

## Death 1681

Death... and me

### Chapter 1681: Recovering Senses

On the side of Blansin's group, they naturally noticed Erla's group joining Roan, Kentucky, and Celis's. Blansin, of course, was given a heads up of what was happening, but the mercenaries didn't know.

One of the mercenaries looked at the leader of their group. "Hume, it'll be difficult to deal with all those guys. Should we pass on this test and wait for the next one?"

Hume checked their cultivations with his Divine Sense. Other than Erla and Krikei, the other six demon beasts in Kentucky and Celis' group were all in the Void Tempering Realm. It meant that Rean and Roan's group now had eight Void Tempering Realm participants. However... "No need. The strongest demon beast there is only at the Late Stage of the Void Tempering Realm. Ritre and I are both at the peak of the Void Tempering Realm. With the two of us there, the others will pose no risk to us. As for the Transition Realm guys in their groups, they're obviously not a threat at our cultivation realms."

Ritre, the other Peak Void Tempering Realm mercenary, agreed with Hume. "He's right. We will need to find Sense Seeds first. With our group's strength, we should be able to collect them faster than Erla's group, though. It'll be even easier to capture Erla and receive the reward from those guys outside."

Blansin nodded in response. "Since you guys have decided to try it out, I'll also follow you. Erla must be captured alive, understood?"

Hume smiled in response. "That will be easy."

With that, they also joined the other groups to enter the Null Senses Realm.

Since the twins' huge group joined together, their badges allowed them to be teleported into the same random location. Sure enough, everyone stopped hearing, seeing, feeling, and tasting. In the zone where they were at the moment, the only sense available was smell. However, it didn't matter. That's because they already had a plan.

Roan poured Divine Energy into his badge, and sure enough, he felt the location of the other members of his group. Soon after...

‘Death Style, First Energy Form, Shadow Bind!’

Immediately, the Shadow Binds took form and grabbed everyone in the group. The demon beasts in the group were all in their human form, so it was extremely easy for Roan to pull them over with his strength. However, he wasn’t the one pulling. Instead, he left the pulling for Luan to do.

Back in the Jhiod Sect’s room for elders, they watched with a puzzled expression as Luan was pulled into the test with Rean and Roan. “Why would they bring a weakling at the Saint Realm to the test?” Libraia asked.

Govin shook his head, saying, “There are no rules saying that people below the Transition Realm can’t take part in the tests. However, no one at such a level would take the risk. This young boy must have some special ability for the twins to be using him in the Null Senses test.”

Iglet was curious about something else, though. “In any case, where did this boy come from? I hadn’t noticed his presence until the last moment before the test started.”

Libraia and Govin shook their heads in response. They also didn’t know how Luan suddenly appeared there. “Anyway, let’s wait and see what happens.”

In the test, Luan’s three pupils immediately started to work. Yes, normal sight was blocked in this test, but Luan had three different types of pupils, not just one. He could also see the Elements and Divine Energy of the environment. Although everything was dark in the light-related view, he could clearly see through his Divine Energy and Elements pupils. ‘There it is!’

Roan’s mission for Luan was very simple. As soon as they entered the Null Senses Realm, he would use his vision to:

First: Avoid other cultivators, demon beasts, and spirits.

Second: Find the Sense Seeds.

Third: Pull everyone together once Roan bound them with the Shadow Binds.

Luan didn't have Rean and Roan's Third Grade Star Body, but he did have one at First Grade. With his Divine Energy, he also had the strength to pull everyone since the others wouldn't move.

The way to find the Sense Seeds changed in each zone. The Sight Zone obviously allowed one to see. The Smell Zone's Sense Seed gave a peculiar smell one could follow. The Touch Zone's Seed would have a different feeling if touched. The Taste Zone was the weirdest since one could only taste things. Nevertheless, some demon beast races could use their sense of taste to guide themselves. Obviously, the Sound Zone's Seed would emit a sound for others to find it.

However, Luan didn't need anything like that. All the seeds were obviously full of Divine Energy and other properties that allowed one to recover their senses. For Luan, they looked like big suns in the darkness. Luan quickly pulled the entire group with Roan's Shadow Bind and arrived at the side of the first seed faster than anyone else. Not only that, but he also avoided any possible groups around them.

Rean and Roan could feel the smell of the seed, so they didn't need an invitation to take it. It was decided that Roan would be the first, so he quickly grabbed it and began to absorb the seed. Ten minutes later, Roan's sense of touch was back. 'Touch, uh? If it was sight, it would have been much better.'

Nevertheless, it was a great start. And just like that, Luan pulled the entire group to the next seeds while avoiding any zones with groups. There were weird battles happening everywhere due to the restrictions of each zone, but none of them mattered for the twins' group.

Eventually, on the third seed, Roan's vision was recovered. He then looked at Luan after that. 'His eyes are truly enviable...'

Roan then used the badge to tell Luan that he could continue. However, it was Roan pulling everyone this time around since he could now tell the directions with his vision.

And in that fashion, the twins' group began to recover their senses.

Death... and me

## Chapter 1682: Counter

Libraia and the other elders in the Jhiod Sect building were truly surprised by what they saw. "That boy has an amazing sensory ability. It seems to be related to those eyes of his."

"Do you think they'll bring him along to take all twelve tests?" Govin wondered all of a sudden.

Iglet shook his head, saying, "I don't think so. If that was the case, they would have taken him for the previous tests too. They seem to be using his ability just to pass this test."

Libraia narrowed her eyes after that. "He's very young and has very good cultivation. Not to mention he has those eyes. It would be a shame if we couldn't bring such talent to the sect. Fortunately, the participants who complete the twelve tests are allowed to bring two people with them into Jhiod Continent. They just need to have a cultivation level lower than themselves. I'll tell them that they can bring the boy together."

Rean and Roan didn't hear anything, obviously. They were just focused on recovering their senses. With Luan's eye ability, Rean, Roan, Kentucky, and Celis recovered their five senses several times faster than anyone else. Soon after, they used Luan's ability to help Erla, Min, and Habac get their own senses back as well.

Rean then looked at Roan after that. "Alright, Roan. The four of us will be taking our leave. You guys can continue with your own tests."

Roan didn't mind. "Don't forget to crush the badges if you see you're going to die."

And just like that, Rean's group separated from the others while Luan continued his search for more Sense Seeds.

Rean's group then used their battle formation to fuel their speed as they traveled from zone to zone nonstop. They could see several battles all throughout the realm for the seeds. One or other cultivator, demon beast, or spirit had recovered their vision or some other sense. However, those ones were very rare since they couldn't tell where the seeds were like Luan did.

Obviously, Rean's group was looking for Blansin and his teammates. The longer they took to find them, the higher the chances that those mercenaries would recover their senses. They had to strike while they were still oblivious to the early recovery of their group.

"There!" Habac suddenly pointed in a direction far into the distance. It was hard to make out the group in the distance, but Habac was pretty sure that that was the group they were looking for. After all, the majority of the participants entered this test with very small groups of two, three, or at most four members. The mercenary group, on the other hand, had ten members, so it was easy to pick them out.

Erla's eyes lit up once she saw them. She was looking for a way to vent her anger after what happened to the White Scaled Carp race. Of course, those mercenaries trying to capture her were the perfect outlet.

To make things better, the mercenary group was already fighting two more groups. They were all inside the Sound Zone, so most of them could only hear things. That made it quite difficult to aim at the right targets. Blansin's larger group size had paid off at least. Thanks to that, they had absorbed seven seeds already. Hume, their group leader, obviously was the first one to take five seeds and recover all his senses.

As for the other two seeds, they were given to Blansin. After all, he was the one who would be watching the mercenaries work while they tried to capture Erla.

Nevertheless, Huma was locked in battle with another cultivator in the Peak Stage of the Void Tempering Realm. His opponents haven't absorbed five seeds yet, but he did get his vision back, at least. Since the zone was the sound one, he could both see and hear, which was enough for him to fight Hume.

Rean's group assessed the situation before finally deciding on the targets. "Other than Blansin, the rest of them seem to only have access to sound. Be ready. We'll attack them when they're at their most vulnerable. We need to eliminate as many as possible in a single strike."

Rean was using his Light bending skill, so it was obvious that no one noticed his presence. Divine Sense was blocked in this realm, so few had the ability to detect where his group was. That's also how they approached Blansin's group without being noticed by anyone in that zone, including other groups.

Rean and the other then waited for a moment where Hume would be too busy to notice their actions until finally, Hume's enemy forced him to open some distance from his own group. "Now!"

Right behind Blansin's group, Rean and the others used their strongest abilities.

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

'Myriad Water Dragons!'

'Heavens' Calamity!'

'Three Suns' Collision!'

Rean especially aimed his Flame Emperor Slash against the other Peak Stage Void Tempering Realm mercenary who still hadn't recovered any of his senses. As for the others, they wanted to make sure they would get rid of at least one opponent each, so they aimed for the Initial or Middle Stage Void Tempering Realm ones.

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

Blansin's group was already busy fighting with the help of sound the other groups made for the Sense Seed in that Sound Zone. Now that a new enemy had appeared completely unnoticed, they had no chance to avoid it.

\*Arrrrgh!\*

\*Ahhhhh!\*

Immediately, four mercenaries were killed or heavily injured. Of course, Rean's group purposely avoided hitting Blansin.

“What?!” Hume heard the screams of his group members as his vision immediately turned in their direction. Only then did he see Rean and everyone else. “It’s you!”

He wasn’t happy that his targets had suddenly appeared. After all, four members of his group were immediately put out of commission. Worst of all, Rean didn’t hold back with his Flame Emperor Slash at all. A strike at full strength from him was definitely at the Peak Stage Void Tempering Realm in strength. With that said, the other Peak Stage Void Tempering Realm mercenary died before even having the chance to activate his badge.

Death... and me

Chapter 1683: Eliminating Enemies

Hume immediately gave up on the battle against his opponent and changed his target to Rean and his group. However...

“Hahaha! I don’t know who they are, but they definitely have my thanks!” Suddenly, Hume’s Peak Stage Void Tempering Realm enemy laughed out loud.

‘Thunder Crows!’

Several crows made out of lightning appeared everywhere around Hume, charging at him with high amounts of Lightning Element imbued in them. They were already fast due to the element they had. But with Space Power added to them, they became even more terrifying. Without much choice, Hume was forced to stop and defend himself.

‘Fire Tornado Barrier!’

Wind and Fire Element gathered before forming a scourging tornado of fire around Hume.

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

All the Thunder Crows exploded on touch, unable to pass through the tornado.

Hume wasn't happy, though. "You! Can't you see that they'll get the Sense Seed if you stop me?"

His enemy shook his head, saying, "They won't. Look at the four of them. All of them have already recovered all their senses. They can finish this test anytime they want. Those who already got all five senses back can't absorb any more seeds. I wonder. What did you do for them to not finish the test and come after your group? Well, whatever the reason may be, I can definitely say I'm lucky! Hahaha!"

Rean's group obviously didn't stop there. As Hume fought his enemy, Rean used his Light Element to make his group disappear once again before they reappeared in another location to attack the mercenaries. This time, however, the mercenaries were aware of a new hiding enemy, so they were able to defend themselves... or so they tried.

Unfortunately, the battle formation of Rean's group increased their attack strength way too much. Besides, with their other Peak Stage Void Tempering Realm opponent dead, the others had even less of a chance of defending themselves.

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

'Myriad Water Dragons!'

'Heavens' Calamity!'

'Three Suns' Collision!'

There was no reason to hold back, so all of them used their strongest attacks again.

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

This time, only two mercenaries died, though. The other two were heavily injured. Nevertheless, Blansin's group was now down to three members. Blansin himself, a mercenary in the Late Stage of the Void Tempering Realm, and Hume, who was fighting in the distance.



Hume understood that the situation had completely changed, so he gave up on this fight. “Blansin, Tiyei, crush your badges!”

Blansin and Tiyei didn’t need to hear that twice. They crushed their badges, which immediately activated, sending them out of the Null Senses Realm.

Hume didn’t intend to stay there either. He also crushed his badge, making his body disappear in the next second.

Last but not least, of the mercenaries that were heavily injured by Rean’s group, two of them were still conscious, so they also crushed their badges even earlier. Blansin’s group had ten mercenaries at first, but now it was left with four. Two of them were in no condition to fight anymore either.

Seeing how Blansin’s group disappeared, Erla couldn’t help but feel rage. She then looked at the unconscious mercenaries who hadn’t crushed their badges and immediately ended their lives right there and then. However, that didn’t make her feel any better. “Fuck! Four of them still escaped.”

Rean patted her shoulder in response. “It’s fine. We eliminated most of them. Besides, it doesn’t really matter how many we kill. The elders outside can simply contract new ones. But then again, since they sent these mercenaries, that means they were the best ones they could find. The next ones, if they come at all, won’t be as tough.”

Min agreed with Rean. “He’s right. In any case, Blansin did a great job telling us about it beforehand. We purposely aimed our attacks at him as well, injuring his body quite a lot. He can totally pretend he was also a target and come back to tell us about the next group later.”

Suddenly, a voice echoed in Rean’s group’s ears. “The four of you, I hope you’re not thinking about getting in my way as well.” The one who talked was none other than Hume’s opponent. With Hume gone, he was naturally free now.

Rean quickly shook his head, saying, “Don’t worry, sir. We had a personal vendetta with that group. We already got our seeds and recovered our senses, so we have no use for the seed in this zone. Good luck on your search.”

“Wait right there!” However, the man didn’t let Rean’s group go that easily. “Before you leave, you have to tell me how all of you got enough seeds to recover all of your senses. That’s just way too fast!”

Rean smiled in response, replying, “I would love to help you. Unfortunately, the one responsible for our success isn’t here at the moment.”

The guy snorted in response. “Hmph! In that case, I have no reason to let you go either. I’ll make you stay here until I find this guy and get his help to find more seeds for my group.”

Rean shook his head once he heard that, telling him, “Sadly, you don’t have time for that.”

“What?!” The man was taken aback when suddenly, he heard a call for help.

“Graco, why the hell are you taking so long? We’re still fighting the other groups for the fucking seed in this zone. Come back and help us, now!”

Graco was obviously the man’s name. He looked back and could see that his own group members were having a hard time against the other groups there. In the end, he looked at Rean’s group one last time and gritted his teeth. “Count yourselves lucky.” Soon after, he charged against one of the enemies who had a similar level of cultivation to his own.

Rean shrugged his shoulders after that. With the battle formation and his own strength, he was pretty confident he was able to fight the guy to a standstill at the very least. “Alright, we’re done here. Let’s get out.”

“What about Roan and the others?” Habac asked.

Rean smiled after hearing that. “Don’t worry. They’re almost done collecting their share of seeds.”

Death... and me

Chapter 1684: Deal With It Another Way

By the time Rean's group arrived at the spatial gate in the center of the Dimensional Realm, Luan had already guided Roan, Kentucky, and Celis's group into taking all the seeds they needed. Although one needed ten minutes to absorb a seed, Luan would always leave someone absorbing a seed while he moved to another one. That way, by the time he was back to take the member he left behind, that one would have finished his absorption already.

"Oh! So you guys are here as well." Rean was happy to see everyone there. Well, he knew they were there through his connection with them anyway.

"We just arrived," Kentucky said in response.

Roan wasn't in the mood to talk, though. "Let's go. You can speak all you want outside." Soon after, he passed through the spatial gate with Krikei and the others. Obviously, Rean and Kentucky followed him with their own members.

\*Vup, vup, vup, vup, vup...\*

It went without saying that the twins' group were the first ones to appear outside of those who completed the tests. Many had appeared before them, but that was because they crushed their badges in the test.

As soon as they appeared, Rean and Roan received a Divine Sense message from Libraia, explaining that they could bring Luan with them to Jhiod.

'Sure enough, they noticed Luan's abilities,' Roan mentioned through their Soul Connection.

Rean nodded, saying, 'We already expected it anyway. Perhaps they even know about Erla. Well, since they didn't come after her, they might not be looking at us when the event took place.'

Rean then used his Divine Sense to thank Libraia. 'That's good to know, elder Libraia. I just hope you and the other elder won't consider what we did cheating.'

Libraia immediately shook her head, telling him, 'Demon beasts have an advantage in the Pressure Realm, while spirits have an advantage in the Soul Land. You just so happened to have someone who gave you an advantage in the Null Senses Realm. If we kick you out of the test because of that, we will need to kick everyone else as well. The Realm of Gods had never been fair. The same goes for our tests. If you know a way to complete a test with ease, make sure to use it. I definitely would.'

Rean and Roan nodded after hearing that. Even if she didn't like their use of Luan's eye abilities, they could have simply said that there were no rules against it. Fortunately, it wasn't necessary.

'Now then, we need to check the test while it's ongoing,' added Libraia. 'Once it's over, come back to the elders' room again so that we can continue fighting against your weapon intents.'

Rean was more than happy to agree with that. A thousand Rank Two Divine Stones per day was definitely welcome. 'We'll definitely be there.'

Rean then looked at Erla, who seemed to be looking for the mercenaries that survived the attack with Blansin. "You won't find them here anymore," he said.

Erla nodded in response. "I know. After that crushing defeat, they definitely left to talk with the elders of Blansin's race."

Min agreed with Erla, saying, "That's true. We'll just have to wait until the next test starts."

Habac didn't seem unhappy, though. "Hehehe! Who cares! Four! Four tests in a row! I've never thought I would really complete a third of the tests. The last one was even easier. Hahaha! I can see hope in joining the Jhiod Sect now."

Roan, on the other hand, was talking with Luan. "You did a very good job out there. We avoided all battles while we got all the seeds we needed. From the looks of it, your eye abilities have improved a lot compared to the time I found you."

Luan nodded, telling Roan, "Yes, father. The range of my Divine Energy and Elements pupils is now two kilometers long. Back when I was a kid, I could only see up to a hundred meters away."

Last but not least, Kentucky and Celis were receiving the praises of the demon beasts in their group. None of them expected to pass the test that easily, after all.

Outside the Jhiod Sect's trial building, Blansin, Hume, and the other three mercenaries returned to the elders of the Silver Horn Sturgeon race. Min was right about one thing. Blansin was quite injured as well. It's just that it had been agreed ahead of time that Blansin would be attacked.

"W-What happened to all of you?!" Sure enough, Tilte was shocked to see that only four mercenaries returned from the Jhiod Sect's building.

Blansin obviously pretended to be quite injured. "Elder, we were ambushed in the Null Senses Realm by none other than Erla and her group."

Tilte quickly helped Blansin by pouring his Divine Energy inside Blansin's body. As he did that, Tilte looked at the leader of the mercenaries. "Hume, you better give me a very good explanation about this."

Hume bitterly smiled in response. He definitely didn't want to enrage these monsters. However, he had to tell everything. "It went like this..."

Tilte and the other elders finally understood the situation. "How did they recover their senses that fast?" He had acquired information about all the tests in the Jhiod Sect's building. He knew that what Rean's group did was way too hard to believe.

Hume and the other mercenaries shook their head, saying, "We don't know. They definitely had some way of finding the seeds. That's all we can tell."

Blansin's complexion improved a bit after that. "Elders. Erla's group is really strong. Even if they recovered their senses first, they got rid of the mercenaries in our group way too easily. We can't underestimate them like that anymore." No one doubted that Blansin was still after Erla's heart as well.

Hume didn't want to accept it. "It's because they ambushed us! If we were in a head-on fig-"

“Enough!” Tilte immediately stopped Hume’s words. “Blansin is right. Even if it was an ambush, just four enemies dealt with nine of you, Blansin included.”

Tilte then looked at Blansin after that. Blansin was the top genius of his generation in their race, so Tilte couldn’t risk his life anymore. “You won’t return there anymore. It’s too dangerous. We will deal with it some other way.”

Death... and me

#### Chapter 1685: Offer To Leave

Surprisingly, during the next five tests, the Silver Horn Sturgeon race didn’t appear anymore. Rean, Erla, and Min thought that some of the new contestants were probably sent after them, and they just didn’t know. However, no one seemed to be actively looking for them during the tests.

Or perhaps there were more mercenaries looking for them, but they simply couldn’t find Rean’s group. Well, Rean made sure to use his Light and Divine Sense bending skill in all Dimensional Realms where they were useful. After all, it would definitely irritate anyone looking for them while inside the Dimensional Realms.

The weird thing was that Erla and the others hadn’t seen Blansin anymore after that. She wondered if his disguise was seen through or if he simply couldn’t return. Nonetheless, with these five tests gone, they had now completed nine in total.

Another good thing was that Rean made a fortune in Rank Two Divine Stones during the time he and Roan used their weapon intents against the elders. Thanks to that, the Dimensional Realm already had over two hundred thousand Rank Two Divine Stones. With that, it was a given that the sect wouldn’t run out of Rank Two Divine Stones anytime soon.

Rean then looked at Habac, who seemed to be on cloud nine. “You seem quite happy.”

Habac nodded, saying with a hint of glee, “Only three tests to go, and I’ll be able to join the Jhiod Sect. How can I not be happy? Not to mention that I really contributed to our tests so far, so I’m definitely in a good mood.”

Rean smiled in response. “That’s good to know. So, which one is the next test?”

“Life Syphon Forest,” Habac’s smile disappeared as he answered the question. “Shit, why did you have to make me remember that?”

Rean shrugged his shoulders, saying, “You were just delaying the inevitable. So, what should be aware of in that place?”

Habac was just about to answer when suddenly, someone approached Rean’s group. “Are you Rean Larks?”

Rean and the others looked at the guy but couldn’t identify who he was. “Well, that would be me. And you are?”

“I’m Fanso, a member of the Silver Horn Sturgeon race,” the demon beast answered.

Erla narrowed her eyes in response. “What did you come here for? Have you finally given up hunting me for my heart?”

The guy glanced at Erla for a moment but then ignored her. Instead, he looked at Rean and said, “Our Silver Horn Sturgeon race is willing to pay you to not get involved with her anymore. That’s all you need to do. State your price.”

Erla and Min were taken aback to hear that. Could it be that they didn’t find anyone else so far because of Rean’s presence?

Rean, of course, was quite surprised by the sudden request. “Oh-ho... and why would you even believe I will keep my promise?”

Fanso then took out a Soul Binding Contract. Sure enough, he could see that Rean was a Transition Realm cultivator. That meant he shouldn’t have the means to break the seal once he signed it. One couldn’t blame the Silver Horn Sturgeon race for coming up with this plan. After all, where has one seen a Transition Realm cultivator that could avoid the contracts even after signing them?

Naturally, that wasn't all. Rean could see that several more demon beasts, all in the Void Tempering Realm, were just behind Fanso. One didn't need to be a genius to understand that they were all Silver Horn Sturgeons.

Rean then looked at Erla and asked, 'Do you know any of them?'

Erla nodded, telling him, 'I've seen some of them back when I visited the Silver Horn Sturgeon race a few times. I've only seen Fanso for the first time, though. However, I know him by his name. He's also one of the geniuses of the Silver Horn Sturgeon race. He isn't quite at Blansin's level, but he isn't that far off either. However, because he's older, his cultivation is much higher. As you can see, he's at the Peak Stage of the Void Tempering Realm.'

Rean understood the situation after that. "So your Silver Horn Sturgeon race decided to give up on the mercenaries and bring a lot of their own Void Tempering Realm members, is it? But I don't understand. Why wait until now to appear?"

Fanso answered without care. "Bringing this many members all the way from Terces to here takes time and Divine Stones. It's that simple. So, will you state a price, or will we have to fight you as well during the next tests? Unlike those mercenaries, we won't give up regardless of the danger. This situation is directly related to our race's future, after all. I advise you to get out of our way and even receive some compensation while at that."

"Sure! Why not? Give me a thousand Rank Three Divine Stones."

Mina, Erla, and Habac almost burst into laughter after hearing that. That was a ridiculously high price. To afford such a price, the Silver Horn Sturgeon race would probably go bankrupt for many years. There was no way they would accept Rean's price.

Sure enough, Fanso felt like Rean was making fun of his face. "Do you think we're that rich? We can pay for you to get out of our way, but you have to be reasonable. Ten thousand Rank Two Divine Stones for you or any of your friends and that brother of yours to get out of your way. If you refuse, then we'll meet inside the next tests. Sooner or later, we'll find you there. That's why we brought so many sturgeons."



If the guy just knew how rich Rean was, he probably wouldn't have made that offer. Nonetheless...  
"Alright, I accept your offer. Ten thousand Rank Two Divine Stones."

Erla and Min were taken aback. Didn't he accept it way too easily? "Rean, are you serious?"

Rean shrugged his shoulders in response. "Come on! It's ten thousand Rank Two Divine Stones. Would you refuse such a fortune if you were me?"

"This..." Erla and Min found it hard to go against Rean's words. Indeed, for them, that was really a huge amount of Divine Stones.

However, it was then that they received a Divine Sense message from Rean. 'Don't worry. I won't leave you. Just trust me and pretend to be afraid of my departure.'

Ten thousand Rank Two Divine Stones might not be much for the System Sect at the moment. However, Rean wouldn't let the chance of getting Free Divine Stones slip through his fingers that easily.

Death... and me

Chapter 1686: Payment

Erla and Min were taken aback for a moment but immediately followed Rean's words. "Wait! Rean! You can't leave us now!"

Habac had also received the same message, so he obviously helped in his own way. "Stop bothering Rean, you two. He already helped you a lot. Look around you. If he wanted to, he could have hundreds of stronger demon beasts and cultivators join his group."

Erla and Min's expressions turned dark after that. "The same goes for you! You aren't the only one with experience, you know."

Habac nodded, replying, "True. However, I'm pretty confident in my knowledge, so I don't think Rean will discard me that easily. After all, I have nothing to do with this problem between you and these guys."

Rean laughed in response. “Hahaha! You’re quite selfish, aren’t you, Habac? Well, I’m pretty selfish myself, so I know what that feels like. Don’t worry. Your knowledge has been quite complete during the tests, with only a couple of points unknown. I won’t send you out.” Rean then looked at Erla and Min before continuing, “As for you two, I already helped you get to the tenth test. All you need to do is complete three more tests on your own. Don’t tell me you can’t do at least that. Just consider it a challenge.”

“We...” Erla and Min were speechless. However, they couldn’t come up with an answer... or so it looked on the surface.

Rean returned his attention to Fanso after that. “You aren’t lying about the ten thousand Rank Two Divine Stones, right?”

Fanso was more than satisfied to see that his offer was accepted. “Of course. It’s a high price, but one that’s worth it. You’re quite annoying to deal with according to the information we got.” He couldn’t help but think. ‘Hehe! In the end, riches are more important than any hollow friendship. Most people would give up their own mother for this amount of Rank Two Divine Stones, let alone some people they just knew for a while.’

Fanso then showed the contract to Rean, saying, “You can read it if you want.”

Rean checked the contract, although he didn’t really care. “It’s all right. Once I get to the Void Tempering Realm, I’ll be able to remove the seal anyway. Let me sign it.” Rean cut his finger and used a drop of his blood to sign the contract. As always, the contract burnt down and put a seal on Rean’s soul... dummy.

Rean then extended his hand after that. “Give me the Divine Stones. According to the contract, I only have to follow it if you make the payment.”

Fanso immediately threw a spatial ring at Rean after that. “You can check it yourself.”

After confirming that there were ten thousand Rank Two Divine Stones inside, Rean smiled. “Very good. With this, our deal is completed.” Rean immediately left Erla and Min behind once he received the stones. Habac followed in his footsteps without even looking back either.

Erla and Min seemed to have terrible expressions as they looked at Fanzo. “You don’t think we’ll give up that easily, right?”

Fanzo coldly smiled in response. “That’s up to you. However, I would consider giving up earlier than later. Erla, if you give us your heart without any struggle, we can at least guarantee the lives of your White Scaled Carp race. How about that?”

“Hmph!” Erla snorted in response. “You won’t touch them even if I don’t surrender. After all, if I pass the test and enter the Jhiod Sect, I’ll be untouchable. You’ll have to wait for the day I come back and will definitely need something to negotiate your own lives. Unless, of course, your Silver Horn Sturgeon race decides to flee from Terces and especially Clendes Sea.”

Fanzo didn’t deny that. “True. However, can you pass the test with us there? We’ll be the judge of that.”

Fanzo turned around and left with his group. This time, the Silver Horn Sturgeon race was serious, as Erla could see over thirty Void Tempering Realm sturgeons in the group alone. Not to mention that there might be more of them that hadn’t appeared. ‘They probably didn’t leave a single sturgeon at the Void Tempering Realm behind. Every single one of them is here... except for Blansin. I wonder if they found out about Blansin’s lies.’

At that moment, both Erla and Min were quite nervous. They wouldn’t give up even if Rean really left. However, they saw Rean signing the contract and it activating. Since Rean wasn’t in the Void Tempering Realm, he shouldn’t be able to go against the contract.

Well, it was then that they received Rean’s Divine Sense message. ‘I’ll stay away from you for now. Don’t worry. Our badges are connected since we’re in the same group. That means we’ll be teleported to the same place once we enter the tests.’

Erla immediately answered back. ‘Are you sure you wanna do it? What if the seal kills you?’

‘Seal? What seal?’ Rean asked with a smile. ‘No contract seal can do anything to me. Just trust my words and wait for the next tests.’

Meanwhile, outside the Jhiod Sect's building, Blansin was sitting together with Tilte and the elders of the Silver Horn Sturgeon race. "Elder, I understand why you don't want me to take the test. Then again, I should at least be allowed to check the main hall, no?"

Tilte shook his head, telling him, "I know you. You aren't the type to give up so easily. If I let you enter the main hall, you will definitely enter the next tests to try and make up for your failures. You already got close to dying once, so that won't happen again."

"But what's the point in cultivating if I can't even try to make up for my errors? Since when did a demon beast run away from danger?" Blansin asked, obviously unhappy.

Tilte was happy he felt like that. However, he still didn't let Blansin go. "You will have a lot of danger to deal with in the future. For now, just stay here and wait for the good news from Fanso's group. They have three more chances to capture Erla, considering Erla will succeed in them."

Death... and me

Chapter 1687: Too Slow

Rean's group wasn't together, but they still went back to talk about the next test through their Divine Senses. 'So, Habac, what's that about Life Syphon Forest?'

Habac nodded, explaining, 'It's a survival test. You don't have to go anywhere. Once it starts, you will be sent into a Dimensional Realm completely covered by a forest. Everything there, from insects, demons, plants, and so on, can drain one's blood. Everything there will attack you nonstop. Killing them is also useless as the formations in that realm will make everything revive or grow back in a matter of seconds. It's one of the most dangerous tests. If you get caught by some of them, you will become a mummy in just a few seconds.'

'Demon beasts?' Rean was surprised to hear that. 'You mean they can be revived?'

Habac immediately noticed his error, clarifying, 'Oh, that's not it. I say demon beasts, but they aren't really living beings. They're similar to the monsters in the Deep Sea Monster Assault, creations of the Dimensional Realm's formation. They don't really have intelligence even though their strength is at the Void Tempering Realm. Both tests are very similar, although it's now in a different environment.'

Erla nodded in response. 'The Deep Sea gave advantage for Water Affinity cultivators and aquatic demon beasts. This one obviously gives a lot more advantage to the races who live on the surface than those like me. It's especially advantageous for those who are fast.'

Hhabac confirmed Erla's words. 'She's correct.'

Rean couldn't help but smile playfully after that. 'Well then. Ain't this quite the simple test?'

'Easy?' Habac was taken aback. 'What's so easy about it? I find this one even more dangerous than the Deep Sea one!'

Rean didn't deny that, telling him, 'Sure, it's dangerous. However, Erla said it herself. Speed is definitely one of the best abilities to have in this Dimensional Realm. With that being said, we are in a very good position. After all, since you guys are in my own battle formation, I can use my speed and the channeled Divine Energy to move faster than anyone else. Last but not least, this is the kind of test where the realm's forces will focus on bigger groups with higher cultivations. Don't forget that it's the same thing in the Deep Sea test. Most of the monsters focused on bigger and stronger groups.'

Min and Habac were obviously happy to hear that. 'Now that you say that, it does seem to be the case. With that Enhancement ability of yours and the battle formation, this really seems to be quite the very advantageous test for us.'

However, Erla thought something strange. 'Couldn't you do the same thing in the Deep Sea test then?'

Rean shook his head, telling her, 'It was completely different. In the Deep Sea, I needed to go through the water. You were the only one who could move freely there. Now three of us are beings from the surface, so it's a lot easier to pull everyone around.'

'I see...' Erla didn't ask any more after that.

They then discussed a few other things and resolved to wait for the next test in different places. Roan and Kentucky asked Rean if he wanted help with the Silver Horn Sturgeons. After all, there were a lot of enemies going after them this time. Joining Roan, Kentucky, and Celis' groups together would bring their fighting force to a much higher level.

However, Rean refused. That would only attract more attention from the hostile things in the Life Syphon Forest. Because he had the element of surprise up their sleeve, he was confident he could keep himself away from the Sturgeons.

In the end, the time for the Life Syphon Forest test arrived as everyone prepared for a grueling fight. After all, it was a test of pure resistance.

“The Life Syphon Forest is now open. Your objective is to survive one day there. However, if more than 70% of the participants are eliminated, the remaining ones will automatically pass the test. You can enter now.”

Rean and Roan understood why that rule existed. That way, the participants would think twice before crushing their badges to flee. Naturally, it would get even more candidates killed.

‘Then again, only a single day?’ Rean could not help but say. ‘The Deep Sea Monster Assault took an entire week.’

‘It’s about the difficulty,’ Habac mentioned. ‘The Life Syphon Forest is a lot more packed with enemies. That’s why it takes just a day to finish. If there’s anything good, it’s the fact that we don’t need to save Divine Energy that much.’

There was no more time to discuss anything, so everyone entered the Spatial Gate.

Rean and Erla entered the gate at separate times. However, due to their badges being considered to be in the same group, they were teleported to the same location. Naturally, the same happened to Min and Habac.

Rean took a quick look around and saw a few cultivators and demon beasts in between the trees. Yet, none of them seemed to be part of the Silver Horn Sturgeon race. ‘Alright, everyone. Stay close to me.’

Immediately, Rean activated his Light and Divine Sense bending skill. With that, they completely disappeared from everyone’s sight. Of course, that only worked for the participants. The formation of

the Life Syphon Forest could tell exactly where his group was. That meant all the 'lives' in the realm would be able to feel and attack them.

As always, the test only started after everyone entered the realm and the spatial gate outside closed.

\*Vrhhhhhh, vrhhh, vrhhhh...\*

The sound of foliage echoed throughout the forest, catching everyone's attention. Soon after, countless vines shot out of the ground. All of them were bright red, darting in the direction of all participants.

'Life Style, First Form, Enhancement!'

Immediately, Rean used his movement technique, pulling himself and his group out of harm's way.

That wasn't all, though.

\*Bzzzzzzzz...\*

\*Roar!\*

Many types of insects and demon beasts appeared from all directions, all generated by the realm's formation.

Though, Rean smiled when he saw that. 'Hehe, too slow.'

Death... and me

Chapter 1688: The Pretense

Rean immediately noticed something different between the Deep Sea Monster Assault and the Life Syphon Forest. Both realm's formations allowed the attacking enemies to find anyone hiding with any kind of technique. However, the time of transferring the information to the enemies was different.

Because there were a lot of insects, demon beasts, and plants, it was too hard to warn all of them at the same time. There was then a slight delay in reacting to Rean's movement. By the time they attacked the position where Rean was a moment ago, he and his group had already used the battle formation to get out of there.

It only worked because of Rean's Light bending skill. Normally, the insects and demon beasts would 'see' the enemy and then attack. In that case, there wasn't a need to warn them as they could do that on their own. But since it was impossible to see Rean with one's sight, they had to rely on the realm's formation, which was too busy controlling everything.

Rean also took that chance to warn Roan, Kentucky, and Celis about this small detail. Kentucky and Roan could also use his Light bending skill, so they didn't waste time activating it. Immediately, their groups became the ones that were the most relaxed during this test.

Meanwhile, the Silver Horn Sturgeons also separated into several groups. They knew that staying together would only attract more of the hostile enemies in this realm, so they had to do that. At the same time, that also helped them do a wider search for Erla's location.

Unfortunately, it didn't matter where their groups went. They simply couldn't find a single trace of Erla at all. Sure, the Life Syphon Forest was very big, but they should at least find some clue after several hours in this place.

The worst part for them was that they didn't have an easy time like Rean and the others. They had to fight the realm's creatures and plants nonstop while doing the search. Because of that, a few of them were already caught and were forced to crush their badges. There were also those who didn't have time to do that and simply died.

And just like that, seconds became minutes, and minutes became hours. Battles between cultivators, demon beasts, spirits, and the realm's creatures happened everywhere. Badges being crushed and others refusing to give up just to die was a very common thing.

Fanso's group gathered in the middle of the realm quite a few times during the search.

"Did you find anything?" Fanso asked the other Sturgeons.



“Not even a clue,” one of them answered.

“Same here.”

“Nothing on my side either.”

Fanso began to find it strange. “Have you found the twins instead?”

Once again, everyone shook their heads in response. That made Fanso have a bad feeling. However, he knew that the contract he gave Rean worked properly. ‘Could it be that Erla was caught by the creatures of this realm and died?’

In any case, he couldn’t just give up. “Continue the search. Also, do your best to stay alive. We’ll have no use for your bodies.”

“Understood.”

In the end, the test didn’t last an entire day. As the manager outside mentioned before, if 70% of the participants were eliminated from the test, the remaining 30% would automatically pass.

\*Tamm...\*

Suddenly, a weird sound echoed throughout the entire Life Syphon Forest, which caused all its creatures and plants to stop moving. Immediately, the silence was the only thing one could hear as everyone paid close attention to their surroundings. They didn’t know what that sound was about.

However, in the next moment, all their badges activated at the same time, forcing them to teleport outside the Life Syphon Forest.

\*Vup, vup, vup, vup, vup...\*

Everyone then appeared in the same place. Seeing that, a worker from the Jhiod Sect's building smiled at them. "Congratulations. You were all within the remaining 30% of the participants. The rest of the candidates died or used their badges to flee from the realm. Remember, only those who complete twelve tests in a row can join the sect. Keep up the good work."

Fanso and his race members couldn't care less about that, though. Their eyes instead were looking all around, trying to find Erla and Min.

"There they are!"

Surprisingly, Erla and Min had a very sorrowful appearance. It was more like they had gone through hell and come back to tell the story. Fanso's group wasn't that well-off, but even they didn't look as bad as Erla and Min did.

At the same time, Fanso found Rean and Habac on another side. They were talking with Roan and Kentucky's groups about their own tests with smiles on their faces. Unlike Erla and Min, Rean and Habac seemed to be doing relatively well. If anything, they seemed to be taking it easy.

Rean then looked in Fanso's direction and noticed that Fanso was looking at him. However, all he did was a small nod before continuing his conversation with his group.

With how different Rean and Habac looked compared to Erla and Min, Fanso found it very hard to believe that Erla and Min were still together with Rean or anyone related to him. 'Was I thinking too much? But then again, why didn't we find Erla and Min at all? If they were having such a hard time, someone should have spotted them during our search in the Life Syphon Forest,' Fanso thought.

Erla and Min then sat down and took a few Divine Stones to recover their energy.

Fanso, on the other hand, turned to his Silver Horn Sturgeons. "Those who are injured can go to the elders outside and get yourselves healed. The rest of us will stay here to watch Erla's movements."

Little did Fanso know, but Erla and Min weren't as bad as they looked. The battle formation, Enhancement skill, and the Light bending skill allowed his group to pass the test easily. The only reason

Erla and Min looked like that was to make Fanso think that Erla and Rean weren't together anymore. It was all planned. They had purposely got themselves injured to continue their pretense.

Death... and me

#### Chapter 1689: Mirror Realm

The next test was the Mirror Realm. It was an illusory realm where it was hard to tell whether the things one saw were real or not. Well, one could already guess what the twins' group did with that. It was once again time for Luan to shine. Especially since this realm also blocked one's Divine Senses.

With that, Kentucky, Celis, Rean, and Roan's group joined together. Roan, Rean, and Kentucky then activated the Light bending skill while Luan used his eyes to help with the test. The objective was simple, find one's way out. There had been tests with the same objective, but each one had a different challenge to reach that objective. This one just so happened to be one of them.

It went without saying that Erla and Min only appeared near Rean and Habac once they entered the Mirror Realm. Before they entered it, they kept themselves far away from each other.

With the Light bending skill, let alone Fanso's Silver Horn Sturgeon race. No one saw the twins' group passing by as Luan guided them through the Mirror Realm. This realm itself didn't have any danger other than the other participants. Since none of them could tell where the twins' group was, there were no dangers whatsoever. The real challenge was to find the way out amidst the illusions, which was easy for Luan.

And just like that, the Mirror Realm was completed by their entire group before they separated from each other once again. The test was over so quickly that the next participants who completed the realm didn't appear before several hours had passed.

Well, as one could imagine, Fanso and the other Sturgeons were completely lost in the Mirror Realm. Forget about finding Erla. They couldn't even find the way out to start with. They did find quite a few other participants, but even those ones were hard to say if they were real or not.

Once again, the test gave the participants an entire week to be completed. Nevertheless, only 5% or so did find the way out. Most of them were due to luck, with very few really having some method to finish it. The eyes of disappointment on the faces of those who would have to start all twelve tests again were obvious.

Fanso couldn't care less about the tests, though. All he could see was that Erla was already outside of the Mirror Realm by the time he failed that test. What did that mean? It meant that Erla had completed the test. Simple as that.

There was a problem now, though. It was impossible to tell whether someone had cleared all the tests before this one or not. If one didn't say it out in the open, no one would find out. Of course, someone might have paid attention to the participants, but during other tests, it was hard to tell whether they came out of the Dimensional Realm because they crushed their badges or because they completed it.

Fanso couldn't help but think, 'From what we know, Erla came into the Jhiod Sect's building eleven months ago. If she succeeded in all the tests until now, she only has another test to pass before she can join the Jhiod Sect. However, did she really pass all of them? Even Blansin outside didn't know that.'

Fanso then looked at one of his race members. 'Go outside and tell the elders about the situation. We couldn't find Erla in the Mirror Realm, and we don't know if she will complete twelve tests in a row with this next one. We need to know what we should do.'

The guy quickly nodded and sped out of the Jhiod Sect's trial building.

In the hotel where the elders were staying, one of them noticed when his race member stepped out of the building. Not long after, they heard the message Fanso sent them.

"They still couldn't find her?" Tilte was truly losing his patience.

"There was nothing we could do, elder Tilte." The Sturgeon felt helpless. "We truly looked for her everywhere, both in the Mirror Realm and the Life Syphon Forest. Fanso thinks that Erla probably has some concealment skill or item that makes her invisible to us."

Tilte narrowed his eyes in response. "She has the Clendes Heart. It would make sense if her father and the other elders of the White Scaled Carp race gave her many items to protect herself."

The young Sturgeon then asked, "Elder Tilte, Fanzo is asking about what we should do in this situation. If Erla truly passed the previous eleven tests, then she has only to pass the next one to be able to join the Jhiod Sect."

Blansin, who was listening to the conversation, immediately asked. "Which one is the next test?"

"The Thunderstorm Breakthrough," the subordinate answered. "It's a Dimensional Realm where storms of lightning are present everywhere. There's no ground for one to step on. You need to really fly through the storm clouds and try to avoid the most dangerous points. It's one of the tests where most deaths happen. After all, when one is hit by the bolts of lightning there, you'll probably be dead before you can think about crushing your badge. Our Silver Horn Sturgeon race will be especially at risk since we're weak against Lightning Element."

"The same goes for Erla," Blansin mentioned. "We must take the risk, elder Tilte. If this is really her last test, we will be finished if she passes."

Tilte pondered over it for a bit before reaching a decision. "Seems like I'll have to talk with the Jhiod Sect elders there."

Blansin and the others were taken aback. "Are you going to tell them about Erla's heart?"

Tilte shook his head in response. "No, that would definitely be worse. Instead, I'll have to pay for their help."

Blansin became confused. "I always thought that trying to buy the Jhiod Sect's recruitment elders was a futile effort."

"Usually, it is," Tilte agreed with Blansin. "However, if the offer is big enough, a mutual understanding could possibly be achieved."

The Sturgeon that came with the message then asked, "What about Fanzo and the rest of us, elder?"

Tilte nodded and said, "Go back and enter the test. If the negotiation doesn't work, I'll have to rely on you to capture Erla at all costs."

Death... and me

Chapter 1690: There Is A Condition

Tilte didn't waste time and headed straight to the Jhiod Sect's building. However, just as he was about to enter, he received a Divine Sense message from Iglet inside. As the protectors that oversee the sect's recruitment, they couldn't allow anyone above the Void Tempering Realm to join the participants inside. 'Turn back. This is not a place for you.'

Tilte already expected that, though. He then used his Divine Sense to follow that Divine Sense back and talk. 'I'm not here to meddle in the Jhiod Sect's recruitment as much as possible. I wish to talk with the person in charge of the recruitment. There is something we need to discuss.'

Iglet looked at Libraia after hearing that. Libraia was the boss here, after all. At the moment, she was fighting the twins with Govin once again. After all, there was a lot of time until the next test, and she wished to see the weapon intents as much as possible. "Hmph! It's probably just another idiot thinking that he can pay us to help his descendants pass the test. Send him away."

However, Iglet shook his head, saying, "He said he isn't asking to help anyone pass any test."

Libraia's attention was piqued after that. "He doesn't want to help anyone? That's quite rare." Libraia then nodded after that. "Alright, show him the way to this room."

Rean and Roan looked at each other after hearing that. 'Could it be the one we're thinking of?'

Roan thought it to be possible. 'Maybe. We will find out since we're also here. However, Erla is your problem, so if you wanna try anything, it's up to you to do whatever you want.'

Rean didn't mind that. 'Well, we'll see.'

Not long after, the demon beast in human form entered the room while Rean was fighting Libraia with his sword intent. Tilte had already received the image of Rean and Roan's appearance from Blansin. Naturally, he was surprised to see that these two Jhiod Sect candidates were in this room as well.

However, Libraia didn't care about that. "Alright, Rean. That's enough for now. Give me a minute to deal with this guy."

After that, she paid attention to Tilte. "So, what is it that you want? I'll be straight here. You can't buy your descendants passage through the test regardless of how much you pay."

Tilte shook his head as he took his attention away from the twins. "I don't have any intention of paying to help anyone in the test. Your friend here should have told you that, lady Libraia."

Libraia nodded in response. "Good. So, what is it about?"

"I would like to pay for you to stop someone from joining the Jhiod Sect instead. This someone is very important to my Silver Horn Sturgeon race. However, we can touch her since she's in your Jhiod Sect's building," Tilte explained. "You can't accept payments to help anyone. However, considering how many candidates fail and die in the test, I'm sure no one will bother if you throw one of them out. Believe me when I say my Silver Horn Sturgeon race can pay you generously for the help."

Libraia narrowed her eyes after hearing that. That wasn't the kind of request she heard every day.

However, it was at this moment she received a Divine Sense message from Rean. 'The person he wants to stop from joining the sect is a friend of mine. If possible, I would be very grateful if you refused his offer.'

After hearing that, Libraia understood who they were talking about. 'Is it about that female demon beast that has been following you? I've noticed that quite a few demon beasts seem to be looking for her inside the tests.'

Rean confirmed Libraia's words, saying, 'That's her.'

Of course, that also made Libraia curious. 'Hmm... I can help you with that. However, you have to tell me what is it that's so important for the Silver Horn Sturgeon race? For this guy to offer to pay for my help, he must be quite desperate.'

'This...' Rean found it hard to talk. After all, the Clendes Sea Heart issue was something that would interest anyone in the Jhiod Sect. But then again, Erla would have to use her status as the Clendes Sea Heart's owner later if she wanted the help of the elders of the Jhiod Sect once she joined it.

After pondering over it for a moment while Libraia talked with Tilte, Rean finally made his decision. 'Oh well, I can only help her so much. She will have to count on her own luck as well.'

With that, Rean told Libraia about Erla's power. However, he concealed the part where it was Erla's heart that gave her such power. Instead, he told Libraia that her Pristine Blue Carp race had a connection with the god of the Clendes Sea, and she was the god's inheritor through bloodline connection. The good thing was that Rean wasn't lying. It was right to tell that Erla was really the guy's inheritor and that it was her bloodline that allowed it.

'What?!' Libraia was taken aback to hear that. 'That little Divine Demon Beast has this kind of power?'

Rean nodded, telling her, 'She does. However, she will have to grow much stronger to be able to control it. Also, it can only be used in this manner inside the Clendes Sea. As to why that's the case, I don't know. No one knows. Anyways, I don't want her to fall into the hands of the Silver Horn Sturgeon race. Instead, it will be better if she joins the Jhiod Sect.'

Libraia couldn't help but ask in response, 'Do you think my Jhiod Sect won't make use of her powers in the future? Although we don't care much about Terces Continent, being able to control it so easily will definitely be a great asset.'

Rean agreed with her, saying, 'We were already expecting that. As the Silver Horn Sturgeon race, they want her dead since they attacked the White Scaled Carp race. For them, she's a calamity. That's why he's this desperate.'

Libraia smiled in response after that. 'Fine, I can refuse his offer. However, there's a condition.'