

Death 331

Death... and me

Chapter 331: Bring It On!

Back in the sect, Roan had gone to talk with Hulian, asking for a position to command a few groups. Usually, Hulian wouldn't even bother to hear such a request. However, since it was the twins, he still decided to give them a chance. It's just that he needed to test Roan first.

There was a war game similar to chess, but several times more intricate, called Sisca. It had close to twenty times more pieces on each side compared to a chess game, with a board obviously several times bigger. However, the size of the board wasn't a problem for the cultivators. After all, they could simply spread their Spiritual Energy to move the pieces and make their movements. The main objective was to take over the enemy's castle on the other side of the board.

It was often used to test a person's intelligence. Obviously, it was also perfect to see their ability to command as well.

"I've never played this thing."

Hulian wasn't surprised by that.

"That's not a problem. I'm not expecting you to suddenly become a professional in Sisca. I just want to see how you perform on your first try. That would also reflect how you would react in a random environment like a war zone. In a certain way, not knowing the game is the perfect condition to see your abilities to command."

Roan nodded, not minding it too much. Hulian then passed him a booklet with all of the rules of the game. Roan quickly browsed it a few times while shaking or nodding his head from time to time. Around twenty minutes later, he closed the book and passed it back to Hulian.

"Done."

"Done?"

Hulian looked at Roan with a surprised expression.

"There are a lot of rules and variations described there. Shouldn't you take a little longer to get used to it?"

Roan shook his head.

"No need. Let's start."

Hulian shook his head in disappointment. He already felt like Roan was rushing things too much. That was not a good quality for a commander.

Rean, who was also present, quickly grabbed the booklet from Hulian.

"Alright, let me look at it as well. It seems fun."

Hulian didn't mind as he brought Roan to the board in another room.

"Okay. The black pieces are yours. The white ones are mine. You can put them in any sequence you like on your side except for the center field."

Roan nodded.

"I already memorized all the rules. Let's start."

The way to position each person's pieces worked in turns. Each side could only put one piece down each turn. That would prevent them from knowing the final form of the enemy's formation ahead of time, making the game fairer.

However, Hulian noticed that Roan didn't seem to be following any particular strategy. He placed his pieces on the board in a very standard formation. It was as if he wasn't even thinking about it. Still,

Hulian didn't complain. He simply didn't expect that much from Roan anymore. He would quickly finish it to show Roan that the art of commanding wasn't that simple.

Meanwhile, Rean kept reading the booklet on the side, trying to memorize its rules.

"Alright, let's start. You can move the first piece."

Roan didn't mind and immediately made his first move. Hulian then followed with his own. And just like that, time began to pass. When those two were around a hundred moves into the game, Rean finally closed the booklet.

"I understand how it works now."

He quickly took a look at the board and analyzed the positions.

"Hum... I think I know what they are trying to do."

Hulian smiled, not really believing that Rean knew what his aim was. So far, Roan's moves didn't seem anything impressive. He also made a few moves that made it easier for Hulian to move forward and conquer territory.

Finally, it reached a point where Roan seemed to not have any chances anymore.

"Alright. Let's stop it here and start a new one."

Roan looked at Hulian, puzzled.

"Why?"

Hulian pointed at the board before saying.

"Isn't that obvious? You can't possibly recover from this."

Rean, who was on the side, shook his head.

"What are you saying, Senior Hulian? Can't you see that Roan already won this battle?"

Hulian's smile froze as he looked at Rean.

"He won this battle? What are you talking about? I'm totally dominating his side."

Roan also looked at Rean with a surprised expression.

"You can see what I'm doing?"

Rean nodded.

"Pretty much. Elder Hulian's five main forces had been lured into a trap where they can't escape anymore. In the next few moves, his right side will crumble while the left side will only be able to desperately hold its position. However, it will be too late since you will take the enemy's castle while impeding Elder Hulian's left side from ever joining the battle until everything is over."

Roan couldn't help but be surprised.

'Since when were you good at commanding strategies? Or perhaps you're only good at games?'

Rean pondered a bit before replying.

'Hum... Now that I think about it, I don't know. It just comes into me naturally. Most likely, this is the influence of our Soul Connection.'

[Rean is right.]

Sister Orb said while they were talking through their Soul Connection.

[It's just like how Roan can lock Light Element in his body almost as well as Rean. It is the influence of Roan's proficiency that allows him to do so. Of course, be it Roan's commanding ability or Rean's Light Element control ability, both your talents also play a huge part in this. Well, this is a good thing for both of you anyway, so just enjoy each other's help.]

Rean's eyes lit up and quickly asked.

'Sister Orb, is there a way to enhance this ability?'

[Sure!]

Both Rean and Roan's interests were piqued.

'How?'

[Increase of brotherly affection. What about starting with a hug?]

The twins almost fainted!

'Ahem... There should be no need to rush things. Step by step learning is also essential to consolidate our knowledge.'

Roan agreed straight away.

'Exactly! Besides, if we force it, we might develop some brain issues in the future. Let's stay like this, shall we?'

Rean nodded vigorously.

As they said those words, they also thought.

'Brotherly affection, your ass!'

'I would rather die!'

'Fuck you!'

'You are lucky that you are a lot stronger. Otherwise, I would have broken your orb in half already!'

Sister Orb felt a little disappointed.

[Oh! Okay, then...]

All that conversation only took two or three seconds through their Soul Connection, so Hulian didn't notice anything.

Instead, he was more worried about what Rean just said. Because of that, he began to analyze the battlefield, especially the right side.

"This... How did you do that without me noticing?"

Roan looked at Hulian and answered as if it was something simple.

"Your overconfidence was the main point. I just pretended to be weak and lured you inside. You never bothered to take me seriously even once, so it was extremely easy."

Hulian's ears became red when he heard that. Sure enough, Roan never bothered to measure his words at all.

"Ahem... Let's continue this battle. I want to see how the end will develop."

Roan didn't mind as they continued to battle. Sure enough, Hulian's side crumbled fast as his left side got trapped by Roan's pieces. In the end, Hulian's castle fell without much of a resistance. The weird thing was how Hulian had a lot more pieces remaining than Roan, so his loss was quite an ugly one.

Still, Hulian was really shocked by that. That was Roan's first time playing this game, and Hulian had even lost in such a terrible way.

"Errr... Again! I admit I wasn't expecting anything from you at all. This time, I will not commit the same mistake. It will be a real test of your commanding abilities."

Roan nodded. He also didn't like this last battle since his opponent was holding back. The two quickly reorganized the pieces on the table and began to put them one by one in their positions each turn. The start of the game quickly followed right after. However...

"How did I lose even faster now...?"

Roan, who observed the entire game, immediately replied.

"You used a pincer attack between the right and left side of your field. However, Roan positioned his piece in a way that he wouldn't lose many of them during that attack. The problem was that when you finished your attack, your pieces were left vulnerable to a counter pincer attack. He simply defeated you with the same strategy you tried to defeat him."

Roan nodded.

"He's correct. You made quite a brilliant move this time. Perhaps you wanted to wipe out the shame of having lost so miserably last time. Too bad that you ignored the traps on both sides. Of course, I made sure to hide it well so that you wouldn't notice before it was too late."

Hulian gritted his teeth before saying.

"Again!"

Roan faintly smiled as he nodded.

Hulian acted a lot more carefully, thinking about every movement this time. As a result, this was the longest game they had so far. Unfortunately for him, the result was still the same. It didn't matter how many times Hulian tried. Roan always found the quickest way of delivering a fatal blow to his forces. Roan's playstyle was just like his combat one. The type who looked for the fastest way to kill the opponent.

Hulian finally admitted that he wasn't Roan's match. Not to mention that Roan got better at it with each game.

"Wait here for a minute. Let me invite someone else."

Hulian liked the game, but he knew that he wasn't any prodigy on it. He decided to call someone else instead.

As soon as Hulian left, Rean went to the other side of the board.

"One week of mother's dessert!"

Roan's gaze turned cold as he replied.

"Bring it on!"

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Chapter 332: Taking Up the Position

After Hulian left the room, he went straight to the Talismans Hall. There, he headed straight to the upmost floor. When he arrived there, he saw two disciples guarding the door to the room behind.

When the disciples saw Hulian, they immediately paid their respects.

"Welcome, Elder Hulian. Are you here to see Master Kassie?"

Hulian nodded.

"Yes. Please let Core Elder Kassie know that it is an important matter."

The two disciples immediately nodded. Following that, one of them entered the room while the other stayed outside. Hulian was only an Inner Elder, while Kassie was a Core Elder. To be a Core Elder, one had to be at least in the Nascent Soul Realm, so her status was definitely higher than Hulian.

Half a minute later, the disciple who had entered the room returned.

"Elder Hulian, you can enter."

Hulian smiled as he opened the door and entered the room. There, he saw an old woman focusing on a piece of paper in front of her that was almost as big as the table. On the sides, there were several cultivation resources, as well as other high-level materials. By making several combinations, she could create various types of ink used to draw those talismans.

Kassie's hands moved quickly yet precisely. Each stroke seemed more like a piece of art than the last. Eventually, she drew the last stroke. As soon as the last stroke was done, the talisman lifted in the air by itself. The piece of paper also began to shrink fast. Suddenly, it became a palm-sized talisman that could be easily carried around.

"Phew... Finally done."

Kassie then looked at Hulian with a smile.

"What is it? Do you need help with some resources again?"

Hulian shook his head.

"No. The reason I came here has nothing to do with resources. Instead, it's about Sisca."

Kassie was surprised to hear that.

"Oh! Have you come to play a match with me? Why didn't you say that earlier? Come, we can play in the room at the side."

Kassie was known in the elders' cycle as an easygoing elder. She rarely complained about anything and spent most of her time managing the Talismans Hall. But other than that, she was also a fantastic Sisca player. In the sect, almost no one could defeat her. If war really came to happen, there was no doubt that she would be in charge of strategies with Mia and a few more intelligent elders.

"No, it's not me who will play."

Kassie stopped walking and looked around. But other than Hulian, she couldn't see anyone else.

"Who is it, then?"

Hulian then took a deep breath and began to explain what happened in his home. As Kassie heard his story, she couldn't help but get excited.

"Oh! That's quite interesting. Those twins are really full of surprises. Not only did they learn Sisca extremely fast, but they could even defeat you on their very first try."

Hulian felt somewhat ashamed.

"Well, Rean hasn't played with me yet, so I haven't lost to him."

Kassie laughed as she shook her head.

"He could tell how you were going to lose three times in a row before you yourself could do it. Obviously, he could play at a much higher level than you. Anyway, where are they? I want to see what they can do against me."

Hulian nodded, already expecting this reaction.

"They are waiting in my room. Please follow me, Core Elder Kassie."

Hulian and Kassie then returned to Hulian's room. But as soon as they stepped into the room, they felt a chill on their backs. There was so much killing intent in the air that even they, who couldn't see it, could at least feel its presence.

"Not good! The twins!"

Hulian and Kassie immediately charged into the room when the twins were supposed to be waiting. However, the bloodbath they were waiting for wasn't happening. All the killing intent was focused on both sides of the board.

'Is there a need for this pressure? Why do I feel like they are about to kill each other?'

Well, Kassie and Hulian were not far from the truth. If the bet wasn't specific for a Sisca game, someone might have lost their head already.

Kassie then stepped forward and looked at the field on the Sisca Board. However, she couldn't tell at which level they were playing since she didn't know how they reached those positions.

Still, Rean and Roan continued to make their moves one after another. As the match proceeded, Kassie's expression changed. The two continued to build and destroy intricate traps one after the other. Sometimes, Roan got the advantage. On others, Rean pulled ahead. Nevertheless, they always had contingency plans for possible mistakes.

"This... just what kind of monsters did you find, Hulian?"

Hulian bitterly smiled while scratching his head.

"Well, I guess my Iron and Blood Faction was quite lucky, I guess?"

As equilibrated as their match might be, their own pieces were being lost one after another. Sooner or later, a winner and a loser would appear.

"Fuck!"

Rean looked as Roan finally broke through his defenses and surrounded his castle. From that point onward, it was a lost fight. Finally, the cattle fell, and Roan achieved victory.

"Let's do it out of three."

Roan snorted in response.

"In your dreams! Mother's desserts are mine. If you don't wanna die, you better stay far away from them."

Rean clicked his tongue.

In the end, Rean lacked a lot of experience. Roan had seen too many battles that he couldn't even count. The fact that Rean could hold his ground this long was already a miracle in itself.

Finally, Rean looked at the side and saw Kassie.

"Oh! It's Elder Kassie."

He still remembered her from the time Mia called all the elders to talk about the Communication System. It's just that Rean and Kassie had never really talked to each other.

Kassie smiled as she asked.

"Can you step aside? I wish to challenge Roan as well."

Rean sighed and nodded.

Kassie and Roan then initiated another Sisca Game. Kassie, Rean, and Roan then alternated between opponents all day long. As for Hulian, he could only watch by the side, trying to understand most of their moves and objectives. In the end, Roan finished all their matches with a perfect score. Neither Rean nor Kassie could beat him even once.

As for matches between Rean and Kassie, they were pretty much even. Out of 16 games, Kassie took 9 while Rean got 7.

Kassie then sighed as she told Hulian.

"Just go ahead and give him a few groups to command. If I could, I would have him take care of at least half of the sect's forces, but the others wouldn't accept it. Still, a few groups at the Foundation Establishment and Core Formation Realm shouldn't be much of a problem."

Hulian nodded, satisfied. Those words really meant a lot for someone who also worked with strategies like Kassie.

"Alright. Roan, I can't have you controlling many people since it would bring up issues with the others. I'll first give you ten teams with ten members each, a total of one hundred cultivators. When the war

starts, you will be responsible for their movements and strategies. However, if you prove to be as good at commanding as you are at Sisca, the groups in your hands will eventually increase. Don't forget, my Iron and Blood Faction rewards those who put in the best effort and bring the best results."

Roan didn't mind. A hundred cultivators at once was already better than he expected.

Hulian then looked at Rean.

"Do you want a commanding position as well? Although you aren't as good as Roan, you were still able to put up a fight against Core Elder Kassie."

Rean shook his head in response.

"There is no need. I wasn't in the mood to become a commander to start with. I would rather stay with the ice block since it's safer."

Hulian nodded. Kassie then passed her token to him so that he could start the arrangements. Finally, Kassie decided to bid her farewell to the twins.

"Today was a lot of fun. If you feel bored, come to the Talismans' Hall. We can play as much Sisca as you want."

Rean and Roan didn't mind that and nodded. Finally, Kassie turned around and left.

As she disappeared in the distance, Rean noticed Hulian following her closely.

"Oh! Elder Hulian, could it be that you are interested in Elder Kassie?"

Hulian was taken aback when he heard that.

"Ahem... Don't spout nonsense. Kassie is a Core Elder, while I'm just an Inner Elder. What is there to be interested in?"

Rean shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, you'll never know if you don't try, right?"

It was then that Roan left the house. He already got what he wanted, so there was no need to stay there anymore. As for whatever romantic talk he might have with Hulian, he simply couldn't care less about it.

Rean then looked at Hulian before saying.

"Anyway, I'm cheering for you, Elder Hulian! If you need my help, let me know."

Rean then ran out as he caught up to Roan. As for Hulian, he simply shook his head as he closed the door.

Sometime later, Roan arrived at the Blue Orchid District. He said that he wanted to see Malaka, so no one thought anything about it. When they arrived at her room, Calina, or better, Illia, was there as well.

It was then that he sent Calina a Spiritual Sense message.

'Alright, I got a commanding position. However, you will be the one to give the orders. During the next few days, I will teach you everything I can about it.'

Roan then showed a faint cold smile before continuing.

'You said it before, an Emperor or Empress candidate has to be both strong and intelligent, so you better be prepared.'

Calina trembled a little when she saw that. Still, she gritted her teeth and nodded.

'Alright.'

Death... and me

Chapter 333: Time Skip

Ten months later, somewhere deep inside the south side of the Cassen Country.

At the moment, Roan was on the rear of a mountain as he looked at the map in front of him. On the map, he had the position of every cultivator group and their levels. They were marked with blue carving pieces that looked to have come from chess games.

On the other side, Roan had similar pieces as well, but with red colors. The map also had several other marks with different colors. First, he had yellow colors representing cultivator groups from the other four sects or the royal family. For land marks, he used brown, purple for traps, and black for danger points.

On Roan's side, one could see a few familiar faces like Rean, Calina, Malaka, and Kentucky. Well, Kentucky was sleeping in a corner, to be more precise. However, there were many more that the twins only came to know later on.

All of a sudden, a small communication formation shone as a stream of information appeared in front of it.

-Liang, Lontis, and Waxae Sect groups, possibly with cultivation varying between Foundation Establishment Late Stage and Core Formation Middle Stage. Moving through sector twelve in the north-west direction. Requesting urgent orders.-

Roan nodded as he used his Spiritual Energy to move the pieces on the map.

"Very well."

Roan then looked at Calina before asking.

"Tell me, what is wrong with this pattern? What are they trying to do? What's the countermeasure to achieve the best results with minimal losses. What will be the repercussions once you lose or win this exchange?"

Rean couldn't help but respond.

"Aren't they trying to-"

"Shut up!"

Roan glared at Rean. Only then did Rean notice that he misspoke. This was supposed to be a test for Calina, not him.

Everyone looked at that and didn't seem that surprised to see this. Obviously, Roan had been asking Calina her opinions about the battlefield for a very long time. Calina was quite frightened at first. But as time passed, she became used to have Roan asking her about what to do on the battlefield.

Not only that, but Roan also spent a lot of time outside battle to teach Calina the arts of war. Rean just happened to be around, so he listened as well. The surprising thing was that Rean seemed to understand it much better than Calina. In fact, he seemed to understand Roan's teaching better than anyone else.

It wasn't just because of the Soul Connection between the two of them. Roan had to admit that Rean was incredibly swift at understanding those things. It wasn't a bad thing, though. The better Rean understood how war strategies and analysis worked, the better it would be for both of them.

Finally, Calina looked deeply at all the positions on the map, the terrain, the allied and enemy forces, as well as the danger zones. She thought about several possibilities and slightly shook her head from time to time. Still, it only took her a few dozen seconds to come up with the answer.

"They are trying to circle through Sector 13 and 9. Most likely, they're aiming for a pincer attack on groups 14, 16, and 17."

Roan nodded.

"Not too bad. Now, what's wrong with the pattern they chose. Why is it not good enough?"

Calina continued to fry her brain as she focused on it.

"Ah! Here, on the Danger Zone near group 14. They aren't timing their attack correctly. The support of the danger zone where their own traps are located won't achieve the maximum effect possible."

Roan nodded again.

"That's one of the issues. What's the next one?"

Calina continued to look at the map. However, she was having difficulty seeing where this other mistake was. She then looked at everyone and had almost given up when, all of a sudden, she noticed Rean's eyes. He didn't say anything, just switching his focus between her and a certain point in the map.

Calina then looked far behind into the enemies' lines and finally noticed the second problem.

"Found it! It is subtle, but I can tell that they're also relying on supporting a higher cultivation level group back in Sector 7. Because of the wrong timing, they will not receive the proper help to eliminate our cultivator's group. Most likely, it would result in quite a few of our forces escaping from their ambush. Of course, things will change our groups here that join the battle later."

Roan looked at Calina, which made her feel a chill on her back. Could it be that she was wrong? Finally, Roan spoke.

"That's correct, however..."

Pah!

Roan slapped the back of Rean's head.

Ouch!

"Why did you do that?"

Roan snorted in response.

"Do you even need to ask? Next time, see how I pull your eyes out of their sockets. I'll make it so that even your Light Element can't restore it anymore."

Rean didn't seem to care, though.

"Hmph! As if you would do that."

"Wanna try it out?"

"Go ahead, let's see it."

The two were just about to hit each other when they suddenly heard a cough coming from behind.

"Ahem! You two, stop with this mess. Our cultivators are still out there, waiting for your orders."

The one who talked just so happened to be Amanda. For some reason, she was put in the same group as the twins.

Rean and Roan then calmed down.

"Anyway, I just slightly pointed her in the right direction. She understood the whole meaning of the issue as soon as she put her eyes over there. Shouldn't her discernment be praised because of that? I also believe she would sooner or later find it."

Roan immediately answered.

"What's the point of this if she can't understand it by herself?"

Roan then looked at Calina, who seemed ashamed that she relied on Rean's help to find that problem.

"What's done is done. Anyway, you often forget to expand your field of vision because of how rare it is for far away forces to make short time differences. Don't look just where the action is happening. Make sure that the entire battlefield is always inside your mind."

Calina immediately nodded.

"Yes!"

Roan then pointed at the map again before asking.

"Next! What's the best countermeasure?"

This time, Calina answered almost instantly.

"The Danger Zone they want to use against us is the best option. They probably think we are unaware of the traps in that place because of how they are moving. Instead of trying to avoid it, we should have our groups retreat straight inside it. Using the information we have, we can make the timing issue on their side an even bigger problem. Just make the groups pretend that they are running away and enter the Danger Zone. There, we can use the few trap locations to our own advantage to eliminate part of their forces and then break out with minimal losses."

Finally, Roan's expression seemed to soften a little.

"That's quite good. Last but not least, what are the two possible repercussions?"

Calina showed a happy face for a moment. However, she quickly regained her bearings and returned her attention to the map.

"The worst case would be the loss of the entire group. Of course, the repercussion of it would be most felt here, here, and here."

Calina then pointed at three different parts in the map, including one that seemed to be quite far away from where the battle would occur.

"The two near forces need that path that our group is protecting as buffers, so its loss would force them to retreat until the situation is controlled."

"As for the faraway forces, the 24th group, who is not under our command, would miss an attacking chance. After all, the help that the enemies are waiting for would leave a gap behind their own defense perimeter. However, if our group loses, they might need to offer support to the lost zone, making it impossible to realize their attack."

"As for the repercussions of winning, it would obviously be the same one I just mentioned. The 24th group will be able to pierce through the defense line gaps, possibly giving us a chance of taking control of that region."

Roan agreed with Calina.

"That's good enough. You forgot about the supply chain from behind, but that wouldn't be a big issue since there is enough time to retreat with a sudden order. I'll give you 7 out of 10 points for this last analysis."

However, Calina seemed to want to say something.

"Do you have something to say, Illia?"

As one could remember, Calina was using the fake name Illia at this moment.

Calina then looked at Kentucky, who was sleeping in a corner, before saying.

"If Kentucky could fly there and use his defense to help the group, chances are that we would save a lot more of our forces. After all, we know about the danger zone and the traps, but not all of them. His defense is always the best in defensive situations like these."

Roan nodded.

"Very well, just have Nightingale here wake it up."

Roan then turned around and passed his orders.

"Start luring the enemies into the Danger Zone. Tell our forces to remember, their objective is to create a gap for their safe retreat. If everything goes as expected, the enemy groups will lose more than us and still give a chance for the 24th group to attack."

Another cultivator close to the communication formation immediately wrote the orders and sent the message.

Rean then looked at Kentucky before saying.

"Release the Kraken! I mean, the Chicken!"

Roan felt like crying already.

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Chapter 334: Past Events

Everyone looked at Rean with puzzled expressions. Who the hell was Kraken?

Roan then took in a deep breath before saying.

"Ignore the idiot. Get ready since we are going as well."

After the war started, Droman and a few other elders were in charge of putting several communication formations. They made it in a way that only they knew how it worked. Thanks to that, information was quickly delivered through the entire battlefield swiftly without leakage. There were obviously Thoughts Transmission Talismans, but they couldn't afford to use those things for every movement on the enemy's side.

This time, it was quite easy and fast to build this particular system. After all, it would only pass orders back and forth. There is simply not enough traffic to overload the cables. They also made it in a web-like manner so that even if one or two cables were cut, the communication would most likely not stop.

Jialin Country was already expected to get the advantage with the boost in power from Laan City experts. Still, they didn't expect that everything would go so smoothly with the addition of the communication system. The ability to be able to keep regular instant reports was tremendous!

That had also indirectly helped Rean and Roan since Destiny Points began to flow even faster into the Soul Gem System. Nevertheless, they refrained from buying anything so that they could get used to their power first. They were planning to spend the points once the war was over.

As for how the war was going so far, over half of the needed territory was already conquered. Jialin wasn't trying to conquer the whole country, but just a part of it, enough for the Laan experts to build their own power.

Trying to conquer the whole Cassen Country would not be a good idea. After all, other countries might become afraid that this would affect them as well. For example, the countries that had their borders connected to Cassen but not Jialin. Who could guarantee that Jialin won't try to do something once they consolidate their new rule in the old Cassen? They would be forced to offer support to Cassen to stop that from happening.

That's why Zuan said that this wasn't a war to take over a country from the very start, but just a small part of it. All the sects and the Royal Family also accepted that.

During the war, the other countries bordering Jialin kept their eyes open. Sure enough, it was as everyone expected. As soon as they thought a chance appeared, they also attacked Jialin, trying to get some territory for themselves. Unfortunately for them, Jialin was already expecting that. With Fuka, Nefere, and the several extra Soul Transformation Realm cultivators from Laan, they were able to hold them back.

It's not like Jialin could really fight all those powers alone. It's just that they would have to pay a high price for them to succeed in conquering territories in Jialin. In the worst-case scenario, some of them might even lose their own sect's Saint Realm experts. None of them were willing to try it. Those two extra Saint Realm experts were really the last resource necessary to make something like this work.

When the war started, a merit point system was also initiated. After all, even sect cultivators were quite selfish, let alone vagrant cultivators that were much more numerous in Jialin. If the sects wanted them to put their lives on the line to get Cassen territory, rewards on par with their lives had to be offered.

Very few cultivators in this war were like Rean and Roan, who didn't need those rewards. Because most of them didn't support the sects or the royal family, this reward system was incredibly beneficial. Each sect had its own system, and Dalamu was no different.

At least half of the cultivators on Roan's group were outsiders that came for this same reason. One could already imagine how they felt when they found out that their commander was a teenager. However, if they wanted to receive their resources, they needed to follow his order.

The worst part came when Roan began to leave the commanding issues up to Illia, and they were right to be afraid. After all, Illia (Calina) really made many bad decisions or took too long to decide on what to do, making things even worse. However, for some reason, they never suffered significant losses. Instead, they always emerged victorious in their battles.

It wasn't long before they understood that it was all thanks to Rean and Roan. Even when Illia messed up, the twins always had a contingency plan to come up ahead of the enemies. As time passed, they really began to respect those two, especially Roan since most of the orders came from him.

Of course, as time passed, Calina's own talent surged. She began to commit lesser mistakes and be faster at recognizing the battlefield. She simply needed someone who could teach her correctly.

Another thing present in this war was the Ranking System. It was determined through the number of cultivators killed, territory conquered, battle victories, support, etc.

At the start, Roan's group didn't appear too much since he spent a lot of time training everyone. Yes, Roan didn't go straight into battle as soon as his group was determined. Instead, he created several combat formations that they had to memorize.

The first three months of the war were spent on the backlines. They rarely ever went forward to do battle. Even when they did, it wasn't anything meaningful. Obviously, that also incurred the discontent of those who came for the resources.

But the situation changed three months later. Their first battles were messy because of Calina's lack of experience, but those formations really saved their lives. With Rean and Roan's timely support, they began to amass one victory after the other.

Ten months later, Roan's group shot up in the ranks. Or better yet, the Death Group did. Very few groups were still contending against Roan's.

Last but not least, Roan's group also increased in size as time passed. What before was only around 100 cultivators, had now risen to a total of 300! That was the recognition of the sects and the royal family. In fact, Roan's group was even offered a bigger group, but he refused. He wanted to use this one to make sure that Calina understood things properly.

As one can expect, all the outside cultivators were now very happy. There were rarely any significant losses on their side while they were amassing large amounts of merit points. It reached a point where many cultivators kept applying to join the 'Death Group' but were kept waiting. After all, since the number of deaths was low, the number of replacements was also the same.

Back to the present, Kentucky got up after Rean called. Soon after, Rean jumped on his back and flew in the direction of the Danger Zone. After all, Kentucky still couldn't fulfill such complicated orders on its own.

As for the rest, they would be going for the cleanup.

"There are at least 120 cultivators between the Foundation Establishment and Core Formation Realm on the enemy side. Once Rean and Kentucky help them with the retreat, we will cover the sides. Remember to work as I told you, and we should be able to achieve a much greater result with smaller losses. Anyone who breaks up the formation will be replaced."

Roan then looked at Calina.

"Illia, same thing as before, you will lead half of the group. The number of deaths will depend on your decisions. If everyone goes as expected, we should be able to inflict heavy losses on the enemy."

Calina nodded with a determined expression. Roan wasn't only teaching Calina about war strategies. He still needed to increase her combat power. This war was just perfect since he could have her fight while leading the groups at the same time.

Thanks to the fact that Kentucky could fly, Rean arrived at the danger zone very fast. Immediately, they began to offer support to their group in there. Kentucky was seriously a meat tank. Not only was his defense extremely high, but he could now spread his White and Black Flames far away. Kentucky often created fire walls that blocked the enemy's passage while bearing their focused attacks in the frontlines. Even when Rean went all out, he couldn't offer such a wide range of support. This also proved that Kentucky's Spiritual Energy pool was enormous, probably larger than any of the twins.

Sure enough, their group kept their formations while using the enemy's own traps to hinder their progress.

Suddenly, Rean's eyes lit up as he saw the chance for a breakthrough.

"Kentucky!"

Rean then passed his thoughts through Spiritual Sense. In an instant, Kentucky flapped his wings and shot through the skies. However, he only went up for a few seconds when all of a sudden, he began to drop down like a meteor.

Creee!

Boom!

Immediately, an enormous crater appeared in the middle of the enemy's forces. Kentucky's Fried Chicken Cannonball's shockwave sent all the cultivators at Foundation Establishment flying. Those who were too late to move suffered grievous injuries or died on the spot.

"Arrow Formation, charge!"

Rean's group then charged into the enemy's ranks, slaughtering everyone on their path as they passed through. Rean then passed another Spiritual Sense thought to Kentucky, who immediately jumped to the back of the formation. There, he used his Black and White flames to defend their back while the group retreated.

Of course, the Cassen cultivators were enraged to see that. Not only had the ambush failed, but they suffered heavy losses during the attack. Their numbers advantage didn't help at all. Following that, they immediately started to run after Rean's group.

Rean looked behind with his Spiritual Energy and smiled before using his Soul Connection with Roan.

'There they come.'

Death... and me

Chapter 335: Not Fighting Alone

Roan received Rean's message and immediately looked at Calina.

"Let's go. Remember to keep the same pace. As soon as you see Kentucky flying in the skies, charge through the right side with your group while I do the same through the left. The formations and things like that will be up for you to decide."

Calina nodded.

"Alright. Let's go."

Soon after, she disappeared on the right side. Roan didn't waste his time either and guided his group through the left.

Rean's group continued to run for another minute. Rean then felt Roan's presence through their Soul Connection and immediately gave Kentucky an order.

Soon after, Kentucky flew up in the skies while burning with White and Black Flames.

Creeeeee!

The cultivators from Cassen immediately stopped, thinking that Kentucky would use the same attack again.

"Come, damned bird. We are ready for you now."

All of them prepared to attack and strike Kentucky down as soon as he charged into them. However, Kentucky stayed in the same place. It was then that they saw Rean's group moving even further away.

"Fuck! It was just a distraction! Liko's group will keep an eye on the Demon Beast. The rest of you, after them!"

Everyone immediately resumed their chase. However, Rean's group suddenly stopped and turned around. Out of nowhere, the escaping group was now coming directly at them.

"Wedge Formation!"

The cultivators on Rean's group then assumed an inverted V shape with Rean right in the middle. Those with the best defense abilities charged in the front while the rest followed behind.

The Cassen group was taken aback for a moment. They weren't idiots. Rean's group had a lot fewer cultivators. If they suddenly decided to attack, then something definitely wasn't right.

Sure enough, two more groups of cultivators immediately appeared from the sides.

Calina looked at Roan's group in the distance and immediately understood what he wanted.

"Triple Line Formation. Create a wall to prevent the enemy from escaping."

Roan looked at that on the other side and nodded with a satisfied expression.

"Triple Line Formation!"

The Cassen group quickly saw itself surrounded. A few even wanted to hastily get away and leave everyone behind. However, that would only make them a bigger target since they could see a few smaller cultivation groups who waited behind the enemy's ranks.

The leader of Cassen then gritted his teeth as he said.

"Since they want to fight force against force, let's give them that. Everyone, full power ahead! Use all your best skills and crush them!"

In the end, this group of Cassen was still bigger than Rean's group alone. Only when the two bigger groups from Roan and Calina joined the attack were they evenly matched. Since Rean's group had the smallest number, one couldn't blame Cassen for trying to aim at it. Besides, different from Calina and Roan's one, there was no support behind Rean's group.

Rean saw that and smiled.

It turned out that Roan and Calina's groups weren't the main attackers. The fact was that the highest cultivation and attack power was within Rean's group. In that case, Roan and Calina would form a path so that Rean's Wedge Formation would once again sweep forward with pure might.

However, that wasn't all.

A burst of Spiritual Energy began to come out of Rean as he lifted his free hand in the air. Not long after, all the Light Element on the surroundings started to charge at him, accumulating right above his hand into a giant sphere of whitish energy. Anyone could tell that Rean had spent a lot of Spiritual Energy just to do that, not to mention the time necessary. Fortunately, his group was still some distance away from the enemy, which gave him the required time. Just as both groups were about to clash against each other...

'Life Style, Fifth Form, Light Aura Burst!'

The sphere of Light Element burst for real! At the same time, Roan and Calina's groups covered their eyes. As for the enemy group, they didn't know what was going to happen. There was no way they would close their eyes when their opponents were right in front of them. That being said, they went all blind because of the sudden extreme brightness.

But that was just a side effect of Rean's Fifth Form. Immediately, Light Element entered the bodies of everyone around Rean. Their combat strength, which was already the highest between their three groups, soared!

That's Rean's new skill. He could now enhance everyone's combat power at once. Not only that, but through his control of the Light Element, he could also prevent it from affecting the enemies. Only the allies received the boost, while the others saw nothing more than an explosion of brightness.

Of course, there was a significant difference in this skill compared to Rean's First Form, Enhancement. The Enhancement Skill was a lot more potent since Rean directly touched his friends' bodies. It could also last for more than an entire minute now that Rean was in the Core Formation Realm.

As for Light Aura Burst, the increase of strength wasn't as sharp. Also, the increase in strength would only last 15 to 20 seconds at most. However, Rean could enhance everyone's attack power inside the

area of effect. Compared to touching each person and using the second form several times, the Light Aura Burst was much more practical. It was a skill made for large scale battles!

Calina and Roan's groups then clashed against the Cassen group's sides, cutting off any path of retreat. Simultaneously, the boosted Rean Army charged through the enemy's ranks like a herd of buffalos. In the cultivation world, this clash was even more frightening, with skills flying everywhere!

Boom, boom, boom...

Clang, clang, clang...

Swich, swich, swich...

Hearts got pierced through, heads were sent flying, limbs fell everywhere. It was a real slaughterhouse. There was nothing beautiful about that scene.

Calina and Malaka, obviously, didn't like that, but they didn't stop. When there was a war, people would die. If they held back, they would be the ones lying on the ground.

That was one more of Roan's objective. To teach the two girls and any other naive male or female cultivator in their army how wars looked like. Whether a side would emerge victoriously or not didn't matter, corpses would be left behind anyway.

The Cassen cultivators that recovered from the blindness saw the situation and immediately tried to flee through the gaps. They couldn't care less about what would happen to the rest of the group anymore. However, Roan had prepared small groups of three by the rear, especially for these moments.

Those who managed to leave the encirclement would immediately encounter the attacks of those cultivators.

The entire encounter didn't last for more than a minute. In the end, just ten or so cultivators with higher cultivations were able to escape after paying hefty prices.

However, Roan, Rean, and Calina knew that it wasn't over. Back then, when Calina was coming up with a countermeasure plan against this attack, they found out that another group would be coming to give support. In the Cassen group's eyes, the battle would take much longer than just a minute, and the last group was supposed to arrive to give the final blow.

Roan then looked at Calina, his meaning obvious. Right after, Calina received his Spiritual Sense message.

'Think! What's the next step? Where are we? How should you react? Should we retreat? Are your allies still in a condition to fight? How long do you think the next group will take to arrive? Could they have already arrived and are hiding to strike us? Give orders! I hope you didn't forget the whole situation after this last battle started. A commander never forgets his or her duty. If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.'

Calina couldn't help but feel the pressure. She didn't forget her duty. As all three groups attacked together, she kept herself at the back, only giving support. Simultaneously, she focused on the time they spent to arrive here, started the attack, and defeated the enemy. In the past, she couldn't keep so many things in her mind at the same time. However, it was different now. Besides, deep down, she wanted Roan to recognize her skills more than anything else.

Rean, on the other hand, couldn't help but laugh mentally.

'I didn't know that you read the art of war.'

Roan shook his head.

'I didn't. I just so happened to have sent the guy who wrote that treatise into the path of reincarnation. When his information entered my mind so that I could do my job, this special sentence appeared several times. I have to admit that it was quite a good one, though.'

Rean was taken aback. Sure enough, death was really old.

Calina didn't hear that conversation, of course.

"The condition of our group is still good. Considering the place and the time we took to finish this, the last enemy group should be two to three minutes away from our position. However, there is a high chance that the cultivators who fled will inform them anytime soon. If they charge at us, there would not be enough time to build up an ambush."

"Still, the 24th group that is waiting for an attacking chance will not be able to charge through the gap left by this group. After all, they will retreat the moment they see that we are not here anymore. The best option would be guerrilla warfare that prioritizes reducing losses, just enough to hold this group here. That will create the perfect opportunity for the 24th group."

Calina then looked at Roan.

"The 24th Group is under Lavile's command. Do you think he would notice this change?"

Roan smiled faintly.

"He will. I already sent someone to tell him what is about to happen."

Roan then looked at Calina.

"Well thought. You can continue."

Calina couldn't help but feel a burst of happiness. It was incredibly rare for Roan to not point any mistake. However, everyone immediately looked at her bright expression and gave her a few meaningful smiles. Poor Calina immediately became as red as a tomato.

Suddenly, Malaka murmured in her ears.

'I don't mind giving up my brother if it is you.'

Sure enough, Malaka might act like a spoiled child, but she wasn't an idiot.

"Shut up!"

Calina then immediately changed the topic.

"Pay attention, assume the Echelon Formation. We will charge forward until the enemy notices us. After that, change into a Center Peel Formation and retreat while keeping the enemy's attention."

Everyone nodded as they assumed the positions and marched forward.

Death... and me

Chapter 336: Finishing the Battle

It was just as Calina mentioned. Their group quickly encountered the enemy group. Not only that, but it was the same size as their own. However, they had no intention to win or lose, just dragging it out as long as possible. With Rean and Roan around, the losses were reduced to a minimum. After all, Rean and Roan could use the Instant Recover Skill. It's just that Roan wasn't as good at it as Rean, so they separated their jobs accordingly. Rean focused on the most grievous injuries, while Roan took care of the rest.

Their enemy group didn't take too long to notice that Roan's group was holding them back. Naturally, they tried to increase their attack power, but it wasn't of much use. Eventually, their leader decided to retreat since they were entering too deep into the Jialin Army's territory.

Unfortunately, Roan's group didn't let them do so. Once they started to retreat, Calina would give orders to change the formation and attack. If they decided to retaliate again, she would change the formation into a defensive one while retreating.

The battle continued like that for over twenty minutes. Neither side had any significant losses either, especially on Roan's side. Finally not taking it any longer, the leader of the Cassen group gritted his teeth before ordering.

"Ignore them, retreat into the back lines. We have been here for way too long already."

He had no choice since Roan's group kept being healed because of the twins. Although the difference was small, it would accumulate as time passed. In the end, they would lose this battle of attrition.

Calina once again changed the formation into an offensive one, but their enemies still ignored that. Because of that, the slower ones ended up being engulfed by Roan's Unit.

Roan couldn't help but show a faint cold smile when he saw that.

'It should be about time.'

All of a sudden, another group appeared in front of Cassen's Unit.

"What?! Who are these guys?"

"We had eyes in the nearby groups! How come they appeared here?!"

"Fuck! Spread out! Focus on retreating! Ignore everything else!"

Obviously, that group was none other than the 24th unit, led by a cultivator named Lavile. Well, in fact, it was only half of his group. The other half charged into the gap left behind by this Cassen group, quickly taking over the region they were defending. Lavile's Unit had an easy time conquering the area, so he immediately dispatched half of his unit to give Roan's group some support.

Calina wasn't that slow either. At the very moment she spotted the 24th unit on the other side, she immediately changed into a full-force attack.

However, Rean was even faster.

'Life Style, Fifth Form, Light Aura Burst!'

The 24th unit was on the other side of Cassen's group, so the Light Burst didn't affect them as much as the enemy. However, Rean's Light Element skill had a limited range. If he spread further than that, the effects wouldn't be as significant. That being said, only his unit was boosted by the Light Aura Burst. The 24th unit had to rely on themselves.

Well, the enemy already had no will to fight anymore, so it wasn't as if it made things worse for the 24th unit.

Under Calina's command, their boosted unit separated into several smaller groups. They quickly charged into the enemy ranks together with the 24th unit. However, the 24th unit was not being controlled by Roan, Rean, or Calina, so they couldn't display the same organization. That being said, around half of the enemy's group still escaped since the 24th group failed to hold them down.

Seeing that the rest were escaping everywhere, Calina immediately stopped their group.

"Stop! Don't chase them. Gather around and collect the spoils."

This was the cultivation world. Each participating cultivator would usually be carrying their Spirit Stones and equipment. Spirit Stones could be used for their own cultivation while equipment could be used by themselves or sold later.

When the 24th unit saw Roan's group taking everything, they decided to join in. However, their leader immediately stopped them.

"Don't touch the spoils."

One of his group members couldn't help but ask.

"Why? We also helped them with this victory. We have as much of a right to take as they do."

The others also agreed with him. However, their leader still shook his head.

"The only reason we got this victory was that they let us do so. It was Death's Unit who told us about the gap that would appear in the enemy's defense line, allowing us to conquer that region. Just the rewards of taking over that area will be a lot bigger than what their group is getting now. Let's go. We need to stabilize that region before Cassen Country organizes other groups to retake it."

Everyone's eyes lit up when they heard that. Indeed, that was a huge accomplishment for their 24th unit, led by Lavile.

"Send someone to the nearest communication formation. Tell the headquarters that we need other units to join us in holding the newly acquired territory down. Make sure to state that it was the 24th unit who conquered it."

Their leader might have left the spoils of this battle to Roan's Unit, but he definitely wouldn't share the reward from the conquered area.

Calina saw those people quickly disappearing in the distance and looked at Rean and Roan.

"Is it okay to let them go like that? They will definitely claim the entire credit of that conquered area."

Roan shook his head.

"Leave them be. The elders are not that idiotic. They will soon understand that it shouldn't be possible for Lavile's Unit to conquer it independently. Once that happens, they will investigate and find out why that happened. We will receive our own share when that time comes."

Malaka couldn't help but say in response.

"But that will take some time. By then, no one will care about it anymore."

Rean smiled as he said.

"That's what Roan exactly wants. For him, the least amount of attention we get, the better. This is directly related to the number of losses our own group will suffer in the future, so this is a good thing instead."

Calina and Malaka nodded. As much as they were in the middle of a war, it doesn't mean the two girls liked killing.

"Let's go back!"

Death... and me

Chapter 337: Cassen's Deal

On the side of Cassen Country, one of their commanders had just received the report of the attack's failure, as well as the lost territory.

"Sigh... why did these idiots attack the Death Unit?"

Roan did what he could to not catch that much attention. However, with the ranking system in place, it wasn't that effective. Of course, in the long run, it still made a big difference. It was only after more than seven months that the Death Unit began to catch everyone's attention. However, once they did, the units of Cassen Country also wanted to test them out.

They also had their own reward system. As one could expect, defeating top-ranked units from Jialin gave a lot more rewards than common units. Naturally, more and more wanted to challenge that unit since the reward was high.

However, six groups had already got themselves killed because of their greediness. It only contributed to making the Death Unit even more famous. This time, the report said that the 24th unit of Jialin was the one who conquered the area, but this commander knew that it was because of the Death Unit that it happened.

Of course, there were also a few other dazzling groups on Jialin's side, so all the attention wasn't on Roan's Unit alone. Every sect and even the Royal Family had at least one elite group with an experienced commander. This was also a moment in time where unknown cultivators began to make themselves known. It was not because they were cultivation geniuses, but because they had a keen eye for strategy.

However, what bothered this Cassen commander the most wasn't the elite units of Jialin.

"Reporting! Commander Gofen, Jialin units appeared in the area where the 56th unit was defending. We didn't have enough time to mount a counterattack before they secured their positions."

Gofen let out a sigh once more after hearing that.

Fast! It was just too fast! That's definitely the strongest war weapon in existence for you, communication! Jialin had an overwhelming advantage in communication speed compared to them. Even their smallest units far in the distance received the reports of any new event tens of times faster than they could.

"Leave it. The Death Unit was probably sent there to give support. If their commander takes over the reins of the defense, we will need to pay too high of a price to reclaim that place."

The subordinate bitterly smiled. Cassen Country suffered one defeat after the other because of Jialin's communications system. They were really helpless in this regard.

"Can't we ask for a few of our Nascent Soul Realm cultivators to lead the units? They can help get rid of the commanders before they can receive support. The battle would end in a flash."

Gofen shook his head as he replied.

"Do you think Jialin hasn't thought about the same thing? They have Soul Transformation Realm cultivators on the front lines with their Spiritual Senses spread. If we really send Nascent Soul Realm cultivators to intervene, they will send their own. At that moment, the battle will quickly scale up."

Gofen's subordinate couldn't help but feel dejected. Their country was losing its territory way too fast.

"Is there nothing we can do about it?"

Gofen nodded.

"There is. If everything goes as planned, Jialin's fast advance should stop really soon."

The guy was taken aback.

"This... how?"

Gofen smiled before saying.

"We are not the only country unwilling to see our territories being taken away. Soon, we will receive some reinforcements to help deal with the situation. At the very least, we will finally arrive at an equilibrium."

However, Gofen's subordinate had a puzzled expression.

"As far as I know, the other countries wouldn't intervene as long as Jialin doesn't really wish to conquer our entire country. Also, Jialin is keeping an eye on the countries on its borders. There was even an attempt against them after they started the assault against us. Still, Jialin's enemies were stopped thanks to their new experts."

He wasn't wrong. Both Jialin and the surrounding countries thought about the same thing. Jialin was indeed conquering their territory quickly, but they had already announced that they only wanted enough territory to expand their borders, not engulf the entire country. The Jialin Royal Family was even bold enough to demand the extra land to prevent unnecessary conflict. Obviously, Cassen rejected and went to war. He was right to find it strange that some other country wanted to intervene.

"Don't worry. The reason we will receive reinforcements is thanks to Cassen's Royal Family. From what I know, it seems like Cassen's King thinks very highly of this territory. He is paying a hefty sum to have the Tolak and Rorel countries help us."

Tolak and Rorel countries didn't have borders touching Jialin. That being said, they were out of Jialin's reach at the moment.

"No country likes to see the others growing strong; that's the natural rule of the world. With the payment from Cassen's King and the fact that Tolak and Rorel are not at war with anyone, we will be able to get this extra force to help us. Of course, they won't send all their experts. Instead, it will mostly be Foundation Establishment, Core Formation, and Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators. There will be a few Nascent Soul Realm cultivators in tow, but they are only there to oversee the war."

Gofen's subordinate couldn't help but ask.

"Still, why do I feel like this is not the only reason they are coming to help us? If making payments was enough to make other countries' powers move, many countries would have used this method before to defend themselves. However, all countries are selfish. They would rather keep their forces alive."

Gofen agreed.

"That's correct. However, I don't know the details of their negotiation. In any case, it doesn't matter to us. The important part is that we are getting the reinforcements we need to hold Jialin's forces back. Whatever the reason is, it's beneficial to both Cassen and those two helpers. That's all we need to know."

Back at Death Unit, Kentucky's eyes suddenly lit up as he looked in a particular direction. If one looked closely, they would even be able to see him drooling.

Chick!

Death... and me

Chapter 338: New Discovery

As Gofen mentioned, the Death Unit had received orders to help secure the new area acquired during the last battle a few days later. Naturally, they had to move to that place. However, when they finally arrived there, Kentucky's perception immediately found something.

Rean noticed the change in Kentucky's behavior as the Minokawa looked in a particular direction.

"This... what's wrong, Kentucky? Did you find anything?"

Chick! Chick! Chick!

Kentucky jumped, excited while using his wings to point in the direction he was looking in.

Roan looked at it and remembered something.

"Isn't this the same reaction when the chicken found that..."

However, Roan stopped talking there. After all, Kentucky's abilities were also a secret. Instead, Roan used their Soul Connection to convey his words.

'Isn't that the same reaction Kentucky had when he found the Luminun Ore deposit?'

'Ah! That's right!'

Rean didn't have much Luminun Ore remaining. After all, it had already been over a year since they found the Luminun Ore deposit. At that time, Rean got 10 kilograms of that metal. As a Middle Heaven-Quality Ore, Kentucky could eat and digest around 100 grams every five days, which gave Rean a supply that would last five hundred days. By now, he only had 400 or so grams left in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm.

Of course, he still had Elder Reliance's stock that could last him another month or so. Reliance himself said that he didn't mind parting with it. Yet, that would soon be over as well. Kentucky could live perfectly fine without the Heaven Level ores to eat. In exchange, the development of his feathers and scales would be almost halted since Kentucky would only be able to use Spiritual Energy on them.

Chick!

Kentucky then tried to run away in the ore deposit's direction, but Rean immediately stopped him.

'Stop right there!'

Kentucky then looked behind, puzzled.

Chick?

'You can't go right now. Stay here. Understood?'

Kentucky couldn't help but look with a sad expression. However, Rean was adamant.

After confirming that Kentucky wouldn't run out by himself, the twins finally started to talk.

'Considering Kentucky's search range, the deposit might very well be hundreds of kilometers away.'

Roan nodded.

'Kentucky only noticed that deposit's presence once we arrived at this newly conquered area. That means we are at the very border of his perception. Also, don't forget that he is a lot stronger now than when we found him. His perception range has probably increased a lot since then. I wouldn't be surprised if this deposit was a thousand kilometers away.'

Rean agreed with him.

'That is well within the Cassen's army territory. It already took this long to take this area that was only 50km into their territory, let alone conquer all that 1000.'

'We need to talk with Droman and Mia.'

Other than Reliance, Droman and Mia were the only ones who knew about Kentucky's real identity. Obviously, they also knew about its ability to detect Heaven Level metals.

Roan then stayed in the area while Rean dashed back to where they came. Rean was responsible for everything related to equipment, so Roan did not intervene and let him do as he wished.

The Jialin forces were already building another Communication Formation in the new area. Still, it would take a day or two to pass all the cables and connect everything. Without any other choice, Rean had to go back to where the closest one was located. Well, with his Enhancement Ability and Core Formation Realm cultivation, that wasn't anything hard to do.

Finally, Rean reached the Communication Formation.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

The guards protecting the formation had noticed Rean immediately.

"It's me."

Rean finally got close enough for them to see who it was.

"Oh, Rean. What's up? You need to pass any message?"

Rean nodded.

"Yes. Can I use our communication formation for a second?"

The guards nodded and let Rean pass after he showed his Dalamu Sect badge. Not everyone could use Jialin's Communication Formations. Only the leaders of each Unit could do so, and they needed to have a good reason for it. However, Rean was Droman's Disciple, the Formation Master responsible for all communication formations, so he had a free pass.

Rean didn't say what he found in Cassen's territory. He simply requested that his Master came to see him as soon as possible. Their communication system was still too primitive. There were no such things

as cryptograph or the like. At most, they had a few codes with hidden meanings. It was better to talk with Droman face to face.

Droman didn't take too long to appear after that. Since he was responsible for all communication formations, he obviously stayed nearby.

"What is it? It is not the time for your Formation lessons yet."

Rean shook his head before using a Spiritual Sense message to explain everything.

'Kentucky seems to have found another Ore Deposit with Heaven level ores. This time, he was a lot more excited as well. I believe that whatever he detected is of very high quality, or there is a huge amount.'

Droman was surprised to hear that.

'That's great! Give me a second.'

Droman took a Thoughts Transmission Talisman and immediately contacted Mia. Sure enough, Mia also arrived after some time. The good things about Thoughts Transmission Talismans were that they were safe, so Droman already told her everything when he sent her the message.

'Rean, are you sure about that? Is there really another Heaven Level deposit here?'

Rean nodded.

'I'm sure. However, I don't know where it is since it's within Cassen's territory. Also, Kentucky is at the very limit of his detection range, so the deposit is definitely far inside the enemy's ranks.'

Mia nodded, not minding that part.

'It's fine. I just need the general direction so that we can focus our attacks on that side. However, you must understand that the spoils will be the property of the entire alliance. We will need to share it with the others.'

Rean already expected that. After all, if they tried to take everything for themselves and were found after, that might start an internal conflict instead. That's the last thing Jialin and Dalamu needed at the moment.

'How are you going to tell others about it?'

Mia smiled before saying.

'Don't worry, that's a simple matter.'

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Chapter 339: Continue

The reason Rean asked that was that Kentucky's ability should not be revealed. Mia wasn't an idiot, so she knew how to act.

'Alright, Rean. Tell me everything you know at the moment.'

Rean nodded and explained what he knew to Mia and Droman.

Mia wasn't sad that they would need to share the deposit with the Royal Family, the Sects, and the Laan experts. After all, Heaven Level materials were worth a lot to the point that even shared amounts are worth acquiring. Besides, wars were incredibly costly for countries. The rewards of the new territory would take a very long time to make up for the loss. Those Heaven Level Ores would help a lot in that case.

Mia left not long after talking to Rean. A few moments later, Droman also bid his farewell and returned to his place. Rean smiled and also left the area, going back to the newly conquered region.

'It's done. Mia went to talk with the other leaders about this Heaven Level deposit. I just hope she doesn't reveal anything about Kentucky.'

Roan shook his head.

'There is no need to worry. Mia can simply state that her spies found this information, and none of them would be able to do anything about it. In fact, they won't care how she found this information either. Once they heard that a Heaven Level Ore Deposit was located, they will immediately switch their attention to securing it.'

Rean nodded.

'That's good. I just hope to get some of it so I can feed Kentucky.'

'That shouldn't be a problem. Knowing how Mia acts, she'll probably give you another 50% of what the sect acquires. Of course, considering the share between all the powers in this war, the amount will probably be smaller than the time we found the Luminun Ore deposit.'

Rean didn't mind that.

'Anyway, why do I feel like everyone is tense?'

Roan then passed Rean a bunch of documents with information inside.

'It seems like Cassen's King convinced the two countries behind it to offer support during this war. Several units with cultivation ranging from Foundation Establishment to the Core and Soul Fusion Realm are coming now.'

Rean was taken aback.

'Isn't that bad? We won't be able to advance anymore if the difference in numbers is that big.'

Roan nodded.

'Indeed. After 10 months of war, we have acquired quite a significant part of their territory. Although it couldn't be compared to the Sects or Royal Family ones, it is still enough for the Laan experts to build their home. That being said, there's a good chance that Jialin will stop this war right here.'

Rean narrowed his eyes. If that happened, they wouldn't be able to acquire the ore deposit. Naturally, there would be no food for Kentucky.

Roan could tell what Rean was thinking.

'Don't worry, this is just a possibility. Didn't Mia leave straight away when you told her about this information? Chances are that Jialin will try to at least reach the ore deposit before calling this war.'

Roan was right. Right now, Mia was talking with the leaders participating in this war against Cassen.

"Heaven Level Ores! Are you sure about that?"

Mia shrugged her shoulders.

"How can I be? This is just something that my Dalamu Sect spies found. However, they haven't seen it by themselves. However, it is most likely true."

Burin looked at Mia and Zuan, who was beside her.

"How can you be so sure about that?"

Mia then explained.

"Simple. Didn't we just receive a report that Tolak and Rorel joined in an alliance with Cassen to help hold us back? Don't you think it would be too weird? We didn't get even close to conquering enough

territory to force those two countries to move. Even if Cassen's King paid them, that shouldn't be enough for them to move. Only in a case where the benefits were enormous would it be worth risking the lives of their forces."

Everyone in the room soon became pensive.

Sure enough, they knew about the income help. After all, there was no way such a huge amount of cultivators would appear on Cassen's side without being noticed.

"That makes sense. We were all puzzled as to why those two countries decided to help out of nowhere. However, as good as Heaven Level materials are, would it be enough to make those two countries move? After all, it's not like they can't get these kinds of metals as long as they are willing to pay the price. Their overall force should be more important than the deposit."

Everyone agreed with that as well. However, it was then that Rago from the Rohe Sect said.

"In that case, it can only mean two things. One, this deposit is so big that those countries think that it is worth a shot. Or two, there is High, or Peak Level Heaven Materials there. I personally feel like it's the first option."

Everyone agreed with Rago. Indeed, for it to be worth a country's mobilization, the reward must be big enough.

"Alright. At first, we were discussing whether we should continue this war or not. After all, the addition of those two countries' armies was out of our calculations at this point. However, I believe all of you don't want to give up this deposit anymore, right? After all, if Cassen can mobilize two allies, this deposit is bound to be worth it."

Roan was right. They were really considering stopping this war. Kentucky's findings overturned the situation.

"Those who agree to continue in securing the deposit, raise your hands."

Mia and Zuan immediately raised their hands. Not long after, Umbral Sect did the same. Rohe, Lagan, and Laskil quickly followed. In the end, only the Laan experts remained.

"Could it be that the ore deposit doesn't attract your interest?"

Fuka shook his head.

"That's not it. It's just that back in Laan City, we had access to quite a few pieces of equipment at the Heaven Level. It's quite weird to have to fight for it now."

When the Laan experts were teleported outside the city, their equipment didn't come with them. The Artifact Spirit had retrieved everything. After all, they didn't win those things. They were given by the Artifact Spirit itself.

Eventually, Fuka and Nefere raised their hands.

"Alright. We'll need to get a few weapons for us as well, so we agree."

With that, the continuation of the war was set in stone.

Death... and me

Chapter 340: Last Defense Army

With Kentucky's findings, the flow of the war had changed. The units filled with cultivators were now following the path indicated by Mia. However, things turned a lot more gruesome now that two countries joined to help in defending Cassen. Tolak and Rorel Countries had only dispatched part of their forces. If not for that, Jialin would be forced to stop the war due to the numbers' difference.

Back on the side of the Death Unit, Roan and the others were once again looking at a map of the region. Mia was right about her thoughts. It was indeed because of the Heaven Level Ore deposit that Tolak and Rorel joined Cassen's side.

There was a big problem ahead of Jialin at the moment.

At first, Tolak and Rorel were expecting to not lose a single cultivator. That's because the idea was to show their hands and force Jialin to stop, thinking that it wouldn't be worth continuing this war. Unfortunately, Kentucky's ability changed that outcome.

Soon, they noticed how Jialin slightly changed their path of attack. Naturally, they were moving in the direction of the ore deposits. Mia would even ask Rean from time to time if they were moving in the right direction, which Rean confirmed through Kentucky.

Unfortunately, Jialin had now reached an impasse. Since Cassen, Tolak, and Rorel knew where Jialin's army was heading towards, they immediately mounted a defense line. That's to be expected since the reason for their alliance was behind them.

At the same time, they began to mine the place. Their objective was to get the Heaven Level Ores before Jialin arrived.

Cassen had found this deposit by pure coincidence. It was because Jialin was attacking that their forces gathered around. If not for that, this deposit would probably be kept hidden for who knows how long. After investigating, they understood that this was a Triliun Ore vein. Triliun was an Earth Peak-Level material.

As mentioned in the past, the Luminun Ore was discovered because of the Zarkarian Ore. As for Zarkarian Ore itself, it was an Earth High-Level Ore. Luminun Ore appeared at the very center of Zarkarian Ore. It's not wrong to say that Luminun Ore was an evolution of Zarkarian Ore.

As for Triliun Ore, as long as the vein was big enough and had a constant flow of Spiritual Energy, one might be able to find Transten Ore. This was a rare Heaven High-Level type of ore known for being able to circulate Spiritual Energy easily. One doesn't need to be an expert to understand that it was incredibly valuable, especially for cultivators at the Nascent Soul Realm and above.

Of course, one couldn't ignore the Triliun Ore itself. After all, it was just a weaker level of Trasnten Ore. Earth Peak-Level Ores would also be worth a lot.

The problem that Cassen was facing at the moment was that this deposit was too big. In the past, Dalamu Sect took over a month to reach the Luminun Ore located at the center of the Zarkarian Ore

Vein. Not to mention that Zarkarian and Luminun Ores were a lightweight type of metal, so they were easier to mine.

Triliun Ore was a metal of higher level than Zarkarian. Even if it was at the same level, Triliun was already considered a metal with a higher defense than Zarkarian since Zarkarian was a lightweight material. Also, the deposit was much bigger than the Zarkarian deposit found in the Dalamu Sect territory. That being said, the time necessary to mine it and reach the center of the Triliun Vein would be several times higher. At least four months to half a year would be required depending on how deep inside the Transten Ore was.

Unless you were at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm, you could not fly. Nascent Soul Realm cultivators and above also refrained from joining the battle. That's because neither side wanted to risk losing those level of experts.

That being said, most of the war was conducted on the ground through their Foundation Establishment and Core Formation Realm cultivators. There were very few Core and Soul Fusion cultivators participating. They couldn't give up their own allies on the ground.

That was all Cassen needed to mount a strong resistance. They selected an area where they would have the terrain advantage. Jialin couldn't circumvent it either. Going around with a few cultivators and going around with an army of tens of thousands were two completely different things. It took time to move everyone in an orderly manner.

That also meant that Jialin would have to turn their backs to Cassen's alliance. Cassen and the other countries could use that chance to strike the middle of the pack or their rear. In the end, Jialin would need to lose a good part of its forces. It simply wasn't worth it since they wouldn't have the numbers to contend against Cassen's alliance once they finished that.

It also wasn't possible to make a much bigger detour. This was Cassen's territory. The Cassen alliance had a free pass behind this defense line. They would be able to move much faster and mount another defense line somewhere else to stop Jialin's advance. Not to mention that they already know the terrain much better than Jialin did. That being said, Jialin would only waste its time and resources by doing that. One couldn't forget that it would give Cassen, Tolak, and Rorel even more time to mine the Triliun Vein and the Transten Ore.

There was only one path remaining. Jialin had to defeat this defense line in head-on combat. It would be a clash to test the power of its cultivators and their own strategists.

Back in the Jialin Army, one of the Nascent Soul Realm cultivators couldn't help but ask.

"They have all gathered ahead. Can't we simply go there and level the ground for our army to pass?"

Zuan, the Dalamu Sect's Ancestor, shook his head.

"That won't happen. You can't feel it, but how can I and the others not? The four Saint Realm experts of Cassen are there, watching us. They also brought most of their Soul Transformation and Nascent Soul Realm cultivators. The moment we move, they will do the same. At that moment, the army below us will be the ones who'd suffer."

It was awkward how both Jialin and Cassen couldn't use their high-level experts to decide the outcome. Jialin couldn't bring all their Saint, Soul Transformation, and Nascent Soul Realm experts. After all, someone had to stay in Jialin to defend their homes. However, Cassen was inside of its own country. There was no problem for them to bring almost everyone.

That being said, Jialin and Cassen had the same number of Saint Realm Experts waiting. Soul Transformation and Nascent Soul ones were not that different either. It was fine for their countries to lose a high number of Foundation Establishment and Core Formation experts. Considering the lifespan of cultivators, they would recover those level of experts in no time. However, Nascent Soul cultivators and above was another matter entirely. Even Core and Soul Fusion were already quite powerful, so not a lot had participated in this battle.

All of a sudden, one of the Saint Realm experts of Cassen came out of the defense lines.

"Who is the Jialin Country representative? Step forward!"

Kocei Jialin was the one who came this time.

"I'm Kocei Jialin. Speak!"

Immediately, everyone's eyes and ears were attracted to the skies.