

Descent 851

Chapter 851

Leonel's eyes narrowed. He suddenly felt that his entire body was being chained down by something. He had a feeling that if he tried to cast a Mage Art, it would fall flat. He was even having a difficult time communicating with his Lineage Factors. In fact, of all his Lineage Factors, his Spear Domain Lineage Factor was the only one he could sense clearly.

After some thought, Leonel realized that the only reason he could sense his Lineage Factors at all was likely due to King's Might. If it wasn't for the will of King's Might, it might have been possible that all of his strength would have been locked away.

As for why he could sense his Spear Domain Lineage Factor the clearest, it was definitely because he currently held a spear in his hands. The combination of King's Might and this was likely why...

These were only speculations in the end. Leonel had no way of being certain that his deductions were correct. What he did know, though, was that his body suddenly felt heavy without his Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor. He hadn't realized just how much he had relied on it.

Due to the heaviness of his Metal Body, he was meant to be inherently slow and lumbering, especially at Tier 9. Of course, this problem was mostly mitigated because the Metal Synergy Lineage Factor was so high level, so the drawbacks weren't as obvious as other defensive Lineage Factors. However, that didn't mean there wasn't any trouble at all.

Unfortunately, while these invisible chains could seal away much of his strength, it couldn't change the heaviness of his Tier 9 Metal Body. Now, not only did he have the drawbacks of a heavy body, he couldn't even activate his Runes to maximize its usage.

'Fantastic...' Leonel smiled bitterly as the illusory spirit before him finally formed.

The spirit became a semi-transparent blue that looked like a paler shade of the star in the far off distance. It didn't have a face, but it wore an elaborate armor. Whether by coincidence or intention, it too wielded a spear as it faced Leonel.

Without warning, the spirit shot forward, its spear whistling.

No, it wasn't whistling, at least not in the normal, slicing through wind sense. From what Leonel could tell, the spirit and its weapon was unobstructed by wind as though they had become one with it. What was causing the whistling was the spiraling Star Force that accumulated at the spear's very tip.

However, even when the spear was just half a foot from his face, Leonel had yet to move. It wasn't because he was frozen stiff... But rather because...

It was too easy.

If there was one opponent Leonel feared the least in going against, it was a spearman. Especially a pure spearman who didn't seem to have any other abilities.

Leonel had seen so many styles of the spear and used just as many of them. His Dream World was filled with a countless range of techniques, each with their unique quirks, triggers and weaknesses immaculately marked down.

Even though his Spear Domain Ring didn't seem to activate against an illusory spear... It didn't matter.

Leonel's spear shot forward in an almost casual arc. The spirit couldn't react before it was bisected from the shoulder to the opposite hip, its spear completely losing its momentum. $\rho \int \rho \rho \rho \rho \rho \rho \rho$

As it fell, it turned into motes of light that entered Leonel's body. But, this only cause Leonel to frown all the more.

One would have thought that defeating the spirit should come with a reward? So why was it that his body felt even heavier instead? Panda Novel

It was just a small change, maybe only as small as a fraction of a gram, not even heavy enough to match up to a feather. But, how could Leonel miss something like this, even if it was so subtle?

The moment he had noticed that he was being suppressed, he had focused many of his minds onto monitoring every change in his body from now on. He wouldn't miss this even if he was absentminded, let alone now that he was intentionally looking out for such a thing.

If this trial only added more chains to you as more and more powerful enemies came and went... It would be troublesome indeed.

But, none of this explained where that overwhelming feeling of danger came from.

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There were, indeed, multiple other roads of light leading to the same star. The moment Leonel's feet had touched down, it was as though something numerous had been waiting for finally began. Leonel seemed to be the only one unaware that he was not alone.

With how swiftly and almost without caution the other youths were moving, it was easy to tell that they were racing against an enemy they couldn't see, bringing out as much speed as they could to try and widen the gap between themselves and the others.

Unfortunately, the roads were simply too far apart. Just how massive was a star even in the Third Dimension? Even if there were thousands, tens of thousands of roads even, with how long they were and with how large the blue star was, it would be a long while before any of them set sights on one another.

Still, that didn't mean there weren't a few among the group who were just as 'leisurely' as Leonel. The unfortunate part was that even though they were moving forward as though they were taking a stroll, they were still moving along much faster than Leonel was...

It seemed that rather than taking things casually, these few young men and women were instead pacing themselves. Even with their measured speed, they were keenly aware that their swiftness would soon begin to matter.

But it was difficult to tell if this was because their placement was important... Or if there was a time limit.

The trouble was that this ignorance was the least of Leonel's worries...

Even the weakest of these participants were in the Fifth Dimension.

As for the strongest...?

They had long since entered the Sixth.

Chapter 852

Aina dove into her father's arms, her tears falling like rain. For some odd reason, though, she was completely silent, her shoulders hardly trembling and her sobs having been completely stifled.

Miel couldn't help but be stunned for a moment. One because Aina had jumped from a still moving ship. Two because his daughter was far taller than he thought she could be—and that was saying something considering his own height. And three because she was actually... crying?

Miel had never seen his daughter cry before. Aina had never personally witnessed her mother's death, Miel hadn't allowed her to. However, Aina had definitely experienced every bit of the curse being etched into her body as a little girl, and she hadn't shed a single tear then—something that definitely couldn't be said for Miel himself.

Even when Miel was forced to separate from Aina, leaving her to Earth's orphanage system, he hadn't seen Aina shed a single tear.

So, what exactly was happening here? Was he seeing things? Was this maybe not his daughter at all? But with his demeanor and presence, who else would ignore it all just to hug him if not for his daughter?

What Miel didn't know was that it wasn't that his daughter had never cried... It was just that she had never cried in his presence. This could be said to be the very first time it had happened and he wasn't exactly sure how to react to it.

If he knew this truth, he could probably guess why. After all, his method of training Aina in her youth had been no different from how he would have treated her had she been his son rather than his daughter.

If he was honest, had Aina come sniveling and crying to him when she was five years old, it would have been more likely for her to receive a reprimanding as opposed to any sort of care and attention. If there was anything of the sort in Aina's life, it had only come from her mother who had long since passed.

But, oddly enough, now that Aina was a grown woman of 21 years of age, Miel didn't have the instinctual reaction he would have normally had. This wasn't because he didn't want to have it, but rather because he was too caught off guard.

If you have never seen your daughter cry before you as a toddler, only for them to suddenly burst like a dam when they should have been an adult... How would you react exactly...?

Maybe that was exactly why Aina wasn't sobbing. For the first time, she couldn't completely control herself before her father, so she had controlled what she could.

After several moments, Aina felt two strong hands grip her slender shoulders. She sniffled slightly, but didn't dare to look up at her father. She knew that all she would see is disappointment in his eyes and she didn't want to see it.

By this point, her tears had already stopped, a decision marking out a place in her heart.

Emotions? She didn't need them. This could be considered the last time she would display them.

Miel opened his mouth to speak, but it was at that moment that Aina had regained enough calm to look up. Whatever words he was going to say vanished within the depths of coldness he saw.

Staring back at him, a pair of bright amber eyes seemed suffused in a layer of frigid ice. p??J??????

Indifference. Apathy. An unfeeling calculation...

That was all that was left.

Miel's mouth slowly closed, his lips almost completely covered by the thickness of his crimson beard. He looked down at his daughter silently. Even through her black mask, he could almost see the ice carving that must have been her face at this moment.

It was difficult to tell just what it was he was thinking in the depths of his mind.

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Leonel shook his spear lightly, his gaze reflecting a cold light. Another spirit fell, but Leonel himself wasn't nearly as healthy or fresh as he had been before. Panda Novel

The road ahead seemed endless, but Leonel had already been marked by a number of shallow injuries. Though his revamped chain necklace had been able to repair the rips in his clothing, it didn't do anything about the blood that marred them.

Things had started off so easy, especially since all the experts Leonel faced were spearmen.

But, as time progressed, Leonel's body grew more sluggish and heavy. His mind was just as fast as it had always been, but his reactions were lagging behind further and further as though a burden was being strapped onto his shoulders as more and more weight was added.

To make matters worse, without his Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor, or access to Forces other than the Force that swam through his Force Nodes due to [Dimensional Cleanse], he couldn't even heal himself.

The only good news was that his wounds were mostly superficial as he was able to avoid more fatal wounds. But, the bad news was that many of these superficial wounds were still bleeding, refusing to harden.

Leonel was certain that this was due to the odd blue Force the spirits were using, but there was nothing he could do about it.

Looking ahead, Leonel shook his head. Despite what he had been through, he felt as though he hadn't made any progress at all. The star was so large that he couldn't even tell if he had gotten closer or not. Regardless, the path ahead still seemed to be without end.

'Am I really doing this right? It took brain power to enter this place, but now it's suddenly nothing but fighting and battle? Is that really the end of it? Or is there something more?'

Leonel's frown deepened.

There was a possibility that the test to come to this place was enough to prove his intelligence, and as such, whoever made this space felt that it was no longer necessary to test this aspect. It was because of this logic that Leonel hadn't looked for another way until now.

However... there was also the possibility that Leonel was missing something very important, something that would give him more of a chance than he seemed to have now.

Chapter 853

Leonel released a steam laden breath.

He slipped his backfoot further backward, anchoring himself with power, strength and leverage as he pierced forward.

The moment he released the attack, he knew that his trajectory was off. This wasn't because he had aimed incorrectly, but rather because the spirits were becoming smarter and more skilled. It was maybe the world's greatest irony that on the day Leonel faced the most spearman he had in his lifetime, that

his Spear Domain Heirloom which was supposedly invincible against them, had become completely useless.

Of course, he knew that this was likely because these were energy spears rather than real, tangible ones. But, that didn't mean he didn't feel aggrieved.

Leonel knew that it was too late to change his spear's path. Shifting his momentum had been easy in the past, but his current self was too slow and lacking in agility.

His mind spun through several calculations before he made a choice.

His body's momentum continued forward while falling slightly to the side. The anchor that had been his feet wavered, weakening his strike. But, he also managed to just barely survive with just a graze to his shoulder.

He used his fall to turn his pierce into a downward sweeping motion, raking his spear across the chest of the spirit.

'Dammit... not deep enough...'

The good news was that Leonel's Quasi Silver spear was still very much effective against his enemies. Usually, as long as he could land a strike, it would be enough to end the battle.

The bad news, however, was that the spirits were becoming sturdy to the point that even his Quasi Silver Spear didn't seem to have as great of an affect as it had once had.

Leonel knew how dangerous this journey would be, that was why he hadn't even bothered to try to use his Quasi Bronze spears, trying to gain as much of an edge as he could. But, he had never expected for his once reliable trump card to become neutered before he even made a dent in his journey.

At that moment, the spirit reacted as Leonel fell to the ground. Its illusory spear spun in its hands before piercing downward with stifling momentum.

Leonel's pupils constricted. His mind had already thought of numerous counter measures, but his body wasn't fast enough to execute even a single one of them.

His hairs stood on end, his muscles constricting and his nerves firing.

Death wafted about his neck and whispered into his ear as though it was ready to descend, coaxing him toward the 'other' side... Whatever it is that was... ρ??(???????)

Leonel knew that if this spear struck true, he was finished. Not to mention the fact he didn't have access to his Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor to heal himself, even if he did, he had just used it to bring him back from the brink of death just a few weeks ago. It hadn't been nearly enough time for that life saving measure to replenish itself.

At that moment, Leonel's mind went blank.

His silver spear vanished, replaced by a jet black Quasi Bronze spear in an instant.

He reached out a palm as he fell to the ground. The instant it made contact and not a moment sooner or later, a mighty Chain Domain appeared around him.

A chain hooked around his ankle, whipping his body to the side with his singular palm as an anchor.

The illusory blue spear missed Leonel by a hair, clanging against the light road as Leonel was spun to its back. The spirit couldn't react in time before a spear was suddenly jettied through its chest, its body becoming another cluster of light that entered Leonel.

Leonel collapsed to the ground, his breathing heavy. He really thought for a second there that he was finished. This trial was truly something else. He didn't even have the luxury of lying here to rest. He had already tried to do that before, but after a few minutes of not moving forward, the same spirit would manifest again and the penalty for defeating it was the same. Panda Novel

That meant that if Leonel wanted rest, he also had to accumulate more weight to himself. Whoever made this trial was definitely a sadistic bastard. Why couldn't they go back to doing puzzles? That had been fun.

Leonel was pushing himself up when he suddenly sensed something odd.

His Chain Domain felt different at the moment. In fact, now that he thought about it, it wasn't his mind that had come up with a plan to avoid that deadly strike. Rather... It was more like his Chain Domain Spear had... called out to him?

Called out to him was what it felt like if he tried to attach some logic to it. But, in practice, it was more like he instinctually knew what to do.

The issue was that this instinct hadn't come from the primitive consciousnesses that he had absorbed, but had rather come from...

Leonel frowned, turning his senses toward his Ethereal Glabella to gaze upon a silently floating spear embryo.

This was all too confusing. Was he right about the reason his Spear Domain Lineage Factor felt so clear to him right now? Or was there another reason that had nothing to do with him holding spears or his King's Might?

If his King's Might could keep his Spear Domain active, why not do so for the more useful Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor? Was there another purpose for this? Or was he overthinking things?

Maybe this space was able to suppress Lineage Factors that gave direct boosts to the body but allowed more ethereal Lineage Factors like King's Might or Spear Domain to thrive? That was possible... After all, [Dimensional Cleanse] gave the most benefits to the mind not the body, so it would make sense...

But none of that explained the odd feeling Leonel had just experienced.

Of his Lineage Factors, it would be accurate to say that his Spear Domain was the most neglected. Could it be that that neglect had caused him to miss something so life changing?

Chapter 854

Leonel took deep breaths, pushing himself up the rest of the way.

If this most recent thought of his was correct, that would mean that the creator of [Dimensional Cleanse], or at least whoever it was that set up this competition, did in fact want him to use his mind over the raw strength of his body. It was just that now, rather than applying it to puzzles, he or she wanted it applied in battle.

Leonel would still remember the borderline narcissistic comments the creator of [Dimensional Cleanse] had left in the first part of their technique. Back then, Leonel had been in the Joan Zone and his life was on the line every minute of every day, and yet he still couldn't help but chuckle. Even now, with his body in such a state, he was caught between rolling his eyes and laughing some more.

When he framed things like this, if the creator was really the one who set up this fiasco, it was no wonder it was all so sadistic. That person was really a bastard.

'97 seconds...' Leonel thought to himself.

He had to make it to the next spirit in that time or else he would have to fight the one he just had again. The distance wasn't far, just a kilometer. But in this endless stretch of road Leonel felt like banging his head against a wall.

'There's got to be something to this...'

The truth was that Leonel was at a striking disadvantage. It was very rare for those with powerful bodies to choose [Dimensional Cleanse] of all things to practice. They would usually pick a technique that could supplement their power, not their mind.

But, back when Leonel was choosing [Dimensional Cleanse], he hadn't awakened any of his Lineage Factors. His mind was the only strength he had thanks to his ability. He hadn't really had a choice... He had simply made the best choice he could.

Unfortunately, that led to a state where now his Metal Body, rather than being an asset, was actually the worst detriment to him. He shouldn't feel so heavy right now, at least not at such early stages. But, the situation was exasperated by his Metal Synergy Lineage Factor.

Ironically... Leonel would have had an easier time had he left his Metal Body at Tier 1 before entering this place.

Not only was his body heavier to start, but the blue Force that entered his body after every victory worked on percentages. This meant that the added weight he experienced was also greater than that of others. It was as though the creator of [Dimensional Cleanse] was snubbing his nose at Leonel for being a muscle head that dared to pine after his precious technique. Panda Novel

As though this wasn't bad enough... This place was located in an unknown Higher Dimension. The pressure Leonel was experiencing as someone in the mere Third was simply unprecedented.

The misfortune of it all was that Leonel didn't have the luxury of whining about it.

There was no road back. Leonel's Force Arts didn't work so he couldn't even try to teleport away from this place. Stepping off of the light road meant certain death. And, to top it all off, there was nothing but an endless abyss to his back.

If it wasn't for the beauty of the blue star, all of this would feel like nothing more than a death trap.

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Leonel took a measured step forward. He had already calculated the pace he needed to maximize his rest time while not being forced to fight the same spirit again. But now, he had to think of a solution. He couldn't just continue like this. If he did, there would eventually come a point where he couldn't hold on any longer... And by then, only death would await.

Leonel wasn't a fool. In fact, he was being overly optimistic right this moment. The truth was that he had already reached his limit.

Every subsequent spirit was always between 5-6% more difficult to defeat. This was calculated using a combination of Leonel's added weight, along with the spirit's increase in defenses and skill.

If Leonel fought more passively, he felt that he could at most defeat three more spirits. But, even if he couldn't see to the end of the light road, he could definitely see three kilometers ahead... And that was enough to know that that put him no closer to his destination.

What was the conclusion...?

100% chance of death.

For Leonel, whose very foundations were rooted in logic, there was no false hope birthed in his heart, nor was there a steely determination... All there was left was the acceptance that if he didn't change something, he was finished. And, he had 97 seconds to think of it.

Even though he would last three more rounds, he had already calculated that he would suffer grievous wounds after just the first... They would definitely be terrible enough that even if he did figure something out, he would be finished.

Leonel's gaze was left with nothing but an eerie calm.

They say that when one faced death, their lives would flash before their eyes. But, nothing of the sort happened to Leonel. Maybe it was because he wasn't like other individuals, or maybe it was because the control he had over his mind was too great... Whatever it was, it saved him valuable mental strength, all of which was focused on a solution.

What did he have? He had his King's Might. He had his Spear Domain. And he had his spears.

He knew that this trial would never allow him to rely on anyone else, so he didn't even consider using Little Blackstar, Candle or Vice. He also knew that there was no Force allowed to be used here other than the Force [Dimensional Cleanse] produced, which should be Star Force.

Leonel's eyes narrowed. Maybe that meant that it wasn't that his Force or Mage Arts were useless, but rather that Mage Arts that used Forces other than Star Force couldn't gather the energy they needed with these restrictions.

A small crack opened in Leonel's logic as the chance of death fell to 99.9%.

Chapter 855

Leonel's Dream Force acted. Thanks to his Dream Force having fused with his Three Star Constitution, it wasn't restricted by the laws of this place. This thought led one of Leonel's split minds to explore the possibility of fusing other Forces with his Stars, but it was quickly dismissed. It had required a very special set of circumstances to allow for this.

Leonel soon ran into another problem, though... He had never constructed any Star Elemental Mage Arts.

It took a second of his time left—more than he had even spent to deduce things to this level—to reformulate a simple arrow spell to be formed with a Star Elemental foundation.

The moment the Mage Art was complete, to Leonel's pleasant surprise, an arrow of sparkling Star Force radiating a pure silverish white appeared. In fact, Leonel realized the abundance of Star Force was so great in this place that the spell was completed about 10% faster than it would have otherwise been.

Leonel nodded to himself. This was a good sign, he was learning more about this place. Though he was inwardly kicking himself for not trying to deduce these things earlier, it was better now than never.

To Leonel 97 seconds with his thinking speed and split minds might as well have been days. Though, that 97 seconds was now 96. He adjusted himself realizing the next time he calculated the restructuring of a spell, he would have to assign more minds to it to cut down on the time.

Though it was a shame he never formulated any Star Elemental spells, there was no use crying over spilt milk. Now was a unique opportunity. But, he also wasn't foolish enough to believe that this alone was enough.

The road ahead was nearly endless. Now that he could use spells, he would indeed have some added flexibility in battle, but it wasn't enough to be life changing. At the very least, he would need time to formulate more powerful spells that would have a greater impact.

That placed him right back at square one. King's Might and his Spear Domain.

In that moment of life and death before, his mind had gone blank and his instinct had taken over. Leonel wasn't a fool, he knew well what this meant. The instinct he hated so much—or, rather, disliked—had actually been the very thing to save his life.

As Leonel's mind grew powerful, he unfortunately fell into a very human-like trap, the very same trap so many fell into when they gained new wealth. It was simply human nature...

What happened when someone came into new money? Usually, those who managed to take advantage did the opposite of what was in their nature.

If someone received a promotion at work, they might choose to move into a larger apartment or house, buy a fancier or faster car, maybe have another kid or two to celebrate. What these actions ultimately did was raise their cost of living to the point that even with their promotion, they were once again living life the same way they always had. $\rho \int \dots$

How did this apply to Leonel? Panda Novel

Every time he gained a plus one to his split mind and his cognitive function became more powerful, he would assign his ability to do more and more things, to accomplish and seek after more and more. The result was him feeling that even with the capability of splitting his mind more than a thousand ways... that it still wasn't enough.

In battle against an opponent he couldn't properly react to, this shone through like a sore thumb. Leonel's mind was calculating so many things, weeding through so many possibilities, but he hadn't

been able to come up with something actionable in those final moments that could save his life. It had been up to his instinct to act for him, the very thing he had looked down upon from the beginning.

Leonel was very stubborn in his own way... It didn't display itself as overt arrogance, at least not often. But, it was there nonetheless. His feelings and the way he did things were quite rigid even when others might tell him to do different.

Why was it that his Spear Domain was his weakest and most neglected Lineage Factor? It was because he kept trying to fit its square peg into a triangular hole.

Every time Leonel mastered a new spear, rather than fusing it with his fighting style, he would build another Dreamscape and add it to his existing one. Then, he would try to calculate when it was the most optimal to use in battle.

Every time Leonel did this, he added another shackle to his Spear Domain. It was meant to be a Lineage Factor all about feel, instinct and fluidity, but Leonel was constantly trying to break it down into an exact science that could be brewed and reproduced.

In a lot of ways, having the Spear Domain Heirloom by his side only exasperated the problem. With so many styles and techniques at his fingertips, it fed into his philosophy all the more.

He always thought that maybe, just maybe, if he memorized enough spear techniques, absorbed enough spear consciousnesses, and mastered enough Spear Domains, he would reach a level where he could instantly react to almost any situation.

And therein lied the problem.

Leonel had over a thousand minds that could think at once. And, he only had access to about 900 of them now. How could he possibly compute things fast enough to react to what was effectively an almost infinite series of possibilities?

He might be able to get away with it if his opponents were relatively tame and his body was in its peak condition. But... As his enemies grew stronger and his body grew heavier... He might as well have been putting the chains around his own neck.

That was the problem... But what exactly was the solution? Was it even possible to reconcile his Lineage Factor with his ability?

No... That wasn't the question, because the answer didn't matter. If he couldn't do so, he would die.

The trouble was how could you allow for computation and feel to coexist?

Chapter 856

Three young women and a large man shared a table in the private room of a restaurant. Among them, the blond young girl clenched her hands tightly on her lap, staring down at the wooden patterns before her.

Savahn felt like she was walking on pins and needles. This had to be the oddest family dynamic she had ever been apart of. Miel hadn't even asked her about who she was or what she was doing here. After Yuri casually introduced her, that was the end of it and he hadn't said a single word to her. In fact, he barely nodded—something she almost missed because she found it difficult to look him in the eye.

The father was expressionless. The daughter was expressionless. The adoptive daughter was expressionless.

This sort of family almost made her thankful that her own didn't have to step into the oddity of this world. Even if she had to be alone because of it, at least she and them would never reach a point where this was how they interacted...

Finally, a waitress came into with large amounts of food. A bit of the pressure Savahn felt was finally alleviated because someone with a normal smile and expressions had come. Unfortunately, seemingly sensing the atmosphere, the waitress didn't dare to stay long and practically bolted away, holding up the hem of her skirt.

Things only became worse after the food came. What once was an atmosphere of silence became filled with gnawing, cracking and chewing. If Savahn closed her eyes, she would have thought that she was sitting amidst a pack of wolves.

To Savahn's right, Yuri elegantly cut apart her food with a fork and knife. However, across from her, the father and daughter pair seemed to be fighting to the death.

Their elbows clashed every so often, causing resounding booms to reverberate through the air. It sounded almost like claps of thunder every time they struck. And yet, they continued to bite at the piles of meat and bone as though nothing had happened.

Savahn had never known that Aina could eat so much. But, even if she could eat so much... How had she suddenly become a barbarian? It was as though any womanly elegance she had had in the past completely vanished.

If Savahn didn't know better, she would have felt that Aina's hair and irises were slowly tinging red as though she was becoming more and more of a Brazinger with every passing moment. She really had no idea how to process all of this.

It took several more orders and another hour before the father-daughter pair finally stopped eating.

By some miracle, their clothes, hands and faces were completely stainless of food. Even though Savahn had watched from start to end, she had no idea how they had accomplished it at all.

Then... As though nothing had happened at all, Miel began to speak. His voice sounded like smooth stones slowly grinding against one another. But, his word choice was short and succinct. It was as though he didn't want to waste a single breath more than he had to.

"I am a vassal of the Viola family. The reason that I've called you here is because I now have enough capital and cachet to not fear direct action from the Brazinger family. Your growth here will be faster. Use the resources well. I give you ten years."

With that, Miel vanished.

No... He didn't vanish, he simply moved too fast for them all to register. ρ??∫???????

His words, though, left far too much information out. It was all so vague and open ended that it was difficult to draw any solid conclusions from anything, and it said even less about how he had managed to carve a path from Earth to become a vassal of such an important family within the Sixth Dimension.

Panda Novel

However, rather than looking toward where her father had left, Aina simply looked toward Yuri. For as long as Aina had known her, Yuri had always been the interpreter of her father. In a lot of ways, one would think that Yuri understood more about him than she did as his biological daughter.

Still, she seemed unmoved by this as she waited for a deeper explanation. Luckily, Yuri didn't disappoint.

“At these Higher Dimensions, it's impossible to find a powerful family without the backing of an even larger family. Adoptive father has become respected and useful enough to the Viola family that they won't casually get rid of him for some benefits. At the same time, the Viola family has enough backing from higher places that targeted their assets would be something one would need to think twice or thrice about.

“Though adoptive father used the term vassal, he is more important than this. It could be said that he is an integral part of the Viola family's combat prowess. We can take advantage of this to grow beneath their umbrella.

“Under the proper circumstances, it may become possible to gain a chance from the backers of the Viola family to take a look at the Seventh Dimension and gain even more benefits, but this will be difficult and the Viola family will not casually give such benefits to outsiders.

“The only way to circumvent these barriers is by doing as father did and become more useful than they could possibly ignore. But, it will be difficult because even adoptive father has not had a chance to look at the Seventh Dimension. He has always been passed up not due to his lack of skill, but rather due to the fact the Viola family Elders don't want to use their few opportunities on an outsider.”

Savahn looked from Aina to Yuri and back again a few times. She was very much confused.

Brazinger family? Wasn't that Aina's last name? So she hated her family?

Alright, she could accept that. But, the problem was why did it take a Sixth Dimensional family with backing from the Seventh Dimension to finally make it safe for Aina's father to bring her here?

Wasn't the Brazinger family from Earth? Weren't there protections for lower worlds from higher ones? What was going on...?

"Ho... How strong is the Brazinger family...?" Savahn finally managed to ask.

Aina and Yuri looked over toward her together.

"We don't know."

The answer left Savahn speechless.

Chapter 857

On one hand, there was Leonel's ability. As powerful as his Lineage Factors were, he still felt that it carried much of the burden for how he had made it this far.

On the other, there was his Spear Domain Lineage Factor. It had been mostly neglected, but now it was practically his only path toward salvation. As powerful as his King's Might Lineage Factor had the potential to be, not only did Leonel not have enough subordinates to scale it properly, it was ultimately just a supplement to strength he already had. This led him right back to his Spear Domain Lineage Factor.

Leonel's brows furrowed as the time continued to tick by.

It was an impossible question. It had taken him fractions of a second to think to this point, the moment he came up to this blockage, time seemed to flow like water, and its speed was only getting faster.

Even after 80 seconds was left, Leonel still hadn't made any headway to answering this question. Did he just have to abandon his ability entirely? But that couldn't be right. Cutting off his ability would feel no

different from losing an arm to him. Who was to say that there wouldn't be a point in battle where it would be useful?

But Leonel couldn't just leave things as is. It obviously wasn't working how things were now. If he just tried to press forward, he really could be that brainless meat head the creator was trying their best to weed out completely.

60 seconds.

It was like trying to hold two extremes at once. Was it even possible?

Leonel could execute two different Styles at once because he could split his minds, but this felt even more fundamental than that. It resided on a layer deeper than just a Style and was almost ingrained into Leonel's very bones.

If he could just split his mind and solve the problem, he would have already done it.

50 seconds.

Leonel could almost feel his silver spear chuckling. The little bastard had always hated him ever since he broke the rules to reach it. He was supposed to use his comprehension of the spear to move forward, but Leonel had always used his strong Soul and Dream Force to travel further than he should have been able to. But, therein lied the problem he was forced to deal with now.

40 seconds.

Was this really days worth of thinking to a normal person? Leonel felt as though time was moving faster than it ever had for him before.

Even as his measured steps continued forward and he approached the next trial faster and faster, the coldness in his gaze seemed to only deepen.

Maybe he really had relied on his ability too much. He had been so confident that 97 seconds would be enough to think of a solution. Who other than himself would actually be so arrogant as to think that? 97 seconds wasn't even long enough to cook a proper meal, but it was enough to change the entire philosophy of a person stuck in his ways?

30 seconds.

Leonel's blood slowed to a crawl, his bodily functions shutting down one after another. This wasn't because he was feeling the looming fear of guaranteed death, but rather because he was diverting all his brain power to his singular task. He barely left just enough thought to keep his body moving forward and store away his thoughts and feelings toward Aina. Panda Novel

20 seconds. ρ??∫??????

Time was like an endless drain on Leonel's psyche at this point. No matter how hard he wracked his brain, he couldn't find a solution.

He felt as though he was stuck in a box. His thinking was too rigid almost as though he was a two dimensional construct observing something created by a third dimensional construct. He had a viewpoint that wouldn't allow him to understand no matter how hard he tried.

Understanding... This was the first time Leonel had ever run into something he truly couldn't wrap his head around.

Should he just do it? Should he just give in?

If he didn't change something, he would be finished anyway. Wasn't it better if he just took a leap of faith and hope that his instinct could carry him through this battle?

But... Why was it that he had such a strong revulsion toward such a thing? He felt as though he was ripping out a piece of his own soul just thinking about something like this...

10 seconds.

Leonel's jaw steeled. He was less than a hundred meters away. He felt like he had overturned every possibility and simulated everything he could.

At this point, he felt that he had wasted his time. Would he have been in a better situation if he had turned all of his brain power toward formulating new Star Elemental Force spells?

However, Leonel knew that this was a foolish thought to have. Even he would need days to formulate new Mage Arts that could battle near and at a Fifth Dimensional level. Even if he dug through his memories and found some Arts from Camelot, they would all be at a Third to Fourth Dimensional level at best.

5 seconds.

Leonel had no choice. He unleashed all more than thousand of his split minds.

Waves of emotion he had long since suppressed practically blindsided him despite the fact he thought he was ready. But it still caused him to lose a second, his mind spiraling into a well of memories.

4 seconds.

“... It's not the first time I've seen it.”

Aina's voice might as well have been whispering into his ears. The wererat and the other weremen lay dead beneath their blades and the man's primitive consciousness had taken hold of Leonel's body, forcing him to pull down his pants.

Even now, Leonel had no idea what Aina had meant by that. What did she mean she had seen it before?

3 seconds.

Leonel's footsteps froze. He faced a line the demarcated his life and death.

He hadn't even taken the first step toward his goal yet. Would he really die like this?

Chapter 858

The memory suddenly hit Leonel like a ton of bricks. It was as though he had thought of something but the true ramifications, or maybe more accurately, implications of it didn't hit him until a moment later. It felt like he was on a rollercoaster with everything whizzing by so fast it was difficult for his eyes to keep track... But there was just that one small moment that appeared for just long enough to catch his attention just barely.

That day... That was the first and one of the only times Leonel had ever allowed one of the consciousnesses to take over his body. It had given him combat prowess far beyond his means at that time.

Ultimately, though, what he had done that day was out of necessity rather than desire. After all, he had only just stepped out of his second Zone and hadn't even really understood what it meant to wield a spear. It also had to be remembered that he had had the Spear Domain Heirloom for all of a few minutes at that point, so he wasn't even really sure what he was getting himself into.

However, what was especially memorable and important about that time was the fact that the primitive consciousness hadn't snatched his body away forcefully. In fact, Leonel was able to take his mind back as he pleased, he never truly felt that he wasn't in control.

Leonel wasn't sure if this was how things were supposed to have gone or if he had been meant to struggle to keep his mind safe, but all of that was irrelevant. The fact that he was so clearly unaffected was a very good thing.

The issue with allowing consciousnesses to take over his body was the blurring of the lines between what was you and what wasn't. But, Leonel was able to define this line so clearly and easily that there wasn't even a chance at such confusion.

The question was... Was the answer to allow his body to be taken over?

What was so powerful about that memory was that Leonel had been able to take a back seat and observe everything while his body was being controlled by another. If things were like this, then he could take a step back and calculate the progression of battle. This would allow him to step in should he ever be needed...

However, the trouble was which consciousness should he allow to take over his body? The logical answer was the consciousness of the Quasi Silver Spear. The issue with that, though, was that Leonel had forcibly snatched the spear and let alone experiencing its consciousness, he hadn't even experienced its Domain yet. As far as he knew, the Quasi Silver Spear didn't even have a Domain... Which was definitely untrue.

This was just only one problem, though...

Something about allowing others to control his body while he observed left a bad taste in Leonel's mouth. It was like he wasn't earning it. And if he wasn't earning it, was he truly winning? Could that even be considered the path of a True King?

'I feel like I'm close... So close to something...'

2 seconds.

Leonel's gaze sharpened. 'Spear Domain...'

What did those two words truly mean? What did they represent?

Leonel had gotten mixed up in the powerups each spear provided. He had spears with Elemental Domains, ones with restrictive Domains and even others with boosting Domains. Every spear he added to his arsenal felt like another button he could press when the going got tough, so he got lost in them... With every spear he claimed, the problem only became worse and worse. Panda Novel p???(?????)

However, if Leonel broke things down as logically as possible, there was a disconnect here.

There were the Spear Domains of the actual spears. Then there was the Spear Domain Heirloom, which shared the same name. Then, even beyond that, there was his Spear Domain Lineage Factor.

Of these three, the only one Leonel ever really paid attention to was the first. He treated the second like a one stop shop for spears. And, he treated the third like a mere boost in sharpness for his Spear Force, yet another one of his neglected abilities.

Leonel's Snowy Star Owl Lineage Factor allowed him access to the abilities of a Snowy Star Owl...

Leonel's Metal Synergy Lineage Factor allowed him a oneness with metal that could both improve his body and his control...

Leonel's Spear Domain Lineage Factor... Was used how, exactly?

1 second.

Leonel suddenly took a step forward, crossing a line of no return. His gaze was just as cold as always, his palm flipping over to replace his chain laced black spear with a spear that sparkled like a shimmering ruby.

Even if Leonel held this spear up to his face, he would be able to see his palm right through it. It seemed as though it was carved out of delicate crystals, yet it had a heft beyond the 50 kilogram Chain Domain spear and completely lacked any sort of flexibility whatsoever.

What was the most 'shocking' about this spear, though, was that it didn't have a blade. It looked like a rod or a staff, something that had baffled Leonel until he learned exactly how it was meant to be used.

Due to its abilities, of all the Star Elemental Domain spears he had, Leonel chose to start with this one.

As the spirit began to form, the Star Force in the surroundings began to whip about.

Leonel's spear twirled about in his hands. With every spin, it became faster and faster, Leonel's gaze becoming sharp as the spirit grew more and more solid.

Wheels of a metallic blue Star Force followed the arc of Leonel's spear.

'Star Domain.'

The blue Star Force surged, connecting with Leonel's crystal red spear and suddenly flashing toward a blinding ruby color.

In that moment, the blades spear suddenly gained a vibrant crimson point.

Within Leonel's Ethereal Glabella, his Spear Force Embryo trembled. The sharp sound of blades colliding began to flow all around Leonel, his pale violet eyes beginning to glow brighter.

Chapter 859

The blade of red energy looked no different from a real blade. It shook the surrounding air, sparkling with a translucent sheen that emitted a grandiose power.

However, its majesty was overwhelmed by the ever growing sound of blades clanging against one another. A strong Force whipped about Leonel, forming into a growing dome of strength that enveloped him and eventually even the spirit before him.

What did it mean to have a Spear Domain Lineage Factor?

All this time, Leonel had focused too much on the spear aspect. However, it was precisely due to this that he had ended up neglecting one of the most powerful cards in his hand.

It was like a clash of memories was finally coming together into one, forming a full picture that Leonel had completely missed until now.

That day his consciousness was taken over... That day he mastered the primitive consciousness for the first time... That day he touched upon the true form of Universal Force, causing him to step upon the King's Path... That day he finally realized that he was truly meant to be a King...

What was a Domain? What was the Spear Domain Lineage Factor...?

An indifferent light reflected in Leonel's gaze. He took a step forward, his spear spinning in his hand, following an elegant arc.

His Spear Force Embryo continued to tremble fiercer and fiercer. It grew in size, becoming larger and more prominent. Eventually, it grew so large that it began to manifest in Leonel's surroundings, the striking mark of a golden spear etching itself onto his forehead.

Rather than ruining his appearance, it gave him a mysterious, exotic air that bordered on intoxicating.

The mark of the spear grew brighter and brighter as Leonel clashed with the spirit. His steps were so steady and his strike so perfect that the sturdy spirit stumbled a step backward, its spear rebounding away from Leonel's own.

Leonel took another step forward, his spear spinning. Swirls of blue Star Force came into being, forming a second blade that slashed at the spirit.

Recovering quickly, the spirit blocked with the body of its spear. However, Leonel wasn't fooled. He could almost feel the imbalance of the spirit, causing him to instinctually apply pressure just a bit more to its right.

The spirit's steps faltered, clearly not having recovered as much as it had seemed to.

Leonel's spear didn't stop. With a third spin, the head of the spirit shot into the air, an arc of crimson slicing through the air without a single sound.

The spirit vanished into motes of light, sinking into Leonel's body and adding to its heft once again.

Leonel's gaze narrowed as he took deep, steady breaths.

Every time he had mastered a spear, he slotted what he learned into his Dream World for his later use. But, this not only put a greater burden on his mind, slowing his cognitive function, but it also neglected the true form of what his Spear Domain Lineage Factor was meant to be.

His Spear Force Embryo wasn't a Spear Force Embryo at all... It was a Spear Domain Embryo. Its purpose was to store Leonel's comprehensions of the spear, forming it all into a unique path that could match up to its master. $\rho\omega\sigma\tau\upsilon\phi\chi\psi$

Of all the owners of Spear Domain, there were practically none that had systematically mastered so many spears at once. And then there were those with the Spear Domain Lineage Factor who would never touch the Heirloom a day in their lives.

Yet, Leonel had the conceptions of so many spear masters in his mind. But, rather than using them as he was meant to, he practically tried to reformulate the Spear Domain Lineage Factor in his own image.

What did it mean to have a Spear Domain?

If one was referring to an individual spear, it was a narrow avenue of power related to an Element or a restriction.

If one was referring to the Heirloom, it was a graveyard of spear masters of the past, an homage to the greats that once lived. Panda Novel

And... If one was referring to the Lineage Factor, it was an area of absolute control, confidence and Kingship. It was a region where delicate and masterful control of the spear was demanded, a region where the spear was almighty and all must kneel before it.

In those few seconds, Leonel had only managed to fuel his Spear Domain Embryo with just a few lower level consciousnesses and had yet to fill it with all the spears he had mastered, of which there were tens of thousands. And yet, the change to his combat prowess was mind numbing.

‘I understand... I’m not supposed to simply fill my Spear Domain Embryo with all sorts of spear disciplines. What I’m supposed to do is select those that match with my combat prowess the most and fuse those and those alone with my Spear Domain Embryo, allowing it to truly become my own. That’s the true strength of the Spear Domain Lineage Factor... I can also tell that there’s more waiting for me as I help it to grow stronger...

“However... That is just for others. Others don’t have minds capable of housing a Spear Domain Embryo with endless assortments of spear disciplines. As such, they must be extremely selective. But, my mind is strong enough.”

Leonel had finally come to understand. This was where feel and computation met and fused into one.

He didn’t have to allow his body to be taken over. From the very beginning, his Lineage Factor was designed to take on all the ‘feel’ for himself. It was already one with him from the very beginning. It was just like he was taking a test he had studied thoroughly for, but had forgotten at the critical moment how to apply that knowledge.

But now...

Leonel shot forward, the mark on his forehead growing brighter and brighter with every passing moment. It resonated with a luminescence that seemed intent on outshining even the star before him.

‘All of it. Fuse with all of it.’

...

‘Hm...?’

A young man paused, the spirit he had felled with his sword turning into motes of light that fused with his body.

He had quite the disposition. He had a starriness in his eyes that would make women swoon, his deep black irises somehow twinkling with their own light. He had long, sweeping jet black hair only tied at its very end. It made his hair almost look like a perfect flow of water.

However, what was maybe the most shocking about this young man were two things in specific...

The first was an eerily familiar ring that could be found on his finger.

The second was the bright sword mark that was etched onto his forehead.

Chapter 860

The young man's sword slightly twisted in his hand, the flat of its blade catching the blue rays of sun coming from the distance and sparkling with a translucent sheen.

He wasn't sure why it was he had looked in that direction, it was just the feeling of something familiar. As for what it was, he had no idea.

"Curious."

His robes fluttered, his steps seemingly slow but his true pace being at tens of meters a second. He seemed to effortlessly glide forward.

His sword vibrated in his hands continuously, almost eager to the point of flying out of his hand.

"Haha!" He could no longer hold back his grin. "It's been a long while since I, the Sword Deity, has met something that made my blade thirst."

Sword Deity was, of course, not his name... In fact, it wasn't even close... The truth was that even others hadn't given him this name like one might expect—he had named himself. If one went even deeper to the true root of the matter, no one even knew of him.

After the humor of it all faded away, those who understood how the strongest powers of the Dimensional Verse worked would sink into their own solemn expressions, looking toward this young man with arrogance that could poke a hole in the skies with the utmost seriousness.

To put matters into proper perspective, even if one was born into a higher Dimensional world, everyone would start at the Third Dimension. However, if one thought that made everyone equal... you would be sorely mistaken.

It seemed that Leonel was capable of punching above his weight because his individual abilities added up toward such a result, but it was far deeper than this. To put things in the simplest way possible, Leonel was a cup that could be filled to the Seventh Dimension but with only enough water in it to match up to the Third.

There was a difference between a cup filled to its brim and one with so much room to maneuver. If Leonel was fierce enough with his cup, he could cause the water that made up his strength to slosh about and reach toward a height it shouldn't be able to reach...

However, if someone with a smaller cup tried to do the same, their water would just spill over and be wasted.

Why was all of this important now? It was important because depending on the strength of a family, it required a youth to reach a certain level of strength before they could leave and begin to experience the world.

The stronger the family or organization, the stronger a youth of talent would have to be to meet their requirements...

This young man was already in the Sixth Dimension. And, yet, not only was he arrogant enough to call himself the Sword Deity, he was a complete unknown to the world.

So, the question was... How strong did his organization need to be to think that only the Sixth Dimension was decent enough to finally let him out?

It likely wouldn't be long before the name Amery, the Sword Deity, was known far and wide.

...

Leonel took deep breaths as he continued to move forward. Unfortunately, his recent breakthrough hadn't done much to alleviate his previous fatigue. But, it was gradually getting better for him.

As his battles grew more efficient and wasted less energy, the gaps between them became more and more beneficial to his recovery. If it wasn't because the battles also grew more difficult, he might have already been able to catch his breath.

Leonel didn't grow complacent, though. His battle prowess continued to grow as he integrated more and more of his comprehensions into his Spear Domain Embryo, but he was also keenly aware that this was not enough.

At this rate, if the road was really as endless as it seemed and not just an illusion to test his mental fortitude, he would practically be nothing more than a stone by the time he reached the half way point.

Leonel was already felt twice as heavy as he should be, something that effectively meant he was dealing with what felt like double gravity. In addition, it was only growing worse with every passing battle.

The good news was that Leonel felt with his progression, it shouldn't be a problem to continue for a long while. The bad news, however, was that he was certain he would eventually reach his limits again.

Leonel wouldn't make the same mistake, though. There was no need to wait until the final moment and hope and pray for another breakthrough. What he needed to do was think of a path of progression for himself that guaranteed improvement. He had to assume that he would be stuck here for years and act accordingly.

Leonel's head tilted slightly to the side, his free hand shooting up with a coating of Star Force forming a Force Skin over it. With a sturdy grip, he latched onto the spirit's spear and pierced forward with his free hand at the same time.

Moments later, Leonel's body grew a small measure heavier as he continued forward.

His steps maximized the time he would have between battles, both for recovery and so that he could continue to think. ρ??∪???????

His best options for improvement were Star Elemental Mage Arts, mastering more spears within Spear Domain, and thirdly, there was Universal Force.

If there was one Force that still functioned just fine in this place aside from Star Force, it was Universal Force. If not for this, Leonel wouldn't have been able to keep up for so long. After all, Universal Force was one of the core reasons he was able to battle above his Dimensional level.

The current Leonel used it so frequently and fluidly that he hardly even thought about it consciously anymore. But, that ironically led to it being neglected as well.

Funny enough, Leonel found it difficult to use Dream Path on himself. However, that didn't mean he had any intention of giving up so easily.

'Interesting... I haven't felt any hunger or fatigue since I've been here. Is it because of this Star Force that keeps entering my body?'

If Leonel had to lament one thing about being stuck here for so long, it would definitely be the fact that he wouldn't be able to eat or sleep. But, as time passed, he realized that he felt neither. Panda Novel

Once Leonel realized this, he started paying more attention to his body. He had already been doing so, but he had mostly been monitoring weight. Now, however, he was trying to find out what this mysterious Star Force was doing to him.

The conclusion he reached, though, was quite surprising. Because... The answer was nothing.

The blue Star Force didn't do anything after entering his body except for fuse into his flesh and bone. After that, there were no surprising mechanisms, no subtle changes, no hidden dangers or even benefits. It seemed like it just fused and vanished.

‘Interesting...’

If there was one part of Leonel’s body that was completely untouched, it was his right kidney. It sparkled like a polished, golden-red crystal, swirling about with a gaseous-like energy that looked like smoke being lit by vibrant gold and crimson light.

Whenever the blue Star Force tried to fuse with this kidney of his, it would be eradicated.

In truth, Leonel’s current body was only functioning on one kidney as he didn’t dare to allow his Scarlet Star Force to move about as it pleased. If it did, he might as well prepare himself an urn right this moment because nothing but ash would be left.

Even now, Leonel had no illusions toward allowing it to go throughout his body right this moment just to deal with the blue Star Force. The exchange wouldn’t be worth it, especially since Leonel was no longer certain that the blue Star Force was harming him.

There was no denying that this blue Star Force was making him heavier. But, at the same time, it was also the reason he didn’t need food or rest, two abilities that were all too important to actually completing this trial.

‘... Maybe?’

Leonel suddenly thought of something that made his eyes narrow.

Back on Earth, especially during its less technologically advanced Eras, everything was reliant on the sun. Plants needed the sun to produce their food, herbivores consumed these plants for their energy, and then omni and carnivores would consume these herbivores. This was how the cycle of life worked.

All the most fundamental energies that allowed for life originated from the sun itself...

Even when Earth continued to evolve and began to produce some energies itself, was it really self-reliant from the sun? Even on 25th Century Earth, the greatest source of power was Nuclear Fusion, the very same process the sun relied on to produce the energy it did.

Earth, even when it began to be 'self sufficient', was still just doing its best to imitate what a Star could do innately.

When Leonel thought of Star Force, he thought of many of its abilities.

He thought of its abilities to purify and cleanse. He thought of its heft and weight. However... He never really considered what it was most fundamentally...

A power source.

At that moment, it suddenly clicked. Why was it that he wasn't feeling tired or hungry? The real question was why would he believe that he should feel those things when his body was being saturated with the purest form of energy the universe had to offer?

For the second time in just as many days, Leonel's world view had been flipped on its head.

'So I've been using Star Force all wrong... But if it's core use is as energy... Why am I still breathing so hard...?'

Leonel's eyes narrowed, seemingly having thought of something.

Maybe the creator of [Dimensional Cleanse] wasn't as much of a bastard as he thought. It was either that... Or he or she was even worse than Leonel believed.

