

## **Death 321**

Death... and me

Chapter 321: Soul Gem

'How do you know this name?'

Roan didn't explain, saying.

'That's our problem. We only want to know if we can obtain information regarding it instead. If not, then forget it.'

Wario narrowed his eyes as he looked at Rean and Roan. Finally, he let out a sigh before saying.

'I should have killed you two straight away. Still, it has been too long, and you are indeed helping us by taking non-believers away. However, I can not give you the answer you seek. If you really want to know more about it, you will have to ask the City's Artifact Spirit. If he doesn't answer you, then there is nothing I can do.'

Rean and Roan instantly had puzzled expressions on their faces.

'Artifact Spirit? What's that?'

Wario then explained.

'You saw how the city was built, right? All the buildings are connected to the terrain itself. In fact, they are all the one and the same. There isn't really such a thing as several houses. They are all part of the same structure. Simply put, this is an artifact. The entire city is a large piece of equipment.'

Rean and Roan were taken back. They didn't expect that such a big piece of equipment could exist.

Wario then continued.

'This equipment has a Spirit, which is the real one responsible for everything inside. The reason you were able to enter this place is most likely because the Artifact Spirit allowed you to. If it wanted to, you would all be dead a long time ago.'

Rean couldn't help but ask.

'What kind of equipment is this? What does it do?'

Wario shook his head.

'It's not up to me to answer that question. If the Artifact Spirit wishes to, it will give you that answer. Anyway, that's as far as I can tell you. Do you want to meet it right now? Remember, this will be done in the place of your rewards. If the Artifact Spirit doesn't wish to talk to you, then we can't do anything about it. You two will end up being sent out empty-handed.'

Rean and Roan nodded almost instantly. They didn't have much interest in the treasures and cultivation techniques of this place to start with.

Wario then appeared beside the twins like a ghost, which alarmed Tiria and Juvian. However, they quickly calmed them down.

"Don't worry, elders. Senior Wario is bringing us to get the reward we chose. There is no need for the things we asked you anymore either."

Tiria and Juvian wanted to ask what was happening. After all, everyone was kept inside the hall while they chose their own rewards. However, only the twins were being brought away. However, Juvian and Tiria knew that there was nothing they could do. The difference in level was just way too big.

Wario enveloped Rean and Roan with his Spiritual Energy and then disappeared with the two.

"Tiria, do you know what's happening?"

Tiria shook her head.

"I have no idea. However, something's not right. Those twins definitely know something that they don't want to talk about. Also, I'm still puzzled why they asked for Rank Four Spirit Stones before."

Juvian nodded.

"It seems like we can only wait for now."

Tiria and Juvian were not the only ones to notice it. The other sects, as well as the royal family, also saw how the twins suddenly disappeared with Wario.

'It's those twins again. Just what is wrong with those kids?'

'I need to report it back and have them further investigated.'

The ones with the worst looks were obviously the Umbral Sect members.

'Those twins will be the greatest threat for us in the future. Perhaps we should really pay the price the Shadow Reapers required for the job.'

Meanwhile, in several parts of the city, many citizens were informed about the elders' decision.

"What? We can leave?"

"Idiot! This is not leaving. We are being banished."

"So what? Do you want to stay here forever?"

"Hmph! That's only for the non-believers. When the ancestors come back, you will be stuck in this world. How can you give up the ancestors' words that easily?"

"Indeed. In fact, it is better that you are gone. This will purify our city."

"Zerio, are you really leaving? Are you going to leave your parents behind?"

"Sorry, mom, dad. However, I can't stay here anymore. Instead, you should come with me. Nothing will change if you stay in this place."

"Brat! How dare you say such things?"

This kind of conversation was happening in the entire city. In the end, the number of believers was much higher than the ones who didn't. Only around 10% of the population wanted to leave. Another 10% were in doubt where it was the right decision or not. As for the remaining portion, they were fanatics that genuinely believed that their ascender ancestors would come back and bring them away.

The guards around the city repeatedly advised everyone.

"Everyone who wishes to journey outside, be aware that this is a permanent decision! Once you step outside the city, you will be forbidden to ever come back. Ask yourselves, is that what you really want? Can you leave your family and friends behind? You have one day to decide. On the second day, we will start to bring everyone out."

While all of that happened, the twins finally arrived at the back of the city. There, they could see an enormous sphere that glowed with a faint light. They couldn't help but remember the glow on the pedestal that Latalia used to open the city's entrance.

Wario then bowed to the giant Sphere before saying.

"This lowly one seeks the Artifact Spirit's assistance. I've brought two outsiders who wish to know more about the Vruve."

Rean and Roan looked at each other, and then at the Sphere. Although the elder said that, nothing seemed to be happening.

Wario then sighed as he looked at the twins.

"I'm not sure if the Artifact Spirit will answer. If it doesn't, then we are lea-"

Suddenly, the Sphere's glow shone more brightly as a Spiritual Sense message entered their minds.

'Wario, you can leave.'

Wario was taken aback. Although he had brought them here, the truth was that he didn't expect that the Artifact Spirit would really answer. However, he didn't dare to neglect the Artifact Spirit's orders.

"Yes, this lowly one shall come back later to fetch the twins."

Wario then disappeared like a ghost. He was too fast for Rean or Roan to see his movements. Well, that didn't matter now. They finally seemed to be able to obtain a few answers.

Rean then bowed to the giant Sphere before saying.

"Thank you for receiving us, Senior Artifact Spirit."

Roan didn't say anything but still bowed to the Sphere as well.

However, the Artifact Spirit ignored the twins. Instead, he looked at Kentucky, who was brought together with them. The Artifact Spirit didn't have a mouth, so he could only communicate with Spiritual Sense.

'The swallower of suns and moons. How long has it been since I saw a real Minokawa? I can't even remember correctly anymore. Still, this one seemed to have received some kind of mutation.'

Rean and Roan were taken aback. The artifact spirit was the first one other than Elder Reliance to identify Kentucky's race.

\*Chick?\*

"Do you know about Kentucky?"

The Artifact Spirit confirmed.

'Yes. They are powerful creatures capable of bringing death to entire planets.'

Rean and Roan had the knowledge from Earth, so they understood what the Artifact Spirit meant. If Kentucky could really devour a sun, any planet in that solar system would lose its support. A sun was crucial for the existence of life, so it wasn't wrong to say that eating the sun would also mean the death of planets with life on them.

"Don't worry. We will raise Kentucky well."

The artifact spirit didn't seem to care, though.

'It doesn't matter. That is not my problem. The life that exists inside me can be sustained even if the Sun and Moon disappear, but I'll give you a piece of advice. Minokawas can't escape their fate. They need to swallow one sun and many, many moons to compensate for the Sun's Yang Energy. Be careful once you decide which ones you will let it eat.'

Rean nodded. He already knew how the universe worked thanks to his education back on Earth. There was no lack of life-devoid solar systems in the universe. Well, this was a problem that he won't need to care about for many years. He still didn't even know how they would leave the planet to start with.

However, that wasn't as shocking when compared to what the Artifact Spirit said right after.

'Leaving the bird aside, what kind of relationship do you two have with Soul Gem?'

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Chapter 322: Famous Character

Rean and Roan were shocked to hear that name. No one other than them knew about the Soul Gem System. Even Calina, who stayed in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, was not told about the system or its name.

Rean was about to ask him how he knew about that name when all of a sudden, Roan stopped him. Soon after, Roan looked at the giant sphere and asked.

"Who is Soul Gem? Do you know that person?"

Rean finally understood what Roan was trying to do. Indeed, the giant sphere didn't say Soul Gem System, only Soul Gem. It felt like it was talking more about an individual rather than a machine.

'You have his aura all over your body. That's why I can tell that you have some connection with him.'

Roan pondered a bit before saying.

"We did meet someone connected to this Soul Gem who was of great help for us in the past. At the moment, we are trying to figure out who he is and why he selected us. However, the only clue we have is that Vruve name. If it is not a problem, could you tell us more about that?"

The Artifact Spirit became silent for a moment. Finally, it talked once more.

'All I know is that Soul Gem was involved with a disaster from many, many years ago. After that, he completely disappeared without a trace. Unfortunately, most of my memories of that epoch have been lost. However, I do know a few things about Vruve.'

Rean and Roan's interest was immediately piqued.

"What is Vruve. Were they a clan? A race? Both? Perhaps it's the name of an event?"

'There is no need for you to know.'

Rean and Roan felt like cursing this Artifact Spirit. If so, then why did you bring it up?

'I'm joking.'

"..."

Was it a common trait? Why does this guy remind the twins of Sister Orb so much? It's just that this Artifact Spirit didn't look like it had emotions. Obviously, that wasn't really the case.

[I like this guy. I wish I could talk to him.]

Roan's mouth twitched before answering.

'And I would like to get rid of you. Too bad neither of us can have what we want.'

[Hmph!]

Of course, the Artifact Spirit couldn't tell about Sister Orb's existence. That being said, Rean and Roan had no intention of revealing the Soul Gem System's presence.

Rean then shook his head helplessly before asking.

"Ahem... so, can you tell us about Vruve?"

'Vruve is the name of a long-extinct organization. Soul Gem was also one of their members. They did many things in this universe and could be said to be one of the strongest powers. They were also the

ones who created me. However, I wasn't sentient by that time yet. Nonetheless, I still retained a few of the memories from the time I was used by them. But that was only until the Severing Day.'

"Severing Day? What's that?"

'I don't know the details. It's just that something had gone horribly wrong, affecting the entire universe. After that, I was damaged and sent away in the middle of the chaos. As for what happened, why it happened, and so on, I don't know.'

Rean and Roan didn't need to think much to understand that Severing Day was most likely the reason for the universe's separation. After all, their mission in this half of the universe was to unify both parts of the universe together once more.

"Do you know if there are any Vruve survivors or where Soul Gem had gone?"

'I do not know about any Vruve survivors. However, you two should know more about Soul Gem than I do. After all, you met someone related to him before. Yet, I might know who this person who helped you is. Send me a Spiritual Sense message with your memory of his appearance.'

Roan narrowed his eyes. After all, they didn't really meet anyone. However, he didn't expect Rean to do that in his place.

'There you go.'

Roan looked at Rean, puzzled. Immediately, he talked with Rean through their Soul Connection.

'We don't know anyone like that. Why did you send someone's picture? Also, who did you show?'

Rean then explained.

'If we hesitated for too long, the Artifact Spirit might get suspicious that we are lying. Don't worry, it's no one important.'

Although Rean was right about not delaying the answer, Roan still felt that something wasn't right.

Finally, the Artifact Spirit answered.

'Sorry, I don't know anyone called Harry Potter.'

Roan almost vomited blood.

'You sent him a film character?!'

Rean shrugged his shoulders.

'Of course! That's a very easy face to remember and the first one that came to my mind. Even I, who didn't care about anything in my previous life, at least knew what the actor looked like.'

Roan didn't know what to say. First of all, why would you select that guy?

Roan then calmed down. It didn't matter since the guy was from the other side of the universe. The Artifact Spirit obviously wouldn't know about him.

'I really don't know who Harry Potter is, but I do know this face. Perhaps he changed his name.'

Rean and Roan were taken aback. You know someone like that? Even the mark on his forehead?

'But, I wonder what happened to his forehead. There is a strange mark there. Maybe it was an effect of the Severing Day.'

Oh... so he didn't have the mark. No, wait, it doesn't change the fact that someone who looked like Harry Potter was part of the Vruve Organization. Oh, well, the actor's name wasn't really Harry Potter, though.

"Ahem... You know him? That's great... I guess? Errr... Do you know how we can meet Harry Po- cough, cough... I mean, this guy? Oh, knowing his name would be good too."

The Artifact Spirit then replied.

'His name was Harry Troter.'

Rean and Roan's mouths twitched.

'Harry Troter, your ass!'

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Chapter 323: Not Enough Time

The Artifact Spirit then continued. Obviously, he didn't notice the twins' weird expressions.

'I don't know where you can find him. To be honest, he wasn't anyone important. I thought he had died back in the Severing Day due to how weak he was.'

The twins nodded. It was already a miracle that there was someone who really looked like that to start with.

"How do you know him, then? Didn't you lose most of your memories?"

'Hum... That's true. How come I can remember him? Maybe he was just lucky to be within my memory fragments. Nonetheless, I can't tell you where he is or how to find him.'

Roan then pondered about other questions.

"What about other information regarding Vruve? How about places where we can find them if they still exist? Also, any other information about Soul Gem will help too. What did he specialize in? Did he have enemies? Family? Anything is valid."

The Artifact Spirit thought about the questions before answering.

'If Vruve still exists in the same place, it would be in the Higher Realms. However, you will need to investigate by yourself if you ever arrive there. As for Soul Gem, I know almost nothing about him, nor do I know what he was working on together with the organization. All I can tell is that he was quite important, so much of his information was covered up.'

The Artifact Spirit continue to ponder and check the memories that still existed until finally, something else came up.

'Oh! I don't know if this is of any help, but I think I heard the others who worked with Soul Gem talking about something called the Unification Plan. However, I don't know what it is about.'

Rean and Roan fell into deep thought.

'Unification Plan? Is it about the plan of unifying the two halves of the Universe?'

Roan nodded.

'This is a very important piece of information. Suppose this Unification Plan is really related to our own Universe Unifying mission. In that case, that means the Vruve organization knew that the Universe would be split in two before it happened.'

Rean agreed with Roan.

'Well, we can't guarantee that this is the same thing, but the chances are high. It could also confirm that the Soul Gem System was entirely built for that purpose.'

Roan then asked.

'I wonder what the other side of our universe has to do with it. I've been wondering, were they the perpetrators?'

'Are you talking about your Universal Transition organization where you worked as Death?'

Roan nodded.

'The one and the same. However, we were just a branch of a higher power that controls the universe.'

'What kind of power?'

'Well, putting it in Earthlings' words, they would be what you call gods.'

Rean couldn't help but ask.

'There is one thing I don't understand, though. Our previous half of the Universe doesn't have Spiritual Energy, right? Since that's the case, what kind of energy did you use as Death? After all, you could open portals, travel between places, etc.'

Suddenly, Roan showed a puzzled expression as he replied.

'Now that you talked about it, I do wonder what kind of power I used. It's definitely not Spiritual Energy, that's for sure. If I were to guess, it would be something similar to souls, maybe even the same thing exactly. After all, I know that I was a Death Spiritual Soul.'

'Can't you use Soul Power in this side of the universe?'

Roan shook his head.

'I tried it as soon as our souls entered our Mother's womb. Just as I said, I couldn't connect with the other side at all. It was that connection that allowed me to do everything. I will think more about it later.'

Rean nodded, and they returned their attention back to the Artifact Spirit.

However, before they could say anything else, the Artifact Spirit intervened.

'Seems like our time is up. You should all leave.'

It was then that Rean and Roan noticed a faint white light appearing under their feet. However, they weren't the only ones. All the citizens who had doubts or didn't believe in the so-called ancestors also saw the same thing. Before Rean and Roan could ask what was happening, Sister Orb's voice rang in their mind. No, to be more specific, it was the Soul Gem System.

[Forced Teleportation Detected.]

"What?!"

[Forced Teleportation Activated.]

Rean, Roan, and everyone else then suddenly disappeared from Laan City. The twins only saw their surroundings blur and go dark for a second. When the light returned, and the blurriness disappeared, they were already outside Laan City.

When they looked around, Tiria, Juvian, and everyone else appeared around them as well. Everyone looked confused, not knowing what was happening. Last but not least, the non-believers of the city also appeared outside together with the rest. That also included Fuka and Nefere, the two elders that were at least in the Saint Realm.

"What happened? Didn't we have two days to gather everyone together? Also, weren't we supposed to use the exit teleport formation to go out? How come we all got out already?"

"That's not all. Look around. All of those who were still in doubt whether they would leave Laan City or not were also brought outside."

Suddenly, everyone felt the ground tremble as they looked at the mountain ahead of them. Rean and the others immediately noticed a difference. Before, the pillar of light shooting into the skies was white. Now it had become silver.

It was at that moment that the Silver Light intensified many times. Everyone couldn't help but close their eyes or look away. Not even the Nascent Soul Realm elders could resist the strength of the Silver Light.

Still, it only lasted for a few seconds. Not long after, it completely disappeared. However, it wasn't just the Silver Light that disappeared. The Four Peaks Mountain was gone as well. Tiria, Juvian, and all the Nascent Soul Realm elders immediately used their Spiritual Senses to check it. However, all they could see was a bottomless hole.

"Laan City... is gone!"

Death... and me

Chapter 324: Decisions

Not long after, Nascent Soul Realm experts began to fly into the hole where the mountain was located. Juvian then looked at Tiria before saying.

"Take a look at the twins. I'll go there as well to see how things are inside."

Tiria nodded as Juvian disappeared off into the distance with other experts of the other sects. As one could imagine, Laan City's experts also went there to check while the low-level ones waited behind. Since they would need to wait, Tiria took the chance to ask the twins about the situation through Spiritual Sense.

'Was this related to the two of you?'

Rean and Roan immediately shook their heads. They had opted for acquiring information. However, the disappearance of the city had nothing to do with them. First of all, they still had a lot of questions to ask the Artifact Spirit.

'We have no idea either. We opted to ask for a few pieces of information instead of getting rewards. We even met an Artifact Spirit.'

Tiria was puzzled.

'Artifact Spirit? What's that?'

The twins thought that someone of Tiria's status would know, but it seemed like even she had never heard of it. Without any other choice, the twins told her the same thing Wario told them.

'So the city was, in fact, a piece of equipment? No wonder we couldn't inflict any damage to the walls after we entered it. Just what level does it have to be to reach this state? Even something like an Artifact Spirit was born in it.'

Rean and Roan nodded.

'We were also shocked by that. We didn't know that a piece of equipment could acquire sentience.'

Tiria narrowed her eyes.

'Anyway, what was it that you wanted to know?'

Rean shrugged his shoulders.

'Something that we can't get in this place. Information about Light and Dark element cultivation techniques and skills.'

Tiria was taken aback. Indeed, their sect didn't have any cultivation technique or skill for Light or Dark Element cultivators. In fact, probably even the Imperial Family wouldn't have such a thing due to how rare such an elemental affinity was.

'But why would Wario ask to bring you away to talk about that? Also, why would you need Rank Four Spirit Stones?'

Rean and Roan shook their heads. Of course, those were blatant lies. However, they couldn't talk about things involving the Soul Gem System either.

'Perhaps Light and Dark Element techniques have some secrets? As for the Rank Four Spirit Stones, we wanted to use them to buy the techniques if they didn't want to give it to us.'

Tiria's instinct told her that Rean and Roan were definitely hiding something from her. However, it was a fact that everyone had the chance to select any reward they wanted. Before everyone was teleported outside, they were all able to choose the things they wanted in the end. It might not look like that, but Rean and Roan's conversation took quite some time, which was enough for the others.

Tiria then looked at a Jade Slip in her hands. It had a cultivation technique of the water element extremely compatible to her constitution. She was even planning to pass it to Mia since Mia also had a Water Element Affinity. On top of that, this cultivation technique was targeted towards women.

Everyone waited around an hour before those experts returned from the hole. Juvian headed straight for Tiria to tell her what they found.

"Empty. There is absolutely nothing there anymore. Just a super deep hole that goes over a thousand kilometers down. We found the place where the city was located before, but it turned into an enormous square-shaped room, nothing else."

Tiria and the twins nodded.

"What do we do now?"

Juvian and Tiria then looked at the experts of Laan City who were also banished. At the moment, they were trying to calm down everyone while deciding what they should do from now on.

"Everyone wanted those experts to enter their sects. The trade was also meant to help them, so they would probably come to talk to us soon. It would take some time for Mia and others to arrive, not to mention that Ancestor Zuan is following Droman at the moment."

They all nodded. Laan City had too many experts. Even though just around 20% were sent out, they had more high-level experts than a single sect alone. For example, Fuka and Nefere were both experts at the Saint Realm. If they decided to open a sect, they would instantly be on par with the power of Jialin. Let alone Soul Transformation and Nascent Soul Realm cultivators who were more numerous.

Eventually, Fuka, Nefere, Sira, and a few other members of Laan City came forward to talk with the Nascent Soul Realm experts of Jialin.

"Well, this turned out a bit different than we expected. Even those who didn't know if they should come out or not were teleported outside with us. It took some time to calm them down."

Xansio of the Royal Family then asked.

"Does Senior Nefere know where Laan City went to?"

Nefere shook his head.

"We didn't even know that the city could disappear like this. Perhaps that's how the city was moved in the past. No, it was most likely the case. Anyway, we have no way to know where it has gone now. It might be in this world, or it might not be. In any case, at least half of us already wanted to leave anyway."

Tiria asked something else.

"Aren't you afraid that it was your ancestors that took the city away, leaving you behind? That would have proved Wario and the other elders' beliefs."

Fuka and the others immediately shook their heads.

"We doubt it. Why would they have waited until this last moment to do so? Just to see who believed and who didn't? That doesn't make sense since many generations came and went. Just two or three thousand years ago, there wasn't a single non-believer. Even if there was, it would be only a few, not enough to make up for even 1% of the population. Wouldn't that time be much better to bring the city away?"

Furen shook his head.

"They might not have had the chance to do that in the past, simple as that."

Sira shrugged his shoulders in response.

"Anyway, what difference would it make? We are out, just like most of us wanted. Laan City is no more either. There is no point in pondering about it anymore. We need to focus on what to do from now on."

Fuka nodded as he looked at the Nascent Soul Realm experts of Jialin.

"Well, then. Who wants to start? We would like to hear an explanation of how things work around here. From what I can see, you are all from different powers, so it will be good to hear each sides' opinion."

Galios then asked what most of them wanted to know.

"Before that, what do you intend to do? To be honest, with the number of experts that senior Fuka and Nefere have, it wouldn't be hard for you to establish your own sect. I won't lie here since you would find about it sooner or later. You alone would be stronger than any of our sects. Only if we allied would we be able to pose any threat to experts of your level."

Fuka and Nefere nodded.

"Indeed. We also thought about creating our own place to stay, but I'm happy that you were sincere about you guys being weaker. You probably noticed after you saw our conversation in Laan City, but Laan Citizens are not found of killing. We prefer to have things as peaceful as possible. Perhaps that's because we have lived in that city during our entire lives, so we had to cherish the little company we had."

"That being said, we really have no intention of causing any trouble to you or any other power around. That's why we want an explanation about the world we are in at the moment."

Galios nodded, satisfied. It would be very troublesome if they suddenly decided to take someone's territory forcefully.

And just like that, the Nascent Soul Realm experts of the sect began to explain about Jialin, the surrounding countries, the empire, and so on. Because they were all from different sects, no one tried to lie since the other five could immediately reveal the truth.

A few hours later, both sides finally finished the questions and answers they had for each other.

"I see, now our Laan City has a picture of where we stand."

Fuka looked at the others, and they nodded.

"We need some time to decide."

Death... and me

Chapter 325: Roan Approves

They didn't try to leave the Demon Beasts' forest. Instead, the Laan City experts built a few simple structures just for their ordinary people to stay. Even though the majority was at least at Foundation Establishment, there were also a few under this level. This was still the Core of Jiran Forest where Stage Four Demon Beasts lived, after all.

As the twins saw the Laan people preparing to start discussing their next steps, they couldn't help but think about what they learned this time around.

'Sister Orb, Soul Gem was not a system, but a cultivator, right?'

[You know I can't talk about it.]

Rean shook his head.

'There is no point in hiding this fact since we already found it. You could just confirm it with a simple yes or no.'

[Still can't. It's the Soul Gem System's rules. You will need to increase the Authority Level if you want to know more about it.]

Roan noticed something strange, though.

'Now that I think about it, the Soul Gem System didn't give any mission, nor did it say anything during the time we were in Laan City. I thought that such close involvement with what happened in the past would make the System react somehow.'

Rean agreed with Roan.

'That makes sense. However, it might also be because the System doesn't allow us to learn more about the past that it also didn't bring any quest up.'

[There isn't much of a point in thinking about it. After all, the System won't answer. Besides, you are forgetting an important part in all of this.]

Roan nodded.

'I know what you're talking about. Indeed, there is no proof that what the Artifact Spirit told us is the truth. He could be tricking us from the very start. However, nothing can prove if the Soul Gem System is telling the truth or not either.'

[I won't deny that. I can't give you any proof to confirm the integrity of what you learned from the Soul Gem System. Still, if my word means anything to you, I can guarantee that the System is not lying.]

Rean and Roan shook their heads.

'So the system is most likely lying as well.'

"Yep. No doubt about it.'

Sister Orb would cry if she had eyes now.

[Are my words that unreliable?]

'Uh-huh!'

[Fuck you!]

Rean and Roan ignored Sister Orb's sadness and continued. And just like that, a few more hours passed. All of a sudden, another Spiritual Sense fell over everyone as they looked in a particular direction. Whoever it was, he or she wasn't trying to hide their presence. Even the low-level cultivators noticed it.

Tiria and Juvian looked at the newcomer and sighed in relief.

"We pay respects to Ancestor Zuan."

Although Zuan was far away, taking care of Droman, he was still inside the Dalamu Territory. Naturally, he was the first of the Jialin powerhouses to reach this place. Talking about Droman, the guy was also there with Zuan.

"Rean, what did you get yourself into this time?"

Rean shrugged his shoulders.

"Master. It's not like we asked for all of this to happen, you know? We told Elder Hulian that we would be going out to do some missions to train and check that possible inheritance we found. But, well, things obviously went out of control, as you can see."

Zuan ignored the two. He then asked Tiria and Juvian about everything. He had received Mia's message to come to this place as soon as possible, but he knew little about the situation.

Tiria and Juvian then compiled everything they knew and passed the information through Spiritual Sense to Zuan and Droman.

'What? Lost City? Artifact Spirit? How come everything these twins get involved with turn out into such a big mess?'

Rean helplessly laughed as he told Roan through their Soul Connection.

'Perhaps we have the protagonists' power.'

\*Pah!\*

'Protagonists' power, your head!'

Rean rubbed the back of his head, feeling like he had been wronged.

Zuan then looked in the direction of the Laan City experts as he narrowed his eyes. As a Saint Realm expert himself, he obviously noticed Fuka and Nefere, but that wasn't all. There were also 12 Soul Transformation Realm experts and more than 40 Nascent Soul Realm experts among them. Perhaps only the Royal Family would have the power to contend against the Laan City experts on its own.

The Laan experts also noticed Zuan's arrival, but they didn't come out and continued their discussion with everyone.

"Do you think I should go there and talk to them?"

Tiria and Juvian shook their heads.

"Because all six powers of Jialin are here at the moment, we had to tell the truth. Otherwise, the other one would reveal the fact that we were lying. That being said, we already told them everything that should be said. Even if Ancestor heads there right now, it won't make much of a difference. Instead, they might find it rude that you interrupted their meeting."

Zuan nodded as he accepted Tiria and Juvian's opinion. Zuan then looked at the Umbral Sect members and snorted. Slowly, he began to make his way to where they were staying.

Obviously, the Umbral Sect members noticed it and began to feel nervous. In front of a Saint Realm expert, they were nothing more than ants. Let alone the fact that they were inside the Dalamu Sect's territory.

"So... I heard that some people sent a few idiots to kill our sect members. Not only that, but it was a mayor of one of the cities in our territory who opened his mouth. I wonder what I should do with people who come to kill my sect members. What do you think?"

Furen immediately stepped forward and bowed.

"Elder Zuan knows very well that our sect is on edge because of Rean's healing ability. Umbral Energy is just too important for us. So I won't deny that we really did send a small group to try and get rid of them. However, not only did they fail to do so, more than half of the group died in your twins' hands. I hope Elder Zuan can take it as our punishment and not make things more difficult for us."

Zuan laughed after hearing that.

"Sure! I won't make things difficult for any of you. I'll simply kill everyone, and then there will be nothing difficult to deal with anymore."

Zuan raised his hands as Fire Element in the surroundings began to gather around it. Furen and everyone else immediately felt the pressure. Even Nascent Soul Realm experts were nothing more than ants in front of Zuan's power. Before they could even react, their surroundings ignited, preventing any of them from escaping.

Roan looked at that but didn't bother to say anything. Even Rean, who wasn't that keen on killing as Roan, refrained from opening his mouth. Those guys came to kill them. It wasn't as if they fought because of some other reason, like treasures.

Furen and the other Nascent Soul Realm experts immediately enveloped everyone with their Spiritual Energies as they tried to resist the flames. Zuan snorted once again and increased the power of flames once again. He wanted to slowly cook these guys so that the Umbral Sect would think twice before sending someone to deal with the twins once again.

However, someone from the Royal Family Experts stepped forward.

"Senior Zuan, could you please let them go just this once?"

Zuan looked at who talked to him and saw that it was Xansio.

"Hehehe! And why should I do that?"

Xansio then looked at the experts of Laan City before saying.

"It would look too brash if we start killing each other here, no? We still don't know what the Laan City experts will do. It would be better to not give them a reason to doubt our words after they decided what to do."

Zuan narrowed his eyes as he looked at the Laan City members. They didn't look like they were paying attention to this place, but Zuan could tell that at least the Saint Realm experts had an eye on him.

"Hmph!"

Suddenly, the Fire Element around everyone from the Umbral Sect disappeared. However, just as they were about to sigh in relief, several fire snakes shot from the ground, piercing through the dantians of all the cultivators below the Nascent Soul Realm. In less than an instant, they all became as weak as ordinary humans.

"Consider yourself lucky. This Zuan left you alive and didn't cripple your Nascent Soul Realm experts."

Furen bitterly smiled as he looked at Lian and the rest. They had no right to complain since they did really come here to kill the twins.

Roan, who watched all of that, approved of Zuan's actions.

'That's how things should be done.'

Death... and me

Chapter 326: The Reason

Time continued to pass, and more and more cultivators of the six powers soon arrived. The first one was the ancestor of the Lagan Sect, Burin Falan, who also had a bloodline connection with Luina. It's just that they were separated for several generations due to Burin's age.

Zuan noticed when the guy appeared and immediately went to greet him.

"Brother Burin, it has been a long time."

Burin smiled as he replied.

"Indeed. The last time was at the Brittle Dragon Valley over 30 years ago, no?"

Zuan nodded.

"Indeed. Anyway, we are all waiting on what those guys will decide. Join us down there."

Burin nodded as he came down. He also asked his sect members through Spiritual Sense message about the whole situation. After confirming everything, he began to wait as well.

Not long after, the other sects' ancestors began to arrive—Umbral Sect, Rohe Sect, Raskil Sect, and finally, the Royal Family's expert. The Umbral Sect ancestor, a cultivator named Darnil Belue, noticed what had happened to his sect members before asking Furen what happened. Furen obviously told everything with a Spiritual Sense message.

"Zuan, are you not ashamed of raising your hands against a few kids?"

Zuan, not caring about Darnil's expression at all, snorted as he said.

"Do you really have the right to say that? A group with several Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators came to assassinate two kids at the Initial Stage of the Core Formation Realm. Am I really the one shameless here? Ridiculous!"

As always, the Umbral and Dalamu Sects didn't get along. The same went for their ancestors too.

"You can stop already. That's not the reason why we're here. Once this situation with the Laan City members is resolved, you two can do as you wish."

Obviously, the other powers wanted nothing more than have those two kill themselves. Darnil and Zuan knew that very well, so they simply stopped it there.

Finally, around a day later, the meeting between the Laan City experts was over.

Fuka and Ferene, the two Saint Realm experts of Laan, then came forward to announce their decision.

"Thank you for waiting, everyone. After considering all the information you gave us together with our own situation, we decided that we will be moving out of your Jialin Country. In the end, we don't want to be put under someone's power, but instead, make our own. Besides, we have two Saint Realm experts, which would make the command chain of your own sects or Royal Family afraid of having us rebelling one day to take over."

Zuan immediately intervened.

"Wait! In that case, come to our Dalamu Sect. I don't mind sharing the power of our sect with two other Saint Realm experts at all."

Everyone looked at Zuan, shocked! Who would simply give away the power they have fought so long to build? However, they immediately understood. Suppose Dalamu Sect became a power with three Saint Realm experts. Wouldn't they be more powerful than the Royal Family itself? As far as those ancestors knew, the Royal Family only had two Saint Realm Experts, after all.

Still, they didn't think it would be good for the Dalamu Sect at all since they might even cease to exist and instead become a new Laan Sect. Their leadership would be replaced, and they even might have their experts killed or forced to give up the sect's power to join the other side. That was something that none of the other sect ancestors would bear to see within their own sects.

The initial plan of the ancestors of each power was to divide the Laan experts and redistribute them within their own sects or Royal Family. That way, they could control them while increasing their own powers. These Laan Experts might refuse to fight their own Laan members who joined other forces in the future. Still, just their presence alone, especially the Saint Realm ones, would be a massive boost against outside intervention. So they felt quite sad when these experts decided to leave Jialin for good instead.

Obviously, Fuka and Serene didn't expect Zuan to offer that either. They obviously thought about what all those sects wanted, to divide their forces. However, they would instead move into a more barren region that was still free to take to keep their people together.

However, there was a problem with that. Neither of the other sects could allow Dalamu Sect to take all these experts for themselves, even if it meant losing their sect. After all, their strength would be much higher than any of the others. The balance would be disrupted.

"Zuan, you can't do that. Do you think the rest of us would let that simply happen?"

Zuan didn't seem to care at all as he replied.

"Why would you care? You guys obviously want to separate their forces, but you forget that they have lived for a very, very long time together in the same place. I knew from the very start that they would instead decide to leave Jialin behind."

Zuan then turned in everyone's direction before saying.

"However, that would be a waste! Don't forget that although we live at the empire's borders, we are still surrounded by other countries that would love to invade and take our places. If our friend of Laan City decided to stay, the country as a whole would get stronger. Instead of thinking only about yourselves, why don't you think about the big picture?"

Darnil snorted in response.

"Do you think we're all kids? Who would believe this patriotic bullshit you're spouting out? It's obvious that you just want your Dalamu Sect to replace the Royal Family as the strongest power."

The Royal Family Saint Realm expert, Kocci Jialin, narrowed his eyes after hearing that. However, it wasn't because of what Darnil said, but because it was evident that Darnil was trying to stir discord between the Royal Family and Dalamu Sect. The only problem was that he was right. They couldn't just let Dalamu become more powerful than them. Counting himself, the Royal Family had two Saint Experts. They would be one below if Dalamu succeeded.

However, Zuan seemed to have expected that answer already.

All of a sudden, Roan's expression changed a bit.

'Oh, I see... This Zuan guy, he's quite smart.'

Rean couldn't help but ask.

'What are you talking about?'

Roan faintly smiled.

'Just wait and see. Finding opponents to fight will be quite easy for the next few years..'

Zuan then looked at everyone.

"Oh, so that's the problem? Then let me change the idea into something else. The issue is that there would be no space for Laan City members in Jialin if they decided to create a power their own, right?"

The Ancestors, Fuka, Serene, and the rest all nodded. None of the Jialin Country powers would be willing to give some of their own territories away. They fought very hard in the past to have what they do today.

Zuan shrugged his shoulders before saying.

"Then that's simple. The fastest way would be if they all joined a single sect, but you obviously don't want it. In that case, we just need to find a place for the Laan experts to create their home. That being said, let's increase our Jialin Country's territory. What about... we expand a little into the Cassen Country?"

\*Boom!\*

Everyone felt like they were struck by lightning! Zuan wants to conquer part of their neighboring country! Well, everyone except for one teenager. How many war reasons has Roan seen in his previous life? He just so happened to have seen a few similar plots in the past.

Death... and me

## Chapter 327: Settling Things

Fuka and Nefere immediately replied.

"Wait a second! Are you planning to start a war with our help? Not gonna happen!"

Zuan laughed out loud as he said.

"It seems like our friends from Laan City don't fully understand how the world works yet. It doesn't matter where you go. You won't be able to take territory without a fight. It's always like this, and it'll always be. If you don't believe me, I'm more than willing to wait for you guys to go look for something by yourselves. Once you find out that I'm not lying, you can come back, and we can talk again."

Kocei Jialin pondered about the advantages and disadvantages of getting to expand Jialn's territory. On paper, the Jialin Royal Family was still the ruler of the country. The country's entire territory was shared between the five sects, but the Royal Family receives taxes from all of them. For the Royal Family, it would be a great deal.

However, that also meant that a new power called Laan would take that place. They had two Saint Realm experts, not to mention several more Soul Transformation Realm cultivators than them. They would definitely be on par with the Royal Family on their own.

Then again, having a bigger territory and so many new experts would also increase the country's power as a whole, making it more stable. It's just as Zuan mentioned in the past, all countries are always waiting for a chance to increase their territories. Jialin was obviously no exception.

Zuan then continued.

"Don't worry, if you think that we will have you fight in the frontlines while we watch, that won't happen. The expansion of the country's power is something that all sects and the royal family would love to see happening."

Zuan then looked at the others.

"Am I wrong?"

No one, even the Umbral Sect, denied Zuan's words. As much as a new power in Jialin would create problems, the truth was that increasing the country's size was an overall benefit for all of them.

Fuka and Nefere fell into contemplation. Finally, they looked at Zuan before asking.

"We are not saying that we believe all of your words. We will indeed go out to investigate other places to guarantee that you are not fooling us. However, let's consider that what you said is actually true. What would be the risks for us if we accepted this idea?"

Zuan then looked at Kocei Jialin.

"Well, the best person to talk about it would be none other than our Royal Family experts. Kocei, you go ahead and say what you think."

Kocei Jialin bitterly smiled, but it was indeed the country's rulers who are the ones who should have a better picture. Kocei then began to ponder about the chances, changes, the territory they would take, the possible retaliation, etc.

"I would say that the chances are quite good. Our Jialin Country has more experts to start with. It's just that if we decided to attack, the price might have been too high. Not to mention that while we're out fighting, other countries could be behind our backs and attack while our experts are out."

"However, with the addition of two new Saint Realm experts and so many Soul Transformation and Nascent Soul cultivators, we would be able to guard our backs while advancing."

"Of course, I won't say something as naive like there will be no losses and such. Any new conquest would have its own burden. However, this is not all bad. All sects and Laan City members' real talents would be screened out through real life and death situations. The same could be said for our Royal

Family. But if we are talking about the high-level cultivators like us, Saint Realm ones, chances are that none of us would really die during it."

Fuka and Nefere had to agree that the proposal seemed feasible. They just had to take care so that they wouldn't be the only ones fighting. However, it wouldn't be too hard since they would be overseeing it. Besides, Kocei said something that greatly affected them. The fact that their Laan Cultivators were lacking in combat experience way too much. The only reason they could advance this far in cultivation was due to the extremely high-concentration of Spiritual Energy in Laan City.

However, such a thing was not available anymore. Laan City disappeared, and no one knew where it was sent to. Even if they knew, they were now considered banished citizens. They simply couldn't go back anymore. Proper cultivation and a steady income of Spirit Stones would be necessary from now on. But above all, battles would be the main driving force to bring out their members' real potential. In this case, even they, the Saint Realm Experts, were severely lacking compared to Zuan and the others.

Fuka and Nefere then asked something else that was bothering them.

"However, would the Empire allow its countries to fight each other? Wouldn't Cassen go and complain to the Imperial Family that we are trying to steal their territories?"

Zuan and the others laughed after hearing that.

"It seems like you guys had really lived in peace for way too long. Don't worry, the Imperial Family won't lift a single finger. In fact, they welcome these disputes. It's within these environments that the real experts of the Empire will rise. Overall, they consider it as getting rid of the trash that waste resources to train the experts that will defend the Empire in the future."

Although it seemed harsh, that was the formula for a long-lasting Empire. It was not uncommon either to see countries of different Empires fighting themselves. As long as it wasn't anything too big, the Imperial Families wouldn't intervene.

Fuka and Nefere nodded after hearing everything.

"Give us some more time. First, I'll have Fuka lead a group to investigate whether what Zuan said was true or not. If there is no free place for us to take, then we can discuss it once more. Besides, we need to talk with the rest of the Laan citizens about it."

Zuan then replied.

"Well, it's not like you won't find anything at all. However, the free ones are all barren lands with no resources whatsoever. Only small powers with at most a Core Formation or Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator would have taken root there. Suppose the low concentration of Spiritual Energy and severe lack of resources don't matter to you. In that case, you can simply pretend that I didn't say anything."

Zuan was very confident. Considering the high-level cultivation techniques that these Laan City members have and their above-average talents, they would definitely not choose to live in those places.

Fuka and Nefere nodded before returning to their group and beginning to discuss the Jialin Country's project.

As the Laan experts talked, Kocei and the other Saint Realm experts of Jialin also gathered to discuss this.

"I won't say that Zuan's idea doesn't have its merits. However, would it be okay to have one more power taking root in Jialin?"

Zuan shook his head.

"They wouldn't exactly take root in Jialin, but in the Cassen Territory. That's not a land that we possess at the moment, so it's not like we would be losing anything. Besides, helping them acquire it would also put us on friendly terms with those guys. After all, it would be the same as acquiring a nice home for someone without it."

Kocei nodded.

"They have the techniques and talents, but they lack the resources to make full use of it. Just like Zuan said, we all know that the only territories available are barren lands that are not worth anything to experts of our level. Let them investigate as much as they want. They will come to the conclusion that our offer is much better."

It was a rare moment that all sects and the Royal Family reached an agreement so quickly. It was just that advantageous.

Koeci then turned around and prepared to leave.

"Although I agree with the ideas, I have to report it back to the rest of the Royal Family. Xansio, you will stay here and act as our representative. Help the Laan citizens as much as they want while I'm out."

Xansio immediately nodded.

"Yes, Ancestor."

Zuan, Burin, Darnil, and the other Saint Realm experts also decided to do the same.

"Droman will go back with me. Tiria and Juvian will stay here to do the same thing."

Tiria and Juvian nodded.

"As for the twins, there is nothing for them to do here anymore, so you will come too."

Rean and Roan nodded, not minding it too much. Of course, they would first resolve a few things with Latalia and Rovian.

Death... and me

Chapter 328: Leading

Rean and Roan then went to see Latalia soon after.

"Senior Latalia, I believe you know what to do, right?"

Latalia bitterly smiled as she nodded. These Umbral Sect members that came after them were here because of her nephew. It wasn't just a problem with Rean and Roan. Having someone acting as an informant to the Umbral Sect inside the Dalamu Sect territory would not be allowed. Even if she doesn't do anything, the Dalamu Sect will.

Of course, Dalamu Sect members weren't idiots. There are definitely many others who act as spies for all the other sects and Royal Family. Still, it was one thing to know that they exist and knowing who they are.

"Don't worry, I'm dealing with it. In any case, thank you."

Rean smiled.

"There is no reason to thank us, you helped everyone get what they needed, after all."

Latalia shook her head.

"That's not it. I'm thanking you for stopping the entire Amakal Family from taking the blame because of my idiotic nephew. If it was in any other circumstance, the entire family would be affected. However, you are only focusing on Juan alone. That's already an immense favor."

Roan didn't seem to care, but Rean felt a little embarrassed that his intention was seen through. Indeed, he had asked Tiria and Juvian to not do anything to the Amankal family. After all, there was no way Roan would raise such a request.

"Ahem... that was nothing. By the way, you also got your own reward during this trip. What did you ask the Laan City elders?"

Latalia smiled as she winked at the twins.

"That's a secret."

Rean laughed out loud.

"Hahaha! Well, I guess that's to be expected."

Rean then extended his hand to Latalia.

"Senior Latalia, until next time."

Latalia answered his handshake.

"I hope it won't be too long. Oh, right! Don't worry about the Serene Blue Jade. I'll send it to you once I get everything settled back in Tamadol City."

Rean smiled as Roan merely nodded.

After Latalia left, only Roan remained.

"Senior Roan, it looks like you are quite satisfied with what you got."

Roan laughed as he nodded.

"Indeed, I am. I got a cultivation technique for my granddaughter. Since I'm her grandfather, I know all her aptitudes from top to bottom, so Laan City's elders got one very suitable for her. I was just waiting for the sects to finish their businesses so that I could leave as well."

Rean and Roan nodded. They knew already that Roan did everything for his granddaughter. His age was quite advanced, and he had no hopes of advancing anymore.

"Well, I wish her good luck."

Rovan then scratched the back of his head before asking.

"Would it be too much to ask you two to give her some help when she joins the sect? I intend to have her take the Sect Exam next year."

Roan didn't say anything since he didn't want to waste time. As for Rean, that was up to him.

Rean then narrowed his eyes before saying.

"Senior Rovan, the truth is that I can't help her much since it goes against the sect rules. If she wants to join the sect, she must take the exam and pass it through her own effort. But if it is something simple like helping her with her equipment or finding a suitable mission, then I don't mind giving her a hand."

Rovan nodded, satisfied.

"That will be more than enough. With the cultivation technique I got for her, she will definitely pass the exam next year."

Rean accepted that since he didn't mind helping a little. Rovan then told him how she looked like and her name. He also said that he would be there when the sect exam started next year. Only after that did he finally depart.

Following that, the twins returned to Zuan and Droman's side.

"Did you finish everything?"

The twins nodded.

"Very well, let's go back."

Zuan quickly enveloped the twins and Droman with his Spiritual Energy before bringing them away.

On the way back to the sect, Zuan looked at Roan before asking.

"I kept my Spiritual Sense spread the entire time I stayed there. When I revealed that I wanted to conquer part of Cassen, you were the only one who didn't seem surprised by that, though. Did you expect that?"

Roan looked at Zuan and simply nodded.

"That was the only plausible choice when you consider the situation between countries and each one's powers. None of the sects would give up part of their territory, let alone the Royal Family. Cassen was the only possibility if you wanted to keep the Laan City members here."

Neither Rean nor Droman seemed to be surprised by that, though.

However, Zuan didn't know Roan well, so he couldn't help but sigh in praise. Of course, he knew that Roan might be lying to catch his attention, but his instinct told him that Roan wasn't lying.

"You two, if everything goes as planned, we will begin a battle against the Cassen Country since it is the easiest one to take. However, battles at the Nascent Soul Realm and above are quite rare. Only at the very end are we going to step in. That being said, most of the time will be a war fought by those at the lower level. You don't need to worry about the Umbral Sect using this opportunity to get rid of you two, so you should take this chance to hone your skills."

Rean and Roan nodded. They had participated in a war before for a small period of time, so they knew how it worked. Just like Zuan said, high-level cultivators were not present there.

"We understand, Ancestor."

Zuan nodded with a satisfied expression.

Rean then looked at Roan before saying through their Soul Connection.

'Well, that's a good opportunity for Calina and Malaka. We can have those two participating in increasing their level, especially Calina, who needs it more.'

Roan agreed with him.

'Yes. There is one special thing that I will need Calina to get used to. I was thinking about starting to train her in that in a year or two. But since this war is coming earlier, I can move my plans ahead.'

Rean couldn't help but ask.

'What is it that you need her to do?'

Roan replied straightforwardly.

'Commanding.'

Death... and me

Chapter 329: New Versions

Rean nodded as he understood what Roan meant.

'Calina said that the princes and princesses that can be considered real candidates to the throne need to be both talented in cultivation and intelligence. That's so that the next emperor or empress will have the ability to run an empire. What you are doing is related to that, right?'

Roan nodded.

'Yes. However, that's not the only reason why I'm doing that. Anyway, it's not certain yet, so I'm just preparing the terrain.'

Rean didn't mind it. Following that, he thought about a problem.

'Wait, to command, one needs to gain the rights to do so. Even if this war comes around, how will you make Calina one of the commanding characters?'

Roan shook his head as he replied.

'I don't need to. I just need to be a commander myself. I will then have her watch and teach her while I'm doing the orders.'

'Oh... Then that's fine.'

War is not something that you start in a single day. Besides, they weren't sure if the Laan experts will accept it or not. Because of that, the twins returned to the sect with Zuan and Droman. They didn't know how long it would take, so Rean and Roan went out to do their own things.

Rean left with Droman, Zuan, and Kentucky to check the Communication System work. Router Formation Version 1.2 worked pretty much fine after a few weeks of testing, and they only needed to make a few adjustments. Droman also helped a few lower-level Formation Masters learn how to build the Router Formation. Thanks to that, the Router Formation began to spread between the cities that had the older version or none to start with.

As for the cabling work, several months had already gone by. With the sect mobilizing its Blacksmiths, Earth Element experts, and Lightning experts, more than half of their territory was already connected like a web. Still, they were just waiting for the addition of the Router Formations themselves. As much as Droman taught others how to build it, this formation wasn't something that could be made in just a few hours.

After all, every city had so many buildings that they wanted to connect. Bigger cities obviously needed more complex Router Formations than smaller ones.

Surprisingly though, Rean and Droman were not inside any city at the moment. Instead, they had stopped in a hub that connected the main cables of several cities at once.

"So that's our problem at the moment. We prevented the cities themselves from intervening with each other. We just need to work on a Router Formation that can now manage all cities together."

Droman nodded as he looked at several cables coming from several directions. Although there weren't as many cables as big cities, each one of them carried way more information than any city alone would generate.

"I wonder if the Router Formation can hold so much information at once."

Rean didn't seem to mind as he replied.

"It's fine. For now, all we need to do is build Router Formations in parallel. After that, we connect them together to work in unison. But first, let's not connect too many at once. Three, for now, is a good start."

Droman nodded as he said.

"Indeed. Three will give us an idea if there will be a struggle or not. The problem is that a single city couldn't force the Router Formation to the point where it couldn't deal with the information. That being said, we couldn't test its limit yet."

Rean agreed with Droman.

"Exactly. Who knows? Perhaps we are underestimating our own creation, and just a single one can deal with everything. Anyway, let's start."

"Oh, right! I also got a new idea for the Router Formations that we can add to Version 1.3 later."

"Version 1.3?"

Rean nodded.

"It would be about the sending and receiving of signals. We can simply add a rule where the formation will not pass information that a specific city doesn't need. As you know, the Router Formation only takes all the information in and organizes them in a queue to send them forward without hitting each other."

"In Version 1.3, each hub like this one would screen the information codes. For example, messages sent to Harevi City always start with code F13. Thus, no communication formation receptor that is not from Harevi City will display the message that the signal code F13 is bringing. However, at the moment, the Router Formation doesn't screen it. It queues this information up to be sent to all possible routes."

Droman immediately understood as his eyes lit up.

"I see... Once we make a screening process in the Router Formation hubs, they will only send code F13 information through the cables connected to Harevi City. That will decrease the burden on the cables and Router Formations by many times since they won't need to take care of signals that have nothing to do with them."

Rean really liked how Droman always got excited with every new idea.

"Hahaha! Exactly! Still, Master, it isn't that simple. We also need contingency plans. Otherwise, the web-like communication system will lose most of its effectiveness."

Droman's interest was piqued once again as he looked at Rean.

"What do you mean?"

Rean then explained.

"For example. Suppose we change the Router Formation to screen the F13 code from Harevi City. Now the Router Formation Hub will only send this signal through the cables destined to Harevi City. However, what if someone cuts the cable used to deliver that message to Harevi? Wouldn't it make it impossible to connect to Harevi?"

Droman had to admit that Rean was right.

"That's true. But if that's the case, wouldn't it be better to not add these screening abilities to the Router Formation?"

Rean shook his head.

"I understand what Master means. If there is no screen, the Router Formation will send the signals through all cables in the proper order to not jumble other signals. Since we have a web-like communication system, Harevi City would receive the F13 signals through different routes, right?"

Droman nodded and waited for Rean to continue.

"That's where Version 1.4 will come into play."

Droman was taken aback.

"Version 1.4? Weren't we talking about Version 1.3 just now?"

Rean smiled as he explained.

"Version 1.3 is the one that will make the screenings. Version 1.4 will do the same screening but will have the contingency plan I told you about before. In Version 1.4, what will be changed is not the Router Formation but the communication formations. I like to call it, Answer Protocol."

Droman became even more confused as he asked.

"Answer Protocol?"

Rean smiled before continuing.

"The Answer Protocol is very straightforward and, at the same time, very complicated. Simply put, the sending Communication Formation will require an answer from the Communication Formation that will receive the signal. Think about it like this: the Communication Formation in Harevi City received the signal with the code F13. It will then send an automatic answer back to the sending one 'Hey, I got your signal.'"

"Once the communication formation that sent the message at first gets this answer, it will then ignore it as it continues to work on the other tasks. However, if it doesn't receive this answer, it will change the route and try again."

Droman felt puzzled.

"Wait! Isn't it exactly the same thing that the communication formations already do? No, wait, I see... so that's what you mean by the changes."

Rean smiled.

"Seems like Master understood what the difference from the previous Communication Formation is. That's correct. The trick here is how the Communication Formation will act once it doesn't receive an answer. It will then try to send that message once again, but this time, it will send a code to the Router Formations telling them: First Route has failed, try another route."

"For example. F13 is the code for signals going to Harevi City. We could put another Code in front of it that only the Router Formations will understand, not the Communication ones. Let's say... 404F13###. The first Router Formation will immediately understand that the first route it tried to use didn't work, so it will try another. The Communication Formation will then wait for an answer once again. If it fails another time, it will ask the Router Formation to try another route. This process of trying different routes will keep happening until it gets an answer."

Droman nodded with a satisfied expression as he uttered.

"It will indeed reduce the burden in the Router Formation by several times since most of the cables will not be used to pass that specific signal. However, there's another problem. What if all routes into Harevi City have been cut? Wouldn't the sending Communication System keep trying to send signals endlessly? That might turn into a burden in the end as well."

Rean shook his head.

"That's the easiest part to fix. We just need to set up a limit saying that the communication formation can only try 10 to 100 times. If the destination doesn't answer, the sending formation will give up and then warn the sender through its display that it was impossible to reach Harevi City."

Droman loved the idea straight away.

"That's great! That way, we can even know when there is a problem in our network and send someone to check what is happening. We would be killing two birds with a single stone."

Rean nodded.

"Exactly! However, we first need to work on Version 1.3, and I believe Elder Droman knows how complicated it will be."

Droman didn't mind it at all.

"Who cares? Let's do it."

Rean stopped him, though. He then said.

"Not yet. First, let's make sure Version 1.2 works fine and then present it to the Imperial Family. Version 1.3, and especially 1.4, will take way too long to develop. We need the empire to already start working on spreading Version 1.2 to later receive the upgrades easier. After all..."

Rean then smiled.

"We need them to buy our Lightning Beads. Hahaha!"

Droman was taken aback and began to laugh out loud too.

"Hahaha! Right! We need them to do that, indeed."

Death... and me

Chapter 330: Should Start Soon

While Droman and Rean greedily thought about the massive amount of Spirit Stones the sect would receive, Roan had once again returned to the Blue Orchid section. However, Malaka and Calina were not around this time since they went out for a mission together. That being said, he spent his training hours bully- helping Julio and the others.

After he was done with it, he returned and began to cultivate.

'Oh! You're cultivating already?'

The one who talked to him was Rean. Thanks to the last upgrade of the Soul Connection, their communication range extended up to 3000 kilometers. Droman and Rean just so happened to be inside the range.

'Old Worm went somewhere else. Besides, I've reached a bottleneck of what I can do with Alchemy at the moment. To create Peak Level Pills, I would need to be at least in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm.'

Rean had already expected that. The Side Occupations' levels were pretty much divided in the same way. He had to become a Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator if he wanted to forge Earth Peak-Level Equipment. That was an easier way of separating the level since it could be done together with cultivation.

'I see. I'm not done with Droman and the formations here yet, so I can't sit to cultivate right now. However, I should be back in the sect in the next three days or so.'

'By the way, have you received any information about this possible war against Cassen?'

Roan nodded.

'Yes. Elder Tiria and Juvian are still there in Jiran Forest, watching over the Laan experts. That Saint Realm guy called Fuka had stopped by once to report what he found so far, and it seems like they confirmed that the situation is like Zuan told them. After that, Fuka left again and continued their investigation. Still, everything points to the start of this war to conquer part of Cassen.'

Rean nodded, not too surprised by it. Zuan had mentioned before that he wasn't lying when he explained everything to the Laan citizens. It was just a matter of time until they confirmed that this was indeed their best choice.

'What about the other powers? I doubt that Jialin Country was the only one to notice what happened in Jiran Forest.'

Roan answered straight away.

'Correct. The experts at the Nascent Soul and Soul Transformation Realm of Jialin locked the Core of Jiran Forest down. Low-level cultivators can't get close at the moment. However, the other surrounding countries noticed the chances and decided to send their own high-level experts to investigate.'

'It didn't take long until the news that a bunch of experts had appeared in our country. Fortunately, no one knows who they are or where they came from. Naturally, they don't know if those experts are Jialin's enemies or allies. Still, they began to raise their guards since more Jialin experts meant bad news for their side.'

Rean agreed with Roan.

'That makes sense, but it doesn't matter either. Elder Zuan and the other sects already took into consideration those things. After all, once the war starts, they would all find about those Laan experts anyway. The only thing we need to pay attention to is Cassen itself in case they decide to build defenses before the war starts.'

Roan shook his head in response.

'That doesn't matter. After all, the borders are just too big. There is no way to build up anything meaningful to that extent. They would need the help of other countries if they wanted to do that. Unfortunately for them, it doesn't seem like Cassen has any allies around as far as we know. Well, the same could be said to most of the countries close to the borders of the Empire, ours included.'

Rean couldn't help but sigh.

'It's kinda sad, don't you think? If a few small countries simply allied with each other, they would be much safer, but they don't do it.'

Roan snorted after hearing that.

'It seems like you don't understand how this world works yet. The problem is cultivation resources. They are thousands of times more important than any resources humans needed back on Earth. After all, they are directly linked to their own lifespans. Who would not like to live hundreds, if not thousands of years?'

'If they really made such alliances, they would not be able to attack each other. No, it would be worse than that. Those alliances would never be real ones. You would never know when someone might stab you in the back to rob your country of its resources. Only absolute might can keep countries at bay. That's what the Imperial Family has been doing so far to the point that all 10 clans don't dare to rebel against it, let alone the other countries surrounding it.'

Rean couldn't help but ask.

'Wouldn't it be possible to ally together to attack other countries' then? That way, they wouldn't need to stab themselves in the back and still get resources for everyone.'

'No. Because if you do that, the countries that will become targets will also ally with each other to move against you. It's simply a fear state. If that country was taken by the alliance, we might be the next ones. Only when mutual benefits surpass the fear of distrust will an alliance come up. In this case, the fear of

being conquered one by one or the promise of benefits for the attackers. In the end, they would once again reach the same impasse. Since that's the case, they might as well stay neutral.'

Roan continued.

'Of course, I'm not saying that there are no countries allied in our Sasamil Empire. There are always a few exceptions to the rules. Maybe they have a deep relationship, perhaps they passed through turbulent times together, and so on. In any case, those types are quite rare in a world like this.'

Rean nodded.

'Still, I don't think such a state will continue for too long. Eventually, it will be a lot more difficult to start wars like this one we intend to do.'

Roan agreed with Rean.

'Seems like you at least understand your own doings. Indeed, the communication system will most likely reduce the number of new wars by more than 90% once it spreads through the entire Empire. After all, it will become a lot harder to conduct operations when the enemy side has constant communication available. Anyway, this is something that will happen far in the future. Perhaps we would have left this Empire already when the situation reaches this point.'

Rean pondered a bit before shifting his attention to the Soul Gem Realm.

'Sister Orb, would fewer wars reduce the changes of destiny? Or is it considered a major change instead?'

[Of course, it would be considered major changes. However, don't forget that each new thing you do to gain Destiny Points have their own caps. The Communication System will eventually not give you any Destiny Points even though the changes continue to increase.]

Rean nodded.

'That's fine, then.'

Rean then finished talking with Roan before returning his attention to the communication system.

Time continued to pass. Rean eventually returned to the sect three days later, where he focused on Inner Sect Fights and cultivation with Roan. Two weeks went by when Malaka and Calina finally returned. Calina had specially selected a mission outside of the country, so they took this long to come back.

"What happened to you two?"

Rean looked at the two girls that were filled with injuries on their bodies.

"Didn't Roan say that we should have more dangerous experiences? We went to Javei Country, where an inheritance had been discovered. However, it was only at Core and Soul Fusion Realm level, so the Nascent Soul Experts stayed out. Still, many Core Formation Realm cultivators went there as well. Even a few Core and Soul Fusion cultivators appeared."

Malaka bitterly smiled as she followed up where Calina left off.

"It was horrifying. The people of Javei targeted those who came from outside quite often. Calina and I were obviously selected a few times."

Rean patted Malaka's head, knowing that she probably couldn't hold back and had to kill.

"There is no need to think about it too much. In such a situation, your lives were obviously more important than your enemies. You did a good job, Malaka."

Light Energy accumulated on Rean's hands, and he healed the remaining injuries on Malaka's body.

Even though she knew she could do it, Malaka still hated to do it. However, he soon noticed someone showing a jealous expression on the side. Because of her pride, though, she wasn't saying anything.

"Hahahaha!"

Rean also patted Calina's head.

"Of course, Calina also did amazingly well. You probably had to protect Malaka, who has lower cultivation than yours, several times, right?"

Calina finally smiled as she nodded.

"But she also saved me too."

All of a sudden, Roan appeared there as he looked at the two girls. His Spiritual Sense then entered their bodies for a moment before he nodded.

"Not too bad. Even though you two had only recently broken through, your cultivations seem quite stable already."

Malaka smiled as she nodded vigorously.

"Of course! We're geniuses!"

Roan ignored Malaka's shameless words, though.

As for Calina, she seemed to be a lot happier than Malaka after hearing Roan's praise.

"Ahem... I followed the steps you gave me. They helped me very much during my cultivation. Thank you."

Roan nodded, already expecting this much. After that, he looked at Rean.

"Finish healing those two and then come with me. We need to talk about Cassen."

Rean was surprised to hear that.

"Is it time already?"

Roan nodded.

"Yes. It should start soon."