

## Death 1301

Death... and me

Chapter 1301: A Chill

Trika finished exchanging information with the clan before she looked back at Rean, Roan, and Maeralya. "Alright, I know you have been talking through Divine Sense. In any case, I don't care. Maeralya, I've kept the truth of your relationship with these two hidden from your father and mother. There's still a chance for this to be fixed. If you separate right now, things won't become too complicated."

Rean then got an idea as he asked Trika, "Senior Trika, how bad is it for our Maeralya to be with us?"

Trika immediately explained, "She's the daughter of the Croste Clan, as you already know. If people found out that she took two men as her lovers, it will implicate not only herself but the clan as a whole."

Rean and Roan nodded in response. "So us being together would implicate our Maeralya that much, huh?"

Maeralya truly felt like killing Rean and Roan right there. However, she couldn't do so because of Trika, not allowing her to move. However, it was then that Rean said something that made her surprised.

"Senior Trika, we can accept leaving her. However, it's true that life in the Croste Clan was what led her to leave it in the first place. We only met each other several years later. I can convince her to not try to kill herself, but there's a condition. You must not close her behind four walls anymore. The only way to keep her safe is to not try keeping her safe anymore."

Maeralya immediately nodded, although it was quite difficult for her to do so due to Trika restraining her. If she could still be free, then that would be for the best, even if Trika mistook her for having a male harem.

Trika narrowed her eyes after hearing that. "Isn't that just another way for you three to meet each other in the shadows? That's not gonna happen."

Rean then got close to Maeralya and touched her cheek as if he was someone important to him. He truly deserved an oscar already, considering how sad he looked. Maeralya, on the other hand, was doing her best to get away from him.

Rean then looked at Trika before saying, "We don't mind signing a Soul Binding Contract, stating that we will never meet her again. If we do, then we die."

This time, Trika was surprised to hear that. "Well... that works."

Maeralya was even more in agreement than anyone else there. She could get rid of the twins while still keeping her freedom. How good was that?

With that, Trika decided to release Maeralya from the control of her Divine Energy before asking, "What about you? If I keep your freedom to a certain extent, would you end your relationship with those two?"

Maeralya knew this was a good chance. Shrugging her shoulders, she replied, "It depends on how much freedom you want to give me. I can head back to the clan, but I don't want anyone following me every time I leave. I'll choose my own missions, go on my own journeys, and acquire my own resources. In a certain way, I'll only be my parents' daughter on the surface."

Trika didn't like that. "If you do that, how much further will your cultivation fall behind others?"

"I don't care," Maeralya replied. "You talk as if I should be ashamed of what I accomplished by myself. I am not. Try to take the other geniuses of our Croste Clan and send them into the wild to live as I did. How many of them do you think would reach this level of accomplishment? They're all deeply addicted to having everything in their hands. You take their resources, and they will fall into despair in less than a month, just because they can't keep up with the others. You should be proud of me because of that."

Rean agreed with Maeralya, saying, "Senior, she isn't wrong. The baggage she acquired during all these years of experience can't be bought with any number of Divine Stones. We, more than anyone else, know how many dangerous situations she had been through. We even followed her into a few of those moments. Those life and death moments she had gone through have definitely made her stronger than any greenhorn disciple of your clan. After all, the important high talent members of your clan always have someone protecting them, so they don't really know what it's like to have to rely on themselves."

Rean's speech was so good that even Maeralya almost believed in his story, let alone Trika. "You do have a point there. However, cultivation is also part of the Croste Clan's status. If others see that Maeralya has such weak cultivation, that will also implicate the clan's status. So far, we kept her disappearance under wraps, saying that we sent her on a secret mission that would take several decades. If she doesn't level up quickly, it won't be good for our name."

Rean then tried to make an offer, looking at Maeralya before saying, "Maeralya, you know that Roan and I know how much you value the resources that you acquired all by yourself. However, your aunt has a point there. You should accept the resources if it makes you stronger. Please, do that for us. We don't want to find out one day that you died because someone with much stronger cultivation caught you off guard."

Rean then looked at Roan before continuing, "Isn't that right, my brother?"

Roan had been silent all this time. He truly had difficulty accepting this shitty lie that Rean came up with. However, he knew he had to follow up, saying, "He... is right."

Surprisingly, the hesitation in Roan's words felt like the hesitation of someone who was going to get separated from their beloved one...or so Trika thought. Little did Trika know that he simply had a hard time saying those words because it felt disgusting for him.

At the same time, Rean contacted Maeralya through Divine Sense, 'Just take the offer. You will still keep your freedom, which should be the most important thing. It's obvious that your parents regard your cultivation as the highest priority. I don't think you'll get a better deal than this one.'

Maeralya had to admit Rean was right. "Sigh... very well, I will accept the resources to cultivate. However, I still want my freedom." Maeralya then looked at Trika and asked, "However... do you think my parents will accept these terms?"

It was then that an old voice appeared out of nowhere. "If we don't, you will try to flee again, won't you?"

Maeralya felt a chill on her back after that. "Mom!"

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## Chapter 1302: Successful Negotiation

Rean and Roan pretended to be surprised to hear that voice as well. However, the fact was that they noticed someone hiding not far away ever since they arrived on the mountain. After all, that person was using Divine Sense as well, thinking that her cultivation was too high for the twins or Maeralya to feel.

Space moved apart as an old woman came out, just like Trika did last time. Trika found it strange, though. How come the twins found her location but didn't find Maeralya's mother? Did she fuck up on her spatial concealing ability somehow? Even if she did, someone at the twins' level shouldn't have noticed her.

Trika then put those thoughts behind and looked at the couple who had just appeared. "Sister Filauria, you took quite some time to make your appearance, eh?" Obviously, Trika lied about keeping Maeralya's relationship with the twins hidden. Also, Filauria was obviously Maeralya's mother.

Maeralya couldn't help but ask in response, "How long have you been watching?"

"Since the very start," Filauria replied.

However, she didn't pay attention to her. Instead, she looked at the twins with a cold expression. "Maeralya, I could more or less understand if you fell in love with one man. After all, no one is supposed to be alone in their lives. However, aren't your tastes a bit too strange? I've never thought my daughter would try to start her own male harem. How did you end up like this?"

Maeralya almost vomited blood after hearing that. Who the hell has a male harem? It's all a lie, a lie! Unfortunately, she couldn't say that anymore. That's because her ticket to freedom was at stake. "I... things just... happened."

Filauria continued to look at the twins with a dark expression, saying, "You're lucky that she's still a virgin. Otherwise, I would have skinned you alive already." Sure enough, she could tell that with her Divine Sense.

Maeralya went bright red when she heard that. The poor girl was completely inexperienced with such things even after living for over 80 years. But then again, for someone at her cultivation level, 87 years

of age was basically akin to a kid. "Ahem... we knew our own limits, mom. We didn't want to risk having a kid at this point, so we never tried... that."

Rean immediately nodded, continuing, "There's no need to fear, madam. Other than kisses and some skinship, we have never gone too far."

Maeralya was already crying after hearing that as Filauria's anger reached its peak. "You sure don't have any fear, do you?"

Roan also felt like slapping Rean when he heard that. Why was he creating even more problems? However, Rean had a reason to say that.

"Madam, we have been lovers with your daughter. I don't wish to lie to you about what happened between us. If I did, I believe you would feel even worse. I'm being true to myself, you, and your daughter." Sure enough, Rean put on a serious face while saying those words.

Falauria narrowed her eyes, but her dark expression did ease up a bit. "Hmph! Whatever. You two already agreed to sign a Soul Binding Contract, stating that you will never meet her again, so I'll leave at that."

With that, she paid attention to Maeralya once more. "Maeralya, I will take you up on that offer of yours. Don't worry about your father. I'll convince him to let you have your freedom as long as you don't try anything stupid like disappearing once again. However, you will have to carry a tracking device everywhere you go. We won't stop you from going anywhere, but we must at least know where you're going if you ever need help. Also, resources are out of the negotiation. You have to take them and increase your cultivation as fast as possible. That also includes cultivating the clan's technique once again."

Maeralya knew that this would be the best offer she could have. Having a tracking device was different than having someone watch her every single second, after all. Besides, she doubted her parents would commit the same mistake and let her escape if she refused. "Fine! You don't need to worry about me. I've been through many life and death situations on my own. I know how to take care of myself. I'll cultivate with the resources of the clan."

Maeralya then looked at the twins and asked, "What about them, mom?"

Rean immediately raised his hand, saying, "Madam, my brother and I already convinced Maeralya that we should stop by the cities at the center of the continent. Even if you hadn't appeared, we would have gone there nonetheless while keeping Maeralya's identity hidden. With that said, could you do us one last favor and leave us anywhere near the center of the continent? We'll still sign the contract anyway."

At the same time, Rean's Divine Sense messaged Maeralya. 'Tell her to help us. You owe us at least this much since we helped you convince your mother and aunt to give you your freedom.'

Maeralya was still angry about this 'lovers' thing. However, it was this 'lovers' thing that ended up giving her that shot at freedom. If the twins weren't there, she would simply be brought back to the clan and most likely wouldn't get a chance to leave anymore. The twins were almost killed by Trika because of her as well. Last but not least, she knew that the twins had changed the contract somehow. If they decided to tell the truth that they had never had any romantic relationship with her right now, her shot at freedom would disappear into smoke. Those were all reasons that forced her to plead for Rean's request.

"Mom, they're telling the truth. Would you mind if we stay close to each other until we arrive close to the continent's center? With your and aunt Trika's spatial abilities, it won't take more than a few hours to arrive there."

Trika and Filauria were surprised to hear that. "To think you like them that much. Just how did you end up like that?"

Maeralya mentally screamed that there was nothing going on with them, but she instead apologized when she heard that. "I'm sorry."

"Fine," Filauria answered. "I'll allow you three to stay with each other for a few more hours. But I'll have both of you sign the Soul Binding Contracts after that."

With that said, Trika and Filauria grabbed the twins and Maeralya with their spatial powers before disappearing.

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## Chapter 1303: And A Half!

With Trika and Filauria's cultivation, they were able to teleport to far distances in one go, going far than most city-to-city teleport formations. Above that, they didn't need to feed Divine Stones into the formations, nor did they need to wait for them to charge. Those two old women could simply teleport again straight away.

Thanks to that, they were able to do thousands of teleports per hour. Well, that was also the reason why they were able to cover half of the continent's distance in just a few hours instead of decades or centuries. Rean and Roan couldn't help but feel a little jealous, hoping to be able to do that as well as soon as possible.

Eventually, they arrived at a country called Vupe, located in the Dilatan Region. This was a region close to the center of the continent, but still several regions far away from where the Croste Clan was located. Trika and Filauria then descended from the skies before dropping the twins on the ground. After that, Filauria gave the twins the Soul Binding Contract, the terms already written on them. "Here you go. All three of you would have to sign this. However, the terms are different than what you think. It only says that you shall never have a romantic relationship anymore, that's all. After all, the last thing I want to happen is for Maeralya to die just because she met you two by coincidence."

Well, it made little difference for Rean, Roan, and Maeralya. They weren't in a relationship anyway. Nevertheless, Rean pretended to be unwilling to sign the contract, as if he was doing it for Maeralya's sake. Roan couldn't go that far, though. He simply signed the contract as he wanted to get over with the farce. Soon enough, Maeralya did the same, although she did pretend a bit as well.

The contract then burnt out and entered their foreheads before Rean sighed and looked at Maeralya, saying, "This is our last time together. We might meet each other again, but we shall never get together. I wish you happiness."

Roan nodded, wanting to add more substance to Rean's words.

Maeralya almost couldn't hold her laugh there after hearing that. At some point, the situation went from being ridiculous to just outright funny. It's just that Trika and Filauria thought she was trying to hold her tears instead. "Maeralya, this is for your own good. Now, let's leave this place. We have to meet your father in the clan as he's waiting."

Maeralya took a deep breath and nodded in response. Soon after, the three women disappeared from that place.

As soon as they did that, the twins activated their Divine Sense bending skill to see if they were somewhere far away, observing them. When they confirmed there were no Divine Senses, they didn't relax. They didn't know if Trika and Filauria would send someone to get rid of them to prevent future problems. Before the system could identify any trouble, the twins immediately entered the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm.

Surprisingly, it turned out they were right. A few hours later, a huge Divine Sense that could cover thousands of kilometers covered the entire area. It wasn't the only one, though. Several more Divine Senses passed around that place. They were all trying to find anyone that resembled the twins' appearance. Eventually, many men and women appeared where the twins were last seen.

"Did you find anything?"

"No, I scanned all the lives I've seen. Still, nothing."

"I found many cultivators in the surrounding areas, but none of them fit the description."

"Keep looking for them. According to Filauria, they're just in the Initial Stage of the Saint Realm. They couldn't have gone far in just these last few hours."

"Understood."

Sometime later, they all left, unaware that the twins saw everything from the Dimensional Realm. Rean looked at Roan and sighed, saying, "Well, that's to be expected."

Roan glanced back at him and replied, "That's because you came up with that 'lover' bullshit. Obviously, they want to eliminate the threat of someone finding Maeralya's attempt to start a male harem. Those people we saw just now wouldn't even ask why they're in charge of looking for us. They would just kill us straight away."



Rean laughed in response. "Hahaha! Well, it worked, didn't it? With that, we saved many years of useless travel and battles."

Kentucky, who was watching everything unfold, couldn't help but ask after that, "Does that mean we can't go out for the time being? I'm feeling quite bored here already, cultivating nonstop."

Unfortunately for him, Roan confirmed his fear, saying, "That's exactly what will happen. Even though we can change our appearances, those people outside might just kill anyone who's inside this area where we were last seen. We can't take the risk. With that said, we will focus on cultivation for the time being. At least, the four of us will be using Rank Three Divine Stones, so we'll improve very quickly."

Kentucky was afraid to hear that but could only do as Roan said.

Celis wasn't the least bit unhappy, though. "Stop complaining and return to your nest. We finally got the opportunity to cultivate together at the same time, so let's not waste it."

Rean then looked at Roan after that, asking, "By the way, how long will we stay here?"

"At least a year. Cultivators of that level probably don't care about time anymore, so they'll definitely stay around for a while. It's better to be safe than sorry," Roan answered.

Rean nodded and didn't say anything else. They were far ahead of their schedule anyway.

The search for the twins continued, just as Roan mentioned. Of course, because the twins were in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, they couldn't find the twins' location at all. It wasn't before an entire month had gone by that those Divine Senses began to appear more sporadically. They continued like that for another half a year before the last one disappeared for good.

Of course, the twins didn't know when the enemy would give up, so they stayed in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm for an entire year.... and a half!

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Chapter 1304: They Are Sick!

Roan did say that they would stay there for at least a year. But just to make sure, he decided that they shouldn't leave for another six months. Just as a reminder, the twins had already saved a huge amount of time by taking a ride with Trika and Filauria. Even after cultivating for a year and a half, they were far ahead of the schedule they predicted.

Well, that was considering they wouldn't take any teleport formations. If the teleport formations were available from the start, they could have reached this place much earlier. It's just that it would have cost them quite a few Divine Stones.

Rean, Roan, and Kentucky then stepped out of the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm after they thought they had cultivated long enough. Back when the twins received the Rank Three Divine Stones as payment, Sister Orb predicted the time necessary for them to breakthrough through each stage. Of course, that would only be the case if the twins, Kentucky, and Celis were all focused on cultivating.

She said that it would take six months for them to reach the Middle Stage, another nine months to reach the Late Stage, and one more year to reach the Peak Stage. With that being said, the result was pretty obvious. The twins had reached the Late Stage of the Saint Realm while Kentucky and Celis reached the Late Stage Seven level. They broke through together, as always.

"Out! I'm finally out! Hahaha!" Kentucky couldn't help but stretch his body with glee as he felt he was finally free. "One year and a half of cultivation, cultivation, cultivation! Fuck that! I'm not cultivating again anytime soon!"

Roan glanced at the idiot bird, saying, "Stop complaining. Thanks to that, we broke through two entire stages and a little more. Now, let's leave this place as soon as possible. I don't think there's anyone looking for us at this point. However, I would rather not risk being caught in this place, even though we've already changed our appearances."

Rean and Roan definitely wouldn't use the same appearance as they showed to Trika and Filauria. Now that their cultivation had advanced two stages, it would be even more impossible to relate them to the twins who disappeared eighteen months ago.

Rean agreed with Roan, saying, "Roan's right. The next city should be the one called Cantio, more or less 500 kilometers from here." He and Roan then jumped on Kentucky's back after that. "Let's go, Kentucky."

Kentucky was more than happy to comply. "Anything is better than cultivating. Hahaha!" He quickly spread his wings, and with a powerful flap, he took to the skies.

Kentucky obviously became faster thanks to his advancement in cultivation, so it took less than thirty minutes to cover the distance to Cantio City...or so it was supposed to be. When they had arrived where Cantio City was, there wasn't a city to be found. Well, to be more precise, there was a city...in the past.

From what they could see, the entire city had been razed to the ground! Rean's group could see many cultivators walking around the rubble, trying to find something useful. However, compared to the hundreds of millions of people that the city had before, those cultivators were nothing.

"Kentucky, head down," Roan said.

Kentucky immediately dove into the destroyed city before landing on a patch with quite a few cultivators around. Roan then came down from Kentucky and began to analyze the rubble. There were obviously many bones everywhere. It was proof that everyone who once lived here was now dead. "It hasn't been long since the city was destroyed."

Rean agreed with Roan, saying with a serious expression, "Indeed. It's been a year or two, at most." Rean could tell that by simply analyzing the mortal remnants in the place. Soon after, Rean walked away until he got close to one of the cultivators exploring the city. Naturally, the guy had his guard up as this place wasn't under any kind of rules or laws anymore.

Rean just smiled at the man, though. "Hello, friend. My brother and I are travelers who have just arrived in this place. Do you know what happened here? It doesn't seem it has been long since this city turned out like this."

The guy was surprised to hear that question, asking in response, "You really don't know? Where have you been living? Under a rock?"

Rean nodded, replying without any change in expression, "Believe it or not, we were very close to that statement."

The guy narrowed his eyes after hearing that but decided to explain anyway. "Well, it's not like this is a secret. Anyone here would be able to tell you that. Cantio City wasn't the only one to turn out like this. Another eleven cities in the surroundings got wiped out. Not only them, though. Any possible kind of settlement was destroyed, and everyone inside was killed. All the cultivators who were in the vicinity of the twelve destroyed cities were also killed. For an entire year, not a single soul dared to step into this place. It was only six months ago that people realized that it was safe to step in once again."

Rean obviously thought it to be too much of a coincidence. He and Roan had entered the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm around the time the cities were destroyed, after all. 'They couldn't be that crazy, could they?'

Rean then asked the guy, "Such a massacre happened? Why? Who did that?"

The guy shook his head, replying, "That's the thing. No one knows. No, to be more specific, no one dares to look into the information. For your own good, you should not ask who did it either, lest you might find yourself buried somewhere very soon."

Rean looked at Roan, asking him, 'Do you think it was the Croste Clan?'

Roan nodded, thinking that it could only be them. 'It does match the timing, doesn't it?'

Rean agreed with him. 'Indeed. Then again, would they really wipe out so many cities, especially considering we're close to the center of the continent, just to make sure we're dead? That doesn't seem possible.'

Roan shook his head, giving Rean a piece of his mind as he told him, 'You're still thinking on a planetary scale. For a single country in the Realm of Gods, a few billion people mean almost nothing, even for the country itself. They couldn't find us, but they knew our cultivation. They believed we definitely couldn't have traveled much far, not that we had the Divine Stones to use teleport formations. For them, destroying these cities and other settlements, where we were most likely hiding inside, was probably their safest bet.'

Rean's expression went dark after that. 'They are sick!'

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## Chapter 1305: Looking For

Rean wasn't an idiot. He knew that the story he invented about being lovers with Maeralya was the thing that led to this outcome. 'Fuck those guys! No wonder Maeralya wanted to leave them.'

Roan glanced at him before asking, 'You aren't thinking that you're the one at fault, are you?'

Rean shook his head, saying in response, 'Of course not! I won't feel guilty for something I didn't do. Who the hell would kill billions of people just to keep some weird story under wraps? First of all, no one would believe us unless we used Soul Binding Contracts. It was their fault, not mine. However, I do feel angry that my plan to get away from the war zone was used as a reason to do this.'

Roan was satisfied to hear that. 'As long as you understand that, then it's fine. However, you should know that there's nothing we can do about it. Simply put, we're too weak to face off against a behemoth like that.' Roan then turned around and went back to Kentucky. 'Since this city is gone, we need to find another one. Let's go.'

Rean nodded. 'Fine. Let me ask the guy first.' He then calmed down and asked the cultivator, "Brother, we need to find an intact city to resupply. Do you know which one is the closest?"

"Wasxi City is the closest one. You can find it by traveling northwest. I can see that you have your own Demon Bird, a Stage Seven one at that. It shouldn't take more than a few weeks to get there," he responded.

"Thank you, brother. By the way, did the people who raze these cities to the ground at least tell why they did it?"

It was then that the guy took a jade slip from his spatial ring and threw it at Rean. "Check inside."

Rean quickly sent his Divine Sense into the jade slip and saw his own image together with Roan's. Well, the ones on the jade slip were the fake appearances they were using back in the army. Naturally, they now took on a different appearance. However, all it said was that anyone who could find him and Roan should report to the Mercenary Guild. It didn't mention who was the power behind the task. The Croste Clan really didn't want others to associate them with the destruction of these cities.

The guy then explained, "These jade slips have been distributed in the many cities close to these destroyed areas for quite some time now. However, it doesn't seem like anyone found these guys. Everyone believes the cities were destroyed because some big power was looking for them."

Rean sighed in response. "That's really crazy." He then threw the jade slip back to the guy. "Thank you once again, brother." Right after that, Rean went back to Kentucky before the Minokawa took to the skies once more.

Roan then warned Rean, "Just forget about it, at least for now. There might be a day you can do something, but that day's not today."

"I know." Rean agreed with Roan. "Let's head to the Galanmord Region and find the Lost Star Realm."

It would take a few weeks for a normal Stage Seven Demon Bird to make that travel to the next intact city. However, Kentucky was much stronger than an average one. For him, it took only a week and a half to fly all the way. Eventually, they saw the big walls of Wasxi City.

However, just as Rean and Roan were about to enter through the skies, the city guards immediately stopped them. "Halt! Come down right now, or you will be considered an enemy of the city."

Naturally, the twins descended before Rean took his Beast Tamer Guild badge out, saying, "Brother, I'm part of the Beast Tamer Guild. Shouldn't we have a free pass into the city?"

The guard nodded, saying, "In normal circumstances, that would be the case. However, after what happened to the cities nearby, we're not willing to take any risks. Can I see your badge?"

Rean nodded and passed it over. Unlike the ID Rean and Roan used in the army, the Beast Tamer Guild badge was different. The guild existed in the whole Realm of Gods, so their badges were the same anywhere. Naturally, Rean's name was different in there. Roan also passed his own badge, as he joined the guild together with Rean back then.

After checking that the badges were legitimate, the twins' appearance, and their cultivation, the guard finally accepted them. "Very well. Before you go, have you seen these people?"

The guard then threw a jade slip, which was the same Rean saw before in the destroyed city. Naturally, he and Roan simply shook their heads before the guard let them go.

"They're really putting a lot of effort to look for us, aren't they?" Rean could not help but say.

Roan didn't seem to mind, though. "Forget it. Once we take the teleport formations to head somewhere else, these jade slips should stop appearing."

Kentucky then landed in an inconspicuous place before he was unwillingly sent back into the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Rean promised him that it was only during the time they were using the teleport formations. After all, it would cost more to teleport Kentucky and themselves.

However, before they continued, Roan decided to enter the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm as well. "They're looking for two brothers. Although we look different both in appearance and cultivation, someone might feel suspicious. You go ahead and teleport between the cities on your own. I'll come out once you have teleported all the way to Trimazo Country in Galanmord Region."

Rean didn't mind it. "Sure. It will also save us a lot of Divine Stones if I'm the only one using it. However, there are definitely hundreds of cities, maybe thousands, before I teleport all the way to Galanmord. Since I'm also using the group teleports, I will probably take several weeks to arrive."

Roan nodded after hearing that. "So be it. I'll just cultivate during then."

With a plan of action in mind, Roan also entered the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm before Rean headed to the Formation Guild.

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Chapter 1306: Grinha City

Well, Rean did just that. He was the one traveling from teleport formation to teleport formation. Since he wasn't part of any of the big powers of the Lanqueas Continent, he had to pay for all of the teleport formations he used. There was also the fact that he couldn't use them straight away but instead had to wait for their daily activation. If he arrived after that, then he had to wait until the next day. Fortunately, Rank One Divine Stones were enough to pay for teleport between cities close to each other.

Galanmord Region was a cold place. In the Realm of Gods, such things as seasons weren't very accurate in most places. The places that had seasons were rare, and it was usually because of the intervention of cultivators. Galanmord was one of those regions without accurate seasons. Even though the regions around it were also cold like Galanmord, they weren't completely covered in snow.

Trimazo was one of the twelve countries included in the Galanmord Region, located at the very center. Even though it was a cold place, Trimazo Country received cultivators of all cultivation levels all year long. That's because the Lost Star Realm was located here. According to Langara Talan, that was the place where she got injured, being forced to escape into the neighboring country. It's just that she had never told the twins how that happened.

This was obviously the place where Langara found the Fallen Light Star Fragment. Rean needed them so that he could use the fragments as a catalyst for his eventual breakthrough to the Elemental Transformation Realm. As mentioned before, materials purely biased towards Light or Dark Element were very hard to find.

Grinha City, the closest town to the entrance of the Lost Star Realm...

The teleport formation in the Formation Guild flashed with silver light as hundreds of cultivators of different levels appeared on it. Those that had arrived were in multiple groups, while there were also those who arrived alone. The workers in the Formation Guild then immediately asked those people to move away. Since it was the closest city to the entrance of the Lost Star Realm, the town received teleports all day long with no time for breaks whatsoever. There were several of them at that.

In the midst of the group, no one paid much attention to a brown-haired cultivator passing through. He didn't look anything special, after all. He moved alone, eventually leaving the teleport formation as he headed to the center of Grinha City... well, he was already there in the first place. The Formation Guild always kept the branches close to the city center anyway.

The brown-haired guy then looked around as he made his way to the market, where he intended to look for a specific item.

Once again, Grinha City's location greatly favored the economy. With that said, the city had been expanding for hundreds of years since the appearance of the Lost Star Realm. Thus, the market area



extended for tens of kilometers. Treasure shops, weapon shops, armor shops, alchemy shops, talisman shops... if it could be sold, then it would be there.

On top of that, they were also easily separated by their quality. The best shop had entire buildings for themselves, while individual cultivators opened their stalls along the streets with their findings from the Lost Star Realm. In fact, Grinha City was the best place to sell one's findings from the Lost Star Realm. After all, anyone who came to this place to buy something was most likely because they needed something from there.

Even though so many different shops could be found there, the young man knew what he was exactly looking for. He took out some kind of tablet, which contained many inscriptions, before pouring his Divine Energy inside. The tablet lightly shone for a moment before a small stream of energy took the form of an arrow that pointed in a certain direction. 'Oh! So there really is some of it in the market. Perhaps I won't even need to enter the Lost Star Realm in the end.'

Following the arrow, the young brown-haired man arrived at a stall a few kilometers later. By the time he arrived, he saw what looked like a tiny white crystal that shone with gentle light, a light that was pretty similar to his tablet. 'So small, that won't be enough at all...'

Of course, he wouldn't just ignore it like that. He knew that this thing would be very difficult to find, so that tiny piece might make a world's difference in the end. However, just as he was about to reach for that tiny piece of white crystal, another hand also came at it, bumping with his own.

The young brown-haired man then looked at the other person and said, "Sir, I saw this piece first, you know?"

Rean then looked at that young brown-haired man in response. He was surprised that someone else other than him would come after the Fallen Light Star Fragment as well. Rean had arrived a few days prior to this young brown-haired man. However, rather than heading straight to it, he decided to stay in the city to gather information.

It turns out that not only were Fallen Light Star Fragments really hard to find, being mostly located at the core of the Lost Star Realm, no one wasted time gathering them. In the end, they would only be useful for someone who had Light Element Affinity. Cultivators that used Yang Energy to manipulate Light Element would prefer items biased towards Yang Energy instead. Obviously, items filled with Yang Energy were countless times easier to find, and one didn't need to come here to get them. If anything, this cold place called the Galanmord Region was a terrible choice to search for them.

In any case, Rean didn't enter the Lost Star Realm after learning about it. He didn't know if a Fallen Light Star Fragment would end up appearing or not. Perhaps someone felt that they had some use. Which was why he was still in the city. Unfortunately for him, even after many days, this tiny piece was the very first one to ever appear. Above all that, Rean also got someone competing with him for it.

Naturally, Rean wouldn't give up just like that. "Sorry, brother.. However, I really need a lot of these Fallen Light Star Fragments."

Death... and me

Chapter 1307: Why?

Obviously, the young brown-haired man didn't believe Rean. After all, he had the tablet that could find those Fallen Light Star Fragments. He found it way before even really seeing it. However, before he could say anything, the vendor in front of the stall called their attention, saying, "I'm the one selling it, and I saw you two reach for it at the same time. Let's do it this way. The one who offers more will keep it."

Sure enough, he wouldn't let such an opportunity pass up. He carried this thing, not thinking it would be of much value, but it seemed like he was lucky.

Rean sighed in response before bringing 10 Rank One Divine Stones out. Rean could see that the young brown-haired man had the same cultivation as himself, Late Stage of the Saint Realm. One must remember that Divine Stones, even Rank One Divine Stones, were very hard to get for average cultivators. In his mind, 10 Rank One Divine Stones should be enough to make the young man reconsider. "Now then, let me take it."

However...

"Just ten? Sir, I'll give you 20 Rank One Divine Stones for this fragment," the young brown-haired man countered.

Rean narrowed his eyes when he heard that and took a good look at the guy but shook his head in the end. "Forget it." He wasn't in the mood to compete anymore, so he immediately took out 100 Rank One Divine Stones, much to the seller's shock. Well, for Rean, that amount really meant nothing at all. He had tens of thousands of Rank Two Divine Stones, let alone Rank Ones.

However...

"200 Rank One Divine Stones," the young brown-haired man counteroffered yet again.

Rean and the young man looked at each other after that. It was obvious to both of them that neither side was simple. But then again, why would the other want an item that no one wanted? That puzzled Rean and the young man very much.

Rean then looked back at the fragment. He did have enough wealth to battle for it to no one. However, if he took out more than 200 Rank One Divine Stones, it would start to attract way too much attention. He could tell that a few eyes were already looking in this stall's direction. Besides, that fragment was indeed too small to be worth the trouble. "Alright, I give up. I felt this fragment's presence from afar, so I wasn't lying when I said I saw it first. Then again, it doesn't matter anymore."

Rean then turned around and decided to leave. It was better to not gather attention as some people might have the wrong ideas.

The young brown-haired man was surprised to hear that. He also found the fragment from afar due to his tablet. He looked at Rean walk into the distance before quickly paying the man the 200 Rank One Divine Stones, taking the fragment soon after. However, he didn't go away after that. Instead, he immediately went after Rean.

It's just that it didn't matter how fast he was. It looked like Rean was always the same distance away from himself. If he slowed down, Rean wouldn't disappear either. He would continue to stay at the same distance. 'He knows I'm going after him, but where does he want to bring me?'

Surprisingly, the young man was right. Rean noticed that he was being followed, so he led the young man to an inn he was staying. With that, Rean quickly entered the inn and headed to the restaurant inside it. The young man followed him inside and saw Rean waving at him from a table close to the window. The young man scratched the back of his head before approaching the table, sitting on the opposite side. "Hi, brother. Sorry for following you."

Rean didn't seem to mind. "It's fine. You're probably curious as to why I would need Fallen Light Star Fragments, and so am I."

The young man shook his head, saying, "I was more interested in how you felt the fragment's presence, though. But yeah, I'm also curious as to why you need Fallen Light Star Fragments. By the way, I'm called Hurio Locks."

"You can call me Rean Larks," Rean also introduced himself. "I can't really tell you why I need them, though. As for how I felt them, let's just say I have my methods."

That's the part that Hurio found concerning. "Brother, do you perhaps have one of these tablets?" Hurio then took out the tablet he used to find the Fallen Light Star Fragments. He wasn't afraid of having it stolen as all it could do was find Light Element Materials. Such materials had no appeal to other cultivators, so he was fine.

Rean immediately looked at the inscriptions of the tablet and showed a surprised expression. "These runes..." There were quite a few runes on it that he had never seen before. However, judging by how the runes were arranged in comparison to the other ones, Rean could guess how they worked. "It's a detection item. But the runes that I'm not familiar with are similar to the mainstream elemental runes. Is this the tablet you used to find the Fallen Light Star Fragment?"

Hurio immediately nodded, saying, "It seems like you are well-versed in formations and inscriptions. That's correct. This tablet can locate Light Element Materials. However, they're too rare, so that's why this tablet was made. Could it be that you don't have one of these?"

Rean shook his head, telling Hurio, "To be honest, I don't need something like that to find Light Element Materials," He could simply feel the Light Element coming from the fragments from afar. It was the same as feeling Life Force. However, it was a lot easier when it came to items made out of pure Light Element.

Rean then asked the young man, "How far can this tablet detect Light Element Materials?"

"It depends on how much Light Element is in the material. That fragment, for example, I detected it around 5 kilometers away."

Rean nodded after that. "That's quite the distance.." Eventually, Rean asked the real question. "So, why did you come after me? You wanted to ask something else other than whether I had the same tablet as you, right?"

Death... and me

#### Chapter 1308: Lost Star Realm

Hurio nodded at Rean's question, replying, "Indeed, brother. I came after you because it seems like we're after the same thing. But above all, it seems like we have our own ways of finding Light Element Materials. With that in mind, I think we can help each other. Tell me, how many fragments have you found in Grinha City so far? How long have you been looking for them?"

Rean shook his head, saying, "I arrived at this city about ten days ago. However, that fragment was the very first one to appear for sale. You probably know this better than me. Light Element Materials mostly have no use at all. I'm already shocked that someone other than me needs them. With that being said, no one really pays attention to them, even if they find some in the Lost Star Realm. Well, in any case, it's also hard to find them there."

Hurio nodded in agreement. "It seems like it'll be impossible to gather enough in this city unless we stay here for several years then. You said it yourself. You need a lot of them, right? It just so happens that I also need a lot. How about this? Let's join forces and enter the Lost Star Realm together. With both our detection abilities working in tandem, it might be much faster to achieve our objectives."

Rean narrowed his eyes after hearing that. "Why would you trust me that easily? This is the first time we've met each other."

"I don't," Hurio said in response. "I believe in the power of the Soul Binding Contract instead."

Sure enough, it had to be those contracts. Nevertheless, Rean had to ask, "Soul Binding Contracts are very expensive for average cultivators. Are you sure you want to use it?"

Hurio laughed when he heard that. "Hahaha! Come on, brother. We both know that Divine Stones aren't exactly an issue for you and me. Otherwise, would we really offer over a hundred Rank One Divine Stones for that measly fragment? I can tell that you could go over my offer many times, but you decided that it was best not to do so. In fact, you're right to do something like that. Well, if you had offered more

than 200 Divine Stones, I would have been the one to give up. It's not that I couldn't pay an amount above yours, but it's because I also wouldn't want to catch too much attention."

Rean smiled back at Hurio when he heard that. "You're smarter than you look. So, who are you exactly?"

Hurio looked straight back at him and asked in response, "How about telling me who you are first?"

Rean was the one to laugh this time. "Hahaha! I guess it's better if we don't get into such details."

Hurio agreed with Rean. "It's good that brother thinks the same way as me."

"Alright, I think we can indeed help each other here. However, I'm not the only one going after it in the Lost Star Realm," Rean told him.

Hurio found it strange. It was already surprising to have one person looking for Fallen Light Star Fragments, and now Rean was telling that there were more. "Who else is going? If we end up having to share too much, it won't be worth it due to the materials' rarity."

Rean noticed what Hurio thought. "Oh, don't worry. I'm the only one who has uses for the Fallen Light Star Fragments. The other two are only coming inside to provide me with support. Don't worry. They can also sign the Soul Binding Contract. In the end, you will have 50%, and I'll have 50%."

Hurio sighed in relief after that. "In that case, any extra help is certainly more than welcome."

Rean and Hurio then began to discuss when they should go inside the Lost Star Realm. In the end, they decided to stay one more week in the city, just to see if any other Fallen Light Star Fragment would appear. They even left a request in the Mercenary Guild's hall. However, not a single person appeared to sell Fallen Light Star Fragments. In the end, they simply headed to the Lost Star Realm.

On the day of departure, Roan and Kentucky came out of the Dimensional Realm. It had been a month since they entered there. Thanks to that, they were able to achieve some progress in cultivation. Of course, it would take at least another year before the twins, Kentucky, and Celis advanced to the Peak Stage of the Saint Realm, or Peak Stage Seven in the demon beasts' case.

"Phew... I thought I would be locked inside there for another eon," Kentucky could not help but say as he stretched his body.

Roan already knew what happened with Rean so far, so he went straight into the point. "Let's get over with it so that we can proceed with our journey to Jhiod Continent. Where did you agree to meet the new guy?"

"He should be waiting for us at the entrance of the Lost Star Realm," Rean said. "We can take the city's teleport formation or fly over there with Kentucky. It's quite close, so I would rather not spend Divine Stones. Even though it's close, the Formation Guild still charges for it."

"No problem, no problem." Kentucky didn't mind at all. "Let me take you there. So, where is it?"

Rean then pointed at the distance. Only then did Kentucky notice the huge swirl spinning far above in the skies. It went way further than Grinha City. Yes, one could see right above Grinha City itself. As mentioned before, it wasn't possible to see the stars beyond the skies. However, the Lost Star Realm was different. It was located right below the eye of the swirl, which was completely empty. Thanks to that, the stars could be seen from there.

"That thing is huge! How did that even happen in the first place?" Kentucky could not help but ask.

Rean shook his head, saying, "How am I supposed to know? All I found out was that this Lost Star Realm is even older than the official formation of the Lanqueas Continent itself. Well, at least that's what I was told during my investigations. When I say official formation, I meant the time the Lanqueas Sect took it over and renamed the continent with its name. That alone has already been tens of thousands of years ago. The Lost Star Realm is even older than that, so there's no information on how it came to be. At the very least, there isn't information available on it for the average public."

Hearing that, Roan shrugged his shoulders. He didn't really care that much anyway. "So be it. It doesn't matter how it was formed. What we want is what it contains, the Fallen Light Star Fragments. Let's go."

Kentucky nodded in response and immediately took flight, heading towards the entrance of the Lost Star Realm.

Death... and me

#### Chapter 1309: Divine Origin Energy

Although Grinha City was the closest city to the entrance of the Lost Star Realm, it wasn't the only city close enough for people to travel from. A few other cities also had teleport formations that could send one directly to the place, and they were all very big and busy, just like Grinha. With that said, one could already imagine just how crowded the entrance to the realm was.

Rean and Roan had arrived at the place from the skies, so they had an even better view. Obviously, Kentucky could see it as well. "Holy shit! There's a sea of people of all possible races down there. Don't you think there are even more people than there were people back in that war between regions?"

Rean shook his head, saying, "Not really. You're talking about when we saw two armies fight each other. However, those were just two of the many, many armies that filled those ten regions in turmoil. If you take all the armies into consideration, then the number of people down there couldn't even be considered a hundredth of it."

Rean also added, "Of course, there are definitely many more people here than during any of the battles we saw back in the war. This place should have what? Two? Maybe three million people? What surprises me is that there isn't a single building at the entrance. At most, you have stalls, barracks, and similar things like that."

Roan agreed with Rean. "There should be a reason to not build them here, most likely due to the Lost Star Realm. Anyways, where did you say you would meet with Hurio?"

Rean then looked around, looking for what seemed to be a big hill. Naturally, there were multiple of them. However, one of them was supposed to not be totally covered in ice, according to Hurio, standing out from the rest. "Oh, there's the one. It seems like it's being protected from the snow by a formation." Rean then asked Kentucky to come down. Of course, he also told the Minokawa to keep quiet from now on.

There was no lack of flying or land demon beasts being accompanied by beast tamers, so no one really cared much about the descent of Rean's group. Not too long after, Rean heard Hurio's voice come from the distance. "Rean, I'm here!"



"There he is," Rean said. "Let's meet him."

Once they met up, Rean introduced the other two heading into the Lost Star Realm. "This guy by my side is Roan, my brother. This one is our demon beast, Kentucky. We will be using him to move around in the Lost Star Realm." Of course, although Rean used their real names, their appearances were anything but that. This was very far from the area where the Croste Clan wiped everyone out. Nevertheless, it was better to be safe than sorry.

Hurio nodded, saying, "No problem. Here, I have already prepared the Soul Binding Contracts. As you can see, it mentions that all Fallen Light Star Fragments shall be shared equally between Rean and me, 50% for each, until the end of our journey. In case it can't be correctly split, I took the liberty to write down that you can have the extra ones. After all, I got that fragment back in the city."

Rean was happy to hear that. However, that wasn't everything written down. It also stated that neither side shall betray the other, nor shall they use any methods to put the other in danger. Of course, that didn't mean one would have to save the other part in case they got into trouble. As long as it wasn't the fault of one party, then one had no obligation to do anything. Well, if it was the intention, one would break the clause of betrayal anyway, so one couldn't do that even if one wanted to.

After confirming everything was okay, Rean, Roan, and Hurio signed the contract. The contract quickly burned before its power entered their foreheads. Hurio didn't have Kentucky sign it for obvious reasons. As a Stage Seven Demon Beast, it was supposed to be under the twins' commands since it shouldn't have sentience. If the twins asked it to attack Hurio, it would once again fall into the contract's terms, and they would die because of that. Yes, Hurio didn't want to leave any breach, so he stated a death sentence if any of them broke the rules.

One could say that Hurio was a lucky guy. Kentucky had its own sentience, and contracts were useless against the twins. It's just that the twins wouldn't do anything wrong as long as the other part didn't try something first.

"Phew... our deal is on!" Hurio was satisfied that everything had worked out according to plan.

Roan then took the opportunity to ask. "You seem to have been planning to enter this place for a while already. Or, to be more specific, that tablet of yours gives me the impression that you're connected to it somehow. Anyway, can you tell us more about the Lost Star Realm? We tried to find more information, but everything we've obtained seemed very vague. It was more like everyone had their own opinions of it."

Hurio nodded, saying, "Very well. I can't deny that the tablet makes me look kind of suspicious. Fortunately, we have the Soul Binding Contracts to work with. What I'm going to tell is what I found myself, so I can't guarantee everything is true or not since this is my first time heading inside. Well, you can probably guess that when you look at my cultivation at the Late Stage of the Saint Realm. Everyone agrees that it's not a good idea to head here before the Soul Transformation Realm at the very least."

Hurio continued, "It's said that some of the things you can find in there could even shake the power balance of our Lanqueas Continent. Of course, such extraordinary treasures are exceedingly rare." Naturally, such things obviously surprised Rean and Roan. Shaking the power balance of an entire continent, even for a forgotten one like Lanqueas, was not something one could take lightly. Nevertheless, the twins didn't stop Hurio from talking. "Of course, it might be just myths spread to gather even more cultivators around.. What really matters in there is what everyone calls Divine Origin Energy."

Death... and me

Chapter 1310: What More?

"Divine Origin Energy?" Rean, Roan, and Kentucky had to admit it was the first time they've ever heard of such a thing. "What is that?"

[Divine Origin Energy!!!] Sister Orb was shocked to hear that. [Holy shit! We're incredibly lucky to have come across this.]

Obviously, it was something very good. Nevertheless, the one who explained was Hurio. "Do you know what realm is above the Transition Realm?" The twins shook their heads and waited for Hurio to continue. "It's the Void Tempering Realm. That's the realm where you start to refine spatial powers into your body. Of course, this is very, very far away from us. In any case, to do that, you would need Divine Origin Energy. Without it, one would find it extremely complicated to surpass the Transition Realm."

Sister Orb also added, [However, that doesn't matter for us as this Divine Origin Energy has other uses.]

Hurio didn't hear what Sister Orb said, so he said similar words. "For now, let's leave the Void Tempering Realm aside. Divine Origin Energy has another use for everyone below the Transition Realm. It can be used for cultivation as well. From what I know, Divine Origin Energy can be found in Rank Seven Divine Stones and above. However, I don't know if our Lanqueas Continent has even one of those things. I would be surprised if we could even find a single Rank Six Divine Stone in the first place."

Rean took a deep breath before saying, "The same goes for Rank Seven Divine Stones. I guess the concentration of Divine Energy in the Divine Stones won't matter anymore after Rank Six then as the type of energy changes."

[You're correct. Rank Seven Divine Stones don't have Divine Energy anymore, but Divine Origin Energy instead. Suppose you consider the concentration of energy alone. In that case, a Rank Six Divine Stone has hundreds of times more energy than a Rank Seven Divine Stone. However, even if you offer thousands of those stones in exchange for a single Rank Seven Divine Stone, I doubt you'll ever find anyone willing to trade.] Sister Orb told them. In fact, Hurio gave them a similar explanation.

Rean couldn't help but ask Hurio after that, "If it's so good, then how come this place is open to the public? Shouldn't this place be sealed by the Lanqueas Sect so that only their elders at the Transition Realm and above can use it?"

Roan agreed with Rean, saying, "He's right. No power would let others use such a gold mine."

However, Hurio shook his head. "It's useless. You don't know how vast the Lost Star Realm is. If the Lanqueas Sect alone tried to search this place independently, it would take them countless years to explore everything. Even now, with the place completely open for the public, some say that not even half of it has been explored."

Roan understood after that. "That means the locations with Divine Origin Energy are extremely rare to find. It would be several times better to use everyone else to look for treasures that can fortify the Lanqueas Continent as a whole. Not to mention that it should be a great training place. However, everyone is entering in the hopes of bumping into one of those Divine Origin Energy locations, which means they appear and disappear randomly."

Hurio nodded in response. "That's correct."

Those words reminded Rean of something. "Doesn't it feel like the Divine Energy Stream we came across?" Back when they arrived in the Realm of Gods, Rean and Roan ended up finding a Divine Energy Stream where Divine Energy was condensed in the form of a liquid. There then came a day where it began to evaporate while turning back into normal Divine Energy. Thanks to the huge concentration, the twins were able to jump two stages in cultivation.

Hurio wasn't from the Huring Continent, so he didn't know what Rean was talking about. Rean didn't mention where it was, but he did give Hurio an explanation regarding the Divine Energy Stream lake they found in the past. "Oh! Was there such a thing? Indeed, you could say that they're similar. However, Divine Origin Energy isn't in the form of a liquid. It's just an energy that can be found lingering in the air. It doesn't have any color or anything else like that. Unless you enter the place where it's highly concentrated, you won't notice even if you move a meter away from it."

Hurio then told them the advantages, continuing, "Anyways, it's said that such places only remain open for a few hours before disappearing. But if you're able to find it straight away, those few hours should be enough for you to cultivate at least two small realms. Of course, as long as you're in the Saint Realm or below. Then again, people don't use it to cultivate small realms, though."

Rean and Roan could obviously guess what people used it for. "People who are at a bottleneck and can't find a way to break through, right?"

Hurio smiled in response, nodding. "Smart. Look around. There are many young cultivators, well, young considering their cultivation level. However, there are a lot of old men and women at the peak of their cultivation levels, close to the end of their lifespan. For them, their only chance to reach higher levels is to find one of those Divine Origin Energy areas and use that energy to achieve a breakthrough. For those at bottlenecks, Peak Soul Transformation, Peak Saint Realm, or Peak Elemental Transformation, it's all the same. Divine Origin Energy can help them all."

Rean and Roan were obviously interested in it. With their Yin Yang cultivation manuals, bottlenecks didn't exist, so breaking through small realms was way better. Not to mention that it would save them on the expenditure of their Rank Three Divine Stones. However, they weren't idiots. Two small realms would be impossible for the twins since they needed around three times more Divine Energy than others. In any case, a single small realm in a few hours instead of a whole year was more than welcome.

Surprisingly, even after knowing all that, Roan shook his head. "That's good and all, but it's definitely not something easy to find.. We should focus on the Fallen Light Star Fragments for now. What more can you tell us?"