

Death 1161

Death... and me

Chapter 1161: Terrible

In the end, Roan simply decided to pick the Sacred Land. However, there was one thing he still didn't get an answer for. "Fine. If that's the case, I'll enter the Sacred Land. Though, you haven't told me about the Dark Element catalyst."

Etherian laughed when he heard that. "Hahaha! That's right, that's right. I was talking about our skill repository and forgot to mention that. To be honest, we don't have any of them here. However, I do know where you can find it. Most likely, it'll be the same information that Gille had for you."

Gille bitterly smiled as he knew that it was true.

Etherian continued, "I'll talk more about it once the next test is over. I also want to know the two of you a little more." After that, he left the guests' hall.

Outside, Etherian met with Cassia. Looking at him, Cassia asked, "Senior Etherian, is that really okay? We have never gone after disciples before. Considering your status, it might make things difficult for the twins later after the amount of interest you showed in them."

Etherian smiled in response. "If they can't even deal with some pressure, then they have no need to stay in our Sacred Land. Just make sure those two come and see me later regardless of entering the Inner or Outer Sacred Land."

Cassia nodded in response. "Very well."

Back in the guest hall, everyone was discussing what had just happened. Many ideas were circling throughout. Some thought Etherian wanted a direct disciple, while others thought there was a hidden agenda behind it. Regardless of what it was, the situation was obviously not common at all, especially for the elders who had come here several times in the past.

Rean and Roan just ignored all the eyes focused on them, though.

Roan then looked at the unhappy Gille and asked, "Is there anything else?"

Gille looked back at him before leaving. In the end, he decided to not talk anymore as it would be useless. Instead, he focused on the members that came to participate this time around.

Fabio finally let out a sigh of relief once Gille left. "This is not good for my heart, you know? How come you guys always get so much attention?"

Roan didn't even bother answering, so Rean had to do that. "Well, it's not like we're doing it on purpose. Or perhaps... we are? Anyways..."

It was kind of a weird situation. Before they even joined the Sacred Land, they already had a connection with three people there. Tulipa, Paulo, and especially Etherian. How many people out there could say they have done that at their age?

Fabio then warned Roan, "Just be careful. The Klacks Country isn't exactly known to forget things. I don't think he'll try anything against you now that you're part of the Sacred Land, but I can't guarantee that either."

Roan agreed with Fabio, saying, "I know. I could see on his face that he was having a hard time accepting this outcome. In any case, there's no point paying attention to it right now."

The six hours Cassia talked about went by in a flash. With the Sacred Land's help, every cultivator that had to recover got back to their feet in full strength.

"Alright, you all had your time." Suddenly, a spatial door appeared near Cassia. "All the remaining cultivators, enter this spatial door. You will be randomly teleported to one of the sealed rooms. As mentioned before, no Divine Sense nor Soul Power could pass through their walls, so you'll be on your own."

Cassia continued, "However, everyone outside will be able to see your progress, including the other Sacred Land elders and me. That's how we can tell whether you succeeded or not. Each of you will see a jade slip on the table in the middle of the room. Inside, you have ten neutral techniques that I came up with myself just for this test. Once you learn one of them, just try to execute it in the room. If it's up to

the threshold of mastery, you will receive a signal saying that you completed that technique and that you can head to the next."

"Naturally, once you receive ten signals, one for each technique, you would have finished the test. Of course, you must remember, only the top ten will be joining the Inner Sect. The rest will all be sent into the Outer Sect. This test is made to test your comprehension ability and also your general knowledge about the cultivation world."

Cassia finally pointed at the doors before saying, "Alright, head inside. Don't touch the jade slip until I say so, though."

Rean's group then got up once again and headed to the spatial door. The same happened for everyone else. Once inside, they were teleported to a square room. Inside, they found the table with the jade slip, that's all.

A few minutes later, everyone finally appeared in their own rooms. Only then did Cassia's voice echo in their minds. "Alright, the test starts now. You can check the jade slips."

Rean and Roan immediately took it and checked the content with their Divine Senses. At the same time, Rean contacted Roan through their Soul Connection. Yes, their Soul Connection had nothing to do with Divine Sense or Soul Power. With that being said, they could still talk with each other. 'Should we focus on different techniques and share our memories? Or do you want to try it alone?'

Roan immediately answered, 'Let's share the work. This isn't really training anymore, so it's best if we join the Inner Sacred Land straight away. I'll start with this Stacked Divine Energy Palm.'

Rean agreed with Roan. Sure, it could be considered cheating. Then again, they didn't intend to stay in the Sacred Land for long to start with, so they didn't care. 'Very well, I'll get this Cyclic Divine Energy Barrier.'

As Rean and Roan looked into the meridians' path to use the techniques, they noticed a peculiarity. 'What a terribly made technique...'

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Chapter 1162: Sharing Information

Rean and Roan weren't the only ones to think of the techniques that way. Every cultivator who looked at the techniques had the same thought. It wasn't the level that a Sacred Land technique should have, which meant it was done on purpose.

Roan then commented, 'Cassia wanted it to be difficult. If you miss the right rotation of meridians to release the technique, chances are that you will injure yourself and even your cultivation.'

Rean agreed with Roan on that. 'Indeed. Fortunately, we have my Instant Recovery skill, so we can afford to be injured. Let's just go for it.'

Rean immediately got up and channeled the Divine Energy into the meridians necessary to create the Cyclic Divine Energy Barrier.

Bang!

However, he lost control over it in just a few seconds, not being able to make it work at all. Not only that, he felt his body receive the backlash. 'This is quite painful...'

'Life Style, Second Form, Instant Recovery!'

Light Element gathered as Rean healed his internal injuries in an instant. 'Well, let's try again.'

Roan was better off, though. It wasn't a surprise as he had created many techniques himself. Divine Energy channeled through his hands' meridians before he struck out.

Pah!

He hit the wall, which made it tremble a little. Soon after, several runes appeared on the wall, showing that it was protected by a formation. 'Hmm...not quite right. I also had a lot of difficulties trying to keep the balance. Well, at least there was no backlash.' Roan was right. Although he did execute the technique, he didn't receive a signal telling him that he had mastered it.

Nevertheless, Cassia opened her eyes in surprise as he looked at Rean and Roan. One could try as many times as he wanted because of his unbelievable healing technique. The other one had a comprehension so high that he already achieved basic success on his very first try. 'These guys...no wonder even Senior Etherian was interested in them. They're freaks.'

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Shhhhhh....

Rean lost control over the Cyclic Divine Energy Barrier four more times until finally, he got it to work, albeit barely. It still took him more than an hour, though. After that, he tried to keep the barrier working for a few seconds before he stopped. 'Phew...now, that's a lot more like it. Roan, how's the palm technique going?'

Just as Rean asked, Roan received a signal message in his room. 'Stacked Divine Energy Palm has reached the threshold of mastery.'

Roan understood with that message that one didn't really need to fully master the technique, just use it more or less correctly. 'I got the palm technique to completion. I'll share my memories of the technique.'

Rean then received all the steps Roan took to use the Stacked Divine Energy Palm straight away. Of course, just the memories weren't enough. Rean would have to try it a few times until he understood how to apply it. In any case, that would save him at least 90% of the work. 'Good! I'm not as good as you with techniques, but I'm not too far behind. I should finish the Cyclic Divine Energy Barrier soon.'

Rean wasn't lying. After he got it to barely work, he understood the principles. Twenty minutes later, Rean also received the same signal message. 'Cyclic Divine Energy Barrier completed.' Naturally, he shared that memory with Roan straight away.

Roan nodded and immediately put Rean's memories to use. Of course, Rean did the same thing with the palm technique. This time, it didn't take one hour for them to understand those two techniques. Both of them already knew the right steps to make them work with each other's help. Roan got the Cyclic Divine Energy Barrier working in just fifteen minutes while Rean got the Stacked Divine Energy Palm. Obviously, both of them received the same signal again, saying they completed those skills.

By now, Cassia didn't even know what to say anymore. However, she also found it strange. Out of nowhere, both twins succeeded in using the same skill the other had just mastered. 'It's as if they can share what they learn. Is it just a coincidence?'

However, that thought became more prominent as time passed.

Roan completed the third skill, Divine Energy Resonance, in about one hour again. Rean did the same thing through trial and error for Divine Finger Strike. After that, they both learned the other's skills in just ten to fifteen minutes.

The same thing happened for the fifth and sixth skills. They used around one to two hours to comprehend the next skill. After that, it only took a few minutes for them to be able to use the skill that the other brother had taken over one hour to comprehend.

By now, Cassia and everyone watching the twins were sure. 'They're definitely sharing information with each other!'

However, what Cassia was even more impressed with was not the sharing of information. Instead, it was from their comprehension ability when they tried one of her skills for the first time, especially Roan. 'Even if they weren't sharing information, they're still far ahead of the third-best one.'

Cassia then looked at the room where Liana from the Tenke Kingdom was comprehending her skills. She had just finished the third one, while the twins would have finished at least four even if they didn't share information. The fourth one was Venali from Huring Country, who was in the middle of comprehending

the third skill. But in Venali's case, there were quite a few people on similar steps as him, so it wasn't guaranteed that he could take the fourth slot.

Well, it didn't take long before someone raised a voice. "Senior Cassia, those twins are cheating! It's obvious that they're sharing information. Otherwise, how could they learn exactly the same technique as the other after they finished comprehending them?"

Many elders and cultivators who failed in the recruitment nodded. They also thought the same thing.

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Chapter 1163: Smashing

Cassia then shrugged her shoulders as she said in response, "Can you prove it?"

"This..." Immediately, that elder went silent. Prove? Prove how? "Can...we check their rooms to see if their Anti-Divine Energy and Soul Power Barriers are working?" That was the only thing he could come up with.

Cassia couldn't help but laugh out loud in response. "Hahaha! Are you an idiot? Do you think I haven't tested that already? I did that as soon as they comprehended the second skill. Even with that, the Formation Masters didn't find anything wrong with the barriers."

Cassia then mentioned, "Also, so what if it isn't working? Have you checked their cultivation? They're both at the Peak Stage of the Soul Transformation Realm. With the concentration of Divine Energy in our Sacred Land, how far do you think their Divine Sense and Soul Power Scan can go? Take a look at how far they are from each other. It's simply impossible for their Divine Sense and Soul Power Scan to get that far."

"That's not all," Cassia continued. "My Sacred Land members are there right now. If those twins were using Divine Sense or Soul Power Scan to communicate, they would first touch these members before reaching each other. All the elders there are far above in cultivation than the twins. Do you think they wouldn't feel the twins' Divine Sense if it was escaping the room?"

"I..." That elder didn't know what to say. Not only him, but all the others also looked away. Indeed, with all these factors put together, it shouldn't be possible for them to communicate.

"Could it be that they're using Thoughts Transmission Talismans?" Someone else wondered.

Cassia shook her head as she replied, "Let alone that we would have seen it, the Anti-Divine Sense and Soul Power Barrier also prevents those talismans from working." With that, Cassia sighed as she said, "Sure, I also believe they have some way of communication. However, our Sacred Land works on facts. If none of you can tell how they can communicate, then it is all but speculation."

Cassia then turned her attention back to the test rooms. 'Still, why would those twins act in this way? If they wanted to keep it a secret that they can communicate, they could simply choose different skills to learn in sequence. However, the moment Rean or Roan finishes comprehending a skill, the other goes and finishes comprehending the same one in just a few minutes. This is simply a blatant method of saying that they can communicate.'

Cassia was right. They were doing it on purpose. The reason was very simple. They just wanted to see if someone could find out how they did that. If that was the case, they would have one more thing to investigate while they were in the Sacred Land. Sister Orb also approved that plan as it would mean the system's methods had some flaws. Killing two birds with one stone, she thought.

[Hehehe! Even the Sacred Land can't find out about your Soul Connection. That's a good thing. You can continue to rely on it in the future for communication in secret.]

Rean agreed with Sister Orb, but he had to admit he felt a little nervous. 'This was quite dangerous, in my opinion. What if they found out? We might have gotten into trouble. No, to be more specific, we can still get into trouble. After all, the Sacred Land elders will definitely ask about it.'

Roan shook his head in response. 'It's fine. For now, let's just focus on finishing this test. We don't know how good the comprehension ability of the other cultivators are, after all. They might be even faster than the two of us are. If the Sacred Land really comes out to ask, we can just give out some excuse. It's not like they can find out how it works anyway.'

Rean nodded after hearing that. 'Alright, let's focus.'

Well, it went without saying that the twins simply smashed the comprehension test. They finished comprehending the full set of ten neutral skills in just seven hours! To put it in comparison, Liana from

Tenke Country took thirteen hours to comprehend all ten skills. That meant that even if they didn't share information, they would have definitely finished in the top ten without a doubt.

Venali was the fourth one to finish, much to his dismay. Not only wasn't he first, but he wasn't second or third either, only fourth! He was supposed to be the best disciple of Huring Country, but he couldn't beat a girl younger and with lower cultivation than him. Let alone the twins, who had cultivations even lower than Liana, although they were of similar age to her.

The fifth one was Dissiele from Huring Country, while the sixth one was Hedoi from Klacks Country. However, the seventh, eighth, and ninth were not part of the top countries, just like Rean and Roan. They were all from medium and small countries. At least the tenth position was from a top country. Fulia Volder took that position. As for the rest, it didn't matter. They had all become Outer Sacred Land disciples regardless of whether they were eleventh or three hundredth.

Plack!

Cassia then clapped her hands as she looked at all the participants. "Such a surprise from this recruitment this year. The top countries still got a lot more of their disciples to join our Sacred Lands as always. However, to think that only five of the top ten cultivators would be part of them. Sure enough, you never know where talent can appear. I'm glad I used this comprehension test and fished out these hidden talents."

With that, she looked at the top ten cultivators. "Roan, Rean, Liana, Venali, Dissiele, Hedoi, Qeijada, Polamino, Varsia, and Fulia. Those ten are now accepted into the Inner Sacred Land. As for the rest, all of you can become Outer Sacred Land disciples. Don't look down on this position. Not only can you fight your way up, but even Outer Disciples are well treated here. I'm looking forward to your performances."

Cassia then smiled before saying, "Alright, our Sacred Land prepared a banquet for everyone to enjoy. Everyone is free to leave or take part in it. Let's go!"

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Chapter 1164: A Few Rules

Some stayed, others left. In any case, the banquet was enormous and went on for several days. Only then was everyone who wasn't part of the Sacred Land invited to leave. Fabio took the chance to come and talk with Rean and the others. "The five of you will obviously stay here. However, I hope you don't

forget our deal. If I need your help in the future, you have to come to me as long as it isn't anything overboard."

Samanta and the rest nodded in response. Milina, however, couldn't help but hug Fabio. She never thought she could have succeeded in entering the Sacred Land, even if it was as an Outer Disciple. "Thank you, Uncle Fabio. I won't forget all you did for me. Please, tell my family about what happened. I'm sure none of them believe I would pass the test, so they're definitely waiting for me to come back."

Fabio laughed and nodded in response. "Hahaha! Alright, alright. Your father is a friend of mine, so I'll explain it to him. I'm sure everyone from your branch family will be dying out of jealousy."

Rean and Roan also exchanged a few words with Fabio before he finally left with the other princes, princesses, and the participants from the Kamos Kingdom that failed the tests.

Samanta, Regio, and Milina also took the chance to say goodbye to Rean and Roan as they were being sent to the outer part of the Sacred Land. "We don't know if we'll be able to go to the Inner Sacred Land any time soon. After all, we wouldn't have succeeded in this test if not for your help. Nevertheless, we will try our best as everyone in the Outer Region gets the same treatment. We can finally match those geniuses from the top countries."

Rean nodded with a satisfied expression. "You say that, but during the capture the flag tests, you did help us out a lot. Us two alone wouldn't be able to fight five guys at the same time."

Even Roan agreed on that. "I thought all of you would be useless, but it turns out that wasn't the case. Not too bad."

Samanta felt the urge to beat him again. Unfortunately, she knew she wasn't his match. "Hmph! Just you wait." With that, she turned around. "Let's go, everyone."

As for Rean and Roan, they were told to wait in the banquet hall once the party was finished. There was also Venali, Liana, and the other competitors who ended up in the top ten. Eventually, only them, Cassia, and a few elders remained there. "All of you, come here."

Rean's group then gathered and waited for Cassia's orders.

"You will all get your own private estates inside the Sacred Land. They aren't big, but it's much better than the shared buildings of the Outer Sacred Land disciples." She then threw a triangle-shaped token at them. "These are your keys and also your proof of membership in the Sacred Land. Put a drop of your blood over it, and it will bind to you. Even if someone else tries to use the token, it won't work. Also, you better not lose it as you will have to pay a hefty price to make a new one."

Cassia continued, "The Sacred Land isn't much different than the general sects out there. If there's a difference, it's the fact that we rarely intervene in the struggles between countries of our continent. We try to keep a neutral position at all times, which also guarantees our power. Unless we find a situation similar to the Soul Eater Sect, we won't move a finger."

"However, you're still allowed to help your own countries and families. Just keep in mind that when you do that, you cannot use the name of the Sacred Land against your enemies. Even if you die while doing so, we won't go out there to take revenge for you. When I say our Sacred Land is neutral, I mean it! If it is found that you tried to use the Sacred Land's name improperly, let's say, to stop a war against your own country, you will be punished."

"Of course, you can use the Sacred Land's name for other things. For example, to get a vacancy in some important auction that usually wouldn't have a slot for you. To get information in the many countries and regions of our Huring Continent and so on. In those cases, you don't need to hold back at all and make full use of your status as Sacred Land disciples."

"Alright! Rean and Roan will come with me. The rest will follow the elder in front of each of you as they will show you your residences. If you have any questions, just ask them before they leave. After all, you're all on your own. The sect rules can be found in a jade slip inside your estates."

"Yes, Elder Cassia!" Everyone bowed to her at the same time.

With that, Cassia and the others left. Liana, Venali, and the others couldn't help but think about the twins, though. After all, they did see what happened in the guest hall. Unfortunately, they couldn't follow the twins to find out.

Cassia didn't bring the twins to their new residences, though. Instead, she headed straight to Core Elder Etherian. It's just that she was barred on the way there. "Elder Cassia, wait!"

They looked back and could see a man flying in their direction. Rean and Roan immediately recognized him as Fabio shared the information with them. It was Paulo, an ancestor of the Kamos Kingdom that was supposed to arrange things for the twins. "Elder Cassia, I'm from the same kingdom as them and agreed with my descendant that I would take care of the twins while they're here. Would you mind if I took it from here?"

Cassia pondered over it for a bit before saying, "I have to bring the twins to Core Elder Etherian. If you want, you can follow me. After that, I'll leave all the arrangements to you then."

"Core Elder Etherian?!" Paulo was taken aback. After he talked with Fabio, he left to take care of a few things and only came back after the event with Etherian and the twins. Naturally, the information of what happened didn't reach his ears. Of course, he immediately accepted the invite as meeting one of the Ten Greats wasn't simple, even for him. "Alright, I'm going."

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Chapter 1165: Why Did You Call Us?

On the way, Rean couldn't help but ask, "I've heard this 'Ten Greats' mentioned before. What does it mean?"

Paulo then explained with a respectful expression, "The Ten Greats are exactly what the name implies. They're considered the ten strongest cultivators in our Huring Continent. Core Elder Etherian is one of them. However, this rank was created a long time ago, so no one knows if all the Ten Greats are still alive or not. I knew Senior Etherian was still alive, but I can count in my hand how many times I saw him. As for the others, I wouldn't be impressed if a few have already passed away or left our Huring Continent."

Cassia agreed with Paulo, saying, "You know quite a bit for a minor elder."

Paulo scratched the back of his head, replying, "It's because Senior Etherian was my idol when I first joined the Sacred Land. I still remember the stories about him during the Continental War several millennia ago."

Cassia couldn't help but giggle after that. "Hehe. It's good to see some people still remember it."

"What stories?" Rean asked back.

However, Cassia shook her head as she carried the twins while flying. "We're almost there. If you feel like it, you can ask him directly."

Etherian was in his residence, drinking some tea when he looked in a certain direction. Not long after, Cassia appeared with the twins and Paulo. "So, you're here." However, Etherian also noticed Paulo. "And you are...?"

Paulo immediately bowed to Etherian. The excitement on his face was obvious for anyone to see. "Hello, Senior Etherian. I'm a minor elder of the Sacred Land. These twins came from my country, so I was going to prepare their things when I found out that you wanted to see them. Lady Cassia then let me come along. It's my pleasure to meet you in person."

Etherian nodded, not minding it too much. "Is that so? Oh well. I normally never come out as I don't care about the Sacred Land's problems. Unless it's in danger, I leave everything in the hands of elders like you. You were quite lucky to have caught me here, so it could also be considered fate."

Etherian then took out a pill with three colors inside a bottle and threw it at Paulo. "I can see the blocked meridians in your body. It was most likely the backlash during a harsh attempt at a breakthrough. If you take this pill, it should heal them in a few days. Just be careful not to commit the same mistake again."

"This..." Paulo couldn't believe the thing in his hands. "But this is too expensive. I only came here because I wanted to meet you, senior. I can't possibly accept it."

Roan then tried to grab the bottle as that pill very much interested him. "Since you can't, I can. Give it to me."

Paulo immediately pulled his hand away as he looked at Roan with a dark expression. "In your dreams! Is that how you treat your elders?"

Roan glanced at Paulo and said, "I didn't even know you until a few minutes ago." Sure enough, Roan couldn't care less. "If you want the pill, then just say it. Otherwise, give it to someone who wants it. I know I definitely want it as I'm an alchemist."

Paulo was taken aback for a moment before he nodded. Right after, he bowed to Etherian. "Thank you, Senior Etherian. I shall make good use of this pill."

Etherian couldn't help but laugh out loud after that. "Hahaha! You should be more like the young men on your side. If there's an opportunity, take it. Don't waste time with meaningless pleasantries."

"Yes, Senior Etherian."

Cassia then asked back, "So, can I head back already, old geezer?"

Paulo almost froze when he heard Cassia's words. 'How can you say that in front of one of the Ten Greats?!' Of course, he didn't dare say anything and waited to see the result.

However, Etherian simply sighed before waving his hand, telling her, "You're not as cute as when you were a kid anymore. Shoo, shoo. Go take care of your things."

Cassia snorted in response. "My things and a certain old geezer who never takes care of his own things, so his great-granddaughter has to do everything for him. Anyways, I'm out. Also, don't try to run away again. There's a huge pile of documents that I can't approve without your consent. Later, you better be prepared to spend a few days in front of your desk. There's a limit as to how much you can distance yourself from the Sacred Land's affairs."

Great-granddaughter?! Paulo was surprised to hear that. He didn't know of it at all. He was sure that none of the elders he was acquainted with in the Sacred Land knew either. 'Is it really okay for me to be hearing these things?' He wondered.

Eventually, Cassia turned around and disappeared into the distance.

After she wasn't close anymore, Etherian laughed. "Hehe! I want to see how she'll find me. If I want to run, no one can stop me. To hell with all that office bullshit!"

Paulo couldn't help but feel that the image of the man he had built in his mind was crumbling down. That wasn't the type of person Paulo thought Etherian would be.

It was then that Rean noticed something. "Hahaha! No wonder almost no one knew if you were still alive or not. You just kept hiding yourself to run away from your work."

"Idiot!" Paulo rebuked Rean. "How can you say that about Senior Etherian! When he leaves, he stays out for many years. There are definitely more important reasons behind his absence."

Too bad that Etherian shook his head. "Nope, there isn't. I just hate office jobs, so I try to stay as far away from it as possible."

Paulo felt like crying already as Rean looked at him and said, "See? I told you, didn't I?"

"Shut up! I don't wanna hear it anymore." Paulo decided that he would close his ears and eyes from now on.

Roan didn't care about any of that, though. "So, why did you call us here?"

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Chapter 1166: How did you know?

Etherian then looked at Paulo before saying, "You go wait outside. I'll send the twins out once I'm finished with them."

Paulo was obviously curious as to what Etherian wanted to discuss with the twins, but he could only nod in response and leave.

Once Paulo was gone, Etherian's expression changed before he asked the two, "You didn't come from the Realm of Gods, but from the Mortal Realm, right?"

Rean and Roan were surprised to hear that. That was the first time someone mentioned the Mortal Realm to them, let alone ask if they came from there. Rana was the only exception, but they knew she wouldn't have told anyone anything. Nevertheless, they had to consider whether they should say it or not. 'What do you think?'

Roan pondered over it for a bit. 'I believe there isn't much of a point in denying it.'

Rean agreed with him. 'Since he asked such a specific question directly at us, he must have a way of knowing we came from there.'

With that, they nodded at Etherian as Rean asked, "How do you know that?"

Etherian smiled in response after seeing the twins' serious expression. "If you're afraid that someone else noticed it, you don't need to worry. I'm probably the only one here who can tell that. Besides, it's not like this is a crime or anything. As to how I found out, it's because of the remaining Spiritual Energy deposits in your body. It's obvious to me that you cultivated with Spiritual Energy for a long time before changing to Divine Energy."

"Is there such a thing?" Rean asked while checking his body with Divine Sense and Soul Power. Only after doing a thorough search did he finally find a few remnants in his body that even he didn't know was there. Roan also noticed the same thing.

"It seems like you found it," Etherian told them. "As long as you remove those remnants of Spiritual Energy from your bodies, no one will be able to tell where you came from."

Roan couldn't help but ask, "But how did you know about that? Are ascenders that common?"

Etherian shook his head as he replied, "The opposite. Ascenders are extremely rare. As far as I know, our Huring Continent hasn't received a single one for many millennia. By the way, the last one to appear was me."

Hearing that, the twins understood immediately. "No wonder you found out about our origins. You came from the Mortal Realm yourself." However, that also wasn't very good news for the twins. If no one appeared in this continent for millennia, that just showed how ridiculously big the Realm of Gods

was. After all, there should be a lot of ascenders coming up when one considers the entire Mortal Realm and all the planets with cultivators there. But even with that, none appeared here after so long.

"Or...you just don't know if an ascender appeared or not, right?" Roan also added.

Etherian nodded. "True. However, I think it's very difficult for an ascender to appear in my Huring Continent without me knowing. Can you guess why?"

Rean pondered in silence for a bit before he tried a response. "Transition Realm...?"

Roan had to admit Rean was right. "Now that you say that..."

Etherian was satisfied with the answer. "Exactly. All ascenders who come up are usually at the peak of the Transition Realm. It means that they were on the verge of breaking through but couldn't do it because of the Mortal Realm's issues. However, as soon as they arrive, the Spiritual Energy in their body is changed to Divine Energy, giving them a boost. That boost immediately forces a natural breakthrough into the next realm. The same happened for me."

Etherian continued, "However, once someone goes through a breakthrough into the next realm, a phenomenon that spans for several hundred kilometers appears. With how thorough the information network of our Sacred Land is, it's almost impossible that we don't see when someone surpasses the Transition Realm. Unless the cultivator leaves our Huring Continent and makes his breakthrough somewhere else before coming back, of course."

Roan shook his head after hearing that. "That obviously wouldn't be possible for an ascender. As you said, the breakthrough happens naturally, and I refuse to believe any cultivator would try to stop it. Especially ascenders, who wanted it for so long before arriving in the Realm of Gods. Not to mention that they wouldn't be able to pass through the continental barrier."

Etherian nodded in agreement. "Smart. That's why I can tell that it's almost impossible for me to not know when an ascender arrives. In fact, I also have information about the other several continents around Huring, where another four appeared since I arrived." Etherian then narrowed his eyes before looking at Rean and Roan, asking, "However, how come two Soul Transformation Realm cultivators have arrived in this realm? Was there another way to enter the Realm of Gods other than the normal way?"

Since it was obvious to them that they were all ascenders, Rean decided to tell how they came to this place. He recounted the story of how they found a devil, how he used the demon beasts' Bestial Sacred Land Formation to recover and had the portal deactivate during it. Once it was defeated, they fixed the formation, but due to the extensive damage, it would only stay open for some time. They and many other cultivators didn't want to let the chance pass up, so they ascended straight away.

"Such a thing happened..." Etherian was obviously surprised by the twins' story. "I didn't know it was possible to construct portals between the Realm of Gods and the Mortal Realm. But then again, I'm only a cultivator of an isolated continent. In the grand scheme of things, I'm just a fly compared to real ones."

Etherian then smiled back at the twins as he asked, "Now you know why I took some interest in you. How can I phrase this? It felt quite lonely to be the only ascender in this place after so long. Just make sure you wipe out those Spiritual Energy remnants, and you'll be fine. After all, only another ascender like me would know where to look for the clues."

The twins had to admit they had quite a good impression of Etherian after all this. "Thank you."

Death... and me

Chapter 1167: Smugglers

Etherian then helped the twins by pointing out the places they should pay attention to. After around an hour or so, all the remnants of Spiritual Energy that could still be found in their bodies were eliminated. "With that, no one will be able to tell that you came from the Mortal Realm. If you were a normal ascender who got here using your Peak Transition Realm cultivation, it wouldn't be an issue. Although extremely rare, it's not like they have some advantages."

"But it would be a problem if others find out you arrived here at your level. The existence of a portal that can connect both sides is a big thing, after all. I know you told me you can't even figure out how the portal worked as its level was too high, but others wouldn't believe that so easily."

Rean nodded as he said in response, "No problem. Even though I can't understand the high-level parts of that demon beast portal, I can at least remember most of the runes' shapes. That's something I better not comment about."

Since they were already here, Roan decided to head straight into the reason they tried to enter the Sacred Land. "As we mentioned before, we came up with our companions. But because of some trouble

during the transfer, we ended up being teleported to different places. I believe our girls are in the demon beasts' territory. However, not only do we not know which one, but we also have no idea about how to pass through the continental barrier. The Fairy Queen told us that even she doesn't know how to pass through it."

Etherian was taken aback for a moment. "You wish to pass through the continental barrier?"

The twins nodded in response. From the very start, they had no interest in staying in the Sacred Land. "We don't know if they're dead or alive. That's why we need to go."

Etherian immediately shook his head as he told them, "Although it might sound cold, I have to tell you that you should give up. The Realm of Gods is not only dangerous, but I don't think anyone can grasp its true size. Even putting all the continents I know about together, it would still be nothing but a grain of sand on an entire planet made of sand alone. I can guarantee that finding them is impossible. At the very least, it's impossible with your actual cultivation."

Roan shook his head in response, saying, "Even if that's the case, we still need to go."

Rean agreed with him. "It's definitely better than staying still, doing nothing. Until we can confirm they died or something like that, we need to see it to the bitter end."

Etherian could see the determination in the twins' eyes. "Sigh...why are men are so stubborn when it comes to women? Well, it's not like I'm any different. Fortunately for me, I only found my wife once I was already in the Realm of Gods."

Etherian then warned the twins. "However, you can forget about passing through the continental barrier. You will simply be smashed by its power with cultivation like yours. In fact, even my own cultivation is far from enough to pass through, let alone yours."

The twins weren't surprised to hear that. If it wasn't powerful, Rana would know and tell them. "However, you do know how to pass through, right?"

Etherian nodded. "The Sacred Land does have a way to open a stable passage for others to pass through, but so do other continental powers. When a passage is open to another continent, a very big

disruption will happen during that time. It's impossible to open a passage without alarming the continent you're trying to connect to. Usually, when that happens, it's because a continental war is about to happen."

Rean couldn't help but ask, "So, is there no way to head to other continents without starting a war?"

"Of course, there is," Etherian succinctly replied. "Every few years, a passage is open with the agreement of both sides. Many trades are carried off during those times. During moments like these, we have members from both sides travel to the other continents. That's how I came to visit many continents in my life. But ultimately, I came back here."

Etherian continued, "However, the number of people allowed to pass through the barriers and continue on the other side is limited. Usually, these people will perform some high-level assignments on the other side, so their cultivation must be high. Can you see the problem? You two are definitely not at the level where the Sacred Land would even consider letting you go. First of all, unlike the others, you don't have any intention to come back. Do you think the Sacred Land would let you take some of those slots?"

Rean and Roan immediately shook their heads. They knew very well how weak they were in this kind of situation. "It seems like we'll have to look for a way through on our own."

Suddenly, the twins received a Divine Sense message from Etherian. Obviously, he didn't want others to hear what he was going to say next. 'However, if you really insist on it, there are a few... smugglers... if you understand me.' Etherian simply couldn't help but empathize with fellow ascenders like him.

Rean and Roan's eyes lit up as they looked at Etherian. 'Tell us more.'

Etherian continued to talk as if nothing had changed. "You should focus on your cultivation and come back once you reach the Transition Realm. At that time, it might be possible for you two to get a slot." At the same time, he kept using his Divine Sense to convey his real thoughts. 'As you can probably imagine, it isn't exactly a recognized way of traversing to the other side, you know? I also can't guarantee any safety whatsoever. Would you still be interested to know more about it?'

Naturally, the two replied to his words. "Reaching the Transition Realm will really take a very long time." Of course, they answered Etherian's Divine Sense message. 'We are. We'll judge whether it's worth a shot or not.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1168: Demising Catacombs

The twins knew that Etherian couldn't talk about it openly. However, the fact he knew about something like that, and it still existed to be used, meant that the Sacred Land also kept an eye closed. The Sacred Land, or probably its elders, most likely had their hands in some sort of profit from the smugglers. Perhaps even Etherian himself was one of them.

Etherian continued after the twins made their decision. 'Unlike the Sacred Land's official openings with other countries, the cultivator smugglers transfer people to other continents every five years. In the Sacred Land's case, we do that once every ten. Just like here, the smugglers on the other side also have connections to prevent the controlling power of those continents from intervening.'

'However, the most I can do is show you where you can find them. Also, it won't be cheap.'

Rean and Roan already expected that. 'That's fine. As long as it can be bought, we're pretty sure we can raise the necessary money.'

Etherian nodded in response. 'Good. Because although I'm telling you this, I won't give you a single Divine Stone for the trip.' Etherian then warned the twins, 'One more thing. Not many continents use this method. It happens mostly in small continental powers like ours. So before you head out in another continent, looking for smugglers, be aware that you might be delivering yourselves on a silver plate to the powers of those places.'

Roan immediately asked back, 'To know which continents we can use this method, we first need to know in which direction the demon beasts' territory is located. Do you know which side we should go?'

Unfortunately, even Etherian shook his head as he told them, 'I did travel through a few of the continents around Huring. However, I've never thought about heading to the demon beasts' territories. In fact, I've never been to a continent that's controlled by only humanoid races, either. Let alone Spiritual Race ones. Most of the continents around us are jointly controlled by the three powers, with different ratios inside. I doubt anyone in Huring knows of it either due to the distance separating us from such places.'

Etherian had an idea, though. 'However, I do know where you can find this information. There's a continent called Jhiod located northwest of here. However, it's really far away. Even if you travel day and night with a flying demon beast at your level, you would still need at least 100 or so years to arrive. With that being said, you better be prepared to pay for both the smugglers and the teleport formations. That way, you should be able to reduce your travel time from 150 to 20 years.'

Etherian then commented about Jhiod, 'Jhiod has a connection with a humanoid-controlled cluster... or so the rumors I heard say during the time I traveled there. However, I don't know which cluster it is. If that's true, they should be able to provide you with information about the demon beasts' territory. At the very least, they should be able to tell you where that humanoid-controlled power is located. There's no doubt that the power controlling that cluster knows the information you need.'

Rean and Roan became confused. 'Cluster? What's a cluster?'

Only then did Etherian remember that the twins were new to the Realm of Gods. 'Oh, right! You don't have that information. A cluster is a set of at least twenty continents controlled by a single power. That's why it's called a cluster. I don't know who gave this name, but that's how it is. However, I might also be wrong since I've never been to such a place. That's how isolated the Huring Continent is when we think about the Realm of Gods as a whole.'

Rean and Roan nodded in response. Of course, they were still pretending to be having a conversation while drinking some tea with Etherian.

Rean thought it to be quite convenient, though. 'Northwest, right? That's good since we need to pass by Lanqueas Continent on the west. We can make that our first stop. It's not exactly northwest, but it's something.'

Rean's words immediately reminded Roan of another thing. 'Right. Etherian, you said you knew where I could find Dark Element materials for my breakthrough to the Elemental Transformation Realm.'

Etherian confirmed. 'Indeed. However, Dark Element materials are very hard to come by, even for our Sacred Land. Fortunately, there's one place in our Huring Continent where you can get it. In a certain way, you're lucky and unlucky at the same time. No one has a Dark Element Affinity, as far as I know. That being said, there aren't many people who can find a use for those things. That's why you can still find it since no one wants Dark Element materials. Even the evil path powers like the Blood Path Sect don't have much use for it. Sure, they use Dark Element, but that's a byproduct of the Yin Energy that they control. It's far different from you, who can use Dark Element straight away.'

'Anyway, there's a rock called Life's Nemesis. You probably can imagine why it has such a name, right?'

Roan nodded, saying, 'If this rock really is a Dark Element item, then anywhere it's placed will cause the life around it to whiter and die. Suppose it's thrown in the middle of a forest. I wouldn't be surprised if this rock cleared everything a few hundred meters around it after a few days. That's definitely a suitable name. In fact, I believe most Dark Element items in the Realm of Gods wouldn't have a good name either.'

'That's true,' Etherian agreed with him. 'Leaving its name aside, it's a proper Dark Element material. Since this is your affinity, it won't have any issue for you. It's just that the place where you can find it is a little troublesome.'

'Where is it?' Roan asked.

'It's inside the Demising Catacombs Danger Zone. Or, to be more precise, in its core region.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1169: Timoteo

Etherian then explained, 'There's good news, though. Due to the seals put in that place, only those at the Elemental Transformation Realm and below can enter it. That's because it's also considered a good place for training. It opens once every year for an entire month.'

'However...' Etherian warned Roan. 'Most of the people who go there are those from the evil paths. After all, that's a place full of Yin Energy and Dark Element. Of course, our Sacred Land also has many of those evil path cultivators, as you have seen. There is no doubt that many of them will join the many other powers once it opens again. If you decide to head there, be aware that you might be killed by them. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of training if you couldn't touch anyone? This is especially true for evil path cultivators.'

Etherian then added, 'The next opening will be in two and a half months' time. To be honest, I don't think it's a good idea for you to head there on the next opening, though. You saw what Gille wanted to do with you, right? The Dark Element material he offered is, without a doubt, the same one I told you just now. I'm pretty sure he will have his cultivators, including those who participated in the

recruitment, capture you. At the very least, he won't risk losing the only Dark Element Affinity cultivator to another power, so he'll ask everyone to have you killed.'

Roan already expected as much the moment he understood both Gille and Etherian were talking about the same item. 'That's fine. It's not like he can move everyone in the evil path to his will, right? Especially the Sacred Land's evil path cultivators. As part of the Sacred Land, they wouldn't want to follow anyone's orders anymore. There shouldn't be many between our ranks that have Soul Binding Contracts with him.'

Etherian was surprised to hear that. 'So, you guessed that many of the cultivators joining our Sacred Land are affected by Soul Binding Contracts.'

Rean nodded as he replied, 'That includes ourselves. It's just that the Soul Binding Contract we signed only asked for our help in case Fabio ever meets some problem in the future. I believe you and Roan are talking about something deeper. Like acting as a spy inside the Sacred Land, correct? Like that guy called Hedoi, the strong ones are most likely under such contract clauses.'

'Indeed,' Etherian said in response. 'That means once it's decided which cultivators will be entering the Demising Catacombs, people like Hedoi are definitely going to report back to their previous countries.'

Roan couldn't help but ask, 'Can we enter that place without others knowing we're going there?'

Etherian nodded in response. 'I also thought about the same thing. I can arrange that your identities aren't revealed. Then again, anyone could tell that you would definitely be interested in those Dark Element materials. Besides, you aren't the only one who's heading there without showing your real name. That's a perk everyone has access to. However, it will depend on whether Gille thinks you'll appear or not.'

Roan immediately shook his head. 'Then there's no best time to enter that place than now.' Roan pointed at himself before continuing, 'I'm just a Peak Soul Transformation Realm cultivator. The only time I would need that catalyst is during my breakthrough into the Elemental Transformation Realm. With that being said, I shouldn't need it before I reach the peak of the Saint Realm. Do you think I would go into that place before I reach that point?'

Etherian had to admit Roan was right. 'That's...true. Any normal person wouldn't go there unless necessary, and it'll only be necessary for you once you cultivate another entire realm.' Etherian then shook his head. 'Then again, it doesn't change the fact that you would be a lot weaker than the top cultivators who go there to train. Of course, there are a lot more cultivators at Saint Realm and below, as their numbers are higher.'

Roan didn't mind it. 'It's fine. I don't intend to go there using my real appearance anyway.'

Roan then looked at Rean, who understood him. Soon after, Rean used his Light Element to change their bodies. Rean's appearance-changing technique had evolved a lot in the past years, especially after they reached the Realm of Gods and got to use Divine Soul Power.

Etherian was shocked by their transformation. Even his own Divine Sense could barely see through the facade. 'Impressive. Although I can see through it, I would need to pay very close attention, and that's because my cultivation is much higher than yours. It might really work out.'

With that, Etherian made his decision. 'Alright, I'll add you two to the list of cultivators that are participating in this year's Demising Catacombs' opening. However, that's as far as I can help you. You will have to look for the items and overcome the dangers yourself. Cultivators have to rely on themselves more than anything else, so I won't make a move.'

Etherian then changed the topic and went back to the smugglers' case. 'Now then, I believe you will want to leave as soon as you get Roan's Life's Nemesis Rocks, right? For that, you will need to find a person called Timoteo. He's the one who controls most of the cultivator smuggling routes to the neighboring continents. There are a few more, but they aren't as reliable. Just be aware that it doesn't mean it isn't dangerous. Also, his price is the highest due to his success rate. Forget about Rank One Divine Stones. He will only accept Rank Two stones. Once again, it's up to you to gather his payment.'

After that, Etherian passed a dark jade to the twins, telling them, 'You will need this to contact him. Go to Yagxin City in the Fovles Country and present this jade to the Rockfoi Treasure Store Owner, Jalel. Just tell him the Green Beetle sent you. He'll know what to do.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1170: Visiting Elder Tulipa

After that, Etherian decided to tell the twins, 'Of course, I would prefer that you two don't go away. You have just joined the Inner Sacred Land, and I don't mind offering some support in the shadows. I truly think your chances are better if you patiently cultivate here until you're strong enough to venture outside. To be honest, our Huring Continent could be said to be one of the easiest continents to live, at least compared to the other continents I've been in so far.'

Rean shook his head and said in response, 'It's fine. We don't want things to be easy since Roan's training methods rely on the difficulties of the cultivation path.'

Roan confirmed Rean's words. 'Having an easier path would instead hinder our progress. Of course, we will make full use of the Sacred Land during the time we're here. I'm sure its repositories and side occupation halls have a lot for us to improve on.'

Seeing that they really made their minds up, Etherian didn't try to stop them anymore. 'Very well. I guess I can only wish you good luck, then. I'll tell you when the things are ready for the Demising Catacombs. That's all for now.'

With that, Etherian finished his faux conversation. "It's good that you two understand. Go back to your residences and cultivate well."

Rean and Roan nodded. "Thank you, Elder Etherian."

The twins then left through the front door, where Paulo was already waiting for them.

At the same time, Etherian got up and prepared to leave without anyone seeing. However, just as he was about to step out, an old female hand touched his shoulder. That sensation gave him a chill on the back as he could guess who it was. "Claria, can't you pretend you didn't see me?"

The old woman smiled before...

Pah!

Smacking Etherian's backhead. "You disappear for so long and force your great-granddaughter to seek me for help. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Not even a little," Etherian answered straight away as he tried to escape.

Unfortunately, Claria was already expecting that. "Is that so?" Claria smiled in response, not trying to stop him at all. "I guess Cassia will want to hear about what a certain old geezer did to catch my attention a few millennia ago. That was so funny. Well then, go ahead. I'm going to see her."

Etherian's face went pale as he immediately turned back. All the ideas of escaping evaporated completely from his mind. "My beloved wife, I was just kidding. How could I leave all my work for our great-granddaughter to do alone? I'm just teasing her a little. Now that I'm back, I'm obviously carrying out all the office work that accumulated during my absence. I have to set an example, after all."

Claria was obviously the one in charge of that relationship. "How very nice of you, old geezer. I expect to hear good news from her in a few days' time when your office table documents are done." Without even looking at Etherian's face, Claria left without remorse. She knew very well that there wasn't any worse punishment in this Realm of Gods than office work for Etherian.

Nevertheless, it was obvious how these two doted on Cassia so much. Otherwise, why would Etherian care about her knowing a few stories of his past? That's because they had three children, and they were all men. Those men all married and had their own children, which turned out to be all men again. In the end, Cassia was the first and only woman in their lineage so far.

With the expression of someone heading to his execution, Etherian made his way back to his office, where all the documents waited for him.

Rean and Roan knew nothing about it, of course. Instead, they were making their way to their new residences in the Inner Sacred Land. However, Rean remembered the glittering coin that Rana passed to them on the way. "Oh, right! Elder Paulo, do you know of a fairy called Tulipa? She should be a member of the Sacred Land?"

"Tulipa?!" Paulo was taken aback once again. "How do you know her?"

Rean answered in all earnest, "We happen to know the Fairy Queen from our Yukirrom Region. Due to a few things, she decided to give us some help in the Sacred Land. We need to find a fairy called Tulipa to pass on her word."

"I see..." Paulo couldn't help but wonder, asking the two, "Just how many important people do you know? Even Core Elder Tulipa is part of them."

"Core Elder Tulipa?" Rean and Roan were taken aback. "Does that mean she's also one of the Ten Greats?"

"No," Paulo replied. "She's definitely strong, but not at the level of the Ten Greats. However, her position in the Sacred Land is very high, thanks to the fairies' karma-related abilities. She could be said to be one of the closest aides of the Sacred Land Head. Even for me, it would be difficult to see her."

Paulo then pondered in silence for a bit before telling them, "However, since her Fairy Queen gave the order, it should be possible. That's how the hierarchy of the fairies work, after all. Let me bring you to her residence and see what I can do."

Rean and Roan nodded in response, although they didn't have much use for Tulipa anymore. They just got the information about the continental barrier, after all. As for information about the continents they would pass by, they could get it from Etherian later. He seemed to have traveled a lot.

Tulipa's residence followed the same style as the fairies back in Rana's home. It was a house carved into a tree, full of colorful decorations. It's just that it didn't seem to have anyone guarding it... or so thought Paulo. However, Rean could see the two light beings sitting in front of the entrance.

"Halt!"

Sure enough, those two appeared and showed their true appearance. "What do you want from Elder Tulipa's tree?"

Paulo was just about to say something when Rean took out Rana's Glittering Coin.

"That's...!" The two fairies recognized it straight away. "Please wait for a moment. We will inform Elder Tulipa of your arrival."