

Descent 611

Chapter 611

Leonel whipped out his spear, his wrist flexing. The droplets of blood that remained sprayed outward, leaving the spear spotless and whether by design or accident, landing on the three moaning and groaning before him.

Ingkath, Irolana and Balthorn didn't quite know how to react to such a scene. They had been planning on distancing themselves, but Leonel had reacted so quickly that they were somehow still to his back. Their vantage point was by far the best of everyone else. But, it was precisely because of this that they could hardly believe what they had just seen.

Wielor and the other so-called seniors were all Tier 4 at worst.

This number sounded benign. After all, even the City Lords of Terrain had been more powerful than this. Their average strength had been around Tier 6 while the most powerful of them like City Lord White had been Tier 7.

However, it had to be understood that strength across worlds was looked upon differently.

The truth was that true geniuses spent the most time within the Fourth Dimension, slowly accumulating the strength of their bodies.

In the Dimensional Verse, the Third Dimension was technically the beginning. But the reality was that it was more like a spark. The Fourth Dimension was where the flame was slowly nurtured and grown.

The Fourth Dimension would lay the foundation of the body into the future. So, usually, geniuses would wait until their Force spilled over into the next Realm rather than forcing their way through like the City Lords of Terrain had.

As a result, Tier 4 to these seniors was likely no worse than Tier 6 to those City Lords. In comparison, Ingkath, Irolana and Balthorn were all still suppressing their Force at Tier 1. Unfortunately, they couldn't even use this as an excuse because... Leonel hadn't even stepped into the Fourth Dimension yet!

Of course, none of this mentioned abilities. But, Leonel had taken two out before they even got a chance to use theirs, while he abused his speed to stop Wielor from making use of his.

It could be said that with this one fight, Leonel was already considered to be the strongest newcomer and was even a match for upper years.

At that moment, before the stunned crowd could even process what they had just seen, Leonel put his spear away and began to move.

Pulling out a rope of beast tendons from who knows where, Leonel tied a single ankle of each one of these so-called seniors and began to drag them.

Too caught up in their own pain, the groaning seniors could only protect themselves from worsening their injuries while being dragged through the crowd.

Leonel stopped before a thick tree near the city gates.

If there was one thing Valiant Heart Mountain had going for it, it was the fact that its city wasn't completely disconnected from nature. Even such a thick tree which would easily take ten men to wrap around it was still standing here proudly.

Leonel took out another spear.

This one had an exceptionally long blade that took up a third of its body. In reality it almost felt and looked more like a glaive than anything else.

Still holding onto the rope with one hand, Leonel began to slowly carve into the soil around the tree, careful not to harm its roots. It would be a shame if such a beautiful ancient tree died. ρ??∫??????

No one understood what Leonel was doing. And, unfortunately for the trio of seniors at his feet, no one dared to stick their nose in this mess. They were still unaware of exactly what was happening, but what they did know was that a youth of not even the Fourth Dimension had just demolished three Tier 4 experts.

From the conversation they had overheard, it was clear that this young man was a freshman, yet he already wielded such strength. In their minds, anyone with such power would most definitely not come from a common background.

Yet, this young man had also said something about these lackies being from Hero Peak.

Who would want to get caught in the battle between two giants? At this point, they could only hope that the boy's background was as exaggerated as they thought it was, or else his life would be pretty much forfeit.

Although killing between fellow disciples was prohibited, if one understood the cruelty of the world, there were a lot of things one could do before reaching that extreme. And, in a lot of ways, those things were even worse depending on the type of person that you were.

Considering how prideful this young man seemed to be, there was likely little doubt that he would likely be a person exactly like that.

At that moment, someone gasped.

Everyone snapped out of their thoughts at once only to find that Leonel had launched the three into the air, hanging them all from the thick tree upside down.

Leonel tied the final knots tightly. He wasn't very familiar with the most difficult to undo knots in the past, but one would be surprised just how comprehensive the lesson plans his father left behind were.

Leonel doubted that there would be anyone who could undo this knot in Valiant Heart. Their only option would be to cut them down. But, if they thought it would be so easy, they'd be sorely mistaken.

Taking a step back, Leonel admired his handywork before nodding to himself in satisfaction.

“Make way!”

At that moment, a young woman pushed her way through. Not far behind her, Radlis seamlessly blended into the crowd once again, but Leonel didn't miss that small hint. He couldn't help but shake his head. It seemed that Radlis hadn't just run away after all.

The crowd began to murmur. They recognized this young woman. This wasn't because she was famous, but rather because of the unique runes drawn across her cloth belt.

She was a member of the only true neutral faction of Valiant Heart mountain, Valiant Hall. They were the peacekeepers of the organization and handled disputes between disciples. They were also designated with the task of recruiting disciples.

And this final role was what Leonel knew this woman the most for...

She was none other than Sael, the young woman who had recruited both himself and Aina.

Chapter 612

They say that Hero Peak was the most powerful Peak. But, the true reason for this was because Valiant Hall never involved themselves in any resource disputes. If not for this, even if Valiant Hall wouldn't be the most powerful, they would definitely be a close second or third to Hero Peak.

When Sael made her way through the crowd, something that was not too difficult considering her stature, she suddenly felt a massive headache coming on when she saw that the core of this commotion was Leonel.

'Goddammit!' She screamed in her mind.

This was exactly what she didn't want to happen. And, of the elders of Valiant Heart who were against accepting Leonel, this was exactly what they had worried about as well.

If they accepted him into the organization, what would they do when he ran amok? How were they supposed to reprimand the potential Heir of a Seventh Dimensional family? They could hardly hold onto their place among Bronze Organizations, they had no right to even think of facing the ire of a Gold Organization.

In the end, their only recourse was in ignoring Leonel while he was here and hoping that he went away faster. In their minds, a genius like Leonel wouldn't be with them for very long. As long as they held out for a year or two, he would likely get bored of the girl he was chasing, or maybe he would even win her heart, then he would go off toward other adventures.

Of course, they had also considered that this was potentially part of the coming trials all Morales Clan Heirs had to face. But, that world was so far from them that they only understood tidbits that they could pick up from rumors.

Though Sael had believed this to be the case, after speaking to more knowledgeable elders, she realized how ridiculous her previous assertions were.

They, as a mere Fifth Dimension organization, had no chance in stepping foot into such a war. If they did so, they would only be asking for death.

This was ultimately why the decision was made. They would ignore Leonel. They wouldn't ask him for help because they were well aware that he had no way of helping them.

This decision is what resulted in Leonel's current situation.

Aside from Sael, the two Valiant Hall members that had come with her that day, and the highest echelon members of Valiant Heart, no one else was aware of Leonel's true identity.

And the truth was, that other than well learned individuals like Sael who also happened to have had the benefit of seeing much of the world, no one would be able to deduce Leonel's identity either.

It could even be said that if it wasn't Sael specifically who had gone that day, maybe, even to this point, no one would know Leonel's true identity. After all, there was a reason even to his death, Anared didn't recognize Leonel even after he used his Bronze Runes.

Leonel smiled when he saw Sael. "Long time, no see."

Long time no see your head!

Sael grit her teeth.

'This damned playboy chased a girl all the way here and he still hasn't given up yet. Now he's causing trouble I've got to clean up. How are we supposed to keep the prestige of Valiant Hall if we're lenient with him?'

"Come with me." Sael eventually said coldly.

Leonel raised an eyebrow. "What for?"

Sael felt like her head was about to explode. This damned brat, couldn't he understand that she was trying to be lenient? Though Leonel hadn't killed anyone, battling disciples outside of designated areas was also grounds for punishment.

Within the crowd, Radlis scratched his head at a loss. He had gotten a Valiant Hall member to help Leonel. But, who knew that he would actually beat those three seniors before he could even get her here.

It seemed that his help was more of a detriment than anything else.

Radlis sighed. "Pops always said to keep your nose out of everyone's business..."

If those who knew Radlis heard him say this, they'd probably bash him over the head. Maybe he should listen to his father more. But, it was clear that he had never taken these words very seriously.

ρ??∫??????

What Sael didn't know, though, was that Leonel really didn't know. From his perspective, he wasn't in the wrong considering he was attacked first. But now, Sael hadn't even asked what happened before asking him to come with her.

“He was attacked first!”

“Yea, those greasy seniors tried to put paws on our handsome little junior brother!”

“They deserve to be hung up a tree!”

“Yea!”

“Yea!”

Radlis dashed through the crowd, cupping his hand over his mouth and forming different voices. He was seemingly exceptionally proud of his female voice.

“Little junior brother, if she bullies you can come to me tonight. Big sis with soothe your aching limbs!”

The crowd seemed to grow more and more rowdy.

Sael frowned when she heard these things.

“You were attacked first?”

“Shouldn’t you have checked that first? What’s the point of asking now?” Leonel replied somewhat coldly.

Sael felt a headache coming on. Wasn’t this brat playing wronged little brother a bit too well? Dammit, you’re the potential Heir of a monstrous family, can’t you at least act like it?!

Sael’s expression darkened. But in the end, she pinched her brows and sighed.

Forget it. Wasn’t this the way of the universe? The powerful did as they pleased and the little people like her had to pick up after them.

“Who are the freshmen for this round?”

“Me!”

Radlis dashed out of the crowd. “Beautiful lady, I was so scared. You’re too fast, you left me so far behind. How could you do that?”

Sael sent Radlis a glance, causing him not to dare cross the half meter mark between them. But, his sly grin never disappeared.

Not long later, with a hint of embarrassment, the remaining three also made their presences known.

“Alright, follow me. To ensure that nothing else happens, I’ll lead you to finish the remaining procedures.”

Sael turned to leave before sending one last glance back. Luckily, she stopped herself before she looked all the way back and bit her teeth hard.

She had to pretend as though she had forgotten about the seniors left in the tree to appease Leonel, or else who knew if this shameless young master would make a small matter even larger than it was.

Unfortunately for her, as bad as her impression of Leonel was, Leonel's impression of her was even worse.

'These damned organizations (young masters), they're all the same.'

Leonel and Sael shook their heads.

As their backs disappeared into the city, news spread like a wildfire. The humiliation of members of Hero Peak suddenly became a hot topic.

Chapter 613

Leonel followed behind Sael, casually looking through the city at the feet of the seven peaks.

Though he had previously described this city as small, the truth was that this was only an illusion. It felt quite quaint due to all the nature in the surroundings. But, for a city to be at the base of seven separate Peaks, its size didn't need to be explained.

This space was taken over by the youths of Valiant Heart. Since a single round of recruitment brought in over a thousand, it wasn't a surprise that they managed to fill in all this space. But, Leonel could also tell that there were quite a number here that weren't members of Valiant Heart.

Though the city didn't have tourists, what it did have were many traders.

It only took a silent walk around the city for Leonel to understand what was happening.

Valiant Heart was likely only one protected corner of this Fifth Dimensional world. Beyond it, he was sure that there were countless resources. It was at this very city that these resources could be traded.

It seemed that Valiant Heart gave quite a bit of freedom to its disciples and students. But, Leonel was also sure that they took their fair share of taxes from these transactions.

'So that's how these factions are competing, huh?'

Sael and the others had no idea how much Leonel had picked up on a single pass through of the city. He could clearly see that the shops and various establishments he passed through were separated into six avenues. There was no doubt that these six represented the six Peaks.

It seemed that there was a lot of tension in the underbelly of this organization. But, this also bred a competitive fire that could fuel later generations.

The question was... could this fire be turned off in the face of a common enemy? Or would Valiant Heart eat itself alive?

"This is Valiant Hall." Sael finally led the group to the core of the city.

Before them, there was an ancient building that seemed to be the cross of a world center and Roman architecture. Leonel thought it was a shame that they didn't have pyramids considering their style of dress, but he doubted that anyone here would even understand what he was saying if he brought it up.

He found it curious though. Though this large building had quirks that existed outside of what one would expect from Roman architecture, it was still eerily similar. Leonel wondered which came first... was Earth influenced by outside powers?

"This is where you will register yourselves and become official warriors of Valiant Heart."

'So that's what they call themselves?'

Sael led them to be registered one by one.

It turned out that the spatial rings they were given, not only acted as the life saving treasure Sael once mentioned, but also acted as their form of identification. Leonel found the number of functions they could pack into such a small device to be quite fascinating.

Though he had always said that the more parts a Craft had, the more complex it was. There was also another second direction of complexity. And this was incredibly small and miniature Crafts that managed to pack a lot of things into a small volume. ρ???(?????)

Leonel wasn't certain which was more complex as a whole. But, what he did know was that he had already built a Craft with many parts, but he had yet to do the opposite. This left his mind spinning with a lot of untapped potential.

Leonel was absentmindedly registered, barely paying attention as Sael led them around the city once again.

“... This is the location of the Valiant Vault. Usually there are only three methods of entry. The first is the golden tags you all should have gotten during the entrance exam. The second is by any number of Peak Rivalry events that happen over the course of the year. And, the third is by breaking Peak Records.

“Of these methods, the easiest is definitely the entrance exam, so I hope you all took advantage. I hear that if you accumulate ten golden tags, you can even trade for a Tier 9 weapon. 100 golden tags will get you a Quasi Bronze weapon. And though it's nearly impossible, there is a rewards of a Tier 1 Bronze treasure if you accumulate 1000 golden tags.”

Sael thought that her words would excite the group, but when she looked back, she only saw that they were all gazing toward Leonel with weird faces.

“... Though I say this, I advise that you all take advantage of the golden tickets you all have now. Sometimes you have to spend money to make money. You're all currently too weak to even think of earning golden tickets by other means. It's better to improve yourselves now.”

The more Sael spoke, the more odd she felt that none of them were moving.

Radlis finally cleared his throat. “... Um, beautiful big sister, we don't have any golden tickets.”

Sael frowned. “How's that possible? That old man always gives those who ...”

Her words paused, finally following everyone's gaze back to Leonel.

Finally realizing that something was off, Leonel looked around. Seeing Valiant Vault proudly displayed in front of him, he just shrugged.

“Sorry, I gave all my golden tags to someone else.”

Sael's lip twitched.

Without a choice, Sael could only move on, introducing the other locations of Valiant City before dropping them off at their designated residences.

“Stay put here for as long as you can.” She said sternly. “And don't cause any trouble.”

Though she seemed to be speaking to them all, her gaze never left Leonel.

Sael grit her teeth and walked away after realizing that Leonel didn't seem to pick up on her hints. She had managed to stop any trouble by being by his side, but she couldn't exactly do this all the time, right?

‘... I'll have to assign a mission in Valiant Hall and have someone keep an eye on the situation so it doesn't get too out of hand...’

Sael rushed away as Leonel prepared to walk into his abode.

What they were both unaware of was the fact that news had finally drifted to Apestus' ears.

Chapter 614

Aphestus sat on a meditation pillar that stood five meters tall. One leg dangled over the edge while he brought his other knee to his chest. His gaze peered over the ledge, gazing upon the few that had come to report matters to him.

This seemingly ordinary pillar was actually one of the resources that youths of Valiant Heart pined over. Yet, Aphestus was using it as a casual sitting stool, not even practicing Force as one would expect.

However, at this moment, the few beneath him didn't have the luxury of thinking about how wasteful their vice leader was being.

Seeing that crooked smile that hung on Aphestus' face, with their experience, they could tell that he was just a step away from blowing his lid.

"... We... We tried our best to cut them down, vice leader. But, for some reason, no matter how hard we tried, we couldn't. There's some weird space distortion around the tree... As best as we can tell... If someone more powerful than us doesn't go..."

The words of the young man were cut off by Aphestus' laughter.

"You want someone more powerful to go? Someone recognizable maybe? Somewhat of a genius that everyone has seen before?"

Aphestus laughed even more.

He felt as though he was getting out of character in just this past day. Often times, humans fell into the trap of doing something they never would. But, instead of backtracking after they realized they had made a mistake, they rather chose to double down, causing them to continue down a rabbit hole of doing things they wouldn't ever usually do.

Maybe Aphestus had fallen into this very hole.

Him? Spending time on a rookie? What an absolute joke.

If it wasn't for the precarious time they were in, he wouldn't have even been sent to personally recruit anyone. Even though Aina had activated the pillars on her first try, Hero Peak wasn't short of individuals who had done exactly that.

In fact, while Aina had succeeded in climbing the mountain pass that had been nerfed under the presence of the elders, there were no shortage of people on Hero Peak who had succeeded under the full brunt of the pillar's strength.

Yet, over this semi-decent talent, he had actually landed himself in such a situation. It was quite pathetic.

This matter would be over as easily as him taking action personally, but that would only make a matter he thought was insignificant to begin with even worse.

How could he not be furious? It was as though he had tried to squash an ant, only for it to survive and shit into his food later. It was infuriating.

"What a good little brat." Aphestus chuckled, the Force around him trembling as his muscles ripple like they had a mind of their own.

"Leave them up there for all I care. They can bleed to death."

Aphestus rose his dangling leg, entering a state and posture of meditation. Hidden patterns on the pillar he sat upon began to glow, causing a typhoon of Force to form around him. ρ???∫???????

The youths at the bottom of the pillar looked at one another, not knowing what to do. But in the end, they could only leave. None of them dared to disturb Aphestus while he was in meditation.

'I don't need to do anything any longer. Speaking the name of Hero Peak so casually was already enough to seal your fate.'

...

As the commotions was only growing as more and more people attempted and failed to take the trio down from the tree, Leonel had entered his home for the next small while.

As one might expect, the accommodations for rookies weren't exactly lavish. And, since Leonel had given the Segmented Cube to Aina, he could only make do with what he had.

The only things Leonel had taken with him out of the Cube were his feather pen and Little Tolly.

Leonel didn't expect to be barred from seeing Aina. Even if he was, he didn't plan on taking it lying down. He had given her those things as though they might separate only so that she could focus on her training.

Leonel knew how important it was to her, so he decided to give her some time to focus on those things. As for him, his goal here wasn't exactly to become stronger. Though, that might happen as a by-product, his main goal was to gather resources.

The second reason Leonel had given Aina the Segmented Cube was because he believed that she would likely have a better training environment than he did. Only in a place like that would the Segmented Cube be able to grow faster.

'Resources, resources, resources...'

Leonel eyed his small bed and narrow window toward the outside. He hadn't gotten to experience college, but he felt like it wouldn't be much different from this at all. Though, his accommodations would have probably been better as a Five Star Quarterback...

'I guess the first thing I should do is focus on healing myself.'

Leonel made a decision. He couldn't keep running around like this.

It seemed like his worst injury were his cracked ribs, but the truth was that his burnt inner organs had something to say about that.

He really hadn't expected that using his Scarlet Star Force would have such a drastic impact on him, but now he had to deal with the consequences.

'I've already tried to improve [Grand Heal] as best I can... But it definitely can't heal me and is nowhere near good enough to heal coach. Maybe...'

Leonel took a deep breath. The last time he looked at the core of Merlin's Trial World, he almost passed out. But, since then, he had crossed into the peak of the Fourth Dimension with his Soul Force. Maybe he stood more of a chance now.

His only path forward seemed to be that complex world of Force Arts.

Leonel began to cast numerous spells to lock down the defenses of his small room and shelter him from distractions from the outside.

He had no idea the kind of surprise he was in for. And, even worse than that, he had no idea the kind of commotion his sudden disappearance would cause either.

Chapter 615

Leonel brought out a particular snowglobe from his spatial ring, staring at its surface for along while.

He could immediately tell that something had changed about it, but he couldn't quite put his finger on exactly what it was.

This particular snowglobe had spent no small amount of time in the Lab Setting, sitting on a shelf. And, what Leonel didn't know was that it had undergone this change long ago, more than half a year ago, in fact. However, in his caution, Leonel had kept at arm's length from anything related to it, choosing instead to focus on other things.

In the past, Leonel might have recklessly chosen to charge forth. But, learning a bit of caution, he brought out the only tool he could continuously rely on.

A part of his mind felt that he relied on the dictionary a bit too much. At least for now, though, he didn't feel that this was worth harping on.

"Is it safe for me to observe this Force Art?"

After a while of being unsure of how to approach this matter despite the fact his instincts were screaming at him every which way, Leonel decided on the most logical question.

[*Ping*]

[Replying to Seed, it is not completely safe.]

Leonel sighed. Once again with these overly straightforward answers.

The more Leonel learned about Crafting, though, the more he realized just what sort of feat it was for his father to create such a thing. If the dictionary had to be classified, Leonel was absolutely certain that it was beyond the Silver Grade.

Leonel expecting more complex answers was akin to wishing this dictionary would birth intelligence of its own. But at that point, the dictionary wouldn't just be a treasure, it would likely be capable of being classified as its own form of life.

Such a thing would be far beyond Leonel's scope of understanding and would likely be even beyond a Gold Grade treasure.

After thinking for a moment, Leonel settled on another question.

"What exactly is unsafe."

[*Ping*]

[The observation of Force Law Arts requires a strong foundation of mental fortitude and computational ability. It is inadvisable to observe this Force Law Art unless you have begun to reinforce your mind.]

'Force Law Art?'

Leonel was intrigued. This was the first time he had heard this term. It had some familiar parts, but wasn't entirely so. Realizing this, Leonel pressed for more answers. ρ???(???????)

[*Ping*]

[A Force Law Art is a category of Force Art that has no functional ability but rather lays the Law for the function of derivative Force Arts.]

The definition was simple, but Leonel felt as though an explosion had gone off in his mind. If he understood this to mean what he thought this meant, it was a massive boon.

Steadying his breathing, Leonel calmed himself. He had already understood that this must be the true reward from the Camelot Zone. However, what he still didn't understand was exactly what change it had undergone for him to feel as though it was so much different now than it had been in the past.

“What caused the change in this Force Law Art?”

[*Ping *]

[The Force Law Art was incomplete until the Mythological Zone it was constructed from was perfectly cleared.]

It was then that Leonel finally understood. He had thought that the only reward for completing the Camelot Zone and solving the love triangle was the evolution of Earth... But it turned out that he couldn't have been more wrong.

What function did a Force Law Art provide?

When Leonel embarked on the journey of improving Camelot's spells, he tried his best to deconstruct their Force Arts into their most simple form. By breaking them down and rebuilding them, he was able to somewhat better understand how spells were formed.

As a result of this, he became capable of layering and combining spells of even two separate attributes together – as he displayed during his battle with the Puppet Master.

However, ultimately, the improvement Leonel was able to bring about wasn't very great. Though he allowed a Peak Third Dimensional spell to display power rivaling that of a Fourth Dimensional one, it wasn't enough of a change to be worth it.

When Leonel battled the seniors just now, he didn't even consider using spells because the tradeoff just wasn't worth it despite the fact his mind was the most powerful part of himself at the moment.

What this Force Law Art provided was a path forward. Rather than stumbling forward himself, it was like Leonel had been handed a decryption key. Now, the enigma that had been the laws that governed Camelot's spells opened up to him and read no differently from any other book...

And, the best part of all of this was the fact that the root of the Law itself wasn't restricted by Dimensions.

There was no doubt that there were some Mythological Zones that were more valuable than others. Even if one cleared two and gained full rewards from both, there was no guarantee that the new magic system one gained from it would have the same potential.

This was all to say that no two magic systems were built to reach the true heights of the universe and the odds of stumbling into a new magic system that could rival the oldest of the existing ones was slim to none...

Still, even with all that being said, if there was going to be one world capable of producing such a magic system from the very first Mythological Zone it produced...

It would most definitely be Earth!

As for whether Camelot's magic system truly had such potential, only time would tell. However, Leonel didn't mind even if it became useless after the Fourth Dimension. All he wanted was for it to be of use now. As for the future? He could deal with it then.

With these thoughts completed, Leonel sat on his small bed and sank his mind into the snowglobe, still unaware that trouble had already come knocking.

Chapter 616

Leonel immediately felt overwhelmed.

In order to hide the existence of the Force Law Art, a treasure Leonel was sure that even worlds would war over, he had chosen to keep it within the snowglobe. But, he hadn't taken time to consider the disconnect his mind and body would feel in doing so.

Leonel felt as though his concept of time had been completely destroyed. As much as he would love to believe that this meant that he had unlocked some new cheat, he knew better than to think this.

Maybe it was a product of his high Dream Force affinity, but he was quite good at seeing through illusions of the mind. As a result, he could tell that while his mind felt as though time had come to a grinding halt, his body was still very much experiencing it in real time.

This seemingly small matter resulted in Leonel wasting over an hour before he even thought of gazing at the Force Law Art.

Leonel immediately retracted his mind from the snowglobe, a cold sweat on his forehead. He realized then that had it not been for his high Dream Force affinity, he may very well have been stuck in the snowglobe to the end of his life.

Of course, things wouldn't be so exaggerated. As long as just one person came to check on him, he would be able to leave. Well... As long as that person was determined enough to smash through the protections he had put up. But, it was a scary thought nonetheless.

'Wow... So this is Time Force...'

This was the first time Leonel had come across Time Force and it was only now he truly understood how fearsome it was.

Much like everything else in his Segmented Cube, he took the snowglobes for granted. But the reality was that their value was impossibly great as well. If someone with Time Force affinity knew that Leonel had such things and in such large quantities, they'd likely be willing to give up whatever large amount of wealth they had for just one. Well... That or they'd go all out to kill him.

Being able to have the opportunity to observe Time Force at work was rare. Yet, it seemed like Leonel could do so whenever he wanted.

Leonel took a deep breath. This time, he steeled his mind and was prepared for the sudden change.

The world within the snowglobe was an expanse of white fog. At least, that was what it was normally when there was nothing to be stored within it. But now, there was a massive globe of floating golden symbols.

It felt as though Leonel had stepped into the inner workings of a clock. Every shift in a rune or symbol here would cause a chain reaction that ricocheted throughout the whole Force Law Art. Just standing there, Leonel found himself awed at its beauty.

At that moment, Leonel felt a tiny prick on his finger.

'20 minutes already...?'

This time, Leonel had commanded Little Tolly to give him a small prick in 20 minute intervals. He could hardly believe that even though he felt like he was on guard this time that he still managed to wash away so much time so easily.

Still, there was a difference now. Leonel hadn't gotten lost due to some feeling of time dilation, but rather due to the beauty of the Force Law Art.

Maybe only he would be able to say that such a complex system was beautiful, but this was truly how Leonel saw it. If he could one day create a craft so perfect... Just what level would it be at?

'So that's why Camelot uses Spiritual Wood as a medium... Ugh, Spiritual Wood is such a terrible name. Let's call it... Mage Wood.... Wait, no, that's even worse. Let's throw out the Wood part entirely, it ruins everything...'

Leonel settled on the name Spiritual Medium. Because, even after just 20 minutes of study, Leonel realized that this so-called Spiritual Medium didn't have to be Wood at all.

The basic principle of Camelot's spells was amplification. ρ??∪??????

When Leonel was first learning Light Elemental Mage Arts, he was stunned by how simple they were. But, what he soon found out afterward was that the simple layered on itself to form more and more complex spell structures. The amplification of this layering was where the strength of powerful spells came from.

A Spiritual Medium took advantage of this foundational law of Camelot's Mage Arts. During the conjuring of a spell, it amplified each one of the individual basic parts, thus making the whole more powerful.

Leonel realized right then that if he really wanted to heal his coach, maybe reforming a new healing spell wasn't necessary. If he could just find an excellent Spiritual Medium, his strength could increase by ten times without even learning a single new spell.

As for what could be used as a Spiritual Medium, Leonel realized that anything with high Soul Force compatibility could work. The reason the trees Camelot formed their wands out of worked so well was

because they were a special breed capable of purifying regular Force. This made them good outlets for Soul Force which was essentially just that.

‘I don’t have any Spiritual Mediums powerful enough and I also don’t want to carry around a wand...’

Maybe it was the teenage angst in him, but Leonel had no intention of running around like Gandalf.

From what Leonel could tell, the wand format was just a product of circumstance. Wood wasn’t exactly the easiest material to work with and restricting the Spiritual Tree too much would cause it to lose its functions.

But, if Leonel picked a better Spiritual Medium, then he could mold it into anything he liked.

Leonel nodded to himself. But for now, he didn’t act on this thought.

The Spiritual Medium he needed would have to be high grade within the Fourth Dimension. Getting such a resource from this place would require strength. And that once again brought him back to a need to heal himself.

Leonel turned his attention back to the massive inner-workings of the Force Law Art again.

Just 20 minutes got him such a breakthrough. Though it seemed meaningless and quite tiny, one needed to consider how long it must have taken Camelot to realize the benefits of a Spiritual Medium.

There were many discoveries throughout history that seemed trivial... Until they suddenly weren’t.

...

Outside of Leonel’s dorm room-like accommodations, the commotion was only growing.

A youth stood amidst many. His face was flushed red from exertion and his mouth opened so wide one could fit two fists into it.

He looked somewhat comical, but the booming voice that came out as a result had already been shaking the freshman houses for several hours already.

“... COWARD OF THE FRESHMAN CLASS, COME SEEK YOUR PUNISHMENT!”

All around this roaring youth, there was a group of what seemed to be six. But considering the emblem on their neckwear, everyone knew that they were from Hero Peak.

“Hm, it seems that coward isn’t enough of an insult for him. Start with Plan B.” One of the youths said plainly.

Chapter 617

The young man with the large mouth hesitated when he heard these words. Saying such things...

Usually, when the behemoths faced off against each other, it was always the little people who suffered most. He was just a freshman, no different from Leonel. Yet, because he, quite literally, had a big mouth, he ended up in this situation.

In truth, he was among the group who had surrounded Leonel and Aina during that time. But, for obvious reasons, he hadn’t been able to lay a hand on either. As a result, he ended up venting his frustrations in one of the few open bars freshman could afford and happened to be overheard. Once again... because of his big mouth.

Now, he had been standing here, yelling insults for the past several hours. By now, his throat was scorched and his tongue felt heavy. He really needed water, but he was also too afraid to ask these seniors for such aid. He couldn’t even muster up the courage to look at them.

From time to time, he would send pleading glances toward his fellow freshman, but they only returned rage fueled gazes back.

These were the freshman living quarters after all. In an ironic twist, Leonel, the one person they wanted to bother the most, was likely the only one unbothered by this turn of events.

Obviously, as mere freshman, they couldn't even dream of turning their anger toward the seniors. If even the likes of Ingkath had to tread carefully around these youths, who were they to do any different as youths who couldn't even match up to him?

As a result, everyone turned their anger toward their fellow freshmen. Why the hell did he have to have such a big mouth?

The young man was known as Thetris. But at this moment, the only thing he could be happy about was that very few knew this.

He wanted to cry real tears, but could only suck it up.

'I'll just have to wear a mask and change my voice until all of this blows over...'

Taking a deep breath and holding back a stream of salty liquid, Thetris began to bellow once more.

"I HEAR YOUR NAME IS LEONEL! IT'S TOO BAD THAT YOU WERE TOO MUCH OF A COWARD TO TELL US YOURSELF, SO WE HAD TO CALL UP YOUR MOTHER! DON'T WORRY, WE GAVE HER A GOOD TIME! HOW ELSE DO YOU THINK WE GOT HER TO SELL OUT HER OWN SON?!"

A silence fell over the freshman quarters.

Beads of sweat fell down Thetris' brow. He really thought that there was no way any man would allow such words to be said about his mother. If Leonel was ignoring him before, there was simply no fathomable way that he would continue to do so.

The eerie silence that fell over the freshman quarters felt like a calm before the storm.

But, even after more than two minutes, there was still no movement from the freshman quarters.

The youth beside gave Thetris another signal. Since the first wasn't enough, they would just go down the rabbit hole. He really wanted to see if this Leonel would truly not dare to step out after they were through raking his name through the mud.

[Author's Note: Fair warning... I got a bit creative with these ones... I think I need to see a therapist]
p??J??????

“... A man who doesn't step out to protect his own mother's name? Ah, I get it! When you were being conceived, your old man had his cock in his hand, bending over the side of the bed with sweat pouring down his face, taking bets for which of your whore mother's gang bangers would father you!”

...

“... I also hear that your mother birthed you along with a steaming pile of shit! She was so cum drunk, she couldn't tell which pile of garbage was you! Who the hell knows what she was doing up until she went into labor?!”

...

“... Don't worry about your little girlfriend! We have real men over at Hero Peak, she's getting your mother's treatment and then some! When next you see her, she won't even be able to remember your name! Her vocabulary will be whittled down to 'Yes, daddy!' and 'Right away, daddy!'”

...

Thetris' barrage of insults only seemed to grow worse and worse. No stone was left unturned. It was like a rapid fire collection of what would only expect to find in the worst kind of doujin. It was a horror to listen to without a doubt.

The youths who had come to the freshman quarters knew their limits. They didn't dare to cause a commotion throughout the whole city, or else they would be annoying people they couldn't afford to

annoy. So, Thetris' voice was restricted to the few kilometer long strip assigned to freshman, but that didn't stop news from spreading like wildfire, especially after there was not a single movement from Leonel even after all this time.

On a building a distance away, a youth wearing the emblem of Valiant Hall sat, looking on with a half bored, half amused expression. He had come here to protect Leonel at Sael's will, but he didn't expect this brat to actually be such a coward.

'Aiya, of all the Hero Peak members you had to catch the attention of, it had to be that sadistic bastard.'

The young man, who went by Gersan, looked at the back profile of the youth standing by Thetris, handing him orders every so often.

Even just his back view made him seem like a writhing snake, ready to pounce.

He had only been in Valiant Heart for three years, yet he had already been promoted to a white belt and was only a step away from entering the ranks of blue belts.

Unfortunately, his strength was just one aspect. What he was truly known for was being the King of the Ores. He was a business savvy individual who practically hoarded merits thanks to his borderline evil business practices.

Him targeting Leonel like this was truly a case of bad luck. It seemed that this King of Ores, Sarrieth, was using Leonel as a stepping stone to ease his promotion to blue belt.

'Tch... Bad luck indeed. But, what does this have to do with me?'

Gersan leaned back on the rooftop, half closing his eyes.

Chapter 618

Leonel had no idea what was happening on the outside. How could he? Even if someone was knocking on his door at this very moment, he wouldn't hear it.

The more he studied the Force Law Art, the greater his comprehension became. Every so often, he would test this by, somewhat ironically, buffing the protections on his little room. This only made it even more unlikely for him to hear what was going on.

Even if the whole of the freshman quarters fell to an earthquake, it was very likely that Leonel would be left unharmed. He might not even be able to tell that such a thing was happening to begin with.

Leonel completely immersed himself in the world of Camelot's magic system. He made one discovery after another. He almost felt like a kid who had gone back to grade school. The rapid changes in his thought process almost left him in awe.

He realized then that he was actually forming a way of thought.

All throughout one's formative years, maybe what was most important wasn't what you learned, but how you learned it. What was more important than how much you knew, was the way you had come to understand it all.

Unfortunately, too often, methods of thought were extremely high level classes left to youths who had already had their minds molded. By then, it was often too late to change much of anything.

But at this moment, Leonel felt that he was in a unique position. Not only was he aware of the importance of this method of thought, but he was also simultaneously in the position of a youth learning everything for the first time.

He immediately realized that this was yet another opportunity. And, maybe just as quickly, he realized what the corner stone for his method of thought should be.

There were two factors: flexibility and foundation.

As described before, Camelot's magic system was bottom up. Rather than constructing new spells for every use case, what it instead did was build upon existing spells to create new, more powerful and more useful ones.

One might wonder how this might be different from other magic systems. Well, one could take, for example, Leonel's Morales family's Metal Synergy Lineage Factor. This alone could be constituted as its own magic system, this one reliant on the absorption of metals. One could build an entire civilization on this concept alone.

These two magic systems were similar in that they both relied on setting strong foundations. Leonel could build new affinities for himself, but he had to start from the bottom and work his way up. In this way, the two were very similar.


However, where they differed was in their flexibility. The foundational pieces of Camelot's magic system could be easily swapped and weren't as rigid as the Morales family's.

If Leonel started building a Space affinity for himself, he couldn't just discard it for the sake of a Time affinity. In Camelot's system, though, if Leonel began to build his way toward an extremely powerful Fire Mage Art, swapping out its foundational pieces would be as easy as thinking it.

One might think that this wasn't a fair comparison. After all, one was a Mage Art that could be deployed and retrieved at will while the latter was a body cultivation art that was in perpetual action.

But, Leonel felt that this was an improper way to think about it, especially the more he studied Camelot's magic system.

Leonel believed that the best way to maximize this magic system was to focus on the Element you had affinity with and slowly build a massive spell structure over time. This spell structure would combine all the lowest level spells you had the highest compatibility with to form the strongest Mage Art you could cast.

If one looked at it this way, with the spell being a lifelong partner that could be refined over several decades, to centuries, to even millennia... Then was it really so different? 

Leonel believed that if given enough time, Camelot would have eventually stumbled onto this truth as well. They already had the foundation and this was obviously the most logical next step.

‘Yes... This is the right path, the most optimal path for this magic system... I’ll call it... Mage Core.’

Mage Core...

As a young mage, one would begin to form this Mage Core within one’s Ethereal Glabella. Not much unlike the Spear Embryo within Leonel’s, one would nurture and help foster the growth of this Mage Core.

One would begin with the lowest level basic spells and build upward, eventually constructing an ultimate spell unique to yourself.

This was the basic idea Leonel settled upon after the second hour concluded. But, by the time he got to the fourth, it evolved once again. By the time a half day had passed, the concept of this Mage Core had been morphed once more.

All the while, Force Elements were slowly congealing within Leonel’s Ethereal Glabella.

At first, it was a sphere. But, it began to slowly change, growing a stem, and eventually beautiful twinkling leaves.

As the hours and eventually days ticked by, a gorgeous multi-colored flower had bloomed within Leonel’s mind.

Its stem was a swirl of colors that eventually opened to a budding rose.

It had one petal that flickered with a deep crimson, licks of fire dancing across its surface.

It had another petal that seemed white on first inspection, but had a delicate blue hue to it. It twinkled like the finest stars in the sky.

Yet another petal was a radiant gold. Yet, unlike the heavy metal, it waved in the wind, looking more flexible than the lightest feather.

The final petal was a deep black. Its every movement caused the space around it to crack and fold. How it managed to stay in place without shattering the delicate flower to pieces was a wonder of nature.

Leonel felt that calling this a Mage Core was no longer appropriate. However, he chose to stick with it, not knowing how this budding flower might choose to change in the future.

On that day, almost half a month after he first entered meditation, Leonel expelled a long breath and opened his eyes.

At that moment, a swirl of Force shot toward him, inadvertently shattering his protections.

A massive cyclone formed overhead, throwing the freshman quarters into another upheaval.

Leonel's Mage Core rose within his Ethereal Glabella, finding a home amidst his three rotating Stars.

Chapter 619

The sudden change took hold of the whole of Valiant City. Whereas the commotion had once only taken hold of the freshman quarters, at this point, it was as though the Force of Valiant Heart had all chosen to concentrate toward one region.

There wasn't a single person that didn't sense the change. From the weakest to the strongest, they all looked toward one particular direction.

Leonel looked down at his own body, feeling strength flooding through it.

'This is it...' Leonel lip curled.

One had to remember that the core of Merlin's Trial World encompassed the whole magic system of Camelot. Back then... was it only mages that had entered?

The answer was obviously no. So, in that case, why was it that it seemed that Leonel was so focused on the path of a Mage but didn't say anything about Knights from start to end?

The truth was that there was a thin line of separation between the two! The path that Camelot had split into two had always meant to be one!

The four petals on Leonel's Mage Core bloomed, growing a fold in size. At that moment, a fifth petal began to form, growing until it balanced the rest into a state of absolute perfection. Even the crackling of the black petal seemed to ease, calming until it only sent small ripples in every direction.

This fifth petal was none other than Leonel's Earth variant affinity. It held a beautiful bronze color, its every movement causing what sounded like sharpening metal to ring through the air.

This was the process of Leonel's body perfectly combining with his magic. He could feel it coursing through his pores, filling his body up with a brimming strength.

As the Light Element flooded through him, his body began to rapidly heal. As the Fire and Star Elements surged through his veins, he felt as though his resistance against his own Scarlet Star Force had skyrocketed. As the Earth Element rippled through his body, the foundation of his Metal Body grew steadier, opening up a path toward forward progress.

And finally... As the Space Element shook his body to its very core, he felt as though his Divine Armor had fused with him toward a new level of perfection.

'This is Camelot's true magic system... A system where the best Spiritual Medium is none other than one's own body.'

Leonel felt like he could call down the elements with a thought, fueling his actions with the Force of the world.

It was difficult for Leonel to concentrate his half month of study into just a few words, but if he had to... It almost felt like he had turned his body into a lightning rod for magic.

Whereas in the past he needed to use his Soul Force to draw Force Arts to call down the elements, he didn't need Force Arts to do so anymore. It was almost as though Leonel had gained an ability.

However, what was scariest about this ability was that when Leonel consciously chose to draw Force Arts... Not only would it be even faster than his already blazing speed, it would be tens of times more powerful.

This was the true beginning of Camelot's magic system!

'[Grand Heal].' ρ??∫??????

A pillar of golden light fell from the skies. It tore a path through the dorm rooms, leaving everything practically unscathed. The only change was that everyone who passed by this light suddenly felt lighter on their feet, like all their hidden injuries and worries had been washed away.

Leonel took a deep breath, soaking up all the golden lights as though a drunkard.

With just a single [Grand Heal], he had gone from 70% healed to over 80%. He cast it a few more times, feeling intoxicated. After the sixth, he finally managed to return to 100%.

He felt his bones pop and crackle. He stood, the floors beneath his feet threatening to shatter.

Having stepped into the true gate of this magic system, Leonel didn't even have to modify the spells he already knew to display combat prowess equivalent to the Fourth Dimension. This was how great a boost forming his Mage Core had given him. Even the simplest of spells had become exponentially more powerful.

‘It’s not quite enough to heal coach, but I only need to focus on rebuilding the spell from the ground up to get the results I want... If I was a doctor, restructuring healing spells would be much easier, but unfortunately –’

As Leonel was lost in his thoughts, the commotion of Force he had caused slowed until it was as though nothing had even happened. It was at that exact moment that a voice familiar to all the freshman sounded once again.

“... Leonel, you scolding piece of trash...!”

‘Huh...?’ Leonel’s gaze seemed to penetrate through the walls. He didn’t like having his thoughts interrupted and he would have already put up another silencing array had it not been for the fact he just heard his own name.

“... I heard your mother picked your last name out of a hat! Too bad she couldn’t remember who her bastard kid’s daddy was...!”

Leonel’s gaze went cold.

...

Outside, Thetris’ voice continued to boom. He had been shocked by the sudden shift in Force, but he regained his confidence after it dimmed down.

Over the past two weeks, he had gotten more bold. Since Leonel was too scared to come out, what did he have to fear exactly?

The best part was that he was also getting paid handsomely and he didn’t even have to yell continuously like he had in the past. Now, he only had to say something every few hours and he even got ample time for rest and play. His only task was to remind everyone that Leonel was a coward who didn’t dare to do anything in the face of such insults.

He was quite happy with this arrangement even though he wasn't necessarily needed. By now, Leonel's face was plastered all over Valiant City in the form of a bounty parody. Even without him, people wouldn't forget.

He took a swing of water, a wide grin on his face.

“Did you know, Leonel?! Everyone knows you as Leo the Cuck now! The bounty posters are everywhere! It's a shame you can't see them! It's alright though, every night when we fuck your girlfriend to sleep, she cuddles up with one in her arms!”

Thetris took another swing of his water, ready to shout out at the top of his lungs again, but his words were suddenly caught in his throat.

He didn't know when, but a tall shadow had suddenly appeared before him.

...

On the roof of a building not far away, Gersan's eyes shot open.

Chapter 620

Leonel looked down toward Thetris whose mouth hung half open. The latter was so stunned by the sudden change that the swig of water he had just taken drizzled out from his mouth, falling down his chin and drenching his shirt completely.

Leonel's hand was like a snaking whip, shooting forward so quickly that Thetris didn't even have a chance to register its movement, let alone react to it.

Thetris keeled over, feeling as though every bone in his rib cage had shattered simultaneously.

His body seemed to lag behind the shot of pain he felt. Time dilated, his body convulsing in a fit of pain before, only then, shooting backward like a rocket.

He crashed into a thick pillar, his spine warping.

The freshman quarters fell into another bout of silence.

Truthfully, over the past two weeks, they had learned to live with Thetris' voice. They had no choice in the matter. It was either they accept it, or leave Valiant Heart entirely. None of them dared to deal with a person protected by a white belt, so how would they dare touch Thetris?

The pillar Thetris had just crashed into was just one of many surrounding a community meditation square. It was meant to be one of the many tasked with helping concentrate Force in this region. Though it was much worse than the personal meditation rooms, as freshman who couldn't afford anything, this was the best they could do with.

Knowing this, there was no surprise, then, that there weren't a small number of people present. Many of them had learned to ignore Thetris, so they hadn't seen the initial collision. But, they had most definitely heard the end result.

When they looked toward the direction Thetris had come flying from, they all felt their heart skip a beat.

Leonel was completely expressionless, but the energies around him seemed to be seething in rage for him. The wind around him was still, almost too still. But, it was as though the world refused to regain its normal color.

Leonel's figure blurred, appearing before Thetris in another blink.

"Hey, hey, hey."

Leonel found his wrist clamped down by someone else just as he was about to grab Thetris' head.

"What are you trying to do here exactly? Kill him?" Gersan frowned, looking at Leonel as though he had lost his mind. "If you were going to vent, don't you think it's a bit pathetic to wait until the true culprits have all disappeared just to take out your rage on a pawn? Are you even a man?"

Gersan's disdain for Leonel boiled over. He couldn't help but feel disgust when he looked at this young man.

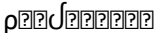
He didn't know why Sael had asked him to protect him, but if he had to guess, it was because Leonel's family background wasn't simple.

But, for Leonel to have a family background robust enough for Sael to tiptoe around him, yet end up in Valiant Heart... Well, wasn't the conclusion obvious?

He was too pathetic to make it in his bigshot family so he came here to flex his talent, only to realize that Valiant Heart had its fair share of steel plates to accidentally kick.

The result was him hiding away in his little dorm room for weeks, only to come and bully someone far weaker than him.

If that wasn't pathetic, then what was?

It was clear that many agreed with Gersan's words. The freshman remained silent in their places of meditation, but most of them agreed. Their looks of disdain alone seemed to make the atmosphere several times heavier. 

But, what no one expected was for Gersan to have hardly finished his words before he suddenly found a knee approaching his chin.

'Huh...?'

Gersan couldn't even react before he felt his jaw rattle. It was as though a steel club had swept up and through him. If it wasn't for the fact he had just shut his mouth, he would have bitten his tongue clean off.

Leonel ripped his wrist out of Gersan's grasp.

His fist cocked back even as Gersan's feet lifted off the ground. Flames suddenly erupted on his knuckles, concentrating to the point they formed a level a crimson that seemed reserved for hell.

BANG!

Leonel's fist collided against Gersan's chest. The latter flew backward, a trail of smoke and crackling flames following his trajectory.

It felt like he had been before Leonel in one instant, but in the next, he had collided with another pillar, blood flying from his lips.

Gersan sank down, violently coughing.

Unlike Thetris, though, he didn't lose consciousness immediately. He landed on the ground, his face grimacing in pain, but the flicker of rage behind his gaze was palpable.

"Haha... Attacking a member of Valiant Hall... it seems you really have a death wish."

Gersan growled, pushing his body up. At that moment, his blue eyes flickered with arcs of lightning.

He stood, his body exploding forward with an impossible speed.

But, he lost track of Leonel almost instantly. When next he saw him, he found a palm closing in on his face.

Leonel appeared to Gersan's side, his palm shattering the latter's nose. In that very instant, his fingers clamped down on Gersan's skull.

His back flexed, his thigh bulging.

BANG!

The back of Gersan's head smashed into the ground.

The stone tiles of the community meditation square shattered, shooting up into the skies in a rain of rubble.

Gersan's eyes rolled back, their whites looking up into the sky.

Leonel stood, his pace even as he walked back to Thetris. It was as though he had never fought Gersan to begin with, as though he never truly took the latter seriously.

Just like that, in the blink of an eye, a promising youth of Valiant Hall, a genius who had already gotten promoted to a white belt, was defeated.

Leonel kneeled by Thetris' side, picking up the latter by his hair to force their eyes level.

Thetris teetered and winced, his consciousness fading in and out. He wanted nothing more than to collapse and forget the pain his body was in, but the more Leonel moved him around, the less of a chance he had at this dream of his.

“Start speaking, or else I'm going to pin your headless corpse to this pillar.”

