

Death 2381

Death... and me

Chapter 2381: Why?

"However, it is true that you won't get much of an advantage at first," Rean added. "How about this? Essefy, give me the badges you got your hands on. I will arrange for the communication that goes through those ones can't be seen by the Demon Beasts and Humanoids."

"You can do that?" Essefy and Huban asked at the same time.

Rean obviously confirmed. "I can. As long as there aren't too many of them, I can make their communication pass unnoticed by the system. First of all, there are quite a few tens of millions of these badges already, so keeping track of all of them is already quite a hard task for the humanoids and demon beasts."

Huban then looked at Essefy, who was the one with more knowledge about this topic. "Is it worth it?"

Essefy immediately nodded. "Absolutely. First of all, our Essence Race will have a huge issue once we get the schemes to build our own communication system. We don't have the manpower to build the towers. Even if we do, we can't do that without the other powers of the Realm of Gods perceiving it. After all, the towers have to be visible and stay at high points. As long as we spread our system a little, it will definitely be found by the others."

Essefy continued. "However, Rean's method will allow us to use their communication badges and towers, so no one will notice anything. Since we still can't show ourselves outside, at least not until the devils are defeated, having a few untraceable communication badges will be a huge advantage. At the very least, I won't need to use the other methods to deliver the message to you anymore, which is much better and faster."

Joju, standing on the side, found a problem. "Wait, but that is based on our trust in this human. What if he is lying, and we get found straight away?"

Roan glanced at Joju and shook his head. "I don't want to make you look like someone who can't think things through, but... Do you really see us trying to become enemies with three Peak Divinity Realm experts, especially someone like Huban? Huban said he has an agreement with other experts at his level,

but I doubt it reaches the point where he can't at least take care of one or two people like me and Rean."

Indeed. It didn't matter how you looked at it. Becoming enemies with Huban alone was already a very idiotic thing to do. Joju then went quiet and looked away. His question was a little too unnecessary. After all, one must not forget that Rean and Roan are also trying to stay hidden from the humanoids, spirits, and demon beasts. There was simply no advantage whatsoever for the twins to fool the essence race here.

Huban then thought of something. "Since you can prevent others from looking into our communications, you most likely can make it so we can look into theirs, can't you?"

Rean nodded. "I can, but I won't do that for you."

"Why?" Huban asked back.

"Because I'm still a human, am I not?" Rean answered. "It is already very generous that I'm putting you and my own race on the same terms. Neither side will be able to pry into the other's information. This much is absolute, and I won't change my mind."

Roan, on the other hand, didn't seem to care. But since Rean already said that, he didn't add anything.

Essefy looked at Huban. "Master, we should take this deal. We will get our hands in our own communication system anyway. If we are still afraid of such an outcome in the future, we can just build our own system once we come out and take what is ours back."

Huban pondered for and accepted the deal. "Very well. However, just the schemes of the communication system won't be enough. Rean, you have to stay here and teach our Essence Race Formations Masters directly. Once they are able to set up a communication system on their own, then we can say that this deal was properly accomplished."

Kentucky, who had been silent all this time, couldn't help but ask. "But in that case, who can guarantee that you will give us the Fragment?"

Roan glanced at him and answered that question in Huban's instead. "We don't have any guarantee. He holds the ultimate power, the ultimate strength. We can only trust him, and that's about it. That's the advantage of the strong."

Huban was quite satisfied with Roan's answer. "It is good that you know. That's how the world works."

Rean didn't seem to mind. "No problem. I just hope you have some skilled Formations Master as the Circuitry Formation theory is quite complex compared to the normal formations you have been using so far."

"Skilled?" Huban snorted in response. "I feel like you have already forgotten who created the formation on the gate of this underground city."

Rean felt like giving himself a kick. That was right! The Essence Race literally built a Legendary Level Formation to protect the entrance of the city! The Legendary Level was even outside of the Soul Gem System's scope of detection! If that was not considered a work of skilled Formations Masters, then nothing was! "Ahem... I've never doubted the knowledge of the Essence Race in Formations. Yes, it was a joke, just a joke. Hehe... Hahahaha..."

Still, that made another doubt appear in Rean's mind. "If you have such skilled Formations Masters, why did you send Essefy to spy on the other races? You even wanted him to get the secret of the Communication System. However, he said he knew nothing about formations... Wouldn't it have been better to send one of your skilled Formations Masters instead?"

Essefy, Huban, Landeau, Joju... all the Essence Race members felt a little helpless at that question. "Do you think we haven't thought about that? Unfortunately... Only Essefy has the ability to change into human form. Above all, he is the only one of us that can leave the land of the Essence Race."

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Chapter 2382: It's My Pleasure

Only then did Rean remember when Essefy mentioned that he was bound to this land. "Oh! You said something like that before. So you are similar to the Cosgle Race, a race that can't live outside a certain type of field. Still, is it okay for you to tell us that?"

"Cosgles?" Huban didn't know that one. But then again, the Realm of Gods had countless races, so he didn't pay it much attention. "Well, if they are also bound to their land, then you were right. As for telling you, don't worry. This is definitely not a secret to the other three powers. The Essence Race is said to dominate the Northeast side of the Realm of Gods in the past. The other powers understood that we couldn't leave this place ever since then."

"It makes the idea of them being afraid of your power a little weird, though," Roan commented. "What risk would be there if you can't even leave this side?"

Essefy shook his head on Roan's side. "That's the point. What if we suddenly got the ability to leave our land? Am I not someone like that?"

Roan had to admit he made sense. "Indeed... But how come you can leave? Also, only you can change into humanoid form?"

Essefy nodded. "Yes, I'm the only one capable of both. Well, if you think about it for a moment, you can probably imagine why that is."

Rean pondered a bit. "Usually, I would say that you have a mixed bloodline. However, Essence Race members aren't born from mothers. They are similar to a few spirits instead, being born from the energy of the Heaven and Earth... Or better, from the Essence of Heaven and Earth."

Essefy smiled. "Believe it or not, you aren't far from the truth. I wasn't born from Heaven and Earth like everyone else. Instead, I'm the result of a relationship between a Wisp and an Essence being."

"Wisp..." Rean remembered that there is indeed a race of wisps in the Spirit Races Territory. "I can't even imagine how you could be conceived..."

Essefy shrugged his shoulders. "All I can tell you is that it was definitely not like you humans do. But ultimately, this mixed... bloodline? No, I guess it is better to say I have mixed energy instead. I also believe this to be the reason why my humanoid form is still looking like a child. I didn't do it on purpose. I've simply always been like this."

"Still," Essefy continued. "Even though I'm a result of this relationship between wisp and essence, I'm pretty much 99% an Essence Race member."

Roan wasn't surprised. "The Essence Race is such a powerful race, while wisps are pretty much one of the weakest out there. If we are talking about mixed energy, like mixed bloodline, then the stronger type takes priority. Nonetheless, this last 1% is what breaks your bond to this land."

"Exactly," Essefy nodded. Essefy then looked at Huban. "Well, Master could possibly leave this place if he wanted."

Huban sighed. "I can... but it is not very good for me. So, unless necessary, I refrain from doing such a thing. Don't worry. This is also not a secret to those monsters who share the same position as me." Huban then laughed a little. "Hehe! Just make sure to not make me angry since I might think that hunting you down is one of those necessary reasons."

"We wouldn't dare," Rean answered straight away.

With that, all the things they had to talk about were over. On the same day, Rean was brought to another building in the city where he met the Essence Race Formations Masters. He immediately felt at home there. These Formations Masters were truly at the top of the Formations World.

Surprisingly, the leader of the Essence Formation Masters was someone Rean already met before. It was Landeau, one of the three Peak Divinity Realm Essence Race Beings. Rean soon came to know that Landeau was also a Legendary Level Formations Master. There were other members who had the ability to reach that level in the future, too. It's just that these other Essence Race Members didn't have the necessary cultivation for that.

"Can you tell me more about the Formation on the Gate of the City?" Rean couldn't help but inquire.

Landeau still didn't like the humans very much. However, Huban told him to cooperate, so he followed those orders. "Very well. However, you need to show me the communication system first."

"No problem!"

Vup!

Immediately, another person appeared outside, coming from the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. "Is it here?! The Legendary Formations Master? Where is him?!" It was none other than Droman, Rean's Master, back in the Dalamu Sect.

Droman looked at the human-shaped colored flame in front of him and immediately kneeled down. "Sir, I shall be in your care!"

Rean scratched the back of his head. "Master... isn't it a little too much?"

Yet, Droman immediately grabbed Rean's head and forced it down with him. "Shut up! This is a Legendary Level Formations Master! What kind of attitude is that? Kneel down and show this sir the respect he deserves!"

Rean felt helpless as his master forced him down. But then again, he just couldn't force himself to go against Droman's wishes.

Seeing that, Landeau's impression of the human race quickly improved. "H-Hmph! At least there are some sensible humans out there." Not that he would admit it. "Alright, let's get into the main topic. Show me the schematics of the Communication System."

Droman then got up, excited. "Yes!" He then passed the jade slip with the methods of building a communication system. "However, sir, it would be best if you first learn about the Circuitry Formation Runes."

Landeau looked at the jade slip information and narrowed his eyes. Indeed, without knowing about the Circuitry Formation, he would take too long to understand. "Very well."

Landeau then spread his Divine Sense. Soon, another twenty Formations Masters arrived at the scene. "They are all my trusted subordinates. You can teach all of us at the same time."

"It's my pleasure!" Droman nodded.

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Chapter 2383: Teaching

The introduction of the Circuitry Formation Runes to Landeau was something he had never experienced before. Because his Essence Race couldn't reveal themselves, Landeau hardly got any contact with the communication system. At most, he got a few communication badges from Essefy.

Yet, because he didn't understand them, that badge looked nothing but some foreign object. He couldn't figure out why and how it worked. The main reason is that the communication system opened the door to many other improvements.

Let's not forget that while Rean was still in the Dragon Race Territory and watching over the System Sect, he and the others created other types of circuitry formation machines. Within those machines, there were the ones that allowed the building of microcircuitry formation runes. They used the first version to create the next one and then the next one to create another.

Following this process, the Circuitry Formations inside the communication badges had too many runes, and they were way too small. Even Landeau and his Divinity Peak Stage Realm couldn't do anything to see them. He simply did not have the equipment necessary to do such a thing. So, although he knew the communication badges operated with formations, he couldn't even analyze them, much to his frustration.

Now, however, Rean and Droman even brought a few examples from inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Landeau was, after all, a Legendary Level Formations Master. His talent in the field was definitely higher than his cultivation talent. He is a member of the Essence Race, a race that was naturally blessed with cultivation talent. To say that his Formations talent was higher than cultivation already showed how great it was.

"I see... no wonder it was so hard before..." Landeau commented as the flames of essence energy of his body shined brightly. The other Essence Race Formations Master could totally tell how excited Landeau was at the moment. "What an incredible concept using the speed of the lightning element... no, you named this type of usage as electricity, right? Anyway, such tiny, tiny currents that I can barely feel with my Divine Sense can give birth to such wonders. This programming, above all, is simply limitless!"

Droman nodded, happy to hear that, as if he was the one who created the Circuitry Formations.

"Hahaha! Indeed, they are very good. However, compared to the runes senior Landeau can use to create

Legendary Level Formations, we are still lacking. Senior Landeau simply didn't know about this concept before, that's all."

During the past few weeks, Landeau grew more and more fond of this human called Droman. They simply seemed to get along way too well. By now, he had completely forgotten the abysmal disparity between his cultivation and Droman's. It was to the point that if Landeau didn't control his emotions well, a simply burst of Divine Energy and Essence from his body would vaporize Droman right there and then.

Rean then approached the two to give a report. "I got Tintan to work on the microcircuitry runes machine. He seems to be quite enjoying working on these bigger devices and has some talent for it, so he should be able to develop and utilize them well in the future."

Laundeau glanced at him. "So be it. Just take Hihie and Flotivan and help them catch up to the rest." Yet, he seemed to still not like Rean very much for some reason. Perhaps it was his pride that couldn't accept that Rean created something like this instead of him, a Legendary Level Formations Master.

Nonetheless, Rean didn't pay much attention. He wasn't here to be liked anyway. To make sure nothing would go wrong, he put quite some effort into teaching together with Droman. They were also able to experience the impressive capabilities of the Essence Race.

They weren't good at cultivation only. Instead, they seemed to be good at anything they put their mind to. Even the Essence Race members, who were 'slightly behind' in the learning category, were still several times better than most Formations Masters Droman and Rean had ever seen, let alone the good ones. It reached a point where they wondered if there was anything this race wasn't good at.

A few more weeks passed by, and Landeau had grasped pretty much the entire concept. By now, he could totally create his own communication system even if he didn't have the schematics from Rean and Droman. With that said, he decided it was about time to give something back. "You two, come with me."

Rean and Droman stopped what they were doing and quickly followed. Not so long after, they arrived at the city entrance. Arriving there, Rean couldn't help but look up. "I wonder what happened to the Devils who were investigating this place."

Landeau didn't mind telling them. "Nothing much. They kept roaming around for around ten days, trying to find the reason why Divine Senses didn't work. They did the same thing several times in the past. It's just that since your Realm of Gods' Powers are now taking over this continent, they probably gave it one last try. Well, without enough information like what Zandolf got his hands on, they were fated to never find this place anyway."

Landeau then waved his hand, and tens of thousands of small colored runes shined on the gate entrance of the Essence Race Underground City. Rean and Droman had never seen them before, but they could feel the power behind them.

Sure enough, that was the Legendary Level Slaughtering Formation that was maintained by Landeau himself. "I'm quite proud of this work if you ask me. This Formation is capable of transforming Divine Energy into Essence Energy and using it to attack. The power is also capable of killing even Peak Divinity Realm enemies if they are not careful."

Landeau then looked back at Rean and Droman. "You two still lack the cultivation to create these runes. However, you definitely have the necessary talent to learn how they work and how to build them in the future. From now on, I'm the teacher, so listen carefully."

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Chapter 2384: Extinction Sphere

Rean still felt some difference in how Landeau explained the runes and their effects between him and Droman. Nonetheless, he would still answer all his questions without complaining... although he didn't seem very pleased with it. Rean and Droman used that opportunity to the fullest, making sure to record everything they needed.

Another few weeks passed in a flash. By now, Rean had already forgotten about the week he had free before going back to the Limigo Region. Because the signal of the communication towers didn't reach this underground city, the cultivators even thought that Rean, Essefy, and Kentucky had died somewhere.

Rean didn't mind. What he gained during this time in the Essence Race City was several times better than the Serene Gold Filaments. He could even think about several places where he could apply the knowledge he got from Landeau in his new set of armors in the future. As for the Gold Filament necessary, he would try to come up with some excuse to rejoin the army later.

Finally, they reached a point where both sides taught everything they could. Naturally, there were a few secrets that each side would rather keep for themselves. Nonetheless, The Essence Race and Rean earned a lot from the experience.

Back in the room where Huban stayed, Rean, Landeau, and everyone else once again gathered. Huban looked at his Essence Race members and especially at Landeau. "How is it? Did he fulfill his part of the deal?"

Landeau nodded. "Yes. I have already put the methods of creating a communication system to the test and achieved a very simple version of it. Naturally, it will be impossible to reach the size and complexity of the humanoids and demon beasts' system. After all, we are keeping ourselves hidden here. Nonetheless, once we go out and show ourselves, it shouldn't be a problem to build a much bigger and more complex one."

Huban nodded, satisfied. "If that's the case, then it is good. What about the communication badges he promised us?"

Landeau took out seven communication badges that Essefy had acquired while he lived outside. "I'm not too sure if they are truly capable of hiding our communication. After all, the equipment to create these badges is definitely much more advanced than what I can build here at the moment. In this specific case, we can only trust Rean here that he did what he said."

Rean shrugged his shoulders. "Well, that is, after all, up to you to believe or not. Even if you don't want to, at least Landeau and the other Essence Race Formations Masters already know how to build the communication system. You might as well just throw these badges away and wait for the day you can build and spread your own system."

Huban didn't seem to mind. "Let's use them. If things really go south, I can bring everyone away to safety on my own. I can't intervene in the changes of the world, but no one will complain if I just carry some members of my race away. For now, they are just too useful to ignore."

"Very well," Landeau nodded and passed one of the badges to Essefy. "I already added these other six badges' numbers to yours. It shouldn't take long until the signal of the communication system towers reach this place as the Realm of Gods' forces advance into this continent. You can use it to contact us later. Of course, we will use some codes so that no one can figure out who we are in case the conversations are still being monitored."

Essefy nodded and quickly put the badge away. "No problem."

Huban then looked at Rean, Roan, and Kentucky. "With this, you have accomplished your part of the deal. Now, it is time to go ahead of mine."

Huban's body expanded, turning into a colored flame several times bigger than the Peak Divinity Realm Essence Race experts. Following that, a Spatial Gate appeared, showing a connection to another world on the other side. Just like the Essence Race City, there were many buildings with similar characteristics, all with the same colored cubic image on them.

Pin!

[Universe Foundation Fragment Detected!]

[New Quest Available: Retrieve the Fragment from the Dimensional Realm protected by Huban.]

[Destiny Points Reward: 1000000 Destiny Points]

[Failure Penalty: 2000000 Destiny Points]

[Failure Conditions: Leaving the Central Area of the Realm of Gods without the Fragment.]

[Time: Unlimited]

Sure enough, the soul gem system immediately activated, feeling the power of the Fragment coming from inside that Spatial Gate. However, that wasn't everything the system detected.

[Warning! Extinction Sphere Remnant Energy detected!]

The system continued.

[The Extinction Sphere was responsible for killing a Universe. It was the natural enemy of the Universe's Foundation Pillar. As something derived from the Universe Foundation Pillar, the Soul Gem System's Control Orb is extremely vulnerable to this kind of energy. Hosts must be absolutely careful to not let the Soul Gem Orb get in contact with that energy. Otherwise, the system might get damaged or even destroyed.]

'Remnant of the Extinction Sphere's Energy?' Rean and Roan were taken aback. They obviously remember that Soul Gem destroyed it in the past, but the result of the Universe being split in two. 'To think that some of its energy still exists to this day...' they thought.

[No wonder the system seemed to detect something but couldn't figure out what it was,] said Sister Orb. [This Energy and the System do have some kind of connection, after all.]

'Is it dangerous?' Roan asked.

[For you, not really. Only the system would be affected by such a small amount of energy from the destroyed Extinction Sphere. So, make sure you don't force me to come outside if you enter that Dimensional Realm.]

'Alright,' Rean and Roan agreed with her.

Huban, not knowing anything, called the twins' group. "Come with me. The Universe Foundation Fragment can be found inside. I'm using the energy in this Dimensional Realm to hide its presence."

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Chapter 2385: Dilemma of the New Fragment

"Hide it?" Rean and Roan got puzzled. "But the Fragments we found in the past never had a need for anything to stay hidden. Others simply couldn't detect them. The way most used to find the Fragments were mostly through the phenomenons they cause."

Huban passed through the Spatial Gate as Rean's group followed. "We both know it is wrong, don't you think?"

Rean and Roan were taken aback. Then, they remembered how the Soul Gem System was indeed able to detect them once they got close enough. However, until Huban opened the Spatial Gate, the system truly couldn't detect this Fragment, which, in theory, was really close. "What do you know?"

Huban looked at them as he continued to move forward. "What I know is that you two definitely have some method to find the Fragments. Otherwise, Hyeoumu would never have spoken for you. I might as well add that I would have tried to take the Fragments you have in your hands if not for that. After all, it is still believed the Fragments might be the key to reach the next realm."

"Do you mean the other experts at your level are able to tell where our Fragments are located?" The twins asked back. The twins it to be possible.

However, Huban denied it. "No, we can't. All I said is that it isn't impossible to detect the fragments. However, due to the Energy in this place, it should be extremely hard to detect it if I don't open the Dimensional Realm."

Rean and Roan admitted the system couldn't find it until that moment. "So you are hiding it from those like us, who have methods to find the Fragments' locations."

Huban continued. "What I said before we entered this place is that the Energy here helps keep it hidden. However, it was not me who put this Energy here. At my level, I don't really need to hide anything since few could contend against me anyway, especially in this region. Too bad we are all bound by the agreement where we can't interfere with the events of the outside world."

"The one hiding the Fragment is none other than the Fragment itself," Huban then dropped the bomb.

"Impossible!" Rean and Roan spoke at the same time. After all, the Energy in this place is the same Energy as the Extinction Sphere. This Energy was supposed to be able to destroy the Foundation Pillar, after all. How could the Fragment of the Pillar be releasing this type of Energy that was supposed to be harmful to it?

Huban didn't seem to mind Rean and Roan's answer. "As I thought, you do know what kind of energy this is, right?"

"This..." Roan kept a cold expression while Rean struggled a little to keep his surprise in check. In the end, Roan simply spoke. "This Energy is a Remnant of the Extinction Sphere."

Huban nodded, satisfied. "That's correct. The energy present in this place is the same as the Energy of the Extinction Sphere. I can understand your shock. After all, this Energy should harm the Fragment, not be released by it."

Huban truly seemed to be aware of many things. But then again, he was probably alive even back then when the Extinction Sphere first appeared... or so the Twins believe.

Finally, they arrived at the center of the Dimensional Realm. In the distance, Rean and Roan could see the floating piece of material in the air, not moving. However, they could also feel that the Energy of the Extinction Sphere was denser the closer they got to it.

Huban then looked at the twins. "So, here you go. That's the Fragment. You can simply go and take it." From Huban's tone, he seemed to be enjoying this situation quite a lot.

Rean and Roan knew why. The Sistem and Sister Orb warned them already. This Energy is terrible for the system, so they can't let it get close to it. The Soul Gem Dimensional Realm was completely sealed at the moment because of it.

Yet, the Fragment ahead was the cause of the issue. If they wanted to take it and fuse it with the other Fragments they got, they would need to send it into the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Naturally, that was out of the question. Huban was giving it to them, just as he promised. Yet, they couldn't take it. 'Cunning old fox...' Rean and Roan thought at the same time. It was obvious Huban knew what was happening.

Even if Huban didn't know about the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, he already made it clear he knew Rean and Roan had more Fragments. Yet, the Fragments they had were also part of the Universe Foundation Pillar. If they tried to fuse both sides, wouldn't that Fragment ahead corrupt the Fragments they had?

The worst part was that the quest said they couldn't leave the central area of the Realm of Gods until they got it. Unless, of course, they paid for the failure penalty, which costs Two Million Destiny Points! At the moment, the twins only had a million and a half. Or, to be more precise, 1533215.

'Sister Orb, what do we do here? First of all, how can that Fragment be releasing the same Energy as the Extinction Sphere?' Roan asked.

[That's hard to say since my memory is sealed. I truly have no answer to your questions at the moment. However, there is indeed a way to acquire this Fragment...] Sister Orb mentioned.

'There is?' Suddenly, Rean and Roan remembered something. 'Oh, right... there is...'

The Fragments Rean and Roan have in their Soul Gem Dimensional Realm weren't bound to the Dimensional Realm. If they wanted, they could bring it out. Another method was to simply acquire that Fragment ahead but never put it inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. It's just that only the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm gave Rean and Roan enough confidence that the Fragments would never be detected by anyone. If they bring it away with other methods... it might not take too long before they receive the visit of a few Divinity Realm beings.

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Chapter 2386: Refinement

However, a question still remained in all their minds. "Senior Huban, just... how the hell is this Fragment resealing the same type of energy as the Extinction Sphere?"

Huban looked at them. "So you can tell it is the Extinction Sphere's energy, uh? Seems like Hyeoumu was right about your chances. Anyway, since you know about the Extinction Sphere, you know it was the reason for the Universe Splitting Phenomenon, right?" Rean, Roan, and Kentucky nodded and waited for Huban to continue.

"That's just my theory, but I believe the impact of the Extinction Sphere's explosion caused some of its energy to fuse with this Fragment in particular," Huban explained. "I know, it is hard to believe. After all, the Extinction Sphere's Energy should be the nemesis of the Universe Foundation Pillar."

"But then again... the Universe still survived the explosion. That said, what if, and this is a BIG IF, the Universe Foundation Pillar had part of itself change to match the Extinction Sphere's Energy? What if this Fragment was just the Universe's own way of saving itself after Soul Gem used his formation to destroy the extinction sphere?"

The twins' group couldn't deny that possibility. After all, Sister Orb was the previous Universe Sentience. If she had a sentience back then, she might have purposely done what Huban just suggested. Too bad she didn't have access to those memories anymore.

Rean then noticed something. "If what you say is true, then this Fragment isn't the only part affected by the Extinction Sphere's Energy. It is better to say that the Foundation Pillar Itself now has a part of it with the same Remnant Energy of the Extinction Sphere."

Roan went even further. "Not only that, this part of the Foundation Pillar that is fused with the Extinction Sphere's Energy might be causing the rest of the Pillar to deteriorate. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the Universe to be dying."

Huban was surprised they could figure that much out of his initial words. "Smart. I also considered the same scenario. But then again, I have no idea how to revert it... if I'm right. Don't forget, everything I said was just a theory. I might be completely wrong."

The problem came with the fact that Huban might be right instead. If he is right, then the Foundation Pillar is also affected. How exactly will they purge the energy of the Extinction Sphere from the Foundation Pillar? Of course, such a thing might not have really happened.

Pin!

Suddenly, the System's Voice echoed in the twins' minds.

[Hosts have reached a critical point in the restoration of the Universe's two halves. To save the Universe, restoring its foundation is absolutely necessary. For that, all fragments must be acquired and cleaned from any harmful properties. However, such a thing had never happened before in the Universe's history, so no one knows how to clean the Extinction Sphere's Remnant Energy.]

[New Quest Available: Find a way to restore the Fragment to its original form.]

[Quest Reward: 10000000 Destiny Points.]

[Time: Unlimited.]

[Failure Penalty: Universe's Destruction.]

Rean and Roan immediately understood. The Soul Gem System wanted them to use this Fragment as a testing item. Suppose they could find a way to clean the Extinction Sphere's Energy from this Fragment that had been modified. In that case, they might be able to do the same with the part of the Pillar that got affected by the same issue.

However... 'Just how does the system expect us to find a solution?' Rean and Roan immediately felt lost. From the looks of it, they will not be able to take this Fragment away today.

Rean then turned to Huban. "Senior Huban, you figured these possibilities a long time ago, so you had a lot of time to think about it. Have you thought about any means that the Fragment can be cleaned of the Extinction Sphere's Energy?"

Huban sighed in response. "There isn't a single day that goes by that I don't think about it. However, the problem is that the Fragment isn't just affected by the Extinction Sphere's Energy. Instead, it is fused with it. The Fragment itself is capable of releasing this Remnant Extinction Sphere's Energy pretty much forever, showing they are well connected to each other."

"I truly can't think of a way to separate them both. It's not like we can refine it, you know?" Huban concluded.

Yet, his words immediately lit up a spark in Rean's mind. "Wait! What did you say?!"

Huban looked at Rean. "I can't think of a way to separate both. Didn't you hear me?"

"No, the second part!" Rean immediately shook his head. "That's right! It might truly be possible."

Roan also looked at Rean through their Soul Connection. 'Are you talking about refining the Fragment?'

Rean nodded. 'It might be possible. If you look at it in the most basic way, the Foundation Pillar and the Fragments are, after all, a type of ore. They are hard but can be manipulated. So much so that they are able to change form and fuse back to each other once they are close enough and the conditions are right. Since that's the case, why wouldn't it be able to be refined?'

Roan and the others understood the logic, but the practice... 'And how exactly will you do it?'

Rean pondered a bit, and his mind ended up on the Soul Gem System Reward list. To be more specific, he thought about the Soul Gem Blacksmith Workshop. 'So far, the system has been upgrading the Blacksmith Workshop and allowing me to make things no one was ever able to do in this Universe. Perhaps... the end stages of the Blacksmith Workshop Upgrade could even allow me to refine the Foundation Pillar itself.'

Roan heard that through their soul connection. 'If that's the case, perhaps it is not just the Blacksmith Workshop.'

Rean agreed with him. 'Indeed. Nowadays, my best weapons use everything. The forging techniques, the concoction liquids of your alchemy, and the inscriptions of the circuitry formation repository. To refine that Fragment... we might need all three of them.'

Death... and me

Chapter 2387: No Proof

Roan considered that option. 'And what if it is the part of the Foundation Pillar itself? It is one thing to refine the 'impurity' that is the Remnant Energy of the Extinction Sphere. But would you refine the entire Pillar?'

Rean shrugged his shoulders. 'You are getting too ahead. How could I know if I can refine that thing or not? For now, I would rather just focus on this Fragment alone. If I am successful, then we can think about the Pillar. Besides, it is still not guaranteed that part of the Pillar turned out like this.'

Roan had to admit Rean was right. 'Very well, refining this Fragment it is, then. Will you need me to concoct that tempering oil again?'

Rean shook his head. 'I don't know. I don't even know if I can refine it like any normal ore. Well, many of the Divine Ores we got up to this point had different refinement methods, so it doesn't bother me.'

[Ahem...] Sister Orb then called their attention. [As I mentioned, the energy of the Fragment is harmful to the system. If you wish to use the Blacksmith Workshop, you will have to bring everything outside first. DO NOT bring that thing inside since the Control Orb is derived from the Foundation Pillar.]

Rean knew that. 'Obviously.'

Huban noticed that the twins went silent and thought they had given up. "There is no need to feel down just because of what you found. Perhaps there is a way to circumvent this issue in the future. For now, it will stay here with me. I won't go back on my word. If you find a way to bring it away and get rid of the Extinction Sphere's Energy, just pay me a visit."

However, Rean quickly shook his head. "There is no need. I'm going to start on it soon."

Huban and the others were taken aback. "Work on it? Are you really serious about refining it to eliminate the harmful energy?"

Rean nodded. "That's the idea. I'm not sure if it will work, but I will give it a try. However, not today."

Roan agreed with him. "You need to go back to the war, or you might even lose the Merit Points you acquired so far."

"Exactly," Rean agreed with him. Rean then changed to soul messages between him and Roan. 'Also, we need to go back to the Dimensional Realm and buy the next levels of the three production upgrades.'

Huban found it hard to believe Rean would succeed. Nonetheless, he wasn't going to stop him. "Well, that's up to you. Nothing can destroy the Fragments, as far as I know, anyway. It will be here next time you wish to give it a try. Let's return."

Rean's group then followed Huban back, traversing the Spatial Gate. Following that, the Spatial Gate closed, once again sealing the Fragment inside.

Around a day later, Rean's group was ready to go back. Naturally, Essefy was with them too. "I already have your numbers here, so I can contact you at any time. Obviously, no one will be able to detect it either. Senior Huban, we will take our leave," said Rean.

Huban nodded, not minding it too much. "Sure, sure. It's not like I'm going anywhere, either." He then looked at Essefy. "I will have someone bring one of those badges into the communication tower's range. Make sure to send us daily updates on what is happening in the war. With this, our greatest issue with our resurgence, the lack of information, is covered."

"Leave it to me, Master Huban." Essefy immediately agreed, already back to his six-year-old humanoid form.

Rean was also given a token, which would resonate with the Essence Race's Underground City Gate. That way, he wouldn't be attacked by the gate anymore once he returned. Last but not least, Landeau kept Rean's group inside the exceptions for the Divine Sense Bliding Formation. That way, their Divine Sense wouldn't be seeing just a gray mist anymore while they were in the range of the Formation.

Returning to the surface, Rean and Kentucky immediately spread their Divine Senses. In the end, it was just like Joju mentioned. They could see that many of the buildings that still stood back when they arrived had been destroyed. The ruins were even more ruined now. That was proof that the Devils truly tried everything to uncover the secrets of these Ruins. Naturally, they failed in the end.

"I can't see any Devils in the range of my Divine Sense," Kentucky said.

Essefy wasn't surprised. "That's obvious. If there were still devils around, senior Landeau would have warned us before leaving the Underground City. Still, for them to be gone now, I believe it is safe to say that the humanoid army in this continent began its advance again."

Rean and Kentucky agreed with him. "Indeed. Anyway, should we go back to the Zandolf's army? I'm pretty sure they are confused about where Zandolf went."

"You can't tell them what happened, Rean," Essefy warned.

Rean knew that. "Don't worry, I don't intend to. Still, we need their teleport formations. Let's just go back, as I already have an excuse."

As they made their way back, they soon left the area dominated by the Devils and saw the first signs of the Realm of Gods' scouts. They were much further into the Devils' Territory, just like Essefy mentioned. Around a day later, they returned to the city where they first arrived through the Long-Distance Teleport Formation.

It's just that the moment they appeared, another Divinity Realm expert appeared to receive them. "So you finally appeared. I'm Lavanda, the temporary commander of this continent's army. I was told you went after Zandolf over a month ago. Where is he?"

Rean shook his head. "Wait! Zandolf is not back yet?! Shit! I thought I would finally be able to talk to him... We were trapped by a formation while investigating the ruins of the Essence Race, and it wasn't until a day ago that we finally managed to get free. We did not manage to find him in the end." It was simple but effective. In the end, no one could prove the contrary.

Death... and me

Chapter 2388: Late For It

Lavanda narrowed her eyes. She only knew that Rean, Kentucky, and Essefy had gone out to look for Zandolf themselves. Yet, they also lost contact with them. Only today, now that they appeared here, did she finally have the chance to ask them. Yet, they knew nothing. "Trapped? You are saying you got trapped inside the Devils' Territory and returned alive?"

Rean nodded. "That's because we weren't trapped by the Devils. Instead, it was some ancient formation in the Essence Race Ruins. The Devils probably didn't even know we were there. First of all, it isn't even a terrain worth attacking, so there weren't any Devils near those ruins anyway. In the end, we spend all these days to get free."

Rean then asked back. "Still, we didn't find senior Zandolf. How come he isn't back yet? We saw on our way here that the army was advancing. Wasn't it supposed to happen only if he commands?"

"Since I'm his substitute, I obviously have the authority to deploy the army," said Lavanda. The fact was that Lavanda was quite displeased to be sent to this place. As mentioned before, this continent didn't hold any strategic value, so the war here wasn't that important. However, if she conquers it quickly, she might be able to bring the army somewhere worth being used. She truly didn't like the idea of this army being used mostly for the support of other armies.

She continued. "So, how did you get out in the end? The Essence Race Formations should be quite impressive."

Rean agreed with her. "Definitely! Didn't you see? We took way over a month to return. I think we were already lucky enough there wasn't any slaughtering formation in place, too. To be honest, I think we would have taken even longer, or perhaps never returned, if it wasn't an ancient formation. It most likely lost most of its power already by the time we stepped in it."

Lavanda had some knowledge about formations, so she knew what Rean said was possible. Besides, because of the Devils' invasion back then, no one was left to explore these ruins. It was hard to tell whether the formations back in the Essence Race Cities were still active or not. "Fine. However, you are not part of my army, so you must leave. Just go back to your post in the Tormalek Continent." Lavanda then left, as she was still commanding the army's advancement at the moment.

Rean, Kentucky, and Essefy didn't complain at all, quickly going to the Long-Distance Teleport Formation and paying to get away from that place.

Of course, the problems weren't solved with just that. As soon as they arrived at the Limigo Region in the Tormalek Continent, Hrume came to see them. "So... you finally decided to show your faces again, uh?"

Back when Rean's group had helped Gardo, Gardo said that he would cover for them while they visited Zandolf. However, he would only do that for a week, and after that, he wouldn't have anything to do with them anymore. Way more than a month had passed already, so Rean, Kentucky, and Essefy were now being treated as Deserters or Experts killed in battle. Yet, finally, they appeared again.

"Ahem..." Rean took the chance to talk. "We were sorry, senior Hrume. We were trapped inside an Ancient Formation in one of the ruins of the Essence Race. We were supposed to be back way earlier."

Gardo didn't seem to care. "As far as I know, you weren't even supposed to go anywhere else after helping Gardo. Once you finished helping him, you should have come straight back. Or could it be I was wrong? How come you ended up going to Zaldolf's army?"

That was the one thing Rea, Kentucky, and Essefy couldn't deny. "That's true. However, senior Hrumes know very well why I came here. I didn't hide from you or anyone else that I was looking for information regarding the Essence Race. So, when I finally got some information, I had to go there to check. I just didn't expect to get trapped."

"So you did it knowing you were breaking orders, is that correct?" Hrumes asked with a cold tone.

Rean rubbed the back of his head helplessly. "That's... That's correct."

Hrumes then looked at Essefy. "I know Goku and Kenny were after information regarding the Essence Race, so it makes sense they broke the rules to go investigate that place. However, what about you? Why did you follow them?"

Essefy dropped his head. "I just thought it would be funny to check things out..."

Hrumes' expression turned even worse. "Normally, death would be the only outcome to deserters like you three. However, it is true that your efforts helped our Realm of Gods' Armies achieve two major victories. Millions were saved by your contribution. Besides, you did come back in the end instead of fleeing, which is somewhat commendable. That said, I will spare your lives."

"However!" Hrumes' face then showed a cold smile. "Your actions can't go unpunished, or they would settle a precedent to the army. An army is composed of orders, and orders must not be broken. Otherwise, it would crumble. All your Merit Points... have now been wiped out! And that also includes the points you earned for the contribution to Gardo's army. Oh, just so that you know, that mission ended in the death of an Elder Devil, so each of you was given over 2,000 points, which are now gone, too. Hahaha!"

"EH?!" Rean, Kentucky and Essefy were taken aback. That was a crazy huge reward! If Rean and Kentucky put their merit points together, they could have bought 500 grams of Serene Gold Filament! Yet, it was all gone now.

"Come on, senior Hrumes! You can't do it with us!" Even Essefy complained, knowing that such a huge amount of Merit Points would be very useful for himself, too.

"Yes! Yes! This is too harsh!" Rean and Kentucky complained as well.

"Hmph!" Hrumes didn't relent. "Count yourselves lucky I didn't take your lives. Now, shut the fuck up and get ready! Your next mission has already been assigned, and you sure are fucking late for it."

Death... and me

Chapter 2389: Our Part in the Plan

Later that day, Rean's group arrived in a snow-covered region of the Tormalek Region. After being out for over a month, the Army there had already got rid of many of the Underworld Death Trees, allowing the advancement of the Army again. Now, they left the Limigo Region and entered Krohasan.

Deep inside an abyss, a group of cultivators and a few demon beasts gathered, keeping themselves as hidden as possible. A Spatial Gate then appeared nearby, from which Rean, Kentucky, and Essefy stepped out with Hrumes.

The others saw that and quickly approached to receive them. "Welcome back, senior Hrumes."

Hrumes nodded, pushing Rean and the others forward. "Here are the rest of your group."

Yea, Rean's head was down, and a gloomy expression covered his face. "Over five thousand merit points... gone... just like that... Over five thousand merit points... gone... just like that... Over five thousand merit points... gone... just like that..."

Bang!

Hrumes lost his patience, sending Rean flying with a Kick. Inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, Roan nodded, feeling a connection with Hrumes there. 'A worth Divinity Realm expert.'

'Fuck you!' How couldn't Rean hear Roan if he was talking in his mind?

Hrumes didn't know about their conversation and only threatened. "You better put yourself back together, or a little kick will be the last thing for you to worry about."

"Sigh..." Rean then got up and joined the rest of the group. There, he saw a few familiar faces, like Kanglia, the leader of their group during the last attack in the Limigo Region. "Whatever... I will just earn it all again."

Hrumes nodded, satisfied. "With your abilities, it is not that difficult. Now, then, let's enter the main topic. This time, there is no such thing as a protection formation to destroy. With the environment in these mountains, the Devils don't really need a protection formation. Their high point advantage already more than makes up for it. Instead, any formation you find in this endeavor will all be slaughtering, illusory, or trapping formations."

Hrumes then turned around, preparing to leave. "Kanglia, you did a good job last time, so I'm counting on you to lead this group too. You already know the plans, so prepare everything."

Kanglia immediately accepted the orders. "Yes, Senior Hrumes."

After Hrumes left, Kanglia let out a sigh of relief and looked at Rean, Kentucky, and Essefy. "I can guess why senior Hrumes spared your lives, but don't expect such treatments here. If you try to go somewhere else while under my command, I will kill you guys, understood?"

Rean and the other two nodded. "We already finished our investigation anyway. There is no need for Lady Kanglia to worry about us escaping."

"That's more like it," Kanglai accepted their words. "Rean, pass me your new badge number. I heard that your old one broke."

"No problem," said Rean. He did indeed break the last one to find Zandolf, and ultimately, that ended up in a meeting with the Essence Race. Rean then quickly exchanged numbers with the other cultivators and demon beasts there.

Finally, Kanglia explained the situation. "Although there aren't any barriers or similar types of formations in this region defended by the devils, there are several detecting ones. Approaching without being detected is pretty much impossible. However, attacking head-on while they hold the high-ground advantage would incur too many losses."

Essefy got confused. "What's the point with the High Ground? We can simply fly past and attack from above. If they really stay on the ground, we will quickly wipe them all out."

Kanglia immediately shook her head. "If you can see that, so can they. There are no protection barriers, but there are other types of formations. One of them, obviously, is flight restriction formations. The whole mountain range is covered by it, making flight impossible."

Kanglai then used her Divine Sense to share the landscape of the mountains and the position of the Devils' Army in this region. "Because of that, senior Hrums and the others thought of a plan. Instead of attacking, we are going to ignore this Army and circle around, advancing into the Northeast side of the Krohasan Region."

The cultivators around narrowed their eyes. "But that would not only block our supply chain but also open our rear to the enemy. I don't see how it is a good thing."

Kanglia nodded, already expecting this question from the others. "We know that, and we truly wish they to come."

Rean smiled. "Luring the tiger out of the mountain. If we do it, we can be sure the Devils will take two approaches. The first one is to attack our rear or flank while we go around the mountain range. The second one is to aim at our supply chain, cutting our connection with the rear. However, one thing is certain: the devils definitely won't lose this chance and will come after us one way or another." Rean spent enough time with Roan to get some experience with strategies.

Kanglia looked at Rean with a smile. "Goku is right. When they come down, it will be our time to attack."

Essefy got confused. "But wouldn't it be too obvious? I mean, I can only see it as a blatant provocation. What if you are wrong, and they stay on the mountain range?"

"They can't," Kanglia spoke. "Further Northeast, you can find one of their farming areas. Well, that's just a fancy name for a place where they harvest living souls for their cultivation. Because of our fast advance, and especially the huge victory we got last time, they are still far behind the complete harvesting schedule, according to our scouts. For the Elder Devils, the value of that farm is higher than the Devil Army on this mountain range. They must at least buy enough time for them to finish their harvest, so they will definitely take the chance to attack us, even if they know it is a provocation."

Rean nodded, but he had one doubt. "Alright, I get the plan... However, why are we gathered here? What is our part in this plan?"

Death... and me

Chapter 2390: Divergence

Kanglia smiled in response. "I thought you would never ask. Our job is to attack the Lodigan Fortress and rescue a certain someone."

Everyone there was taken aback. Even those who arrived earlier than Rean's Group were unaware of this. "Lodigan Fortress? But... where is it?"

They all checked the map of this region on their communication badges. Be it the mountain range of the farm further northeast, none of them had this Lodigan Fortress as part of the site. In fact, they couldn't find this Fortress anywhere in the Krohasan Region at all.

"It is no surprise you can't find it because it is not in Krohasan. Instead, it is in the opposite direction, further northwest instead," Kanglai explained. "If you expand your map in the communication badges, you should be able to see a Region called Xowert. Lodigan Fortress is at the southeast border of this region."

"Xowert?" Rean quickly checked the information, and sure enough, he found the Fortress there. It's just that it had barely any information whatsoever. If anything, it looked more like it was one of the many disregarded locations in this war. "Wait, but this Xowert Region is truly very deep into the Devils' Territory. Our army is nowhere near getting close to that place yet."

Santiso, one of the Elemental Space Realm cultivators there, agreed with Rean. "Goku is right. There is another army positioned not too far in the Juedibos Region, too. Reaching this Fortress would be quite

complicated since the Devils will definitely keep a look out in the surroundings. This Lodigan Fortress just so happens to be within this army's range."

Amixer, another Elemental Space Realm expert and a Demon Beast, noticed it too. "Although a little risky, it shouldn't be that hard to reach the Fortress without anyone noticing. The real problem lies after we start the attack to rescue whoever it is. Because the other devil army is nearby, it shouldn't take more than a few minutes for them to get reinforcements. What if an Elder Devil appears?"

"I see..." Rean understood the situation. "That's why our target was placed in this Fortress. One, it was to make it look like there was nothing important there. And two, it was close to the army, which could provide help at any time. It seems like we have a quite high-profile figure in that place, no?"

Kanglai confirmed everyone's words. "You are all correct. However, our advantage lies in this attack on the northeast soul farming. Senior Hrumes will ally with another Divinity Realm expert, who should arrive during the attack. When both of them join forces, the Elder Devil in charge of the army of the mountain will have no other choice. He will have to ask for reinforcements to prevent our army from reaching the farm."

"The closest helper, even though it is a little far away, is near the Xowert Region. As you can probably imagine, it is the Elder Devil in charge of the army there. He would have to immediately leave and come to help the Elder Devil here. Not only him, but even his Space-Time Realm Devils would have to accompany him. That gives us the chance we want."

Rean narrowed his eyes. "It makes it look like even though the destruction of the soul farm is important, the whole reason for this attack is to attack that Fortress you mentioned. Is that the real objective of this endeavor?"

Kanglia shook her head. "That I don't know. What I know is that the higher-ups see both the destruction of the farm and the rescue of the target as highly important. However, I, too, think that the main objective is the rescuing plan."

Kentucky couldn't hold back anymore after hearing all of that. "Oh, for fuck's sake! Can you just tell us who the hell we are risking our lives to save? You don't expect us to simply know whoever it is by default, do you?"

"Actually, I do," Kanglia smiled. "Simply put, there are only Devils in that Fortress. That's why even I am not told who is there, seemingly to prevent any information from leaking. Nonetheless, our target will basically be whoever isn't a Devil in that place. Shouldn't be hard to find."

"What if there is more than just one target?" Rean asked back. There was no guarantee they would encounter just one individual who wasn't a Devil there. Perhaps there are thousands of them.

Kanglia shrugged her shoulders. "In that case, just take everyone with you. Send them all into your Pocket Dimensional Realms and then leave."

Everyone looked at each other, finding this operation somewhat too strange.

However, every single one of them gave up any complaints after Kanglia's next words. "What I can guarantee is that our target is definitely worth the risk. As a reward for this rescue plan, the army will be paying everyone 2000 Merit Points."

"What?!" Everyone's eyes lit up! "You are not lying, right? You mean it, right?!"

Kanglia nodded. "Yes, I absolutely mean it. I already got confirmation from senior Hrumes himself. "

Rean was just as impressed as the others. Hrumes told him that he would have got a similar prize after helping Gardo since he contributed to the death of an Elder Devil. Yet, this rescuing target is worth just as much. How could he not be excited? Especially since it would be 2000 points for him and 2000 points for Kentucky. That would be 4000 points since it will all be used to buy the Serene Gold Filaments.

Kanglia also warned everyone. "Do not have weird ideas about being the one who rescued the target first. Regardless of who brings the target back, the reward will be the same for everyone: 2000 points. That is to prevent any idiot from attacking their own allies, thinking they can get a bigger reward."

Everyone was satisfied with that. Such a decision prevented any discord within the group.

Seeing that everyone was ready, Kanglia finally opened a Spatial Gate. "Alright, let's go."