

Death 1471

Death... and me

Chapter 1471: What Kind Of Test?

The worker then looked at Luan, who was in Roan's arms. "There is indeed a test to go through. Are you going to try it alone, or do you want your son to take part as well? We have no restriction on age here. In fact, quite a few people send their children to participate in the Mercenary Guild's test. Of course, the tests and missions that we give the kids are based on their age and strength, so you don't need to worry about them being in harm."

Roan didn't care that the worker thought Luan to be his kid. What caught his attention was that it was quite a good system if they really had a Mercenary Guild test made for children. He still remembered how he had to force Malaka and the other kids around his age in the Varen Tribe to go into the demon beast forest nearby. Naturally, he wouldn't make it easier for Luan. "You heard the guy. Since they have a Mercenary Guild test for cultivators of your age, you will take part in it as well."

Luan couldn't help but get nervous when he heard that. "B-But... what if I can't complete it?"

Roan shook his head, saying, "You have been training with me ever since we got together. It has been a few months already. If you fail, then you better be prepared for punishment."

Luan felt a chill on his back as determination filled his mind. "I'll succeed!"

Roan nodded, satisfied. "Very well." He then looked at the worker before asking, "I'm at the Peak Stage of the Elemental Transformation Realm. What kind of test do I need to take?"

The worker shook his head in response, telling him, "At your cultivation level, there isn't really a need for a test. Only those at the Saint Realm and below have to take tests."

It was then that Roan remembered something. "Could it be that it's the Mercenary Guild test that's happening on the other side of the island?"

The worker nodded, replying, "That's correct. At the moment, I believe they should be reaching the end of the test for Nascent Soul, Core and Soul Fusion, and Core Formation Realm cultivators. The next one

will start tomorrow, and it's directed at Foundation Establishment kids." In the Realm of Gods, Foundation Establishment kids were a very common sight.

Roan couldn't help but ask, "So you'll have the entire backside of the island for Foundation Establishment Realm kids, huh?"

"Yes." The worker immediately nodded his head. "The other side of the island is very big, after all. However, stages won't matter. In short, the Foundation Establishment Realm test can have everyone between the Initial Stage and Peak Stage."

Roan looked at Luan and pondered over it for a bit before asking, "Can I put my disciple in the Foundation Establishment test?" Roan believed Luan could even fight some of the Core Formation Realm guys if he wanted to. After all, during this time, he helped Luan achieve a breakthrough to the next realm. Right now, Luan was at the Peak Stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. However, he really had been training him for way too little time. Roan wanted to test if Luan could deal with people at his level first, especially since he doesn't really have an Elemental Affinity to use. He couldn't use spatial powers yet, so he would have to rely on the few sword skills he taught Luan until now. Well, at the very least, Rean forged a good sword for him.

"No problem." Naturally, the worker didn't see a problem putting Luan in the Foundation Establishment test.

Luan, of course, was nervous. He wasn't as confident in his abilities as Roan. "C-Can I not?"

Roan glanced at Luan in his arms with a cold expression before snorting in response. "Hehe. Sure. I will simply change your Mercenary Guild test with a few tests of my own. I wonder which one will make you suffer more."

Luan immediately gave up on the idea after that. "No! I'll take the test! I'll take the test! Forgive me, dad!"

"I'm not your father," Roan said after. "Anyway, register this kid in the Mercenary Guild's test for Foundation Establishment kids. It's quite unfortunate that killing isn't allowed, but anyway. I guess it makes sense since we're talking about kids."

The worker didn't know whether Roan cared about the kid or hated him. "Er... sure..."

A moment later, Roan got two new badges. One for his entrance in the Mercenary Guild, and another one for Luan to take the test. Following that, Roan took the chance to ask something else that was bothering him. "I arrived on the island through the wrong side, so I ended up meeting a guy who seemed to be above the Void Tempering Realm in cultivation. Are people in this island all that strong?"

The worker pondered in silence for a bit before he understood what was happening. "Oh! You're probably talking about the Guild Master."

"Your Guild Master?" Roan was surprised to hear that. "You have your own Guild Master overseeing the tests?"

The worker shrugged his shoulders in response. "Normally, guilds wouldn't send their own Guild Masters to do such a thing. However, our Guild Master is quite an eccentric guy. He likes to check the tests himself. He says it's funny to see the new low-level candidates competing against each other."

Roan understood after that. "So, that doesn't mean everyone is as strong as him, right?"

"That's correct." The worker confirmed Roan's words. "Our Guild Master is one of the three cultivators in Utari City that's at the Space Bending Realm."

That was the first time Roan heard the name of the realm above Void Tempering. "Space Bending Realm, huh? That explains why he's so strong." Roan then thought, 'He was still weaker than Sally, though. Sally's Divine Sense was much more powerful. If that's the case, how strong was Wekil?' He then shook his head and put those thoughts away for now.

Luan then asked the worker, "Sir, what is the test about?"

The worker smiled at the kid in response. "What else could it be? Being a mercenary means that you need to be strong.. Obviously, it's a test related to strength."

Death... and me

Chapter 1472: Not A Bad Choice

Luan was still curious, so he asked, "But what kind of test? Is it battle? I've never battled anyone before."

That wasn't true. Roan had purposely made Rafatia and Luan fight against each other to test their abilities quite a few times. He already lost count of how many times he scolded the two because of mistakes. It's just that Luan considered Rafatia to be a friend, so it was different in his head.

Roan didn't care, telling him, "Good! You've only been bullied so far back in Dry Sky City. Now it's time for you to show that you can do more than just receive a beating. Otherwise, you'll get a beating when you come out."

The worker couldn't help but think, 'No beating or a beating... this kid is having quite a hard time with such a dad.'

"Ahem... is there anything else I can help you with?" the worker asked.

Roan pondered over it for a bit before nodding. "Can I use this Mercenary Guild badge to look into the guild's information?"

"Sure." The worker nodded in response. "However, the amount of information you have access to depends on your mercenary rank. You have just joined the guild, so it'll be very limited."

"Mercenary rank?" Roan then looked at his badge, asking, "Does it follow the same status as the other guilds? For example, Bronze, Silver, Golden, etc..."

The worker shook his head, explaining, "No. The other guilds have subcategories to separate their member's levels. For example, they have Initial, Medium, High, and Peak levels for each. The mercenary guild is different. We don't have subcategories, just the categories themselves. They can be seen on your badge. Can you see the stars on your badge?"

Roan could indeed see a star engraved at the top of his badge.

The worker continued, "Since you just joined, you're obviously at the very first level, a One Star Mercenary. Naturally, you only have access to One Star Missions and One Star Benefits. Information is one of them."

Roan nodded in understanding. "How many stars do I need to learn about how to use the teleport formations in the undersea cities?"

"Who knows?" the worker shrugged his shoulders as he replied. "I'm not even sure if you can at all. However, there are always exceptions. That's why I didn't say it's impossible but extremely unlikely. As you can imagine, I don't have access to such information either."

Roan was already satisfied with that answer. At the very least, he obtained some useful information. "Very well. That's all I needed to know."

The worker nodded after that. "You can bring Luan to the entrance of the Utari Demon Beast Forest tomorrow. Our Guild Master and elders will be there to oversee the test. As for what Luan needs to do, you'll only find out tomorrow. Even I don't know the contents of the test."

Roan liked that system as it didn't give anyone an unfair advantage. "We'll be there."

Meanwhile, Rean found an inn for his group to stay at the moment. "Alright, you can just take any bed. I'm going out since I have a few things to do." Suddenly, he received a message from Roan through their Soul Connection. "Oh! Roan said that they'll have a Mercenary Guild test tomorrow. It would be a good thing if you let Rafatia take part in it as well. What do you say?"

Falangia looked at Rean before asking, "In that case, I might as well take the test with my daughter."

Rean shook his head in response as he told her, "Not gonna work. The test for those at the Core Formation Realm ended today. You'll need to wait until the next month to take the test again."

Falangia couldn't help but sigh after that. "Alright then. I'm going to the Mercenary Guild with Rafatia to register her, I guess. What about you?"

Rean then took his badges from the Formation and Blacksmith Guild from his spatial rings. “It’s about time I upgrade my badges to the Golden High-level.” In fact, Rean was confident he could draw and forge Golden Peak-level formations and equipment. After all, he was at the door of the Transition Realm. However, he decided to leave it for now. ‘I’ll take the test again once I enter the Transition Realm.’

After being in the city for quite some time, they thought the city was quite nice. There was barely any trouble happening. The fact was that the same happened in most of the islands occupied by humanoid races. Roan found out in the information available to him that there was a reason behind it. In Pol Continent, most cities, undersea or not, were considered neutral zones. Guards kept order on the island while aquatic demon beasts did the same with undersea cities.

However, that was only inside the cities and occupied islands. Islands without cities and the sea itself were an open space where everyone was free to do whatever they wanted. This was a good thing for both the humanoid races and the demon beasts. That way, both low, medium, and even high-level cultivators and demon beasts would be able to temper themselves.

For example, the Mercenary Guild accepted both aquatic demon beast and humanoid race members. However, more than 90% of its mission board happened in uninhabited islands and especially the open sea. It wasn’t out of the norm to see mercenaries fighting each other outside if they got the same mission and needed the same thing. Of course, they could also join forces to finish the mission faster and share the rewards.

‘Simply put, there’s no lack of places to train in this continent. Even then, there are quite a lot of safe havens where one can rest both inside and outside waters.’

Of course, Roan knew that things weren’t so easy. There were obviously exceptions. For example, if one offended someone in a powerful position and tried to hide in a city, the city wouldn’t protect them. Especially if one offended someone from the demon beast powers. Pol was a continent where aquatic demon beasts ruled, so aquatic demon beasts set the rules.. ‘In any case, this isn’t a bad choice of a place to live in.’

Death... and me

Chapter 1473: Pudding

Of course, Roan had no intention to stop in Pol Continent. Following that, he looked into the information regarding undersea cities. Sure enough, the worker from the guild wasn’t wrong. The only city that Utari Mercenary Guild left available for One Star Mercenaries was Salt Canyon City. ‘No wonder the worker

before said that they only knew of this one city. He simply didn't have access to information about others.'

However, Roan's mouth twitched when he looked into the distance. 'They weren't kidding when they said the closest one was extremely far away. Kentucky crossed ten thousand kilometers in two days by flying leisurely. If he really put in the effort without expending himself, he should be able to do this distance in half a day or less. However... Salt Canyon Undersea City is 630000 kilometers away. Even if nothing wrong occurs along the journey, Kentucky would still take over a month to arrive.'

Naturally, that wasn't all. Roan didn't have any specific details. However, he was at least able to tell that humanoid races passing through the territories of aquatic demon beasts usually didn't go well. Humanoid races would definitely try to take the journey by flying. However, there was no lack of demon beasts at the Transition Realm and beyond who kept their eyes on the skies as well.

Of course, Roan knew that if Rean kept his Light and Divine Sense bending skill activated all the time, they most likely wouldn't be found. However, he had no intention of doing such a thing. 'Well, that's not a bad thing. It will serve as training for Rean, Kentucky, and me. I still haven't tested my powers at the Elemental Transformation Realm for long enough.' Roan also thought about throwing Luan, Rafatia, and Falangia into the lower-level aquatic demon beasts to see how they would fare.

Those three same people felt a chill on their backs as he thought that, even though they didn't know why.

Suddenly, Roan found a piece of information that looked nothing important. However, that caught a lot of his attention. 'The Dark Viperfish Spirits' territory? Seems like even the aquatic demon beasts don't like to pass through that place.' The information stated that those Dark Viperfish Spirits fed on other living beings' life forces. However, they were a true spirit race with intelligence and not some dead ghosts that moved by instinct. They looked like eels but had terrifying faces.

As always, the main problem was that spirits could stay invisible to demon beasts and humanoid races who weren't strong enough. A lot of them died in that region, so the information available for Roan said to avoid that area at all costs. 'It's quite unfortunate it doesn't say anything else. It doesn't say their strength, the most dangerous areas inside their territory, or anything relevant. This One Star Badge is just too useless.'

Roan then pondered over it for a bit and reached a decision. 'I guess I'll pay a visit to these Dark Viperfishes. Rean could see faeries, so I might be able to see these Dark Viperfishes. In any case, we have Luan to tell us if some of them appear even if I can't see them.'

After looking into some other information, Roan decided to take a look at the Mercenary Mission Board. There was only one way to increase his mercenary rank, and that was by completing missions. 'For me to be promoted, I need to complete at least five missions at my own level. One's strength doesn't matter. However, I can't take any missions at Two Stars or above before reaching that rank. That's their way of guaranteeing a certain percentage of success for the guild's customers.'

That made sense. If someone who couldn't even complete One Star Missions took a Two Star Mission, they would probably waste the customer's time. That wasn't good for the mercenary, for the guild, and especially the customer.

Roan then looked through the mission board and quickly noticed that the majority of missions were indeed inside the sea. There were a few directed at the uninhabited islands as well. However, they were less than 10% of the missions available. Let alone the fact that one had to travel there, so one would travel across the sea nevertheless.

Roan then took a few One Star Missions and called Luan over. "Your test starts tomorrow, so I'll bring you somewhere else to train while I go out and complete these missions."

"To train? Where?" Luan was obviously curious.

"You'll see," Roan said in response.

Roan then told Rean what he would do before taking Luan in his arms. Once he got a little far from the city, he accessed the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm and pulled Kentucky out. "Come on, I was sleeping in my nest."

Roan couldn't care less. "Stop the bullshit, and let's go. I need to complete a few missions. You can have more of the Demon Cores later."

That was enough of an incentive for Kentucky. “Really? Great! Let’s go!” He quickly let Roan and Luan jump on his back before taking flight after that.

Kentucky then flew to an uninhabited island not too far from Utari. However, that was only a stop.

Roan then threw Luan onto the ground. “Here you go. When I looked into a piece of information, I saw that the people of Utari liked to bring their kids to this island as the sea around has a lot of Stage Two Demon Beasts.”

Roan was right. With his Divine Sense, Roan could see a few hundred kids between 6 and 10 years old. Most of them had some adult to protect their lives, but there were a few who were left alone as well. “Your mission is to kill and gather 20 Demon Cores. I already told you how to use a spatial ring, and there are a few Rank One Divine Stones inside. Use them to replenish your strength if you run out. I should be back in six to ten hours.”

Before Luan could say or ask anything, Kentucky took flight again and shot into the distance, leaving Luan completely alone. However, he also received a Divine Sense message from Roan. ‘If you complete the task, I’ll let you choose what dessert you want for tonight.’

Luan’s eyes lit up as his fear completely disappeared. “Puddinggggggggggggg!!!!!!!” With that, he threw himself inside the water without thinking twice. With his eyes, no demon beast could hide from him.

Death... and me

Chapter 1474: Golden Peak-Level Formation Master

While Luan fought the weak demon beasts and Roan steamrolled through those simple missions he got, Rean arrived at the Formation Guild’s counter. “Hi, here’s my badge. I would like to change it to a Golden High-level one.”

The worker there looked at Rean’s badge and quickly noticed that it wasn’t from Pol Continent. “Oh! I would understand if this was a badge from Treavin Continent since the Under Desert Sea is there. However, this is the first time I’ve seen a badge from another continent.”

Rean smiled in response but didn't say anything until the worker prepared the material. "Well, here's your token. Just bring it to the testing room there. A Formation Master at the Golden High-level or higher will come to you shortly. All you need to do is build a formation at the Golden High-level on your own. Do that, and you will get a Golden High-level badge."

Rean quite liked it. There were no other types of tests once someone reached his level. All he needed was to prove he was there, and he would get a new badge. It was that simple. The same went for forging, alchemy, etc.

Nevertheless, a Golden High-level Formation Master was a very rare sight in Utari City. Anyone at the level to test Rean would usually be occupied with their own projects. In the end, the Guild Master himself had to come out to take Rean's test. "Hello there. I'm Tuvuru, the Guild Master here. You look quite young. Are you sure you applied to the right exam?"

Rean nodded in response. "Golden High-level, right? To be honest, I'm confident I can even build a Golden Peak-level formation, but I'll leave that for when I reach the Transition Realm."

Naturally, the Guild Master noticed Rean's cultivation. "A genius, huh? Types like you are definitely rare. Anyways, go ahead and start. Any Golden High-level formation is valid, so try to make something simple and fast."

Rean planned on doing exactly that anyway. No point in expending a lot of materials on a complicated formation since it would have no use once the test was over. "How about a Golden High-level Fire Element Gathering Formation?"

The Guild Master pondered in silence for a bit before nodding. "Simple and fast enough. Alright then. Just do that."

Well, for Rean, who already had the ability to build Golden Peak-level formations, a Golden High-level formation was nothing much to him. He was even able to impress the Guild Master due to how fast he built it. "Just 43 minutes? Holy shit! Even I can't build one this quick. By the way, what are those runes?" the Guild Master asked, pointing at Rean's Circuitry Runes. "I can tell that this power of this formation is better than common ones at the same level, but I've never seen them."

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he replied, "Those are just some runes I learned in Huring Continent." Rean's badge was from there, so there was no point in saying he was from somewhere else. Of course, the part of the runes being from Huring was a lie since they were a reward from the system.

"I did hear from the worker at the entrance that you came from another continent. Then again, we get one or another cultivator from Treavin once in a while, so I guess it's nothing that incredible." From the looks of it, the news about the closure of the Under Desert Sea hadn't spread yet.

Rean smiled in response. "So, can I get my badge now?"

Tuvaru nodded in response. "Of course! If such a performance isn't worth a Golden High-level badge, then nothing will." Tuvaru then thought about something else, soon telling Rean, "Hmm... on second thought, I'll just give you the Golden Peak-level badge instead."

Rean was taken aback. "Really?" Rean was indeed at that level, but he didn't want to spend the resources to make a formation at that level. Thus, he planned to wait until the Transition Realm as it would be easier. "Why?"

Tuvaru shrugged his shoulders in response. "After seeing how easily you built your formation, I really doubt you were lying when you said you were at the Golden Peak level. Don't underestimate the eyes of a Divine Initial-level Formation Master, kid."

That immediately caught Rean's attention. "Oh! You're the first person I've seen that reached the Divine level. Say, is it hard to break through into the Divine level?"

Tuvaru nodded in response. "Well, it was for me. First of all, there wasn't anyone who could judge me, so I had to go to Salt Canyon Undersea City. Only there did they have a Formation Master at the Divine level, a demon beast at that. However, I failed quite a few times until I got my formation right."

Rean understood after that. "Well, it doesn't matter how many times you try. As long as you pay the fee and succeed even once, you'll be considered to have reached that level. What's the main difference between Golden and Divine-level formations?"

Tuvaru couldn't help but laugh out loud after that. "Hahaha! You're already at the Peak Stage of the Elemental Transformation Realm, so you probably know that already. Say, what's the thing that you need to go from the Transition to the Void Tempering Realm?"

"Divine Origin Energy!" Rean immediately replied. "I see... then Divine-level Formations should definitely be very hard to build."

"Correct," Tuvaru said in response. "As you know, for us to get Divine Origin Energy, we need to gather many times more normal Divine Energy. Only then will we convert it to use in our cultivation to the Void Tempering Realm. That's also why the cultivation speed drops drastically once you reach the Void Tempering Realm. If a stage of cultivation took ten years before, now it would take a hundred years or more."

He then continued, "Anyway, the formations at the Divine-level obviously need Divine Origin Energy. You can already imagine how hard it is to make since gathering Divine Origin Energy and being able to use it in the formation makes things really complicated.." Tuvaru then smiled at Rean as he told him, "However, with your talent, I believe you won't fail as many times as I did."

Death... and me

Chapter 1475: I Better Tell Roan

Rean agreed with Tuvaru on that point. "I was already expecting it anyway. Well, thanks for the Golden Peak-level badge. That will save quite some time for me."

Tuvaru didn't mind, waving his hands as he replied, "It's fine. In exchange, how about you tell me a little more about these runes of yours? Of course, if it's some deep secret, just ignore my request."

The runes Rean used were quite simple ones from the Circuitry System and wouldn't really make much of a difference if others figured them out. Then again, Rean quite liked Tuvaru's easy-going behavior, which was a rare find in an expert of his level. "Sure, let's just say I'm using the time I saved to teach you about them."

A few hours later, Rean finished giving an explanation and a few examples of how to use those runes. At the same time, Tuvaru showed why he was a Divine-level Formation Master. Surprisingly, he was able to help him slightly improve the already polished Circuitry Runes and their usage. With that, Rean didn't end up being the only one offering something. "Well, I guess this pretty much sums it up."

Tuvaru was very satisfied with the results. "I can even think of a few ways of using these new runes in my Divine-level formations." He then looked at Rean and said, "Thank you. Such knowledge is worth more than any amount of Divine Stones in my eyes."

It was then that he thought about something. "By the way, where are you going? Since you came from somewhere as far as Huring, Pol Continent shouldn't be your only stop, right?"

Rean nodded in response. "I'm trying to reach Jhiod as there's something I need there. Well, I'm really far away, and it will take many years to arrive there."

"Jhiod?!" Tuvaru was shocked by that information. "Indeed... I would be surprised if you could get there in a hundred years' time, especially since teleport formations are prohibited in the humanoid races' islands. My advice to you is that you should reach the Void Tempering Realm before leaving Utari City. At least you'd be able to fly and have some meager control over spatial powers."

Rean shook his head after that. "That would take way too long. Just reaching the Peak Stage of the Transition Realm would probably take me a few decades."

"De-decades?" Tuvaru was taken aback as he asked, "Don't you mean a hundred years at least?"

Rean shook his head as he told him, "Not really. I have the confidence to reach that level much faster than others. In any case, I won't wait until I reach the Void Tempering Realm. I have a Demon Bird, so I can fly already, even though I can't use spatial powers."

Tuvaru didn't try to stop Rean. "Well, I still think it would be suicide to venture the seas without being at the Void Tempering Realm, at least. However, if you want to go, I'm not gonna stop you."

Rean then took the opportunity to ask, "By the way, Senior Tuvaru. Do you know a way of making use of the teleport formations in the undersea cities?"

Tuvaru immediately shook his head as he replied, "Although there are exceptions, you won't be qualified. Only important aquatic demon beasts are allowed to use those, and each teleport formation is

heavily guarded. Just so you have an idea, if we attack Salt Canyon City, we would be wiped out by the forces protecting the formation.”

Rean sighed in response after that. “That hard, huh?” Of course, Rean was curious. “However, what are those exceptions you talked about?”

“Subordinates of the Sacred Undersea Kingdom,” Tuvuru said in response.

Naturally, that piqued Rean’s attention. “You mean there are people from humanoid races who are subordinate to the aquatic demon beasts?”

“Exactly.” Tuvuru nodded. “They have pledged loyalty to the Undersea Kingdom and had to go through many tests to be accepted. Besides, only those at the Void Tempering Realm or above can try to join the kingdom.”

Rean then thought about something. “What about using one of those subordinates to get us teleported away?”

Tuvuru pondered over it for a bit before nodding. “That might be possible. However, such subordinates are very rare. In fact, it would be a lot easier to find an aquatic demon beast related to the Sacred Undersea Kingdom and get their help. After all, due to how difficult it is to become a humanoid subordinate, none of them wish to risk their positions.”

Rean couldn’t help but sigh after that. “Well, do you think I can find anyone related to them in Salt Canyon Undersea City?”

Tuvuru was just about to answer when suddenly, someone barged into the room like a storm. Naturally, that made Tuvuru quite displeased. “Can’t you see we were in the middle of a test? You better have a good reason to enter this room before we were finished.”

“So-Sorry, Guild Master. However, there’s an aquatic demon beast from the Sacred Undersea Kingdom in your office. They wish to speak with you immediately,” the worker replied as they apologized. “It seems like the Under Desert Sea’s continental barrier has started to regain its strength.”

“What?!” Naturally, Tuvuru was shocked to hear that. With that, the news about the Under Desert Sea had finally arrived at Utari. “I’m heading there right now.”

Tuvuru then pointed at Rean and told the worker, “He already passed the Golden Peak-level Formation Master test. Arrange a new badge for him to take.”

“Yes, Guild Master,” the worker answered straight away. “Sir Rean, right? Please follow me so I can prepare your new badge.”

Of course, Rean was very interested in the aquatic demon beast. “Senior Tuvuru, wouldn’t you let me meet this demon beast from the Sacred Undersea Kingdom? He might be the right person for me to get to use the teleport formation in Salt Canyon Undersea City.”

Tuvuru shook his head in response. “Better not. Come see me later, and I’ll let you know if the guy will stay in Utari or not. It’s not a good idea to mix issues, especially after such a thing happened to the Under Desert Sea.” Tuvuru didn’t wait for Rean to say anything else and immediately left.

Without much choice, Rean could only follow the worker to get his new badge. Of course, he hadn’t given up yet.. ‘I better tell Roan.’

Death... and me

Chapter 1476: This Is Good For Us

Even though Roan was quite far, he was still well within the twins’ Soul Connection Range. ‘Well, that’s fast. I didn’t expect the Sacred Undersea Kingdom to get there already.’

Rean couldn’t help but ask, ‘Do you think we should leave the city? I tried to ask Senior Tuvuru to let me talk to this aquatic demon beast, but it seems quite hard.’

Roan shook his head, telling him, ‘There’s no need to leave. Did you forget what others said? Although it’s not that common, the city does receive people from Treavin every now and then. Even if we aren’t exactly from Treavin, no one will be able to connect us to the event regarding the Under Desert Sea. Even if they do know that we were there when it happened, so what? With our cultivation, those guys won’t believe we were related to it at all.’

Rean agreed with Roan after that. 'As I thought. That's why I tried to get in contact with that aquatic demon beast. I'll check with Senior Tuvuru later.'

'I'll be back in Utari half a day later,' Roan said. 'Just do whatever you want until then. It seems like the Mercenary Guild in the Salt Canyon Undersea City also has some ways of using the teleport formation. If things don't work on your side, we can try the Mercenary Guild. Worst case scenario, we'll have to fly all the way to the division between Pol Continent and Xifia Continent.'

'Very well.' Rean didn't mind it. 'I'm heading to the Blacksmith Guild now so I can also upgrade my badge there. Though, Roan, there's one thing that caught my attention. Although there aren't as many high-level cultivators as we initially thought, there's still much more than what one would expect for a city at the borders of the continent.' One must remember that the first guy the twins met in Utari Island was the Mercenary Guild's Guild Master, and that guy was at the Space Bending Realm. That's why they thought it was too high. Later, they found out the guy was the Guild Master, so it made some sense that his cultivation was high.

However, back in Huring and Lanqueas Continent, one would never see people at the Void Tempering Realm in such places, let alone Space Bending. For example, the first city the twins visited was Cosec. There, only a few cultivators had reached the Transition Realm. Obviously, Void Tempering wasn't present at all. In Utari, on the other hand, there were many Transition Realm cultivators and quite a few at Void Tempering.

Roan understood where Rean was coming from. 'You mean that Utari City is more than just one city close to the Treavin Continent, right?'

Rean nodded, saying, 'Yes. There must be a reason for it to have that many experts.'

However, Roan didn't think so. 'You're probably wrong there. Although I don't have access to a higher level of information in the Mercenary Guild, I should have enough to notice this difference. However, there's nothing wrong with Utari other than the fact it's located close to the Under Desert Sea. I believe the reason so many cultivators got such high cultivations is because of the environment.'

'Environment?' Rean was confused. 'What do you mean? The Divine Energy concentration here isn't much different from Lanqueas and Huring.'

‘That’s not it.’ Roan shook his head as he clarified, ‘It’s the Divine Stones.’

Rean was taken aback to hear that. ‘The Divine Stones?’

Roan then explained, ‘When we checked the city with our Divine Senses, you looked at how ‘safe’ it was for Rafatia and Falangia. I, on the other hand, looked at the cultivation side. Everywhere I looked, there were transactions involving Rank One Divine Stones. Did you forget? Even Rank One Divine Stones should be considered quite rare, but that’s not the case here.’

As soon as Rean heard that, he spread his Divine Sense in Utari City. Sure enough, he could really see quite a few transactions happening with Divine Stones. Even a few Core Formation Realm youngsters had them. Rean also noticed a few people not caring about the eyes around them, cultivating with their own Divine Stones. ‘So... Pol Continent is richer...’

‘Exactly.’ Roan confirmed Rean’s words. ‘I’ve also noticed something different. I’m collecting a few Stage Six Demon Beast materials at the moment to upgrade my rank at the Mercenary Guild. While doing so, I noticed that the deeper I go into the ocean, the higher the concentration of Divine Energy is. It isn’t anything impressive, of course. The difference between the bottom and the surface wasn’t anything more than five or so percent. However, you do know what that means, right?’

Rean immediately nodded in response. ‘A much, much higher chance of Divine Stone mines naturally forming. Besides, it’s a rule that the closer you are to the center of a continent, the higher the concentration of Divine Energy. It goes without saying that at the bottom of the seas, Divine Stone mines will become even more common if this trend continues.’

Roan was satisfied that Rean understood. ‘That explains why so many Divine Stones are present here. Too bad that Pol Continent’s size is also its weak point. Its territory is way too big to be defended. The Sacred Undersea Kingdom has to keep its experts spread out to maintain order. Well, that has nothing to do with us anyway. All you need to know is that the average level of both cultivators and demon beasts will be much higher. Well, to be more specific, the humanoid races get most of the advantage, although the aquatic demon beasts also benefit from it.’

‘How come?’ Rean asked in response.

‘Because we know how to use Divine Stones from the very start when we’re five years old, the age when we begin to cultivate. Sea Demon Beasts, on the other hand, don’t have intelligence. They don’t know how to make use of it before they reach the Transition Realm,’ Roan explained. ‘Of course, they more than make up for it with sheer numbers.’

‘I see...’ Rean nodded after hearing that.. ‘Well, that’s good for us.’

Death... and me

Chapter 1477: Much Scarier

Rean pondered in silence for a bit and asked, ‘Do you think it’s a good idea to get more Divine Stones here in Pol Continent?’

Roan didn’t seem to care. ‘That’s up to you. Considering that the majority of the high-level beings are aquatic demon beasts, they don’t have use for your weapons. That means you can only sell those Element Gathering weapons to the humanoid races in the islands. I don’t know if they would target you once they find out about your weapons.’

Rean nodded after that. ‘Well, I’ll give it a try, but not here. I want to see if I can get Rank Three Divine Stones first. I doubt anyone would be willing to trade such stones in this city. We need to head to humanoid cities closer to the center of Pol Continent.’

Roan agreed with Rean after hearing that. ‘That much you are right.’

Just as their conversation ended, Rean had arrived at the Blacksmith Guild and presented his badge once again. Not too long after, he was called over to a test room, where an elder of the Blacksmith Guild oversaw his test. Once again, only a few blacksmiths had reached the Golden Peak-level, so it was surprising to hear someone wanted to take the test.

The elder, a woman named Gubia, was impressed with Rean’s skill. “So young and yet so talented. I’ve seen your previous badge before. You came from the Huring Continent, didn’t you? You’re quite far away, no? Why would someone so talented and with such high cultivation like you be risking life traveling between continents?”

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he replied, "That has to do with my family head. He believes the best way to cultivate and gain experience is to travel all around. He just didn't expect me to leave the continent, so I can only guess how he's feeling right now. Hahaha!" Once again, another lie was made on the spot.

However, the woman agreed that it was indeed a good way of gaining experience. "Then again, I wouldn't risk someone with your talent to travel alone. Are you sure there isn't some expert from your family following you from the shadows? I would definitely put one if I was them."

"Who knows?" Rean didn't seem to care as he shrugged his shoulders. "If there is one, they're hiding very well since I've been traveling for a very long time."

Gulia sighed before she threw a token to Rean. "Anyways, I just had to confirm that you could forge a piece of equipment at the Golden Peak-level. Since you did it, you're eligible for the promotion. Bring this token to the workers at the entrance hall, and they'll provide you your new badge. Of course, it will state that you did the test in Pol Continent, so people won't be able to tell that you came from Huring anymore. We can't provide badges from the Huring Continent, after all."

Rean didn't mind. The same thing happened when he took the test from the Formation Guild. "Not a problem. I just want to be recognized so that when I try to sell my equipment, no one will doubt my skills."

Gubia nodded after that. "Very well. This kind of Golden Peak-level weapon is very popular here in Utari, so you should be able to make a few good Rank Two Divine Stones with them. You can ask for a private workshop here in the guild as well when you decide to start working."

"Thank you," Rean said in response. "I'll take my leave now."

And just like that, several hours went by. Falangia registered her daughter to take the Foundation Establishment test designed for kids. Meanwhile, Roan gathered all the items and got rid of all the targets in his missions. As for Rean, he returned to the hotel and just cultivated while waiting for the rest.

Roan finally returned to the island where he left Luan when it was starting to get dark. It didn't take long for him to find Luan, though. 'Oh-ho...' It's just that he noticed that the kid was being bullied by other

kids. Some of them were in the Core Formation Realm, so Luan was kind of paralyzed with fear. He was still six and a half years old, after all.

“Are you going to hand over your Demon Cores or not?” asked one of the kids that seemed to be the leader there.

Luan shook his head vigorously, although he didn’t have that much confidence. “I d-don’t have Demon Cores.”

“Liar!” Another kid who seemed to be around his nine years old intervened. “I saw you when you cut down a Stage Two Jellyfish as if it was nothing. You definitely got its Demon Core right after.”

“Hey, kid. Some of my friends are in need of Stage Two Demon Cores to give to their elders. Why don’t you help us, huh? You can just go back into the water and look for more Demon Cores.”

That wasn’t true, though. Luan did complete Roan’s task and got 20 Stage Two Demon Cores. However, he did get his fair share of damage and wasn’t in any condition to fight much more. He would be able to defeat a few more demon beasts, but it was impossible to get another twenty. At the very least, not before he spent time healing himself. Roan, of course, would come back much earlier than that.

Suddenly, Luan received a Divine Sense message from Roan. ‘Why are you even wasting time listening to them? Just put them down already. Just be careful not to cripple or kill any of those kids since it’ll make things annoying later.’

Luan was taken aback as he immediately looked at the skies. Sure enough, he saw Roan and Kentucky far away. He wanted to tell Roan he didn’t have the ability to do that. After all, there was even a Core Formation Realm cultivator in the middle of this pack of six kids. How would he fight all of them?

Of course, Roan knew what he was thinking. ‘Just attack already. If things go south, I’ll be here to take care of the rest. Remember to use the side of the sword.’

Luan was still scared, but he believed Roan. Besides, he was even more afraid of what might happen if he didn’t do what Roan said.. Indeed, to Luan, Roan was much scarier than any bunch of kids.

Death... and me

Chapter 1478: Lessons

Since Roan told him what he needed to do, Luan took his sword out as he took a few steps back to create some distance between him and the other kids.

“Ha! Do you wanna fight all of us?”

“That’s some courage right there.”

“Courage? He’s trembling nonstop. That’s just an idiot.”

“Who will take care of him?”

“Not me. I told you before. I saw him cut down a Stage Two Jellyfish Demon Beast as if it was nothing. We can do that as well, but I don’t want to risk it.”

“Ha! Coward. Let me deal with him.”

Eventually, one of the kids stepped out. Just like Luan, he was at the Peak Stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm and was also a sword user. “Take this!”

Fire Element gathered as his sword burst in flames.

‘Fire Slash!’

It was a very simple attack that any sword user with Fire Element Affinity could use. Then again, that’s to be expected since they were all kids. They had all been taught simple skills now that they were at the start of their cultivation.

However, Luan's three pupils rotated as he could clearly see the Divine Energy and Fire Element move before his opponent even started to move. In his eyes, time seemed to slow down as Luan took two steps to the side. The Fire Slash hit only air as a shocked expression appeared on the kid's face.

Unfortunately, the kid didn't have the time to think about anything else after that.

Pah!

Suddenly, something heavy hit the kid's head, making his vision go dark before he dropped to the ground. He passed out, just like that.

All the kids looked at that with greater shock. They didn't expect that Luan would defeat one of their members with such ease. When the first kid missed his Fire Slash, Luan's sword was already flying at his head. It's just that Luan used his sword's blunt side to hit the kid. Otherwise, Luan could have totally cut his opponent's head off.

Even Luan was scared of how easy this first fight was. 'Could it be that he lost on purpose?' That was his first thought, as he didn't believe he was that much stronger.

In the air, Roan narrowed his eyes when suddenly, Kentucky's voice echoed in his ears. Naturally, Kentucky could see everything much better than Roan due to his better eyes. "Luan's eye ability is really amazing. Did you notice? Luan began to move away before the kid launched his attack. He knew exactly where his opponent was going to strike and counterattacked quite well."

Roan nodded in response. "Indeed. The ability to see Divine Energy and Elements is truly remarkable. His response to the kid's attack was quite shit, but the result wasn't that bad in the end. It's pretty obvious how much lack of experience he has, though. His body acted naturally. His dodge wasn't something he controlled willingly. Only the strike on the kid's head was. He has a lot to improve upon, especially in the usage of his eyes' abilities."

Kentucky couldn't help but ask in response, "Can't you feel happy even a b-?" However, it was then that Kentucky noticed a very faint smile on Roan's face. It wasn't the same cold smile that gave others a chill. Instead, it looked like an excited and satisfied smile. 'Hmph! So you do like the kid,' thought Kentucky.

Kentucky was right. Roan could already see the great prospects of Luan's development. 'Perhaps he'll turn as scary as Zuo and his Magnetism Affinity.' At that moment, Roan couldn't help but wonder how Zuo was faring with Calina. After all, they had been separated, and Zuo ended up heading in the same direction as Calina and the others. However, he quickly put those thoughts behind as he paid attention to the kids' battle below.

As soon as Luan got rid of the first kid, three of the remaining five kids immediately took a few steps back. Those three were all in the Foundation Establishment Realm, with some of them being at lower cultivation than Luan. Naturally, only the two Core Formation Realm kids remained, both of them at the Initial Stage.

They were eight and nine years respectively, being the oldest ones there. Immediately one of them sent a Divine Sense message to the other. 'Let's take him down together. My dad is definitely watching. If I lose to my peers alone, I'll definitely be punished.'

'Me too. My aunt is here with me. She'll definitely tell mommy if I lose to a Foundation Establishment boy.'

That was one of the reasons Roan told Luan not to kill anyone. He could tell that some Divine Senses were also watching this development. None of the adults around would intervene in kids' battles against each other as long as no risk of killing appeared. Roan, obviously, wouldn't either. That would be detrimental to Luan's development.

One of the kids took a spear out, which was obviously bigger than his own body. The other kid had a sword, though, made to match his size. Luan wasn't much different as the sword that Rean forged was also made to match his size.

The two kids then assaulted Luan at the same time. Wind and Lightning Element gathered around their weapons before they used their own attacks.

'Myriad Lightning Thrust!'

'Tempest Blades!'

Their attacks were obviously a lot more elaborated, and they aimed to give Luan no space to dodge. However, before they even started to move their weapons, Luan's body already began to move as he thought about one of Roan's lessons.

'Remember, cultivators at your level can show many flaws at the very start of their attacks. Use these eyes of yours and aim at the breaking point of their skills with a quicker attack. Not only will you stop their assault, but it will also give you an opening to take your enemy down. Now, let's practice it.' Roan had used Rafatia for that purpose many times. Well, Rafatia also benefited from it, so it was fine.

'Death Style, Stellar Piercer!'

Death... and me

Chapter 1479: Call Me Whatever You Like

Luan decided to aim at the Myriad Lightning Thrust first. The reason was very simple, actually. The kid who used that attack was very close to him. Thanks to Luan's eyes, and especially Roan's numerous lessons, Luan was able to identify the breaking point of the Myriad Lightning Thrust.

However...

Clang!

The other kid was able to react fast enough, blocking Luan's faster attack. Well, to be more specific, it was Luan's mistake. He failed to judge the right time since it was the first time seeing this attack. In the end, he was able to stop the Myriad Lightning Thrust but wasn't able to create an opening.

At the same time, the Tempest Blades arrived at Luan. Scared, Luan could only brandish his swords as fast as he could, blocking some of the blades.

swish, swish, swish...

Immediately, Luan's body was covered in many deep cuts. However, just like Luan, the other kids weren't trying to kill him either. Luan then fell to the ground while pain took over his mind.

Aarrgh!

Roan sighed when he saw that. “Well, I guess it’s already good that he had the courage to counterattack.”

Kentucky agreed with Roan. “That’s true. It’s quite unfortunate he was terrible at choosing the right time to strike. This is something he’ll have to train in to get used to.”

Roan nodded before he sent Luan a Divine Sense message. ‘Get up! Do you think they’ll wait for you to recover? If you don’t want to suffer more, get up and counterattack.’

Luan was taken aback and could only try to bear the pain. Fortunately, Roan had already done quite a few painful punishments on him, so Luan wasn’t completely foreign to it.

“Ahhhh!”

Luan then threw himself against the two Core Formation Realm kids, who obviously retaliated. In the end, Luan wasn’t able to use his eyes’ ability the way Roan wished before he fell to the ground again. This time, however, he didn’t have the strength to get up. He was already quite exhausted even before that battle started, so it didn’t help.

The two Core Formation Realm kids weren’t that much better, though. Luan succeeded in delivering a few hits. After all, it wasn’t like his eyes’ ability was completely useless. It’s just that they had the advantage of cultivation and numbers.

Roan wasn’t too dissatisfied. At the very least, Luan fought until he had no more energy whatsoever.

Creeeeee!

Suddenly, a Demon Bird’s cry echoed in the surroundings as Kentucky descended from the skies. Since the battle was over, there was no need to simply watch anymore.

The kids were scared out of their minds, seeing the enormous Demon Bird heading in their direction. Even though they were very young, they knew that this Demon Bird, and especially the man on its back, had to have something to do with Luan.

Of course, just as Roan predicted, those kids' guardians also stepped out to protect their own. It's just that Roan didn't seem to care. "I'm not here to do anything against your kids. I'm only here to take my own. You should have no problem with that since you would have done the same if my kid won this battle, right?"

Three men and a woman, all in the Transition Realm, looked at Roan with cold expressions. However, it was true that it was all but some kids' fight, so it would look bad if they were to escalate it any further. Not to mention that the ones who started the fight were their kids. "Of course. Then again, you little man isn't bad. He was able to fight two Core Formation Realm opponents for a short time while he's still in the Foundation Establishment Realm. I'm sure he'll become a strong expert in the future."

Roan nodded after hearing that. "Thanks." After that, he quickly pulled Luan and jumped on Kentucky's back before Kentucky took off. He wasn't the type to talk much anyway. A few moments later, Kentucky disappeared in the distance.

On the island, the guys who came out looked at the two Core Formation Realm kids with dark expressions. "What kind of bullshit was that? You two had both the advantage in cultivation and numbers. But even with that, you ended up full of injuries against a kid younger and with lower cultivation than you. Just wait until we go back. I'm going to put you into a much stricter regime of training."

The two kids couldn't help but tear up after that. Naturally, kids preferred to play instead of training, so extra training was anything but welcome to them.

Back on Kentucky's back, Roan used his scythe's Light Element to heal Luan completely. Of course, Luan was still exhausted after a day of fighting demon beasts and that bout at the end. He had to spend some time to recover his Divine Energy. "S-Sorry..."

Roan nodded in response, telling Luan, "It wasn't too bad for a first time fighting other cultivators. You obviously made many, many mistakes, but those can be fixed."

Even though Roan said that, Luan still looked depressed. Roan knew why, though. "It seems like you got the 20 Demon Cores even though I had to come down so that you wouldn't be robbed. Since I gave my word, I'll keep it. Tell me, what kind of dessert do you want during dinner?"

Luan's sad expression immediately disappeared as if it had never been there. "Pudding!"

Roan nodded after that. "Pudding it is. However, I'll expect a lot more from you during the test tomorrow. Well, everyone in that place will be in the Foundation Establishment Realm. Judging by how easily you defeated the other kid at your level, you should do fine."

Luan obviously didn't rebuke as he replied, "I'll do my best, dad!"

Roan narrowed his eyes once again. "I told you already, I'm not your father. I'm your master, that's all."

"S-Sorry, M-Master."

Kentucky couldn't help but intervene, "That's weird, Roan. As far as I know, you would never care about how someone calls you as long as they're not purposely trying to annoy you. Why come you care if Luan calls you father, dad, or whatever? Doesn't that mean he looks up to you?"

Roan pondered over it for a bit and had to admit Kentucky's words made sense for once. "That's true." Roan then looked back at Luan and said, "Just call me whatever you like, then." He shouldn't care about such minor things, so he decided he wouldn't.. Little did he know how happy Luan felt because of that decision.

Death... and me

Chapter 1480: Now Go!

Back in Utari City, everyone gathered in the inn after dealing with their own issues. There wasn't much to be said other than that Rean would bring Falangia and Rafatia together when they left. Roan more or less expected that, so he decided not to complain.

The next day, Roan, Falangia, Rafatia, and Luan went to the other side of the island, where the Mercenary Guild's test would happen. As for Rean, he received a message from Tuvaru, the Formation

Guild's Guild Master. 'Well, it seems like he can tell me something about the guy from the Sacred Undersea Kingdom, or so I hope.' Rean couldn't think about another reason for Tuvuru's call anyway.

Of course, Roan knew about that as well. 'Since you always do the talking, just try to get access to the teleport formation. Your healing skills and my pills might be of use in this case.'

'Sure.' Rean agreed with him.

As Rean went to see Tuvuru, Roan's group arrived at the Mercenary Guild's testing grounds. Well, Falangia and Roan weren't the only ones who brought kids with them. Pretty much all the Foundation Establishment kids present had their own parents, guardians, family members, or something like that with them. That's because the majority of the participants were under eight years old.

The Mercenary Guild's Guild Master was there once again. He seemed excited to be able to see another batch of candidates going through the test. "Welcome, everyone. I'm the Utari City's Mercenary Guild Guildmaster, Latros. I'll be overseeing your test with a few of our elders here."

"Now then. You should all be curious to know the contents of our test for the kids this time around. This time, all the kids will have to enter the demon beast forest behind me and... hide!"

Everyone was taken aback after hearing that. Hide? The Mercenary Guild's test was usually related to strength, so how come that's the test?

Naturally, Latros noticed the confused expressions on everyone's faces, soon saying, "Come on, it shouldn't be that ridiculous. Strength is indeed very important for a mercenary. However, hiding and waiting for the right opportunity to attack is almost as important. We are mercenaries, so any means to complete our missions is okay if it doesn't affect the Mercenary Guild's integrity."

Latros then raised his hand, and suddenly, hundreds of mercenaries came out of the forest and gathered beside him with the elders. "All of them are mercenaries at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. Of course, they all have their own set of skills and things like that. During this test, they will be the ones looking for the kids. However, Divine Sense is prohibited. They will have to find all of you using other means."

Luan couldn't help but comment to Roan, "I don't know if I can hide well, dad."

Roan nodded, saying, "I didn't expect it to be a hide and seek test either. I haven't taught any concealing abilities yet." However, he still had some time, so he used a Divine Sense message. Since Rafatia would take part in the test, he included her in the mix. 'Listen well, here's what you two are going to do.'

As Roan taught Rafatia and Luan, Latros continued to explain, "We will wait one hour outside. During this time, no one other than the candidates will enter the demon beast forest. Of course, this demon beast forest has quite a lot of Stage Two and a few Stage Three Demon Beasts, so you'll have to avoid them as well."

Someone couldn't help but ask, "Will there be any other tests after this? It seems way too simple."

Latros shrugged his shoulders as he replied, "We have a total of 14367 kids here. Well, there are some teenagers who are still in the Foundation Establishment Realm, but who cares? Anyways, this is quite a small number considering the over 100 million inhabitants in our Utari City."

Following that, he smiled. "With that being said, I decided that I would let only a hundred kids pass this month's exam. Now then, do you think it'll be easy for your kid to succeed?"

"Wait! They're all kids! Wouldn't their results pretty much be attributed to luck?" Someone else asked.

Roan felt like snorting after hearing that. Sure, some would be lucky enough to maybe make it into the last 100 remaining kids. However, he was absolutely sure that at least 80% or more of the 100 to pass would have their own concealing skills taught by their backgrounds. That person was probably thinking he hadn't taught his kid anything like that, so he wanted it to change. However, there was no way Latros would change the test just because of that.

Sure enough, Roan was right. "Do you really think luck would be the main factor? So naive... anyways, I won't change the test." Latros then continued to explain the rules, "The testing grounds will be the entire demon beast forest behind me. The elders will keep a close watch on its borders as well. So, if any kid tries to leave the forest, they'll be immediately disqualified."

"As always, killing between candidates is prohibited. It's just that the demon beasts in the forest won't care about this rule, so be careful against them. Also, a piece of advice. I wouldn't waste my time

battling since that means less time to find a hiding spot. Well, I guess that sums pretty much everything important,” he concluded.

With that, Latros gave the signal. “All candidates, you can enter the demon beast forest now. Remember, in one hour, all our mercenaries at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm will enter and look for you. The moment you are found, you are disqualified. We will make a loud announcement that will reach all corners of the forest once there are only one hundred kids remaining. That’s all.”

Immediately, all the kids and the few teenagers who were still in the Foundation Establishment Realm rushed into the forest. Roan, obviously, looked at Luan and Rafatia and told them, ‘Remember what I said. If you do it right, no one will find you without Divine Sense.. Well, even with Divine Sense, it might be difficult. Now go!’