

Death 1511

Death... and me

Chapter 1511: Let's Try Sister Orb

In fact, it wasn't an actual dragon but another form that the white powder creatures took. The difference was that this dragon was several times bigger than even Kentucky. On top of that, it didn't launch itself against the twins. Instead, it seemed to be doing something else.

'Not good!' The twins didn't take too long to understand what it was doing. The dragon was inhaling all the white powder on the ground with its mouth at very high speeds. Before the twins could even think about dodging, the dragon attacked with a dragon breath!

Shua!

A dragon breath filled with white powder covered the entire cave in the twins' direction, giving them absolutely no path for escape. Even the white powder creatures that were attacking the twins got hit by it. They all broke apart almost instantly, showing the power of that dragon breath. Without a doubt, it was even stronger than an attack used by an expert or demon beast at the Space Bending Realm.

Without much choice, Rean and Roan got closer to one another and used their Reversive Arcs together while they began to retreat. After all, if they moved in the direction that the dragon breath was heading, the impact wouldn't be as great compared to if they were moving against it.

The dragon didn't stop, though. Its dragon breath continued to sweep everything in its path, dangerously getting close to breaking through the twins' defense. However, it didn't matter how good the twins' Reversive Arcs were. The fact still stood that they were being forced back.

"Fuck!"

The twins cursed out loud as their power from their Nascent Souls dissipated even more. Eventually, the twins' Nascent Souls disappeared completely, which immediately caused the twins' cultivation to plummet. As one could expect, the twins fell to the Core and Soul Fusion Realm before the white powder-filled dragon breath broke through their Reversive Arcs.

However, that wasn't all. The twins' salt transformation also accelerated now that there was almost no power to block it. Rean and Roan could see how their bodies turned white before it finally covered even their heads and eyes. In the end, the twins were also transformed into salt statues.

At the very moment that happened, everything in the cave went still. The white powder creatures, including that dragon, stopped their attacks. They couldn't detect any other form of life anymore, so they all crumbled as fast as they had taken shape previously.

The white river continued to flow as the white powder floated to the ceiling and disappeared. All the light from before was gone as well. The only difference in this cave from before was that it now had four salt statues. They stayed there, unmoving.

With that, time began to pass. Seconds, minutes, hours, days...

There was one thing that slowly changed as time passed, the concentration of white powder. As mentioned before, the Salt Sweep only lasted around two years before it stopped. That meant the white powder generated by the white river would eventually stop as well.

The twins came out of Salt Canyon City, predicting that the Salt Sweep would last another three months or so. The guards Rean talked to also confirmed that since they had seen this happen before. Indeed, the white powder from the river really stopped three months and ten days later.

That also meant the white powder by the riversides began to disappear little by little. The guard back in Salt Canyon City had mentioned it before. The white powder didn't continue to exist after the Salt Sweep was over. It would enter the ground and simply disappear.

Another two months passed after that. It was also after this time that only the white river remained. Any traces of white powder were now completely gone. That also included Rean, Roan, Kentucky, and Luan. Because they turned into salt statues, they were absorbed into the ground itself, disappearing into it. Even if someone came here right now, they wouldn't be able to find any clues of Rean's group.

Time continued to pass nonstop. Who knew how long it had been since then.

Cla, cla, cla, cla...

Suddenly, Rean began to hear the sound of footsteps. In fact, he couldn't even think straight and tell that those were sounds at all. After his body was transformed into a salt statue, Rean lost all his senses. The system protected the twins' souls, but not their brains. Without a brain to help generate thoughts, it would be pretty much useless to have only the soul.

Little by little, Rean's conscience came back to himself. That was a process that didn't take just a few hours or days. No, it was a process that took years. Not that it was a bad thing since Rean couldn't even tell that time was passing at all. Every now and then, he would hear the sound of steps again and some chatter into the distance, but that was about it.

Though, at some point, Rean's conscience finally awakened enough for Rean to at least question what was happening. It's quite unfortunate that his thoughts couldn't go much further than that. It wasn't before another few months had passed that Rean's consciousness had finally seemed to have recuperated enough. 'Wh-where am I?'

Rean tried to open his eyes, but he noticed his body couldn't move at all. He then tried to use his Divine Sense, but it was no good either. He couldn't use his Divine Sense, nor could he use his Soul Power Scan. It was as if his whole being was confined into something that didn't allow him to do anything else.

Rean didn't panic, though. There were still two beings that he could contact. 'Roan, are you there?' Rean immediately used his connection with Roan's soul to try to talk with him. Unfortunately, it didn't matter how many times Rean called for Roan. He didn't get any answer at all. Rean also couldn't get any memories from Roan either. If not because his Soul Connection with Roan was still there, he would think they had been separated somehow. 'At the very least, I can tell that Roan is just a few meters away from me because of our connection. Though, it seems like he hasn't come back to himself yet.'

In the end, there was one last option for him to try.. 'Let's try Sister Orb.'

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Chapter 1512: Someone Or Something

It was then that Rean had an idea, saying, 'Sister Orb, are you still there?' Before anyone had a chance to answer, Rean continued, 'Please, tell me you're not there. Because if you're not, it means I'm finally free from you and the system. Please, don't answer. Please, please, please!'

[Fuck you! I'm very much here, okay?] Sure enough, a certain orb got quite angry.

"Tch..." Rean pretended to click his tongue in response. 'So much for my hopes and dreams.'

[Who cares about your hopes?! First of all, did you forget that if the link between you and me was broken, you two would be dead? How can you even wish for that?]

'There's no harm in dreaming a little, right?' Rean answered without the least bit of guilt.

[Hmph! So be it. Don't come at me later complaining when you need my support.]

'Hahaha!' Rean couldn't help but laugh after that. 'Sorry, sorry. I was just trying to improve the mood a little. Sister Orb is great! You're the best orb ever!'

[That's more like it.]

After that, Rean decided to focus on the issue at the moment. 'So, Sister Orb, what's happening? I just woke up... well, to be honest, I feel like I've been partially awake for a long time already. It's just that my mind only clarified right now.'

[You're not wrong to think like that. I've been watching you and Roan for long time already. The problem was that your brain, as well as your whole body, turned into a salt statue. Well, it isn't really salt, but you know what I mean. Anyways, because of that, your brain's ability to form thoughts ceased completely. However, since was still connected to you and Roan, it meant that you two were still alive.]

Sister Orb continued after that. [It wasn't until a few months ago that the situation in your body began to change. You should be thankful that you're a cultivator and Divine Energy exists. Your body was returning to normal little by little. If you were still on Earth, your recovered parts would die in just a few days since they couldn't work without the rest of the organs. Divine Energy protected it while the rest continued to recover.]

[However, you're still far from being able to move anything. At least 70% of your body is still in that 'salt statue' state. Fortunately, your brain was one of the very first things to fully recover. When the

transformation disappeared from your brain, you were able to think straight once again. And that's when you contacted me. On the other hand, you can give up moving a single muscle all over your body for the time being.]

Rean was truly surprised to hear all of that. 'So many things happened... wait, you said it took a few months until my body began to finally start recovering. Just how long has it been since was transformed into salt statue?'

[Lo and behold! Five years were completed just three weeks ago! You are now a proud old-aged man in his 70s. Congratulations! Well, you are 73 years old now, to be more specific.]

'Five years?! Holy shit!' Rean couldn't believe so much time had passed. 'What happened to Falangia, Rafatia, and Luan?'

[How the hell would know? I have no connection with them whatsoever. Though, how come you haven't asked about Kentucky?]

'Because I can still feel my connection to him,'" Rean said in response. 'He's just like Roan. He's just a few meters away from me. Well, you should be able to see everything anyway, so why do you even need to ask?'

Sister Orb disagreed with him on that. [That's not correct. I can see what you and Roan see. I use your sense to interact with the outside world. Now that you two are in this state, I'm just as blind as you two.]

Rean found it strange, asking, "Wait, but you could come out of the Dimensional Realm if you wanted to, no? You did that in the past.'

[Come out? Do you think that with your bodies like this, the system wouldn't consider the situation dangerous? Other than being able to talk to you and Roan, I literally can't do anything else.]

Rean had to admit Sister Orb's words made sense. 'I see... then that means you also have no idea about where I am and what's happening around me, correct?'

[That's pretty much correct.]

Suddenly, Rean heard another voice through the connection with Sister Orb. [Is that Rean? Is he finally awake?]

Rean immediately recognized it. 'Oh, Celis! It's you! I didn't think I could talk to you through Sister Orb since the Dimensional Realm is locked.'

[Forget that! Can you tell me what's happening right now? Sister Orb told me how you two were defeated, and I thought you had died. However, she said you were alive even though she couldn't communicate with you anymore.]

Rean wanted to shake his head as he replied, 'Other than what you know, I'm also clueless. My last memory was when the white powder dragon used a dragon breath full of white powder. Our Nascent Souls were burnt out, and we were unable to defend. After that, our brains transformed into salt statues, and we lost our ability to think after that. The only thing safe was our soul, although it was useless since there wasn't a brain to generate thoughts. At the moment, I can see anything. All I can do is wait for more of my body parts to return to normal.'

Rean then thought about something else. 'By the way, Sister Orb. How come my body is turning back? Do you know why that's happening? Were you able to analyze our bodies and tell us just what that salt transformation was about?'

[Unfortunately, have no clue. As I said, I interact with the outside world through you two when the system is closed. Since you were somewhat 'gone,' I wasn't able to check anything. I still don't know how this salt transformation works.]

cla, cla, cla, cla...

'Wait! I can hear step sounds. Someone... or something is coming again..'

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Chapter 1513: So You Are Awake

Rean could vaguely remember that he had heard the sound of footsteps before. It's just that with his partially transformed brain, he couldn't think straight. With that said, he didn't pay attention to whatever the one coming was doing.

In any case, the sound of footsteps got louder until Rean could tell that the one walking stopped by his side. Following that, Rean felt like something cold was poured on some parts of his body. 'Now that I think about it, whatever was used on me was probably poured over my entire body. It's just that I could only feel it on the parts that had already returned to normal.'

A moment later, Rean heard the same footsteps move away but stopping not too far soon after. He didn't need to think too much into it to realize that whoever poured that thing on him was doing the same thing to Roan. Those sounds continued for a few minutes before they disappeared.

Rean then asked System Orb after that. 'Sister Orb, now that I'm awake, can you tell if whatever was poured on me was the reason for my body returning to normal?'

[Just a moment...] Sister Orb then went silent for a few seconds before replying. [Indeed, it's some kind of liquid that acts on the mixed elements of the white powder. As you probably can guess, these elements were mixed in a specific way with Divine Stones' dust, which created the white powder. This liquid separates the elements into their individual states. You could say that it simply returns the white powder to elements and Divine Energy.] Sister Orb explained.

That only raised more questions than answers, though. 'Just what is happening here? Who's helping us? First of all, are we really being helped? Since whoever's helping my body return to normal knows the formula to revert the transformation, it's possible that they also know how to create the white powder. If that's the case, they would be the culprits for it. Could it be the Sacred Undersea Kingdom?'"

Celis answered that through Sister Orb's help. [At the moment, it's impossible to tell. All you can do now is wait until you can at least open your eyes.]

Rean agreed with Celis, saying, 'That's true.' Soon after, he asked something else to Sister Orb. 'Hey, Sister Orb. How long do you think this will take?'

[At least four more months for your entire body to return to normal.]

"Guess I'm stuck here until then..." Rean felt helpless but had no other choice.

And just like that, time continued to pass until a month and a half later, Rean and Sister Orb finally heard Roan. 'What's happening here?'

Naturally, they immediately explained to Roan the situation they were in. Roan was Roan, so he took it all without batting an eye. 'I understand. Rean, can you already open your eyes at least?'

"No. However, I'm very close to being able to do it. As long as that liquid is kept being poured on my body, that is.'

Roan then added, 'Let's exchange elements. Use my Dark Element to help destroy the transformed parts.'

Rean immediately denied the idea, telling him, 'Are you crazy? That means I would destroy several of my organs that are partially transformed. Don't forget I can't regrow things without the necessary nutrients. At the moment, I have no way to take your pills.'

Roan didn't mind, saying, 'Whatever. Let's just keep waiting. At the very least, it seems that my dantian is back to normal.'

Rean was surprised to hear that. 'Really? It seems like we're returning to normal in different ways. My dantian is still completely transformed.'

Roan ignored that and focused on his dantian. 'Sure enough, the Nascent Soul is gone. Sister Orb, we'll need to buy the Nascent Soul Revival in the future. Otherwise, we would need to cultivate from the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm again.'

[You'll be able to do it once the system considers that you aren't in danger. At that time, just come inside and buy it yourselves. I can't buy it for you while the Dimensional Realm is closed.]

'So be it. I'm going to sleep for now. Wake me up if you find anything else.' After that, Roan fell asleep in an instant.

Rean felt like crying when Roan did that. Back when they were inside their mother's womb, Roan did the exact same thing. He simply slept during the next few months until they were finally born. Rean could still remember the boredom from that time. 'At least I have Sister Orb and Celis to talk during this time...'

Time continued to pass, and another ten days went by. Eventually, Rean felt that the blockage on one of his eyelids disappeared as he tried to open it. The first signs of light entered his eyes, showing him a big room. Unfortunately, Rean couldn't move his head yet, so he didn't have a good vision from his perspective. 'Well, better than nothing, I guess.'

He already knew the frequency that the being who poured the cold liquid on him appeared. 'The person should be back in the next two hours. When that happens, I might be able to obtain some information.' Of course, Rean tried to see more, but the only thing he could make out other than the room was the other beds not far away from him. "'That one there is Roan, as for the smaller one... great! It seems like that one is Luan... or so I believe. I can't see well from here.'

Rean then tried to move his head, even just slightly. Fortunately, even though his head didn't move more than a centimeter, that allowed him to peek at something very big from the corner of his eye. 'Big, feathery... definitely Kentucky. It seems like our group of four was put together in the same room. Did they know we were coming? Well, that's hard to say...'

cla, cla, cla, cla, cla...

Sure enough, the being who poured the cold liquid on them appeared two hours later. With that, Rean could finally see the person helping his group.

Well, the other side also noticed Rean's open eye, saying, "Oh, so you're awake!"

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Chapter 1514: Wait Again

Rean looked at the old woman who had the appearance of someone in her 70s or 80s. Of course, he still couldn't talk, so he could only hear her side. "I'm really surprised with your recovery speed. Usually, it would take at least ten years for those who changed into the statues to reach your stage. On the other hand, you only took five."

She could obviously tell that Rean couldn't talk, so she continued, "Well, you're probably confused as to what's happening here. You were supposed to have died after transforming, but here you are, gradually reverting to your original form. By the way, until you get to talk, just blink once for no and twice for yes. That's all we can do at the moment. But don't worry, since your eye has already recovered, it won't take more than a few weeks until you can at least use your Divine Sense partially. When that happens, talking with each other will be a lot easier."

Rean blinked twice, expressing that he understood her words.

The woman said in response, "Good. Your thinking ability is also back to normal since you can answer me with your blinks. Well, let's start with where you are at the moment. To that, I have no idea."

Rean was taken aback to hear that. How come she had no idea? 'Could it be that she's some prisoner and don't know where she is?' he thought. 'No... she doesn't look like someone who's being held against her will.'

Sure enough, the woman explained what she meant after seeing the surprised look on Rean's eye. "I meant what I said. I really don't know where we are, nor does anyone who lives here. We were all just like you and your friends, statues who were caught by the Salt Sweep, or the White Dust Waves, or the Death Dust Spread, or..." She mentioned a few more names in a row.

Rean was confused after that. He obviously knew the Salt Sweep. However, it was his first time hearing the other terms. 'Could it be...

He didn't need to conclude that thought before the woman told him, "Yes, as you can probably imagine, the phenomenon that caught you doesn't only happen in a single place. It happens in quite a few different regions in Pol Continent. It's just that they have different names. With that said, until you can use your Divine Sense or recover your mouth, I won't be able to tell which one of those areas you came from."

She continued, "Anyway, no one knows where we are, but we do know that this place is where all the statues are sent to. Of course, that's only if the statues aren't broken. If you had been broken, then you would absolutely be dead now... well, kinda. If what broke was a leg or an arm, then you could still survive probably."

"As for why the statues are sent here, that you will have to see by yourself once you're free from your confinement. It'll be useless to talk about it for now since there's nothing you can do anyway."

The old woman then took a flask with some kind of colorful water and began to spread it on Rean's body, especially the transformed parts. Following that, she left Rean behind and moved to Roan, then Luan, and finally Kentucky last. Well, she spent quite some time in Kentucky's case due to his enormous body. "Well, that should do for today."

She then returned to Rean's side before saying, "Just close your eyes and rest. You will get out eventually. I'll be coming every day to pass the Divine Water on you all."

Rean, obviously, didn't want the old woman to go. He still had way too many questions in his mind. However, she was right. He couldn't do anything else other than blink with his free eye. In the end, the old woman left Rean behind just like that.

Rean, of course, contacted Sister Orb, Roan, and Celis after what transpired. 'So, what do you think?'

Roan was the first one to answer, saying, 'At the very least, it doesn't seem like we're in immediate danger. Second, we're definitely not anywhere near Salt Canyon City anymore, considering that old woman spoke the truth. As far as I can tell, she did speak the truth, though. As for the faster recovery, that's most likely due to our constitutions and elemental affinities.'

[Roan is right.] Sister Orb said soon after. [If Roan wasn't able to detect a lie, then it's pretty much certain that the old woman spoke the truth. As for Divine Water, that's way too generic. Many types of liquids in the entire Realm of Gods carry this name, so I can't tell which one it may really be. Maybe it's something completely new.]

Celis simply ignored that. [Whatever. Since she won't speak anymore, then we can only wait. By the way, I have already reached the limit of Peak Stage Eight. It seems like that even though you guys were in your statue form, I could still share cultivation with you. However, I can't break through at all if you don't do the same. Just know that as soon as you return to normal, we can all enter the Transition Realm.]

Sister Orb immediately denied Celis'' words. [They won't be able to break through anytime soon. They have burnt their Nascent Souls out. Without that, they're back to the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm.]

Celis knew that. [I know that. However, you told me they could buy the reward to revive their Nascent Souls. They also have the Destiny Points for it.]

Rean then explained, 'We will obviously buy our Nascent Soul Revival. However, it seems like Sister Orb didn't mention how long it would take.'

[Well, the fact is that I don't know either. It's not like it's an exact science, you know? You will take as long as it is needed. Of course, it'll definitely be much faster than trying to cultivate all the way to the peak of the Elemental Transformation Realm again.]

'Sigh... it seems like we're in for a long wait... again....'

Death... and me

Chapter 1515: Upside Down

The old woman wasn't wrong. A few weeks later, Rean was finally able to use his Divine Sense. Not only him, but one of Roan's eyes had also recovered as he also regained control over his Divine Sense. They could even move their bodies a little bit right now if they wanted to. However, they didn't try to move that much as a lot was still in a transformed state.

The old woman, obviously, received a barrage of questions from the twins when they could finally communicate with her. "Calm down, calm down. I'm not gonna run away, you know?"

"Gramma, how are our new friends?" Suddenly, the twins heard a voice coming from the door as a young man who seemed to be in his middle 20s entered the room. "Oh, so you can already use Divine Sense. That's truly remarkable. You two set the record for the fastest recovery so far."

Rean didn't want to talk about that, though. 'Alright, alright. Let's leave our recovery speed aside for now. First, let me ask you. What are your names?'

The old gramma and the man nodded in response. "Oh, where are our manners. I'm Glasita, and this young man here is my grandson, Xuve."

Rean slightly nodded in response. 'Nice to meet you, senior Glasita, brother Xuve. You can call me Rean. The other guy who looks just like me is my brother, Roan.' Roan slightly nodded as well and let Rean continue the talking. 'As you obviously know, we're completely at a loss as to what is happening here. Senior Glasita mentioned that she doesn't know where we are. Could it be that we are imprisoned somewhere?'

Xuve confirmed Rean's words, replying, "It's not wrong to think like that. Well, was born here, so I've never felt imprisoned since I've never seen the outside world. However, for people like you and my gramma, this should indeed look like imprisonment. Of course, it's not like you didn't give this place a name of its own. We call the area we're in the Upside Down World."

'Upside Down World?' Rean and Roan became confused after that. "Why such a name?"

"Oh, right! You haven't left this room ever since you arrived. Let me bring you two outside to take a look at the environment." Xuve then used his Divine Energy to grab the twins before moving out of the room.

Immediately, the twins were shocked by what they saw.

"This..."

In front of their eyes was a literal upside-down world. Rean and Roan could see that they were inside some kind of cylindrical area. In any case, it formed a perfect roundabout. When they looked up, they could see more buildings upside down while the building they were in was in the right position. Naturally, the buildings on the sides seemed to be rotated 90 degrees.

As they looked around, they could see more people and demon beasts walking in the distance. Above them, the people seemed to be walking upside down as well. "The gravity of this place is all messed up."

Glasita agreed with the twins as she laughed in response. "Hahaha! Indeed it is. Surprising, isn't it? I was just as shocked as you when I arrived here many years ago. If you walk on the street and move to the

sides, you'll eventually end up there. It'll look like we're the ones upside down while they're in the right position."

Roan calculated that they would need to move at least twenty or so kilometers to do one full round. The cylindrical area was just that big. Then again, Rean and Roan were lucky as they were on the top of a big building. From there, they could see both sides far in the distance. However, they couldn't see the end of the cylindrical region on any of the sides. 'How far does this upside-down world extend?'

Glasita answered, "It extends for a total of 1341 kilometers. Just so you know, the inside of this 'tube' where we are at the moment is the same regardless of where you are in the Upside Down World."

That size wasn't a small area. Then again, it did look to have quite a lot of cultivators and demon beasts. 'So, in the entire 1341 kilometers, there's no way of heading out, is there?'

"Precisely so." Xuve nodded without hesitation.

Naturally, the twins were curious about it. "How come?"

Glasita sighed before explaining, "That's because there's some kind of powerful barrier that covers the entire place. It's not like we can't pass through it, but we will die if we do so. No one has been able to resist more than a few seconds inside that barrier."

Rean narrowed his eyes after hearing that. 'Barrier? Powerful? Are you talking about the continental barrier?'

Glasita shook her head, telling them, "Quite a few of us had seen the continental barriers before. The barrier holding us inside is definitely different from the continental barriers. Since you mentioned the continental barriers, you definitely know that it has all the elements of the Realm of Gods mixed in it, right?"

Rean nodded again, saying, 'Indeed, they have all of them in a constantly chaotic state.'

Glasita then continued, "Our barrier is different. It's basically filled with the five mainstream elements other than Divine Energy. It's also abundant in Yin and Yang Energies. We have no idea what generates it, though."

Rean immediately put the continental barrier aside. Then again, he hoped it was the continental barrier since they would have the chance to use the Kibin. However, that was obviously out of the question for now. 'From your description, it's most likely a formation that keeps it up. Possibly, it's also the same formation that keeps this place's gravity in such a state.'

"We thought the same thing." Sure enough, they had their own Formation Masters as well. "Some of us even call it a slaughtering formation. It's quite unfortunate we can't check it out, though. The barrier covers the entire Upside Down World. The formation keeping it up is located beyond the barrier."

Rean had an idea when he heard that, but now wasn't the time to mention it.. "So, how do you live in this place?"

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Chapter 1516: Information Bearers

"How do we live?"

Rean nodded, clarifying, 'It's obvious that you have been trapped here for a very long time. Most likely, Senior Glasita was far from being the first one here. Naturally, you had to find a way to live in this place.'

"Oh, so that's what you mean," Xuve understood after that. "Well, it isn't any secret. Just think of this place as some kind of closed miniature world. Everything here works pretty much as it does outside. We have authorities, organizations, clans, and so on."

That was quite impressive, in Rean's opinion. 'You have all of that in such a small place?' Of course, Rean compared it to the Realm of Gods or the cultivation worlds. If it was compared to Earth, this place could only be thought to be huge. However, the cultivation worlds and the Realm of Gods were all about huge distances and powers in control over thousands, if not tens and hundreds of thousands of kilometers alone. 1341 kilometers was more or less nothing when compared to the scale of the Realm of Gods.

Glasita didn't deny that, replying, "Well, you aren't wrong there. It's not that hard for some conflicts to appear every now and then. Then again, it's not as bad as you think. Can you guess why?"

Roan immediately nodded, answering, 'Space. There is only so much for everyone to work with. If high-level cultivators start to fight each other nonstop, the available living area will be gone in a flash. The real experts most likely never intervene with disputes.'

Glasita and Xuve were surprised by Roan's words once they heard that. "Smart. That's correct. When dispute arises, only those at the Saint Realm or Stage Seven and below are allowed to fight each other. This is a pact that everyone signed a long time ago. Although there isn't really anyone to enforce the rule, rarely does anyone break it. If higher-level cultivators or demon beasts really have no other choice than to fight, they will do it inside specific areas with protection formations that can withstand their power."

Xuve then shrugged his shoulders, saying, "Well, we're also part of one of those powers, so we also follow those rules."

Rean then decided to leave this kind of conversation for another time. 'Forget about the power struggles for the moment. Can you tell us how we ended up in this place? As you know, the last thing we can remember is how our bodies transformed into statues of white powder.'

Glasita was the one to explain, telling them, "You should be able to see it from here. Look there." She then pointed in a certain direction. There, the twins could see what seemed to be a large lake with the same colorful water that Glasita used on them. "There are a total of 33 lakes like that one in the Upside Down World. Everyone that becomes a statue will eventually appear inside the lakes. This time around, a total of 42 people and demon beasts appeared at different times. Since you two arrived at the same time as the little boy and the Demon Bird, we thought you were together. That's why you were put in the same room."

Hearing that, Rean and Roan understood why. The Salt Sweep only happened once every ten or so years, so the arrival times were obviously connected to that timing. "You mentioned that there are other places with the same phenomenon. Could it be that there are 33 places in Pol Continent where it happens? Is that why you have 33 lakes?"

Glasita nodded, saying, "That's correct. The lake you can see there is the lake connected to the Salt Canyon deep in the Foczi Sea. Well, the majority of the living beings here aren't the ones who came

from outside anymore, though. After so long, there are a lot more people and demon beasts who were born here instead of appearing in the lake as we did."

Xuve continued from there, telling them, "By the way, we're part of the Traquio Sect. In case someone asks, you can use our names."

Roan then looked at the lake and could tell the water it had was the same one that was being used to revert them to their original forms. 'So that lake's water is what you used on us, right? Is there anything special about it?'

Glasita shook her head. "Other than reverting the transformation, it doesn't have any other uses. At the very least, we didn't find any other use. Also, the water in the lake never goes down. We use a lot of it for farming, for example. Something always feeds it from below, beyond the barrier."

Rean could imagine that it was probably the same natural formation from outside, the one that gave birth to the white river. 'Sister Orb, the lake water and the white river are probably different sides of the same coin, don't you think?'

[So you noticed that as well, huh? I also reached the same conclusion. The natural formation most likely creates both the river and the lakes with opposite effects. Well, it's not like we can do much with that information at the moment.]

Rean nodded in response. 'Well, it might come in handy later.'

Eventually, Roan decided to ask something that was bothering him. 'Alright, let's get into the main topic. Why did you help us? It doesn't seem you lack people or demon beasts in this place. Is there a reason to go through the trouble of reverting us to our original forms? wouldn't be surprised if you simply broke all the statues that appeared in the lake and only transformed back the spatial rings on them.'

Glasita shrugged her shoulders as she replied, "If we do that, how exactly do you expect us to get information about the outside world? As far as I know, the dead don't speak."

'Roan speaks, though,' Rean said after that.

Roan completely ignored Rean's remarks. 'Information, huh? Well, it does make sense. The more people you transform, the greater the amount of information you can get.'

"By the way," Rean called their attention.. 'Considering the size of this place, don't you suffer from overpopulation?'

Death... and me

Chapter 1517: Open System

As soon as Rean asked that, the expressions on Xuve and Glasita's faces changed as one of them responded. "Yes, we do. It was decided a long time ago that the population in this place must never surpass ten million. Every one hundred years, the leading powers of the Upside Down World count the number of living beings here. If the number is above ten million, then culling is done."

'That's quite harsh,' replied Rean. 'How do you decide who's gonna die or live?'

Xuve then explained, "Anyone above the Saint Realm is safe. That's because trying to Kkill people at the Elemental Transformation Realm or higher could potentially lead to more damage than we can afford. As for those at the Saint Realm and below, they would be chosen randomly. There is a thing called the Death Roll organization. It's maintained in conjunction with all the leading powers of the Upside Down World. That's to ensure that not only one side would have their people and demon beasts eliminated."

Xuve continued, "They will spread their forces around the Upside Down World and kill people based on some random selection formation plate. Once the necessary numbers are dead, the killing is stopped, and they would retreat to the organization, not to come out for the next one hundred years."

Rean couldn't help but ask after that, "Isn't there a much better way to do this? Like, birth control?"

Glasita shrugged her shoulders, saying, "Can you really make everyone follow such a thing? First of all, do you think someone would really waste their time trying to prevent people from having sex? We already live in this confined place. If you eliminate sex as well, people will definitely go crazy. In the end, it's a lot easier to simply put down some people than preventing them from being born."

Roan also added, 'No one probably cares that much either. Since the number is ten million, chances are that even if the number goes above, it won't be that much. Who knows? A hundred thousand, maybe

two? In the lottery that follows, everyone would prefer to trust their luck that they won't be the chosen ones. In fact, they probably won't as the chance of being selected is indeed low.'

Xuve nodded, continuing, "That's why no one complains. Besides, everyone believes that as long as they reach the Elemental Transformation Realm, they would be on the safe side, never to be afraid of being killed again. As long as the ten million number is maintained, then we would have enough space and food for everyone. Well, it's not like it's that easy to reach the Elemental Transformation Realm."

Following that, Xuve brought the twins back to the room. "Now, just lie down and rest. You will finish reverting to your original forms in two or three months at most. At least, that's what I can tell from the speed of your recovery."

Rean couldn't help but ask, 'Aren't you going to inquire about information from the outside world?'

Xuve and Glasita shook their heads. "If we do and you answer, we would have no reason to keep treating you, right? Would you really answer before you could at least move on your own?"

Rean had to admit they were right. 'I wouldn't...

Neither Glasita nor Xuve took it to heart. "This is just an exchange. Transforming you two back to normal doesn't cost us anything other than time. Once you're back to normal, you can simply tell us the information we want to hear. It's that simple."

Xuve and Glasita then left the twins behind so that they could have their own discussion. 'So, what do you think, Roan?'

'They're definitely telling the truth. It's just that I don't know if it's all the truth or not. The water in that lake is abundant, so transforming us back indeed doesn't cost anything. We just need to be careful once we finish this exchange. After all, nothing guarantees that we won't be killed as soon as we reveal whatever they want.'

Rean had reached the same conclusion. 'That's good, then. Let's just patiently wait.' In the end, Rean couldn't help but think about Rafatia and Falangia. 'Sigh... I wonder what happened to those two. We

had been out for over five years, and we did ask them to wait for us. It feels just like Qia and Calina as I don't know what happened to them.'

Roan closed his eyes in response, saying, 'It's hard to say. However, they definitely wouldn't stay in Salt Canyon Undersea City for long. Most likely, Falangia grabbed Rafatia and moved back to Utari City. The only doubt is whether she arrived there or not. In any case, that's not something for us to care about for now. Let's focus on our recovery.'

"Alright." Rean nodded.

Thanks to the twins' constitution, it really took just another two months before most of the transformed parts of their bodies returned to normal. There were a few small pieces remaining, but the twins could at least fight and defend themselves now.

Plus, that wasn't all. Kentucky was also someone who had Light and Dark Elements as affinity. With that said, his brain also recovered quite quickly, being just a tad slower than the twins. He couldn't really move well, but he could already talk and use his Divine Sense. The twins believed that it wouldn't take more than two or three months before Kentucky was free as well.

The last one was obviously Luan. There was one thing the twins noticed about Luan's case. Even though Luan had become a statue, he didn't stop growing up. That was quite a weird thing as Luan's statue was now the size of a young thirteen-year-old man. However, he obviously didn't have the twins or Kentucky's perks. Because of that, only a few small parts of his body seemed to have come back to normal. He couldn't think, see or say anything at the moment.

Nevertheless, there was a piece of good news. After the twins became able to walk on their own, the system opened once again. It considered that the twins were not in a dangerous situation anymore..

Death... and me

Chapter 1518: Questions From Both Sides

However, they didn't have time to check it for now. That's because the system only considered their situation safe once Xuve came to ask for their cooperation. That meant it was time to be questioned about the affairs of the outside world. The twins could only leave Kentucky and Luan in the room and head to the main hall, where the elders of the Traquio Sect were already waiting.

Their Sect Master, who was called Ormo, was the first one to talk in the 'audition.' "Hello, friends. It seems like you can already take care of yourselves. Since you have almost fully recovered, we will have you take care of your other members, the Demon Bird and the kid. Is that fine with you?"

Naturally, the twins had no issues with that. They would take care of Kentucky and Luan even if Ormo didn't ask them that. "No problem at all. We would also like to thank you for your support. We thought we were dead, but here we are. We will try to pay this debt however we see possible."

Ormo nodded, satisfied. "That's good. My sect is known for being quite open-minded, so you don't need to dwell on this issue too much. All we want from you is information from the outside world. Since you appeared in our closest Divine Lake, you most likely came from Salt Canyon, right?"

The twins nodded, saying, "Indeed. We were transformed after being caught up by the Salt Sweep. That's what we call the phenomenon there. After we recovered our consciousness, we were already here." The twins decided that it was better to not mention the natural formation or the white river. After all, who knew? This might be some secret that others shouldn't know about, and it could very much set the twins as targets.

Ormo had already heard such descriptions many times, so he wasn't too impressed. Instead, he decided to enter the main topic. He looked at one of the men there before saying, "Good. Elder Kloce, it's your and your groups' time to ask questions."

Kloce nodded. "Thank you, Sect Master." The twins noticed that there were different chairs, and each one seemed to have a symbol. Kloce seemed to be the one in charge of the group in the chairs with the same symbol. Following that, he looked at the twins, saying, "My group is made of people who came to the Upside Down World through the Salt Canyon or their descendants. That means your knowledge is a lot more important for me than the others."

The twins finally understood the division of chairs. "So that's how it is. No problem, elder. Go ahead and ask. However, there's one thing we must tell you in advance. My brother and I were indeed brought here by the Salt Canyon phenomenon. It's just that we also came from outside Pol Continent. However, we will try to answer as many questions as we can."

Kloce's group was surprised to hear that. It was extremely rare to receive people from somewhere else other than Pol Continent. "Is that so? That's quite interesting." Nevertheless, he did ask the same questions as he intended from the start.

Kloce asked about the powers in control of Salt Canyon Undersea City and Utari Island, as well as a few other cities that the twins didn't know anything other than their names. He wasn't the only one, though. Some of the elders or their relatives also asked questions. For example, if the twins knew anything about their children, parents, families, clans, sects, etc. Fortunately, Roan had read a lot of things in the Mercenary Guild, so it turned out that he was able to answer quite a few of those, much to the surprise of the people present. However, when it came to individuals, the twins knew almost nothing since they didn't focus on specific people.

The audition continued for quite a few hours before the elders and their relatives were finally satisfied. "Thank you for your cooperation, friends. You answered a lot more than we expected. It's quite unfortunate that your knowledge was more related to the grand scheme of things than the individual people from each power. Well, I guess that's to be expected since you were only in Pol Continent for a limited amount of time."

Now that all the elders had finished their questions, the twins thought it was a good opportunity to ask their own. "No problem, elders. By the way, we would like to ask a few things as well. Of course, if it's a problem, then just ignore our request."

The elders looked at Ormo, who nodded his head after hearing that. "Go ahead."

"Since the lakes are obviously connected somehow to the phenomenon, isn't there a way to leave this place through the lake itself?" Rean asked.

Ormo couldn't help but laugh a little when he heard that. "Hehehe... do you think no one thought of such an obvious thing before? Trust me, the number of people who tried to use the lakes to leave this place is uncountable. Unfortunately, it seems like the lake only works one way and not the other. Of course, the lake is enormous, and everyone is free to check it. If you want, you can go and see it for yourself later. Trust me when I say there's no lack of people and demon beasts who hope that someone finds a way out."

Roan knew why no one bothered to protect the lake. Other than the ability to revert one's statue's form, it had no other use. It wasn't like the white powder had enough Divine Energy to be comparable to Rank Three Divine Stones. It made sense since Rean expected the colored water to have the opposite effect to the white powder, so it was expected that it had no Divine Energy. Besides, if someone really found a way out, then it was even better.

Rean nodded, saying, "I see... we will indeed take a look later."

After that, he asked a few less relevant questions before he ended his part of the question and answer session. "That's all. Thank you, Sect Master Ormo.."

Death... and me

Chapter 1519: Revival

Ormo didn't mind as the twins gave him a lot more information than he expected. "It's fine. You two are still in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm, so let me warn you in advance. The purge of those beyond ten million will start in two years. Try to increase your cultivation since it's easier to be selected for elimination depending on your cultivation."

That was the first time the twins heard that. Wasn't it supposed to be random? Then again, it's not like they had anything to do with the selection criteria. If it eventually came and they still weren't back to their original levels, they could simply hide in the Dimensional Realm until the purge was over. "Thank you for the warning. We will keep that in mind."

Ormo then offered the twins some shelter, saying, "You can do whatever you want. Though, you can also join our Tranquio Sect if you feel like it. I don't know if you noticed already, but the level of cultivators is quite low here. Two Peak Stage Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators are more than welcome."

The twins refused the idea, though. "We won't stick around, so it's better if we don't join. Of course, if Senior Ormo needs our help in the future, you can let us know. Although you guys didn't lose anything by helping us, it still meant a lot since you basically saved our lives."

Ormo nodded, replying, "I'll let Xuve and Glasita know about it since they were the ones who took care of you."

After that, the reunion was finally over. It turned out that the twins were the first ones to be questioned due to the speed of their recovery. The other 38 transformed beings were far from returning to their original form.

Later, Rean and Roan met Xuve, with the latter telling them, "I heard that the elders, especially those from Salt Canyon, were quite happy with your answers. It was definitely worth the time we spent to turn you back into your forms."

Rean didn't mind, telling Xuve, "Give and take, simple as that." He then changed the topic as he asked, "By the way, would you mind if I make a concealing formation in our room? Roan and I would like to have some privacy here."

Xuve didn't mind it either. "Sure. Just make sure you leave a method for us to call you from outside. Otherwise, I would have to barge in if you don't answer."

Rean was happy to hear that, nodding in response. "Thank you."

After exchanging a few more words with the twins, Xuve left them alone.

Rean, of course, didn't waste time and built the concealing formation. The twins wanted to go into the Dimensional Realm as soon as possible to deal with the remaining issues they had. Sometime later, the formation was done, and they finally had the chance to enter.

[Oh, so you're finally here.] Sister Orb knew what they wanted. [Alright, let's start.]

With that, the twins touched the Soul Gem Orb and sent their Divine Sense and Energy inside. Soon after, the rewards list appeared in their minds. Obviously, there was only one thing they were interested in at the moment.

[Nascent Soul Revival - 20000 Destiny Points]

"We have 60357 Destiny Points, counting the extra 50000 we got from helping the Flash Beast come out," Rean said.

"After buying the revival, I want to use 10000 points to get a free pass for Luan." Since Luan was going to follow them everywhere, it was better if they could put him in the Dimensional Realm as well.

Rean agreed with Roan on that point, saying, "Cool. Fortunately, we didn't use the Destiny Points, so we have enough for everything even though we won't receive any upgrades. Anyways, let's start."

[Soul Gem Dimensional Realm Pass - 10000 Destiny Points]

[Nascent Soul Revival - Two Times - 40000 Destiny Points]

[Confirm the purchase?]

uYeS!u

[Select the living being within a hundred meters from the hosts' exit point.]

Suddenly, the twins received an image of all the living things that could be found in a hundred-meter radius around them. Surprisingly, that included even insects. Naturally, the twins found Luan in the middle of them and selected the young man.

[Target confirmed. Blood signature acquired. Free pass added for the being called Luan. Hosts are now able to bring that being into the Dimensional Realm at any time.]

Following that, the System switched to the twins' dantians.

[Initiating Nascent Soul Revival...]

Rean and Roan felt like their dantians became warm before they focused their Divine Senses inside. There, they found something that looked like a small fire taking form where their Nascent Souls were located before. Rean's one was white, while Roan's was black. It was nothing but a very small flame, but the twins could feel a presence similar to their Nascent Souls. Unfortunately, the flame didn't change at all after that.

[Process concluded. Nascent Souls revived. Time expected for Nascent Souls to reach previous performance: One year, three months, and thirteen days. Hosts' strength won't surpass the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm until then.]

The twins couldn't help but sigh after that. However, the one who seemed sadder than anyone else was Celis. "Oh, come on! I've waited five years and a half already. I still need to wait for another year?" Since the twins were in the Dimensional Realm, they didn't need Celis to use Sister Orb to talk to them.

Celis couldn't break through into the Transition Realm until the twins recovered since he was connected to them. Naturally, he wasn't happy. Nevertheless, Rean shrugged his shoulders in response, saying, "I think this is a small price to pay. This is the revival of a Nascent Soul, you know? The fact that it could be completed in such a short time and allows us to recover to our peak state is already heaven-defying enough."

Sister Orb and Roan agreed with Rean. "Rean is right. Besides, your cultivation speed compared to the time you didn't know us is like the difference between an ant and an elephant. You really have no rights to complain about this small pause."

Celis could only sigh after that. "Fine... I'll wait." He then changed the topic, saying, "By the way, with you two being this weak, should I go out with you to protect everyone?"

The twins had to admit it seemed like a good idea..

Death... and me

Chapter 1520: To the Lake

In the end, the twins opted to let Celis out of the Dimensional Realm. After all, it would be good to have someone at the peak of Stage Eight to help them if necessary. It's just that they had to go somewhere else, away from Tranquio Sect, since they couldn't explain Celis's sudden appearance. The excuse they used was that Celis was someone who got caught in the Salt Sweep from another time, and they found him just now. Well, whether the others believed it or not wasn't their problem.

After that, the twins sent Luan and Kentucky straight into the Dimensional Realm, keeping them safe for the moment. Eventually, their group decided to take a look at the colorful lake.

Rean approached the water and used his Divine Sense to check it, muttering, "Such a weird thing. Divine Energy disperses inside it."

Roan nodded. "You mentioned that the white powder was probably made with Divine Stones. Could it be that you were wrong?"

Celis answered that question, saying, "It's too early to say. Did you forget? It was the white river that gave birth to the white powder. Perhaps the white river used crushed Divine Stones for that, especially since it was filled with Divine Energy."

Roan had to admit Celis's words made sense. "Indeed. However, now we don't have access to that anymore. Well, it's not like we can't leave this place anytime we want."

Roan was right. The twins could indeed leave the Upside Down World as long as they wished to. One must remember that now that the Dimensional Realm was open, they had access to the Circuitry Teleport Formation. That thing could teleport the twins up to a thousand kilometers away in any direction. It's just that the landing point would highly depend on their luck.

"The problem is which side we would teleport to, right? The gravity in this place is messed up. We have no idea which side is up or down. Not to mention that we might not be in the Realm of Gods at the moment, but instead, in another Dimensional Realm. In any case, it wouldn't be the first time that happened. Last but not least, let's consider that the barrier covering this place extends for over a thousand kilometers. We would teleport directly into it and die because of its power." Rean quickly listed all the issues with using the Circuitry Teleport Formation. That's why they didn't think about using it straight away.

Roan then changed the subject, telling the others, "Okay, let's get the 'Divine Water' for now and send it into the Dimensional Realm."

'Sister Orb, can you prepare a small well in the Dimensional Realm for us? We will store the lake's water there,' Rean asked.

[Sure. Give me one second.] Sister Orb then opened a deep hole and made it so that the lake water wouldn't escape to the soil. In the Dimensional Realm, she was god, so she could do anything she wanted to the environment. [Alright, can you see it?]

Roan nodded. 'Yes. There it goes.' Roan touched the lake water after that, and immediately, several liters of the colored lake water, the 'Divine Water,' disappeared. It continued nonstop, creating a small torrent around Roan's hand. "Fortunately, the Dimensional Realm only uses the power of space to move things. If it used Divine Energy for the teleportation, the lake water would disperse all of it."

Some people looked curiously at Roan as it was quite obvious how much water he was taking for himself. However, several people used the lake water for things more than just transforming the statues back. Although Roan seemed to be taking way too much, no one really bothered about that. That's because the lake always filled itself up even if they didn't do anything.

[Alright, the well is filled up.] Sister Orb told Roan.

Roan nodded and couldn't help but become interested in that water. "This thing might be a lot more useful than you think."

"How come?" Celis asked.

Rean understood what Roan meant, though. "It can disperse Divine Energy. Touch the Divine Water, and you'll feel it. There is absolutely no Divine Energy whatsoever inside it. There are many things that rely on Divine Energy in the Realm of Gods that we might get access to if we use this water. For example, formations."

Celis was surprised to hear that. "Oh! Now that you say that, it does seem quite useful. No wonder you took so much of it."

Roan nodded, saying in response, "There is enough Divine Water there to last us for hundreds of years now."

Rean then decided to check the lake after that. 'Sister Orb, can you feel any formations in the lake? After all, we got sent into this Upside Down World through this thing.'

[It's hard to tell. Our Divine Sense also doesn't work inside because of the Divine Energy dispersal effect. Then again, if there was anything inside, others would have found it already, right? First of all, did you

get teleported into the lake, or was it some other method of transportation? Even if it was a teleport formation that sent you over, the lake might simply be the other end of it.]

Rean narrowed his eyes before he decided to enter the lake. Sure enough, he felt that all the Divine Energy around his body disappeared as the Divine Energy in his dantian seemed to escape. Immediately, Rean sealed his own Divine Energy in his body so that it wouldn't leak. "Well, I can only swim down there and take a look."

Roan and Celis looked at each other and nodded after that. "We'll wait here, just in case. You're the only one who knows anything about formations, after all. Use your connection to tell us if anything happens."

Rean nodded in response and immediately dove down into the lake water. He didn't have a problem breathing since his dantian had more than enough Divine Energy to sustain himself. Sure, he couldn't bring it out, but he could at least use it in his own body.

The lake was quite deep as Rean had to swim over half a kilometer down. "This should be the place where the statues appear, according to Xuve's words."