

## Death 1521

Death... and me

### Chapter 1521: Spreading Divine Stones

Eventually, Rean touched the floor of the lake and started to look around. The only problem was that the light inside wasn't very good. Well, in fact, even the light outside the water wasn't great either since they were inside a confined space. Naturally, the artificial methods to generate light outside could barely make their way to the bottom end of the lake.

Rean didn't seem to care, though. Suddenly, his own body began to shine as if he was a lamp himself. "I might not be able to bring Divine Energy outside, but I can still use it inside my body." He simply used the Light Element that was present in his body to brighten his skin. There wasn't much Light Element since he couldn't gather some from the surroundings, but that was enough to at least illuminate the things around him.

He couldn't help but say sometime later, 'Sister Orb, this water is a lot heavier than normal water.'

[Indeed. I can tell the same thing about the Divine Water Roan sent into the well here. It's at least five times heavier than normal water. However, I made a small test here. This water can be consumed just like any normal water, and it'll nourish the body the same way. The only difference is that you will have a hard time using Divine Energy until your body processes the water in your body. Other than that, there are no harmful side effects. It seems like it's only a bad thing for Divine Energy and nothing else.]

Because of the water's heaviness, the pressure over Rean's body was obviously many times higher than if he was inside normal water. Fortunately, Rean still had his Third Grade Star Body, so he didn't feel anything at all.

Rean walked around and found a few more things than just the bottom. First, there were no living beings inside the lake. Perhaps because of the heaviness of the water itself. Though, he did find many bones and a few dead bodies of common fish and low-level demon beasts. "These things are probably the transformed living things that got sent to this place as well. Because their cultivation level was too low or inexistent, they ended up dying due to the water pressure after the Divine Water transformed their bodies back to normal."

[You're probably right. If you look closely, you'll see that their bones seem to have been squashed while their bodies were flattened.] Sister Orb agreed with Rean there.

Rean walked on the bottom of the lake for over an hour, but he couldn't find anything at all. 'Sister Orb, this place is completely empty.'

[I believe it's not that it's empty, but that we can't find anything because of the water's Divine Energy dispersal effect.]

It was then that Rean got an idea. 'Dispersal effect... right! Why didn't I think of it earlier?'

Immediately after, Rean tried to release his Divine Energy from his body. Of course, the moment the Divine Energy touched the water, it dispersed straight away. He had sealed it in his body so that it wouldn't disperse, but now he wanted that to happen.

Naturally, that puzzled Sister Orb. [Why are you doing that?] She wasn't afraid of Rean dying or anything like that since the system was still open. Rean could simply enter the Dimensional Realm if he ran out of Divine Energy.

Rean didn't stop there. He couldn't access his spatial ring since it needed Divine Energy to work. However, the Dimensional Realm only needed the power of space as it had its own Divine Energy inside. With that hat said, Rean immediately brought out many Rank One Divine Stones and started to spread them around as he moved as fast as he could down there.

'Divine Energy dispersal will act on anything that has Divine Energy, right? In that case, it should also work on whatever is making the statues appear in this lake. The Divine Water is robbing the stones and myself of Divine Energy. However, it can't wipe it out instantly. It will take some time to do so. I'm using this method to see if I can find someplace in this lake where Divine Energy Dispersal will act differently. Perhaps it'll be slower or faster. In any case, that's the place I think to have a connection with the outside world.'

Sister Orb had to admit the idea wasn't that bad. Besides, they didn't have much choice at the moment. [Well, I can't tell if it'll work or not. However, since it's only Rank One Divine Stones, it's totally worth a shot. Still, do you think no one has tried this method before?]

Rean shrugged his shoulders in response. 'I don't think so. Did you forget? This is a sealed space from where no one has escaped from. We can't even tell whether this is a Dimensional Realm or not. Do you think people and demon beasts would waste their Divine Stones and Energy in such a way when they don't have access to more?'

[I see...] Sister Orb agreed with Rean. [Well, I'll keep an eye on the Divine Stones. Just try to spread them as fast as possible.]

Rean nodded and continued to spread the Divine Stones while leaking out his own Divine Energy slowly. That continued for twenty-two minutes when Sister Orb's voice suddenly called Rean's attention. [Wait! Over there!]

Rean immediately looked in the direction Sister Orb mentioned. It was a place he had just spread the Divine Stones a minute ago. Rean quickly approached the area and noticed the difference. The Divine Stone Energy was indeed being dispersed by the 'Divine Water.' However, some of that Divine Energy seemed to be gathering at a specific point before that happened. 'What is this thing?'

Rean looked up closely and approached his hand. Surprisingly, the Divine Energy coming out of his hand didn't disperse in that place. 'Is this the other end of the teleport, perhaps?' Rean wondered.

Death... and me

Chapter 1522: Seems like it

Sister Orb immediately called Rean's attention as she told him. [Rean, I can feel it through your hand. It has the same feeling as the natural formation after we entered that cave.]

That confirmed Rean's suspicions, prompting him to reply, "So I was right about the lake water and the river water being two sides of the same coin."

[Although it isn't 100% guaranteed, that's most likely the case. Then again, it isn't hard to guess why. One is basically the byproduct of the other. For you to create the white water in that river, this colored water appears as a side effect. Or, it may be the opposite. For this lake water to appear, that white river is the side effect.]

Rean nodded, saying, "It's a basic rule of equivalent exchange as one is filled with huge amounts of Divine Energy while the other gets rid of all of it. One transforms us into statues while the other recovers us from that state. Though, how come we get transformed into statues so quickly but take so long to return to normal with this colored water?"

[That's where the Divine Stone dust comes in. Did you forget that we believe that there's a Divine Stone Mine below the white river? The Divine Energy from that mine and especially the Divine Stone dust is boosting the transformation speed by a lot.]

Rean had to admit Sister Orb's words made sense. "I see... well, we'll be able to confirm it as long as we can head back there and not get attacked by those white powder creatures. The only question is whether the creatures were the fruit of the natural formation or not. In any case, now that we know the exact location, we can go there while the Salt Sweep is gone. No Salt Sweep, no white powder."

[We need to find a way out of here first. If possible, I really don't recommend using the Circuitry Teleport Formation in this situation.] Sister Orb then continued to analyze the point where Divine Energy wasn't dispersing. [Okay, here's the thing. I can tell that this point where the energy from you and the Divine Stones is gathering is connected to the white river somehow. If you build a teleport formation and use this point as the target, it should serve as coordinates to get back to where the white river is located. Well, at the very least, you will be teleported somewhere in the Salt Canyon.]

Rean narrowed his eyes after hearing that. How would he build a teleport formation here if the lake dispersed all Divine Energy? After all, no Divine Energy, no teleport formation. "Hmm... perhaps I can forge a chamber and throw it into the water. It's just that it'll need to be really, really heavy since this water is heavy itself. Otherwise, it will just float on the surface."

[Just forge a chamber with holes and let the water enter. Once it reaches the bottom, close the holes and pump out the water.]

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he told her, "And how exactly do you want me to do the pumping without Divine Energy? Unless I use some kind of tube that'll be over half a kilometer long to reach the border of the lake, that won't work. It's way better to simply forge something heavy enough to sink."

[I see... well, would you be able to forge such a thing with your current cultivation?]

It was then that Rean noticed how idiotic his thoughts were. "Forget all of that. I'll simply forge something in the Dimensional Realm and take it out here."

[Ahem... that's a good idea as well.] Well, Sister Orb also felt like Rean at that moment.

With that, Rean marked down the area where he found the connection point before swimming back to the surface. Surprisingly, Xuve was there when he arrived, talking with Roan and Celis. "Hey, what's up?"

Xuve noticed that Rean had come out of the lake and couldn't help but laugh, saying, "Hahaha! Just like everyone else, you couldn't just give up, could you? So, did you find anything that no one else did?"

Rean nodded. "Seems like it. We should be able to return to Salt Canyon in a few hours..." or so Rean wanted to say. However, he knew that such a thing would cause chaos since everyone wanted to leave this place. With that said, he had to hide his discovery for now. "If I had found a way, do you think I would still be here?"

Xuve agreed with Rean, saying, "That's true. Divine Energy here isn't as abundant as outside, so there's no lack of people who wish to leave."

Rean then changed the topic after that. "So... why are you here?"

Celis explained from there, telling him, "Xuve asked us if we wanted to help with a certain fight for territory or something like that."

Xuve sighed in response. "You make it look like it isn't anything important. As you can imagine, space is everything in the Upside Down World. Every centimeter is owned by someone or some power. However, you heard before that high-level fights can't happen. Because of that, the territories came up with an easier way of settling things. That's the territorial contest or challenge, if you will. In this contest, we will have disputes with cultivators of each level to determine which power will get extra land."

Roan couldn't help but mention, "So it's basically some fight for victory. I don't see how you lack participants for this. Why us?"

Xuve continued, "That's because we don't have enough strong Core and Soul Fusion Realm disciples. Our Tranquio Sect is very small, you see? The Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators we have at the moment are mostly between the Initial and Late Stages. There are only five Peak Stage ones."

"Can't you call those ones?" Rean asked.

Xuve nodded, replying, "We did. The problem is that we need ten participants. Since we only have five at the peak level, we came here to ask for this extra help. I know it looks too sudden, especially since we could have asked you during the questioning. However, the challenge just came in."

Rean then used his connection to Roan to talk. 'Well, I don't mind it. I do feel like I didn't pay them enough for the help they gave us to turn back to normal.'

Roan already imagined Rean would say that, telling him, 'Fine. By the way, did you find something?'

Rean nodded in response. 'Seems like it.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1523: You are all dismissed

Rean then explained what he found at the bottom together with Sister Orb to Roan. After that, Roan told them, 'I see. That's good enough. However, if that's the case, there may be another use for these lakes.'

'Other uses?' Rean and Sister Orb was confused.

Roan nodded and continued, 'Since you can connect a teleport formation to the coordinates of that thing, can't you do the same with the other lakes? The Salt Sweep, or whatever it's called in other places, all send their transformed people here. We can use the other lakes to connect to the other side of the Pol Continent. Since we can't use teleport formations in Pol Continent itself, it'll save us many years of travel. Especially since Pol Continent is much bigger than the other continents that we have been to so far.'

Rean found a problem with that, though. 'If we do that and head somewhere else, we won't be able to see what happened to Rafatia and Falangia. Also, we'll lose out on our chance to meet Havek. Don't forget he's a potential clue to find mom and dad.'

Roan, of course, didn't forget that. 'I know. However, who said we can't come back here after and use the other lakes?'

'This...' Rean had to admit Roan had a point. 'That's indeed a very good idea. Perhaps there is a way to return without having to turn into Salt Statues.'

With that, Rean looked at Xuve and smiled, telling him, "Alright, we will give you our help. However, there isn't really a need for anyone else in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. Roan and I are more than enough."

Roan agreed with Rean, saying, "Indeed. Unless there's some test where ten people are absolutely necessary, just let Rean and I take the challenge. We don't know how things will go with the other cultivation levels, but we should easily win any battle at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm." Roan didn't want to waste much time, so he also believed it was better for him and Rean to do it themselves.

Xuve was shocked to hear that. "Aren't you two a little way too overconfident? That's ten Peak Stage Core and Soul Fusion Realm opponents! Can you fight five each?"

Roan snorted in response, replying, "Even if it was ten Peak Stage Nascent Soul Realm cultivators, only one of us would be more than enough to deal with them, let alone the Core and Soul Fusion Realm."

Rean laughed after hearing that. "Hahaha! Don't worry, don't worry. Just leave it for Roan and me to take care of."

The twins weren't lying. Even if one didn't consider their Third Grade Star Body, the twins were definitely much stronger than average Peak Stage Nascent Soul Realm cultivators. With their Third Grade Star Bodies, they were pretty confident they could even take on Peak Stage Soul Transformation Realm cultivators as long as they weren't geniuses of big powers.

Celis, who was also there, patted Xuve's shoulder, saying, "These two aren't lying. I'm a Peak Stage Eight Demon Tree. Trust me, they're just as strong as they're saying."

"This..." Xuve, of course, had his doubts. "I'll have to talk with Sect Master about it. Do you mind coming with me?"

The twins nodded and followed Xuve, who took the opportunity to ask them. "By the way, are you okay with leaving your two friends in the sect? I thought you would stay by their side all the time."

Because of the concealing formation that Rean left in the room, no one saw that Luan and Kentucky were now gone. At the moment, they were both in the Dimensional Realm. "It's fine. We don't think anyone will try anything against them. That's how much we trust you guys."

Xuve was happy to hear that, although he didn't know it was a lie. "Well, that's good. You can indeed trust us on that issue."

Not too long after, Xuve returned with the twins. However, they were brought straight to a giant field where several kids seemed to be cultivating together. It's just that half of them had the Tranquio Sect's white clothes while the others used a set of blue ones.

"Is the challenge already ongoing?" Rean asked.

Xuve scratched the back of his head in embarrassment. "That's how things work in the Upside Down World. Once a challenge is issued, the challenged power has to assemble its people and be ready for it in three hours at most. That's a way of showing that the sect, clan, or whatever is capable of assembling their forces on short notice. The last time when we issued the challenge ourselves, the others also gathered very quickly."

The Sect Master, Ormo, was obviously there. His sect had been challenged for control over an area of three kilometers located north from there. Since this was a tube-like world, it only had its north and south areas. Not that they really knew which side was north. It's just that everyone had long since decided which side should be considered to be one or another. Behind him, there were a lot more cultivators as well. They were all in groups of ten, with cultivations varying between Foundation Establishment and the Peak Stage of the Soul Transformation Realm.



Ormo, naturally, noticed when Xuve brought the twins. He nodded at them, thankful that they decided to hear their call. Nevertheless, the twins were just a small part of the forces that would fight, so he didn't put too much importance on them at first. However, when Xuve told him what the twins asked through a Divine Sense Message, he was just as shocked as Xuve was when he heard it. 'Ridiculous! Do you think we can risk losing one of the challenges like that? They will join the test together with others.'

Xuve already expected as much before looking back at the twins. 'That's what he said.'

Rean shrugged his shoulder before he approached Ormo. Naturally, Ormo could guess what he wanted to talk about. However, that wasn't the case. Instead, Rean simply held his arm a bit before releasing it, returning to Xuve's side after that.

Little did others know, but Ormo seemed to let out cold sweat when he suddenly contacted the other Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators of his side. 'You are all dismissed.'

Death... and me

#### Chapter 1524: The Tests

The Core and Soul Fusion Realm participants from the sect were taken aback. They came here expecting to represent their sect in the challenge, so why were they dismissed out of nowhere? Of course, they weren't the only ones. The elders and the teams for the other cultivation levels were also surprised by the Sect Master's words.

"Sect Master?"

"Why did you dismiss us?"

"We're ready to fight, Sect Master."

"Indeed, we might not have ten Peak Stage Core and Soul Fusion Realm disciples like the Hura Clan that's challenging us. However, we can make up for it with Late Stage ones. We still have a good shot at winning."

"That's right. Why should we give up on the Core and Soul Fusion Realm challenge?"

Ormo shook his head in response. "Enough! We aren't giving up the challenge for that cultivation level. It's just that there's no need for all of you to take part in this exam anymore. Rean and Roan will take it alone."

Not many knew who Rean and Roan were since they had just recently appeared. However, it didn't take long for all the sect's eyes to land on the twins. Naturally, they could see that Rean and Roan were in the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm.

"Only the two of them?"

"How come?"

"Sect Master, that's the same as giving up straight away."

"What those two can do alone?"

Ormo didn't give in, though. "All you need to do is believe me. Now, step back since the rest of you would most likely get in their way. You have no idea how strong they are."

Although the disciples and elders weren't satisfied with that answer, they could only follow the Sect Master's orders and trust that he had some plan in mind.

As for Rean and Roan, they didn't mind how the Sect Master arranged it. In fact, even if the Sect Master had told them that he wouldn't take the others out, the twins wouldn't care. It's just that it would be easier without others bothering them. As for the eyes of doubt and anger that they received, the twins were used to that kind of thing already, so they simply ignored it.

The twins, instead, decided to pay attention to the Foundation Establishment kids in the Foundation Establishment test. Sure enough, only brats would still be in that cultivation level. The same could be said to the Hura Clan on the other side.

Naturally, that wasn't all. There was a need for a judge for the tests, and the old men and women in charge of it weren't part of either power. From what Xuve said, they were part of the same organization that purged cultivators and demon beasts once the number surpassed ten million every hundred years. That was the only power in the Upside Down World that was jointly commanded by everyone and could be said to be truly neutral.

As for the test ongoing at the moment, it wasn't a battle. In total, the challenges had five groups with five cultivation level differences. Tests could be anything, and each side had the right to decide the content of two of those challenges. It's just that there was a list of acceptable tests that one could choose from.

In any case, it made sense. After all, one side could come up with some bullshit test like which side has more women cultivators or something like that. Such information could be easily acquired, and the result would be determined even before the test. Thus, there was a need for a list of acceptable tests one could choose from.

At the moment, it was the Hura Clan who selected the Foundation Establishment Test. As for the test, it was simply cultivation! There were formations set in place that measured how much Divine Energy each side gathered over a certain amount of time. Once time was up, the results would come out. Simple as that, which was good since it was a test being taken by a bunch of kids.

Then again, there were five tests, but each side could only select two subjects. That meant one last test was left. Neither side could choose what it would be, though. That was a job for the judges of the neutral organization.

"Time is up!" Suddenly, an old woman shouted. As soon as she did that, the formations of both sides turned off, stopping the measurement of the kids inside.

Both powers' disciples then left the field and returned to their sides as the judges verified the formations. Of course, a few elders of each power were also there to check the results. After a few moments, the elders of the Tranquio Sect seemed to show a dark expression before the old female judge announced the result.

"The Hura Clan wins the Cultivation test. The next contest for the Core Formation Realm disciples will be selected by the Tranquio Sect."

Although the people of the Tranquio Sect seemed unsatisfied with the results, none of them contested it. They knew that complaining would lead to nothing.

Ormo quickly calmed down and immediately selected something that his sect excelled at, Soul Power Manipulation. As mentioned before, Soul Power wasn't anything new in the Realm of Gods. It's just that some focused only on Divine Energy while others put more emphasis on Soul power. Ormo's sect just so happened to be the second type. As for body cultivation, there would rarely be any power that focused on that.

"Our Tranquio Sect chooses Soul Power Manipulation," Ormo announced without thinking twice.

The Hura Clan head snorted after hearing that. "Ha! Just as I thought." He didn't seem to mind it at all. In fact, that was a test that the Tranquio Sect was famous for always selecting. With that said, he already gave up that one and only sent his disciples so it could be dealt with.

Sure enough, the results didn't surprise anyone. "The Tranquio Sect wins the Soul Power Manipulation test. The next test for the Core and Soul Fusion Realm disciples will be selected by the Hura Clan. Both sides' disciples come forward."

With that, Rean and Roan stepped into the field.

Death... and me

Chapter 1525: Tea

At first, only the members of the Tranquio Sect knew about the change in the roster. However, everyone watching was obviously caught by surprise when only Rean and Roan entered the field sometime later.

"What's happening there?"

"Could it be a mistake?"

"That can't be, right? I'm pretty sure there are more Core and Soul Fusion Realm disciples in Tranquio Sect."

"If that's the case, why are they sending only two members?"

"You're asking the wrong person here."

Such conversations and more went all around. Naturally, the Hura Clan also noticed the change and asked the judges, "What's happening here?"

The old woman nodded and looked at Ormo, asking, "Where are the rest of your disciples, Sect Master Ormo? We need ten participants to start the next challenge."

Ormo shook his head in response, replying, "There are no rules saying that one side can't send a smaller number of cultivators. For this test, those twins are more than enough to deal with the Hura Clan."

"You!" The Hura Clan Head's expression went dark as everyone was taken aback by that response. Wasn't that the same as throwing dirt on the Hura Clan's face?

However, Ormo couldn't care less. "These are the members who are taking part in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm level challenge. If you don't want to accept it, just surrender and give my sect the victory."

The judges looked at each other and nodded in the end, saying, "Sect Master Ormo isn't wrong. There are no rules regarding fewer members during a test. As long as the limit in cultivation is met, the number of participants doesn't matter. Clan Head Zosviei, what are you going to do?"

Zosviei was obviously the name of the Hura Clan's head. "Hmph! They're just acting tough. It's obvious that they simply gave up on this contest and are focusing on the next ones. Very well then. Don't blame me if I get rid of your little twins over there."

Zosviei then gave the order to his Core and Soul Fusion Realm disciples. "All of you, get rid of those twins. My Hura Clan chooses a group battle!"

Immediately, everyone sighed after hearing that, thinking there wasn't anything else to be seen anymore. After all, how could the twins win against ten enemies? They all thought Ormo was giving up on this challenge as well.

"They're totally dead."

"He could have just given up, no?"

"Why waste everyone's time?"

Nevertheless, the judges didn't budge. If the Tranquio Sect wanted to use only two disciples, then they wouldn't stop them. "The Hura Clan has selected a group battle for this test. We will now raise the protection formation so that you can fight. The battle will be over as long as one side gives up or gets defeated. There are no rules for the fight itself. Killing or just beating the other side is up to the disciples participating."

\*Zunnnnn...\*

Suddenly, a protection formation below the field activated, followed by a Divine Energy shield that covered the whole area. The judges confirmed that the formation was working just fine. They were just about to start the battle when suddenly, something caught their attention.

Out of nowhere, there was a table on the field. Not only that, but Roan was sitting on the chair in front of it while sipping on some tea.

That, of course, bothered Rean. "Are you going to leave all the work for me to take care of?"

Roan didn't even look in Rean's direction as he replied, "It was your idea to help them, so you deal with it. Don't worry. If things go south, I'll give you some help. I'm here, am I not?"

Rean couldn't help but sigh after hearing that. "Fine... it's not like I needed your help anyway."

The faces of the disciples, the elders, and the clan head of the Hura Clan went red with anger. It was one thing for Ormo to disregard them, but even those two disciples were making fun of their faces.

Ormo, Xuve, Glasita, and everyone else from the Tranquio Sect were even more baffled. Surely that was way too much confidence, wasn't it? Ormo even wondered if he had made the wrong decision.

It caught so much attention that even the judges, including the old woman in charge of them, didn't know what to do.

Zosviei couldn't hold that back anymore before he shouted, "What's taking you so long? Just start this challenge already! I want those twins dead!"

The old woman finally came back to herself and sighed after that. 'Well, whatever happens to them has nothing to do with me,' she thought.

"The group battle starts now!"

Immediately, all ten Peak Stage Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators of the Hura Clan charged forward. Swords, spears, skills, and abilities. All kinds of attacks materialized in Rean's direction. Why Rean's direction? That's because Rean put himself in the middle of the path between Roan and the Hura Clan disciples.

'Death Style, Fifth Form, Mirage Assault!'

Immediately, Rean's hair changed into a mix of black and white as two clones of himself appeared by his side. The clones began to turn too weak to be used in fights at the Elemental Transformation Realm and above. However, for fights at this level? They were pretty much as good as average Peak Stage Nascent Soul Realm cultivators.

'Life Style, First Form, Enhancement!'

'Death Style, First Movement Form, Shadow Steps!'

\*Zush!\*

\*Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom...\*

All the attacks hit the place where Rean had just been a moment ago. However, Rean himself and his clones disappeared from the Hura Clan's cultivators' eyes in a flash. Not only did Rean have Shadow Steps and Enhancement, but he also had the Third Grade Star Body. Only those at the Soul Transformation Realm and above could possibly follow his movements. For those disciples, he truly disappeared from their sight.

'Life Fire, First Form, Flame Emperor Slash!'

'Life Fire, Second Form, White Stellar Explosion!'

'Life Fire, Third Form, Flaming Blade Arc!'

\*Slash!\*

\*Swish!\*

\*Bang!\*

Before the disciples could even react, Rean and his two clones appeared behind the furthest Hura Clan's disciple and struck them head-on!

Roan immediately thought as he saw that, 'Naive as always.'

Why? Because Rean didn't kill them. He only used enough power to defeat those disciples.

Death... and me

Chapter 1526: Checking Time



Everyone was shocked by Rean's display, especially those with a high enough cultivation to see his movements. It was too sudden, too fast, too strong!

But of course, Rean didn't stop there. He and his clones immediately moved once again as he had no intention of letting those guys reach Roan. After all, Roan might really just kill them since it would be far easier to achieve.

'Death Style, Third Form, Three Claws of the Dragon!'

'Death Style, First Energy Form, Shadow Bind!'

The real and illusionary swords all hit the enemies near them, knocking them out while the shadow vines held the rest to the ground. Rean was much closer to these people than he was before. Thanks to that, the shadow vines were enough to hold the remaining four as his Three Claws of the Dragon put another three to sleep.

"Phew... it seems like everything went well," Rean said as he approached those guys being held by Shadow Bind. Once he got closer, he simply pointed his sword at them and asked, "How will it be? Will you give up, or should I knock you out to achieve victory?"

"We... we give up." They had no choice. Rean was simply on a completely different level compared to them. They thought that Rean shouldn't be fighting against people of their level at all as it was too unfair. First of all, was he really just a Peak Stage Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator?

Sure enough, they weren't the only ones thinking that.

"They're cheating!" Immediately, Zosviei raised a complaint to the judges floating above the field. "They're obviously hiding their own cultivation. There's no way someone at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm could ever be this strong. Their strength is definitely at the Soul Transformation Realm at the very least!"

Ormo, obviously, was delighted by that outcome, so he wouldn't take Zosviei's words easily. "Hahaha! Are those the words of a sore loser? That's how it sounds to me. You can feel it with your own Divine Sense, can't you? The twins are definitely in the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm."

Then again, it's quite unfortunate that Rean's display was too eye-catching. Not only did the Hura Clan people complain, but even the observers found it ridiculous.

"Sect Master Ormo, there are many ways to hide one's cultivation."

"I'm sorry, Ormo. I have to side with Zosviei this time."

"Indeed. A Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator shouldn't be that strong."

"I plead the judges to check the twins, especially Rean since he was the only one who fought."

"Me too! The challenges of the Upside Down World are made to be fair to both parties. This wasn't fair at all!"

With that, Zosviei made a formal request. "Judge Himatikia, you're the one in charge of this challenge. You have to make sure its rules are being upheld."

Himatikia was the old woman mentioned before, the same one who closed the formation and was part of the purging organization. Himatikia couldn't help but sigh after hearing that. This test got a lot more annoying than she wanted. She didn't even want to be here, but she was the only one available when the Hura Clan issued their challenge. Besides, she had to admit the twins were way too suspicious.

"Don't worry, the other elders and I will check them."

She then opened the formation, just to see that Rean was now sitting on the table with Roan, drinking tea. "Hey, this one isn't too bad. How come you didn't use these leaves before?"

Roan shook his head in response as he told him, "I got them here, idiot. Even if I didn't, since I was the one who got them, what would be the problem in not sharing with you? Be happy that I'm in a good mood and let you drink it."

"Hmph! You just want to show how good at preparing tea you are. Do you think I can't tell that?" Although Rean said that, he still continued to drink tea.

Himatikia's mouth twitched when she saw that. The twins completely ignored her existence. Sure enough, neither of the twins were worried about any checks. They weren't cheating, after all. Well, that's if one considered their existence not to be cheating. "You two, aren't you listening to what the others said? I'll have to make sure you guys aren't hiding your cultivations."

Rean nodded before he took another cup from the Dimensional Realm and poured tea inside, telling her, "No problem. Here, Senior Himatikia, have some tea as well. My brother might have many problems, but he's definitely quite good at making tea. Oh, by the way, do the other elders want some tea?"

Himatikia and the elders from the purging organization didn't know what to say. In the end, Himatikia shook her head. "Forget the tea. We will now hold you and send my Divine Energy into your dantians. That's the only way to be absolutely sure that you're not hiding your cultivations. Don't try to block our views."

Rean and Roan nodded after that. "Sure, go ahead." In any case, the twins couldn't care less. There was indeed a small flame that was recovering in their dantians. However, that looked just like the soul of someone at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. After all, it was that piece of soul that became the Nascent Soul later. Considering the twins were at the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm, finding such a thing in their dantians was simply what one should expect.

Himatikia and the elders didn't waste time and immediately sent their Divine Energies inside. Neither Rean nor Roan blocked their passage and just kept enjoying their tea.

A few moments later, the expressions changed.

"This..."

Himatikia's group was truly shocked by what they saw. Sure, they confirmed that the twins were definitely in the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. However, that wasn't all. They also saw the twins' perfect foundation and the extra Light and Dark Element Pillars. In short, they had never seen a foundation like that before.

Death... and me

## Chapter 1527: Not coming out

Of course, it didn't stop there. They also saw how the twins' Divine Energy Pool was simply gigantic. Even though it was reduced many times due to the loss of their Nascent Souls, the twins still had Divine Energy Pools around three times bigger than common cultivators.

Another thing was that they could tell just how resistant the twins' dantians were. One must remember that the twins used the Universe Essence to fortify their dantians against damage all the way back in the Core Formation Realm. Naturally, this part didn't change at all.

"Wh-What kind of monsters are you two?"

One of the elders immediately had an idea, suggesting, "Himatikia, they're definitely part of the Sacred Undersea Kingdom. Only if they're related to that place would their talent be this heaven-defying."

The other elders immediately nodded in agreement. They, too, could only think about this reason.

Rean faintly smiled in response as he replied, "Well, to be more precise, we're kind of guinea pigs of the Sacred Undersea Kingdom. After all, the Sacred Undersea Kingdom is controlled by aquatic demon beasts." Of course, that was all a lie... which truly did look to be true after they considered the Sacred Undersea Kingdom's position.

"It's the first time someone from there fell into the Upside Down World because they turned into statues," Himatikia said in response. She then took her arm away from the twins as she had already confirmed they weren't lying. They truly were at the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. "Since you came from there, could it be that the Sacred Undersea Kingdom finally discovered this place?"

Immediately, the other elders' eyes lit up once they heard that. Wouldn't that mean they finally had a chance to get out?

Unfortunately, Rean shook his head in response, telling her, "Sorry for disappointing you. However, it was truly just an accident that made us turn into statues. We can't tell you the details, but I can

guarantee no one asked us to check anything. First of all, everyone considers those transformed to be the same as being dead. Why would anyone try to verify anything?"

Sure enough, the hopes of the purging organization's elders were crushed as fast as they appeared. "I see... that makes sense. Otherwise, the Sacred Undersea Kingdom would have sent someone much stronger than you two."

Rean then returned to the main topic, saying, "So, have you confirmed we haven't cheated?"

Himatikia's group must stay impartial at all times. They were also prohibited from revealing any secrets that weren't relevant to the situation, so they couldn't talk about the twins' origins or their superior conditions. In the end, Himatikia could only nod. It was also the reason the twins didn't mind showing her all of that. The purging organization's elders couldn't do anything about it.

Following that, she took flight once again and positioned herself above the field, announcing, "I have now checked the twins' foundations. There's nothing wrong there. They are, without a doubt, at the Peak Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm."

"Impossible!" Naturally, those were the thoughts of everyone watching. Even Ormo was surprised, thinking that the twins would be caught somehow. He also checked Rean's foundation before. That's why he agreed to let only Rean and Roan participate. At that time, he didn't find anything wrong with the twins' foundation, only that their talents were truly heaven-defying. In any case, he was concerned that the purging organization would find something wrong that he didn't. However, that didn't happen.

Well, not everyone was as happy as Ormo.

"Elder Himatikia, how can that be possible? You must be kidding, right?" Zosviei immediately voiced his opinion. "If that's really the case, then let me check them myself. I refuse to believe they're at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm."

"Enough!" However, Himatikia's expression only went dark after hearing that. "Are you saying that our purging organization is siding with the Tranquio Sect?"

That was truly a serious accusation. If that was truly the case, Himatikia's group would be killed as the organization had to follow the rules at all costs. However, if it turned out to be a false accusation, it wouldn't be surprising if the Hura Clan was wiped out as a result. They would be eliminated to set an example. "I..."

Indeed, Zosviei couldn't risk it. As much as he didn't believe the twins could be that strong with their cultivation, he had no other choice but to comply. After all, if he was wrong, the consequences would be dire. "I'm sorry, Elder Himatikia. I let myself be guided by emotions."

Himatikia nodded after that. "I'll let this one pass since this is indeed an extraordinary situation. However, you better think twice before you open your mouth again." In fact, even Himatikia wanted to ask a lot more things to the twins, but she and the elders of the purging organization had other tests to carry out. "The next test will start now. Send the ten people you wish to take part in."

The twins didn't move, though. Instead, they simply looked as eight more Nascent Soul Realm cultivators from the Tranquio Sect entered the field. Yes, back when Rean showed his talent to Ormo, he also asked to let him and Roan take part in the Nascent Soul Realm level challenge.

Ormo wasn't sure if he should do that or not, so Rean simply told him to make his judgment after watching him in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm test. After what he saw, however, Ormo truly didn't want the twins to be anywhere else other than that field.

"Wait! This is against the rules!" Well, Zosviei obviously noticed that as well. "The twins are not in the Nascent Soul Realm! Why are they taking part in this challenge?"

Rean laughed out loud after hearing that, saying in response, "Hahaha! That's where you're wrong. The rules say you can't send anyone above the limit of the test. It says absolutely nothing about not letting cultivators below the limit take part."

Himatikia couldn't help but smile a bit when she heard that. Right now, she began to find this situation quite entertaining, completely different from her thoughts a few minutes ago. "He's right. If you wish, you can review the rules yourself." With that, she threw a jade slip at Zosviei. Naturally, it had all the rules of the challenges on it.

Death... and me

## Chapter 1528: Blind Maze

Then again, there wasn't really a need for Himatikia to throw that jade slip. After all, all powers in the Upside Down World had a copy of it. Nevertheless, Zosviei and the other people took a look inside with their Divine Senses. Naturally, one could already imagine the result. There was no way Himatikia would be wrong about a rule of the Upside Down World. There was nothing against lower-level cultivators taking part in the test, only higher-level ones.

"But..." Of course, Zosviei didn't like it. However, seeing Himatikia's dark expression, he didn't continue his comment. Instead, he gathered with his elders to select one of the tests on the list. They saw how the twins were as strong as Soul Transformation Realm cultivators. Obviously, they definitely wouldn't select a fighting challenge. At the very least, not a group one.

On the twins' side, they were greeted by the other Nascent Soul Realm cultivators of the Tranquilo Sect.

"Say, how can you be that strong?"

Rean smiled in response, saying, "There isn't much to it. It's just that my brother and I cultivated all three branches of cultivation at the same time."

"All three branches?" Those words confused the guys.

Rean nodded, explaining, "We cultivated our body, Divine Energy, and Soul Power to the same level. Although we're at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm, we're several times stronger than people who focus on a single thing. You guys know that those who cultivate both Soul Power and Divine Energy are usually much stronger than the others, right? This is the kind of strength you get if you cultivate all three things at the same time to the same level."

Rean wasn't really lying. Although their Soul Power and body were way past the Core and Soul Fusion Realm, someone who did cultivate the three things to the same level would definitely be stronger. It's just that they wouldn't be at the twins' level.

"But... aren't body cultivation techniques extremely hard and painful to cultivate?"

The twins nodded, replying, "They are, but that's a small price to pay for strength. Well, at the very least, that's how we think about it."

Neither Rean nor Roan tried to hide their voices. That would serve as an excuse to anyone who wished to come after them later. They even had a few body cultivation techniques in case anyone asked for it. It's just that Roan would never give the technique with the Star Body to others.

"We have decided!" Suddenly, Zosviei's voice echoed throughout the area. His Hura Clan had finally decided which among the tests they would have their Nascent Soul Realm cultivators take part in. "We want the Blind Maze trial."

"Blind Maze trial?" Rean and Roan were obviously clueless. They had no idea what it meant.

Ormo, knowing that the twins had just arrived not long ago, explained through a Divine Sense Message. 'The field will transform into an illusion formation where Divine Sense is useless. Not only that, you won't be able to trust your eyes either. The objective is to reach the end of the maze faster than anyone else. To be honest, this is a test that's more focused on memory than anything else. You have to memorize the endless amount of paths that you went through, wrong ones, right ones, fake ones, dead ends, floors, and so on...'

'Seems quite annoying. Why would they select such a thing?' Rean asked Ormo.

Ormo quickly answered, 'That's the kind of test you select when you aren't confident in some more direct tests. In this case, you would pretty much be relying on luck. It's an often-used method when weaker powers get challenged.'

Rean and Roan had to admit they didn't have anything that could help them pass this test quickly. Unless... 'Can you beat your opponents if you find them in this illusionary maze?' If they can get rid of the competition, it would obviously be much easier for them to win in the end.

However, Ormo shook his head. 'No. Battles are prohibited. You might bump into the guys of the Hura Clan, but other than looking at their faces, there isn't much you can do. Of course, nothing stops you from following them, but that also means you might be heading in the wrong direction.'



'Tch...' Rean and Roan obviously didn't like that.

However, Rean got an idea. 'You told us that we just need to find the way out as fast as possible, right?'

Ormo nodded in response. 'Yes.'

Rean pondered over it for a bit and continued to ask, 'Is there anything in the maze that would disqualify me from the challenge?'

Ormo shook his head again. 'As long as you don't intervene with the opponents or try to destroy anything, you're free to do whatever you want.'

Rean's eyes lit up. 'Then it's pretty much decided. Roan, we're going for the most tiresome but almost guaranteed method. I just don't know if we'll be the first ones out or not, but the chances are high.'

When Roan heard the word tiresome, he immediately understood what Rean wanted to do. He then thought about that method and had to admit it would work quite well for them. 'Sigh... I guess it's better than nothing.'

Ormo didn't understand what the twins were talking about. However, he didn't try to intervene either. 'Well, even if you lose this test, there's still the last one, which will be selected by the judges. Don't worry about it.'

Rean and Roan nodded after that.

Himatikia spent some time preparing the formation with the other elders from the purging organization. Around 40 minutes later, she finally called everyone's attention, saying, "The Blind Maze trial is ready. For those watching, you just need to focus your Divine Sense on the core located above the formation. You will be able to watch anyone through it as long as you wish it."

Following that, she looked at the participants of the test and said, "Now, the rules are simple. You are prohibited from destroying anything or getting in the way of the other participants in any way." With that, she ordered one of her elders. "Turn on the formation."

Death... and me

#### Chapter 1529: Simple but Effective

Suddenly, everyone's vision blurred before they all found themselves inside the blind maze. Rean's group soon appeared in what seemed to be a big corridor, even though they knew it was mostly an illusion.

Rean and Roan tried to use their Divine Senses, but the formation completely nulled them. The other Nascent Soul Realm cultivators of the Tranquilo Sect then looked at the twins, asking, "Sect Master Ormo told us to follow whatever you decide on doing. What do you want us to do?"

Rean shook his head in response as he told them, "To be honest, you can do whatever you want. Just select a path and start exploring the maze. Who knows, you might get out before everyone else."

"This..." They were taken aback by Rean's words.

Seeing that, Rean then said, "It's not like that we don't want to help, but instead, there isn't much we can help you with. This isn't a test of knowledge, side occupation, battle, or anything like that. It's highly reliant on luck and memory. With that said, you guys might as well trust your own selves. Or could it be that you know some way Roan and I can help you in this kind of test?"

They all shook their heads after hearing that. Sure enough, if no one found a better method until today for this test, those guys wouldn't be much better either. "Alright, everyone. Let's split."

Nevertheless, before departing, one of them asked Rean and Roan, "What about you two?" He was just curious to see if the twins would do the same thing.

Though, instead of responding outright, the twins each went to one side of the corridor and touched the wall. "Us? We will rely on speed."

Naturally, that confused everyone. If speed was enough, everyone would have tried that already. Everyone knew it was a lot more about luck and memory than anything else.

However, the twins didn't answer before Rean and Roan activated their skills.

'Life Style, First Form, Enhancement!'

'Death Style, First Movement Form, Shadow Steps!'

\*Zush!\*

The Tranquio Sect members didn't have the chance to ask anything else. Only the twins' afterimage remained when they tried, which quickly disappeared as well. Rean moved straight to one side while Roan went to the other. The Enhancement skill had a much greater effect thanks to Rean and Roan's Third Grade Star Body. That, combined with Shadow Steps, made the twins unbeatable. Thanks to it, their speed immediately surpassed any Nascent Soul Realm cultivator in this place at least several times.

Outside, some of the Soul Transformation and even Saint Realm cultivators wondered if any of them could be as fast as the twins. Indeed, they were just that fast.

"They had been hiding their real speed..."

That was the thought in everyone's heads. It turned out that the speed Rean used in the battle against the Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators was far from his real abilities.

Zosviei narrowed his eyes, saying, "So what if they're fast? They might cover a much greater distance, but it will also make it harder to memorize the paths. Other than memory, they're completely relying on luck alone."

Quite a few people nodded in agreement. If one didn't make sense of the place one was in, chances were that one would keep returning to the same place time and time again. Just speed alone won't help.

However, it was at this time that Himatikia laughed out loud, saying, "Hahaha! I see! I see! So that's how it is! Hahaha!"

Naturally, everyone's attention was caught by that, including the elders from the purging organization. "Himatikia, what is it? Do you know what the twins are trying to do?"

Himatikia nodded as she looked around. Although she noticed a few faces who seemed to have realized the twins' trick, the majority looked completely lost. "Well, telling you what they're doing won't change the results of this test anyway. In fact, this is probably a trick that only people with much greater speed than their opponents can use. If your speed was similar or just slightly higher, it would be completely useless. However, the twins' speed can compare to some Saint Realm cultivators, so it's the perfect method for them. I can't guarantee that they'll be the first ones to find the exit since luck also plays a part in this test. However, their chances right now are very, very high."

"Stop beating around the bush already," one of the elders from the purging organization complained. "Just tell us already what they're trying to do."

Himatikia smiled before explaining, "They're following the walls."

Though, that statement only puzzled them even more. "Following the walls?"

Though, quite a few people realized what was happening because of it.

Himatikia then continued, "Yes, following the walls. Look closely. Both Rean and Roan are touching one of their hands against the wall on their side. It doesn't matter how fast they are. Their hand never loses contact with the wall."

Only then did the majority realize this part. "They're planning to cover the entire maze with that method!"

Himatikia nodded in response. "Correct. There are quite a few tricks in this blind maze, even fake paths and disorientating traps. However, the twins aren't even opening their eyes. They completely shut themselves from the outside world and are only following their touch. That way, no illusion or fake path will matter. Their hands will always be touching the wall."

\*Thud!\*

Suddenly, Zosviei fell to the ground, murmuring, "How can this be..."

He understood that as long as the twins followed the walls, they were guaranteed to leave the maze eventually. The walls would definitely be connected to the exit. It's just that the twins weren't choosing any path, so they were likely to pass through at least half of the entire maze before that happened. If it was anyone else, such a method would be pretty much useless. After all, the time necessary for it was just too high. Someone else would be bound to find the exit before that.

However, the twins were several times faster than the fastest Nascent Soul Realm cultivators in that maze. They could totally cover half of the entire maze before anyone could step out by relying on other methods. It was all about speed! Unless the cultivators of the Hura Clan were extremely lucky and selected the right paths one after another, they were bound to lose!

Death... and me

Chapter 1530: A New Challenge

After everyone realized what the twins were doing, there was another uproar.

"Holy shit!"

"Can they really do that?!"

"Isn't it unfair to the Hura Clan?"

"Unfair? They're following all the rules. How come it's unfair?"

"Hah! If it was your clan who had the twins, would you tell them not to do that?"

The opinions were divided, but Himatikia couldn't care less. All that mattered was that she was sure all the rules were being followed. Besides, she found the twins' display quite entertaining. As for whether it would really work or not, that answer would appear eventually.

Around two hours and twenty minutes later, someone finally stepped out of the maze in a flash of black and white light. That flash then disappeared, showing the appearance of a young man in his twenties. Surprisingly, that man was none other than Roan! Because he felt that the wall he was touching disappeared, he stopped moving to see what was happening, muttering to himself, "Am I out already? Well, that was faster than I thought."

Behind Roan, the formation conjuring up the blind maze suddenly disappeared, revealing all the cultivators trapped in that illusion. Naturally, Rean was among them. "Hmm? Could it be I'm out?" However, he quickly noticed Roan in the distance while he was still within the field's range. "Tch. You and your luck."

Roan didn't seem to care, though. "It was you who selected this method, so don't complain about the results."

Once again, the twins paid little attention to the surroundings and the result of their efforts.

However, Ormo and Zosviei were different. They were obviously very interested in the end result. It's just that one of them didn't want to hear it while the other couldn't wait.

Unfortunately for the former, Himatikia didn't waste time, saying, "The results are out. The Tranquio Sect has won this challenge issued by the Hura Clan. As per the rules, if the challenger loses, he will need to pay twice the amount he conceded for the challenge. The Hura Clan wanted three kilometers from the north side of the Tranquio Sect, from which they are connected. With that said, they will have to deliver six kilometers from their own territory on the south side of their clan."

Himatikia continued, "Let it be known that the Tranquio Sect has the right to decline any challenges for the next twenty years unless they issue the challenge themselves." That rule was created to prevent several powers from challenging the same opponents one after another. After all, that would be taking advantage of the previous contest. However, the same couldn't be said from the Hura Clan. As the challenger themselves, they didn't have the right to refuse a challenge. That was another risk the challenger had to take if they wanted more territory.

Suddenly, an old man's voice echoed in the field, saying, "Hahaha! That was truly an eye-opener. To think the Tranquio Sect obtained such promising disciples."

Immediately, Ormo and Zosviei recognized that voice. "Jan..."

Jan was the leader of the Crita Organization, which was also located close to their Sect and Clan. Obviously, they had challenged each other's powers in the past for more territories.

Nevertheless, Ormo simply smiled at him, as he knew very well what Jan was planning to do. "Hey, Jan, you came right on time. I'm going to hold a banquet to commemorate my sect's victory and my new six kilometers of territory. Wanna participate?"

Jan shook his head in response, telling him, "I do want to talk with these twins of yours. However, I have a more pressing matter at hand." Jan then looked at Zosviei, who had a terrible expression on his face. "My Crita Organization challenges the Hura Clan for a territory contest. We will bet the same as the Hura Clan did, three kilometers of territory."

Zosviei wanted nothing more than to beat Jan up right there and then. Unfortunately, he couldn't do that as Jan didn't break any rules. He was the one who challenged the Tranquio Sect, so he didn't have the right to refuse other challenges after it was over. "Hmph! My Hura Clan accepts. If you think you'll win against us that easily, you better think twice. We have more Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators to replace the ones who were beaten during the last fight."

Jan laughed in response, saying, "Hahaha! Is that so? Well, that's no problem since I still know that you sent your best ones before. Since we have a very good chance at winning the Core and Soul Fusion Realm contest, I can't really let this opportunity pass up, right? It's good that you accepted the challenge."

Zosviei still tried to make Jan give up on that idea. "Aren't you afraid that someone will challenge you straight away after we finish our contest?"

Sadly for him, Jan was prepared for that. "There's no need to worry. I obviously reached an agreement with those who might come after us. We won't flee from this challenge."

Himatikia couldn't help but sigh after hearing that. She thought she would have some time to talk with the twins now that this challenge was over. She wanted to know more about their cultivation abilities and, if possible, obtain some of their cultivation methods. However, as the one responsible for this area,

she had to oversee this challenge as well. "Since both sides are ready, we might as well use this field. Crita Organization Leader, Jan Dui, you have obviously brought your own disciples already, right?"

Jan immediately nodded, responding, "But of course!" He then looked in the direction he came from, shouting, "All of you, are you ready?"

"Yes, Leader Jan!" Following that, several groups of cultivators appeared. At least ten members of each cultivation realm were within those people, and all of them were at the Peak Stage of their respective realms. "Elder Himatikia, we can start at any time."

Himatikia nodded after that. "Very well." She then looked at the Tranquio Sect, telling them, "You guys have already finished your business, so open space for the Crita Organization's members."

At the same time, she sent a Divine Sense Message to the twins, telling them, 'I want to talk to you later.'