still 20 meters above the ground, his surfboard vanished, leaving him to plummet to the ground on his own.

At that moment, Nile finally awoke from his stupor. He didn't know who this person was, but judging by the way his gaze had been locked onto Aina from start to finish, Nile could already guess what this unknown entity's goal was.

"Stop him! Long ranged units, fire!"

Nile had already been directing a small troop against Guinevere and the remaining five Knights of the Round Table. So, hearing his new orders now, the transition was seamless.

However, it was as though Leonel couldn't even see the arrows streaking toward him. He hardly said a word, yet a strong current of Earth Elemental energies formed a bronze bell around him. PANDA NOVEL

PENG! PENG! PENG!

The barrage didn't even stand a chance. Let alone cracking Leonel's defenses, they rebounded away without suspense.

BANG!

Leonel crashed heavily into the ground. However, the sight of him breaking several bones or becoming a pile of mush never occurred.

A small crater splintered out beneath his weight. But, Leonel had hardly felt his two feet touch earth before he shot forward.

For a moment, he looked no different from King Arthur. His body almost became a streak of golden light, blazing a trail past Nile and his men to appear beside Aina in a flash.

No one could react. Not a single soul could even comprehend what was happening. PANDA NOVEL

How had a single person managed to complete what so many of them had been trying to for the last several minutes?

Leonel fell to his knees beside Aina's convulsing body, his gaze finally giving way to emotion. Watching her in this state, he almost felt as though her pain was his own. The pain of opening his Lineage Factor, the torture he had put his hands through over the past months, even those savage beatings he had taken at the hands of Lamorak' ¦ none of those things could match the pain he was feeling now.

He didn't care about the foul odor coming from Aina's body, nor did he care that her face was completely unrecognizable beneath the inflamed scars that had begun to travel down her neck.

He slid a hand beneath her head, hoping that the tilt would help her expel more of the black blood without her choking on it.

“What do I do? What's wrong with her?”

Leonel's first instinct was to cast as many [Grand Heal]'s as he could. But, his instincts told him doing so would be useless.

[*Ping*]

[Replying to Seed, One Star Mono-Layered Curse detected. According to analysis, Curse was implemented during infancy, making it near the strength of a Four Star Tetra-Layered Curse in efficacy]

Leonel's pupils flickered.

A curse? He didn't know anything about them. He wasn't sure of what the nomenclature meant and what the difference between a One Star Mono-Layered Curse and a Four Star Tetra-Layered Curse was. But, this did confirm one thing to him: Aina's scars weren't so simple.

Before, he thought that the reason the Cleansing Waters managed to help their inflammation was due to the fact it had cured them of their infections.

To a layman, Aina's scars looked like infected wounds that might burst with pus at any moment. In fact, Leonel thought this was the case as well. Cleansing Water had the ability to rid the body of impurities, refresh the mind, and heal minor injuries. As far as Leonel was aware, anyway.

He never truly felt anything particularly special about the Cleansing Waters, especially since his supply was so abundant. It wasn't until Aina spoke of its specialness that he finally raised an eyebrow.

But now, it was exactly what Aina needed.

The Segmented Cube appeared. Under Leonel's control, streams of water exited and flowed into Aina's nostrils and lips.

The effect was slow and hardly noticeable, but with Leonel's senses, he easily picked up on them. Though the impact wasn't as great as Leonel hoped, it was still a small light at the end of the tunnel.

Leonel's gaze suddenly sharpened.

With calm movements, he sent Aina into the bathhouse of the Segmented Cube. If she was immersed in water, the process would be much easier.

"Take care of her, Blackstar."

Leonel sent the little mink in after her and slowly rose, his cold demeanor returning.

He looked over his shoulder, his eyes locking onto Nile's legion.

"Which one of you is responsible for what happened?"

The voice was emotionless and soft, but those who heard it felt as though they had been thrust into the pits of hell.

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Leonel's gaze locked onto Nile who had begun to approach him with their group.

Nile's jaw clenched, his body tensing. It felt like a python was slowly constricting around his body. This sort of aura, he had only ever sensed it from Prince Noah. He didn't understand how such presence could also come from a young man who seemed to be at least a few years his junior.

However, Nile remained standing. Other than his slightly abnormal breathing, one would never think that anything was wrong with him.

"This is the official business of The Empire and His Highness, Prince Fawkes. This isn't something you should meddle in."

Leonel slowly turned to face Nile. "Is that the question I asked?"

Indifference. Disregard.

One could easily see by Leonel's wrist that much like Aina, he too was a citizen of The Empire. But, unlike Aina who had chosen to acquiesce to their demands for the sake of not splintering relations, Leonel simply did not care.

"I asked you a very simple question."

Leonel took a step forward. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

"Who is responsible?"

Nile stood, his spine shivering. He gripped his spear as tightly as he could, trying to calm himself. But, despite the endless battles he had experienced, he couldn't seem to find any sense of peace beneath Leonel's glare.

It was fine for someone of Camelot to not understand the strength of The Empire, but Leonel, as a person who had grown up within its walls and been indoctrinated since birth shouldn't be so ignorant. It should be almost impossible for anyone indoctrinated to such an extent to defect, especially not if they were so talented.

Anyone with Leonel's level of talent was most definitely a Five Star Professional. Such existences received the best schooling and had the deepest understanding of The Empire. Their deification of the Fawkes Royal Family should practically be ingrained into their bones.

Yet, Leonel didn't even blink an eye when The Empire was mentioned. His breathing didn't hitch, his heart didn't skip a beat, his eyes didn't even blink.

At that moment, Nile didn't deny it any longer. If he opened his mouth and told Leonel that The Emperor himself was responsible, there was no doubt that Leonel would brandish his spear toward the Capital.

"It was me. I gave the order for her capture."

At that moment, a calm voice sounded. PANDA NOVEL

Such a voice should have soothed the atmosphere, but the brunt of it held an aura that soared, colliding with Leonel's.

For a moment, the muffled sounds of two clashing titans reverberated through the air.

However, it was for just a moment. Because upon hearing such words, Leonel didn't breathe a word.

As though a beast released from its chain, violent winds surged around Leonel's foot as he planted on the ground hard, shooting toward Noah, a red-violet color flickering in his gaze.

"Prince!"

Nile's eyes widened. He forced his body to move, trying to intercept Leonel's path.

Leonel almost seemed to look through Nile. It was as though the latter hadn't blocked his path in the slightest, he might as well have been no different from a gust of wind.

"The Prince isn't someone you can casually cross!" Nile roared, but from an objective party's vantage point, he seemed to be trying to shout his fear away. ρ??(?????)

Those who were just under his command, even to this point, didn't seem to have the ability to move in the slightest. Even after seeing through to Leonel's goal, they felt that their movements were sluggish and uncoordinated.

Nile brandished his spear, piercing it forward with all his might.

Crackling lightning flickered within his irises, dancing within them and leaving arcs of blue in their wake.

His spear seemed to react in kind, its tip crackling with the same fierceness. Nile didn't believe that the bronze bell that surrounded Leonel could deflect his strike just as easily. But, what was shocking was that the illusory bell dissipated just when Leonel entered the range of Nile's blade.

"Piss off." Leonel said coldly, his fist whipping forward.

The sound of his bones popping and his muscles stretching resounded.

In one moment, Leonel seemed like just a single man. But in the next, he was like the scorching sun.

Niles couldn't believe that Leonel would try to meet his spear with a bare hand. He had never seen such a foolish battle tactic. Even if Leonel was a master of hand to hand combat, shouldn't he at least use gloves to cover his flesh?

However, what truly happened left Nile at a complete loss. Just when it seemed that Leonel's fist would be split in two, his spear completely shattered.

In that moment, he felt as though someone was looking at him from above, a gaze of indifference and disdain coloring their features. To use a spear before a God' ¦ what was he thinking?

All thoughts of resistance crumbled. He couldn't even react before Leonel's fist tore a hole through his collarbone and shoulder. The strike was so fierce and swift that he wasn't even thrown back.

He looked down at his barely attached arm, the pain still not having traveled to his brain just yet. But, by then, Leonel had already shot by him and appeared before Noah.

Leonel's strike was so fast that not even the faintest hint of blood could be found on him. Yet, the punch he sent toward Noah seemed to be far beyond the first.

The world seemed to revolve around Leonel. Scenes of mellow springs, harsh winters, blazing summers and vibrant falls whirled around him.

Universal Force fell down from above, illuminating Leonel in a golden halo that seemed to fuse perfectly with his violet bronze aura.

Noah reacted quickly, sending a fist forward with his free hand. Leonel was simply too fast, he didn't have the time to swing his saber or lower its weight. However, his body had already been refined to the point of rivaling diamond during his battle with Arthur. He didn't believe that Leonel's body could be stronger than his own.

Unfortunately' ¦ What was a diamond, a Third Dimensional rock, in comparison to a body refined to the standards of a Fourth Dimensional metal?

BANG!

Noah winced. He felt his skin fracture in several places before an unimaginable strength traveled through his arm and into his body.

He was sent flying tens of meters, his body crashing into the ground and leaving a half a meter deep trench as it was dragged along.

“The pain she experienced’ | I’ll make you suffer tenfold.”

Leonel’s back stood as straight as a javelin, vibrant energies swirling around him.

His bronze hair sounded like snapped whips in the wind, a radiant halo shimmering above his head. His violet-red eyes locked onto the Prince, a deep, murderous aura exuding from him.

Prince of an Empire? He didn’t care.. He would make him pay.

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“Prince!” Jessica’s countenance shifted.

She hadn’t believed that the difference between Leonel and Noah would be so stark. But, by the time she was ready to make a move, Mordred had blocked her path.

“I already warned you what would happen if you continued down this path. He isn’t a person that likes to kill, so don’t force him to. It’s better if you let him vent his rage. If you try to interfere, I can’t guarantee that you’ll come out in one piece.”

Jessica almost couldn’t believe the ridiculous nature of Mordred’s words. Her cold expression cracked, giving way to a slight hint of rage.

“Let me through!”

Mordred waved her wand, causing several black tendrils of darkness to shoot up from the ground, obstructing the path of Jessica’s beasts.

The aura around Leonel soared. The pillar of golden light enveloping him made it seem as though he was a chosen. His rage was the universe's rage. If he wanted to someone to suffer, they would. Nothing more, nothing less.

Noah stood from the ground, a deep frown coloring his face as he looked toward the fractures trailing up his arm. Normal skin wouldn't fracture like this, but he had changed the chemical structure of his own. Though it made it far harder, it also gained an added brittleness it didn't have before. PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Usually, it would be impossible to reach the threshold necessary to crack his skin. Yet, Leonel had done it with a single casual punch.

Noah's jaw steeled, his saber raising into the air. He didn't think that he would run into someone so powerful here.

By now, he was more than 90% certain that this person was in fact Leonel. He didn't believe that there was anyone else on this moon who could have such strength and also be a member of The Empire.

And that aura! Only the Royal Family had it, only those with Fawkes blood running through their veins could display such presence.

However, even though Noah was almost certain of this, he didn't voice his conjectures. He had his own pride.

To weasel his way out of this situation by revealing his identity would be something beneath his dignity.

And, even if he was willing to do such a debasing thing, Noah still didn't know much about Leonel. For all he knew, Leonel was already aware of his identity and didn't even care about the fact they were of the same blood. PANDA NOVEL

The only person Noah would lower his head to was his grandfather. As for anyone else!

They could taste his saber!

Noah grew explosively in size, soon reaching to just over three meters. Though he wasn't as the five meter height he reached when battling City Lord White, the density of his bones, blood and muscle couldn't even be compared.

This was his true strongest state.

The sound of slashing winds circled around him, his blue blade radiating with a glow.

"You've stepped into the peak of the Four Seasons Realm." Noah said coldly.

By his demeanor, he was clearly not asking a question. Rather, he was simply stating a fact. But, just by his mere actions, Jessica and the others were stunned. p??U??????

Noah wasn't a person who spoke in battle, he was a person who hardly spoke at all. Yet, he was actually doing exactly that now?

"Though your Fist Force is powerful, it's only the product of someone else's understanding. I'll show you the true Four Seasons Realm."

Noah's indifferent voice faded beneath the sound of howling winds. At that moment, the temperature plummeted, an icy chill seeping into all of their bodies.

In the beginning, Noah thought that Leonel's Fist Force had been comprehended by himself. This reality left him feeling somewhat stifled. To succeed in such a thing at such a young age was far beyond anything Noah had ever seen before.

But, it was after Noah's fist came into contact with Leonel's that he knew that this wasn't quite right. Somehow, Leonel's Four Seasons Realm seemed above the Second Tier comprehension, but below the self-comprehended Third Tier. This gave the illusion that it was more powerful than it really was.

That said' ; even though Noah hadn't reached Completion of the Four Seasons Realm and could only embody Winter' ;

He had relied on himself.

Noah shot forward, his icy blue blade carrying with it the heart of winters' past.

Leonel stood amidst the harsh winds. He could even feel his own Universe Force weakening beneath Noah's.

Images of a harsh winter landscape enveloped the battlefield. The sun in the sky seemed to dim and the land beneath their feet seemed to quickly become covered in ice.

Leonel sank into a boxer's stance.

He didn't keep his spear hidden as a trump card. He didn't ignore his bow for the sake of making a point. He used his fists simply because he wanted to feel Noah's flesh deform beneath his knuckles, he wanted to savor the cracking of his bones, the bleeding of his flesh.

They say that every Dragon has a reverse scale! It was just unfortunate that Noah had yet to realize that he had touched Leonel's.

Leonel's right hand hung up by his chin, his left leaning forward. Just when Noah's icy domain seemed to envelop him completely, he moved again, the violet-red of his gaze flickering.

Leonel's left jabbed. It was a movement without the slightest wasted effort. Images of a winged swordsman perfectly matching his footwork to his attacks played in Leonel's mind, allowing his body to slide into the Style seamlessly.

A halo of Universe Force coated Leonel's fist as he met Noah's blade.

All the air of the battlefield seemed to surge toward the two. Barely a foot of space separated Noah's blade from the flesh of Leonel's fist, but neither could seem to move forward even another inch.

SHUUU! BANG!

The air concentrated into a single point before exploding outward with a raging ferocity. The accumulating snow was blasted away, leaving a crater of brown soil around them.

Noah's emerald eyes looked down at Leonel, his white gold hair whipping beneath the aftermath of their clash.

Leonel looked up to meet his gaze, a fury hidden deep within their indifference.

Noah coughed suddenly, blood leaking from his lips as his arm trembled.

Chapter 497

When he met Leonel's fist, Noah felt as though he had crashed into an immovable wall. All the strength he placed into his strike seemed to reflect back, reverberating through out his body in an unbridled fashion.

In this form, he concentrated all of his strength into power. As a result, his inner organs were completely unprotected, leaving him suffering the brunt of a strike he wasn't quite prepared for.

Noah could tell that his use of Universe Force was beyond Leonel's. Yet, their overall strength was too far apart. Noah didn't know what Leonel's ability was, but at this moment, he had no choice but to believe that Leonel had a body related ability even better than his own.

'No, it isn't that simple. He's too fast, more than three or four times as fast as I am in this form. And, instead of using the speed to whittle me down slowly, he can instead perfectly fuse his movement with his attack, giving his punches far more strength than they otherwise would have.'

Noah shuddered when he had this thought.

An elite fighter would be able to bring out 80-90% of their full strength consistently, only monsters would be able to touch upon 95% and above consistently. But, even the greatest masters shouldn't be able to guarantee touching 100%.

Yet, if Noah's calculations were correct, let alone using 100% of his strength, Leonel was closer to 200 or even 300%!pANDA-NOVEL.COM

'This is' a Martial Art!

By this point, Noah realized that this perfect fusion of speed and attack had to be a Style. There was no other explanation. But, Noah had never run across a Style so perfect for a person. Such a boost to strength' it was unimaginable!

Unfortunately for Noah, Leonel seemed to have no intention of stopping. The instant his left jab blocked Noah's strike, his hips had already spun, winding with a fear inducing amount of torque.

Leonel's body was like a streak of light, crossing into Noah's attack range and hooking a punch at his torso.

Leonel didn't seem to care that Noah stood a meter taller than him. Even if he was ten meters taller, Leonel would cut him down just the same.

Noah's torso flexed, the armors he wore radiating with a faint light. But, Leonel's right fist continued as though he didn't sense a thing. pANDA NOVEL

BANG!

“Oof.”

Noah felt as though all the air in his lungs had been knocked out at once.

He swung his saber to the side, trying to get Leonel to back off. But, because of its length, the blade was effectively a mid-ranged weapon. In such close quarters, its flexibility was lacking. Leonel simply shifted to the side, rolling his shoulder to block the flat of Noah's blade. His movements held a natural air to them, interrupting the Prince's attempt.

Leonel fists suddenly accelerated. His form was textbook as though he was perfectly reflecting the dreams of all orthodox boxing.

A quick three punch combo left shocking dents in Noah's armor. From afar, it looks as though three cannonballs had crashed into his torso, shredding his inner organs to minced meat. But, the armor recovered quickly, in the blink of an eye, it was as though nothing had happened at all. p??(?????)

Unfortunately for Noah, Leonel's barrage didn't come to a stop. The fists rained down with such speed and quickness that pain was all Noah could feel. Even his attempts at brandishing his saber ended in vicious counters that left his right arm practically useless.

If Noah didn't know better, he would think that Leonel's ability was to see the future. Even before his muscles could twitch, Leonel's fist would interrupt his next attempted movement, leaving his mouth practically foaming with blood.

"Your Highness!" Jessica's cold, aloof expression finally collapsed completely.

Sensing Jessica's agitation, the four armed white ape seemed to have a breakthrough, charging past Mordred's blockade.

A sharp gash appeared on its back, leaving its white fur matted in blood. But, it didn't seem to notice, its enraged roar bearing down on Leonel from his back.

"Leonel!" Mordred shouted out a warning.

She was a veteran of battle. She could tell that the difference between Noah and Leonel wasn't so large. It was just that Leonel's combat effectiveness had gained him the upper hand. Mordred knew that this was reliant on Leonel's ability. But, just as easily as Leonel gained the initiative, he could just as easily lose it.

The reality though, was that Mordred still underestimated Leonel.

Leonel didn't even turn back to the ape. He pretended as though it wasn't approaching him at all.

Noah tried to retreat, but between the two of them, who had the greater speed? And, with Leonel's ability to predict Noah's movements before they even came to fruition, what chance did he have of distancing himself from Leonel's fists?

Noah's armor became like a field of fallen meteors. Leonel's movements were so perfect and flawless that even the strength of his punches didn't seem to be enough to give Noah any momentum to retreat.

Leonel stuck to him as though dancing to a rhythm.

Every time the ape came close enough to attack, Leonel's hips would shift and his feet would shuffle, his barrage of attacks forcing Noah's back toward the infuriated ape.

Noah's eyes lost focus, his body seizing. Whatever control he had over his ability faded, causing his figure to shrink.

Leonel's rain of fists was relentless. His cold indifferent gaze flashed with a ruby red. It felt as though he couldn't hit this Prince enough, as though no amount of pain Noah suffered would appease him.

He didn't even care about the expenditure of his Dream Force. He had long since activated his Dreamscape Battle Sense in full force. There was nothing more he wanted in this world than to bury this bastard.

"Please! Please stop!"

Jessica's voice was hardly rose over the sound of Leonel's fists hitting Noah. Even as his own blood coated his knuckles, he hardly reacted in the slightest.

“Please, Leonel! He’s your cousin! You share a grandfather! STOP!”

Chapter 498

Leonel’s endless barrage of fists suddenly came to a grinding halt, his indifferent gaze flickering.

Unconscious, Noah finally fell heavily to the ground, his breathing short and hurried. Maybe he could consider himself lucky to be in such a state, or it would be impossible to measure the amount of pain he would be in.

At that moment, the roaring white ape finally got an opening to attack, but it seemed to lose its will when Leonel swept a gaze over it. It felt a heavy gravity field envelop it, making its knees tremble.

Leonel frowned, shifting his senses toward Jessica who was still in a state of agitation.

Ignoring everything else, Leonel’s palm flipped over to reveal the flat disk-like dictionary.

“Who is my grandfather?”

[*Ping*]pANDA-N0VEL.COM

The dictionary flickered, causing Leonel’s eyes to narrow. It had been a long time since one of his questions caused a recording to appear. Usually, if Leonel didn’t want to watch a mechanical version of his father, he had to go back and watch the lessons his old man left on Force Crafting. But, it seemed he wouldn’t have to this time.

“Ah, I never expected you to ask this question.”

Leonel’s father appeared with his usual carefree demeanor, scratching the back of his head. Eventually, he pushed his glasses up and looked forward.

“I know you wouldn’t care enough to ask on your own, so it must have been some busybody flapping their gums a bit too much. Ai, what a headache.”

Leonel didn’t seem to realize that the entire battlefield had focused on him. In fact, the others felt their knees go weak, any surprise they felt for Leonel being a member of the Royal Family being washed away by the sight of the man in the projection.

It wasn’t because they recognized who this man was but because’! just his projection made them feel as though they were standing in the presence of a wild beast. But, what was maybe more shocking was the fact that Leonel seemed completely unaffected. pANDA N0VEL

Leonel had lived with his father all his life, so how could he possibly notice the kind of effect he had on others? Just his mere projection was like a strangle hold on all those who saw it.

It felt like his words were accusing them of wrongdoing, as though it was their fault Leonel was asking this question and that he now had to answer it.

Noah coughed violently at Leonel’s feet. But, simply had no strength to stand. Even knowing that Leonel was looming over him, there was nothing he could do.

His eyes locked onto the projection. He didn’t know who this man was, but considering his resemblance to Leonel’! was this the uncle his grandfather had said was far beyond what his mother could compare to?

“Forget it. Your grandfather is dead.”

Leonel’s expression flickered. He suddenly realized that this recording must be about his other grandfather, unless Jessica had really been lying, that is. p??J??????

As far as he was aware, Emperor Fawkes wasn’t dead, so this could only mean that his father wasn’t talking about him.

Still, Leonel didn't react much to this. His grandparents had never been in his life, so one way or another, he had always assumed they were dead. Like his mother before he had memories of her, he didn't care much.

Well' ¦ He didn't care much until he saw a flicker of rage in his father's expression.

In all his life, Leonel had never seen his father become angry. Much of his own personality came from his father, the same cheery, charming smile they shared obviously originated from him.

There was only one time Leonel could even remember his father displaying any emotion other than carefreeness, and that was when he spoke about treating Familiars like friends.

Back then, Leonel's father had been adamant that he must treat his Metal Spirit well. But, even then, though his father had formed a murderous aura' ¦ it wasn't rage. It wasn't this kind of visceral gut punch this projection was reflecting now.

The temperature of the surroundings seemed to plummet.

"This part of the recording will only trigger if you've mentioned Scarlet Star Force and your grandfather, while also reaching a certain standard of strength. It seems that you haven't just yet, so this is all I will say."

The recording flickered and disappeared, leaving Leonel staring coldly at the silver disk in his hand.

His father's words were short and brisk, but they already made his already foul mood worse.

Jessica panicked. When she sensed the shift in Leonel's mood, she thought that he would think she had been lying. Though she didn't know what that treasure of Leonel's was, she could tell that Leonel trusted it.

But, it was also impossible for Emperor Fawkes to be dead. Just saying such a thing was tantamount to questioning the Royal Family's Sovereignty, not that Jessica dared to bring up such a thing now.

‘It must be his paternal grandfather that recording is speaking about. That’s right, I just need him to ask about his mater ‘‘‘

Before Jessica could finish her thought, Leonel had already spoken again, his voice carrying a chill several times more potent than the last.

“Is Emperor Fawkes my grandfather?”

[*Ping*]

To Leonel’s surprise, another recording formed soon after the first. This time, his father’s presence was much more casual. Even still, Jessica and others felt as though their bodies were being constricted to the point where even breathing became difficult.

“Oh, you finally found out about that old fart, huh?”

Those members of The Empire choked on their own spit. This was The Emperor they were talking about. Who dared to call him an old fart?!

“Gervaise is indeed your grandfather. Only after meeting him did I learn where your mother gets her hard-headedness. Now that I think about it, you’re stubborn like that too, aiya, my precious gene pool’;! I should consider getting myself a concubine or something’;!”

Leonel’s father unwittingly shivered and looked over his shoulder as though checking for something. Only then did he sigh a breath of relief, feeling pleased with himself as though he had gotten away with something.

“ ‘;! Still, be careful of that old fart. His ambitions reach far and family isn’t his main priority’;! Whatever, he’s still your grandfather.. Do as you please, I guess.”

Maybe when someone learned that they secretly had a great background, they would be ecstatic. All their worries and hardships would now be coming to an end and they could finally live out a life of peace.

However, this wasn't how Leonel reacted in the slightest.

The first thing he thought of when he learned the truth was the number of people who had died when the Metamorphosis began.

No, died wasn't the proper term. They had been sacrificed. For the sake of having an easier path of development and having less Invalids to deal with, these people had been discarded like trash by this Emperor that also happened to be his grandfather.

Leonel didn't particularly feel abandoned by his grandfather either. Another human reaction would be to feel as though his existence had been ignored for so long. If his grandfather knew he had another grandson, why didn't he come into contact with him sooner? But, once again, Leonel didn't feel like this.

Leonel could tell from all the clues that his father likely originated from a higher Dimensional world. If he couldn't piece this together, then whatever worth his calculative mind had would be next to zero.
PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Due to understanding this, he knew that the relation between his family members was likely quite strained and odd. By convention, a son-in-law should respect his father-in-law, but it was difficult to do so if the son-in-law's standing was so much higher.

Things might be fine if Gervaise Fawkes was a normal man, but he was the Emperor of maybe the most talented fledgling world in existence. He was used to lording over people and having unmatched status, so what kind of oddities would it cause if his daughter suddenly married someone above him?

The first thought that someone would have in this situation was that Emperor Fawkes might use the Morales Clan to climb to a larger stage. But, judging by his father's demeanor, Leonel could tell that he actually had respect for his grandfather.

Knowing his father, it was impossible for him to respect someone who would use such means to climb the social ladder. This likely meant that not only did his grandfather likely have a demeanor that at the very least treated Leonel's father as an equal, it also meant that it was even more likely that he treated Leonel's father as someone beneath him.

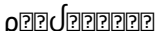
If those of the Dimensional Verse knew that a man of the Third Dimension had dared to treat a core member of the Morales Clan in such a way? Who knows how they would react? PANDA NOVEL

The Morales Clan was so powerful that even an infant could likely eradicate a Fourth Dimensional world on its own, let alone a Third Dimensional world which Earth had been at the time of their meeting.

Thinking to this point, Leonel suddenly felt he understood the odd relationship between his father and grandfather.

If Emperor Fawkes really cared about using the Morales family and Leonel's father was in the way of this, he would have simply contacted Leonel after his father had left. Leonel wasn't a fool, since his father could leave both of the family's heirlooms with him, it meant that his standing in the Morales family wouldn't be small in the future either. But, obviously, this hadn't happened.

However, this didn't make Leonel suddenly warm up to this man he had been indoctrinated to worship since his youth, nor did his emotions toward The Empire change because of it.

Leonel sent a glance toward Noah, their gazes locking. He could see the same cold, indifference in the latter's eyes. It didn't seem to matter that most of his bones were broken and that he couldn't even stand if he wanted to. 

Noah didn't say a word even as he met Leonel's look. There was no pleading, no smugness, no expectation. He was simply there. It seemed that whether Leonel chose to cripple him or kill him right then and there, he wouldn't flinch in the slightest.

Jessica panicked again seeing that Leonel hadn't retreated.

"We didn't know that she was related to you!"

Jessica felt helpless. This was the only thing she could say.

They truly hadn't known about Aina, the Emperor never said anything about her to them. They were only aware of Leonel's appearance here due to Emperor Fawkes in the first place. Since he hadn't said anything about Aina, how could they know?

But, the argument was feeble and Jessica knew it.

A Brazinger was a Brazinger in the end. Even if they knew Aina was related to Leonel, there was no guarantee that they wouldn't have made a move anyway. And, beyond that, this was more than just a matter of attacking a perceived enemy, it was also about attacking someone who was very likely the reason you won this battle to begin with.

Even if Noah had stopped holding back and unleashed his full power like he had against Leonel, it was unlikely that City Lord White would have been defeated if not for Aina. So, what was their excuse for this, exactly?

Leonel didn't respond to Jessica's words. In truth, he still wasn't aware of everything that had happened in this place. So, he obviously wasn't aware that Aina was the reason they had won the battle. That said, the fact that she had risked herself fighting for The Empire only to be treated like this in the end'

This thought alone was enough to fuel his rage.

Leonel turned and walked away, breaking free of Noah's gaze without a word. He crossed the battlefield and entered the Segmented Cube that remained waiting for him.

He didn't want to bear the burden of killing a family member. But, more importantly than that, he wouldn't be able to bear doing such a thing until he understood how his mother would feel about such a thing.

For now, he would let Noah go.

With Leonel's disappearance, a heavy fog that hung over the battlefield seemed to dissipate.

Arthur coughed lightly, sliding back into his armor to hide away his naked body.

‘Tch, that boy sure is a demon when he gets pissed off.’ Arthur shook his head, his lips curling. ‘And here I thought I finally met one of those beauty is more than skin deep unicorns. To think that the girl he fawns over so much is actually such a beauty, what a sly fox.’

Arthur looked around at the mess the battlefield had become and shook his head. It seemed he would have to deal with all the heavy lifting.

‘

At this very moment, news of City Lord White’s death had already traveled to the ears of the Keafir family.

Chapter 500

When Leonel walked into the bathhouse, his rage flared again. If it wasn’t because Aina was in such a bad situation and needed him by her side, he might have run out again to give Noah an even more savage beating.

Noah might have been his cousin, but the feeling Leonel had for Aina far outweighed whatever weak familial ties he had with him. Noah couldn’t magically gain a higher regard in his heart just off the strength of their connection.

While Noah was just a lost family member he had only just learned about, Aina was a woman Leonel deeply cared about. As far as he was concerned, she was his other half. Only his father and mother could hold a comparable place.

The current Aina was far better than she had been just moments ago, but the struggle she was facing was still present. If it wasn’t for Little Blackstar using ropes of darkness to hold her in place, she might have drowned herself by now.

The water splashed about, blackening under the secretions coming from Aina's body. Under some mysterious power, the Cleansing Water purified this blackness the further it traveled from Aina. But, unfortunately, the density around her only seemed to grow with each passing moment.

Leonel stripped off his robes and entered the waters, a deep frown on his face. He propped the back of Aina's head up while submerging the rest of her body.

'This isn't working' | PANDA-NOVEL.COM

Leonel shook his head and brought Aina to the edge of the pool. Using it, he pulled Aina's military boots off.

When Leonel got a look at Aina's skin, he paled. He hadn't noticed before because the entirety of Aina's face and much of her neck was covered in those savage pulsing scars. But, after taking her boots off, he realized just how severe the situation was.

Aina's skin, which had always had a healthy tan hue to it, was suddenly as pale as a sheet of paper. As though this wasn't terrible enough, Leonel could see her veins popping out, completely filled with a vicious black liquid that slowed the beating of her heart and clogged her arteries.

Leonel moved quickly, propping up Aina's other foot to take her other boot off. But at that moment, something surprising happened.

When Aina's bare foot entered the waters once again, there was a burst as a torrent of foul blood was suddenly pulled out by the Cleansing Water. Beneath the surface, Leonel's senses could make out how Aina's pores had opened. In fact, her skin even broke, revealing the veins beneath before healing once again.

But, despite the injuries to her feet, Leonel immediately sensed a slight sigh of relief come from her lips.
PANDA NOVEL

'That's it' |

Leonel hesitated. Then, he furiously shook his head, this wasn't the time to be a prude.

"[Light Curtain]."

Leonel mumbled beneath his breath, causing a surge of light to cover Aina's body. The benefit of [Light Curtain] was that it obstructed one's vision by causing a large gathering of light. But, it didn't have a physical form, so it didn't impede Leonel's actions in the slightest.

Leonel realized at that point that Aina's military uniform and boots weren't normal. They protected her in battle and also had a series of spatial pockets hidden within. In that case, they were very likely impeding whatever help the Cleansing Waters were supposed to provide.

Under normal circumstances, they would be a protection. But at the moment, they were nothing more than a hindrance. Leonel hadn't noticed it before, but the uniform itself wasn't even wet. ρ??∫???

Steeling his resolve, Leonel began to unbutton Aina's clothing.

'Focus'! Focus'!'

If those who had just been scared witless by Leonel saw him now, who knows how they'd react. A young man who seemed to have the strength to overturn a world in his hands was panicking at the prospect of undressing a girl. It was a sad sight to behold, indeed.

Above Leonel, the little mink skipped about, making a noise that sounded like snickering. His long whiskers bounced about, a lively light in his beady little eyes.

Leonel ignored the little guy, his normally nimble fingers fumbling about.

'Focus!'

Leonel shouted to himself, splitting his mind several ways. If others knew he was using such a profound ability just to dull his first ambiguous situation with a woman, Leonel's legend would surely become one big joke.

Leonel's hands reached the end of Aina's buttons. Grabbing hold of her waist, he gently pulled the fabric out from their tucked position. His gaze focused on Aina's face, trying to make sure that he wasn't harming her in any way.

When the waters flooded past the opening in Aina's clothing, the flood of black blood became more exaggerated. More of Aina's pores opened up, the foul liquid being pulled out by some odd osmosis.

Leonel's hands slipped. After untucking Aina's military garb, he realized that there was nothing beneath but her soft skin, causing his breathing to hitch.

Leonel had no idea that just moments before, Aina had snapped the bandages she used to cover her chest, leaving nothing between the fabric and her skin.

With a deep gulp, Leonel carefully shifted Aina in his arms, the blinding lights of [Light Curtain] blocking his view.

Carefully, he slipped her arms out of their sleeves and tossed the military uniform to the side.

Leonel laid her to rest in the waters.

As expected, the speed of her recovery accelerated. Leonel could even see the grotesque scars that had begun crawling toward her heart retreating at a speed a normal human would be able to spot. This left him breathing a sigh of relief.

'Alright, one more layer.'

Taking a deep breath, Leonel rested Aina's back against his bare chest and undid her pants, slowly sliding them off with a forearm wrapped around her waist.

'Soft' ;'

Leonel shook his head, trying to push such thoughts out of his mind. But, just the skin of Aina's back felt so supple against his chest. He felt as though he was on cloud nine.

But, at the same time, he felt guilty. Aina might have been quickly recovering, but she wasn't quite out of the woods yet. He didn't want to think about such things.

Aina's military pants finally slid off her slender legs, allowing Leonel to toss them to the side as well.