

Descent 591

Chapter 591

Leonel should have been taking in what the rest of the room had to offer, but truthfully, he couldn't take his eyes off of Aina. Everything from the beads of sweat falling down her face to the apron clinging to her curves made his heart stop.

Aina's smile faded into one of confusion.

"What's wrong?"

For a moment, Aina became worried. In truth, she had taken Leonel's things without asking and even started using the kitchen wares and appliances too. Though Leonel had said to treat this place like her home, had she maybe gotten a little too comfortable?

She blushed in embarrassment, trying to figure out how she should apologize. Though Leonel never spoke about his parents, Aina had gained a few tidbits here and there, definitely enough to know that this place was left behind by his father. After all, she had been there when Leonel first got the Segmented Cube.

For all she knew, this place was very important to Leonel but now whatever sentimental value it might have had was washed away by her cooking.

But, before she could form the words of apology, she found a large shadow enveloping her.

Leonel hugged Aina tightly, seemingly not feeling much from the heat around them at all. At his current level, it might as well have been a slight breeze tickling his skin and nothing more.

Aina was stunned for a moment. But when she realized what was happening, she panicked.

"You ... you're going to burn yourself!"

Leonel pulled back and grinned, his smile beaming. Clearly, though, he didn't take Aina's warning very seriously.

In truth, even Leonel didn't quite know why he was so excited. There was just something about the current situation that felt right.

Of course, if he said this aloud, Aina would probably beat him to death. He might as well have put his foot in his mouth saying that she belonged in the kitchen.

Still, even though he chose to keep these words to himself, he still beamed beside himself, unable to stop himself from feeling happy for the first time in several days.

Leonel looked around, only to find a large steel table filled with delicacies. Each had a small cut in them, making it obvious that someone diligent had gone through and tasted each and every one. PANDA NOVEL

"... You did all this?" Leonel asked.

Seeing that Leonel wasn't mad at her, Aina's smile returned. But, before she could answer, a hint of panic colored her features. She had almost forgotten something important.

Aina ignored Leonel's question, dashing to the stove and flipping a pan.

What looked like an elaborate omelet, expelling a rich fragrance, flipped in the air to reveal a golden brown base that seemed crisp just to sight alone.

Aina breathed a sigh of relief before rushing out of the kitchen, pan in hand.

Leonel blinked in confusion before hurrying after her. But, what he found at the end of her run was something that left him even more stunned than the kitchen had.

Unlike the kitchen, Leonel had been here several times. In fact, he frequented this place. However, he had never seen it look like this. ρ??∪???

The dining room of the Abode Setting was large enough to comfortably feed a family of eight. But, at the moment, every stretch of table was completely covered with a plate or plates of food.

Aina stood on her tippy toes, carefully sliding the omelet onto a layered dish as though crowning her final achievement.

Aina wiped her brow with a forearm again before smiling lightly. It was only at that moment that Leonel understood that all the dishes that took up the steel table were nothing but experiments.

Leonel's heart couldn't help but warm. He had no idea how much effort Aina had put into trying different combinations of beast meat and herbs to eventually come up with all of this, but he was quite frankly left stunned.

“What are you just standing there for?” Aina looked toward Leonel. “Eat!”

And so Leonel did.

He hardly remembered the first bite, but he most definitely lamented the last. He had thought that maybe like those comedic animes his dad always made him watch, he'd have to pretend to love Aina's food to make her feel better. But the reality was completely outside his expectations.

Not only did the food look and smell good, it was so delicious that Leonel felt as though he was ascending to another realm. And, in fact, in a way, he was. It was even to the point where even the injuries he hadn't bothered to heal to this point as though a badge to remind him of something, had begun to heal on their own.

Aina watched on with a smile on her face, her elbows on the table and her hands cupping her face. Though she too had a great appetite, after all the taste tests she had done over the last few days, she was as full as could be at the moment.

If Leonel knew this, he would probably be even more stunned. With all the tiny bites he had seen before... Just how many test dishes would she have to have made in order to be full?

However, Leonel was so engrossed in eating that he didn't even realize that Aina didn't have anything for herself. It was only after he had his last bite that he looked up at her as though he was looking at a monster.

Leonel gaze locked onto Aina, seemingly not wanting to waste time looking at anything else.

Aina blinked. "... I'm not part of the feast, you know."

Leonel was stunned out of his shock into a fit of laughter when he heard these words.

"And why not?" He grinned slyly.

Aina shook her head and mumbled under her breath.

"Men... Maybe Savahn was right, you lot can never be satisfied."

Leonel coughed and held his chest.

Another fatal blow.

Aina giggled, seemingly pleased by Leonel's reaction. But after a while, her expression grew to one of worry, scanning Leonel.

"Are you alright?"

Chapter 592

Leonel sighed hearing Aina's question. Quite frankly, he didn't know how to respond.

Was he alright? Well, technically, there wasn't anything wrong with him. His life wasn't in danger, his future wasn't exactly bleak... Truthfully, he didn't have very much to worry about at all.

Of course, if the members of Shield Cross Stars heard these thoughts of his, it would be hard to tell how they would react. After all, no one had ever had such a nonchalant response to being designated a Tier 3 Criminal.

To put matters into perspective, to even be labeled a Tier 9 Criminal was enough to have bounty hunters breathing down your neck. To leap from a Tier 4 Criminal to a Tier 3 was the equivalent of being a felon that could be sentenced to consecutive life sentences. Leonel was quite literally only short of individuals known for destroying worlds, solar systems and galaxies. This was how serious this matter was.

Yet, Leonel hardly spared a thought toward this matter. In fact, ever since his conversation with his grandfather, it was all that had been on his mind. He couldn't find a reason to care about anything else.

If it wasn't for the fact that Leonel had already sworn to himself to find a cure for Aina, he might have had no other purpose but to lounge around in depression at the moment.

Maybe the harshest truth of it all was that Leonel didn't feel that this matter was even as serious as that. Depression was often something a person couldn't control, an imbalance in the chemicals of the mind that caused up and down swings in mood. Leonel couldn't say he was going through such a thing, but what he did know was that he felt everything that had once been in his control was slowly but surely slipping away.

Leonel sighed again.

"I just don't feel like I have as much of a grasp on things as I once did. I find it laughable that I thought I understood anything to begin with."

Aina gazed toward Leonel, unsure of how she should answer.

She didn't feel as strongly about certain things as Leonel did. The deaths of the common folk of Earth? She didn't spare them a thought. There were some things about this cruel world that she was just numb to. If it wasn't for the fact it was someone she cared about feeling this way, even to this point she might not have spared a thought toward those matters.

However, at the same time, she didn't want Leonel to keep running from his own thoughts. She was herself while he was him. They would never be the same. While she found it easy to ignore such things, Leonel wasn't the same.

That said... Aina felt that there was something off about how much Leonel cared, almost as though he was trying to cling to ideals that weren't his own while he ran from an even larger problem. PANDA NOVEL

Unfortunately... Maybe the one things Leonel had never told Aina was about his conversation with Coach Owen and the truth surrounding his birth. Whether by coincidence and subconsciously, or on purpose and consciously, she didn't have the final piece of the puzzle that she needed.

"Did you always know how to cook this well?" Leonel shook his head, quickly changing the subject.

Aina realized what he was doing, but there were some things that couldn't be pressed. If Leonel didn't want to talk about it, forcing him to do so would only make him shut down.

"No," Aina replied with a smile, "Usually it was Yuri who always took care of the cooking. I was bored so I thought I would try my hand at it."

Aina waved off her efforts with a hand. But, Leonel's silent smile seemed to see right through her.

"I think it's more than just that." Leonel said after Aina began squirming in her seat beneath his gaze. "There was something special about your cooking, as though it had its own unique flow of energy. It was definitely beyond anything I've ever eaten before." p??(???????)

Aina couldn't help but smile at such praise. Just that sentence alone seemed to make all her efforts worthwhile.

“I’m not sure... I only relied on my ability to tell me what combinations would work well. In the end, this was the product.”

“Your ability evolved?”

“Mm.” Aina nodded. “Beyond self-healing and my training intuition, I can tell what resources I need to consume to improve myself...”

Leonel’s gaze glowed. Even without knowing much about the Dimensional Verse, Leonel felt that this ability would most definitely be exceptionally rare. If just a few days of experimentation allowed Aina’s cooking to have such effects, what if she put in more effort than that?

“Have you ever thought about becoming a Force Pill Refiner?” Leonel suddenly asked.

“Force Pill Refiner...” Aina was stunned.

They were called a lot of things. Force Pill Refiners, Alchemists, Potionsmiths, Elixir Crafters...

In truth, their products didn’t always come in the form of pills. Sometimes it was Elixirs and Potions, sometimes it was ointments and topical creams, and yet other times it could come in the form of brews or... food.

Though they came in many different variations, their core principles were similar enough to be lumped into a single group. But, much like languages across worlds, they often had different methods of communication to accomplish the same goals.

This was why Leonel was so certain that if Aina could do this, translating her ability to create pills, elixirs, or ointments wouldn’t be too large of a leap. Even if she only wanted to focus on food it wouldn’t be a major loss, albeit a waste of her talent.

Aina smiled. “You know about such things?”

Leonel almost blushed if it wasn't for the fact his skin was so thick.

Aina wasn't wrong. Usually, it was her teaching him about things like this. He was about as ignorant as it came when it was in regards to matters of the Dimensional Verse. It could be said that the only reason Leonel knew about this profession at all was due to the introductory Crafting lessons his father had given him.

"But you're right." Aina continued after teasing Leonel. "I think that learning more systematically rather than relying on my talent will help me improve faster."

In Aina's mind, all that mattered was if she could grow stronger. Becoming a Force Pill Crafter was definitely one such method. It would definitely help her self-training reach a completely new level.

Just as Leonel was about to respond, his ring began to vibrate.

'Huh... Valiant Heart Mountain...? So soon?'

Chapter 593

Leonel and Aina's gaze met, both clearly able to see the other's surprise. However, after a moment, they found it easier to accept.

When Leonel spoke with Sael, the overseer of the Brave City trial at the time, he learned that Valiant Heart Mountain would be teleporting all its candidates at once in order to save on costs.

Though Leonel didn't think much of it at the time, it was clear that Valiant Heart Mountain wasn't in the best of positions at the moment if they were penny pinching to that extent. But, Leonel didn't care much. He already had a great distrust of organizations. The only reason he was going was because of Aina. At least this way, he could make sure she wouldn't have to deal with any injustices.

Of course, Leonel also had no idea that Sael had already reported him to the higher ups of Valiant Heart Mountain, causing a fissure to appear in upper management. The details of this matter, though, would be left unknown to Leonel for a long while. But, it seemed that those of Valiant Heart Mountain saw this

as an opportunity as well, not having any idea that the supposed Morales Clan Heir they were banking their futures on was completely ignorant to his status.

"I guess we should prepare." Leonel finally spoke.

Aina nodded. "I'm going to go change."

Aina stood up and hesitated seeing all the dishes that lay empty. She couldn't just leave them here.

Leonel grinned. "Let me watch you change and I'll wash the dishes."

Aina blushed furiously, glaring at Leonel.

"Pervert."

Leonel laughed as Aina ran away, picking up the dishes that were left.

"Is there a dishwasher?" Leonel asked the dictionary, hoping for the best.

Luckily, he wasn't disappointed. After rinsing the dishes a bit and stuffing the machine full, Leonel turned his attention to his own clothing change.

Stripping off the tatters that remained of his clothing, he slipped on the white hammer pants given to him by Sael and tightly wrapped the cloth belt around his waist.

Leonel couldn't help but grin. He felt like he was Aladdin, so where was his genie? PANDA NOVEL

Shaking his head to get rid of his childish thoughts, Leonel adjusted the cloth belt so that its end dangle between his legs, revealing the hidden ancient patterns.

Finally, he pulled out the Egyptian like neckwear.

'Heavy...' Leonel thought as he had the almost solid piece of black steel in his hand. The neck piece alone was at least 50 pounds, it had quite the heft to it.

Aina walked in to find Leonel changing in the kitchen. Toward such a scene, she really didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Didn't he have his own bedroom? What was he doing?

Then again, now that she thought about it, Leonel's room had become the place the two of them slept in. So, maybe it couldn't really be considered 'his room' anymore.

Aina blushed slightly, but quickly shook her head to tease Leonel for his ridiculous choice of location. Unfortunately, before she could, Leonel stood his full height, his backview enveloping her vision.

His tanned skin seemed to emit a slight sheen of bronze, the definition of his back and the way it flexed slightly with his every movement made Aina flashback to moments when her hands ran across those deep trenches. It was the kind of back she could rely on, the kind she had laid upon as Leonel stomped out her worst fears. ρ??∪???????

Aina blushed from something other than embarrassment, turning her head away and pretending as though she hadn't seen anything.

Why did Valiant Heart Mountain have such a provocative dress code?

What Aina didn't know was that as she looked away, Leonel sensed her presence and looked back only to have the same exact thought she had had.

The only difference between the male uniform and the female uniform was a second cloth band that wrapped around the chest. But, this one was white to match the pants rather than being the same black as the cloth belt.

However, this only served to leave Leonel short of breath. He had understood ever since that day in the bathhouse why Aina also wore that loose fitting military garb. But, seeing her wear such a thing practically stopped his heart.

The way her pants clung to her hips, the subtle but feminine definition of her abs after every breath, the way her chest cloth elegantly curved to display those two delicacies that Leonel could still faintly feel on his palms...

Leonel had seen his fair share of women who were even more scantily clad than this. But, only Aina could make his heart flutter.

“Hm?” Aina jumped, but she couldn’t run away before Leonel’s hands were already on her hips.

The blush on her face had still yet to vanish, making her all the more alluring.

“Wait! The teleportation is –.”

Leonel’s lips sealed her own.

Aina’s eyes widened, but after a moment, she seemed to fall victim to Leonel’s advances. Her hands found their way to that very back she was dreaming of tracing, her eyes closing as she lost herself in another world.

Leonel pulled back, grinning. Aina’s eyes slowly opened, only to feel as though a devil was smiling down at her.

Aina looked away, trying to avoid his gaze. But what she saw in her surroundings made her want to dive back into his arms before finding a hole to crawl into.

What should have been the Segmented Cube’s kitchen had suddenly become the midway point of a mountain larger than anything Aina had ever seen.

At the mountain pass, there were two pillars, each over a hundred meters tall and inscribed with the images of war and roaring beasts. Their presence alone, despite being so far away, made the Gates of Brave City seem like nothing more than child's play.

However, what had Aina wanting to hide away wasn't the mountain, nor the pillars, nor even the floating islands in the distance... it was the fact that there were suddenly thousands of youths around them, each at this very same mountain pass.

Leonel laughed at Aina's flustered reaction. Isn't this what she gets for teasing him all the time? He finally got a bit of revenge.

Ah, it tasted sweet. Now that he thought about it, she tasted quite sweet too. He almost wanted another taste.

However, his good mood didn't last very long.

“If I had a face like that, I'd be looking for a place to hide too.”

Chapter 594

Leonel's expression darkened. Aina's own, which had just been filled with embarrassment, almost instantly became as still as a lake. If it wasn't for the fact that she had just been so animated, one would think that she was nothing more than a statue, a puppet that was completely unaffected by the outside world.

A cold wind swept through the grounds.

In truth, not many were paying attention to the situation. Though Aina and Leonel had just appeared out of seemingly thin air, so had everyone else who had come to this place. In fact, even to this very moment, there were still more youths popping up, looking wide eye'd toward the massive pillars on either side of the mountain pass.

With this concentration of people, there were no doubt several conversations happening at once, especially since those from similar worlds had been teleported to the same spots much like Leonel and Aina.

This was all to say that this singular sentence hardly traveled a few meters before getting lost in the hustle and bustle of the excited youths around them. In fact, it was very likely that the person who spoke these words didn't even mean for Leonel and Aina to hear them in the first place, they were just mocking and jeering from within their friend group.

Yet, at that moment, Leonel's gaze turned toward the voice, easily able to pinpoint it amidst the sea of noise.

The young woman who had spoken was dressed in an attire identical to Aina, as were all the women accepted into Valiant Heart Mountain. Though, there seemed to be a very poor ratio of men to women in this place. There were at least five or six males to every one female.

Unlike Aina, though, this young woman seemed to lean into her sexuality. Her cloth belt was extremely loose, allowing her pants to just barely hang from her hips. At the same time, whereas Aina's cloth wrap was large enough to even cover a portion of her belly, this woman seemed to have chosen to fold her own as narrowly as possible, causing two round protrusions to be just barely visible from the bottom.

It was most definitely this heavenly flavor of underboob that had caused males even from other worlds to flock around her like a den of wolves. Even those males who weren't as confident in their strength observed her from a distance, trying to sneak a few more peeks in as they bet on how many rounds of battle she could last without exposing a little nipple.

Leonel gaze made the young lady accidentally bite her tongue, her pupils trembling slightly.

As expected, she really hadn't thought that Leonel would hear her. But, seeing his reaction made her feel as though her head had been dunked into a vat of ice. PANDA NOVEL

When she saw that Leonel was a man, though, she seemed to shake herself awake. Maybe she would have been scared if Aina was the one exuding this kind of pressure, but what male would deem to harm her?

'Hmph, maybe his world is filled with ugly women or something. To be so handsome yet pick out such a tramp, is he blind?'

The young woman stuck her chest out more prominently as though to provoke Leonel into dropping his seething rage.

Originally, the young lady had only commented off handedly, not planning on confronting Aina personally. After all, she wasn't a fool, she had no idea the kind of background these people had, nor did she understand anything about their tempers. Plus, on top of that, she was a genius in her own right, she wouldn't be so bored as to go out of her way to bully someone without cause.

But now that her off handed joke had been accidentally heard, she also had no intention of backing down. This was Valiant Heart Mountain, a place where the strong thrived and the weak got eaten. If she showed weakness now, her future was practically finished. ρ???∪???

However... The glaze-over affect her ample breasts and outrageous curves usually had seemed to fall completely flat in the face of Leonel.

With a step forward, Leonel's minor action seemed to cause the ground to quake. In an instant, what was a situation hardly anyone paid attention to had suddenly become the center of focus.

The young lady's expression changed, not expecting Leonel to suddenly react like this.

Before she could think of how to react, though, several men stepped forward to block Leonel's path just as Aina grabbed onto Leonel's forearm.

Leonel frowned and looked back.

"You cause trouble everywhere you go." Aina said lightly. "Just leave it alone, it's not a big deal."

Leonel's brow furrowed.

Aina's lip curled. "What? You suddenly gain a little bit of strength and think it's okay to hit women now? Should I fear for myself? Maybe I should just forget about us..."

By the end of her words, Aina looked as though she was on the verge of tears.

"Ah...!"

Leonel didn't know what to say. Sure, he had learned throughout his youth to never put hands on a woman, but that was back when their strength couldn't be compared to a man's. In this new world order... even this petite Aina's physical strength was greater than his own.

Leonel was a very logical person, so the moment the foundation for his protective spirit toward women was no longer there, he likewise had no qualms about hitting and even killing them. In fact, he had already done so with a fair few from Joan all the way to Pisces.

Where was the justice? How was he getting bullied for trying to defend his own woman?

Leonel shook his head.

"You win! You win! Don't cry!"

Leonel's switch from murder machine to simping boyfriend was so abrupt that hardly anyone knew how to react. However, no one felt it more acutely than the young lady herself who suddenly had a massive weight taken off her shoulders. If it wasn't for support she got from another rare female and friend, she would have collapsed.

When she looked back up, her gaze was filled with resentment as she gazed toward Leonel's back.

She clenched her fists, her eyes practically spewing fire. Seeing such a scene, the men who had gathered to protect her didn't seem intent on backing off after being instigated by Leonel.

Leonel held his hands together while appeasing Aina, an ingratiating smile on his face. He didn't even spare the group behind him a glance. Or, maybe, he was truly entirely focused on Aina to begin with.

Aina smiled slyly, seemingly enjoying Leonel's display. Wasn't this what he got for teasing her like that? Kissing her in front of so many people, what a bad guy.

"Alright, I'll forgive you this one time."

Leonel beamed as Aina flipped a palm to reveal her blue veined mask. She slipped it on, feeling more at ease now that the itchiness of her face was dying down.

She had taken the mask off previously because she was worried about it being harmed in the kitchen. But the truth was that Leonel's Crafts weren't so fragile. After all, he had designed it to have great defensive prowess.

But, the care she took for the gift spoke volumes about how much she appreciated it.

Of course, those who had been paying attention had no idea that Aina was putting on her mask simply to alleviate the discomfort of her curse. To them, she had been ashamed by the young lady's previous words and had now chosen to hide her face.

Such a scene provoked the sneers of the men who had tried been trying to prove themselves to the young lady. To get angry at such a beauty for a woman that looked like that... Had someone kicked this guy in the head when he was younger?

Clearly, they were dissatisfied with how Leonel was ignoring them and even turning their back to them. But, they still felt that it was no longer appropriate to lash out.

Still, they marked down Leonel in their minds. The moment they learned of his background, as long as he didn't have the capital to wield such arrogance, they would let him know the consequences of trying to impress women.

Obviously, they hadn't sensed the irony of their own thoughts. PANDA NOVEL

"Miss Balthorn, are you alright."

The young lady who had helped Balthorn withstand Leonel's gaze and helped her up spoke. Despite having been admitted into the same Organization, the young lady still didn't dare to be disrespectful to Balthorn. In fact, when she had made that comment about Ailsa, the young lady had even politely laughed along with the rest.

The men sheathed their weapons and surrounded Balthorn as well, trying to radiate outward with a manly presence.

They were all aware that Balthorn's background wasn't small. In fact, her family was a preeminent powerhouse of their quadrant. Amongst those who had come, she was most definitely amongst the most well taken care of.

She was Balthorn Valynore, the young mistress of the Valynore family. The Valynore family was among the three most powerful on Planet Crars, a world on the brink of entering the Fifth Dimension and with the potential of a Sixth Dimensional world. p??U??????

If Leonel had heard this, he would have faintly recognized the name... In fact, among the prisoners he had taken from White City, there was a man who claimed to be from Planet CrarsX10, a subsidiary of Crars.

Back then, Aina had told Leonel that Crars was among the most powerful worlds of their quadrants.

As for how large a quadrant was, Leonel had no idea. He only assumed that it was at least a few solar systems worth of space. But, it was much vaster than this.

Every Galaxy would have at most a few hundred quadrants. Though this seemed like a large number, if one considered the enormous size of a Galaxy, if a quadrant could be worth a single percentage of its size, it would be grandiose beyond imagining. At the very least, if Leonel's ancestors of the 21st century tried to cross such a distance, even their entire lifetimes wouldn't be enough. In fact, even a hundred generations wouldn't be enough either.

For Crars to be among the dominant forces of a quadrant, there was no doubting its strength.

That said, for Balthorn to be sent to Valiant Heart Mountain, an organization that was facing such struggles, it was clear that she wasn't very important to her family.

Still, compared to the background of these young men, she was light years ahead. If they could gain her favor and become her husband, they'd feel as though they had lived a fulfilled life.

"I'm fine." Balthorn said somewhat weakly, her heart still beating erratically.

"There's no need to worry about that coward, Balthorn. I just checked, but that weakling is still in the Third Dimension. There's no threat from him, I could kill him as easily as slaughtering a chicken."

Balthorn's eyes flashed when she heard these words.

'Third Dimension...? You idiot. That only means he's even more talented than you. Do you think Valiant Heart Mountain has fallen far enough to let people in just because? If that was the case, why would I bother with coming here?'

Balthorn bit her lip, suddenly feeling annoyed by all the flies buzzing around her. Seeing Leonel's attention completely focused on Aina, she bit her lip harder. The dichotomy between the kind of love the two women were receiving was striking to the point of being stifling.

The young lady by Balthorn's side, Henorin, gazed between the former and Aina but in the end remained silent.

In the distance, a young man watched all of this just as silently. Compared to the youths brimming with vitality around him, he seemed to have already placed a foot in his coffin. He was skinny to the point the line of his spine and his ribs were sinking against his skin. His complexion was pale to the point of being deathly. And, his back curved somewhat as though his head was too heavy to carry.

He gazed toward Leonel for a moment before shifting back toward Balthorn.

His tongue ran over his lips as he stared her up and down, his eyes focusing on her chest for an obscene amount of time.

But, what was maybe more grating was the fact his tongue, rather than being a healthy pink, was a dull grey...

At that moment, the tall pillars of the mountain pass quaked and a portal opened within them to reveal several figures.

It seemed the big shots of Valiant Heart Mountain had finally appeared.

Chapter 596

Compared to the dress of the youths, the elders of Valiant Heart Mountain weren't dressed much differently at all. In fact, there were only two differences one could point out.

The first was the color of their cloth belts. What dangled between their legs wasn't the black of the youths, but rather a striking red. At least, most of them wore this red as though dyed by centuries of blood. The old man that led them, though, wore one of copper, as though the blood that had once drenched his had rusted over with age.

The second difference was a shawl draped over their shoulders. This matched the color of their cloth belts, giving them a more dignified appearance than the kids below.

The old man's exposed torso was just as hollowed out as the pale young man from before. But, though his body seemed worn with age, his back was as straight as a javelin despite the fact he simultaneously used a walking stick.

The atmosphere fell into silence as this group of five walked forward.

One could feel the difference between realms of existence when standing before the powerful. Though these five elders had yet to speak a word, it felt as though there was a mountain weighing down on them all, as though they wouldn't be satisfied until they all kneeled in deference.

Though the Dimensions felt like 'power levels', this wasn't the case. In fact, only talents like Leonel and Aina would feel this way... like crossing Dimensions and evolving to a higher state of being was no different than crossing any other barrier.

However, to middling existences, the barrier between Dimensions was akin to Heaven and Earth.

There was no doubt that each and every one of these elders stood as a Fifth Dimensional entity, a barrier that more than half of those here would never even cross, let alone travel so deeply into.

This was a strength that they idealized, that they aspired to, that they respected from the deepest recesses of their hearts...

"... Stop playing around."

Leonel felt a strong elbow to his side and coughed lightly. He looked up to see what all the commotion was about only to find that no one dared to even breathe too harshly.

When he saw the elders at the very front, he raised his brows. PANDA NOVEL

Leonel felt like a refreshing breeze was wrapping around his body. Unfortunately, he couldn't enjoy it very much because he seemingly only now remembered that he was still injured. Though Aina's food had helped him along, he was still only about 70% of his normal self, which was a miracle unto itself considering the state of his inner organs previously.

Now that Leonel thought about it, Aina's food was definitely not enough for such a drastic improvement. Was he missing something?

'Oh...'

Leonel suddenly remembered the odd state he had entered when he was completing his Divine Armor. Back then, he had vaguely felt an energy integrating with his body and improving it. If it wasn't for the fact he hadn't been swallowing any Metal Essence at that moment, his Metal Body might have already improved to Tier 3 or 4 by now.

It was only now that Leonel understood that that feeling must have come from the energy he absorbed from the Puppet Master.

Due to how powerful Leonel had become, he had almost forgotten that defeating Invalids could improve his strength. But, this wasn't really his fault. He was so powerful but Earth only had Third Dimensional Invalids to deal with. Those existences could barely move the needle for him. $\rho \rho \rho \cup \rho \rho \rho \rho \rho \rho \rho$

Yet, he had gone from Third Dimensional Invalids, to a Variant Invalid on the verge of entering the Fifth Dimension. The difference was striking. It was no wonder the Puppet Master's residual energy had such a great benefit to him.

In fact, now that he was paying attention, Leonel could tell that he had only absorbed about 20 or 30% of the energy. Unfortunately, his body was too injured to absorb any more or improve any further.

It seemed he would have to focus on healing...

By now, his Healing Branch ability could allow him to heal back to a perfect state immediately. But it seemed a waste to use in this situation considering how long it took to recharge.

'Forget it, I'll be patient for now.'

The elders scanned the crowd in silence, allowing the youths to soak up the feeling of being in their presence.

This wasn't just for the sake of showing off their might, it was also to give them a goal to aspire to while also making their authority unquestionable. Every organization was built from the bottom up, the more obedient and simultaneously ambitious their fresh blood was, the better.

But, in this crowd of serious youths, the one individual with an absentminded gaze couldn't help but stand out. It also most definitely didn't help that there was a small clearing around this person and also that this person was far taller than most on average.

Several gazes landed on Leonel. The change should have been enough to shock him awake, but Leonel continued to be lost in his own world as though his daydreaming was far more important than anything happening here.

Of course, he wasn't doing this on purpose. What these else thought should have been obvious pressure was like a spring breeze to Leonel. If it wasn't for Aina pinching his waist and startling him, he probably wouldn't notice at all.

Seeing the gazes of the elders, Leonel smiled lightly and stood at attention, respectfully keeping his hands to his sides. There was truly nothing about his actions that the elders could pick out. But, their lips couldn't help but twitch regardless.

The old man at the front swept his gaze over Leonel one more time before he began to speak.

“Do you all see these pillars to my back?”

The shuffling of necks resounded through the mountain pass as they all looked upward.

“These pillars are the foundation of Valiant Heart Mountain. You all might not understand now, but this is our home, our lifeblood, our heart.

“You all may think that since you have made it here, you can be considered members of our Valiant Heart Mountain. However, to me, unless you can walk through these gates on your own, you will never be. Even if you die before my eyes, I'll never raise a finger to help you.

“Luckily for you brats, my methods were deemed too cruel. So you have three years to walk through these Gates on your own two feet.

“That said, even if I don't have my way, I also have no intention of letting you all go so easily.

“Below this mountain pass, there are numerous beasts. Some of them are tagged while some of them are not. These tags carry the teleportation talismans you need to enter the mountain peak without crossing these Gates.

“There are 3802 of you here. There are exactly 1901 tagged beasts. Among these tags, there are 10 golden tags that will allow you one trip to the Valiant Vault.

“You have 12 hours.”

The wind around the youths suddenly stilled to a crawl.

Chapter 597

The atmosphere froze for just a moment before the youths suddenly erupted into movement. What once was an orderly field of promising geniuses became akin to a mosh pit. But, in this context, with the strength of the people in question, it felt as though this mountain that Valiant Heart had called home for so long might collapse.

Earth cracked, air crackled, the sounds of shouts of anger and pain sounded as the so-called geniuses fought and jostled for position, each trying to make their way down the mountain faster than the last.

In what felt like no more than half a minute, over 90% of the field had been completely dispersed. As for those that remained, they had long since been trampled by the crowd to the point of being on their last breaths.

There was no doubt that amidst all the chaos, some had taken advantage of the situation to get rid of some competition.

However, true to his word, the old man didn't raise a single finger, watching these youths with broken bodies bleed out without a single word. Aside from a sweep of his gaze, he spared them nothing more even as some of them begged and pleaded.

Still, there were a few that seemed to stand out, geniuses who had kept their calm even in the face of such harsh elimination requirements.

There was the pale youth who was, even now, still intently staring at Balthorn. There was a burly young man with twin short sabers strapped to his back – juxtaposed to his size, they felt more like curved daggers than saber-like weapons. There was a young woman whose hair was pulled into two ponytails that combined down her chest. And, finally, there was Balthorn herself.

Each stared at the gates intently, unwilling to take their eyes off of it. Of course... With the exception of the pale youth.

Among these youths were Leonel and Aina who hadn't moved from the very beginning. But, rather than having done so out of curiosity, their reasoning was far different from the norm. Rather, Leonel had begun teasing Aina before she could even think of the next step she wanted to take.

But, after a while, Leonel raised his head to take a look at all the carnage.

With furrowed brows, he raised a hand.

“[Grand Heal].”

Strong Light Elemental Force descended from the skies, falling onto the bodies of the youths who lay bleeding out on the ground. If they were really left for just a few more minutes, it was likely that none of them would survive. PANDA NOVEL

This minor action caused Leonel to once again become the center of attention.

The old man raised an eyebrow, but he couldn't exactly become mad at Leonel's actions. After all, there was no rule against this.

‘Light Elemental Force...?’ The gaze of the elders and youths sharpened.

This was no longer Earth where there were talents at every corner. In such a place, Leonel's Light Elemental Force stuck out like a sore thumb. There wasn't a soul here who didn't understand just how rare Light Elemental Force was.

The youths who had been focused on the two pillars looked back toward Leonel, a hint of seriousness in their expressions. But, Leonel simply cast [Grand Heal] again and again, lamenting the fact his healing capabilities were still severely lacking.

It was only after the last person's life was no longer in danger that he came to a stop and turned his attention toward Aina. ????????

“What do you think?”

Leonel was only here to follow, truthfully. He had come here not because he wanted to, but because of Aina. So, he would let her take the lead.

“The easiest method is to just cross the gates on our own.” Aina replied.

Leonel looked around. It was clear that they weren't the only one with this idea. Even that woman, Balthorn, was standing here in preparation to go about the same thing.

The whole idea of finding then fighting beasts just sounded like a hassle. If one didn't have acute senses like Leonel, you were practically relying on luck.

“What is your goal for coming here, though? What do you want to accomplish?”

Aina's gaze sharpened.

“To become as strong as possible.”

Leonel grinned, Aina's resolve even making the small hairs on his skin stand at attention.

“In that case, let’s go catch some beasts.”

“Hm?” Aina blinked, looking at Leonel with a hint of confusion.

Wasn’t looking for the beasts a waste of time? Why was Leonel suddenly talking about going after them now?

However, Leonel didn’t explain, taking Aina’s small hand and leaving a streak of gold in his wake as he dashed into the forest.

The old man raised an eyebrow, watching Leonel’s back retreat. But in the end, he shook his head. He had thought that he had run into a talent, but this one actually made the same choice as all the others. This action alone considerably dulled whatever surprise Leonel’s Light Elemental Force had given them.

They were called Valiant Heart Mountain for a reason. Talent was secondary to them, what was most important was what was within a person’s heart. If Leonel wasn’t willing to fight and put his life on the line, what worth did his talent have?

The youths seemed to agree with the old man’s assessment. They had thought that they met another rival, only for him to be a coward. It was quite disappointing indeed.

Ironically, it was only Balthorn who looked toward Leonel’s receding back with an eyebrow raised.

That man... What was he thinking?

Unbeknownst to Balthorn, she had already become curious about Leonel. A woman’s mind was complex indeed... Why she would feel such a way about a man who had been moments away from killing her just a while ago was beyond normal human understanding.

Unfortunately, before she could think any longer, the burly man with twin sabers stepped forward, his heavy steps causing the ground to quake.

“My name is Ingkath Miadan! I don’t need your tags, I will climb up this mountain on my own two feet!”

His roar caused the birds in the surroundings to shoot into the skies. Who knew when they would be confident enough to return to their nests?

Chapter 598

Ingkath feet stomped forward as he began to make his way up the mountain, his eyes completely focused on the pillars before him.

Though the elders of Valiant Heart Mountain stood between the pillars, the youths themselves were a ways down the mountain, a few hundred meters from the foot of the Gates, in fact.

From their position, sensing the pressure of the Gates was impossible. So, in the beginning, Ingkath sensed nothing and continued to walk forward and up courageously.

However, the instant he crossed the 300 meter line to the Gates, a roar suddenly shook his mind. It was so loud and sudden that blood began to ooze from his ears.

Despite this, Ingkath remained on his own two feet, his expression finally growing serious.

This roar had no tangible owner. In fact, it looked as though he was the only one to have heard it at all.

The elders at the top continued to stand there as though nothing happened and the youths to his back who had yet to make a move were only watching him without saying a word. It wasn’t until blood began dripping from Ingkath’s ears that the latter group began to feel like something was wrong.

However, it was at that exact moment that Ingkath began to laugh, beating his fists against his brawny chest until his dark-ish skin became red.

A strong surge of Force erupted from him as he shot forward.

A barrage of bestial roars assaulted his psyche, making his every step heavy and his every movement labored. But, he continued to charge upward, his muscles rippling with vitality and ferocity.

The young lady with twin ponytails braided to combine at her chest blinked with curiosity.

After a while of watching, she too stepped forward.

“Irolana of the Faex Tribe.”

She spoke softly, neatly patting her hair down as she too began to walk up.

Balthorn and the pale youth didn’t move for a long while.

“If you keep staring at me like that, I’m going to dig your eyes out.” Balthorn said coldly.

The pale youth began to cackle. “Your tits are practically out for all to see, yet you don’t want me to look. Is there no justice in this world?” PANDA NOVEL

“You want to die?” Balthorn turned toward the pale youth, her proud chest swaying with her movements like a rippling tide.

“As long as it’s by your hands, I think I’ll enter my coffin with a happy expression on my face.”

Balthorn scoffed. “I don’t like scrawny men.”

The pale youth continued to cackle.

“Let me guess, you like tall, bronzed, and handsome men who... already have girlfriends?”

Balthorn's glare became sharp. However, toward such a response, the pale youths cackling only became louder. In fact, it seemed to take so much energy out of him that he just might keel over and die at any moment.

Though she didn't respond, her lack of one only seemed to make her more guilty.

"Ai, women, women, women. I'll never understand them. Those brats that were flocking around you like a pack of hyenas just ran off, swearing to get you a tag or die trying. Yet, you're standing here thinking about a man who would have killed you for another woman. What should I call you exactly?"

ρ??∪??????

Balthorn's sharp gaze gave way to a curling smile.

"What should you call me? How about a beauty you can gaze upon at your own risk, but can never touch regardless?"

With these words said, Balthorn strode forward, clearly having no intention of waiting for those white knights of hers to retrieve a tag in her stead. As for the trouble they got into trying to do such a thing? She didn't care either.

"Balthorn Valynore." She said simply and sweetly.

Bowing once, she stepped onto the mountain pass.

"Wait for me beauty!"

The pale youth finally moved. As though a shadow, he appeared by Balthorn as though he had always been there.

"My name is Radlis!" The pale youth spoke. But, it seemed that his words were aimed more for Balthorn than the elders above.

...

Aina followed after Leonel with a raised eyebrow, but in the end, she didn't say anything to stop him. As far as she was concerned, Leonel wouldn't do anything to harm her. Plus, even if they fell behind by a step, it didn't really matter much. They were young and time was on their side, who was better and who was worse would be clear soon enough.

The two hopped through the trees, streaking past groups of confused youths trying to find beasts to tackle of their own.

Among these groups that they passed by, there were no small number of them that were already locked into their own fights to the death.

There were over 3800 participants but only 1900 beasts. Even when one found a beast to attack, there was no guarantee that there wouldn't be ten others fighting you to do the same. In a lot of ways, this sort of trial was even more difficult than the trial above.

Leonel shook his head as he watched the carnage beneath him. But this time, he didn't raise a finger to help. This was different from before. These were men and women fighting for their futures, who lived and died here would be up to themselves.

After a long while, Aina finally couldn't help her curiosity any longer.

“What's your goal? How will this help?”

She continued to allow Leonel to pull her along, seemingly enjoying the feeling of his hand enveloping her own. But, she still didn't want to be kept in the dark.

‘Shh, shh. We're here.’ Leonel used a combination of Camelot's silencing spells to achieve the effect of sending his voice directly to Aina once again.

The two came to a grinding halt atop a tall tree.

Down below, there was what appeared to be a large black bear. It had the characteristic tough fur and large, round body. It even had the rounded ears down perfectly.

The only difference was that instead of having light fur around its snout, its own had a fiery shade of red fur. In fact, its eyes were the same striking crimson as though it was prepared and ready to tear anything down at any moment.

‘This...? A bear?’ Aina asked within Leonel’s bubble.

Leonel grinned.

‘You see a bear. But, I see our first golden tag.’

Aina’s eyes widened, suddenly understanding what Leonel wanted to do.

Chapter 599

Seeing Aina’s reaction, Leonel grinned and suddenly jumped down from the tree, a massive spear suddenly appearing in his hands.

This spear was none other than the one he likened to a hammer. But in this situation... It was perfect.

Leonel’s eyes flashed, a golden Domain spreading out around him. In that instant, not only did he become ten times heavier, but so did the over 5000-pound spear in his hand.

The red-nosed bear suddenly sensed something. It looked up into the skies, a snarl taking over its features.

It rose to its hind legs, roaring to the point of foggy, spittle filled breath assaulting Leonel.

A strong red Force erupted around the bear, its body growing a size as its fur stood on end.

It swiped a paw at the descending Leonel, imagining smashing this pesky human into meat paste.

But, at the instant spear and paw met, an overwhelming strength assaulted the bear. Its bones creaked and groaned, before reaching their breaking point and suddenly snapping.

A cry of pain left the beast, but its crimson gaze only seemed to become even more so.

Leonel shifted his weight until it was as light as a feather, landing on the ground with subtle steps before shooting forward.

He gripped the massive spear with both hand, his palms and fingers not large enough to even wrap all the way around its shaft. Yet, he wielded it as though it was no different from an extension of himself.

Leonel sent a strong sweep across, pressing down on the injured beast.

At that moment, he suddenly winced, feeling the fine cracks in his ribs he had been ignoring to this point.

His attack slowed by just a margin, allowing the red-nosed bear to erupt with an even stronger red Force. The beast's healthy paw swung downward, coated by a blazing energy.

The air in the surroundings heated up, the billowing roars of the bear tearing through the forest's canopy.

BANG!

The two attacks collided.

Leonel's feet sunk into the soft soil, his knees bending and buckling.

This beast's strength was no small matter. Leonel could tell why the old man had chosen it to be among those that carried the golden tags. PANDA NOVEL

By Leonel's estimation, this beast was at least as strong as a City Lord of Terrain which was about Tier 6 of the Fourth Dimension.

Of course, Terrain wasn't exactly known for its talent, so its standard of Tier 6 was much lower than that of other worlds.

Still, this kind of beast was difficult for Leonel to defeat without using the Four Seasons Realm, activating his Runes, or using his Dreamscape Battle Sense. Without the help of these factors, Leonel believed that he was actually far worse than this bear. He was only now bridging the gap thanks to two things.

The first was his ability. Even without Dreamscape Battle Sense, Leonel's senses were far beyond what most could even aspire to, let alone claim to have. So his reactions and calculations in battle were perfect.

The second was the most obvious... His weapon.

Leonel was using a Quasi Bronze weapon, a treasure a half step from the Fifth Dimension, against a beast in the middling Fourth Dimensional realms. There was no wonder he was able to stand his ground.

If this was all, things would be fine. Leonel would still be confident in defeating this beast without tapping into his true strength. But, unfortunately... He was still injured.

Just as Leonel was about to clash with the bear again, a shadow suddenly fell from the skies and landed before him. The shadow seemed to only shift slightly, but the roaring of the bear came to an end, just as quickly.

Leonel, who had been about to prepare himself for a tough battle, sighed and lowered his spear.

~~~~~

“You know, you could have at least pretended that it was difficult.” Leonel mumbled.

Aina looked back innocently, her eyes blinking behind her mask.

“Is your ego so fragile?”

“Every man’s ego is fragile.” Leonel defended himself.

Aina giggled. “Alright, I don’t mind taking a step back then. You go.”

Leonel was about to puff up his chest in pride when he suddenly thought of something and turned a gloomy eye toward Aina.

Unable to hold it back any longer, Aina burst into a fit of laughter, clenching at her stomach.

“Go on now, manly man. Do your job.”

Disgruntled, Leonel could only step forward. Kneeling beside the beast’s corpse, and to the tune of Aina’s laughter, he began to cut open the beast’s stomach and dig his way through before he finally found the golden tag he was looking for.

He stood and tried to turn toward Aina, but she scurried away before he could even approach.

She pinched at her nose, still unable to stop her laughter.

“Do you feel more manly now?”

Leonel looked at the bloody, organ littered, half eaten food covered mess in his hand, half wanting to cry and half wanting to vomit.

This girlfriend of his was too cruel.

...

Aina and Leonel shot through the forest, easily finding one golden tag after another. It seemed as though they had a cheat of some sort.

The reality, though, wasn't that far from the truth.

As the old man had said, each tag was capable of teleporting the one who claimed it past the mountain pass. But, the unspoken truth of this was that any beast with this tag was likewise marked by the Force Arts necessary to allow such teleportation.

After realizing this, for Leonel, the matter was simple. His Internal Sight didn't have a very large range in this world. There was no doubt that this place was a Fifth Dimensional world, and as such, not only was the space in Leonel's spatial ring smaller here, but the range of his Internal Sight was only a few dozen meters to a hundred meters at most.

However, the fluctuations in these Force Arts caused small ripples in space.

Normally, one wouldn't be able to sense these ripples at all. Not only was the Space Elemental Affinity even more rare than the Light Elemental Affinity, but even if you had it, it was unlikely to be very strong.

Leonel, however, had just completed his Divine Armor, giving him Space Elemental Affinity no worse than almost anyone within the Fourth Dimension. Though this Affinity would be useless to him after he outgrew his Divine Armor, and was somewhat weaker without summoning the Armor itself, this still remained true.

Using this affinity, Leonel could easily pick out these tiny changes in space. And, once he locked onto a beast, it was a simple matter of using his Internal Sight to see whether the tag was gold or not.

Beyond that, since he knew that the gold tags would only be in beasts of certain strength, he could just as easily not waste time scanning beasts that were too weak!

Like this, Leonel and Aina tore through the mountain range, easily grasping all ten gold tags without the slightest hint of effort...

Well, the effort was minimal on Aina's part. As for the poor sap that was Leonel, he would have to take at least a dozen showers before he felt clean.

Chapter 600

"There's got to be a better self-cleaning spell than this..."

Leonel sighed, looking down at himself with a helpless expression. He really got taken advantage of this time around. Though he had already tried to cast several Water Elemental cleansing spells, his water affinity was so low that it hardly made a difference.

To make matters worse, in this Fifth Dimensional world, as someone who had yet to touch upon this barrier, affinity was even more important. The higher tier the world, the more it took to move its Force.

So, all of Leonel's attempts resulted in a light drizzle of water that made Aina sputter with laughter.

Still, this didn't stop the two from easily taking down the tenth beast.

"Now what?" Aina asked.

Standing over the massive deer with steel-like horns lying beneath them, Leonel pondered for a moment. With these tags, teleporting to the core of Valiant Heart Mountain shouldn't be a problem. Having them in their grasp meant that their task was basically complete.

However, before Leonel could answer, a rustling of leaves caught his attention.

Under normal circumstances, Leonel would dismiss it as passing wind. With his senses, it was unlikely for anyone to approach so closely without him noticing, least of all those youths who had chosen to come after these tags rather than challenge the mountain pass directly.

But, for the first time in a long while, Leonel felt a tingling in his spine.

He remembered this feeling well. It was the feeling he got whenever the primitive man's consciousness warned him of something.

By now, Leonel had lost count of the number of primitive male and female consciousnesses he had consumed the lives of. Originally, he hadn't thought it would have a great impact on him going into the future, but the more he absorbed, the sharper these instinctive reactions of his became.

Ironically, when he was in his cold and calculating battle style, these instincts were dulled considerably. But, whenever he was relaxed and not expecting much, exactly like he was now... Those feelings would fire off.

"Hm...?"

Aina seemed to have noticed that something was off as well.

Previously, with their senses, they could make out the battles that had been happening in the distance. Considering the number of young geniuses versus the land they had to work with, it was no surprise that the next closest group wouldn't be more than a few hundred meters from you.

But at this moment, they heard nothing. PANDA NOVEL

Leonel's lip curled.

"It seems we have company."

At that moment, Leonel wished he had a beard to stroke. But, just as always, his face was as bare as a baby's bottom.

"Do you think you can scare them off with your scent?"

Leonel coughed. His lack of a beard already ruined his cool moment, but this was just a nail in his coffin. Where was the love and support?

Aina giggled underlaid an increase in the shuffling grass.

"I wonder, though. If this person has an ability that can cut off my senses, why is it that they've left behind this shuffling grass?"

Leonel thought aloud. It was clear that neither he nor Aina was taking this matter very seriously. Or, rather, it seemed that they weren't. The truth was that both had already gone on high alert. ρ??∫?????  
?

Everyone participating had already seen the disregard the elders had for the fallen youths. There was clearly an unspoken rule that anything went during these trials. Even if one or two people wouldn't be difficult to deal with... What if it was dozens?

At that moment, as though a veil had been undone, the surroundings were filled with hidden shadows.

Beneath the shade of the trees and the foliage of the greenery, Leonel counted the movement of at least 30 individuals. They surrounded the couple from all sides... And though Leonel couldn't clearly see their faces just yet, there was no doubt their intent wasn't to exchange niceties.

Leonel didn't seem too surprised by this outcome. There were too many people here, hiding the actions of both he and Aina were almost impossible. There was no doubt that they had been sighted jumping around the forest many times.

One or two battles would have been fine. After all, there were only two of them, so they obviously needed to fight two battles to get enough tags. But, after the tenth, only a fool wouldn't be able to catch on to what was happening.

The only thing Leonel was actually disappointed in was not sensing them previously. But, after some thought, he realized that whoever planned this was quite clever in their own right.

For Leonel to be able to so easily pinpoint the golden tags, it would have been obvious to anyone observing that he had great sensory abilities. In that case, how could they not come prepared to deal with this?

When the faces finally came into view, Leonel raised an eyebrow.

He recognized a few, namely the young lady who had been by Balthorn's side, Henorin. But, following her were several youths that had been flocking around Balthorn as though she was a goddess.

Somehow, though, despite how rowdy these youths were, Leonel got the faint feeling that they were following Henorin's directive. It was an odd feeling indeed, especially considering the young lady was in the middle the group, lightly clasping her hands together at her waist as though she didn't plan on raising a single finger.

Despite Leonel's feelings, though, the one who stepped forward wasn't Henorin at all, but rather a young man who had threatened to skewer him with a weapon for the sake of Balthorn not even a few hours ago.

The sneer on the man's face could make a baby cry, Leonel was certain of it.

"You know why we're all here, let's not beat around the bush. I've already let you go once and have no intention of doing it again. Hand over the tags you've collected and you might leave this place unscathed."

Leonel sighed inwardly. You really couldn't underestimate this world of abilities. Even the weaklings could catch you off guard if they were lucky enough.

That said...

Leonel yawned beside himself. Though he had just awoken from a few days long rest not long ago, he had a massive meal right afterward, then proceeded to battle in this damned forest for the next few hours. With how weak his body was currently, he already felt like taking another nap.

“Let’s go.” Leonel spoke to Aina.

The sneer on the young man’s face deepened. But, just as quickly, it froze.

A black surfboard appeared to Leonel’s feet and he grabbed at Aina.

Instinctively, Aina wanted to dodge.

“I’d rather fight to the death!” She protested.

But, Leonel grinned, giving her a massive bear hug as they shot into the skies.

“Bye!” Leonel waved.





