

Death 1651

Death... and me

Chapter 1651: End of the First Test

Everyone looked around and immediately cheered for joy.

"We did it!"

"Holy shit! My dantian is completely empty!"

"You think you're the only one like that? My demon core is drier than sand!"

"Just another hour in that place, and I would be forced to leave."

Rean's group was in a much better condition, though. "Hahaha! See? I told you that we would have no issues with our Divine Energy consumption."

Erla, Min, and Habac were ecstatic! "I can't believe we passed the first test that easily!"

"That's because of Rean, of course!" Habac mentioned.

Min and Erla nodded as they looked at Rean, saying, "We don't know how you did it, but that was the key to our success. Thank you!"

Rean shook his head, telling them in response, "You talk as if I could have resisted on my own forever. It was thanks to everyone's efforts that we got to the end. Erla kept the right distance from the monsters without ever leaving the pre-determined area. Min and Habac's low consumption but highly effective attacks disrupted most of the monsters' ranged attacks. Lastly, any attacks that passed through the first defense were stopped by my Reversive Arcs. It was a team effort in the end."

On Roan's side, Krikei went straight to the thing he was most curious about. "Just what was that energy in your scythe? It wasn't Space Power or Divine Energy. However, it made your attacks just as powerful."

Lita and Vrie's attention was caught after that. They took longer to notice it, but they also understood that Roan's attacks had something extra in there too. "Indeed! We felt like you could slice through anything with that shit."

Roan shook his head, saying, "This is something I came up with. It's also possible to use with any other weapon, but it can't be taught. You need to learn it on your own. That's all I can say."

Krikei's group narrowed their eyes for a moment. However, Roan had been this secretive all the time until now. It wasn't anything new. "Fine, just make sure you're ready for the next test next month."

Roan nodded in response. "I also want to enter Jhiod, so that goes without saying."

Celis and Kentucky's group were a lot more straightforward. They didn't use anything impressive. The only thing was that they were strong. Simple as that. Naturally, they also agreed to join forces for the next test.

Suddenly, a man appeared above everyone in the hall. "Congratulations to those who completed the test. Your badges have been recorded in the sect, so you don't need to do anything. We know who passed the test and who didn't. For those who failed, you can simply try it next year."

Soon after, he waved his sleeve as several purple-colored badges flew in different directions. Soon, they landed in the hands of a few cultivators and demon beasts.

Rean and Roan could see jealousy in the eyes of pretty much everyone who looked at those purple-colored badges. It wasn't hard to tell what those badges meant after looking at the happy expressions on their owner's faces.

Sure enough, the man continued, "Also, congratulations to the 37 participants that have now concluded all 12 tests after the Deep Sea Monster Assault was over. You have all acquired the right to enter Jhiod Continent and join the Jhiod Sect. If you want, you can do that straight away by talking with the Jhiod Sect workers in the transfer room."

He continued, "As for the rest, I hope I can see even more of you pass the next test and complete all 12 tests."

Rean and Roan nodded after hearing that. 'So that's the proof that you passed all tests. It's quite simple.'

Rean then mentioned, 'I expected this test to be extremely hard due to the number of cultivators and demon beasts that succeeded. However, it was relatively easy.'

Roan disagreed with Rean. 'It wasn't. This was a resistance test, and I have to admit they did a very, very good job with it. This is definitely a very hard test. It's just that we had that cheat code called World Swallowing Cedar. Without Celis, even the two of us would have struggled to pass this test.'

'Well, that's true.' Rean agreed that much. 'Still, don't you think it to be strange? The system is giving us such a huge reward to complete all twelve tests. If it's this easy for us, don't you feel like there's something else?'

Sister Orb was the one to answer that question. [There isn't.]

Naturally, the twins' attention was caught by those words. 'How do you know?'

[Because of Celis.] Sister Orb answered. [Celis wasn't supposed to be part of the connection between the two of you, remember? It was nothing but a coincidence that it happened. The system calculated the chances of you passing the tests without Celis' power. After all, the system exists for you, not for him nor Kentucky.]

'Oh!' Rean was happy to hear that. 'So that's how it is. It didn't include Celis in its predictions.'

Roan warned Rean, though. 'Don't get ahead of yourself. Celis' Divine Energy supply can definitely help. However, do you think all the tests will be like this one, simple resistance?'

Rean's happiness immediately vanished after that. 'You truly know how to ruin one's mood, don't you?'

'Did I ruin your mood? Then, that's good.' Roan obviously couldn't care less about how Rean felt.

Rean ignored the guy and immediately looked at the next test. Of course, each test only happened once per month. Since the previous one only lasted one week, the next one wouldn't start so soon. 'Soul Land, huh?'

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Chapter 1652: Soul Land

Rean expected that, saying in response, "So it's basically a Soul Power test, huh?"

Erla took the chance to ask after that. "I can use Soul Power like everyone else. However, I'm not very good at it, just like most demon beasts. What kind of dangers can we expect there?"

Habac continued, "The Soul Land is a Dimensional Realm that prioritizes Soul Power. It has a formation that locks one's Divine Energy inside everyone's body. However, it doesn't make it impossible to use Divine Energy."

Min understood why, saying, "That's because Soul Power is always used with Divine Energy to start with, right?"

Habac nodded in response. "Exactly. What the formation there does is prevent Divine Energy from being used as the main force. You will have to use your Soul Power to drive your Divine Energy instead of the other way around."

Divine Energy was the main fighting energy in the Realm of Gods. Everyone relied on it more than anything else. With that said, Divine Energy was always used first, and then Soul Power was added to the mix when using attacks or any other skill that required the two.

"Also, there's a limit to how much Divine Energy one can use. It will be based on how much Soul Power you can control. If your Soul Power is on par with your Divine Energy, then you can obviously use as much Divine Energy as you always did. It's just that you will have to start with Soul Power first. If your Soul Power is much lower than your Divine Energy, then your Soul Power will limit how much Divine Energy you can use."

Habac shrugged his shoulders after that. “Well, the number of participants who can match their Soul Power with their Divine Energy is pitifully low, let alone those who have more Soul Power than Divine Energy. Expect to see a lot of participants fail this test. In fact, I fared quite badly last time I tried it.”

Back on Roan’s side, he also received the same explanation. “Krikei, as far as I felt, your Soul Power is definitely not worse than your Divine Energy.”

Krikei, the Kipos Lake Spirit, didn’t deny it. “Oh! So you could tell, huh? Indeed. My Kipos Race is quite good at Soul Power abilities. My Divine Energy does indeed match my Soul Power in strength. That’s why I’m quite a bit stronger than others at the same cultivation level as myself.”

Lita sighed after that. “My Soul Power isn’t anything worth mentioning.”

Vrie was even worse, saying, “Your Soul Power should allow you to display at least 60 to 70% of your real strength. Look at me. I’m a demon beast. I won’t be able to do any better than 40 to 50%. We demon beasts rarely ever focus on Soul Power, after all. Not that we didn’t want to focus on it, but because we didn’t even know it existed until we gained sentience at the Transition Realm.”

He was right. That contributed to the number of demon beasts who were always poor at Soul Power. However, they usually had their own demon beast traits to rely on. However, this was a Soul Power test, so it didn’t help them much. Then again, the Jhiod Sect was looking for those who rise against the odds... or hoped they die in the tests.

Krikei then looked at Roan after that. “Because of that mysterious energy in your weapon, I couldn’t measure your Soul Power that well, Roan. How good are you at it?”

Roan nodded, responding, “I’m the same as you. My Soul Power matches my Divine Energy perfectly.” In fact, too perfectly. After all, both of them were merged due to the system’s upgrade. If one got stronger, the other would follow suit.

It was then that Vrie thought about something. “Wait! Roan, that mysterious energy you gathered on your weapon was not made of Divine Energy, right? Doesn’t that mean you can use it?”

Roan agreed with Vrie, replying, "I expect that to be the case. But there's no need to worry. It should be fine since my Divine Energy won't be restricted. We will keep our four-member formation and use Krikei and me as cores since we can both use our powers to the fullest."

Krikei had no issues with that. "Fine by me. We can support Lita and Vrie's Divine Energy that way."

Rean and Roan's groups were more or less covered. However, this test was far from being considered easy. That's because there were quite a few people and demon beasts there that could also match their Divine Energy and Soul Powers. The test was obviously aimed at those beings. As for the rest, they would have to deal with it themselves.

Well, the twins were definitely on another level since their Soul Power and Divine Energy was merged. They already checked it before. If Soul Power was measured, their Soul Power would show as being much stronger than anyone at the same level due to the merge.

There was one group that wasn't feeling very well, though. That was Kentucky and Celis's group. "Here it is, one of the nemeses of our demon beast races, the Soul Land test."

"It's too unfair for us."

"Hey, don't complain. Don't forget the Pressure Realm test is very advantageous for us demon beasts instead."

Kentucky and Celis didn't seem too much concerned, though. 'Well, we have our Soul Power and Divine Energy merged because of Rean and Roan...' they thought to themselves. Indeed, due to the connection, any system reward regarding Divine Energy was also passed down to those two. Right now, Kentucky and Celis's Soul Power were as strong as their Divine Energy. Of course, they didn't tell the others about it since the Soul Gem System was a secret.

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Chapter 1653: The one and the same

And just like that, weeks passed in a flash as they just cultivated. In fact, they cultivated more during these weeks before the Soul Land test than they did in the last two months. That's because all four of them focused on it. Usually, it would be Celis who cultivated nonstop. The other three always had something to do other than cultivating. Rean would be working on formations, Roan would be the one traveling, while Kentucky was called everywhere to help out with the sect.

Eventually, the next month arrived, and the twins' group came out of the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Just like before, Rean gave Celis a lot of Rank Two Divine Stones to use in case they ran out of Divine Energy. Though that shouldn't be the case in the Soul Land, it was better to be safe than sorry.

"Hey, how have your last three weeks been?" Rean asked with a smile when he gathered with Min, Erla, and Habac again.

"Pretty much fine," Habac answered with a shrug. "In my case, I've been preparing for this test since last year when I entered to check it. I focused a lot on my Soul Power, so my cultivation barely moved at all during the last twelve months. In exchange, I should be able to bring out 60 to 70% of my Divine Energy power."

Min and Erla sighed after that. "We weren't prepared for it at all. We worked on our Soul Power, but just a few weeks is far from enough to reach any meaningful result." In Erla's case, she was even worse than Vrie, only being able to use only 30 to 40% of her Divine Energy through the use of Soul Power. As for Min, he was only slightly better. He could achieve 40 to 50%, but that's because he was part of the humanoid races.

Rean laughed before he patted Erla and Min's shoulders in response. "Hahaha! Come on! You two are a couple, aren't you? I'm sure you did something more than just focus on your Soul Power. In fact, doing 'that' was definitely a good thing to relieve your stress after the first test."

Erla's face went slightly red while Min's mouth twitched when he heard that. "You're not very popular with your jokes, are you?"

Rean nodded, saying, "That's true. I wonder why since they're so good." He then glanced at Erla, adding, "Though it doesn't seem like what I said was a joke in her eyes."

Habac couldn't help but say in response, "Come on. If you tease them like that, they'll be even worse at the test. Whether a baby will be born a few months later or not is their problem, don't you think?" Well, Habac was having fun as well... especially after he passed one of the hardest tests, which in his opinion, was the Deep Sea test.

Rean laughed a lot more while the couple pretended they didn't hear anything.

Meanwhile, Celis asked one of the demon beasts in his group who had taken the Soul Land test before. "So, there's no such thing as someone attacking us?"

The one he talked to was a Jade Ox in human form. "That's correct. The test is all about forcing our way through, but not against enemies. Instead, it's against the environment."

At Roan's group... "So what exactly are we fighting against?" Roan asked.

"According to the information I got, we will start the test at a certain position of the Dimensional Realm," Krikei explained. "From there, we have to make our way through the many barriers along the way. All of them can only be taken down by attacks that use Soul Power as the conductor."

In Rean's group, Habac was the one explaining. "But don't think we're safe. These same barriers and the environment around us will send out several attacks in our direction now and then. They don't contribute anything to the test. Instead, they're all attacks with enough power to kill those who are caught with their guards down. Believe it or not, there was even one time when a giant wall several kilometers tall appeared in front of my last group and began to tumble in our direction. The wall was extremely hard and thick. We had no time to retreat either. In the end, we tried to open a hole through it and failed. With that, we could only crush our badges and get teleported out before being smashed by it. These kinds of crazy situations are common inside there."

All the groups also received similar information.

In the room where Libraia and the elders of the Jhiod Sect' building were staying, they accompanied the show through their monitoring formations. "Hmm... we have quite a few experienced participants this time," Libraia mentioned.

Iglet looked at her and could tell what she was thinking. "Are you going to start this next test with that?"

Govin and the other elders couldn't help but smile when they heard that. "That will be a big surprise for them. Hahaha"

Libraia, obviously, was having fun watching. “Since none of you object to it, I guess I’ll go do that.” She touched a few runes on the formation in front of her as the smile on her face widened.

Back in the hall, the spatial gate that connected to the Soul Land Dimensional Realm was finally opened. Following that, one of the Jhiod Sect members came out to announce. “The Soul Land is open now. As always, attacking other participants in this test is prohibited. Your target is to reach the other end of the Soul Land Dimensional Realm. Now, that’s all. Just go out already.”

Everyone quickly entered the gate, soon appearing in the Soul Land. However, they quickly noticed that none of them could move forward.

“Don’t worry. The Soul Land test only starts after the spatial gate closes. That’s why we can’t move yet,” Habac explained. The same kind of explanation happened everywhere.

A few minutes later, everyone felt the force holding their bodies disappear. “It finally started!”

Usually, the groups would follow their own paths and move away from each other. After all, it’s known that the higher the number of participants close to each other, the harder the obstacles they would come across. In the end, using too many cultivators, demon beasts, and spirits was a foolish idea. That’s why everyone kept their groups the same way as they did during the last test. Well, at least those who survived the last one, that is.

Unfortunately, none of the groups advanced at all after the test started. Not that they didn’t want to, but that they couldn’t.

Rean’s mouth twitched as he looked to both sides and ahead of him. There, he saw a gigantic wall several kilometers tall and who knows how long. Rean simply couldn’t see the end of it either on both sides. “Habac, this can’t be that wall you mentioned, right?”

Habac let out cold sweat as he said in response, “What if I tell you this wall is the one and the same?”

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Chapter 1654: Make Sure You Avoid Them

Krikei, as the one with the highest Soul Power among them, was having a much harder time. “Arrgh! It doesn’t matter what I do. I can’t keep this pollen away from me. It’s as if they’re following me.”

He wasn’t wrong. The pollen seemed to gather around the participants who had the highest concentration of Soul Power. In the end, having strong Soul Power in the Soul Land doesn’t always mean a good thing.

Roan also tried to get rid of the pollen, and his Dark Element could more or less do so. However, there was way too much for him to take care of. Even with the battle formation and Celis recovering Divine Energy, it would be impossible for him to keep fending it off forever. “It’s just another obstacle. Try to use as little Soul Power as possible and have Vrie carry you. That should make things easier.”

Krikei nodded and immediately jumped on Vrie’s back. Vrie, as the sole demon beast in the group, had the smallest Soul Power among them all. Thanks to that, the pollen barely gathered on him. “Roan, Lita, you two should jump on my back as well. Use your Soul Power in case some other obstacle appears, or something else attacks us. Leave the movement to me since I’m the least affected here.”

Roan and Lita agreed with Vrie’s plan and jumped on his back. Vrie, who was in his Silver-eyed Black Tarantula form, shot his webs everywhere. He then used them to move through the field and tried to avoid the places with the highest concentration of pollen. Since his webs were just his natural ability, they weren’t affected by the Soul Land. Well, they would be useless to stop any Soul Power attack as well. That’s why he told Roan and the others to deal with anything that might appear.

The Dimensional Realm itself wasn’t that big. If Kentucky was able to fly in a straight line, he would reach the end in just three hours. However, it was anything but that for all the groups. Rean’s group, of course, wasn’t doing any better.

bang, bang, bang!

Arrgh!

Erla suddenly screamed in pain as something that looked like a spear came out of her body.

“Erla!” Min immediately stopped and grabbed Erla.

Rean narrowed before shouting, "Break!"

crack, crack, crack...

Shatter!

Using his Divine Soul Power, Rean destroyed the spear, leaving only a hole behind. 'Just what the hell is happening here?'

Habac bitterly smiled as he hurried his group. 'Just keep running. This is the materialization of Soul Power Weapons. I don't know how they do it, but the Soul Power Weapon can literally materialize inside one's body. Once that happens, what happened to Erla can happen to any of us.'

'Wait!' Min asked. "Erla can't move straight away. This spear materialized close to her Demon Core. Her meridians got affected. She needs time to recover."

'Don't worry. Just carry Erla on your back.' Rean hurried Min as well. 'Don't forget that I'm here.'

Min then remembered Rean's healing powers and immediately nodded. 'Alright!' All those words were exchanged with Divine Sense Messages, so they happened almost instantly.

'Life Style, Second Form, Instant Recovery!'

As they ran, Erla's injury began to close up at fast speeds. However, the weapon materialization wouldn't stop just because Rean was working on Erla.

Argh!

Another one, this time a Soul Power Saber, appeared out of nowhere inside Habac's leg. Fortunately, it appeared in a mostly vertical position, so Habac's leg wasn't cut off by that. "Fuck this shit!" He

immediately used his own Soul Power to drive his Divine Energy and attacked the saber, destroying it, just like Rean did with the spear.

"I'll heal you in a second. Can you hold on?" Rean said, concerned.

"Hmph!" Habac steeled his resolve. "I've seen all of this shit before. These materializations are definitely dangerous. However, they will never materialize inside one's vital points like the neck, head, heart, or dantian and demon core." Once the saber was destroyed, it dissolved into Soul Power again, so the injury itself was pretty much clean. Habac simply drove his Divine Energy into his body with his Soul Power to stop the bleeding. "I can hold it for as long as I need."

Rean quickly finished with Erla before moving to Habac. Unfortunately, he was the next one as a half-moon blade pierced through his chest from inside, quite close to his heart. Normally, it would open up a hole that would make most cultivators stop straight away. Well, Rean wasn't just anyone. His Third Grade Star Body wasn't at Kentucky's level, but not too far off. Because of that, the half-moon blade itself couldn't materialize completely. Only a third of it took form before it couldn't push aside Rean's flesh and bones anymore. "Break!"

Rean wasn't going to wait for it to keep trying, of course. He immediately used his own Divine Soul Power to destroy that blade. At the same time, he finally understood what was happening. 'So that's how it is...'

Rean focused on his own injury first when suddenly, he grabbed Habac's shoulder and pulled him aside. As soon as he did that, a weapon that looked like a huge shuriken appeared right where he was a fraction of a second ago. The shuriken then simply fell to the ground and transformed back into Soul Power a moment later. "This..."

'Life Style, Second Form, Instant Recovery!'

He also took the chance to heal Habac's leg as he used his Divine Sense to explain, 'Divine Energy! Use your Soul Scan not to look for physical things. Instead, use it to look for Divine Energy. A few spots around us have a very tiny and almost imperceptible amount of concentrated Divine Energy. They're all moving too. It's very hard to notice, but they're there. Divine Energy is ethereal, so it can pass through our bodies without a problem. When our bodies pass through them, they transform into Soul Power Weapons. Make sure you avoid them.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1655: Let's see what I can do

Libraia agreed with him, saying, "Well, that's true. Then again, the healing power of that boy is really outstanding. Even that White Scaled Carp, who's above his realm, was healed in just a few dozen seconds. Truly impressive. Does he match our sect's healing techniques?"

Iglet pondered over it for a bit. "I believe so. However, I've never seen anyone using Light Element for healing, so we'll have to ask him later. Perhaps it's possible to control Yang Energy to gather Light Element and use it the same way as he does."

Libraia shook her head after that. "We'll do it if he completes all twelve tests. Didn't you see? His brother and even that Minokawa can use the same Light Element skills. I don't want to scare them away."

Everyone nodded and continued to watch the test.

Be it Rean, Roan, or Kentucky's group, all of them passed through their own share of dangers. There were real near-death situations during the test. Ultimately, they still crossed the entire Soul Land, arriving at what seemed to be a spatial gate. After they passed through it, they reappeared in the entrance hall once again.

"Phew..." Rean felt relieved. "Holy shit. I don't want to go back to that place ever again. The challenges there were just too bizarre."

Erla, Min, and Habac nodded vigorously. "Same goes for us."

Roan then contacted Rean through their Soul Connection. 'Are you out? If so, help me heal two members of my group.'

Rean was taken aback to hear that. Sure, Roan's healing skill wasn't as good as Rean's, but he was definitely much better than any other healer Rean had seen before. The Instant Recovery skill should be enough to heal pretty much anything as long as one wasn't dead or had their dantian or demon core destroyed. 'Is there something you can't heal with my skill?'

Roan nodded, saying, 'We were caught by a Soul Power trap that created some kind of barrier inside one's meridians. I'm fine since I used my Dark Element to destroy it. The same goes for Krikei since he's a Spirit. He doesn't have meridians. However, the other two got their meridians damaged and blocked. It's directly connected to their dantian and demon core too. If I use my Dark Element, I'm afraid it will be redirected directly into them. Your control over the Purification skill is definitely better than mine.'

Rean nodded in response and quickly moved to the area Roan was waiting for. Erla, Min, and Habac didn't have anything better to do, so they simply tagged along.

Soon, Rean saw that many cultivators and demon beasts around Roan seemed to be suffering on the ground. It was obvious that Roan's group wasn't the only one to be caught by the trap. "Was that trap this good?"

Krikei looked at Rean and was immediately surprised at how alike the two looked. "You said you would call for help. It has to be this guy, right? He's identical to you... except for hair color."

Roan nodded, saying, "His healing skills are better than mine, so let him take a look."

Rean smiled and touched Lita's shoulder first. Soon after, he used his Divine Sense to check her condition. However, he couldn't see much. 'Oh, I see. It's a Soul Power attack, so I have to use a Soul Power Scan instead.' Rean's Divine Soul Power then fueled his scan as he looked at Lita's meridians again. "This..."

Rean got up and narrowed his eyes, muttering, "This is quite complicated..."

It was Roan who was surprised this time. "What did you find out?"

"The things that are blocking and damaging their meridians are indeed made out of Soul Power," Rean explained. "However, they seem to be alive. It's like they're worms. I'm afraid that if I use my Purification skill to get rid of them, they will rampage in their bodies. They might really lose their demon core and dantian." It was the first time Rean had seen something like that.

'Have most of the geniuses who take the test die... only the few who pass can be brought to Jhiod.' Rean thought about what the real identity of this test was. 'The Jhiod Sect isn't joking about that.'

Several of the cultivators and demon beasts went to the Jhiod Sect workers to ask about how they could heal their meridian problem. However, all they heard was that they knew the risks when they entered the test. No one gave them an answer that could help heal those afflicted by the Soul Power Worm Rean found out about.

Lita and Vrie might be suffering, but they still heard Rean's words. "Can you at least try? If things continue like this, then we'll seriously lose our dantian and demon core."

Rean then looked at Roan after that, asking, 'What about Kentucky and Celis?'

'They're fine,' Roan answered as he pointed in their direction. 'The path they took was different, so I don't think they came across anything like my group did.'

Rean looked there and could see that Kentucky and Celis seemed to be resting. Other than that, they didn't look like they were experiencing any problems. 'That's good then.'

Finally, he looked back at Lita and Vrie. "I can try it. However, do you even trust me? As far as I'm concerned, I could simply try to hasten the effects, saying that it was the worms' fault. What if your spirit friend here blamed me later?"

Roan closed his eyes, avoiding any attention. He didn't know Krikei and the others before the test, so his words didn't really have much value in this situation. The only ones who could accept to take the risk were Lita and Vrie.

Krikei knew that they didn't have another choice anyway. "Don't worry. I won't blame you unless I see that you're purposely trying to make things worse."

Vrie and Lita nodded as well. "The same goes for us. Just do it."

Rean could only agree in the end. "Fine. Let's see what I can do."

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Chapter 1656: Make Sure You Avoid Them

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"I'll heal you in a second. Can you hold on?" Rean said, concerned.

"Hmph!" Habac steeled his resolve. "I've seen all of this shit before. These materializations are definitely dangerous. However, they will never materialize inside one's vital points like the neck, head, heart, or dantian and demon core." Once the saber was destroyed, it dissolved into Soul Power again, so the injury itself was pretty much clean. Habac simply drove his Divine Energy into his body with his Soul Power to stop the bleeding. "I can hold it for as long as I need."

Rean quickly finished with Erla before moving to Habac. Unfortunately, he was the next one as a half-moon blade pierced through his chest from inside, quite close to his heart. Normally, it would open up a hole that would make most cultivators stop straight away. Well, Rean wasn't just anyone. His Third Grade Star Body wasn't at Kentucky's level, but not too far off. Because of that, the half-moon blade itself couldn't materialize completely. Only a third of it took form before it couldn't push aside Rean's flesh and bones anymore. "Break!"

Rean wasn't going to wait for it to keep trying, of course. He immediately used his own Divine Soul Power to destroy that blade. At the same time, he finally understood what was happening. 'So that's how it is...'

Rean focused on his own injury first when suddenly, he grabbed Habac's shoulder and pulled him aside. As soon as he did that, a weapon that looked like a huge shuriken appeared right where he was a fraction of a second ago. The shuriken then simply fell to the ground and transformed back into Soul Power a moment later. "This..."

'Life Style, Second Form, Instant Recovery!'

He also took the chance to heal Habac's leg as he used his Divine Sense to explain, 'Divine Energy! Use your Soul Scan not to look for physical things. Instead, use it to look for Divine Energy. A few spots around us have a very tiny and almost imperceptible amount of concentrated Divine Energy. They're all moving too. It's very hard to notice, but they're there. Divine Energy is ethereal, so it can pass through our bodies without a problem. When our bodies pass through them, they transform into Soul Power Weapons. Make sure you avoid them.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1657: Let's see what I can do

Libraia agreed with him, saying, "Well, that's true. Then again, the healing power of that boy is really outstanding. Even that White Scaled Carp, who's above his realm, was healed in just a few dozen seconds. Truly impressive. Does he match our sect's healing techniques?"

Iglet pondered over it for a bit. "I believe so. However, I've never seen anyone using Light Element for healing, so we'll have to ask him later. Perhaps it's possible to control Yang Energy to gather Light Element and use it the same way as he does."

Libraia shook her head after that. "We'll do it if he completes all twelve tests. Didn't you see? His brother and even that Minokawa can use the same Light Element skills. I don't want to scare them away."

Everyone nodded and continued to watch the test.

Be it Rean, Roan, or Kentucky's group, all of them passed through their own share of dangers. There were real near-death situations during the test. Ultimately, they still crossed the entire Soul Land, arriving at what seemed to be a spatial gate. After they passed through it, they reappeared in the entrance hall once again.

"Phew..." Rean felt relieved. "Holy shit. I don't want to go back to that place ever again. The challenges there were just too bizarre."

Erla, Min, and Habac nodded vigorously. "Same goes for us."

Roan then contacted Rean through their Soul Connection. 'Are you out? If so, help me heal two members of my group.'

Rean was taken aback to hear that. Sure, Roan's healing skill wasn't as good as Rean's, but he was definitely much better than any other healer Rean had seen before. The Instant Recovery skill should be enough to heal pretty much anything as long as one wasn't dead or had their dantian or demon core destroyed. 'Is there something you can't heal with my skill?'

Roan nodded, saying, 'We were caught by a Soul Power trap that created some kind of barrier inside one's meridians. I'm fine since I used my Dark Element to destroy it. The same goes for Krikei since he's a Spirit. He doesn't have meridians. However, the other two got their meridians damaged and blocked. It's directly connected to their dantian and demon core too. If I use my Dark Element, I'm afraid it will be redirected directly into them. Your control over the Purification skill is definitely better than mine.'

Rean nodded in response and quickly moved to the area Roan was waiting for. Erla, Min, and Habac didn't have anything better to do, so they simply tagged along.

Soon, Rean saw that many cultivators and demon beasts around Roan seemed to be suffering on the ground. It was obvious that Roan's group wasn't the only one to be caught by the trap. "Was that trap this good?"

Krikei looked at Rean and was immediately surprised at how alike the two looked. "You said you would call for help. It has to be this guy, right? He's identical to you... except for hair color."

Roan nodded, saying, "His healing skills are better than mine, so let him take a look."

Rean smiled and touched Lita's shoulder first. Soon after, he used his Divine Sense to check her condition. However, he couldn't see much. 'Oh, I see. It's a Soul Power attack, so I have to use a Soul Power Scan instead.' Rean's Divine Soul Power then fueled his scan as he looked at Lita's meridians again. "This..."

Rean got up and narrowed his eyes, muttering, "This is quite complicated..."

It was Roan who was surprised this time. "What did you find out?"

"The things that are blocking and damaging their meridians are indeed made out of Soul Power," Rean explained. "However, they seem to be alive. It's like they're worms. I'm afraid that if I use my Purification skill to get rid of them, they will rampage in their bodies. They might really lose their demon core and dantian." It was the first time Rean had seen something like that.

'Have most of the geniuses who take the test die... only the few who pass can be brought to Jhiod.' Rean thought about what the real identity of this test was. 'The Jhiod Sect isn't joking about that.'

Several of the cultivators and demon beasts went to the Jhiod Sect workers to ask about how they could heal their meridian problem. However, all they heard was that they knew the risks when they entered the test. No one gave them an answer that could help heal those afflicted by the Soul Power Worm Rean found out about.

Lita and Vrie might be suffering, but they still heard Rean's words. "Can you at least try? If things continue like this, then we'll seriously lose our dantian and demon core."

Rean then looked at Roan after that, asking, 'What about Kentucky and Celis?'

'They're fine,' Roan answered as he pointed in their direction. 'The path they took was different, so I don't think they came across anything like my group did.'

Rean looked there and could see that Kentucky and Celis seemed to be resting. Other than that, they didn't look like they were experiencing any problems. 'That's good then.'

Finally, he looked back at Lita and Vrie. "I can try it. However, do you even trust me? As far as I'm concerned, I could simply try to hasten the effects, saying that it was the worms' fault. What if your spirit friend here blamed me later?"

Roan closed his eyes, avoiding any attention. He didn't know Krikei and the others before the test, so his words didn't really have much value in this situation. The only ones who could accept to take the risk were Lita and Vrie.

Krikei knew that they didn't have another choice anyway. "Don't worry. I won't blame you unless I see that you're purposely trying to make things worse."

Vrie and Lita nodded as well. "The same goes for us. Just do it."

Rean could only agree in the end. "Fine. Let's see what I can do."

Death... and me

Chapter 1658: From Inside Out

Immediately, Roan's Dark Element entered Lita's body, followed by Rean's Light Element. Both of them followed the meridians, quickly finding the Soul Power thing that was damaging her meridians. After that, Rean controlled the Dark Element to eliminate that worm-like Soul Power.

Arrrgh!

However, as soon as the Dark Element started to destroy it, the worm, together with the others present in the other meridians, acted together, going on a rampage. Seeing that, Rean immediately retracted the Dark Element. A few seconds later, the worms stopped their rampage. Only then did Lita's expression ease a bit after that.

"These things are more complicated than I expected. They went on a rampage when I started to destroy them. Not only that, because they are connected to her dantian through her meridians, the dantian was what suffered the greatest burden. I can't destroy them quick enough. Even if I can destroy them, I'm not sure if it'll have a detrimental effect on her cultivation."

Lita obviously heard all of that, asking in response, "Is there no way around it?"

Rean narrowed his eyes for a moment before he got an idea. "Not all your meridians have been infected with these worm-like Soul Power things. Let's do it like this. I'll send my skill through your meridians into your dantian, so I'll need you to let my power course through it. From there, I'll start to destroy the worm things. I'll basically work from inside out."

"This..." Lita was obviously concerned about that. Opening one's dantian to a foreign power. One would need to be desperate to do such a thing. After all, it also meant anyone would be able to destroy the cultivator's foundation, as well as their Nascent Soul.

Roan glanced at Lita after that. "Your dantian is already in a precarious state as it is. Rean won't insist, but I don't think you have a better choice."

Krikei agreed with Roan. "Lita, you need to go for it."

The pain caused by the worms continued as Lita finally gritted her teeth. "Fine! It's do or die."

Rean nodded in response. "Then, let's start."

'Life Style, Fourth Form, Purification!'

This time, Rean sent Dark and Light Elements through the healthy meridians, quickly arriving at Lita's dantian. Because she didn't resist it, both of them entered her dantian without many issues through the openings.

Rean was quite surprised by what he saw. "No wonder the things acted so roughly when I tried to eliminate them. They all have a core." Rean looked at what seemed to be the head of those Soul Power worms. Those heads could also be said to be their cores. "They're attaching themselves to her Divine Energy pool, using it to grow stronger."

Rean then warned Lita, "This probably gonna hurt quite a lot, so you better be prepared."

Lita nodded. "Just get over with it."

Rean then glanced at Roan, who understood what he meant.

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

Lita was then held by Roan's Shadow Binds, unable to move a muscle. "Don't worry. I'm only holding you in place so that you won't try anything during it."

Immediately after, Rean sent Roan's Dark Element into the Divine Energy Pool and ultimately attacked the worms' heads and cores.

"Ahhhhhh!"

Sure enough, Lita tried to contort in pain, but Roan's binds firmly held her in place as Rean worked. The pain was due to the danger the Soul Power worms felt. As a result, they tried to attack her meridians since Rean prevented them from doing anything else with her Divine Energy pool or dantian.

In fact, Rean expected her meridians to be damaged beyond repair by the time he finished... well, beyond repair for someone else. For Rean's healing skill, he was very confident he could make them recover.

Lita screamed and contorted for a whole ten minutes before the pain finally began to subside. It might have been just ten minutes, but for her, it was an eternity. That's because Roan's Dark Element was also used. As mentioned before, it ate life force, and the life force in the dantian wasn't an exception. If not for Rean protecting her dantian with Light Element, Roan's Dark Element would have destroyed Lita's dantian before the worms did.

Fifteen minutes later, Rean finally finished destroying the cores of the Soul Power worms. "Phew... you can let her go, Roan. I'm done with them."

Roan nodded before waving his hand. Soon after, the Shadow Binds disappeared as if they had never been there. It's just that Lita didn't seem to look well.

Rean nodded in response. "After I destroyed their cores, the rest of the worms' bodies dissolved into pure Soul Power. There was no need to destroy the rest."

Krikei couldn't help but mention, "Still, her meridians..."

Krikei wasn't the only one who thought about it. The place around Roan's group was full of people and demon beasts who were caught by the same trap. They were all watching as Rean worked on Lita, hoping he would succeed so that they could ask for help. However, because of what happened to Lita's meridians, they didn't know if it was worth the trade.

"Hahaha!" Rean just laughed in response, though. "Roan, give me one of the nutrient pills."

Roan nodded and threw a pill to Lita.

"What is this?" Lita, who seemed to be in a sorry state, asked.

"Just swallow it. I'm going to heal your damaged meridians now," Rean explained.

"You can do that?!" Let alone Lita, everyone around was shocked by that claim.

Rean just smiled as he waited for Lita to make her decision. Well, Lita had come this far already, so she simply swallowed the pill straight away. Following that, Rean used his Instant Recovery skill to regrow or heal the damaged parts of her meridians. If anything, Roan's pill's ability to clean the impurities of the meridians made them a lot stronger than before after Rean was done with it.

Death... and me

Chapter 1659: Come With Me

"Side effect?" Krikei was confused to hear that. "Such an amazing ability is just a side effect? Then what was the pill's real use?"

"Didn't you hear the name?" Roan asked back. "It was a nutrient pill. Simply put, Rean could reconstruct her meridians, but he can't do that out of thin air. One's body needs nutrients to grow things."

Rean nodded. "Roan's correct. If it was some deep cut, I could do it without a pill. However, remaking the destroyed parts from scratch requires nutrients. Thus, the nutrient pill."

Roan looked at Vrie, who seemed so impressed that he forgot the pain he was going to go through very soon. "You're next."

"Ah!" Only then did Vrie get back to himself. "Oh! Right!" He looked at Rean after that. "Please, brother. Get rid of these things in my meridians too."

Rean nodded in response. "Sure. You're part of my brother's group, so I'll help you with it. Just do the same thing as Lita. Open your demon core so that I can send my skill's power inside."

Vrie nodded. However, he also looked at Roan, saying, "There's no need to hold me. I can resist some pain."

Roan snorted in response. "You have no idea what you're talking about."

As Vrie said that, Lita remembered the pain of the Dark Element and felt a chill on her back. "Vrie, trust me. You won't be able to resist it."

Krikei didn't want to take any chances. "Stop trying to look cool and stay still. Roan, hold him down. If he complains, leave him to me. I know how to make this guy cooperate."

Vrie felt wronged after that. 'I'm a demon beast, you know? We're a lot more resistant to pain than your humanoid races...' Nevertheless, he didn't go against Krikei's words and let Roan use his Shadow Bind to hold his body.

Well, it turns out that Vrie felt like dying right there and then. If Roan wasn't holding him, he might have committed suicide straight away. Only after the problem was solved did Vrie understand how he really had no idea what he was talking about. "Holy shit! How can something hurt so much like that?! I was even begging for death."

Rean patted Roan's shoulder in response. "Roan, he was begging for you."

Bang!

Roan's elbow hit Rean's ribs, almost breaking them. "Arrgh! Fuck! Can't you take a little joke? It's not like I've never done that before."

Roan didn't seem to mind it at all. "I don't remember ever saying I liked them."

Vrie and the others didn't know what those two were talking about. Then again, since they were brothers, they simply thought it was some kind of joke that only the two knew about. "Ahem... Rean, Roan, thank you."

Lita quickly followed suit. "Me too. Thank you for saving my life."

Rean bitterly smiled at them as he rubbed the area where Roan hit him with his elbow. "No problem, no problem. However, I didn't save your lives at all. Even if your dantian, demon core, and meridians were destroyed, you would still survive. It's just that you would have lost all your cultivation. I could tell as I examined those Soul Power worms. They only existed to do that. Once they were done with their job, they would disappear straight away."

Lita sighed in response. "Destroying our cultivations... isn't that the same as dying? I wouldn't bear it if everything I worked so hard to achieve disappeared like that. Not to mention that cultivating again would be almost impossible with most of the meridians damaged or gone."

Vrie agreed with Lita. "She's right. I would have definitely killed myself straight away. For us demon beasts, this is far more important. We love strength more than anything else, after all."

Roan then glanced at a certain Minokawa in the distance. 'For that demon beast, women are probably a lot more important than its own strength. Food might even take second place.'

Rean smiled back at Vrie and Lita. "Well, it's good that you're fine. Roan, I'll take my leave here. See you later."

"Wait!"

However, someone else immediately called Rean's attention. It looked to be a demon beast in human form, probably a bird type one. However, Rean had no idea who the guy was. "Hum? Is there a problem?"

The demon beast immediately pointed to the other demon beasts that were probably part of his own group. "Can you help them, please?"

"Me too!" A woman from one of the humanoid races then called Rean's attention. She looked to be in the same shape as Lita a few minutes ago. "I'll do anything if you can heal me."

"Brother, help my friends and me. We can pay you!"

"No, we can pay more. Just help my daughter here first."

"Fuck you! Can't you see that my group is at its limit? They won't hold much longer! Brother, please help them."

"Who cares about them? My friend. I can pay you as much as anyone here. Heal me first."

Hundreds of voices raised everywhere, making it quite difficult for Rean to discern them.

"Enough!" Suddenly, another voice echoed in everyone's ears before a woman appeared. It's just that Rean had no idea who she was.

However, the workers around seemed to know her very well. "Senior Libraia! Why did you come here?"

Rean was confused. Who was Libraia? She seemed someone important, though.

Libraia continued, "I'm here for this boy. As for the rest of you, deal with the problem yourselves. You all know very well that the tests were extremely dangerous. Now, get lost."

Rean shook his head, though. "Errr... but I don't mind helping them."

"You can't." However, Libraia didn't let him. "You and your friends will come with me."

Death... and me

Chapter 1660: Then what do you want?

As for those inflicted by the Soul Power worms, only despair remained for them. Then again, there was nothing they could do as they couldn't go against Libraia.

In a private area, Rean and Roan's group were finally set free. It's just that they could see a few more elders there, including Govin and Iglet. Of course, they had no idea what was happening. "Why did you bring us here?"

Libraia then used the monitoring formation to bring up the image of cultivators and demon beasts who were inflicted by the Soul Power worms. "Can you see them? We have had this kind of result countless times already. No one was able to get rid of the Cultivation Destruction Soul Worms until today. Well, not in the Lebgram Continent, that is."

Rean nodded in response. "Obviously. Getting rid of those things is hard as hell. However, I can do it, so why did you stop me?"

Govin didn't like Rean's behavior, saying, "Boy, be careful with your words. Even if we kill you right here and right now, no one will say anything about it."

Iglet then shook his head, saying in response, "Let him be, Govin. It's obvious that he's the type who doesn't like killing. It's quite idiotic, but that's how it is."

"Hmph!" Govin snorted but didn't say anything else.

Roan, who was there as well, could guess the answer. "You can't have someone healing the cultivators and demon beasts since it would make the trap's existence useless. It's also unfair to those who passed this test before and were successful or lucky enough to avoid those worms." At the same time, he thought, 'It would also be bad since this place exists to eliminate future problems.'

Libraia was happy that Roan understood. "Very good. I don't mind that you heal your own groups. After all, the participants form groups to help each other. It's part of the tests. However, I can't allow the rest to be healed. Otherwise, the ones afflicted by the Cultivation Destruction Soul Worms would complain about those who were healed in the past."

Rean, obviously, didn't like it. However, he understood that insisting on this topic would only make things difficult for everyone else. He knew that Govin was right. They could really just kill them right there and then. Rean and Roan's strength was nothing in front of these people. "Fine... we will do as you say."

Iglet nodded, satisfied. "Very well."

Krikei, Erla, Min, Lita, Vrie, and Habac didn't know what to say. Lita and Vrie were obviously thankful that Rean helped them. However, none of them wanted to get on the Jhiod Sect's bad side. They were trying to join it, after all.

Seeing their expressions, Govin added, "All of you are in a group with these two, so this serves as a warning for you as well."

"Yes, senior." Obviously, none of them were against Govin.

Roan, however, felt it to be weird. Although he wouldn't pry any further. "Can we go back now?"

Libraia then looked at the twins' groups after that. "Your friends can go. As for you twins, I have something to talk about with you."

Krikei and the others could only take their leave after hearing that. As curious as they were, they wouldn't open their mouths here.

After the twins' groups left, another elder from the Jhiod Sect's trial building appeared. This time, he had Kentucky and Celis with him.

"Oh! Rean, Roan, so it was you," Kentucky complained. "Couldn't you have just asked me to come? This was too abrupt."

Celis closed his eyes and didn't say anything. He knew that things were not that simple.

With the four of them there, Libraia finally got into the main topic. "To be honest, I had no intention of calling you out before you four finished all twelve tests. That skill that allows you to share Divine Energy with each other was impressive, but it's not like our Jhiod Sect doesn't have something similar."

Libraia then narrowed her eyes as she continued, "However, the mysterious energy that the twins had on their weapons. I was sure I had seen it before. To make sure, I sent a message to Jhiod Sect in Jhiod Continent. After they analyzed my message and the memory images with it, I received an urgent message from the High Elder of the sect."

After that, she pointed at the twins. "Was that mysterious energy perhaps the weapons' intents?"

The twins, as well as Kentucky and Celis, were surprised to hear that. As far as they knew, they had never seen anyone using weapon intents. How does the Jhiod Sect know about it?

Well, hiding would be useless since Libraia and the Jhiod Sect obviously knew about it. "We did indeed use the weapons' intents. What's the problem with it? We checked the rules. There was nothing in the tests saying one couldn't use intents."

They were impressed by Roan's words. "So they really were weapon intents!"

Libraia was quite excited herself. "I have seen a sword intent in the past, but only once. It was during a visit to the center of the Realm of Gods back in the Jhiod Sect. A senior from there was challenged by one of our elders before he trashed his opponent with his staff intent. That elder was over a realm below our own elder, so everyone was shocked."

Roan could guess what they wanted by now. "If you're expecting us to teach you how to use weapon inten-"

"We're not," Libraia cut Roan off straight away. "Don't underestimate us, brat. We know that intents aren't something that can be taught."

This time, Roan's attention was really piqued. "Oh-ho... then, what do you want?"