

Death 261

Death... and me

Chapter 261: Universal Restraint Preparations

In the end, there was no need to move to the cave entrance Roan had selected before. That's because they found out about Valeu's fake Jade Slips and the real one in his body. Sure enough, it had an almost complete map of the cave maze of the Profound Abyss.

Seeing that, Rean couldn't help but comment.

"As expected, you guys were sent straight inside the Decaying Devourers' nest. I'm surprised that you were even able to escape more or less alive before encountering Valeu."

Calina had a slightly sad expression on her face as she recalled the time Valeu killed Silo and Erna back then.

"It was a mistake on our part. If we had just checked the Jade Slip with the elders beforehand..."

"There is no point in thinking about it. Instead, focus on the task ahead. We might have a good map now, but that doesn't mean we know where the Demon Beasts are. Don't forget that with the Surge, things became quite chaotic. I doubt we will reach a Vermilion Pool without finding a single one of them."

Calina nodded.

As they moved forward, Sister Orb talked with Rean and Roan.

[It's almost time for the Universal Restraint. Although the Soul Gem System knows the day of its arrival, it doesn't know the exact time. We have been inside the Profound Abyss for almost two entire days. The Universal Restraint is supposed to arrive at the third. So you better find a safe place to wait for it to pass.]

Rean and Roan nodded. In the end, they selected one of the caves that had the most Decaying Energy coming out on their map. The reason was simple, because of the Surge, none of the other groups would select it. Calina, of course, was taken aback when they selected that one. After all, Decaying Energy was no joke. Only then did Rean tell her about his Light Element and its capacity to get rid of Decaying Energy in one's body.

With that kind of advantage, it would be idiotic to not select the most dangerous path, which was, in fact, the safest one with Rean there. Of course, the Jade Slip Map also depicted the Decaying Caves that were territories of stronger or numerous Decaying Demon Beasts, so they avoided those. Roan wanted to practice combat, but he didn't have a 'Roan' wish. Nonetheless, there were still Decaying Demon Beasts available for them.

'Water Frame!'

'Water Prison!'

All of a sudden, a Decaying Demon Beast hit a Water Wall in front of Calina. Soon after, a sphere of Water formed around it, suppressing its movements.

"Now, Malaka!"

Malaka pounced forward, holding her Staff. Spiritual Energy entered it as the Staff attracted the surrounding Water Element on its own. With both Malaka and her Staff attracting the Water Element, the power of her attack increased even more as it became more fluid.

'Death Water Style, Second Form, Spinning Dragon Tail!'

Bang, bang, bang!

Crack, Shatter!

The Decaying Demon Beast's Core then shattered after Malaka took the chance it couldn't defend itself. With the two girls together, they could fight weaker Initial Stage Three Demon beasts and even defeat

them quite easily. The demon beast they finished off just now was more powerful than that, though. It had the power of a Middle Stage Three one. Nonetheless, the two girls were able to work together to finish it after some time.

Creeeee!

Crash!

Malaka and Calina heard the sound and looked to the side just in time to see Kentucky's attack hitting another Decaying Demon Beast's body. Right after, his head pulled back as the Decaying Demon Beast's body crumbled. They were also able to see a Demon Core between his beak.

Gulp!

Burp!

Once again, Kentucky defeated a Stage Three demon beast without much difficulty. He especially became more excited when he fought them since he could eat their Demon Cores.

Calina then looked at Malaka and asked something that had been in her mind for a long time.

"What kind of Demon Bird is this? It is still a Stage Two but can trash weaker Stage Three ones easily. It even held a full-power strike from Valeu, a Peak Core Formation Realm cultivator."

Malaka shook her head in response, saying.

"Rean and Roan never told me what race it came from. However, it doesn't matter. The important thing is that Kentucky can protect itself and even help us."

Still, Calina couldn't help but feel curious. Unfortunately, neither Rean nor Roan answered her question either, which was why she asked Malaka.

With both sides finished, they cast their gazes at Rean and Roan. The two were obviously fighting as well. It's just that they decided to not use each other's power. Thus, it took longer for them to end the Late Stage Three Decaying Demon Beasts on their side.

"Phew... It's finally over. With this, we finished cleaning up the entire territory."

Roan nodded.

"Considering the amount of Decaying Energy in this Cave Path, no other group should select it. Now that the demon beasts are dead, we should be safe for some time."

Roan then turned around and began to walk in the girl's direction. However, his expression didn't seem that joyful. Seeing that, the girls understood what was coming, more lectures... It looked like it didn't matter how much better they did; Roan always had something to complain about.

After filling the girl's ears with complaints and the things they did wrong, Roan finally entered the main topic.

"We will stay here for the third day."

Malaka and Calina got confused.

"Why? We can still go further."

Rean arrived soon after with a bunch of Demon Cores, which he threw to Kentucky before explaining. Kentucky's eyes lit up as he swallowed them one by one and ignored whatever Rean and Roan had to say.

"It's nothing to do with you two. It's just that Roan and I have understood a few things during our previous battles, so we need some time to ponder about it. Of course, you should take this chance to rest as well. Think about all the things Roan said so far and improve on it."

Calina noticed that they seemed to be dead set on staying, so she could only comply. She definitely wouldn't try to move ahead by herself.

Malaka didn't seem to mind and immediately pulled on Calina's hand.

"Then, let's play with Kentucky!"

"Ah! Wait, Malaka. This is not the place to do such things."

Unfortunately, Malaka completely ignored her.

Rean then warned the two.

"Don't go more than twenty meters away from me."

Roan narrowed his eyes in response. Roan had just said that she should ponder about his teachings, but the happy-go-lucky girl forgot it in a matter of seconds. Rean, of course, noticed that.

"Are you fine with it?"

In the end, Roan shook his head.

"Forget them. Lectures will be a lot more efficient once we are back at the sect. I don't have the time to force them to take the training seriously in this place. Sit down, let's wait for the Universal Restraint."

Rean nodded and sat down, as well. Of course, they didn't know when it would come, so they didn't stay still either. The several battles they had, especially those against Valeu, helped stabilize their foundation quite a lot. They also really had things to ponder about their own performances.

As they did that, Rean took the opportunity to ask something else to Sister Orb.

'Sister Orb, how is it? Is the Yin Energy in this Decaying Fog of any help to you?'

Back then, Sister Orb wanted the Yin Ice Ore because of its Yin Energy. The Profound Abyss was full of Yin Energy, but it was mixed in the Decaying Fog, making it incredibly impure. Still, Sister Orb had commented that the Soul Gem System didn't have problems with the impurities found in Yin Energy, so Rean was curious.

[Hum... It's not entirely useless, but nothing worth commenting on either. The Decaying Fog indeed has Yin Energy in it, but it's primarily made of other things. It's just not enough to help improve the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm or the System itself.]

'What are you using it for, then?'

[For the Yin Yang bathhouse. The good thing is that I can convert the excess Yin Energy into Yang Energy, so the bath should be full of Yin Yang Energies for you two quite soon. We will stay here for two weeks, which should be enough to fill it up.]

Rean and Roan nodded. Although the changes given by the Yin Yang bath weren't that big, they were cumulative. So the more they got, the better.

And just like that, the time began to pass. At first, Calina had some restraint because of the location. But she eventually grew calm and enjoyed her time with Malaka and Kentucky. There wasn't really anything to worry about with Rean there to help drive out the Decaying Energy.

Rean used his time to read a little about Formations with the books he brought in the Dimensional Realm. As for Roan, Dark and Light Elements moved around his hands every now and then. He seemed to be practicing something, but Rean couldn't tell what it was.

Soon, more than six hours went by. The girls finally got bored and began to practice, as Roan mentioned. Kentucky also joined the two in their efforts. Rean and Roan did their own things too.

Suddenly, Rean's eyes moved away from his book as he looked in a specific direction.

"Calina, Malaka, Kentucky, come back."

Roan's attention was picked as he looked at Rean.

"What is it?"

Rean narrowed his eyes as he said.

"Someone is coming."

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Chapter 262: Request

Malaka and Calina quickly returned to Rean and Roan's side with Kentucky. With Rean's Fourth Form of the Life Style and the high concentration of Decaying Energy due to the Surge, no one could hope to have a higher detection range than him. Soon, Rean's group began to hear some sounds from a distance.

"Fuck! Are you sure this path is okay? It doesn't matter how I see it. There is too much Decaying Fog here."

"Don't worry, We only used our Anti-Decaying Energy pills by the time we arrived at the Cave's entrance. It should give us enough time to reach the Vermilion Pool. Besides, everyone will be afraid of the concentration of Decaying Fog here. Other than Decaying Demon Beasts, we should have a free pass to the Ver-"

It was then that the guy's voice stopped. Inside his Spiritual Sense, five figures appeared. Not only that, but they were looking directly at him.

"Are you kidding me?"

But soon, his companion noticed that he kind of recognized those silhouettes.

"Wait! I know them. It's twins."

Rean, Roan, and Malaka also looked at the newcomers and were taken aback.

"Tuve and Weren!"

It turned out that they were the other two members of the Sect that came with this time around.

"What are you guys doing in a cave like this one? Can't you see the amount of Decaying Energy?"

Rean asked the same thing back.

"That's our question. We took this path because we knew no one would use it. How come you two chose this place?"

Tuve and Weren looked at each other for a second before looking back at the twins' group.

"We basically did the same thing. However, we are still in the Middle and Peak stage of the Core Formation Realm. Your group is full of Foundation Establishment ones. It's a lot more strange for you guys to be here."

Rean and Roan nodded. Weren couldn't be blamed for thinking like that. A Foundation Establishment cultivator definitely wouldn't take a cave with so much Decaying Fog like this one in normal situations.

"Don't worry, we are fine. In fact, we are probably a lot better than you two."

Weren and Tuve were surprised by those words. But when they scanned Rean's group, they noticed that their bodies had no concentration of Decaying Energy whatsoever. This was shocking to them since even the Anti-Decaying Energy Pills couldn't eliminate 100% of it. The usual way to do it was to go to a place without any Decaying Fog and use one's Spiritual Energy to slowly drive it out.

"It's true... How are you doi- Ah!"

Weren seemed to have remembered something.

"Don't you have that weird Light Element Affinity? That's the reason you guys are fine at the moment, right? I can't think about anything else."

Sure enough, Rean and Roan were famous even in the Inner Sect.

"Senior Weren is correct. I didn't know about it before I entered the Profound Abyss, though. It also came as a surprise for me when I noticed that I could get rid of Decaying Energy with my Light Element."

Tuve then looked at a certain girl that was together with them. White hair, taller than the twins, silver-white eyes. He was sure he had not seen this girl back in the settlement gathering. Of course, Rean and Roan gave her other clothes for her to wear a long time ago. It would be quite idiotic if she was still using the traditional clothes of the Imperial Family.

"And this girl is?"

Rean then introduced her.

"She is someone we rescued from a demon beast attack. Her name is Freta Azure. Her Sect Members couldn't hold the pressure, so they left her behind. It was through sheer luck that she bumped into us."

Weren nodded.

"Is that so?"

Weren and Tuve didn't know if it was true, nor did it matter at the moment. What interested them was the fact that Rean could use Light Element to resist Decaying Energy. They selected this Cave as a gamble to reach a vacant Vermilion Pool. They weren't sure if their Anti-Decaying Energy Pills would be

enough to go all the way in and then come back. But if Rean helped them, that would make things several times easier. Besides, there was another thing that they needed from Rean's group later.

"By the way, Rean. I know it is extremely shameless for me to ask this after we got separated from you, but can you help us with your light element as well? Tuve and I will owe you a favor."

Roan then sent a Spiritual Sense Message to Rean.

'Accept it. I have something I want them to do.'

Rean nodded. They were members of the same Sect as him, and it was not like they had any grudges to start with. Even if Roan had opposed it, he would have helped them anyway. Besides, the Sect Master had never said that they had to follow him and Roan around.

"No problem. There is indeed something that I will need the seniors' help with, so I'm more than glad to help you."

Tuve and Weren were delighted. That's what they exactly needed. Rean then approached the two and extended his hands.

"Give me your hands."

Tuve and Weren did as Rean said. Right after, Rean controlled his Spiritual Energy to gather the Light Element around. Following that, he sent a wave of Life Element inside their bodies, which immediately began to clean the Decaying Energy that had accumulated there. Of course, the lack of Light Element around and the prolonged exposure to the Decaying Fog made it take quite some time.

Around three minutes and a few Spirit Stones later, Rean finally finished taking care of the whole issue.

"Done. Now you two should have even more time before you need to take your Anti-Decaying Energy Pills."

Weren and Tuve couldn't help but feel impressed by Rean's abilities. Not only was there no Decaying Energy in their bodies anymore, they even felt a lot more invigorated.

Weren then looked at Rean before asking.

"Thank you. Now, tell us. What is it that you need our help with? As long as it doesn't delay our travel to the Vermilion Pool, I don't mind acting right now."

Rean then looked at Roan.

"In fact, the one who needs the seniors' help is my brother."

They all looked at Roan as he approached them.

"Let me tell you something else. We have here a map that shows the location of several Vermilion Pools. If we keep following this Cave, there will be two Vermilion Pools in the end. This should be enough for all of us to use. Not to mention that we probably won't need to care about someone else appearing due to the Surge and the Cave Entrance we selected. However, if you follow the wrong path, you might not find anything at all. How much are Rean's favor and the correct path information worth in the seniors' eyes?"

Tuve and Weren were shocked to hear that.

"Wait? Are you serious? Do you really have such a map?"

Roan nodded and waited for their answer.

Still, Tuve couldn't help but ask.

"Aren't you afraid that we will simply take the map from you by force? We are from the same Sect, but we all need the Vermilion Pools, you know?"

Roan snorted in response.

"I invite you to try it."

Weren, on the other hand, decided to put an end to those antics.

"Tuve, shut up! It's thanks to them that we now have a realistic chance of getting into a Vermilion Pool. Even if you want to take their map by force, I won't stay put and simply ignore it. Besides, I know you well enough to understand that your pride wouldn't allow you to do it either."

Tuve scratched the back of his head after hearing that. It was true that he didn't have that intention, but he also didn't like the fact that a kid was leading the conversation.

"Fine! Tell us, what is so important that you are willing to even show us the correct path to one of the Vermilion Pools?"

Roan nodded before sending them a Spiritual Sense message. As soon as the two heard that, they looked at Roan as if he was crazy.

"Are you out of your mind?"

Roan laughed. But just as he was about to continue talking...

[Rean, Roan! The Universal Restraint is here. Get away from everyone else!]

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Chapter 263: Resisting the Universal Restraint

'Wait? Move away? What do you mean? You said nothing about getting away from the others before.'

[That's because I didn't know what would happen. But just now, I felt a terrifying power approaching. Anyway, there is no time to waste. Move away now!]

'Fuck!'

'Life Style, First Form, Enhancement!'

Rean and Roan then transformed into two flashes of Black and White Lights as they dashed away. At the same time, Rean used his Spiritual Sense to talk with those two. Fortunately, Spiritual Sense messages were instantaneous. As long as you know what you wanted to convey, it would be transmitted.

'Seniors, something urgent came up. Please look at Freta and Malaka for a bit. Roan and I will be right back.'

Of course, Tuve and Weren, as well as Malaka and Calina, were taken aback by their sudden escapade. It was too sudden, after all. However, what really shocked them was the twins' speed just now. They were just a little bit slower than Weren. Well, in fact, they would usually be faster than what they are now. Unfortunately, the lack of Light Element in this place reduced the effectiveness of the Enhancement Ability. That was more than enough for them to understand how they got to this place so fast.

'Wait, you two. Is it an enemy? We can help.'

Rean then messaged them one last time before they left his Spiritual Sense range.

'It's not an enemy, nor it is Demon Beasts. It's something personal. Please, just wait a bit. If we take too long, you can simply go ahead by yourself. The time I bought for you with the Light Element should make up for it.'

Weren and Tuve didn't know what to say, but it was evident that Rean and Roan didn't want anyone to follow them. They didn't think that Rean and Roan were trying to trick them, though. That's because the twins were going in the opposite direction as them. It wouldn't make sense unless they were planning to move all the way to the entrance and find another cave.

Tuve then looked at Weren before asking.

"What do we do?"

Weren shrugged his shoulders.

"What else can we do? We can only wait. Did you see how fast they moved? They already left our Spiritual Sense range anyway. Finding them in this Decaying Fog again will be extremely annoying. Besides, I still want to hear more about Roan's idea."

Tuve couldn't help but comment.

"Are you crazy? Those are the Imperial Family Experts we're talking about. Do you really want to mess with them?"

Weren shook his head.

"Of course not. But I don't think that kid would ask something like that for no reason. You noticed it already, didn't you? Those twins aren't normal. Besides, Rean indeed helped us a lot with his Light Element just a moment ago."

Tuve then began to scratch his head helplessly.

"Ahhh! Fine! But if he doesn't give me a good reason for it, I'm out!"

Malaka and Calina then move closer to Kentucky. Just before the twins disappeared, Roan told them that Tuve and Weren would stay with them.

"Why did they run away?"

Asked Malaka, puzzled.

"I was hoping that you two girls knew the answer."

Malaka and Calina shook their heads in response. They were just as puzzled as Tuve and Weren.

Tuve sighed and then looked at 'Freta.'

"By the way, who are you? I don't remember having seeing you before."

Calina had discussed with Roan about an excuse in case they needed to talk about her identity with others. She just didn't think she would need it so early.

"Well..."

However, just as she was about to talk...

Tremble!

The entire area began to shake. In fact, it wasn't only where they were staying. The entire Profound Abyss began to tremble as well.

"What is this? Earthquake?!"

All the cultivators stopped in their tracks. Not only them, but even the Decaying Demon Beasts weren't moving either. Everyone didn't expect something like this to happen.

Back on Rean and Roan's side, they also noticed when it started.

[Stop! It's here.]

As soon as Sister Orb said that, the world around them began to change. What before was a cave full of Decaying Fog and darkness suddenly became a vision of outer space. There were no planets close to

them, nor a sun. All they could see were the stars that were probably tens of thousands, millions, or maybe even billions of light-years away.

However, something ridiculous seemed to have happened right in the next instant. The stars that were supposed to be so far away were suddenly pulled to their side! The twins' vision then became filled with millions of suns of all sizes. But that wasn't all. They also noticed several black holes in the middle.

Unfortunately, they couldn't admire it for long. The moment that all those celestial bodies appeared near them, an enormous pressure pressed on their bodies, trying to crush them to dust! By far, that was the highest pain that the twins had ever felt.

Fortunately, the Soul Gem System acted at that very instant.

[Universal Restraint Detected.]

[Analyzing Rejection Conditions.]

[Peak of the Foundation Establishment Realm: Complete]

[1000 Destiny Points: Complete]

[All Conditions Met, Initializing Universal Restraint Rejection.]

Vup!

Just like when Rean and Roan brought items from the Dimensional Realm, the Soul Gem Orb appeared in front of them in the same way.

[Yin Yang Protection Mode Initialized.]

The Soul Gem Orb then began to shine with a White and Dark Light, which covered the twins like a membrane. As soon as that happened, Rean and Roan felt the pressure over their bodies reduce by at least 99%. Although it looked like the Soul Gem Orb took a long time to act, the fact was that not even half a second passed yet. Still, that less than half a second was enough to almost kill the twins right there and then!

Of course, 99% was still not 100%. That meant that Rean and Roan still had to resist that last fraction of power attacking their bodies. Once again, the twins began to contort like worms. It's just that it happened in the middle of outer space. That less than 1% was still enough to make them feel like their bodies were being smashed by a mountain.

Rean and Roan even began to bleed through their entire body as injuries began to appear one after another. To be more specific, it looked more like 'cracks' were covering their bodies instead.

"Fu-ck!"

As Rean and Roan resisted the pressure, the area outside the Profound Abyss was also in chaos. Even Elder Polian, the Saint Realm Expert, couldn't tell what was happening. With his Spiritual Sense, he could see that everything hundreds of kilometers around this place was passing through the same 'Earthquake.'

'What is happening here? Is it the Profound Abyss? Or is it happening to all the countries around?'

Another elder responsible for the event then came close to him before asking.

"Elder Polian, should we stop the Profound Abyss trial?"

Polian immediately shook his head.

"No. We don't know if what is happening is because of the Profound Abyss or not. Even if it is, it is common for cultivators to find adversities during their path to higher realms. They will have to deal with it on their own. Once the Profound Abyss comes to an end, we can take a look inside."

The elder nodded and didn't say anything else.

Back on Rean and Roan's side, the Soul Gem Orb continued to shine with White and Black Lights as it protected the twins. That torture continued for ten minutes straight. If Rean and Roan didn't keep using the Life Style's Second Form nonstop, they might have bled to death already. It was constant destruction and reformation. Luckily, they had passed by similar experiences before with the Soul Gem System Upgrades, so they could still resist the pain and focus on healing themselves.

It was then that the Soul Gem System's voice echoed in their minds once more.

[Universal Restraint Has Been Repelled Successfully. 1000 Destiny Points have been consumed.]

As soon as the system said that, Rean and Roan felt like they plummeted from outer space straight into the ground in less than a second! The world around them came back to normal right after, and they were once again inside the Decaying Cave.

However, they soon noticed that the cave wasn't the same anymore. Instead, the twins seemed to be inside a massive spherical room! Although the ceiling was still there, what before was just ten or so meters above their heads, now was at least two kilometers away! As to why they could see it? That's because there was no Decaying Fog around whatsoever. That event had literally destroyed everything around them, Decaying Fog included! It was a perfect 2km radius on all sides, with the twins at the epicenter.

Of course, the lack of Decaying Energy didn't last for long. Soon, Decaying Energy began to come out of the walls and the ground and slowly filled the room they were in.

Pin!

[Congratulations to the Hosts for resisting the first Universal Restraint.]

[Reward: One Free Upgrade from the Reward System.]

The Soul Gem Orb then disappeared, going back into the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm.

[Hey, do you need me to find a coffin, or maybe two?]

Rean and Roan's mouth twitched. Sure enough, Sister Orb was back.

'Ignore it, ignore it. Focus on recovering.'

[Oh! By the way, your suffering was not in vain. You got a tiny bit of Universe Essence just now.]

Rean and Roan were taken aback. What's Universe Essence?

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Chapter 264: I Did

[It is what I said it is, Universe Essence. Consider it a type of energy, just like Spiritual Energy or Yin Yang. However, this is very useful. Check your bodies. You should be able to feel this essence circulating through your meridians.]

Rean and Roan nodded as they used their Spiritual Senses to check their own bodies. Sure enough, they could feel some kind of different power present there.

'What can this thing be used for?'

[Keep it. You will want to use it when your Spiritual Pools change into Yin Yang Cores. Although it won't increase your combat powers, your Yin Yang Cores will become a lot more resistant to impacts. It should improve your cultivation speed a little bit as well.]

Rean and Roan nodded.

'That's quite good. If someone aims to cripple our cultivation, it might just become our silver lining. We already got a free upgrade in the Reward System anyway, so this is a bonus.'

Sister Orb agreed with them.

[Indeed. Besides, this is not the only Universal Restraint you will have to pass through, so you will get more of it.]

'Wait! There will be more of that thing?!'

[Of course! Do you think this side of the Universe would let you two change its living beings' Destiny and do nothing?]

'And once again, only now do you tell us about it.'

[Well, you never asked.]

"\$&*#\$!%U\$@&\$##!!!"

Rean and Roan then spent a few more minutes gathering Light Element and used the Second Form of the Life Style. Still, before they healed even half of the injuries, Roan got up once more.

"We already stopped the bleeding. Take a blood replenishing pill, and let's move. I don't think anyone else selected our Cave Entrance, but I don't wanna risk being seen by others in this place."

Rean nodded and got up with some difficulty. Still, he gritted his teeth and followed Roan right after.

Weren's group was still waiting in the same place. However, they seemed to be in a quite bad shape. That tremor made several fall on them. They had to put a lot of effort to prevent themselves from getting buried there. Fortunately, Malaka, Kentucky, and 'Freta' weren't weak either, so they also helped with resisting.

"What the hell just happened? No one told me about Earthquakes happening in the Profound Abyss before."

Calina, who had a lot more information about the abyss, was also confused. Her elders didn't mention anything about earthquakes either. As for Malaka, she was more concerned about Rean and Roan, who had just left moments before that happened.

Weren and Tuve then looked at each other while communicating through Spiritual Sense messages.

'Isn't it too much of a coincidence that this shit happened as soon as those twins left?'

'Indeed. However, would they be able to cause a stir like this? Even if we gathered all the Core Formation Realm cultivators in the Profound Abyss, we wouldn't be able to do it.'

'I know. Still, I can't help but think that it did have something to do with them. You saw how urgent they looked when they suddenly dashed away, didn't you?'

'Yeah. I don't like this feeling. Let's wait just a few more minutes. If they don't come back, we will proceed forward with these two girls. I believe Malaka and this girl called Freta also have a copy of the map they talked about. If that's the case, Rean and Roan won't have any issues finding where we went.'

'Very well. It's better than staying here. I don't want this entire cave falling on our heads either.'

Tuve and Weren nodded. However, it turned out that there wasn't a need for it. Rean and Roan came back just a few minutes later. However, they soon noticed their injuries.

"What happened to you?"

Rean sighed as he said.

"What else could it be? An Earthquake appeared out of nowhere. We were caught in the middle of the falling rocks everywhere. We are fortunate to have suffered just these injuries."

Roan didn't have the patience to talk, though.

"The caves around here are too unstable. Let's get out of here first and talk later."

Neither Weren nor Tuve had any objection to it. Malaka and Calina also nodded after hearing that. Right after, they dashed away from the place. Fortunately, that was the right decision. That's because the cave they were in collapsed just a few minutes later. It couldn't be helped. After all, it was located very close to the place where Rean and Roan went through the Universal Restraint. Several other nearby passages also collapsed just like this one.

The group moved forward as Rean and Roan healed their injuries with the Light Element. Surprisingly, they didn't encounter any Demon beast even after moving for more than one hour. From the looks of it, all of them fled from the place where the Earthquake originated.

"Alright, this place seems good enough. Give Rean and me some time to finish healing our injuries."

Weren, Tuve, Malaka, and Calina nodded. They also took the chance to ask them if they knew what happened.

"What happened? The Earthquake happened."

"But why did you run away in the first place?"

Rean scratched the back of his head before saying.

"Ahem... Roan had a sudden urge to take a dump. Because he is very vulnerable during those moments, so I had to go with him to protect his ass."

Roan's mouth twitched.

'Are you looking to die?'

'Hahaha! Bite me!'

Calina's face went red as Malaka laughed out loud. Weren and Tuve's mouths twitched in response.

"Fuck! Do you think we will believe that?"

Rean sighed helplessly. It was not like he could tell what happened for real. First of all, no one would believe it anyway.

Roan then glanced at them.

"Then there is nothing we can do if you don't believe us. By the way, it is not like this information is important to find a Vermilion Pool, right?"

"This..."

Weren and Tuve wanted to disagree, but it was confirmed that what mattered the most at the moment were the Vermilion Pools.

"Fine! We won't ask anymore. Anyway, what about that thing you wanted us to do to show the correct path to one of the Vermilion Pools?"

Roan nodded and then explained.

"It is as I said exactly. I need you two to report to the Imperial Family elders that you saw several men in black surrounding Calina's group during your travel. You didn't want to get involved in others' conflicts, so you retreated straight away. After all, there were many more enemies while you two were only traveling as a duo."

Roan then continued.

"Do that, and will I not only show you the correct path but also give you a copy of our map. I'm sure it will be of great help to you two."

Tuve immediately shook his head.

"You are asking us to lie in the face of the Imperial Family experts. Are you crazy? If they find out that we are lying, not even our bones will remain."

Roan laughed, not minding that too much.

"Don't worry, they will not look into it. All they're going to do is thank you for the report."

Weren couldn't help but ask.

"How do you know?"

"You don't need to care about it. All you need to know is that the risks involved are minimal. It is a small price to pay for the Vermilion Pool and the chance of entering the Nascent Soul Realm in the future."

Tuve wasn't convinced.

"I don't know what you are planning or why you would want us to report it. However, I'm not an idiot either. Did you see the Imperial Family experts and the Princess being killed?"

It was then that Calina approached them and said.

"I did. I was there, after all."

Death... and me

Chapter 265: Going Separated Ways

Weren and Tuve's attention shifted to Calina, or 'Freta,' in this case.

"I knew it. Roan asked us such a strange request, and it just so happened to be while you were here with us. Speak, what's your relationship with the Imperial Family?"

Calina then brought a token out of her clothes and showed them. It was a token representing the Imperial Family forces.

"I was one of the princess subordinates. Unfortunately, the enemies were too numerous and strong. In the end, I was the only one able to escape, thanks to the help of Rean's group. However, I can't be the one reporting it. Nor can I let Rean's group, which has only Foundation Establishment members in their midst, do that. I needed people who would have a realistic chance of seeing what happened and the same realistic chance of being able to escape."

"And why don't you report it yourself?"

"Because I have to avoid everyone's eyes. I need to go back to the capital to report it directly. Otherwise, chances are that I will be taken care of first since I was also part of the Princess' group. But in your case, you have no relation with the Imperial Family whatsoever, so no one will bother with you. I need others to think that I'm also dead."

Weren shook his head.

"Those 'men in black' saw you escaping, right? They know you're alive, so what's the point?"

'Freta' shook her head.

"Don't worry, they will definitely think I'm dead as well. That's because I will not come out of the Profound Abyss."

Weren and Tuve were taken aback.

"Are you planning to stay here? Then you'd be dead for sure!"

'Freta' didn't seem to mind.

"Don't worry, I have a few tricks under my sleeve. Don't forget that I'm a member of the Imperial Family Forces. It was the Imperial Family that prepared the Profound Abyss, after all. Anyway, this is an almost no-risk job with huge payment. Will you take it?"

Calina might have said 'almost no-risk job.' Still, Weren and Tuve knew that any mistake would possibly have them buried outside, so it was a hard decision to make. The key point was that they wouldn't say they saw the 'men in black' killing the Imperial Family Members. Instead, they were supposed to only say that they saw them 'being attacked' before running away. It was a completely different concept.

"Sigh... Fine! Give us the map."

Calina smiled as she threw them two jade slips identical to their own. Still, Weren couldn't help but ask.

"Rean, Roan, what is there in it for you two?"

Rean laughed before saying.

"What else could it be? Our little friend here promised quite a few good rewards to us since we helped kill her pursuers, so the rest don't know what happened to her. Our only objective now is to help keep her alive until the day the Profound Abyss closes. We will then follow our own paths after that."

One didn't need to think much to understand that it was Roan who told Calina to say those words. There was no way for the twelve years old girl to come up with this deep scheme by herself. It's just that Rean's transformation made her look a lot older, so Weren and Tuve honestly believe that it was her plan instead of the kids.

"Very well. However, we will wait outside the Profound Abyss until it closes completely. We will only report this once we confirmed that you didn't come out."

Calina, or 'Freta,' nodded.

"That's what I need from you two exactly. It seems like we have a deal then."

Tuve and Weren nodded before getting up once more.

"Very well. In that case, we are going to go separate ways from here onwards. By the way, there are only two Vermilion Pools to be found in this specific cave maze. Or at least, that's what the map shows us. We are going to take the right one, is that okay?"

Rean's group nodded.

"No problem. We are only four here. A single pool should be enough for us. That being said, we will take the left one."

Weren and Tuve nodded before leaving straight away. They had to use their time the best they could since once they separate from Rean, there would be no Light Element to help anymore.

Once Weren and Tuve disappeared in the middle of the Decaying Fog, Calina finally decided to ask.

"Is it really okay to trust them? As far as I know, they can simply pretend that they didn't hear anything."

Roan wasn't concerned about that.

"They will. You might not know this, but Rean and I have a certain special status in the Sect. It would be for their own good that they don't go back on their words. Besides, if they aren't idiots, they should know that this favor might bring them lots of advantages in the future."

Calina nodded. For some reason, she felt a lot more reassured when Roan talked. Maybe it was his demeanor that inspired trust. Malaka and Rean seemed to always trust his words when it came to these complicated things.

Without any surprises, Rean was the first one to fully recover from his injuries. He was better than Roan in the Light Element to start with. Not to mention that he didn't lack Spirit Stones to recover his Spiritual

Energy either. After that, he touched Calina's face once more before closing his eyes and focusing on keeping her features the same way.

Roan finished healing himself around ten minutes later.

"Alright. We are still around two days away from the Vermilion Pool. Let's go. Also, be careful. Because of the Earthquake, the Decaying Demon Beasts retreated deeper into the caves. They will be a lot more packed now."

Calina, Malaka, and Rean nodded as their group immediately restarted their journey.

Sure enough, it was just as Roan had mentioned. They began to find bigger packs of Decaying Demon beasts as they pressed forward. Especially since the caves they selected had a higher concentration of Decaying Energy. Let alone the fact that they were in the middle of the Surge.

Still, that wasn't all bad. Roan simply used a luring strategy, separating the mobs into smaller groups for them to fight. It helped him and Rean get their battle experience and further stabilize their cultivation. At the same time, Roan could force a more rigid training onto Malaka and Calina as he wished.

By the time they finished every battle, Calina and Malaka ended in a sorry state. Still, Roan ignored that and forced even more Decaying Beasts over them. Of course, he didn't take it easy on himself or Rean either. While he left the Initial and Middle Stage Three Demon Beasts to Malaka and Calina, he and Rean took care of all Late and Peak Stage Three ones.

Calina finally understood why Malaka trembled every time Roan talked about training, especially 'special treatment.' She felt she got close to death several times.

There was even a one-time event where they found a Stage Four Demon Beast. Fortunately, they noticed it fast enough, thanks to Kentucky. Kentucky seemed to have a keen sense for these Decaying Demon beasts. Or, to be more specific, their Demon Cores. When the Stage Four one approached their group, Kentucky immediately stopped moving and entered a guard mode. The only time he did that in the past was when Rean and Roan found the other Stage Four Demon Beasts attacking another group on the surface.

That being said, their group also stopped and retreated without even thinking. On the way to find another path, Rean couldn't help but say.

"See? Bringing Kentucky here was a good idea, after all! Hahaha!"

Roan snorted in response.

"Obviously. Otherwise, becoming fried chicken would be the only outcome for him."

Kentucky couldn't understand words well, but he still felt a chill that made all his feathers puff out at once. Immediately, he ran behind Malaka, seeking protection.

Chiiick!

"Roan, stop bullying Kentucky!"

Roan shook his head and simply ignored the two.

Rean, on the other hand, had a doubt in his mind.

"Why don't you do those 'Mighty Cries' when you are not battling? This chick, chick, chick sounds kinda lame."

Surprisingly, the one to refuse Rean wasn't Malaka, but Calina. She immediately hugged Kentucky before saying.

"How can you say that? Can't you see that that's Kentucky's charm? You don't understand anything!"

Chick! Chick!

Even without understand anything, Kentucky seemed to agree with Calina for some reason.

Seeing that, Rean couldn't help but ask Roan while narrowing his eyes.

'Why do I have the feeling that he is doing that because of the girls?'

Roan's expression didn't even change as he responded.

'You think?'

Death... and me

Chapter 266: Vermilion Pool

Ignoring the shameless bird, Rean's group continued on their way after selecting another path. There were a few more difficulties here and there, but nothing that could really stop their group from moving forward. Around a day and a half later, they finally began to approach the Vermilion Pool.

It was just like Mia had informed them. At some point, the Decaying Fog began to disappear. It was hard to imagine that the Vermilion Pool was also the reason for the Decaying Fog. The one that felt the most intrigued was Rean.

"So much... Life Force..."

Roan looked at him, puzzled.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, this place is overflowing with Life Force. Not only that, the Light Element is abundant as well. We haven't seen the Vermilion Pool yet, but I can already tell that we are close. It's no more than two kilometers away."

Roan nodded.

Sure enough, a few turns later, they arrived at an enormous cave space. At the very center, everyone could see what seemed to be a lake. Or better, a red lake with steam coming out of it.

"Isn't that just a Hot Spring?"

"A Red Hot Spring?"

Rean looked at the lake and could tell that all the Life Force he could feel was precisely coming from there. He then looked behind from where they came and felt the surroundings with his Light Element manipulation. Only then he understood what was happening.

"I see..."

Roan, Malaka, and Calina looked at him.

Noticing their gazes, Rean then tried to explain what he was seeing.

"Well, how can I put it. There is no doubt that these Hot Springs are really the reason for the Decaying Fog. There is an enormous amount of Life Force and Yang Energy coming from it. However, all of this is connected to the Hot Spring somehow. As the Life Force and Yang Energy get further away from the Hot Spring, they begin to lose their connection."

"Because of that, the Life Force and Yang Energy start to change. Of course, just this isn't enough to create Decaying Fog. If I'm not wrong, what changes them, in the end, is the environment of the Profound Abyss. The Life Force and Yang Energy then begin to transform due to the impurities of the place itself. This mix of Profound Abyss and detached Life Force and Yang Energy creates the Decaying Fog and Energy."

"It's quite funny how if we have been absorbing almost the exact same type of energy that we sought all this time. It's not wrong to say that absorbing the Vermilion Pool's medicinal properties is the same as absorbing Decaying Energy, but in a different state."

Malaka and Calina didn't understand much of it. They were young and can't use Light Element to start with. But it was different for Roan. He understood that it might not be a good thing for himself.

'Sister Orb, will it be okay for me to enter the Vermilion Pool?'

[Oh, that's fine. In this Universe, there is no Yin without Yang. Obviously, the opposite is also applied. Usually, it would be extremely hard to mix them. But you just so happen to have the Soul Gem System and your Yin Yang Soul Connections. Thanks to Rean's existence, you can enjoy it as much as anyone else.]

Roan nodded. As long as it worked, then he didn't care.

splash!

While Roan was thinking, a certain plumpy bird jumped directly inside of the pool. Soon after, it began to swim around as if it was its private bath. That obviously irritated Roan quite a bit.

"Hot water and chicken. Seems like we can have Chicken Soup today."

Vup!

In a flash, Kentucky disappeared from the pool, appearing right behind Rean.

"Hahaha!"

Rean, Malaka, and Calina couldn't help but laugh out loud.

"Well, whatever. Just go back inside. You had been absorbing the Yin Energy in the Decaying Fog all time along. This Vermilion Pool will probably be good for you to balance your powers."

Splash!

Kentucky immediately jumped back inside the pool as fast as it had run away from it.

"How can there be such a shameless bird in this universe?"

Rean just shrugged his shoulders.

"Leave Kentucky be. He did a pretty amazing job fighting the demon beasts while protecting Malaka and Calina. Think about it as his reward. Besides, I already felt the power accumulated in this Vermilion Pool. There is more than enough for everyone to use."

Malaka also couldn't wait anymore.

"Rean, can I go too?"

Rean nodded.

"Alright, go ahead. Don't forget to absorb the Pool's Energy into your meridians to strengthen them. The medicinal properties mixed into the Vermilion Pool seemed to be very beneficial for them. Otherwise, there would be no reason to come to this place in the first place. Also, once you feel that you reached your limit, come out. Too much will be no good for any of us."

"Great!"

Malaka immediately threw her clothes in the air and jumped straight inside, not minding the fact that Rean and Roan were there at all!

Splash!

Calina was shocked by that, though. Malaka completely ignored that Rean and Roan were there when she took off her clothes. Little did she know that back in the Varen Tribe, Rean and Roan would bring her to train outside against the Demon beasts. They would often wash in any nearby river or lake since it

would be a waste of time to go all the way back to the tribe. They did it for years, too, since very young. So for Malaka, it made no difference whether Rean and Roan were there or not. She was simply too used to it. Of course, that only applied to the twins.

"Malaka! You're a girl! At least cover the important par-"

Ban!

Splash!

Unfortunately for her, Roan wasn't in the mood to hear all that bullshit. He couldn't care less whether they were wearing clothes or not. So he simply kicked Calina inside the pool and jumped inside with Rean too.

"Instead of wasting your time, just start absorbing the Vermilion Pool's Energy already."

Right after, he sat with only his head out of the water and closed his eyes. Rean wasn't surprised by that either. That guy never had the tolerance to start with. In his eyes, this was just like washing oneself anywhere else. Clothes? Embarrassment? Men and women? Ha! What a joke. The day Roan starts to care about such things, the Universe would collapse. Rean also entered and completely ignored the naked Malaka playing with Kentucky on one side of the pool. In his case, as long as she did what he said and absorbed the Vermilion Pool's medicinal properties, he didn't mind.

Calina rubbed her butt as she looked at Roan with an angry expression. Still, she wasn't idiotic enough to try to pick a fight against him. She then went close to where Malaka and Kentucky were staying while absorbing the energies into her meridians. As much as Malaka didn't care, she still did. She had to do something about it as her friend.

After complaining with Malaka for about ten minutes, she finally convinced the happy-go-lucky girl to put on some clothes. With that, they all continued to absorb the Vermilion's Pool Medicinal Properties. It was like the reports said precisely. The Vermilion Pool had the power to strengthen and enlarge the Meridians, allowing for a higher and more stable Spiritual Energy flow. Naturally, it would improve one's cultivation speed. Even Kentucky was no exception.

Just like that, they continued to enjoy the comfortable and highly nourishing Vermilion Pool.

Another good thing about the Vermilion Pool was the fact that no Decaying Demon Beasts would approach it. For them, the Life Force and Yang Energy acted more like poison, destroying their Demon Cores.

Last but not least, not everyone would be brave enough to venture into one of the caves with high concentrations of Decaying Fog. Because of that, their chances of really encountering another group here were minimal. Let alone during the Surge. In fact, Rean was still surprised that Weren and Tuve tried such a thing. Although he knew that there will definitely be other groups who have tried it, they were quite rare compared to the majority.

Soon, an entire day passed. What was first was a very comfortable sensation, had already become quite unbearable. That was to be expected, though. After all, the pool worked by absorbing its properties into one's body. Sooner or later, the ones absorbing those energies would reach their limit.

Finally, the first one to decide that it was time to come out was Roan. Nothing to be surprised about there. Although he could absorb the Vermilion Pool's Yang Energy, he was still what Sister Orb liked to call 'the epitome of Yin Energy.' Obviously, his body would be the first one to get out.

The next one was Malaka, quickly followed by Calina. The two girls came out while their entire bodies ached. As women, they were pretty much like Roan, having Yin Energy as their carrier force. They would need quite a few days for their meridians to finish fully processing all the Vermilion Pool's Medicinal Properties.

"Take it."

Suddenly, Roan threw two sets of clothes to Malaka and Calina. Malaka seemed to be used to that already. Still, Calina simply couldn't tell from where the hell Roan took those clothes from. Not only that, but they were pretty much of the right size. Without a doubt, women's clothes. Obviously, those clothes came from the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm.

It couldn't be helped. Calina would be surprised if she knew just how many sets of clothes Malaka destroyed while following Roan's hell-like training. The same was true for the twins themselves. They

had several sets of spare clothes ready to be changed into. Calina was almost the same age and size as Malaka, so Malaka's clothes obviously fit her very well.

Malaka didn't notice Calina's surprise as she looked at the pool together with Roan.

"Rean and Kentucky don't seem to be having a hard time in there."

Roan nodded.

"Rean uses the Light Element, so his body is a lot more resistant to Yang Energy than anyone else. In Kentucky's case, he is a demon beast. His body's natural resilience is stronger than humans to start with. Not to mention that he can also use the Light Element. Those two being able to absorb more energy is well within expectations."

Roan then glanced at Malaka and Calina.

"You two should just sit down and focus on the Vermilion Pool's Medicinal Properties inside your bodies. The sooner you finish processing it, the better it will be for the meridians that were just expanded by it."

Malaka and Calina nodded and did as Roan said.

As for Rean and Kentucky, it wouldn't be before another entire day went by that the first one came out of it.

Death... and me

Chapter 267: Leaving the Vermilion Pool

Rean then got up and moved out of the pool before putting a new set of clothes on.

"Phew... That was really nice. My Meridians did really get stronger and wider. Too bad that I reached my limit so soon."

Roan glanced at him.

"I could only stay for half of your time. What are you complaining about?"

Rean shrugged his shoulders.

"Does it matter? Our cultivations are done through our exchange of elements, so the better I get, the faster you become as well."

Roan narrowed his eyes but didn't say anything. What Rean said was true, after all.

"What about Kentucky?"

"Still swimming in the pool. It won't take long for Kentucky to come out as well, though. We both stayed there for much longer than others would be able to, so we absorbed a lot of the pool's medicinal properties already. Can you see the color of the water? It is a lot clear now. Even if Kentucky can hold for much longer, the pool doesn't have much more to give him anyway."

Roan nodded, not minding too much. It's still the sixth day, so they had time to spare.

Roan then looked behind.

"I hope you two didn't stop processing the Vermilion Pool's medicinal properties."

Tremble.

Malaka and Calina's heart jumped a bit after hearing that. Doing that all the time nonstop was boring for the two young ladies, so they did indeed stop for some time.

Malaka immediately nodded.

"O-Of course not!"

Calina did the same right after.

"How could we? We haven't moved at all since yesterday."

Roan snorted in response. How could he not know the truth?

Pah! Pah!

"Ouch, Ouch!*

Malaka felt gloomy and immediately concentrated once more. As for Calina, she felt even more indignant.

"How can you hit a girl's head like this? I'm also a member of the Imperial Family, you know?!"

Roan then raised his fist once more, not minding her words at all.

"I see, so you still have time to talk."

"Wait, wait, wait! I'll do it, I'll do it!"

Finally, Roan returned to his position and started to do the same thing as the girls once more.

Calina, of course, wasn't happy. No one had ever treated her like that ever since she was born. Roan's ice-cold face was being engraved in her memory more and more as time passed, which made her even angrier.

It was then that she received a Spiritual Sense message from Rean.

'Don't take it too seriously. That's just Roan's way of showing how much he cares about you. After all, he is dead set to make you the empress, isn't he?'

Well, of course, Roan cared about her... After all, her progress was directly linked to his own life. Different from Malaka, that was the only reason Roan cared so much about Calina at the moment.

Rean just... twisted the meaning of his words... a little bit.

Still, Rean's words made Calina remember the time Roan pulled her into his embrace during the battle against Valeu. Soon after, a tinge of red appeared on her cheeks as she immediately shook her head.

Rean couldn't help but laugh inside when he saw that reaction from the young girl. That was what he wanted exactly! He then looked at Roan, who seemed to not have noticed anything.

'This is going to be fun! Hahaha!'

Roan then glanced at Rean with a dark expression.

"Why haven't you started to process the Vermilion Pool's medicinal properties yet?"

Rean nodded while seemingly in a good mood.

"Yea, yea... I'll start now."

In the end, Kentucky came out of the Vermilion Pool a few hours later. Just like Rean mentioned, the medicinal properties of the Vermilion Pool were basically almost gone now. It would be useless for Kentucky to stay in there any longer. Not to mention that even Kentucky was reaching its limit as well.

Roan then got up and looked outside. Because the pool was almost entirely used up, the Decaying Fog from outside got quite close to it. Then again, that didn't matter. Their main objective in coming to the Profound Abyss had been completed. It was time to leave.

"Alright, let's go back."

Rean nodded and approached Calina once more. He then used his Light Element to reinforce her appearance change once more. Following that, their group departed from the Vermilion Pool. On their way back, Calina decided to ask something else.

"Are we meeting with Tuve and Weren?"

Roan shook his head.

"It will be better if we leave the Profound Abyss at different times. Even better if no one sees us together on our way back. I want the elders outside to think that we selected different paths, although we are from the same sect. It will give more credibility to their claim."

Calina and the others nodded.

"Rean, Malaka, remember to not say anything. If anyone asks, we know nothing. At most, just say that you believe our seniors' words."

"Alright."

As for Calina, she was still puzzled about how Roan would pull her out of the Profound Abyss without anyone noticing. After all, Rean himself said that his appearance changing ability would not fool those at the Nascent Soul Realm and above.

"Can you tell me already? How are you going to bring me out?"

"Don't worry, you will understand once we get closer to the entrance. At the moment, take your chance to train since we are battling our way out."

Rean, Malaka, and Calina sighed. Sure enough, Roan wouldn't give them even a second of respite.

On the tenth day, Rean's group came out of the Decaying Caves. Sure enough, no one else entered a cave with a much higher concentration of Decaying Fog. That being said, they only found Demon Beasts on their way out, but no humans.

From here on out, they were only two days away from the entrance. Of course, they finally began to bump into other teams who also started to make their way out of the Profound Abyss. However, since they all seemed to only want to leave this place, almost no one tried anything. The only exception was another group from those ones Valeu had promised a reward for the Pendant and Rean's group lives.

It couldn't be helped. After all, they didn't know that Valeu was already dead. Unfortunately for them, Rean's group was already hard to deal with before, let alone now that Calina was also helping. Calina wasn't as merciful as Malaka, though. Since those guys came after Rean's group because of Valeu's words, she made sure to dispatch them to the next world. Besides, no one would complain about a few Core Formation Realm cultivators that wanted to use their higher cultivation to bully Foundation Establishment ones.

Malaka didn't like that, but she knew how angry Calina was because of Erna and Silo's death. As for Rean and Roan, well, they weren't much happier now that they got that ridiculous quest either. Those guys could only blame their luck for trying to find problems with those three.

A day quickly passed until suddenly, Malaka asked them to stop for a while.

"Why?"

Malaka then explained.

"I reached the limit of what I can do in the Middle Stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. I would like to make a breakthrough into the Late Stage. Master also said that I shouldn't hold my cultivation back once I reached the limit and should go into the next stage straight away."

Roan nodded. If that was the case, then he had no reason to deny that. Rean then gave Malaka a few Rank Three Spirit Stones and touched her back with his hand. He would send Light Element into her body during the process to keep the Decaying Energy away. That would make her breakthrough easier.

Malaka then took a deep breath and began her breakthrough. She used one of the best Water Element cultivation manuals of the sect, Mia's one. Water Element quickly began to gather around her as her Spiritual Energy raised quickly. The Spiritual Energy inside the Rank Three Spirit Stones also began to come out at a fast pace. The process inside her Dantian then started.

Roan and Calina kept their eyes open, looking around to see if there wasn't any danger. But at some point, Calina's eyes narrowed as she looked at Malaka. Roan, who was beside her, noticed that change.

"What is it?"

Calina then sighed before saying.

"Malaka's cultivation technique is quite good. Still, it doesn't use Yin Energy. That's also why my control over Water Element is so much better than her. You should consider changing her cultivation manual into a Yin Energy Water Element one."

Roan shook his head in response.

"We don't have such a thing in our Dalamu Sect. Cultivation Techniques that use Yin Energy are too rare for us."

Roan then glanced at her before saying.

"She could make good use of yours, though."

Calina also thought about that. However...

"The Imperial Family's Cultivation Techniques shouldn't be passed outside. Those are the rules. Sorry."

Roan nodded. He was expecting that answer already.

Roan definitely had the highest talent for Yin Energy, but he couldn't help Malaka with it. That's because he didn't have a Water Element Affinity. Not only that, but his own cultivation manual was not made by him, but the Soul Gem System instead. Cultivation manuals are several times harder to create than skills. So much so that the Sect's Repository only had around a hundred skill manuals for every cultivation manual.

It was then that Rean warned Roan through their Soul Connection.

'Just our luck... Someone is coming again.'

Death... and me

Chapter 268: Roan's Charm

Roan wasn't that surprised by that. This time, Malaka's breakthrough definitely caused a higher stir that could be felt for at least a few hundreds of meters. It was much further in range than Rean's detection ability could reach. Not to mention that most of the groups that were still alive were also making their way back to the Profound Abyss' entrance. Because of that, their group had already bumped into quite a few groups.

But it was then that they noticed, the ones who appeared just so happened to be Luina and her Protector, Wallad Marc. Still, they weren't the only ones. Their group had joined hands with the Umbral Sect this time around since Luina's side was afraid of letting her go with Wallad's protection alone. That being said, another two members of the Umbral Sect were also with her.

"Hey!"

Luina immediately felt happy to see him. She was just curious to see who would try a breakthrough in this place, not expecting that it was Rean's group.

Roan nodded at her.

"We meet again."

He looked at the side and asked.

"And who are these two?"

The person with the highest cultivation, Late Core Formation Realm, then stepped forward to introduce them.

"I'm Sulion Druma. This one beside me is Val Cronze. We are members of the Umbral Sect."

Roan narrowed his eyes after hearing that. The Umbral Sect was the same one that wanted Rean dead because of his Light Element. It could heal their Umbral Energy, which was terrible for their Umbral Sect.

Calina then got close to Roan before whispering in his ear.

"Is this alright? My appearance has been changed, but she knows my real one. She might notice something."

Roan shook his head.

"That shouldn't happen. Rean's ability is very thorough. Even the aura of your body changed slightly because of his Light Element. I doubt anyone in the Core Formation Realm or below can notice anything."

Calina sighed in relief before nodding.

However, Luina didn't like it when Calina got that close to Roan. She had never seen the girl before, not to mention that she knew Roan's personality. For him to let her get that close meant that she wasn't just anyone.

Luina then got even closer to Roan before asking.

"Roan, who is this person?"

Calina was a little taken aback by that. First, because she didn't understand why Luina seemed to be cold towards her. Second, because for some reason, she didn't like seeing Luina getting that close to Roan either. She then got in between the two before introducing herself with a cold voice.

"I'm 'Freta.' Roan's group helped me back in the Decaying Caves, so we are making our way back to the Profound Abyss entrance together. How about you?"

Of course, Calina knew who she was, but she had to keep her pretense too.

Wallad and the two guys of the Umbral Sect looked at that situation in dismay. What made the two girls look at each other with so much hostility?

As for Rean, he was trying to not laugh. He knew that Roan probably didn't notice anything and only thought that those two girls' behavior was annoying.

Invisible sparks flew in the air as the two girls seemed to be ready to fight at any moment.

Finally, Wallad approached them to say.

"Ahem... Luina, we need to leave the Profound Abyss as well. You should not intervene in Rean and Roan's business."

Only then did the guys from the Umbral Sect notice the problem. Immediately, they exchanged Spiritual Sense messages.

'Sulion, aren't those two the Rean and Roan that Sect Master told us to get rid of if we had a chance?'

Sulion nodded.

'The description matches the names. They are definitely the two. However, they seem to be friends with Luina and Wallad. If we really get in a fight, there is a huge chance that the Lagan Sect will intervene.'

Val shook his head in response.

'Look at Rean. Even after we arrived, he didn't leave that girl's side. From the ripples of Spiritual Energy, she is definitely in the middle of a breakthrough. As you know, Sect Master prioritized Rean's death over Roan. As long as we act fast, we can definitely take his life. If Wallad still intervenes after that, we can simply run away. He isn't strong enough to kill us anyway. Also, look at Roan and the rest; they are all Foundation Establishment kids and a Stage Two Demon Bird. There is nothing to worry about them.'

Sulion had to admit that the idea was good. Even if they fail, the chances of anything terrible happening to them were low anyway. Besides, fights inside the Profound Abyss are regular. They aren't doing anything wrong in here to start with.

'Alright, give me-'

Swish!

Crack!

Suddenly, a white and black sword slash cleaved the ground in front of Sulion and Val, extending several meters ahead. Sulion and Val noticed the attack, so they immediately jumped back just as it passed in front. Still, they sucked in cold air. That was too fast! If they weren't vigilant, they might have been cleaved in half just now.

When they looked from where the attack came from, they saw Roan with his hair in a mix of white and dark colors. Not only them, but Sulion and Val also noticed Kentucky and Rean looking at them with cold eyes. Sure enough, the moment Sulion and Val decided to attack, their Killing Intent began to come out of their body. How could Rean, Roan, and Kentucky not notice it?

Luina and Calian were surprised by that sudden movement.

"Ro-Roan... what happened?"

Sulion and Val also asked the same thing.

"Why did you do that? Were you trying to kill us?!"

Roan then smiled before saying.

"Oh, sorry, sorry. That was my mistake. I could swear I heard something in that direction. I thought that it could have been a Decaying Demon Beast, so I attacked. Don't worry. If I wanted you two dead, I would have aimed correctly. But I didn't, right? I only aimed that attack in front of you, so there is no need to be so angry."

No way in hell anyone there believed Roan's words. Still, it was confirmed that the attack was not aimed at Sulion and Val but in front of them. Luina, Calina, and Wallad understood. That was a warning, but a warning for what? Sulion and Val didn't move a single muscle until that moment. Still, Calina and Luina, the two girls who knew Roan, knew better to never doubt him.

Seeing how Luina and Wallad also looked at the two of them, Sulion and Val immediately dropped any ideas of trying a sneak attack. They would only be giving excuses to get themselves as targets with little to no chance of success in their killing attempt.

"Hmph! Then make sure to be more careful next time."

In fact, Roan really wanted to attack them. However, with Malaka in the middle of a breakthrough, he didn't want to take unnecessary risks.

Sulion then looked at Luina and Wallad before asking.

"Anyway, we want to go back. How long do you intend to stay here?"

Luina narrowed her eyes and was just about to refuse. However, Wallad sent her a Spiritual Sense message.

'Young Miss, the elders already agreed with this temporary Profound Abyss alliance. Until we are out, both sects have to work together. If they come out just to tell our elders that we allied with someone else, it will put Elder Erval in a tight spot.'

Luina sighed but nodded. In the end, she was still the Lagan Sect Master's Daughter. There was more attached to her existence than just her own wishes.

"Alright, we are moving back."

Just at this moment, a burst of Spiritual Energy and Water Element came out of Malaka's body. Soon, her cultivation began to rise together with her Spiritual Energy. A few moments later, her cultivation finally stopped at the Late Stage of the Foundation Establishment.

"Phew... I'm finally done."

Rean then patted her head with a smile, much to her delight.

"Very good. I could feel the Spiritual Energy in your body during the breakthrough. It was very smooth without any bottlenecks, congratulations."

"Hehehe~! Of course, I trained very hard."

Roan snorted in response.

"You mean you were forced to train very hard, no?"

Malaka protested Roan's words by sticking her tongue out.

Only then she looked at Luina and the others.

"Oh! Good to see you again, Senior Luina."

Luina smiled at Malaka.

"Good to see you too."

After that, she looked back at Sulion and Val.

"Alright, let's go."

Wallad, Sulion, and Val had nodded, and they immediately left in the direction of the Profound Abyss entrance. Finally, Calina asked Roan just what happened.

"Well, you will stay with us for some time, after all. Simply put, their Umbral Sect uses a thing called Umbral Energy. It just so happens that Rean's Light Element can heal it. Because of that, they would rather have him dead. That attack was just a warning so that they wouldn't try anything idiotic while Malaka was in the middle of her breakthrough."

Calina then looked at Rean.

"Is there something your Light Element can't do?"

Rean nodded.

"Of course! I can't change the ice block's deadpan face, for example. That's really regrettable."

Roan glared at him.

"You would not live to see it anyway, so why bother?"

Rean then asked something else.

"Between showing a happy expression and the Universe Destruction, which one would you chose?"

Roan snorted in response as he replied.

"The Universe can go boom!"

Death... and me

Chapter 269: Hiding Calina

Malaka couldn't help but ask.

"What's a Universe?"

Rean laughed in response.

"That's something you won't understand or even believe if I talk about anyway. Maybe one day, you will be able to take a glimpse of it."

Calina also wanted to ask the same question, but she gave up after hearing Rean's answer.

"Well, that's enough talk. Let's go."

At this point, Rean took Malaka and Calina's pendants from them. He simply said that he would hold on to it so that he could be the target. He was even faster than Roan with his Light Element, so he would be the best against a sneak attack. Of course, that was simply a lie. Instead, Rean sent them into the

Dimensional Realm. According to Sister Orb, as long as they were there, the remaining groups with the blue shards won't be able to locate them.

With that, they continued their journey out of the Profound Abyss. However, once they were just a few hours away from the entrance, Roan asked them to stop.

"Alright, this is enough for now. Time to take care of Calina."

Roan then looked at Rean before asking.

"How is it?"

Rean, of course, knew what Roan meant.

"It's okay. I can't feel any Spiritual Senses reaching this place. Even if it was the elders outside, their Spiritual Sense would still not escape my Hidden Radar skill. I also can't feel any presence of Life Force close to us. We should be fine in this place."

Roan also called the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm with his mind.

'Sister Orb, what about you?'

[Don't worry. If there was a formation monitoring this place, I would know. There is definitely nothing like that around. They really made this Profound Abyss so that no one would try to intervene.]

Sister Orb then continued.

[However, are you sure you want to do it this way? If you go up the Abyss through another path, I can analyze the Formation and control it to open another passage elsewhere.]

Roan shook his head in response, asking.

'You don't know if you would be found, right?'

[Well, there is a risk since my processing power is kinda low for that level of Formation. Still, it wouldn't be high.]

'Forget it. Calina's death must be confirmed. I would rather not risk being found at this point, even if she doesn't get killed. After all, once she returns to the Imperial Capital, we will not have a chance to communicate with her any time soon.'

[Alright.]

Roan nodded, satisfied.

Rean and Roan then approached Calina and put a hand each on her shoulders. Still, seeing their solemn faces, she couldn't help but feel a little nervous.

"Wh-What? Does this have to do with the way to go out without being found out?"

Roan confirmed.

"Yes. However, you must understand one thing. You shall never tell anyone about what you are going to see, am I clear? If I had another choice, I would not use it since it is linked to our own secrets. Can you guarantee that?"

Calina didn't hesitate as she nodded.

"The Imperial Family might be in this situation, but one thing definitely won't change. The Imperial Family Members will never go back on their word. I promise that I won't say anything about whatever happens now."

Rean and Roan were satisfied with the answer.

As for Malaka, she looked curiously at all that happened.

"Very well. You will feel some kind of pulling force, do not resist it."

Calina nodded. Sure enough, the pulling force appeared. In the very next second, Calina disappeared from the face of the world.

Rean and Roan accepted her promise. But above all, they trusted the Soul Gem System's decision of picking her. If it had chosen her, then she should be able to at least keep her words.

Wow!

Malaka came running and looked everywhere around. Still, she couldn't see Calina anywhere.

"How did you do that?! Where is Calina?!"

Rean smiled as he patted Malaka's head once more.

"That is also valid for you, Malaka. You can't ever tell anyone about what you saw today, okay? Otherwise, Roan and I might really die. Calina would be no different either. Understood? That also includes your Master, Mia. If you really need to talk about something related to this with us, do not use words. Use Spiritual Sense messages instead."

Malaka was used to seeing Roan's cold face, but it was incredibly rare to see Rean doing the same. Even during dangerous moments, he wouldn't look as serious as that.

"Don't worry. I'll never say anything."

Chick!

Kentucky, for some reason, also agreed to those words he couldn't even understand. Rean couldn't help but laugh seeing that, saying.

"Really a smart bird. You can at least understand that we are being serious here."

Malaka immediately asked the same question again, though. It's just that she used a Spiritual Sense message this time.

'Then? Where is Calina? How come she disappeared.'

Roan glanced at her before saying.

'We will show you once we are back to the sect. For now, you just need to understand that Calina is safe and she is coming back with us.'

Malaka was surprised that the one who agreed to tell was Roan instead of Rean.

'Alright! It's a promise. You can't go back on your words either!'

Roan nodded, not minding much. Malaka had been with them for way too long already. Sooner or later, she would start formulating her own questions. He simply saw it as inevitable.

Back inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, Calina appeared just beside a bathhouse. However, she couldn't care less about that at the moment. She didn't know how, but her vision went blurry for a second. When it finally came back to normal, she was already inside this strange place.

"What happened? Rean, Roan, where are you?"

[Can you shut up? Even if you talk normally, they can hear you.]

Calina was taken aback again. Just behind her, there was a white and black ball floating. She could swear that the one who talked was that ball. Still, before she could confirm if she was going crazy, Rean's voice echoed inside the Dimensional Realm.

'Don't worry. You are fine. Once we arrive back in the sect, I'll let you come out.'

Still, Calina was just too young and curious.

"But what is this place? You haven't answered yet."

This time, it was Roan's voice that appeared.

'That's the safe place we prepared for you to stay. That's also why the elders outside will not be able to detect you. There is enough food for you to eat around as well. As for places you shouldn't go, Sister Orb will take care of it.'

Sure enough, Roan wasn't planning to let her go around doing whatever she wanted. He had long since asked Sister Orb to stop her from entering the workshops, Yin Yang bathhouse, and from touching anything of value like the Spirit Stones.

Rean laughed before telling her.

'Let me warn you. Sister Orb can totally trash Roan and me while working together, so you better not irritate her. She's a demon in the form of an Orb. Do you think Roan is scary? That's because you had never seen her in a bad mood.'

[Who's a Demon?! I'm a Soul Gem AI, okay? A Soul Gem AI!!!]

Calina once again heard the orb in front of her talking. Still, the impressive thing was that Sister Orb had no mouth. Well, it was only an Orb, after all. Instead, Sister Orb's voice echoed directly inside her mind. Spiritual Senses could do something similar, but she could tell that Sister Orb's words were transmitted in some different way.

However, what made her more fearful than anything else was Rean's words. Sister Orb can trash Rean and Roan while they were working together! Isn't that totally overpowered? She can't feel any cultivation coming from Sister Orb at all!

"He-He-Hello. I-I-I'm Calina Sa-Sasamil. T-Th-Thank you for letting m-m-me stay he-here...!"

Stronger and more fearful than Roan? What kind of reincarnation of all evil is that? Let alone the twelve-year-old Calina, even a real demon would be crying already.

[Don't mind them. I will not do anything to those who treat me well. However, it is as they said, you can't break my rules. Otherwise, even the twins won't be able to save you. Do that, and we will be best friends. By the way, how is the life of a princess? Tell me more! Rean likes to talk to me every now and then, but the black-haired dead body only contacts me when he needs it. I'm kinda bored with having only those two to talk to.]

Rean laughed as he shook his head. Obviously, Sister Orb was very interested in talking to someone else other than him and Roan. Roan didn't seem to mind Sister Orb's words either, so he immediately pulled his focus out of the Soul Gem Realm. Sister Orb would be able to take care of everything there.

"Anyway, we can go out already. If I'm not wrong, Tuve and Weren should have stepped outside a long time ago already. There shouldn't be a problem with us appearing now."

"How do you know?"

"Simple. You and Kentucky could resist the Vermilion Pool for much longer, thanks to your constitutions. However, Weren and Tuve definitely couldn't do it. They probably left as soon as they reached their limit, which should have been more than an entire day ahead."

Rean nodded.

"Well, then I guess this is the end of the Profound Abyss for us."

Roan nodded too.

"Yes. Let's get out of here."

A few hours later, Rean's group finally scaled up the Abyss, leaving it once for all.

Death... and me

Chapter 270: Profound Abyss Closes

Rean's group passed by the Formation's entrance, coming into Reliance's view. Just as Roan had mentioned, Weren and Tuve were already on his side. Of course, they weren't the only ones. All the participants seemed to have gathered around, waiting for the Abyss to close. It's just that it was still two days ahead.

Under the eyes of hundreds of elders of several sects, Rean's group made their way to Reliance's side.

"It seems like everything went okay on your side."

Rean and Roan smiled bitterly. If by 'okay' he meant getting a ridiculous nonsense quest, then yes, it went okay. Still, they couldn't possibly talk about it with Reliance.

"It was okay. We found a Vermilion Pool. In the end, we did not have a need for the Anti-Decaying Energy Pills that Sect Master prepared for us, though. It turned out that my Light Element was capable of getting rid of it a lot easier."

Reliance nodded, not that surprised to hear it.

"Well, I thought that it might have happened. After all, your Light Element did heal quite a few weird things already. Anyway, we can't leave yet. Everyone has to wait for the conclusion and closure of the Profound Abyss. Those are the rules."

Rean, Roan, and Malaka nodded.

Reliance then looked at Kentucky and nodded.

"It seems like Kentucky had quite a good harvest this time around. Oh! It has already reached the level of a Peak Stage Two demon beast. Did he eat a lot of Demon Cores?"

Rean nodded and answered with a Spiritual Sense message.

'We basically gave him all the demon cores that did not shatter in battle. His Minokawa Dark Element seemed to be compatible with the environment as well. Not only he didn't get affected by the Decaying Fog, his body even absorbed it. We also allowed him to enter a Vermilion Pool. He stayed over two days until the pool was basically clear of any medicinal properties. From what I can see, he used the Vermilion Pool to balance the power he got from the Decaying Fog and Demon Cores. Minokawas are really frightening.'

Reliance looked at Kentucky with a surprised face.

'No wonder he reached the Peak Stage Two so fast. Yin and Yang Energies are probably incredibly nourishing for him. This Profound Abyss was really worth it then. Oh, right! How about combat? Was he able to adapt to the changes?'

Rean nodded once more.

'Yes! At first, he kept being knocked all around. But as time passed, he began to get the gist of it. Turns out that his instinct for it is incredible. His defense is really heaven-defying too. Even Stage Three Decaying Demon Beasts have a tough time causing him damage.'

Reliance was happy to hear that.

'The Legends were not wrong, indeed. It is definitely because of Kentucky's scales and his blade-like feathers. Of course, his body's internal structure is probably a lot more resistant than almost all demon beasts at his level so that it can absorb the impacts.'

As Rean and Reliance talked about Kentucky, Weren and Tuve asked Roan about 'Freta,' the member of the Imperial Family's group through Spiritual Sense Messages.

'She left already. She told you, didn't she? As a member of the Imperial Family Forces, she had her own way of leaving the Profound Abyss without using the entrance. It's just that we don't know how she did that. Once we got close to the entrance, she separated from us and went somewhere else. Well, as long as she doesn't appear, that will be fine.'

Weren and Tuve nodded. Once the Profound Abyss closed and the Imperial Family experts saw that their members didn't come out, they would definitely ask questions. Of course, they won't force anyone to say anything since the Profound Abyss rules apply to them as well. Most likely, they will offer some reward for any information about them. Roan also believed that since they were the ones in control of the Profound Abyss, they would eventually enter it and look for clues.

Reliance then looked at Malaka.

"I see that you also had a breakthrough. Very good."

Malaka smiled happily.

"Hehehe! Of course! I'm amazing!"

After they finished talking, Reliance decided to ask something else.

"Oh, right! Did you find anything strange during your time there? We felt a strong Earthquake while waiting outside. Everyone believes it started in the Profound Abyss itself."

Of course, Rean and Roan knew what it was. However, they feigned ignorance.

"No idea. Roan and I were also caught by it and got quite a few injuries while inside the Decaying Caves."

Weren and Tuve narrowed their eyes. The fact that Rean and Roan had dashed away just a few moments before the Earthquake still makes them suspicious. Still, it is hard to imagine that the twins would be able to create that phenomenon either. They might even be seen as crazy if they say that.

"Nothing on our side. We were also caught by surprise by that."

Reliance nodded.

"Alright. Sit down and keep processing the Vermilion Pool's Medicinal Properties. I really didn't expect that all of you would be able to find Vermilion Pools for your own use. After all, the Decaying Caves can lead to several dead ends. Mia's map showed the location of a few, but they were definitely taken by others. Not to mention that those easy to find ones probably had several bloody battles for their use. This travel was a big success."

Rean and the others nodded as they sat on the ground. Just as Reliance said, they still needed some time to finish processing all the Vermilion Pool's Medicinal Properties in their meridians. That would consolidate the changes that happened to them.

Time continued to pass as the thirteenth day arrived. By now, the experts that came with the Imperial Family Members already began to narrow their eyes. According to their calculation of Calina's group's strength, they should have been among the firsts to come out. But so far, not a single one of them appeared. Still, they could not act until the Profound Abyss was over.

The hours passed as more and more cultivators stepped out of the Profound Abyss. Some were successful in finding a Vermilion Pool only for themselves. Others had to fight over the pools against many others, losing several of their members.

The elders of all forces sighed at the view. Because of the Surge, they noticed that the number of cultivators coming out was already relatively small. They understood that the Surge alone had created several victims, let alone the demon beasts that got even stronger because of it. From the looks of it, around 40% of all participants would not come out. Not everyone had Anti-Decaying Energy Pills, after all.

Finally, the fourteenth day arrived. With that, Elder Polian came forward to make the announcement.

"The Profound Abyss will now close. Congratulations to everyone who was able to use the Vermilion Pools. For those who came back empty-handed, know that this experience will also help you greatly in the future. Close the Formation!"

"Wait, Elder Polian! Calina and her protectors haven't come out yet!"

Polian shook his head, not minding it too much.

"That's their problem. The rules are the same for everyone. If they didn't come out, then they died or got stuck in there. In any case, rules are rules. The Imperial Family never goes back on its words."

The other elder then asked something.

"What about the Earthquake? Are we not investigating it?"

Polian nodded.

"There will be an investigation. I'll go there myself after everything outside is settled. After all, I don't need the Formation to enter it. Still, I will not bring anyone from there outside. If you get stuck, then you will need to wait five years. That includes the Imperial Family Members. If you really want to know what happened to them, go ask around and see if you find any information. Now, close the entrance."

Although some of the elders didn't like it, they still closed the Profound Abyss. No one would go against a Saint Realm Cultivator's words. Still, they decided to do as Polian mentioned and started to ask for any information about Calina.

Soon, they found out a few groups that seemed to have been promised rewards for killing Rean's group by Valeu, one of Calina's protectors. Sure enough, they went to Reliance to ask what was going on.

"That you will need to ask our Dalamu Sect disciples."

Roan, already expecting this outcome, came forward to speak. At the same time, he took a Blue Pendant from his pocket.

"This... It's the Imperial Aquamarine! How did you get it?"

Roan nodded as he looked at Malaka.

"Princess Calina presented it to my sister during the time we were outside the Profound Abyss. It seemed like Valeu or whatever his name was wanted to take it back by force from what we found out."

"Calina gave it to her as a gift? Do you think we will believe it?"

Suddenly, a voice echoed around the elders and Rean's group.

"It's true. I kept my Spiritual Sense open during the entire gathering. Nothing escaped my eyes. I saw the moment that Calina gave that kid the Imperial Aquamarine."

The elders stiffened as they simultaneously said.

"Elder Polian!"

Everyone knew that Polian took his job of overseeing the gathering very seriously. He was even doing so at this moment. If he said that, then it was definitely true.

"But Elder Polian, the Imperial Aquamarine..."

Before the elder could even finish talking, Roan threw the Aquamarine at him.

"Take it. If this thing only brings us problems, I'd rather have my sister not carrying it."

The elder looked at Roan and nodded, satisfied. Still, he had more questions for them.