

Death 1131

Death... and me

Chapter 1131: Basic Combat

Rean and Roan could not help but snort when they saw that. Sure, there were quite a few people from Klacks Country entering the store, but...

The store owner saw how outsiders were assaulting his store and yelled, "Help! Guards, Help! Outsiders are destroying my jewelry!"

The Klacks Country disciples and Hedoi snorted in response when they heard that. They already confirmed that there were no guards nearby. As long as they were quick, they could flee before the guards arrived... or so they thought.

Roan then looked at the room at the back of the store before shouting, "Death Guard Squad, outsiders are causing trouble again. Move out and help destroy them!"

Bang!

Suddenly, the wooden wall burst apart as the city guards that were resting rushed into the scene. "Yes, leaders!"

Seeing the guards appear all of a sudden, Hedoi's group turned pale. Out of nowhere, an entire squad of guards dressed in full armor appeared on the scene. 'Wait, did they just say leader?' Hedoi thought for a moment as he looked at Roan in shock.

Some of the guards quickly barred all entrances before the rest pounced at Klacks Country's people.

"Run!" Obviously, the Klacks Country participants weren't idiots. They knew they would be massacred if they stayed here, and that included Hedoi. They all rushed at the guards covering the entrance, trying to force their way through.

However, Hedoi understood that the situation was dire. The store wasn't that big, so he wouldn't be able to force his way out. Instead, he immediately looked at Roan, who the guards called their leader. 'If I want to escape, I need to catch him first!'

Hedoi didn't have a good life at first. After all, he came from a country where the evil path ruled. Because of that, he fought a lot on the streets in order to survive even before becoming a cultivator. He was very confident that he could take Roan on with his skills from the past. Hedoi then quickly attacked Roan before the guards tried to stop him.

However, to his surprise, he could see a grin on the guards' faces when they saw him attacking Roan. None of them tried to help out at all. If anything, their eyes only displayed pity for Hedoi. Of course, Hedoi wouldn't stop now.

He quickly aimed a kick on Roan's lower body, trying to catch him by surprise. However, Roan had none of that as he easily dodged... or so it seemed. That's because Hedoi also used a feint, which he was quite good with. Instead, his fist aimed at Roan's face while he focused on the kick before. Unfortunately for him...

Pah! Roan caught Hedoi's fist without any difficulty. But, Roan didn't stop the force with which the fist was thrown at him. Instead, he used Hedoi's momentum to let the fist pass by his side and switched his grasp from Hedoi's fist to his wrist. Following that, he twisted it beyond what his joints could handle.

Crack!

Arrrgh!

And so, Hedoi's arm broke, just like that. Surprisingly, he gritted his teeth, knowing that whatever happened in this Dream City was not happening to his real body. Hedoi was someone used to much more pain than that, stemming from his early days. He completely ignored the pain a moment later, using his leg to kick Roan away.

Crack!

Arrrgh!

Well, that was of no use against Roan. Before Hedoi even began to launch his kick, Roan's leg was already moving ahead. It hit Hedoi's knee, which was moving in his direction. In the end, the momentum of Hedoi's leg was what helped Roan break his knee in one more move. Hedoi finally fell to the ground, not being able to sustain his body with that broken leg. "You! Just how did you do that?!"

Roan snorted in response, telling him, "This is just basic defense, idiot. Not everyone will simply throw punches and kicks like you." Well, Roan thought that perhaps in this Realm of Gods, where everyone relied on Divine Energy and Soul Power, they would.

Roan then tried to grab Hedoi once again when suddenly, Hedoi's body was covered in red light. One must remember that Hedoi had a bad premonition on this attack to start with. Because of that, he had kept his Existence Pearls ready for any situation. And now, he just used them.

Just as Hedoi was about to disappear, he snorted back at Roan, telling him, "No wonder Sect Master has his eye on you. It turns out that your Dark Element Affinity isn't everything. I'll see you in the next test." After saying that, Hedoi's body completely disappeared.

Rean couldn't help but sigh after seeing that. "Sure enough, one can use this kind of method to escape."

Roan glanced at Rean, who had just finished another member of the Klacks Country by breaking his neck. Rean wasn't much weaker than Roan in basic combat. Obviously, none of Klacks Country's participants stood a chance against him either. "It's not like we didn't expect something like this. Next time, I'll aim for the enemy's Existence Pearl before I break their bodies."

Not long after, the other city guards also finished the rest of the Klacks Country members. Hedoi was one thing. But his countrymen and women didn't have the same escape method as him. They were obviously killed and disappeared or captured after being beaten up.

"Sirs, we found a few more of those Red Pearls you were gathering." The guard then passed another 11 pearls to Rean and Roan. There was nothing to feel surprised about. Hedoi's companions didn't really trust each other, as mentioned several times. They obviously hid some of the Existence Pearls from Hedoi, expecting to gather enough themselves.

Rean nodded with a serious expression after that. "Very well. Let's head back to the headquarters and throw the rest in prison."

Liana and Fulia from Tenke and Volava quickly noticed how Hedoi's name disappeared from the scoring board. They were making their way there, expecting to fish in troubled waters. However, Hedoi disappeared way too quickly, which immediately made them change their plans. Whatever was able to get rid of Hedoi that quickly could probably do the same thing to them. Besides, they saw how Roan's number in the ranking suddenly went up by another 11 pearls, which left him with 108.

Since they didn't know that Hedoi had left, they thought his pearls were taken by Rean and Roan. Simple as that.

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Chapter 1132: Reunion

Rean then looked at the map and asked, "Should we pursue them?"

Roan shook his head in response. "No one can beat us in numbers alone. It's useless to go after them to get their pearls, especially since they might use them straight away to escape. It's a futile effort. Instead, let's just keep patrolling."

Rean nodded in agreement. "That's true. In any case, it shouldn't take long for many more people with ten pearls to appear. They'll definitely try to snatch pearls from other people, which will increase the number of people exiting in a hurry as well."

Rean was right on that one. The number of fights happening decreased, that's true. However, the number of pearls only increased. So, when Rean and Roan went patrolling and intervened between fights among cultivators, they would obtain quite a few Existence Pearls at once.

Roan intended to not meddle with the other cultivators who had ten pearls or more as long as they didn't bother him. However, it was then that Rean saw Venali also obtaining ten pearls a day later. "Hey, Roan. Didn't you want to fight this guy on the same level? This would be the perfect chance."

Roan shook his head in response, telling Rean, "When I said I wanted to fight him, it was in a situation where we had the same cultivation. Now that we have no cultivation whatsoever, this would be meaningless. There would be nothing to learn at all."

Although Roan thought like that, Venali didn't. The moment he had his eyes on the scoreboard and who had the pearls, he felt like he was humiliated. "What?! How the hell did he get 127 Existence Pearls?! Impossible!" Back in the guests' hall, Venali made it clear that Roan would still not be his match in a level battlefield. Although he and Roan didn't fight in this place, they definitely had the same level of physical strength. How could he not feel bothered?

Dissielle and Ricab also got their tenth pearl at the same time, so they saw the map and the scoreboard as well. "Impressive...whatever he did to get those pearls, it definitely humiliates everyone else in this Dream City. At the very least, there is no way we can catch up to him without robbing his pearls."

Venali then slammed the table in front of him. "Gather everyone! There's no way we can let that guy be first place. We'll just become a joke in our Huring Country like that. After all, he and his brother were already the first ones to pass the previous test."

"No can do," Ricab replied. "Take a good look at the rank. We already have twelve people with ten pearls or more. That Liana from Tenke Country, for example, already has 27. Do you think that none of them thought about stealing Roan's pearls? The fact that Roan is still there with this many proves that he definitely has the means to defend himself."

Dissielle agreed with Ricab. "Ricab's right. Do you think it's humiliating to be behind him on the scoreboard? Then, how will you feel if you try to attack him and end up getting defeated? Or worse, get your pearls taken from you before being disqualified."

Hearing that, Venali took in a deep breath and calmed down. "Sorry, I was harsh. You guys are correct. However, we can't let our Huring Country be behind again. That's not how we should perform."

This time, Dissielle and Ricab agreed with Venali. "Obviously, such a thing can't happen. With that said, we have only one choice. Roan definitely has some kind of protection to have kept his pearls for this long. We need to gather information. Depending on the outcome, we will need to join forces with the other big countries to assault him."

Venali pondered in silence for a bit before nodding. "Very well. I know Fulia from the Volava Country. I believe I can get his member's help if necessary."

Ricab also added, "I know the guys from Holand Country in the Calamal Region. Their leader, Tical, has 14 pearls at the moment. I can head there to talk."

Dissielle smiled before she got up. "Alright, while you talk with the other participants, I'll go check and see why Roan hasn't lost his pearls yet. It shouldn't be hard to find out."

Dissielle was right. Rean and Roan couldn't hide anymore after they got the pearls. Naturally, the other cultivators were able to see that they were part of the City Guards.

Later that day, Rean and Roan saw that several owners of ten pearls or more gathered in a place far away from the City Guards' headquarters. It's just that they couldn't care less what was happening there.

Volava, Huring, Tenke, Holang, and a few other countries' participants appeared at that gathering. Of course, each one of them had at least one person with ten pearls already.

Venali then took the lead and started the discussion. "As you know, Cassia said that there is some hidden surprise in this test. Most likely, it has to do with who finishes the test with the most Existence Pearls. The fact that you guys got ten pearls and haven't left yet shows that you still hope to get Roan's pearls. At the very least, you believe there will be a chance to be first place by the end of the following two weeks."

He continued, "Our Huring Country members are the same. We also wish to be first, as it is our tradition. However, none of us can go after Roan and his brother as they're now part of the City Guards. I truly wish to know how they joined that force with that monster called Rivaldo stopping everyone."

Fulia immediately gave his thoughts. "Probably, it has to do with who goes there first. They were just lucky as there's no way anyone passed through that mountain."

Everyone around nodded in agreement. They had many members of their powers try it, but it was simply too hard.

Venali smiled in response. "Then, I guess everyone here agrees with me. At the very least, we can't let such a small fry country take place, even if it isn't my Huring Country. Am I right?"

Everyone agreed with Venali...except for one person, Liana.

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Chapter 1133: Week Off

"So that's why you called me here, huh?" Liana shook her head in disappointment. "Do you really think it's humiliating that a small country has a lot of Existence Pearls? Then, let me ask you. Which one is more shameful? Roan being first, or all these big countries here joining forces to deal with him?"

Venali and everyone else was taken aback after hearing that.

Liana continued, "Let me remind you, all the countries are watching us at this very moment." Liana then turned around to leave. "If you want to go ahead with this bullshit, then so be it. I will take no part in this shitshow." Without even waiting for an answer, Liana left the gathering.

Venali gritted his teeth after she left, wishing to attack Liana right there and then. However, even if he cornered her, she would just use her pearls to finish the test. That's why these countries' leaders accepted a meeting in this place. They had their pearls ready to be used in the worst-case scenario. Attacking her would be of no use as she wasn't a threat to him anyway.

Venali then looked at the others and said, "Hmph! She doesn't understand that it's because he has the City Guards behind him that he's there. With such a force protecting his pearls, why would it be shameful to join forces? Forget her. We don't need her forces."

Obviously, the others agreed with him as well. Well, in their case, they didn't need to uphold so much pride as the Huring Country did. They only wanted Roan's pearls so that more of their members could pass the test. Although more and more pearls were being found, Roan definitely had a lot of them.

"But what if he tries to use his pearls to escape?" Fulia from Volava Country asked.

Dissielle, who was listening to the conversation, immediately answered that question. "That would be even better. Our Huring Country has already tested that. If you use your pearls to escape, only ten of them will be consumed. The rest will remain in the place where the person disappeared. He has 127 pearls at the moment, so 117 will not be used and is up for grabs."

"I see..." Fulia didn't know that. Well, the majority didn't either. "Alright then. So, how will we do it? Don't forget that just like how he can see us on the map, we can see him. He will be able to tell that we're heading to where he was. Besides, I doubt he will leave his guards' protection at all."

A guy called Gari didn't seem to care. "So what? A squad of guards is still just one squad. We all got money to buy ourselves weapons and armor. I doubt he can defend against so many of us at the same time."

"Don't be ridiculous," Ricab could not help but say in response. "If we really attack them with such force, he will definitely call for support before we get there. He can see us on the map, after all. We need a proper plan."

Venali already had something in mind. "Don't worry. We can simply use this information to our advantage."

Back on Rean and Roan's side, they were in the middle of their patrol and got another 3 Existence Pearls in the meantime. "Roan, except for that Liana girl, don't you think they have been in that position for too long?"

Roan nodded in response. "Obviously. What would be the point of moving in our direction together? You don't need to think too much to understand what they intend to do."

Rean couldn't help but smile after that. "So, they don't intend to send their leaders after us, huh?"

Roan was satisfied that Rean saw through it that easily. "That's their only choice if they want to avoid us calling for the help of more city guards. Just keep watching. They will all return to their own places on the map. However, their members will all come for us."

Rean couldn't help but say, "It seems like they aren't concerned about their members acquiring the pearls."

"They aren't," Roan said in response. "It doesn't matter if their subordinates take the pearls and use them straight away. As long as they can make me disappear, they can fight for the first position. Whether they get some of my pearls after they defeat us or not matters little. After all, the ones with the pearls will be other cultivators. It's a lot easier to deal with other cultivators than it is to deal with City Guards."

"Indeed." Rean then looked around before telling Roan, "So, should we initiate Plan B?"

"What the hell is Plan B?" Roan asked with a dark expression.

"Hahaha!" Rean laughed in response. "Isn't that obvious? Let's go back to the headquarters and take a week off."

Roan nodded in agreement. "Plan A it is, then."

"Hey! In that case, what would be Plan B?" Rean couldn't help but ask.

"Ignore everything and just fight everyone who comes our way. If things go wrong, we can simply use our pearls to leave."

Rean pondered in silence for a bit and shook his head. "If so, we can just use Plan A to force Plan C."

"What would be Plan C?"

With that, Sister Orb finally lost her patience.

[Can you two stop already? It's obvious that none of you know what Plan A, B, C, D, or whatever is. Why the hell are you inventing these plans up right now? Shouldn't these kinds of terms be used on plans that had already been discussed and are known by the two of you?]

Roan had to admit he let himself be carried by Rean's words. "Whatever. Let's head back to the headquarters. We already got 130 pearls. That should be enough for now."

However, before they went back, Roan was curious about one thing. "By the way, what would be Plan C? Was it really an idea?"

Rean shook his head as he replied, "Nothing that impressive. It basically meant to stay in the headquarters to force the enemies' leaders out. It can't even be considered a clever plan."

Roan agreed. "Indeed. In any case, we don't need to do anything else either."

Roan then looked at the squad that was following them from behind. "We are returning to the headquarters. We have fought tirelessly for an entire week, so I want all of you to take a week off before resuming our duties. Let's go!"

"Yes, sir!"

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Chapter 1134: What is she trying to do?

Sure enough, Rean and Roan returned to the City Guards' headquarters, completely ignoring whatever the other countries intended. They weren't 100% sure that the other countries were aiming at them, but it didn't matter if they weren't either. It was, as Rean mentioned. They would need to come knocking on their door whether they wanted to or not.

The reason was simple. Rean and Roan had way too many Existence Pearls after intervening in hundreds of battles between cultivators. For example, Liana had 27 pearls after an entire week. The number of cultivators diminished, and the pearls each cultivator carried increased. However, it still wasn't enough to beat Roan's numbers if all of them were gathered.

Unless, of course, they suddenly decided to give all their pearls to one or two people. There was no way in hell that those big countries would give up their pearls, though. Each and every single one of them still held on to the hope that they might end up in first place after two weeks.

"Oh, Rean, Roan, you're back." Rivaldo, who was dealing with a few issues in headquarters, just so happened to bump into them. "Isn't it too early for your squad to be back from patrol?" Rivaldo was quite satisfied with the twins' performance. He heard the reports from his team members, showing that the twins really helped the city a lot. Even the people of the area they patrolled liked them as they stopped the problem with the outsiders there.

Rean nodded with a smile, telling Rivaldo, "We are. Our squad has been stopping the battle between outsiders all this while. Because of that, we decided to give our squad a week's rest. I hope Captain Rivaldo doesn't mind it."

Rivaldo shook his head after hearing that. "You guys did enough service equivalent to over a month of problem-solving. You and your squad members definitely deserve this week off. In fact, I would mention that myself as I could see your squad members starting to feel tired."

Rean and Roan nodded in agreement. "By the way, Captain. As outsiders ourselves, perhaps the remaining outsiders will try to get revenge on us for stopping their conflicts. Some of them might try to cause trouble here in the headquarters while we're resting."

Rivaldo's expression went dark, letting out a grim chuckle as he said, "Hehe! Now, isn't that interesting? I very much wish to see who will come to MY headquarters to cause trouble." Rivaldo then patted the twins' shoulders in assurance. "Don't worry, you two just go ahead and rest. Our members aren't so weak that they can't deal with a few small flies."

The twins nodded and thanked Rivaldo before they retreated. "Well, since we can't use Divine Energy and Soul Power, what should we do in the meantime?"

Roan then grabbed Rean's collar before pulling him to the training field. "What else is there to do? We will train combat without the help of those energies. You're still lacking a lot of experience in this field."

Rean felt like crying, but he could only follow Roan's instructions. Resources were his field, while combat was Roan's. None intervened or complained about each other's plans. "Fine, fine. I can walk there by myself."

Little by little, cultivators began to gather around the City Guards' headquarters, waiting for Rean and Roan to leave for another patrol. At the same time, Venali and the others went somewhere else to look

for more Existence Pearls. Their plan was to look like they wouldn't go after Rean's group after all. Since they couldn't get close, they might as well look for more tasks that would reward them.

Time passed, and ten days had passed since the Dream City test started. During this time, the cultivators understood the rules behind the city and found even more Existence Pearls. However, the majority didn't have plans to be first on the scoreboard. Once some of them were lucky enough to gather ten pearls, they knew their position was revealed on the map. Naturally, they immediately activated their pearls and left straight away. They were all afraid of people like Venali, Liana, and others to come after their pearls. Over a hundred cultivators completed the third test in this fashion.

That, of course, irritated the big countries' leaders, who wanted to gather more Existence Pearls. Other than Roan with his 130 pearls, the second-best cultivator only had 34 of them, and it was Liana from Tenke Country.

Liane didn't care, though. If she didn't get the highest number of pearls by the end of the two weeks, she would distribute them between her country members. It was that simple. The ones who really cared about it were the members of the countries who first wanted to get Roan's pearls for themselves.

In the end, they were forced to gather once again. "Why hasn't Roan left the City Guards headquarters until now?"

"What else would it be? He definitely noticed we sent a lot of our forces after him, so he's afraid of coming out of the Headquarters."

"But if he doesn't leave, we most likely wouldn't be able to get more pearls than him when the second test is over."

"Well, if that really happens, we can still gather our own pearls. As long as we gather all of them, one of us would have more pearls than him."

"Hoh? Is that so? Then, I will obviously be the person to hold everyone's pearls, right? I won't accept any other arrangement."

"Dream on. There's no way anyone here would give their own pearls to someone else. But we can still bet them."

"Bet? I would rather have more members of my country pass this test than risk losing my pearls in this meaningless bet of yours."

Velani then called everyone's attention. "We have no other choice. We must force Roan to come out."

Fulia couldn't help but ask, "And how exactly will you do that?"

Everyone went quiet at that moment. It was easier said than done to force him to come out.

However, it was at that moment they noticed Liana's mark on the map moving in the direction of the City Guards' headquarters. "What is she trying to do?"

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Chapter 1135: We Accept

Venali and the others immediately paused their discussion and headed to the City Guards' headquarters. Liana wasn't particularly fast, so they were able to catch up to her. Not that she cared, of course. When she saw Venali and the others, they were already at their destination. "What do you want? Weren't your countries going to join forces to deal with Roan or something like that? Why did you come here when I decided to do so?"

Venali shrugged his shoulders, telling her, "I'm obviously interested in why you came. Depending on what happens, we might get something out of it, so don't bother about us and go ahead and do whatever you came here for."

Liana narrowed her eyes but decided to ignore everyone in the end. "Hmph! Do as you wish."

Rean and Roan, obviously, noticed when Liana and the others arrived. Especially the fact that Liana was not in the same group at first. "So, they did arrive in the end. What do you want to do?"

Roan simply got up before saying, "Let's check out."

Outside, Liana approached the guard on the gate. "I want to talk with Rean and Roan, your squad leaders. We have something to discuss, so can you tell them that I've arrived?"

The guards looked at each other for a moment before looking back at Liana. "Do you know each other?"

Liana shook her head, telling the guards, "Not really, but they definitely know I came. Just tell them that I want to talk."

The guards were just about to refuse Liana when suddenly, a voice came from inside the building. "It's fine. We do have some relation with that girl."

The guards looked back and immediately opened the way. Obviously, Rean and Roan had come to see Liana. "Yes, sirs."

Rean then looked at Liana with a smile before asking, "We're taking a week off before restarting our work, you know? Is there a reason for you to seek us at this point?"

Liana then went straight to the point. "I want to challenge you for your Existence Pearls."

Venali and the others were taken aback. 'Is she an idiot? I thought she had some plan in mind, but she came up with such a thing? Who the hell would accept that? All they have to do is stay inside the City Guards' headquarters, and they would most likely win first place.'

"Alright, we accept," Rean replied.

Bang!

Everyone almost vomited blood! 'Accept? Just like that? Brother, why have you made us ponder so much on how to force you to come out just to accept it? Are you making fun of our faces?'

Well, the fact was that none of them had ever thought about challenging Rean and Roan. Of course, that's because they never thought the twins would accept such a thing.

Liana, on the other hand, nodded in response. "Good. I have 15 Existence Pearls with me at the moment. I can bet that."

Rean couldn't help but ask, "Didn't you have 34 just a moment ago? How come you have just this amount?"

Liana shook her head as she explained, "Those extra pearls were gathered with the help of my countrymen. I can't possibly bet their pearls on this challenge of mine. That's why I have only 15 now." It was true. Liana was just holding the pearls for the others so that they wouldn't lose them. That's how much the girls and boys of Tenke Country trusted Liana.

Rean sighed in response. "You don't really expect us to bet all our 130 Existence Pearls against your 15, right?"

Liana nodded, saying, "Of course not! I'll bet 15, and you'll bet 15. That's the deal. The loser takes all. If I lose, so be it. If you lose, you'll still have a lot of them."

Rean nodded after hearing that. "That's good and all. But what stops you from using 10 of those pearls to finish the test, leaving only 5 behind after we win? If Roan does the same, he would be leaving 120 behind instead."

With that, Venali lost his patience and intervened. "Wait right there! Why the hell are you even accepting this shit?! Shouldn't you just keep hiding till the end?"

Everyone else nodded in agreement. It simply didn't make sense for the twins to take Liana's proposal. However, Roan snorted in response. "You guys really don't know how to think, huh? There's still 4 more days before the end of the test. The number of cultivators reduced drastically while the number of pearls around increased. Simply put, there are plenty of pearls available if you decide to go after them. I'm not sure if one of you would surpass me in terms of number. However, I can accept her challenge right now and increase my own number of pearls even more. Isn't that perfect? It will guarantee that no one of you will surpass me."

Liana's expression turned dark after hearing that. "You talk as if you had won already."

Roan nodded, telling her, "Yes, I have. In an environment where Divine Energy and Soul Power don't exist, I'm almost unbeatable in a one vs. one battle. You're not my match, not that you will believe my words, of course."

Liana and the others were taken aback. That was some insanely high confidence. However, that also made them think about something else. 'Could it be that he truly fought Rivaldo?' That idea seemed ridiculous.

Liana quickly shook her head, though. "Whether you're all of that or not, it's up for me to judge. Just so you know, I'm also very confident in my combat ability, even without Divine Energy and Soul Power. Not that you will give up accepting my challenge just because I said that, of course."

Roan faintly smiled after hearing that. The girl basically used his own words against him. That wasn't something that happened often. "Obviously, I won't. Though, you haven't answered Rean's doubt yet. What stops you from using 10 pearls to escape?"

Liana then pointed at the City Guards, saying, "Them! It doesn't matter how important you are. As long as you set that the rules can't be broken, they will follow those rules. As for which rules, let's just give the City Guards 15 Existence Pearls each, and they can only deliver it to the winner."

Rean and Roan were surprised to hear that. "It seems like you investigated the city's traits very well, unlike those idiots over there. Alright, we accept."

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Chapter 1136: Rivaldo's Intervention

Rean and Roan had noticed one important point in this Dream City. Everyone had their own defined roles. If you were a gangster, it was normal for you to be untrustworthy. They stabbed one's back without thinking twice.

On the other side of the coin, if you were a City Guard, you were 100% trustworthy. Even if it cost their lives, they would try to uphold their word to the very end. This showed how this city was just an illusion, as one couldn't draw the lines that easily in the real world.

That's also why Rean and Roan never felt threatened by joining the City Guards. Once Rivaldo accepted them, they would follow the twins as long as they also upheld the rules of the city. It was that simple.

Roan then asked something else. "By the way, was it your idea or did everyone think of it together?"

Liana snorted, saying, "You should know the answer after what Venali said. I have nothing to do with them. I came here out of my own volition, that's all."

"Hahaha!" Suddenly, a loud laugh came from inside the City Guards' headquarters. Soon after, the terror of those who tried to join the City Guards reemerged once more. It was obviously Rivaldo! "I heard your conversation!"

Rivaldo then looked at Liana and said, "Girl, you're interesting. Trying to challenge one of my subordinates without my permission. However, I quite like your boldness, so I'll be the one holding those weird pearls you outsiders like so much. I'll give my name as the captain of the City Guards that I will only pass those pearls to the winner."

Both Roan and Liana were more than satisfied with that outcome. "Thank you, Captain Rivaldo."

Rivaldo nodded as he extended his hand. Soon after, Liana and Roan gave him 15 Existence Pearls each. With that, Rivaldo recognized the legitimacy of that challenge. "Very well. However, how do you want to go with this challenge? To be honest, I would prefer to not see a fight between the two of you. This girl seems quite capable, but she is absolutely not Roan's match."

Liana and everyone else outside were taken aback. If it was someone else, they wouldn't take those words to heart. However, the one to say that was Rivaldo himself. That was especially so for Liana, who knew that an ally of justice like the City Guards couldn't lie. However, she quickly recovered before saying, "That's only your opinion. You haven't seen how I can fight without Divine Energy and Soul power, so don't jump to conclusions."

"Divine Energy, Soul Power? What's that?" Obviously, Rivaldo had no idea what Liana was talking about as this Dream City doesn't have any. "Oh well, whatever. Since you want to suffer, I'm not the one to stop you."

Rivaldo then looked at the City Guards looking at the scene and gave his orders. "All of you, position yourselves in a circle around them. Make it big. If any of them tries to escape, kill without mercy."

"Yes, Captain!" Immediately, the guards formed the circle.

Rivaldo looked at Roan and Liana once that was finished. "It was the two of you who decided to fight, so you determine what the rules are. I just won't allow anyone to leave the combat range. Anything else is valid." Rivaldo went to the side of the arena after that. He made sure to put himself between the guards and the outsiders. He wouldn't allow a single fly to intervene in that combat, and his axe showed his determination.

Venali and the others couldn't help but feel tempted by that. After all, they knew Rivaldo was holding thirty pearls on his own. Well, they weren't suicidal either, so they knew better not to test that man out.

Roan then looked at Liana before saying, "Two options for defeat. One, the other side dies. Two, one of the sides admits defeat. Do you agree?"

Liana nodded. If Roan was as strong as Rivaldo said he was, she would obviously want the chance to gather more pearls for herself once she lost her own. Not that she planned to lose, though. "Fine by me."

Liana then assumed a combat position, which caught Roan's interest. 'Oh-ho...she wasn't kidding when she said she knew how to fight without Divine Energy.' The way Liana's limbs were positioned left little to no opening. From the looks of it, she didn't intend to use any weapons either.

Roan then took his armor and weapon out. Not that he was being lenient, but that he wanted to see what the girl was capable of in the same situation. Soon after... he assumed the exact same form as Liana.

"Are you making fun of me?" Liana asked, obviously thinking that Roan was joking.

"No." Roan shook his head. "This is indeed a good form, that's all."

Roan didn't say anything else before he shot in Liana's direction. Liana, of course, did the same.

Just as they got into close range, Liana punched out, trying to test her opponent.

Roan moved his front hand to the side, attempting to parry her punch while following with a punch of his own with his other hand. However, Liana's punch ended up being way too weak for the form she took.

Suddenly, her hand that punched out closed, attempting to grab the hand that Roan used to parry her punch.

Grab!

By forcing Roan's hand to the side, she prevented herself from receiving Roan's punch with his free hand before she contorted the hand that she had caught. 'Too easy!' Roan's display hugely disappointed Liana. Simply put, she tried to break Roan's hand, just like Roan himself did with Hedoi.

Roan couldn't help but faintly smile after seeing that. 'Well, I guess that makes sense,' Roan thought. 'In the real world, women's bodies are weaker than men's when no Divine Energy and Soul Power can be used. At least, that's the case if they're of the same race in normal circumstances. That being said, a good choice would be to practice a defensive style of combat where grabbing attacks can be used.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1137: Not a Single Shadow

Just as Liana thought she would win by breaking Roan's arm, Roan did something she didn't expect. He suddenly jumped forward, rotating his body forward in the same direction Liana's grab was trying to break to. Liana might be good at this kind of combat, but Roan was certain about one thing. She definitely didn't have many people to practice this combat style with. Against him, it was just too far from enough.

As soon as Roan landed on the ground once more, he used his feet to push against Liana's body, making her lose her balance. At the exact moment Liana's body was forced back, Roan retracted the hand Liana

tried to grab onto while using the other one to attack her. Liana had only one choice, which was to let Roan's hand go or receive a hit on the face. Obviously, Roan couldn't care less about genders.

Liana indeed let Roan's hand go as she used that push to jump back. Then again, Roan wasn't going to let her go that easily. He was the one who pushed her body in the first place, so he was also moving in her direction. He used that chance to step forward and kick Liana in the stomach.

Bang!

Liana used her hands to block the kick, but she really underestimated the power behind Roan's leg. He was in the perfect position to do the attack, so the forearm's bone cracked from that alone before Liana rolled on the ground.

Liana was shocked at how savage Roan's assault was just now, but she felt the danger right there and quickly got up. Obviously, Roan was already right in front of her, ready to continue his barrage of attacks. In response, Liana gritted her teeth and paid close attention to Roan's attack. Following that, she parried Roan's next punch and performed a grabbing motion once more.

Roan wasn't having any of that, though. He already gave her a chance by letting himself get caught. How could he fall for that twice? At the same time Liana grabbed his punching hand, Roan brought his own body close to it, making his face appear right in front of the girl's.

Bang!

Suddenly, Roan rammed Liana on the head...with his head! Roan couldn't help but remember the scenes of fighting films back on Earth. 'I didn't expect to see it happening in this side of the universe.'

Liana went dizzy for a moment, which was enough for Roan to grab her fractured arm and contort it in a weird position while moving behind her. Simultaneously, he used his free arm to grab Liana's neck, paralyzing her completely. Liana had no way of escaping anymore by the time she recovered her awareness.

"I... admit defeat." As painful as it felt, Liana knew that she had lost through and through. Roan and her simply weren't at the same level.

As soon as Roan heard those words, he let Liana go. "Don't worry. When I kicked your arm, I only used enough strength to crack it slightly. It would be somewhat painful to use it during the rest of the test, but if you endure the pain, you can still fight."

Liana was surprised to hear that. "So you could have broken my arm with that kick, huh?" Liana sighed as she looked at Roan. "I thought that I would excel in this kind of test, but it seems like I'm still far lacking."

Roan shook his head in response. "You're not bad. At the very least, those pieces of trash over there probably can't perform to your level without Divine Energy or Soul Power. You just selected the wrong person to show it off to."

Though, even after saying that, Roan was curious about one thing. "Why did you learn how to fight without Divine Energy and Soul Power?"

Liana seemed to reminisce some things from the past after hearing that question. "I passed through a similar situation in the past. Let's just say it was not a good memory, so I trained in this combat style to prevent being helpless again."

Roan nodded after that and didn't force the issue.

Rivaldo laughed on the outside. "Hahaha! Very good fight, very good fight!" He then patted Liana's head and told her, "Girl, you did much better than I expected. I knew you were not his match, but to think you lasted this long. I thought he would have broken several of your bones in the very first exchange as this guy is extremely good with grabbing motions as well."

Rivaldo then took the pearls out of his bag before continuing, "Still, the rules are the rules. Since you lost, all your 15 pearls are now his. You have no complaints about that, right?"

"Yes." Liana knew that she wouldn't be able to get her pearls back anyway. Even if she could, her pride wouldn't allow it.

Rivaldo then passed the thirty pearls to Roan after that. "Here you go."

Roan then took the 15 pearls and put them together with his own. Immediately, his number of pearls in the ranking jumped to 145. "You should go out and look for more pearls. With fewer cultivators and more tasks, you should be able to get another ten before time is up."

Liana nodded and turned around to leave. Since she didn't have any other pearls, Venali and the others didn't care much about her. Their attention was all on Roan instead.

Roan then snorted at the rest of the spectators. "Anyone else? You can come here to fight me any time you want. Just make sure you don't cause trouble in the city, or you'll pay for it."

Venali and the other competitors felt like they could explode in anger. However, it was extremely obvious to them. If they fought Roan one on one, they would lose miserably. No, they would still lose even if they fought two or three on one. The difference in experience was just that big.

Roan then turned around and went back to the headquarters. The city guards also returned to their patrols and watching positions, including Rivaldo. They didn't care about the rest at all.

During the next four days, not a single shadow appeared close to the City Guards' headquarters to challenge Roan.

Death... and me

Chapter 1138: Barrier Bead

Things became pretty stable for the last three days of the test, with several new owners of ten pearls, who immediately exited the test as they didn't think they could get first place on the scoring board. However, on the fourth day, everyone who still hadn't finished the test became quite desperate. Because of that, all the cultivators began to gather in isolated areas to fight against each other again. Since they didn't have ten pearls to their name, their opponents wouldn't be able to escape using them, after all.

Because of that, the 15000 or so cultivators that still remained began to plummet at extremely high speeds. Venali, Dissielle, Fulia, Gari, and all the other leaders from big countries tried to use that chance to gather more pearls. Perhaps they could get enough of them to surpass Roan during that time.

However, they didn't expect the twins' move. Roan stayed in the headquarters and simply focused on his own training. Meanwhile, Rean left and went on a patrol once again. With all the other cultivators busy trying to get their own ten pearls, no one had time to deal with him.

Due to the number of battles happening everywhere, Rean and his city guard squad had hit the jackpot. He would always get a few pearls in every fight between cultivators. Once he got 20 or so pearls, he would return and pass them to Roan, keeping only ten for himself. Those ten were there just in case he needed to pass the test in a hurry.

Velani did catch up to Roan's 145 pearls close to the end of the day. However, that 145 was Roan's number at the start. When the last hour arrived, Rean had managed to get 97 more pearls. That put Roan at 242. It was simply impossible to catch up anymore, much to Venali's anger.

Of course, Liana did show why she was confident in her combat power without Divine Energy as well. She had no pearls four days ago after losing to Roan. But on the last day alone, she got another 90! It was almost the same number as Rean's squad. Of course, she had her country people's help, which was a bigger number than Rean's 20 city guards. Nevertheless, that was an impressive comeback. It's just that she never went up in the rank. She knew that passing Roan was impossible, so she gave the pearls to another member of her country every time she got an extra ten.

Eventually, the test reached its end without anyone else trying to challenge Roan at all. Venali and the others could only take their extra pearls and distribute them between their country members as well. After all, the more people on their side that passed the test, the better their chances would be in the next ones.

Suddenly, Cassia's voice echoed in everyone's minds. 'The third test is over! I hope everyone understood what living a few days as a mortal meant. Other than looking for the pearls, you also had to deal with a normal person's everyday issues like traveling, living quarters, jobs, and much more. If you see an ordinary person in the future, I hope you won't simply look down on them as most of you probably did so far.'

Well, Cassia knew that the majority would not really change their minds about this, but she didn't care. Her reason for creating this kind of test was that she was a simple person back in her youth. If at least a few of them changed their minds about it, then it was already enough for her.

'Now then. I said that this test had a hidden surprise. You all saw the ranking system, so it's no secret that this surprise would be given to the one who finished in the first position. Roan Larks, 242 Existence Pearls, take a good look at your pearls.'

Roan heard that and took the pearls out of his bag. Suddenly, they shone with a red light before they fused together, transforming into an even bigger pearl. Rean and Roan could only look at the process, puzzled. However, a few seconds later, the pearl shot in the direction of Roan's body, disappearing inside. It was way too fast for him to dodge.

Rean and Roan didn't know what had happened. But before they could ask anything, their own bodies and everyone else shone with red light and disappeared from the Dream City.

Rean and Roan then awakened in a big room, where they could see many other cultivators, both males and females. Obviously, that was the place where everyone's body was taken care of during the test. Suddenly, Roan touched his head as he felt like there was something new inside. "What's this?"

[Oh, that's quite nice.] Sister Orb could not help but say. [That's a Barrier Bead.]

'Barrier Bead?' Rean and Roan were puzzled. Rean didn't have one, but he could see it through Roan's memories, so he knew how it felt.

[Yes. It's a one-time life-saving item. It's very expensive, you know? I'm surprised a Sacred Land is willing to part with such a thing during a simple test. Well, it's only effective against people of the Elemental Transformation Realm and below, though. Any more than that, and it won't be of much help.]

Sister Orb continued. [It has the power to protect you against an attack from an enemy up to the Elemental Transformation Realm. After that, it will lose its power and shatter away. It can be activated by focusing your Divine Energy on it.]

Roan was quite satisfied with that. Now that they couldn't run into the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm anymore, this item was several times more valuable. 'I see... I'll make good use of it if the chance arises.'

Of course, the only ones who knew about it were Cassia, Rean, and Roan. The others only knew that Roan got something, but they didn't know what.

With that, they were all brought back to the guests' hall, where Cassia and the rest were waiting.

Death... and me

Chapter 1139: Sealed Cultivations

The dream city then began to disappear into nothingness. The streets, the people, the buildings, everything. After it was over, the place became completely empty...except for one man standing in the middle of everything that once stood there. If the participants were here, they definitely would recognize this mountain of a person as the one named Rivaldo! "Hehe! What an interesting pair those two were."

Suddenly, a woman dressed in a white robe appeared beside him like a ghost. "Sir, I hope you got what you wanted. We need to go now as we are late."

Rivaldo nodded and immediately left with the woman. It was as if no one had ever been there to start with.

Once they were back, it was obvious that many were happy, while others...not so much. Huring Country was one of the not-so-happy ones. It was normal for their country to ace every test that had any kind of competitive system, which was the case of the second and third tests. But this time around, they had always been second. Why? Because of a small fry country's pair of twins, which added insult to injury.

Cassia couldn't care less, though. "So, you got first place, huh? Did you like the gift?"

Of course, that reward didn't have anything to do with entering the Sacred Land ahead of time they thought about.

Rean couldn't help but ask back, "Didn't you say the only reward was to join the Sacred Land at the end of the tests? How come there's a reward now?" Rean wasn't the only one curious about that. The rest of the countries heard that, so they were confused as well.

Cassia just shrugged her shoulders in response. "I lied."

For some reason, everyone already expected that answer. "Whatever. That was a good prize." Rean wasn't in the mood to complain either.

Cassia nodded and then continued with the announcements. "Anyway, congratulations to everyone who passed the test. We now have 2341 participants remaining after the last test. As all of you can expect, the next test is the last test to decide who enters the Sacred Land."

Immediately, everyone paid close attention to Cassia's words. Usually, it was around this time that battles would take place, a way of showing who was the strongest and deserved entering the Sacred Land. All the tests prior to it were just filters so that the Sacred Land wouldn't recruit those who had muscles for brains. They wanted people that could think and battle at the same time.

"Well, there's no suspense in this, right? Obviously, we're going with battles," Cassia said. The weaker participants that reached this far sighed after hearing that. Now, they truly needed more luck than ever to not fight against people like Venali and Hedoi. As for Venali and Hedoi, they were obviously very satisfied to hear that.

Cassia continued, "However, it'll be slightly different this time. We will use the lowest cultivation level of the remaining participants as the limit. With that being said, Peak Stage of the Soul Transformation Realm it is."

People like Hedoi, Venali, and Fulia narrowed their eyes after that. Their chances of winning were lower in such a situation. They wouldn't be able to charge through the field by using the raw power of their Elemental Transformation Realm cultivation alone anymore. Well, they were still confident in their own cultivation techniques, skills, and experience, so there's that.

Besides, it would be useless to complain as Cassia definitely wouldn't go back on her word. In fact, she would throw it in their faces that the Sacred Land didn't need scaredy-cats who couldn't even fight against opponents of the same level. Those ones they definitely wouldn't take.

Soon after, a few elders of the Sacred Land lined up beside Cassia. "All the participants, come forward so that we can seal your cultivation levels. There's no need to worry. You can unseal it yourselves by simply applying Divine Energy Pressure to the seal itself. Just be aware that you will be disqualified if that happens."

Rean and Roan were quite satisfied to hear that. From the very start of the recruitment, the lowest cultivation level one could find was the Peak Stage of the Soul Transformation Realm, their realm. There was another reason why they had confidence as well. 'So far, we haven't fought even a single time. None of them know about our abilities, especially my ability with my scythe. Make sure you also make use of it.'

Rean nodded in response. 'Obviously. It's also a good opportunity to see if our higher strength at a certain cultivation level is bigger than the geniuses of the continent. We could fight an average Late Stage Saint Realm head-on with our power. But that's definitely not the case here. Perhaps we might need to exchange elements.'

'Try to not do that unless extremely necessary,' Roan reminded him. 'Still, you better consider that people like Venali, Hedoi, or that girl with a Pure Yin Body to be able to fight at the same level as us. The techniques and skills available for them are simply a lot more advanced than what we found in the Mortal Realm.'

'Gotcha!' Rean obviously agreed with that.

It was then that Samanta, Regio, and Milina arrived where the twins were. "So, you're finally out. Just so you know, there were no rewards for us when we left the dream city. Being the first ones out gave nothing."

Rean and Roan didn't mind. "Well, it was better to prevent in any case. Anyway, you guys go ahead and seal your cultivations. Unlike us, you're all in the Saint Realm already."

They nodded and passed by the twins when suddenly, Samanta looked back at them. "I still owe you for the help in the previous tests. If a chance arises, I'll pay for it in this next test as long as it doesn't mean I'll fail."

Rean shrugged his shoulders after hearing that. "Neither Roan nor I really want any payment. However, you won't give up either, will you? Well, do as you may."

Roan slightly nodded, obviously agreeing with Rean's words for a change.

"Good!" Samanta smiled in response and left with the others to have her cultivation sealed to the Peak Stage of the Soul Transformation Realm.

Death... and me

Chapter 1140: Probably

Fabio then got close to the twins as they didn't need to seal their cultivations. They weren't the only Peak Stage Soul Transformation Realm cultivator there, but their numbers were definitely the smallest. "What do you think about it?"

Roan glanced at him before giving his opinion. "This place has a huge concentration of Divine Energy, so everyone's abilities will be a bit stronger based on that. My doubt is whether we have the strength to challenge the top countries at the same cultivation level."

Fabio nodded in agreement. "I'm pretty sure you two can do that. However, Regio and Samanta are different. As you've already seen, they're weaker than you in similar conditions."

Rean was surprised to hear that. "Wait, you're talking as if Milina is stronger than them."

Fabio smiled in response. "In normal situations, she wouldn't be. However, did you forget what I said about her race?"

Only then did the twins remember. "Right! Although she has only half the bloodline, her body has that weird ability to store Divine Energy. Cassia is sealing everyone's cultivations, not their races' traits. She obviously can't do that to Milina either, since this ability is her race's trait."

"Exactly. Milina is indeed stronger than average cultivators, but she can't compare to you, Samanta and Regio. Let alone the top geniuses of the top countries like Huring. But now, even though her cultivation will be sealed at the Peak Stage of the Soul Transformation Realm, the fact still stands that she can still use the same amount of Divine Energy as a Saint Realm cultivator." Fabio seemed quite hopeful for that branch family descendant. "Simply put, Milina's extremely lucky to have you two to help her reach this place, and even more so when the rules for this battle were decided."

It was then that Rean remembered something. "Right! She's very fat, as you can see. However, after the Yin Death Zone test, I could tell that her weight was no different than ours. How come?"

Fabio then explained, "That's also a trait of their race. The 'fat' that you see is not real body tissue. It's mostly Divine Energy Storage. Do you remember when I said she would be at the very top in tests that demanded high amounts of Divine Energy? That's why." Fabio then laughed as he continued, "Hahaha! You have to see how she looks when there's no Divine Energy stored in her body. She's quite a beautiful girl, you know?"

Rean and Roan looked at Milina and found it hard to believe. "Well, if you say so..."

Everyone then had their cultivations sealed and waited for the battles to start. Meanwhile, the countries' guardians talked with their participants as well.

"I feel like killing you all, but I have to admit the tests you got so far had little chance of concluding the task I gave you," Gille told them. "However, there is no escape anymore. In these battles that are coming, I want you to make sure that Roan will lose. Just make sure you don't cripple him, as I need his Dark Element Affinity."

Gille then gave a cold smile as he continued, "I don't need to tell you what will happen if you end fighting him and lose, right?"

Hedoi and everyone else nodded in response. They knew that Gille wasn't joking around.

The Huring Country, however, completely put Roan's existence behind their heads. "Now that those filtering tests are over, only strength will make the difference. That being said, forget about those twins. They are not your real opponents. Pay attention to Volava, Tenke, Klacks, Holang, and the other top countries. They are your targets this time around. You've probably heard of that girl called Liana and her Pure Yin Body, right? She is someone you should pay even more attention to now that you'll fight at the same cultivation level."

Everyone from Huring Country that was still in the competition nodded. "Yes, Elder Safran!"

On Tenke's side... "Liana, Givaldi, Viola, you three have the best hopes of succeeding. Though, don't feel too bad if you don't make it. Put your lives as first priority. That's all."

"Leave it to us, Lady Jamilian." Surprisingly, one of the names she called was Givaldi, one of the very few men in their entourage.

Similar scenes happened everywhere until finally, Cassia called their attention. "Alright, what comes next is the battles. Last time, we had people draw lots and pick 10 cultivators to fight one by one. This time, things will be different. We will use group battles up to five people. With that said, you can ally with whoever you wish. Even other countries are not out of the question."

Those words surprised most people. Some loved it while others hated it. In any case, they know that the rules can never be changed.

Rean and Roan were quite surprised to hear that as well. They thought they would have to fight people one by one, which was definitely the best choice for them. "Tch... such bullshit."

Samanta narrowed her eyes in response. "What? Do you think we're not good enough?"

Roan nodded without even thinking twice. "Yes."

Samanta felt like giving Roan a beating. "Hmph! I still don't know if you're as strong as you pretend you are. I might be much better than you, you know?"

Regio immediately shook his head. "You definitely aren't." It was a short phrase, but it convened all his thoughts. He knew the difference between himself and the twins.

"Oh, yeah? Then, I don't want to join forces with you anymore. I'll go look for another team!" Samanta was fuming, obviously.

"Wait, wait, wait!" Rean quickly intervened. "It's not like you don't understand the ice block's personality. Just ignore him, will you? Let's make a group with the five of us. It's perfect! The five survivors from Fabio's group! How good is that?"

"Why should I do that if he thinks I'm weak?" Samanta asked in response.

Rean then explained, "It's not that he thinks you're weak, but that we are much better when fighting alone. However, in this group battle, having help is definitely better than not having it."

Samanta narrowed her eyes and looked at Roan. "Do you also think that it's better to have me in the group at least?"

Roan pondered in silence for a bit and nodded in the end. "Probably."

Rean felt like crying already...