

Death 1171

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Chapter 1171: Glittering Crystal

Just a moment later, a fairy not much bigger than the fairies guarding the entrance came out in a rush. "Where's the Glittering Coin?!" She looked at Rean, who held the coin in his hands before saying, "Quick, quick, let me see it!"

Rean and Roan looked at each other and nodded before Rean passed the coin to Tulipa. She caressed the coin as if it was a long-lost child, completely ignoring the rest around her. It wasn't before a few minutes that she finally came back to herself. "Ah!"

She looked at the twins and tried to regain her composure. "Ahem...well done in bringing the queen's coin to me. It is of extreme importance for fairies like us. Tell me, what is it that you need? I doubt the queen would give it to you if she didn't need anything."

Rean then rubbed the back of his head before saying, "Well, the fact is that we already got everything we needed. It's just that since we had the coin, we thought we might as well pass it to you. And it seems like it was the right choice. Well, that's about it. We are leaving now."

Paulo was taken aback. They obtained a chance to get something or some advantage from Tulipa! However, they completely let go of it. Thinking that, he reminded himself, 'Well, they do seem to have Core Elder Etherian's support, so I guess they don't really need hers...? Perhaps?'

Tulipa was also surprised to hear that. "Nothing? Nothing at all? No can do! I can't accept this Glittering Coin without repaying the favor. Even if you don't want anything, I'll do something for you. Let's see... how about some extra luck from karma? Yes, that's gonna be it!"

Before Rean and Roan could say anything, Tulipa had already begun using her Divine Energy and Soul Power. Soon after, the karma threads that connected the twins with all the things related to them appeared in her eyes. However, when she tried to move them...

Ouch!

She felt like she was electrified. She simply couldn't touch the twins' threads at all! In fact, it was the same thing for Rana, who tried to move their karma. Simply put, she also couldn't do it. Tulipa tried a few more times, but it simply didn't work. "What's happening here?"

Rean and Roan looked at Tulipa, puzzled. "Happening what?"

Seeing the clueless expressions on the twins' faces, it was obvious that they didn't know anything about this issue. 'Maybe this is why the queen sent them to me. Since she couldn't change their karma herself, she decided to help them more directly by sending them to me. But they don't know about the karma issue as it seems. I shall do the same thing as the queen, then.'

Tulipa then shook her head at the twins and said, "Don't worry, it's not an issue." It wasn't a lie. Even if she couldn't change their karma, it wasn't as if it was a problem, so Roan also didn't detect any lies. "Let's leave your karma aside. At first, you were supposed to come to me to get something that you just so happened to get already, right? Can you tell me more about it?"

Rean nodded and then shared everything through a Divine Sense Message to make things faster. Of course, he didn't mention coming from the Mortal Realm or anything like that.

"I see..." Tulipa understood their situation before looking at Paulo. "Go stay outside. I have a few things to talk about with the twins."

Paulo bitterly smiled in response, feeling excluded again. He was an elder, for crying out loud! He was the one who had been part of the Sacred Land for many years, not them. However, he knew that he didn't have the right to complain. "Yes, Elder Tulipa."

Rean and Roan then moved inside the tree, unsure what Tulipa had to talk about. After a while, Tulipa took out a piece of crystal from her spatial ring and gave it to the twins. It also shone with many colors, as everything that fairies made. "Here, you can have it. That way, my debt to the delivery of the Glittering Coin is paid."

The twins were even more confused now. "Errrr...what is this thing?" Rean asked, completely clueless.

"What?!" Tulipa was surprised to hear that question. "Have you never heard about the fairies' Glittering Crystal even though you know my queen?"

The twins immediately shook their heads in response. It was the first time they heard about it.

Tulipa sighed, feeling like it was quite a waste to give it to them. "Whatever...as I said, it's a Fairy Glittering Crystal. In a certain way, it is similar to the coin you gave me, but it can be used by anyone instead of only fairies. It's very hard to make as it has to account for any race that will use it. It's just that it isn't nearly as powerful."

Tulipa continued, "Think of it as a pill. Once you swallow it, it will give you a boost of power equivalent to one cultivation realm. You two are at the peak of the Soul Transformation Realm, right? It means your strength would jump to the peak of the Saint Realm. However, the max it can do is increase your power to the peak of the Transition Realm. It won't allow you to surpass it. Of course, to reach the peak of the Transition Realm with this crystal, you will need to be at the peak of the Elemental Transformation Realm first. It will always give exactly one realm of power."

Rean and Roan had to admit it was an amazing gift. For them, who could already fight many stages above their real level, this crystal could put them on par with Elemental Transformation Realm cultivators for a short time. "How long does it last?"

"It depends on your cultivation," Tulipa said in response. "The higher your cultivation, the quicker its power is spent. At your current level, it should last ten minutes."

Roan then took the crystal and put it inside his spatial ring. After all, he was the strongest when it came to combat power. Rean also didn't mind it as he knew it was the best choice. "I shall make good use of it in the future if there's a need for it."

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Chapter 1172: A Nice Gift

Tulipa nodded before warning the twins, "These crystals are unique to the fairy race. Even the alchemists' forbidden pills don't have such a huge effect. Not to mention that the only backlash you'll get from it is the lack of Divine Energy at the end."

Roan was impressed by that. "That good? I'm an alchemist, and I obviously know a few forbidden pill recipes. Usually, they would damage one's dantian, core, and body. How come this has no side effect?"

Unfortunately, Tulipa shook her head as she replied, "This is a secret of our fairy race, only known by those at the highest rank. I just so happen to be one of them, so you're in luck. However, I can not share how we make them as it would be annoying if others decide to come after us for it."

Those words were more than enough for Rean and Roan to understand. From the looks of it, a fairy was necessary to create such a crystal. Whether it was a sacrifice, the loss of cultivation, or any other requirement, it was better if others didn't know about it. "We understand. We won't dive deeper into this crystal's origin."

Rean then remembered something after that. "You said that the Glittering Coin is something similar to the Glittering Crystal, didn't you? Does that mean that Rana had to sacrifice something to create it?"

Tulipa shook her head once again, saying, "No comments on that. However, one thing I can guarantee you. She must like you two very much to go this far. That's all I can tell."

Rean and Roan looked at each other and sighed after that. Rana did say that her feelings for them weren't anything special as she had never spent time with them. She couldn't even remember them according to her words. But if that was the case, why would she go that far? This Glittering Coin seemed to be very hard to create. 'We have to find mom and dad... for her.'

Roan simply nodded after hearing Rean's message through their Soul Connection. Nevertheless, the resolve on his face was obvious.

Tulipa then went to the second part of the story the twins told her. "As for the knowledge about the continents around Huring, you will be better informed by Old Etherian himself. That old monster has traveled more around than anyone else, so he is your best source."

The twins already expected that. "That's not a problem."

Rean and Roan then turned to head towards the exit. "In that case, we're taking our leave now, Elder Tulipa. We still have two months and a half before the opening of the Demising Catacombs Zone, so we will take this opportunity to make use of the Sacred Land's facilities."

Tulipa smiled in response. "Fairies like me, who decide to live far away from their group and queen on their own are rare. The reason I did that is that the cultivation environment here is just way too good to pass up on. Go ahead. Make sure you enjoy it as much as possible before you decide to leave."

With that, the twins thanked her once again for the crystal and left the tree. Tulipa's smile then disappeared as a pensive expression appeared on her face. Soon after, she called the two fairies who had seen the moment she tried to work on the twins' karma threads. "Syvis, Tanelia, attend me."

Immediately, two fairies appeared by her side with a respectful expression. They weren't any weaker than the fairies who worked for Rana back in the faeries territory. "Here we are."

Soon after, Tulipa took out a Soul Binding Contract and wrote a very straight rule. "Bind your blood to it."

Syvis and Tanelia looked at it, and it only had one rule. They should never talk about the fact that the twins' karma threads couldn't be moved. If they tried to tell it to someone, they would die straight away. "This..."

Tulipa looked at them with a dark expression before saying, "It's either this or death. You can choose. Or could it be that you already informed someone?"

Syvis and Tanelia immediately shook their heads before using their fairy blood to bind to the contract. Immediately, the new Soul Binding Contract with its rule was attached to their soul.

Only then did Tulipa sigh in relief as an apologetic expression took place. "Sorry about this. You have been my aides for a very long time, but this issue was just too important. I can't risk any leaks." After that, Tulipa also made a small cut on her already small hand and bound the contract to herself. That obviously took Syvis and Tanelia by surprise. Seeing their reactions, Tulipa said, "Obviously, I won't let you two share this burden alone."

Syvis and Tanelia understood how important it was and didn't blame Tulipa at all. "This was the right thing to do, Tulipa."

Tulipa then looked in the direction the twins left as a thought appeared in her head. 'A fate that can't be changed by anyone other than the twins themselves. Could they be...' However, she quickly shook her head. 'I better not jump ahead to conclusions. It has nothing to do with me either.'

The twins didn't know what Tulipa did or was thinking. They were just satisfied that this encounter ended with such a nice gift. Outside, they met Paulo once again, who finally was able to bring them to their residences. Although he was a minor elder, he still had some power in the Sacred Land. That allowed him to get two homes, one beside the other for the twins. "Here we are. You should have already been informed about how to open the protection formations. You and the other three brought a lot of face to my Kamos Kingdom, so if you need something, ask for me around the elder's facility. The jade slip with the Sacred Lands' rules also has a map of the entire place."

Rean and Roan nodded in response. "Thank you, Elder Paulo. We'll keep that in mind."

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Chapter 1173: I Don't Like You

And so they did. As soon as Rean settled down in the new residence, he went out, telling Rean, "I'm going to check the Blacksmith and Formation Hall. Let me know if you need something."

Roan, who was also stepping out, nodded in response. "I'll be going to the arenas. It seems like they have an Inner Sacred Land ranking there, and the formations even put the disciples at the same level of cultivation. It's an improved version of the system we had in the Dalamu Sect." Sure enough, Roan was more interested in the battles.

Rean didn't mind. He knew that Roan would be passing by the Alchemist Hall sooner or later to memorize all the books he possibly could memorize before they left.

With the jade slip map in his hands, Rean didn't take too long to reach the Formation Hall. Surprisingly, he also met up with Venali there. "Oh, aren't you that leader guy from the Huring Country below?"

Venali's mouth twitched in response when he heard those words. As twins, Rean and Roan obviously had very similar voices. Even though he saw Rean wasn't Roan, he still didn't like him as Rean also finished ahead of himself in the last test. "Hmph! What? Did you think I was simply good at battles?"

Rean immediately shook his head. "Of course not! The Sacred Land doesn't even have side occupation tests as they know that all the geniuses attempting to enter it are usually very good with other things. Seeing you here is just natural."

Rean then patted Venali's shoulder before saying, "Don't take what my brother said to heart. He doesn't care about anyone. Come, let's check what the Sacred Land Formation Hall has to offer. We can even share some knowledge with each other. How about that?"

Venali didn't know how Rean could act so friendly after everything that happened. "And why should I do that? Do you even have some Formation Master knowledge that's of use to me? I'm already a Golden High-level Formation Master, you know?"

Rean wasn't surprised to hear that. He himself could increase his Formation Master level to Venali's standard if he was also at the Elemental Transformation Realm. Unfortunately, his cultivation was acting as a barrier for that to not happen. Not that Rean thought to be worse, of course. He did have his circuitry runes, after all. "Of course I have, look!" Rean then created a simple drawing of one of his circuitry runes in the air for Venali to see. If Venali was really at the level he mentioned, there was no way he wouldn't feel tempted by it.

"This..." Venali's eyes lit up as he had never seen such a rune before. He couldn't tell how it worked as it followed a completely different concept from his knowledge. Nevertheless, his eyes were good enough to recognize that Rean didn't just draw some random figure in the air. "What do you call it?"

Rean knew that he caught Venali's interest, which was very good for him. Huring Country was commanded by the Sacred Land. Even though their country had to go through the tests to have their disciples join the Sacred Land, they definitely knew a lot more about the place. With Venali's help, Rean was sure that he would get into the things that mattered the most in the Formation Hall much faster. "Hehehe! Interesting, isn't it? This is something I've been working on for a long time. You probably already got the information from Cosec City's Lukimeria Sect. With that, yes, I'm not someone from this continent. This is something I brought from my home place."

Of course, Venali already looked into it. Or, to be more specific, his Huring Country elders did it once the twins began to stand out during the tests. He was told in the middle of the competitions about it.

"Entered some mysterious ruins and got teleported all the way here, wasn't it? It seems like it wasn't a lie. I refuse to believe such runes existed in the Huring Continent while I don't know anything about it."

Venali still didn't like the twins for them to make him lose the first position in the tests. However, there was nothing he could do about it anymore. Besides, refusing to learn more about those runes Rean showed him would be an idiotic action as a Formation Master himself. "Fine! Come with me. I have already reserved a private room to study, so we can use it to discuss the runes there. In the same way that I don't know much about those runes of yours, you probably don't know the real core of the runes we use here, either. It's a fair exchange."

"It's a fair exchange," Rean repeated Venali's words, satisfied. He didn't need to reveal much. Just some basic forms of the very first attempts of his circuitry formations should be enough to blow his mind.

It was then that a voice came from behind the two, saying, "In that case, I want to join as well."

Rean and Venali looked behind and noticed a woman heading in their direction. Venali narrowed his eyes as he seemed to know her.

As for Rean... "Err... I feel like I saw you somewhere..."

Venali looked at Rean with a shocked expression while the woman almost vomited blood.

Once she arrived, she grabbed Rean's shoulder and began to squeeze it tightly. "You're doing it on purpose, right? Right?!"

Unfortunately for her, even in the middle of the pain, Rean still couldn't recognize her. "So-Sorry..."

"Ahem..." Venali then called Rean's attention, trying to salvage the situation. "She took ninth place in the last test, you know? That's why she looks familiar."

Only then did Rean remember the girl. It's just that he only paid attention to Hedoi, Venali, and Liana after the test. Her results didn't really catch his attention that much. "Oh! Shalendra Krisyra! I knew I had seen your face somewhere."

Shalendra's mouth twitched in response. Obviously, her ninth position in the test to join the Inner Sacred Land wasn't much in Rean's eyes. "I don't like you..."

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Chapter 1174: Misunderstandings

Well, Rean didn't really care much whether she liked him or not. "So... what do you want? My shoulder is hurting, by the way."

Shalendra finally decided to let Rean go before saying, "Didn't I just tell you? Let me join in that conversation of yours. I just so happened to take a peek at your weird rune, so I want to learn more about it as well."

Venali shook his head in response. "Unlike this guy, you don't have anything to add that I don't know about. Go bother someone else."

Shalendra was just about to complain when suddenly, Rean patted Venali's shoulder and said, "There's no need to feel sad just because she showed more interest in me than you. Come on, share a bit of your knowledge with her. Besides, she might really know a few things or have something that's of some use. At the very least, she knows a lot more about the runes of the Huring Continent than I do."

A vein popped on Venali's forehead after that. "Who the hell feels sad?! Just so you know, your grandfather, I, have no lack of pretenders who would love to do nothing more than marry me! Hell, I could even create a harem if it wasn't wrong."

Those words brought a sense of disgust from Shalendra, though. "So, the leader of the Huring Country group intends to build a harem, huh? To think you would be such a pervert."

Venali almost felt like crying after hearing that. How come a respected leader of the Huring Country's young generation ended up being similar to a pervert? Everyone treated him with reverence. His elders had many hopes for him. Was he ever treated like that in his life? Somehow, he felt that his life began to go downhill ever since he met those twins. "I'm not a pervert, alright? First of all, I don't have any intentions of starting a relationship. I dedicated my life to cultivating and never got involved with women before."

Immediately, Rean took his hand of Venali's shoulders as an apologetic expression appeared on his face. "I see...so you play on the other team. It's okay, brother. I have nothing against the choices of other people. If you need someone to talk about it, I'm all ears. Just don't touch me, okay?"

Shelandra's eyes also changed after hearing that, and she immediately apologized to Venali. "Sorry, Senior Venali. I was wrong. There is no way you would build a harem with such a...peculiar...taste. So, shall we go ahead and talk a little about formations?"

Venali finally couldn't hold it anymore. "Fuck you! What the hell are you even talking about? I'm straight! Very, 100%, without a shadow of a doubt, straight!" Venali then looked at Shelandra. "Do you wanna test me? Come on! Let's go to a private room. Then I'll show you who plays in the other team!"

Venali's outburst immediately caught the attention of many other disciples around, much to Venali's despair. "Look what you did!"

"Ahem..." Rean rubbed his backhead, trying to not burst out in laughter. "Sorry, sorry." He then looked at everyone and said, "Don't worry, guys. We're just joking around. Just pretend you didn't hear anything."

'Doesn't that make things even more suspicious?' Everyone who heard Rean's words thought.

Venali simply couldn't wait anymore and decided to go ahead. "I'm done with this bullshit. If you want, you can come to the study room I reserved."

Shelandra smiled while she asked, "Does that mean I can come as well?"

"Do whatever you want!" Venali wasn't even in the mood to argue anymore. If he continued, he might turn into someone whose dream was to build a reverse harem from their words.

Meanwhile, Roan arrived at the arenas. As shown before, many cultivators joined the Outer Sacred Land while just ten went straight to the Inner Sacred Land. However, that didn't mean one would stay there forever. One could accomplish the Sacred Land's missions, be promoted by an elder, or reach a

cultivation level that gave one the chance to apply for an Inner Sacred Land slot. With that being said, the arenas of the Sacred Land had quite a few Inner Disciples.

"Such enormous arenas..." Roan could tell that space manipulation was being used without regard for Divine Energy consumption. Although the arenas were big, it definitely wasn't big enough to fit even one of the arenas he was seeing here. Each room was increased in size thanks to the Spatial Formations. Obviously, one could use many different fields, just like the Capture the Flag test during the recruitment.

Roan then turned to the center of the building, ignoring the arenas. That's because the ones he could see didn't have cultivators fighting. As for the ones that had cultivators, they were closed so that no one could see what was happening inside. Instead, Roan paid attention to the enormous ranking board.

'Three different ranks, huh?' Roan thought. He could see Soul Transformation Realm, Saint Realm, and Elemental Transformation Realm rankings. The difference was that those in the Elemental Transformation Realm rank couldn't challenge the cultivators in the Saint Realm Ranking. The same thing was applied to Saint Realm cultivators, who didn't have the right to stay or enter the Soul Transformation Realm Ranking anymore.

Roan noticed something else. 'However, I can see some Peak Soul Transformation Realm cultivators at the bottom of the Saint Realm Ranking. You can't use your higher realm to enter a lower realm ranking board. But a lower realm cultivator can try to enter a higher realm ranking board as long as they're confident in their strength.'

Naturally, it interested Roan very much. Although the cultivators here were far above the average ones he could find outside, it would be hard for Roan to find a match in the same cultivation realm. Since he was already at the peak of the Soul Transformation Realm, he could only try entering the Saint Realm Ranking Board. As for Elemental Transformation Realm, Roan wasn't stupid enough to think he had a shot at it. 'From what I saw during the competition, Middle Stage Saint Realm would be my limit against those people. The real good ones from top countries I can probably only face at the Initial Stage Saint Realm without using Elemental Exchange.'

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Chapter 1175: Helper

Roan wasn't sad because of that. If anything, he was happy. Back in the Damalu Sect, where a similar system existed, Rean and Roan could almost jump an entire realm to fight. Here, it was his limit to go one or two stages above, depending on the opponent. That was definitely a much better situation for him.

Roan then went to the counter to see how the challenges worked.

The worker at the counter then explained to Roan, "You can fight anyone as long as they accept your challenge. However, to fight for a position in one of the ranks, you need Merit Points."

"Merit Points?" Roan had read about it in the jade slip that explained the rules of the sect. All disciples could get Merit Points by doing missions, tasks in the Sacred Land, achieving some objectives during danger zone openings, and so on. In exchange, those points could be used to obtain almost anything. The only restrictions were on the items and services available for each section of the Sacred Land. For example, one could exchange Merit Points for Rank Two Divine Stones in the Inner Section, but one couldn't do it if one were part of the Sacred Land's Outer Section. Only Rank One Divine Stones were available for the same Merit Points in the Outer Section.

The worker nodded as he replied, "Yes. To challenge the bottom-most cultivator there, you'll need ten thousand Merit Points. However, if you succeed in your challenge, 80% of your points will be given back to you, and 20% is taken by the Sacred Land. If you lose, 80% of your points will be given to the individual you fought against, while the other 20% is taken by the Sacred Land again."

If Rean was here, he would like this system. Although one lost Merit Points even if one won, it was a good way of fighting inflation. The Huring Sacred Land was obviously much ahead of the Dalamu Sect in terms of management.

Roan didn't really care whether he entered the ranks or not, though. As long as he could fight the guys in there, he would be more than happy to comply. "Can I just challenge the people in the rank without having to fight for their position there?"

The worker nodded, although he didn't seem to recommend it. "Well, you can do that. However, I doubt anyone in the ranking will accept your challenge if you have no Merit Points for them to gain."

Roan had to admit the guy was right. If it was him, he wouldn't accept it either...or perhaps he would, just for the fight. Then again, he knew he was different from others in these kinds of situations. "Sigh...Merit Points it is, then."

Just as Roan turned around, the worker decided to give him another option. "If you desperately need Merit Points, there's a fast way of getting it. I don't recommend it, though."

Roan turned back to the worker, his interest piqued. "Say it."

"By being a helper," the worker replied. "No, I won't make things difficult for you. Although the official name is helper, in fact, it's more known as being a test subject. You can guess the rest, can't you?"

Roan pondered in silence for a bit before saying, "You mean, testing new pills, becoming a punching bag for someone's new skill training, testing out the efficacy of poisons, things like that?"

The worker nodded in response. "That's basically it. Depending on what you take, you can gain many, many Merit Points. But at the same time, you can become crippled. The only rule is that the test subject can't die."

Roan was thinking about heading to the Alchemist Hall to study and, at the same time, concoct pills to sell for Merit Points. With his pills having the effect of cleaning meridians, he was sure he could get quite a few points through that. However, it would take time for him to analyze the new recipes used by the people of the Sacred Land. Besides, he might not have the herbs necessary to concoct them. Since everything in the Sacred Land needed Merit Points, the herbs definitely wouldn't be an exception. On the other hand, this test subject thing seemed to guarantee him points.

"That seems feasible. Where can I apply for it?" Roan asked.

The worker then pointed in a certain direction before explaining, "You can find it in the request boards of the Mission Hall. These kinds of jobs are placed on a different board with a purple color. As soon as you enter the hall, you will see it on the right side."

He then warned Roan, "Try to avoid any request from someone with a cultivation much higher than yours. Also, although there are antidotes, it's not guaranteed that the poisons from the Poison Hall people can be completely eliminated."

Roan understood. "I see...but at the same time, these kinds of more dangerous requests are also the ones that pay the most, am I right? They keep increasing the price until someone gets greedy enough to accept the risks."

The guy nodded in response. "Indeed. However, you're new to the Sacred Land, aren't you? There's no need for you to rush after Merit Points. There's no shame in accumulating Merit Points steadily. I'm only mentioning these jobs because you will find about them sooner or later, so I'm telling you this beforehand."

Roan could see the guy wasn't lying. Perhaps because he was just a worker and not a disciple, he didn't try to push new recruits into those problematic tasks. "Very well. I'll think about it."

Of course, Roan had Rean's Purification skill, so it was fine. However, he wouldn't take those poison-related jobs. Instead, he was going after the training partners. It didn't matter that they were at a much higher level. With his knowledge of creating skills, those guys would happily pay so that Roan doesn't close his mouth. 'But first, I'll take a look at the skills repository. According to the rules in the jade slip, the Sacred Land's Inner Section disciples have access up to the second floor. Let's see what they have there.'

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Chapter 1176: Divine Demon Beasts

A few days later, Venali, Rean, and Shelandra left the Formation Hall. As one could imagine, Venali and Shelandra seemed to have a lot in their minds. At the same time, Venali's behavior towards Rean had more or less turned over its head. At least, that was the case in formations. "The formations used by the people in your place are quite advanced. Now I believe you really did get teleported such a long distance away. Their applications are simply too broad."

Rean nodded in response. "I know that, but you guys weren't that bad either. There were so many more specific runes than what I've seen so far. I thought I was already in the Golden Initial level. But after learning what I did today, the Golden Initial level I knew of seems like a joke."

Shelandra was the one who benefited the most, saying, "I added everything I could to this meeting. But even with that, you two opened my eyes today. I'm heading straight back to my residence to put everything I learned into practice. Do you wanna come as well? I'm sure you also want to put your ideas to the test."

Venali shook his head in response. "I won't forget what I saw today, so I can put everything to practice later. Instead, I intend to go out to make a few Merit Points. As a member of the Huring Country, I can't stay out of the Elemental Transformation Realm rank for long, or the elders will complain about it."

Rean obviously knew what Venali was talking about as he received the information from Roan through their Soul Connection. "Nevertheless, it's ten thousand Merit Points to challenge the bottom-ranked members. I guess I won't see you for quite a few days."

Venali shrugged his shoulders as he replied, "For others, maybe. But for me, I have special access to better methods. As much as the Huring Country members must go through the test, we're still part of the Huring Sacred Land's rule. We get some privileges."

Shelandra and Rean couldn't help but complain after hearing that. "That's quite unfair."

"Not really," Venali said in response. "First of all, it's like Elder Cassia mentioned before. The Realm of Gods isn't fair to start with. However, these better methods also come with greater difficulties. The reason I have access to them is that I'm one of the top disciples of Huring Country. If it was some average disciple, they wouldn't be given such tasks as the elders won't be confident that they could conclude it."

Rean nodded after hearing that. "It's fine. In any case, I'm sure I can make my own Merit Points through the side occupations. It's time for me to head to the Blacksmith Hall."

Only then did Venali remember after hearing that. "Oh, right! The information did say that you're also a blacksmith at the same level. You're the one who made yours and your brother's weapons, right?"

"Exactly." Rean nodded as he confirmed. "However, I do believe I can improve their structure with the techniques in the Blacksmith Hall here."

Shelandra then reminded Rean, "We stayed in that room, sharing information all these days. But didn't you notice we didn't get any jade slip with formation techniques until the end?" Rean nodded, waiting for Shelandra to continue. "It's not that we didn't want to get some to complement our meeting. Instead, we need to first join the Formation Hall. Venali and I came here to take the test, but we ended up spending all the time with you. We will need to come back later and do the test to see where we stand."

Rean was surprised to hear that. "So, we can't simply join the various side occupation halls straight away?"

Venali and Shelandra nodded in response. "That's exactly it."

Rean sighed, but he didn't regret it. He could simply come back here later to take the test. "Well, I guess I'll have to take the Blacksmith Hall's test, then."

Venali then changed direction before saying, "Anyway, I'm off. Rean, let me know if you need anything. As a Huring Country member, we always repay the favors."

"Favors?" Rean was puzzled by those words. "We exchanged information fair and square. What favors are there to be repaid?"

Both Venali and Shelandra shook their heads before Venali explained, "The things I taught you can be learned on your own once you join the Formation Hall. It's just that you got a shortcut by hearing it from us. Naturally, it was a lot faster and easier. Still, it isn't as heavy as your Circuitry Formation Runes. I don't feel like it was a fair exchange at all. If it stays like this, it will bother me to no end. That will get in the way of my cultivation later on if I let this thought take roots in my mind. After all, I'm not an evil path cultivator. These kinds of things do matter."

Shelandra agreed with Rean. "The same goes for me. It can also serve as a warning to you. Unless you decide to follow the evil path, these types of karmic relations play a very big role in your state of mind while cultivating. Let me know if I can do something for you."

Rean couldn't help but ask Sister Orb in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm after that. 'Is what they're saying true, Sister Ob?'

[Hum... that depends a lot on the cultivator. Some might not be from the evil path, but they aren't exactly honorable either. Nevertheless, the state of mind does play a bigger role the higher your cultivation becomes. Well, I've never seen any flaws in your and Roan's state of mind, so I don't think it will be a problem for you two.]

Rean had to admit Sister Orb was right. He never felt he did something he shouldn't unless he didn't have another choice. Rean then looked back at Venali and Shelandra and told them, "I understand. In that case, just answer a question of mine, and I'll consider it even."

"What is it?"

Rean then asked after that. "Do you know if the Sacred Land has any Divine Demon Beasts?"

Death... and me

Chapter 1177: I'll take this job

"Divine Demon Beasts?" Shelandra and Venali pondered over the question for a bit.

After some time, Venali seemed to remember something. "I believe the Sacred Land does have a guardian demon beast. Perhaps that's what you are talking about. However, I don't know where it is or even if it's a Divine Demon Beast or not."

Shelandra shook her head, telling him, "Same for me. Your best chance is to head to the Demon Beast Hall and see if you can get information there. I doubt they would tell a simple Inner Disciple any information about their Guardian Beast, though."

Rean already expected as much. "Is that so?"

"Why do you need a Divine Demon Beast?" Venali asked with a puzzled expression.

However, Rean just brushed off that question, telling him, "Oh, it's nothing. I was just curious about something."

Rean then turned around and began to make his way out. "Anyways, this makes us even. I'm going to the Blacksmith Hall now. See you around."

Shelandra and Venali definitely didn't think it was just mere curiosity. However, it wasn't their business anyway. With that, those two left as well.

However, Sister Orb couldn't help but ask Rean after that. [Why do you need a Divine Demon Beast? You already have Kentucky and Celis, no?]

'That's exactly why,' Rean replied. 'Celis and Kentucky don't know how they should act in the Realm of Gods. Also, I wanted to check whether Divine Demon Beasts are supposed to talk about their cultivation or not. If it turns out that they can, we can use it as an excuse for Kentucky and Celis's ability to talk.'

[Now that you say that, isn't it risky that everyone knows that you came from Lukimira Sect? The Sacred Land should have found out already that two Stage Six Demon Beasts there are capable of talking.]

Rean smiled, not concerned about that, saying, 'Don't worry, nothing will happen.'

[How come?]

'Because elder Etherian knows of our origin. Obviously, Etherian knows that Kentucky and Celis came from the Mortal Realm as well. As a person from the Mortal Realm, Etherian is well aware that Demon Beasts at Stage Six have sentience and are able to talk. Since they already had that ability in the Mortal Realm, it makes sense that they kept it once they arrived in the Realm of Gods. Elder Etherian is our shield at the moment, and he will deal with it.'

Sister Orb was surprised to hear that. [I see...in the end, it was very lucky of you two to find him here. What would you have done if he didn't appear?]

Rean shrugged his shoulders, saying, 'We could only use the same excuse as we've always used. We came from somewhere far away from this place, and there, demon beasts gain sentience at Stage Five. Don't forget, Sister Orb. They can think and talk while they're still at Stage Six. However, that's all. It's not like it makes them stronger or anything. Well, it does make them stronger in a certain way since they can fight with a conscious mind. That's definitely better than a demon beast that only acts on pure instinct.'

[Well... that's true.]

In the end, Rean resolved to go to the Blacksmith Hall first. Since Kentucky and Celis's situation was fine, he wasn't in a hurry to find more about Divine Demon Beasts.

Meanwhile, Roan was in the Mission Hall. At first, he went to the skills repository and took out quite a few manuals to study. However, there were just too many of them there. The Sacred Land didn't just gather the best ones. They gathered everything, including the worst skills and techniques available.

Roan thought it was a good thing, though. 'You never know when you might find an answer for your problem by reading some unknown manual. Not all issues can be resolved with complicated explanations from high-level techniques.'

Nevertheless, it was way beyond what he could memorize in a short amount of time. With that being said, he changed his approach and focused on the skills and techniques that would be most useful for his goal of gathering Merit Points. Now, he was looking into the 'helper' jobs and their rewards.

-Helper needed to test new chakram skill. A Soul Binding Contract is necessary, stating that you will never share information or use this skill in your life with a severe penalty for breaking this rule. Reward: 6000 Merit Points-

-Helper needed to try out a new righteous path cultivation technique. It has only been theorized so far, and there are risks of backlash. Signing a Soul Binding Contract is necessary. However, you are allowed to use this technique in the future as long as you don't share it. It will all be in the contract. Reward: 7000 Merit Points.-

-Helper needed for a new forbidden alchemy pill. The job is to test the effects of the pill on the soul, trying to increase its power. Treatment and compensation for any side effects will be provided. No need for a Soul Binding Contract. Reward: 13000 Merit Points.-

-Helper needed...

Roan went through several rows of jobs of that type. Sure enough, they provided a lot more Merit Points and could be finished much faster, some on the very same day. Compared to the missions and tasks, this really looked like a windfall. However, the fact that many more cultivators were looking into the normal missions and tasks instead of these helper jobs showed how risky they were.

Eventually, Roan saw one that caught his eyes.

-Helper needed. Testing a new righteous path meridian circulation method for the Mantis Blade skill. High chance of body damage. Pills will be provided to recover any lost body parts or shattered meridians. The helper is allowed to use the skill with the new meridian path in the future. However, they will need to sign a Soul Binding Contract, stating that they won't share the information. Reward: 16000 Merit Points.-

Roan took the job and checked its details.

-Contractor: Orphi Tian-

-Contractor's Realm: Elemental Transformation Late Stage-

-Location: Inner Sect, Residence 5983-

Roan then brought it to the counter soon after, saying, "I'll take this job."

Death... and me

Chapter 1178: Orphi's Request

Truth be told, Orphi was starting to give up on the job request he made. It had been over two months, but not a single soul had appeared. That was already counting that he increased the reward three times as his first request only gave 10000 Merit Points. However, he suddenly received a message from the Missions Hall. "What?! Someone took the job?! Quick, quick, what's his cultivation level?!"

However, his excitement disappeared soon after, muttering, "Just the peak of the Soul Transformation Realm? That's too low..."

Well, he didn't have much of a choice anyway. "Forget it, send this guy to me. What race is he? Human? Alright, that should suffice."

The worker on the counter then informed Roan. "Your contractor accepted your application." Soon after, he passed Roan's badge back to him. "Half of the payment has been deposited to your Sacred Land's account. The other half will be given once the helper request is concluded. Are you fine with this?"

Roan nodded in response. "No problem." He then looked into the map in the jade slip and immediately left the Mission Hall. The Sacred Land might be a big place, but it obviously had many teleport formations for one to move around. Thanks to that, Roan only took a few minutes to be teleported to Orphi's residential area.

After some time, he found the right residence number before calling out for Orphi. A few moments later, the protection formation in the residence dissipated, allowing Roan to come inside.

"So you're the guy who took my request, right?" Orphi obviously came to see Roan. "Come to the training field. I have a room with a Spatial Expansion Formation, so we have all the space we need there. There are many dummies that recover themselves with Divine Energy in there as well." Roan quickly followed. For him, it was even better that his client was getting straight to the point.

"I haven't seen your face before. Looking at your cultivation, it's obvious that you joined through the last recruitment. Are you sure you want to take this job? No one will be able to say anything if things go wrong later." Orphi thought that Roan was one of those new disciples desperate for Merit Points. That usually happened when they came from small countries and wanted to catch up with the others.

Well, he wasn't completely wrong as Roan wanted Merit Points as fast as possible. "I'm sure. So, are you going to use your skill against me, or do you need me to try the new meridian path for you first?"

Orphi didn't insist on the topic and simply nodded in response. "As I stated in the job, the new meridian path circulation has only been theorized. Naturally, I need you to try to use it first, as I don't want to suffer a backlash. If everything goes well, I will try to improve it to a level I feel is safe for me to use."

Roan already expected that much. It wouldn't make sense to ask him to simply receive the attack as Orphi could go out and test it against anyone. After all, there was no lack of bandits or demon beasts out there. "Very well. Where's the Soul Binding Contract?"

Orphi immediately took it out and passed it to Roan. "Read the clauses carefully so that there won't be any mistakes."

Roan actually read it completely, even though he didn't need it. It was a good way to know more about those things. "Everything seems correct." Following that, he dropped his blood on the contract, and Orphi did the same as he had to guarantee the other half of the payment.

"Good, take it." Orphi then passed a jade slip to Roan containing his research in the new meridian circulation method for the Mantis Blade skill. Roan then began to read it with his Divine Sense while Orphi continued to talk. "I'll give you one day to get used to it before trying to use the skill for real. If you feel like you need more time, let me k-"

"I'm done," Roan said, cutting Orphi's words short.

"What?!" Orphi looked at Roan as if he saw a ghost. However, it quickly changed as it turned into suspicion. "Are you making fun of my face? There's no way you already know how to do it."

Roan shook his head in response, saying, "I know the normal Mantis Blade skill to start with. I just had to adapt your changes into my mind." Roan didn't even wait for Orphi to rebuke him before he took out his old White Star Sword. It was a sword skill, so it was useless to use his scythe.

'Mantis Blade!'

Mantis Blade was an assassination skill that focused both on speed and swiftness while trying to be as silent as possible. It created an afterimage of the real thing, while the main attack aimed at the opponent's vital points. It was a very good skill for ambushing. It was different from Roan's Three Claws of the Dragon. Roan's Death Style Skill created three blades, but all three were real, so one could see all blades even though the two fake ones only had 80% of the realm sword's power. On the other hand, the Mantis Blade couldn't be seen as it was hidden by the initial afterimage created by the Divine Energy.

Swish!

The afterimage of the skills passed through the dummy's head, but the real blade hit the dummy's heart position a fraction of a second later.

Splurt...

Suddenly, the veins on Roan's arm bulged before several of them burst as blood came out. Well, Roan's expression didn't change one bit, though. Instead, he looked back at Orphi and said, "This new path you created has some potential. It increased the speed of the attack by about 10% and the strength by 15% in this incomplete form. It's quite unfortunate that it generated too much noise in exchange, not to mention the damage to the body."

"However, you messed up the meridians and the amount of Divine Energy circulation necessary on the hand's joints, the elbow's three paths, and the muscles. I would reduce the input of Divine Energy on the joints by ten to fifteen percent and the elbow by twenty to twenty-five. The free Divine Energy could be used to cover the strain on the muscles. Also..." Roan continued to talk for several minutes, offering many changes while completely ignoring Orphi's dumbfounded expression.

Death... and me

Chapter 1179: Shall We Rework?

Eventually, Orphi recovered from his stupor. "Wait! What did you just say about my changes?"

Roan then repeated the same words once again. "Of course, I'll test it out for you if you follow my directions. If you want to think about another solution on your own, I will wait for it."

Orphi wanted to ponder over Roan's words to see if they were feasible. However, there were two things that caught his attention and didn't let him focus. First, it was how fast Roan comprehended his new meridian circulation method. Even if Roan knew the skill's original meridian circulation method, he understood his changes way too quickly! That was simply ridiculous!

As for the second thing...

"Errr... here, take this healing pill. I don't know how you can keep such an emotionless face after injuring your meridians to such an extent. It should be very painful, you know?"

Roan looked at his arm and nodded in response. "Indeed, the pain does bother me."

'Life Style, Second Form, Instant Recovery!'

Roan's hair changed into a mix of black and white, using Rean and his White Star's Light Element to recover his arm. In just a few seconds, Roan's arm was as good as new. If not for the blood on his clothes and skin, Orphi would think that the damage Roan suffered a moment ago was just an illusion.

'Hmm?' Rean then contacted Roan. 'Are you in trouble?'

It was rare for Rean and Roan to use Elemental Exchange, after all. When they did, they knew why it was happening.

Roan immediately answered, 'Everything is fine. I'll need your Light Element for a while, though.'

Rean nodded and didn't ask anymore. If Roan really was in a bad situation, he wouldn't hide it from him as he found such a thing meaningless. 'Alright then.'

"Y-Y-Y-Your arm! Holy shit! How did it heal so fast like that?!" Naturally, Orphi was even more shocked now. Even the best pills he had in his spatial ring weren't that efficient. No, they couldn't even hold a candle to Roan's healing efficacy. Not to mention that Orphi could tell with his Divine Sense that Roan's meridians had recovered to a perfect state. He could see no side effects from the healing whatsoever.

Roan narrowed his eyes as he asked, "Are we here to improve your Mantis Blade's new circulation method or talk about me? If you want to know, just ask around about the last recruitment test. Just know that other than me and my brother, no one else can do what I did." Of course, there was a way to use Rean's Instant Recovery skill without being one of the twins. All they needed to do was have one of Rean's Light Element Gathering equipment. Unfortunately, Rean still hadn't shown anyone about it.

Orphi then calmed down as he looked at Roan from a new light. "Alright! Whatever you did to recover is obviously a good thing for me. It will save me pills and allow for a more thorough test. Let me think about the changes you offered in my theory."

Orphi then sat down and pondered about the ideas Roan gave him. He wouldn't apply them straight away, after all. Even if Roan could recover that fast or miraculously learn his idea in a few seconds, he still preferred to rely on his own opinion. It also had his own pride in play.

However, the more he thought about all the minor and major details in Roan's words, the more he thought that everything he said made sense. There were very few points where he could find any flaws. Well, the fact that he could find any flaws at all showed just how much time he invested in this new variation of the Mantis Blade. "What about this..."

Roan heard the points where Orphi found issues in his first examination and had to admit Orphi also had a point. Of course, the majority of the things Roan mentioned at first were maintained by Orphi.

And just like that, the two of them continued to discuss what they thought to be right and wrong, which took over an entire hour. During this time, Roan didn't try to use the skill again, nor did Orphi ask him to do so. If Orphi had any doubts about Roan's comprehension ability, they were now gone at this point.

Eventually, Roan got up again and raised his White Star. "Very well, let's try it once more." He was still being paid to receive the backlashes of the first tries if they went wrong, after all.

Swish!

Another dummy was hit by Roan's White Star after the afterimage passed through another part of its body first. This time, however, Roan raised his arm to look at it and didn't feel anything wrong. "Seems feasible. The noise decreased while the speed and strength had become higher than what I had previously predicted."

Orphi couldn't help but feel excited. The total attack power of the skill as a whole increased by just ten or so percent. For cultivators, such an increase in an already known skill was a huge thing. "Great! Try it a few more times against the other dummies. Don't worry, they were made by the Blacksmith Hall and can recover on their own."

Roan nodded and used the Mantis Blade several more times until Orphi was finally satisfied. "Alright, that's enough. Let me try it."

'Mantis Blade!'

The skill worked perfectly, just like it did with Roan. However, Orphi still felt a lot of pain in his arm, although no significant damage was taken. The problem is that he wouldn't be able to use it constantly. "This..." He then looked at Roan and asked, "Didn't you feel any pain?"

Roan shook his head in response. "No." However, he knew the reason for that. "It's not a problem with the skill, but our bodies. You cultivators focus too much on the cultivation level and use Divine Energy to strengthen your bodies. I, on the other hand, train my physical body and cultivation. Putting a strong body and my Divine Energy together makes it a lot more resistant than yours."

Roan pondered over it for a bit before asking, "This version of the skill is too strong for you. Shall we rework it for weaker bodies?"

Roan didn't have any intention of offending Orphi with that comment. However, Orphi's pride did take a big hit after hearing that. "No need! From today onwards, I will work on my body as well!"

Death... and me

Chapter 1180: Change of Plans

Roan looked at him and could see that he seemed somewhat distraught. "This is something you get from working your body from a young age. You won't get to use this skill in this form anytime soon if you start working on your body from now on."

Surprisingly, Orphi told him, "Things will change if I use a body cultivation technique. I don't need to reach a high realm with it. Just reaching a level where I could use this technique is enough."

Roan couldn't help but ask, "Body cultivation technique? I went to the repository to take a look, but I didn't see anything like that there."

Orphi was surprised to hear that from Roan. "Of course they aren't there. They aren't Divine Energy-based to start with. You should have noticed that there weren't any Soul Power techniques there either."

"Now that you say that..." Roan had to admit he was right. "Does that mean the Soul Power and body cultivation techniques are in different places?"

Hearing that, Orphi was certain that Roan really was a new disciple. "Well, I guess that's to be expected as everyone only thinks about Divine Energy, even though everyone has Soul Power as well."

Roan knew about Soul Power cultivation techniques, and he did look into them before. However, it didn't have much use to them in the end since their Soul Power was fused with their Divine Energy, so they didn't need it. Nevertheless, it was the first time he heard about a body cultivation technique.

Orphi then added, "Well, it isn't much different with body cultivation techniques. If the Mantis Blade wasn't a skill that I deeply relied on, I wouldn't think about it either." It was then that Orphi noticed something. "Wait! Are you saying you never used a body cultivation technique before, even though you have such a strong body?"

Roan nodded in response. "I didn't just cultivate. I also trained my body from a young age. Didn't I tell you that?"

Orphi shook his head. "I know you did! However, I thought you were telling me you used a body cultivation technique since you were a child. How the hell did you get a body strong enough to endure the variant Mantis Blade without your arm blasting apart?" Orphi couldn't help but be grateful that he called for a helper. Roan already had his arm turn into that broken thing even though his body was that strong. If it was him who tried to use the first version of the new technique, wouldn't his arm have exploded?

Roan glanced at him and once again repeated his words. "Hard training."

Orphi's mouth twitched in response. Just how hard was that training, then? "Sigh... I guess some people are just different." Orphi then continued, "Anyways, with a body like yours, I can't even imagine how you would turn out if you cultivated a body cultivation technique. But then again, there are reasons why people don't try them."

Roan had to admit he did find a few people with strong bodies in the past here in the Realm of Gods. However, they were extremely few and far between. 'Perhaps those guys cultivated it? Or maybe it was

just their races...' There must be a reason why body cultivators were so hard to find, so he asked Orphi. "Are there problems when you use a body cultivation technique?"

Orphi bitterly smiled as he thought about how he would need to do that himself. "There are...and very big ones at that."

"What are they?" Roan asked, already prepared for something extremely expensive. Well, he would just leave it for Rean to deal with.

Sure enough, Orphi then answered, "Not only is it extremely hardcore, but it's also very expensive. For each realm of the body cultivation technique, you'll need the equivalent material to improve your body. But the worst thing is the pain one needs to pass through at each stage! Can you imagine the pain of fusing your body with some different material? The majority simply can't withstand that."

Roan nodded in response. "So it is expensive. Fusing one's body with different materials...isn't it similar to when you enter the Elemental Transformation Realm?"

Orphi immediately shook his head, saying, "Of course not! In the Elemental Transformation Realm, you need a material to use as a catalyst. Think of it as if you transform that material into a part of your body beforehand. A part of your body you had always missed, and that is now coming back to you. That's what the breakthrough to the Elemental Transformation Realm means. It's completely different from fusing other materials that won't necessarily be of the same elemental affinity as yours. Your body will scream as it tries to do its best to reject it."

Roan then began to get a picture of what the Elemental Transformation Realm was. However, it was still early, so he left that part aside. Instead, he got more curious regarding body cultivation techniques. "Very well, I shall take a look at it. If pain is all the issue, I think I know how to deal with it."

Orphi thought that Roan was underestimating the difficulty of body cultivation techniques. However, it wasn't his problem as he wasn't Roan's master or anything like that. "Well, suit yourself. I'm only willing to try it because of the Mantis Blade and because I don't need to go far into the technique's realms. Being able to use the Mantis Blade as it is would be enough for me."

Roan nodded and prepared to leave. "Since you're satisfied with your end result, I guess our business is over. Can you transfer the rest of my Merit Points?"

"Oh, right!" Even though he had to use a body cultivation technique, it didn't change the fact that he was extremely satisfied with Roan's performance. "I'll recommend you to some of my friends. I'm sure they could make use of your abilities. Auto-healing, comprehension, ideas. You're the perfect test subject ever. Oops, I mean helper." Orphi then transferred the remaining 8000 Merit Points straight into Roan's account through his badge.

After Roan confirmed he got his points, he nodded at Orphi and then left. However, while making his way out, his plans changed. He was planning to head straight to the body cultivation technique repository now.