

Death 491

Death... and me

Chapter 491: Many Changes

Rean then commented.

"So... You've found a way of escaping the seal and are now trying to reconquer the world? That seems pretty unrealistic to me."

Fiok shook his head as he replied.

"I'm just a low-level member of the Lakure Race. I'm not sure whether we're trying to reconquer the world or not. However, we are definitely trying to get back to the surface, that's for sure."

Rean nodded as he said.

"And for that, you massacred an entire city of people who probably didn't even know you existed. That seems like a great way of letting people know you've come back."

A faint trace of anger appeared on Fiok's face before he said.

"That's just a small punishment for all the thousands of years that we were kept sealed. This was our planet! We didn't offend anyone before you came out and forced us into that state. How many more of our people do you think died during your conquest?"

Roan didn't see anything wrong with that. He had watched many massacres breaking out for much, much less than the reason this guy described.

"Now, then. Let's forget the reason why you're coming out. How about you tell me what is this Lakure Race you're part of? What is different between you and us humans?"

Fiok then pointed at the red line patterns on his body.

"The main difference is these lines. They are also meridians which we can use to control Spiritual Energy. All the Lakure Race members are born with it. Simply put, not only do we have the normal number of meridians, but we also have these extra meridians. This gives us a huge advantage in battle."

Rean immediately sent his Spiritual Sense into Fiok's body once again. This time, he focused on the Spiritual Energy instead of the lines themselves.

"Oh! It's true. Even though you have no cultivation anymore, I can still tell that Spiritual Energy is circulating inside."

Rean and Roan then asked a bunch of other questions. Things like their distribution of forces, their headquarters, plans, etc. However, the Lakure Race seemed to be very privy with the information, so Fiok really didn't know much. He only moved with the hopes of living on the surface that he only heard about.

"Alright. What about the seal? How did you break out of there?"

Fiok shook his head as he said.

"I don't know the answer to that. However, on the day it broke, the underground world trembled like crazy. The Spiritual Energy inside went into chaos, and it was quite difficult to use it for cultivation. It most likely had something to do with the seal breaking."

Roan then asked something else.

"Do you keep any prisoners?"

Fiok shook his head.

"Unless it's someone really important, like someone at the Nascent Soul Realm or above, we don't. After all, they might have more valuable information. At most, we got some people like the cities' officers to make some inquiries, but they should be dead already."

Rean also asked about Calina and Malaka. They could tell where Kentucky was, but it wasn't guaranteed that the girls would be with him.

"I don't know the ones you're talking about. However, the valley was full of cultivators when we started the plan. Because of that, quite a few had escaped the ambush and are now hidden. I don't know if your friends were part of them or not, though."

Rean sighed in relief. If a lot escaped, then Calina and Malaka were most likely between them. Well, that was obvious since the Lakure Race wasn't keeping prisoners to start with.

Eventually, Rean and Roan ran out of questions.

"Very good. Now, you can go on your way."

Roan didn't wait for the guy to say anything before cutting his head. Rean didn't feel the least bit guilty about it since this guy helped with the cities' massacres. Soon after, they simply threw him outside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm and left the place.

"Let's follow the direction where Kentucky is. I have a good plan in mind, and this situation is just perfect for it."

Rean nodded as the two disappeared in the distance.

Meanwhile, the Royal Family and the sects' forces were moving in the direction of the valley. However, they soon found that things wouldn't be that simple. That's because Erbec Jialin's Spiritual Sense had sensed something.

"Everyone, there are a lot of cultivators coming in this direction. Don't attack without my order since they might be cultivators from Qerlen Country."

However, they soon noticed the difference in the skins of those cultivators.

"What are those red lines?"

"I've never seen that before."

"Are they the ones who activated the natural formation?"

Erbec narrowed his eyes as he stepped forward to talk.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

Unfortunately, his words were completely ignored. A Soul Forging Realm Lakure Race member immediately attacked him without saying a single word. The red meridians in his body seemed to light up as Spiritual Energy gathered like torrents. Following that, Water and Wind Elements followed.

"Whirl Storm!"

Erbec wasn't any slower, though. Everyone knew the risks of entering this place, so they always kept their guards up all throughout the journey. He immediately gathered his own Spiritual Energy as Earth and Water Element came forth.

"Mud Wall!"

The attack hit Erbec's protection head-on. However, Erbec's Mud Wall that enveloped his body began to crack almost immediately.

"What?!"

Erbec could see that he and the guy who attacked were both in the Middle Stage of the Soul Forging Realm. If that were the case, how did his skill break so easily? Without any time to think, he immediately used his movement technique and disappeared from there. Unfortunately, the enemy had no intention of letting him go.

The other elders of the sects weren't much better off either, including Tiria and Juvian. Those guys had similar Nascent Soul Realm cultivation themselves. Unfortunately for them, they were just a tad stronger when it came to the amount of Spiritual Energy.

Obviously, they soon noticed the red meridians on their enemies' bodies lighting up. Obviously, it had something to do with those things.

They quickly looked at the lower-level cultivators from Dalamu that came with them and ordered.

"Work in groups! Don't let them separate you."

Juvian and Tiria quickly got closer to each other and began to battle as well. Only then did they put up a fight with their teamwork.

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Chapter 492: None other than Kentucky!

Of course, a battle with cultivators at that level was totally out of the twins' range. They knew that the main force would encounter resistance, but they decided to ignore it since there was nothing they could do. That being said, they rushed in Kentucky's direction.

"I doubt we'd find anyone who knows more than that guy unless we capture someone with a really high cultivation level. However, that's just too risky, so let's ignore the idea for now."

Rean nodded.

"That's fine. Just stay inside my skill range to not get detected."

Meanwhile, Calina's group also dealt with their own things.

Even though Calina's healing abilities were far from being as strong as Rean's, several days were enough for her to finish putting Wano back together. Not to mention that Wano himself used his Spiritual

Energy to help with his recovery. Once he got back to his top condition, he began to go out to look around.

Around a day ago, he had left once again and had now just come back.

Calina, Malaka, and the others immediately asked him.

"How was it?"

Wano nodded as he said.

"The problem is to avoid other's spiritual senses. However, this region is too big for the enemies to cover everything. Even if we're spotted, we still have enough time to leave the place before they gather around us. Anyway, we should move out as soon as possible."

Everyone agreed with Wano as they immediately stepped out of their hideout. Wano had done his best to find the safest route for them to take, so everything went pretty much as he said for the first day or so. After that, they were able to leave what was still considered the valley's inner region.

"From this point onwards, there isn't much security. From what I could see, they aren't very worried about the cultivators who escaped the valley since they were only at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm at most. They don't think we can cause an uproar, which is good for us."

"Have you found out anything else about them?"

Wano shook his head as he responded.

"Not really. I didn't want to raise any alarms around the place we were hiding, so I didn't try to capture any of them. However, I was able to see a few of them battling the demon beasts in the area. All of them have the same style. The red lines on their bodies fill up with Spiritual Energy when they fight. I'm not sure if they're really humans or not."

Suddenly, Wano raised his hand.

"Wait!"

Calina's group immediately stopped as they used their Spiritual Senses to look around.

"Up ahead. There's something."

Wano, Calina, and Malaka then quietly moved while Kentucky waited with the other cultivators on the back. Finally, they arrived at what seemed to be a huge clearing in the middle of the forest. As far as they could see, it was definitely over 25 to 30 kilometers long. However, this wasn't natural. This place had been transformed into this.

The three of them saw what seemed to be a large red crystal with a few cultivators guarding it at the very center. That crystal was slightly inclined to the valley's direction as it shot some kind of red light. It was then that Malaka found something off.

"Look at the tree and the plants on the ground."

Wano and Calina's eyes paid attention to those things, as Malaka suggested. Only then did they notice the peculiarity.

"There are a lot of other components mixed with the surface of the ground. But they have all turned to dust."

Malaka nodded.

"Can you see the base of the red crystal? It looks like some kind of root. I'm pretty sure that the crystal is absorbing the earth's energy, which killed all the plants, trees, etc."

Calina couldn't help but comment.

"If Rean was here, he could probably identify what's happening. Look around the crystal. The majority of the cultivators there are guarding it. However, there are a few with different clothes which are forming a circle around the crystal. There's a high chance that it's a formation."

Suddenly, that same red crystal seemed to activate some kind of ability that spread its power through the ground. Before Calina's group knew it, the plants and trees around them began to decay at fast speeds. The three didn't waste time and immediately retreated further away.

In just a few seconds, all the plants and trees in an area spanning several meters decayed all around the crystal area, increasing the size of the clearing.

"It's really absorbing the earth's energy."

"I wonder what they're using it for."

Wano could not help but agree with the two girls.

"Indeed. However, that isn't our problem at the moment. Fortunately, there doesn't seem to be any Nascent Soul Realm cultivator around. Now that we are in a clearing, you can see that there are more of these red rays spreading in the same direction. That being said, there are also more of these crystals that we can't see from this position. It also means that they don't have enough high-level cultivators to take care of all of them."

Wano was right. However, it wasn't for the reason that he thought it was. The truth was that many of the Nascent Soul Cultivators were sent to intercept the Royal Family and the sects' forces. Simply put, they were lucky that none of those who remained were close now.

"In any case, let's leave this place. That thing is probably important, so it wouldn't be weird if more people were patrolling the surroundings."

Calina and Malaka nodded. They could think about it for another time. For now, they had to guarantee their safety.

However, it was then that Malaka noticed another ray of light passing above their heads. Calina and Wano, obviously, noticed the same thing. It's just that the ray of light was moving in the red crystal's direction instead.

Seeing that, Wano, Calina, and Malaka's mouth twitched. That light just so happened to have a white and dark light. It was also a more or less spherical and familiar shape. It also looked familiarly fluffy.

"Ahem... It must be an illusion."

"Yep. Definitely an illusion."

"100% sure it's an illusion."

However, they soon heard a very familiar sound.

"Chiiiiick!*

Calina's group almost vomited blood. Trying to deny reality didn't really work well for them. Of course, that was none other than Kentucky!

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Chapter 493: Kentucky's Attack

"What is that damned bird doing?!"

Calina's group was at a loss on what they should do. Should they go help? Would they arrive in time? Oh well... Considering Kentucky's defense, they most likely would. They just didn't know if they should go or not.

The cultivators protecting the crystal immediately noticed Kentucky approaching at full speed. However, the Core and Soul Fusion Realm leader of the group quickly noticed that Kentucky was only a Middle Stage Three Demon Bird, so he let the others deal with it.

"Another annoying demon beast. Just take care of the bird so that it won't touch the crystal."

The Core Formation Realm subordinates immediately nodded and positioned themselves to strike Kentucky down when it got close enough to them.

At the same time, Kuana and the others arrived where Calina's group was.

"Sorry, your bird suddenly began to drool between its beak and shot in this direction. We didn't even have time to react before it flashed away."

If there was any doubt that it was Kentucky, all doubts were gone right now. Calina and Malaka looked at how the cultivators were prepared to attack Kentucky and couldn't wait anymore. Without hesitation, the two charged out, moving in the cultivators' direction.

Wano's mouth twitched. There went their plan of staying hidden until they were in a safe place. He could have ignored Calina's group and fled the scene, but he had a debt to pay to the girls. In the end, he also charged out.

Obviously, the Lakure Race members noticed Calina's group as soon as they stepped into the clearing. Their leader, who was in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm, noticed Wano's cultivation.

"Enemy attack! Protect the Formation Masters! I will stop the Core and Soul Fusion Realm guy while the others deal with the two girls and the bird!"

"Yes, Senior Hue."

Other than the Formation Masters controlling the crystal, there was a total of ten cultivators protecting the crystal. Calina's group only had four members, including Kentucky, so they weren't afraid of them. That was also why Hue didn't call for reinforcements straight away either.

Back at the trees, Kuana, Laffey, and Cassy didn't know if they should go with them or not.

"What should we do, Kuana?"

"We can still flee while they distract the enemies. First of all, we shouldn't even have caught their attention."

"However, it was also because of them that we escaped the valley entrance in the first place."

Hearing that, Kuana finally gritted her teeth and charged out as well. In the end, they wouldn't have Wano to scout the way out, so chances were high that they might get caught due to their weaker Spiritual Senses. Of course, that discussion only lasted for a second due to Spiritual Sense.

Seeing that three more girls came out didn't faze the Core and Soul Fusion Realm guy. They still had the advantage in numbers, and he was one stage higher than Wano in front of him. Just to make sure, he kept three of the protectors of the crystal to deal with Kentucky.

Wano was the fastest one by far due to his cultivation, so he immediately pounced at the leader.

"Take my sword!"

Fire and Wind Element gathered as Wano's swords moved in a flash of red fire.

'Decapitation in Flames!'

A horizontal sweep came forward, taking the leader of the group aback. It wasn't strong enough to prove dangerous to him. However, Wano's attack immediately covered a wide range. Obviously, he was trying to take the Core Formation Realm cultivators down.

"Courting death!"

Lightning Element gathered around the leader as his attack countered Wano.

'Lightning Dispersion!'

He also used a wide-area attack, which clashed against Wano's one.

Boom!

Fire and Lightning mixed together in an explosion of Spiritual Energy. Immediately, the Core Formation Realm cultivators were forced back due to the energy. However, they quickly understood that they shouldn't intervene in those two and focused on Calina and the rest on the back. Calina's group also understood this and did the same thing, avoiding Wano's battle.

Kentucky was the first one to charge out, but Wano was faster than him in the end. Still, he arrived at the Red Crystal just a second later. The three Core Formation Realm cultivators immediately channeled their Spiritual Energy and Elements as they attacked Kentucky.

'Wave Slasher!'

'World of Sunder!'

'Southern River Puncture!'

Three attacks came straight at Kentucky as he descended from the skies in the Red Crystal's direction. However, no one knew just how much stronger Kentucky was compared to demon beasts at his level. Those attacks only made Kentucky angry since they were trying to stop him from eating the crystal.

White and Dark Flames burst out of Kentucky's body as his descent increased several times in speed. Obviously, he was using the Fried Chicken Cannonball Attack. Well, Rean was the only one who called it that.

Creeeeeeee!

This attack needed time for him to reach a high enough altitude and then drop down. However, once Kentucky reached his full speed and had the two flames covering his body, he was unstoppable. The power of the attack was definitely at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm level.

The attacks barely passed through Kentucky's Dual Flames and were completely stopped by the blade-like feathers and scales under them. They weren't even able to reduce Kentucky's speed at all.

"What?!"

The cultivators panicked and tried to get out of Kentucky's way. Unfortunately for them, it was already too late.

Boom!

"Ahhhhhh!"

All three of them were swept away like ragdolls. The Black and White Flames covered their bodies as they collided several times with the ground before coming to a full stop. It was hard to tell whether they were alive or not.

The leader, who wasn't that worried at first, now had his eyes wide open.

"What the hell is that bird?!"

Quite a few of the Formation Masters sitting around the Red Crystal were also blasted away. The remaining ones looked at Kentucky with fear. However, Kentucky ignored them and pounced at the Red Crystal.

"Stop right there, chicken!"

The leader immediately tried to stop Kentucky. However, Wano's face showed a smile at that very moment.

'At least the bird is good for distraction.'

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Chapter 494: What do I do?

Wano might have only been a stage below his opponent, but one must remember that he had already defeated someone stronger than him even though he was injured. Sure, he may have received help from Calina, Malaka, and Kentucky at that time, but during his last attack, he far surpassed his opponent's power.

That being said, he shouldn't have been in a stalemate with this enemy. He kept holding his strength back, waiting for an opportunity to release his full potential in one go. That moment didn't take too long to appear as Kentucky opened a way through the enemies with brute force. The leader couldn't ignore Kentucky, so he immediately turned around to attack the Minokawa.

Seeing that, Wano sheathed his sword and assumed a combat stance. If one looked at that, it would seem quite a slow movement. However, in reality, it was extremely fast. Fire and Wind Element gathered around his body in the next moment.

Vup!

Suddenly, Wano exploded forward with speed even faster than the one he showed back in the valley entrance.

'One Sword!'

The Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator noticed Wano's attack with his Spiritual Sense. In fact, his Spiritual Sense hadn't left Wano for even a split second. However, he didn't expect Wano to be that fast. Not to mention that even though he had Wano in his perception, most of his attention was on Kentucky.

"Not good!"

The guy quickly turned around as he lifted his own weapon. He also curved his body to the side from pure instinct. That was all he could do since he didn't have time to conjure a Spiritual Energy barrier in time.

Swish!

Wano passed by the enemy leader in a flash. However, he immediately narrowed his eyes. Soon after, an arm was sent flying together with the weapon it was holding.

"Argh!"

There was no blood again. Wano's slash immediately cauterized the wound. Seeing that his attack failed to take the guy's life in one go, Wano immediately turned around and dashed in his direction. However, the enemy leader knew that he was at a disadvantage, so he fled without hesitation.

Wano wanted to pursue him, but Calina's group was having a hard time due to the difference in numbers. The Formation Masters noticed that they would need to fight, so they joined their hands against the girls.

'Lucky guy.'

Wano immediately turned around and charged at the rest of the enemies. That leader would definitely call reinforcements from the nearby red crystals. They couldn't stay here for long, or they might even encounter a Nascent Soul Realm cultivator.

With Wano joining the battle, the enemies were killed off quickly. Although two of them managed to escape in the end, this result was quite fortunate and above their expectations.

Kentucky's super attack, the distraction of the enemy leader, and Wano's own power. All of that together brought this quick result.

Eventually, Calina and Malaka were free and went to where Kentucky was. However, when they looked in the demon bird's direction, they saw it happily eating the Red Crystal.

*Crunch, crunch, crunch..."

Kentucky devoured the whole crystal in big chunks.

Kuana couldn't help but ask.

"What kind of bird is that?"

Wano shook his head as he said.

"We can talk about it later. We need to leave right now."

Malaka nodded and immediately called.

"Kentucky, we need to leave. Let's go!"

However, Kentucky only glanced at Malaka for a moment before he continued to eat the crystal.

"This fat bird! It can only think about food!"

Wano narrowed his eyes before he brought his sword out once more and attacked the red crystal. Since the bird wanted to finish that thing, they might as well separate it into several parts and make Kentucky follow the food with them. However...

Clang!

Wano's sword hit the Red Crystal, which was immediately bounced back due to its hardness.

"What?!"

Except for Malaka and Calina, everyone was taken aback. They know how strong Wano's attack is. However, all it did was to make a small chip fall down. Even Wano himself was shooked by that. That's because Kentuck would remove an enormous chunk of the Red Crystal with each bite!

"Just how powerful is this guy's beak?"

Pah!

Suddenly, Calina clenched her fist with Spiritual Energy and hit Kentucky's head. Naturally, Kentuck felt the pain since he wasn't hardening his feathers now that the battle was over. Well, Calina also felt pain when she did that but didn't show it on the surface.

'This dammed bird's skin is too hard!'

She then ignored the pain as she looked at the wronged expression on Kentucky's face.

"Don't look at me like that. Did you see what you have done?! If everything didn't go so smoothly, we might have been held down until more enemies appeared. Now, stop wasting time and leave this Red Crystal there. We need to leave."

Kuana saw that and found it strange.

"Can it understand what you are saying?"

Calina shook her head.

"Not really, but it can at least understand that I'm angry and that we need to leave now."

Wano nodded.

"Well, that already shows how intelligent it is. Perhaps it will really come with us and leave the crystal behind."

Kentucky then looked at the Red Crystal he hadn't eaten yet. However, he didn't want to give it up, so...

Vup!

Crack!

He pierced his beak into the crystal and used his body's strength to lift it up! Finally, he looked at Calina as if it was saying it was ready to go now. That was quite a hilarious scene. The Red Crystal was at least half the size of Kentucky's entire body. Nevertheless, it lifted the crystal no problem.

"Forget it. Let's go!"

Wano charged ahead with his Spiritual Sense spread as Calina and the others followed him. Kentucky came right behind, carrying the enormous bitten crystal.

Somewhere else, Rean and Roan suddenly stopped running and sat on the ground.

"What is it? Where is all this energy coming from?"

"Can't you feel it? It's coming from Kentucky's direction."

"I see... But how is this happening?"

[Seems like Kentucky found a huge source of Spiritual Energy. However, Kentucky's stage is limited by your own. Because of that, he can't advance while you don't do it yourselves. That being said, the extra energy he can't take is all being sent to you through your connection with him. Still, just what item could have such concentrated energy?]

Rean and Roan couldn't discuss since Spiritual Energy kept pouring into their bodies nonstop. The problem was that the energy wasn't Heaven and Earth's energy. It seemed to have an owner or a purpose before, so they could only take a small part of it. All the rest was being discarded.

Just like that, Rean and Roan spent thirty minutes absorbing the energy. Only then did the energy stop coming.

"Phew... Just how many days of cultivation did we save just now?"

"At least two or three. We better check with Kentucky later to see if he can find more of it."

"Indeed. However, let's not waste any more time. Let's go."

Rean and Roan quickly got up and charged in Kentucky's direction once more.

Meanwhile, a man was floating above the valley where the Formation Core was located. However, none of the Lakure Race members could see him, not even Jana. He looked down as his Spiritual Sense spread out.

Finally, he saw what seemed to be a room locked by several chains with many inscriptions on each one of them. Those chains were at a level that surpassed Heaven-Level equipment. Suddenly...

Bang!

The door trembled, and the chains tightened. They were pushed to their limits. However, the inscription held the chains together, not allowing the chains to break at all. Finally, the tightness of the chains went back to normal as the door came back to its original position.

A few minutes later...

Bang!

Exactly the same thing happened again. As the man observing it from above looked at it, he reached a conclusion.

'I see... So you're trying to escape, huh? If you continue attacking the seal like this, it will take just a few more years until the seal is broken. No wonder you used this natural formation. You needed time so that no one would bother you. Your subordinates did an excellent job.'

Suddenly, Spiritual Energy began to gather on the man's hand as he looked down.

'Unfortunately for you, you never expected that I would be in this place, right?'

However, after a few seconds, the energy in the man's hand disappeared as if it had never been there. Following that, he looked in the distance as he pondered.

'Hmm... If I fix the seal, no one will stay here to run this natural formation core anymore. Naturally, the time acceleration effect will disappear the moment the formation collapses as well. It would be nearly impossible to rebuild this time effect with the cultivation of others.'

He continued to think about it until he finally decided.

'Alright, I'll let your Lakure Race see the light for a bit longer.'

The man then looked in the direction where Calina's group was fleeing and narrowed his eyes.

'Leaving the Lakure Race aside... I didn't expect to find one more of them here. Is it a coincidence? Well, whatever. Let's see what will happen from now on.'

Obviously, the man was none other than Old Worm! From the beginning to the end, no one noticed his presence at all. Soon after, he turned around and left without leaving a single trace.

Somewhere else, the group composed of the Royal Family and the sects were having a hard time. Even though they had similar strength, their opponents' red meridians gave them a huge advantage.

Tiria then looked at Erbec, who was also in an awful position against the other Soul Forging Realm enemy.

'Senior Erbec, we can't hold on for longer. We might need to flee from here.'

Erbec knew that. In fact, he was already considering this option since he couldn't picture himself winning a battle against the other Soul Forging Realm guy. However, he was a member of the Royal Family. He really didn't want to leave this easily.

'What do I do?'

Death... and me

Chapter 495: Separation

"Oh! This place seems to be fun."

Just as Erbec was about to give orders for them to retreat, a new group of cultivators appeared in the distance. In an instant, the Lakure Race members and the Jialin Country ones looked in their direction. Both sides didn't know whether they were enemies or not.

Finally, Erbec recognized the Soul Forging Realm cultivator leading them.

"Suan Foiu from the Kuman Sect! It's the Guntao Country!"

Suan also noticed Erbec and couldn't help but laugh.

"Erbec, you seem to be in a tight spot. Do you need help?"

Erbec gritted his teeth but nodded in the end.

"Shut up and help us already. This thing also involves your Guntao Country."

Suan smiled as he and his group stepped forward. Back when the formation was about to close again, Tuise and the two other Saint Realm experts quickly made a group so that they could investigate the inside of the formation. Even though Droman might not be able to open the formation again, it would still be better to have some of their experts inside.

That being said, Suan was sent in with quite a few Nascent Soul Realm cultivators and below to verify what was happening. They knew that the target was the valley in Qerlen Country as well. That's why they ended up meeting Erbec's group here after they had battled for a long time.

'Ruin of the Sun!'

Fire Element and Spiritual Energy gathered around Suan as he joined hands with Erbec to attack the enemy's Soul Forging Realm cultivator. The same things happened all around, with lower-level cultivators helping the Jialin Country members. In fact, they had no other choice other than to help. After all, Jialin Country's forces had bigger numbers inside this natural formation. If even they lost, the Guntao Country forces would have a lower chance to achieve anything. They would need to join hands to be able to proceed.

The situation on the battlefield quickly turned around as the Lakure Race members were gradually being suppressed. However, that didn't make them give up. Instead, they began to attack with even more fervor.

"For a place under the sun!"

"For freedom!"

"No more of that shitty underground world! Brothers and sisters, kill!"

Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom!

The area soon turned into a forbidden zone as many casualties piled up from both sides. It went totally against what Erbec and the others thought would happen.

"Fuck! These guys are crazy!"

"Focus! If they really continue like this, it will be them who'll lose."

"Don't fall for their suicidal attacks! Make sure to preserve your own lives!"

The battle continued for another hour. Only when less than 20% of the Lakure Race members remained did their Soul Forging Realm leader issue an order.

"That's enough! Retreat!"

Immediately, the enemies turned around and ran back in the direction of the valley. As for Erbec and Suan, they immediately gave up any ideas of pursuing them. They were all tired and lost more than 30% of their own forces in this first clash. The survivors of the enemy side were mostly their elites as well. If they forced the other side, they might pay a very high price to kill them.

"Who the hell are those guys? They didn't run away when they were at a disadvantage. Instead, they began to sacrifice themselves to kill us."

Erbec shook his head as he said.

"I don't know. This was the first time I've met them. If you guys hadn't appeared, the ones who would have to retreat would be us instead of them."

Tiria and Juvian weren't that well-off either. Tiria had suffered quite a few grievous wounds, while Juvian had even lost an arm in a suicide attack from a Nascent Soul Realm enemy. The two of them quickly sat down and swallowed a few healing pills. The same scene could be seen in all the other powers around them.

"How are our losses?"

A slightly well-off subordinate quickly made the count before informing Tiria and Juvian.

"Three Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators from our sect died. As for the Core Formation Realm cultivators, we lost 27 of them."

"Three Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivators? Were they all disciples, or was there any Inner Sect elder between them?"

The subordinate immediately answered.

"Two of them were Initial Stage Core and Soul Fusion Realm disciples of the Inner Sect. The remaining one was an elder at the Middle Stage of the same realm, Elder Odeni."

Juvian and Tiria narrowed their eyes. Core Formation Realm cultivators weren't that hard to train. However, Core and Soul Fusion Realm ones were quite difficult to nurture. Between the tens of thousands of disciples of the Dalamu Sect, only 45 were at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. That already included Inner Sect elders like Hulian and Zaia. Each loss at that level was a sting to them.

Tiria then looked at Juvian and his missing arm.

"Elder Juvian, how are you faring?"

"I'm fine. I already stopped the bleeding, and I'm closing the injury. However, I won't be able to recover my arm without paying a very hefty price in the Empire's capital."

Tiria nodded.

"It's fine. Sect leader will definitely compensate you for that."

Juvian nodded. From the Nascent Soul Realm onwards, the loss of a limb wasn't completely impossible to recover. However, that required a very expensive pill that he wouldn't find anywhere else other than the capital. The type that he couldn't buy without Rank 4 Spirit Stones, at the very least.

A few moments later, one of Erbec's subordinates brought one of the Lakure Race members' corpses to him. He wasn't the only one, though. Tiria, Juvian, Galo, and the other sects' Nascent Soul Realm cultivators took their time to check the enemies' bodies.

Sure enough, they quickly noticed that those red lines were not just decoration but part of their bodies to start with.

"Are these meridians?"

"Should be. At the very least, it works in a similar fashion."

"You all saw how these things shone every time they were about to attack, yes?"

"No wonder they're so strong. They had extra help absorbing and using Spiritual Energy."

"Here's the question. Are they really humans? Has anyone ever seen this kind before?"

Everyone shook their heads. None of them know anything about these people.

In the end, Erbec got up again before offering.

"I think we should go back and talk to our leaders. Just this group alone already gave us so many problems. We don't know if they have more members or not. However, I doubt those that fled were all of them. We're at a serious disadvantage here."

Suan bitterly smiled before saying.

"You can't. The formation protecting this place has changed. The guy called Droman tried to use the same method again, but it didn't work. From the looks of it, the enemies changed the properties of the Natural Formation. Our group got inside just a few moments before the gap had closed."

The Jialin Country forces were taken aback by that news.

"What?! Then how are we going to leave this place?"

Suan shook his head as he responded.

"We were expecting to find the core of the formation and turn it off. However, this plan seems highly unlikely considering the enemy's forces."

Juvian then mentioned.

"From the looks of it, they can't tell where we are all the time. Otherwise, they would have arrived way earlier, considering the time and speed difference. That being said, we should leave this location straight away before more reinforcements come."

Erbec and Suan agreed with Juvian. They all got up, gathered what they could from the corpses, and left the place straight away. Along the way, the leaders of each power in this place discussed the next step.

"So, what should we do now?"

"There's a city that got dragged into this Natural Formation. Should we go there?"

"That's a bad idea. I doubt they would leave the cities out of their perceptions. At most, we can only send two or three cultivators to check the situation, but no more than that."

"From what Droman and the other Formation Masters told us, this Natural Formation uses up a ridiculous amount of energy. As good as its core might be, it will eventually dry up. However, it all

depends on how good the core is. It might take a few days, or it might take several years. However, it will definitely run out at some point."

"There is also the Sasamil Imperial Family. We already told them about it, so they should be sending their experts here. Perhaps their Formation Masters can deactivate the Natural Formation when they arrive."

"We should also consider a longer stay. After all, we don't know when the Natural Formation will open again. Perhaps moving like a group is a bad choice as well."

"What will happen if a huge force appears then? We need numbers to contend against them."

"No, it's more of the opposite. Since they can't tell where we are, staying together will only attract more attention."

"He's right. There's only one good thing about this situation. This Natural Formation is just way too big. You will need several armies if you want to comb through such a huge place. I doubt the enemy has this many members. Separating seems to be the best choice for us. That will force the enemies to separate as well. Even if some of us are found, it will be much easier to escape or maybe even get rid of them."

"There's also the option to head to the valley to test things out. Well, that will be up to each power's own choices."

In the end, everyone agreed with that decision. And just like that, each power took its own members and left the place in different directions.

Death... and me

Chapter 496: Seems Fair

Time passed as another day in the Natural Formation went by. Eventually, the Lakure Race cultivators who went to intercept Erbec's group had returned. Seeing the state they were in, Jana couldn't help but narrow her eyes.

"What happened, Cosko? Were there a lot of enemies?"

Cosko was the name of the Soul Forging Realm leader during the attack.

"At first, we were at a slight disadvantage in numbers compared to them. However, thanks to our race's special meridians, we took the upper hand after some time. We would most likely win that battle. Unfortunately, a new group of cultivators appeared at the last moment and joined the battle."

"Our brothers and sisters fought as hard as they possibly could. However, we couldn't make up for the gap in numbers, so I issued a retreat order when it had reached a critical point."

Jana couldn't help but feel a bit of guilt for the lives of the Lakure Race members who had died. They had been living in the sealed underground world for a very long time. Space wasn't exactly a privilege there. Because of that, they could only make do with what they had. That being said, the Lakure Race was very united.

"Their deaths won't be in vain. I promise you that."

Jana then changed the topic as she said.

"You said a new group appeared during the battle. Does that mean they still have a way to enter the formation?"

That was the most important thing to talk about. After all, they changed the formation to prevent just that.

Cosko pondered for a bit before replying.

"I don't think so. However, I also thought about this possibility, so I sent some of our members to check on the Natural Formation barrier for openings. I have their Thoughts Transmission Talismans with me, so it shouldn't take that long before we receive a report."

Sure enough, one of the Thoughts Transmission Talismans lit up as if it knew what they were thinking. Cosko quickly put it on his forehead and absorbed the thoughts inside.

Cosko's group had gone to intercept the Royal Family and the Sects' forces at full speed. Because of that, they were much closer to the Natural Formation border than they were to the valley. That being said, it was much faster for the scout group to arrive at the border than Cosko's group to get back to the valley. From there, they separated and followed the barrier, looking for an opening or anything of the sort.

"The first group reported that they followed the border of the barrier for an entire day, but no openings were found."

Sometime later, the second Thoughts Transmission Talisman lit up as well.

"The second group that checked the barrier in the opposite direction also reported that they couldn't find any entrance. Of course, we can't discard the possibility that they used other methods to enter the Natural Formation."

Jana nodded, letting out a sigh of relief in the process.

"I doubt someone else could pass through the formation's barrier that easily. After all, we changed it so that even Yulian would have a hard time breaking it. Most likely, the team that appeared later entered the barrier using the same method as the first one. However, they probably can't do that anymore now that we've changed the layout of the barrier."

Cosko nodded as he said.

"My thoughts are the same, Lady Jana. So, what should we do now? Gather our forces and look for those intruders?"

Jana pondered for a bit but shook her head in the end.

"No. We can't discard the possibility that this was all done to redirect our attention away from the valley. Remember, this valley has to be protected at all costs. Besides, we don't know if any other group had entered the formation before we changed it."

"If we receive a full-force attack while everyone is out looking for those enemies, there's nothing we can do against it. Leave them be! We already wiped out the seven cities we've enveloped and gathered the resources in the valley. Keep the high-level cultivators here to protect the valley and send the rest to protect the Life Absorbing Crystals. We don't have enough numbers to go look for them. "

Cosko nodded before asking.

"Understood. Talking about numbers, how's the portal?"

Jana looked back at the valley before saying.

"The same as always. We can only bring a few of our members out every day. It will take a very long time until we finish opening the passage. Until then, all we can do is wait. However, as long as the Ancestor breaks out of the seal, we shouldn't have anything to worry about anymore. For that, make sure that the Life Absorbing Crystals are working properly. Ancestor needs them to break the seal imprisoning him."

Jana then added.

"Talking about the Life Absorbing Crystals, one of the crystals was destroyed around a day ago. Send someone to replace that one to not delay the Energy Absorption. Also, make sure the teams are as prepared as possible in case one of the crystals is attacked again."

Cosko nodded.

"Don't worry. I'll also order several teams to patrol the area beyond the crystals' positions. Unless we're talking about Nascent Soul Realm cultivators or higher, they should be able to spot any enemy approaching."

As Jana and Cosko discussed a few more things, Calina's group finally left the valley's territory. They didn't know if they would be pursued, so they kept moving away. Right behind them, a black and white bird was carrying an enormous red crystal in his beak. Then again, it didn't matter what Calina and Malaka say. Kentucky simply didn't let it go.

'Perhaps it's similar to the Heaven-Level metals Rean gave us to feed him.'

Calina and Malaka were right. Kentucky found the crystal really good both in taste and benefits for its body. The Life Energy it gathered was similar to the Life Energy that Rean could feel with his Light Element. Kentucky was able to use Light Element as well, so it was beneficial to him.

Wano soon found a good spot for them to hide and gave the order to stop.

"Let's rest here for a while."

Kuana's group immediately dropped down after hearing that. They had been running for so long that those girls couldn't hold anymore. Even Spiritual Energy wasn't enough to keep up the pace anymore. However, Malaka and Calina, who were also in the Core Formation Realm, seemed to be completely fine.

"Oh! It seems like you received quite a good training. Usually, cultivators only think about their Spiritual Energy and things like that. It's quite rare to see cultivators with such physical health like you two, especially between women."

Wano could not help but say. However, the reaction he got from Calina and Malaka was vastly different from what he expected.

"Hehehe... Good physical health, huh? I don't even want to remember why..."

Malaka nodded vigorously.

"Just don't talk about it anymore, please. The memories are too painful."

Wano only became more puzzled, though.

"This... Did something happen?"

Calina and Malaka then began to remember all the 'special' training sessions they had with Rean and Roan. Of course, that could only be considered hell. It wasn't wrong to say that they almost died in some of them... Frightening. Well, at least it paid off right now. Calina and Malaka were an entire realm or more below Wano, but they could keep up at his pace without a problem. Kuana's group obviously wasn't doing as well.

Bang!

Suddenly, Kentucky dropped the Red Crystal and began to eat it once again.

Crunch, crunch, crunch...

Every time his beak moved, a big chunk of the crystal came out.

"I'm sorry but, just what kind of demon beast is that? I tried to cut this crystal with my sword, but it didn't even break the crystal, much less scratch it."

Calina and Malaka bitterly smiled. Sure enough, where would you find something like Kentucky? Nowhere is the obvious answer. Calina was told about Kentucky's race, so she also knew how rare it is.

"Ahem... This is a special demon bird bred by our Dalamu Sect. They have extremely hard beaks. That's why it can do such a thing."

Wano narrowed his eyes as he uttered.

"If it was just the beak, then I could accept it. However, that attack where it came crashing down from the sky like a meteor was completely different. It definitely reached the power of a Stage Four Demon Beast or a Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator. Do you think I'll believe that it's just a special breed of a sect from the surrounding countries?"

Calina scratched the back of her head as she said.

"Well, that is up to you to believe or not."

However, Malaka suddenly smiled as she looked at Wano.

"As I expected. Wano, you're not from anywhere close to the surrounding countries, right? First of all, your strength far surpasses the Middle Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. Also, you can guarantee that none of the surrounding countries can breed a demon beast like Kentucky. Just who are you?"

Calina was taken aback by Malaka's words. The way she talked was utterly different from her normal happy-go-lucky behavior. She looked more like... like... Mia or Roan! However, she quickly put those thoughts behind. After all, Malaka's point was really important, so she focused on Wano first. Besides, she felt like his moves to be somewhat familiar as well.

Of course, Kuana was close to them, so their interest was immediately piqued as well.

Wano, on the other hand, sighed as he said.

"Why do I have such a big mouth? Well, forget it. Let's do it like this, then. I won't ask about your demon bird, and you won't ask me about my identity. How about that?"

Malaka showed a playful smile before nodding.

"Seems fair."

Death... and me

Chapter 497: Finally Together

Back on Rean and Roan's side, they once again felt Spiritual Energy entering their bodies. Without any other choice, they had to stop moving to absorb the energy into their dantians. This time, however, they stayed in that position for much longer. That was because Kentucky didn't stop eating the red crystal until it was completely gone.

A few hours later, they finally opened their eyes.

"It seems like he was finished absorbing whatever he got."

Rean nodded as he said.

"Well, it's not really a bad thing. We've obtained enough energy to make up for two or three weeks of cultivation. I'm quite curious as to what he found that has so much energy. The only sad part is that we couldn't absorb most of it."

Roan shook his head as he replied.

"It doesn't matter. If we really continue like this, our foundations will become unstable due to the speed of cultivation. This speed is more than enough to keep the balance."

Roan then looked in the direction he could sense Kentucky.

"Anyway, we are very close to him. If not for this energy we've obtained, we would have arrived already."

Roan was right. After all, the group that attacked the Royal Family and the sects' forces had already returned to the valley. It would be weird if the twins didn't move that much as well.

Rean and Roan didn't waste time and departed.

On the side of Calina's group, Kentucky sat on the ground as he digested the red crystal it ate.

Calina, Malaka, and Wano just stayed there as well, waiting for Kuana's group to recover their energy. During this time, Calina and Malaka discussed something else with Wano.

"Don't you think we're being too lucky? We found almost no one on our way here."

Wano nodded.

"I thought the same thing as well. I was even ready in case a Nascent Soul Realm cultivator had appeared. Nevertheless, we've only come across some Core Formation or even Foundation Establishment cultivators. It's as if they are busy with something else."

Malaka pondered for a bit before saying.

"Well, we have been here for over 12 days. The sects and other powers should have noticed what's happening in this place. Most likely, the enemies are dealing with them now. They can't spend much time with low-level cultivators like us."

"That makes sense. In any case, that's a good thing for us. Let's keep moving out of this place."

The three could not help but unanimously agree with that statement.

Just as they were about to move, Kentucky's eyes opened as he looked in a particular direction. Malaka, of course, noticed that straight away.

"What is it, Kentucky?"

Chick!

Wano narrowed his eyes and immediately spread his Spiritual Sense. However, he couldn't see anything in the direction Kentucky looked at.

'Could it be a higher-level cultivator? If that's the case, I won't be able to feel it with my Spiritual Sense. However, how could a Middle Stage Three Demon Beast feel it?'

Wano then assumed a combat stance, preparing to run away as soon as possible.

It was then that a voice entered everyone's ears.

"Oh! We finally arrived."

Kentucky immediately got up and ran in the direction of the voice. Malaka and Calina obviously recognized that voice as well, so they just smiled in relief. After some time, two figures came out of the woods.

Naturally, they were Rean and Roan, who were already close by to start with.

Chick!

Kentucky immediately pounced at Rean.

"Wait, wait, wait!"

Bang!

Poor Rean was pushed to the ground by Kentucky's body.

"Too... Heavy! Get off of me, Kentucky!"

Chick?

Only then did Kentucky notice that Rean seemed to be suffering and stepped back.

Chick!

Soon after, he began to rub his head against Rean's body.

"Alright, alright. I'm happy to see you too."

Roan completely ignored that as he looked at Malaka and Calina.

"It seems like you two are fine."

Wano and Kuana couldn't help but ask, though.

"Who are you?"

Calina smiled as she stood beside the twins.

"It's okay. They're members of our Dalamu Sect."

Malaka nodded as she followed where Calina left off.

"They're my big brothers. We came from the same tribe."

Wano narrowed his eyes in response.

"Are you sure? How did they find this place if that's the case? It's obvious that they knew where we were going. As far as I know, they might very well be allied with the ones who attacked the valley."

Kuana and the other two girls nodded. That was just way too convenient.

Well, Calina and Malaka knew very well why. They had heard how the twins could feel the Minokawa's presence as long as it wasn't too far away. Of course, they couldn't talk about it.

Roan then looked at Wano before saying.

"I don't care whether you believe us or not."

After that, he turned around and began to leave.

"Illia, Malaka, let's go."

Rean couldn't help but sigh.

"Why do you need to always be like this? They might have helped Illia and Malaka, you know?"

Malaka nodded.

"Indeed. Senior Wano was a huge help for us to escape the valley when it was attacked. Kuana, Laffey, and Cassy also helped out a lot. We wouldn't make it out if it wasn't for all of them."

Rean looked at Wano after hearing that and bowed.

"Thank you for helping my younger sister, Senior Wano."

Wano scratched the back of his head in response. How come Illia and Malaka didn't seem to care about their sudden appearance?

"Let me see if I got it right. You two have a way to track down these two girls, right?"

Rean smiled as he nodded.

"I can't tell you how to be exact. However, we do have a way to track them. That's why we found our way here after we heard about the event in Qerlen Country."

Wano nodded.

"Very well. How about we exchange some information then? I'm sure you want to hear what we know. Obviously, I want to know the situation from those who are outside as well."

Rean was more than happy to comply. As for Roan, he didn't say anything as he waited.

Rean, Wano, Calina, and Malaka then began to discuss what they saw and knew. It wasn't before half an hour later that they finished discussing everything.

"So, there's a natural formation impeding anyone from entering or leaving, huh? However, that Elder Droman found a way to open a gap, and that's how you came inside with many other cultivators of your sects. However, after the natural formation went through that transformation we saw before, it became impossible to open it again with the same method. The Arolan City you passed by has also been wiped out by these enemies. There's also the thing about the time inside this place, which is ten times as fast than it is outside or perhaps even faster. Finally, it seems like this is a different race from us humans that had been sealed for quite some time. Did I go through everything?"

Rean nodded.

"That's basically it. As for your case, you were there when the valley was attacked. Also, you got to see those red crystals that Kentucky ate. That makes a few things clearer."

Roan finally decided to talk after that.

"From the looks of it, the main forces of the enemies are all gathered around the valley. There must be something there that they're protecting."

Wano nodded.

"That makes sense. Otherwise, we should have been discovered by now. To me, it seems like they're trying to buy time."

Rean shrugged his shoulders in response.

"Well, that's good for us. I'm a Formation Master, so I know this formation will collapse through lack of energy sooner or later. We won't be trapped here forever."

Rean then looked at Wano, Kuana, Cassy, and Laffey.

"Alright, then. You can head in the direction of the natural formation's barrier. That should be the safest place to be in for now. The area enveloped by this formation is enormous, so there are quite a few demon beast forests enveloped by the formation as well. You can use it to train while you wait."

Wano couldn't help but ask.

"What about you guys?"

"We're going to train as well. We don't know how long this barrier will keep up, so we want to use the time difference to hastily increase our cultivation."

Malaka and Calina were taken aback.

"Are we going to stay nearby? Isn't that too dangerous? The Lakure Race definitely has cultivators at Nascent Soul and above. What if we were attacked?"

"Ah! Forget what I said..."

Calina felt like an idiot.

'What am I thinking? Rean can feel any level of Spiritual Sense. There's no way we can be ambushed by higher-level cultivators without him noticing. Once they appear, Rean and Roan can simply pull Malaka and me directly inside the dimensional realm.'

Rean looked at Calina and could tell that she understood their advantages. However, Wano found it very intriguing.

"From her reaction, it seems like you guys have some way of keeping yourselves safe. How about I join you as well? I've been traveling to train, after all. Now that you say that, this time acceleration is a huge opportunity for me as well."

Rean and Roan were just about to refuse when all of a sudden, they received a Spiritual Sense message from Malaka.

'There's something strange about this guy. His strength is far above those at his cultivation level. He's also extremely young. Perhaps we should keep an eye on him.'

Rean narrowed his eyes as he looked at the smiling Malaka.

'Why do I feel like you are looking more and more like the Sect Leader?'

Malaka laughed in response.

'Master has been teaching me very well... even though I don't want to learn.'

Rean sighed and then looked at Roan.

'So, what do you think?'

Death... and me

Chapter 498: Plans

Roan pondered over it for a bit and had to admit that the guy seemed somewhat off. That's not the level you'd expect to find in a place like this. Even Calina and Malaka could only fight two stages above their level because of his training and Calina's Yin Cultivation Technique. Not to mention that he had let the two cultivate in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm a few times.

"Alright. However, if we see that we've got into a desperate situation, we will abandon you straight away. Also, you can not intervene with our training either. That means you will have to find your own targets and things like that."

Wano smiled as he said.

"That's a matter of course. In fact, I would also flee straight away if a Nascent Soul Realm cultivator suddenly appears. I couldn't pay attention to you even if I wanted to."

Roan nodded in response.

Calina and Malaka then looked at Kuana, Laffey, and Cassy.

"In your case, I would really leave this place now that it is safer. Try to stay around the barrier border for now as well as the demon beast forests. It's the same reason as Wano's. If an enemy that's too strong appears, we really won't be able to do much for you."

Kuana's group knew that it was true. During the battles they had on their way here, they saw that Kentucky, Calina, Malaka, and Wano were much more powerful than what their cultivation showed. However, the three girls weren't anything like that.

"We will leave for the border then. Do you know how long it will take for the Energy Core to run out of it?"

Rean shook his head as he pondered.

"I don't know. However, considering this natural formation's size, a really powerful energy core is necessary just for it to turn on. That being said, you might have to wait a few years in here. Don't forget, the time here passes ten times faster or more. That's why it looks like a lot of time for us."

Kuana's group couldn't help but sigh. That also meant that they wouldn't be able to get any resources for the time being from their sect. Well, they could go look for resources themselves since there was a lot of area to cover. Demon beast forests usually have a lot of Spiritual Herbs that could be used directly for cultivation.

"Alright, we understand."

Rean then sent a Spiritual Sense Message to the girls, telling them the route they took to arrive. It was pretty safe during their journey here, so it should be of some use for Kuana's group to leave this place. Following that, Kuana, Cassy, and Laffey thanked Malaka and the others for the help and departed.

After that was done, Wano took the chance to ask.

"So, what do you want to do for now?"

Rean shrugged his shoulders before saying.

"We all had quite a few battles on our way to this place, right? I just need to check one thing for now."

He then put his hands on Calina and Malaka's shoulders before sending his Spiritual Sense and Light Element into their bodies. Calina and Malaka were already used to it. He did that to heal any hidden injuries in their bodies due to overtraining or battles. At the same time, he could check the state of their foundation. In this part, he was even better than Roan.

"Alright. All the things you went through made your foundations very sturdy. Roan and I are pretty much in the same state. That being said, we should take our time to sit down and cultivate. There's no need to look for problems for now."

Roan nodded.

"Since you confirmed that their foundation is okay, then let's find a place to hide and cultivate."

Wano couldn't help but ask.

"Was it me, or did you use the Light Element just now?"

Rean looked at Wano with a surprised look.

"Oh! Someone from outside Jialin Country can tell?"

Wano nodded.

"Jialin? Are you perhaps famous there?"

Rean smiled.

"You could say so. But you still didn't answer my question."

Wano didn't mind.

"Well, since you can use the Light Element, that means you use a Yang Energy Cultivation Technique. Yang Energy Cultivation Techniques are pretty rare in this place. To be honest, I also use a Yang Energy Cultivation Technique."

Wano then lifted his hand and summoned Fire Element around it. However, Rean could easily tell that Yang Energy was also present, making it much fiercer while using less Spiritual Energy.

"No wonder you're stronger than those around your level."

Wano nodded.

"Indeed. Well, you guys can't say much. Not only do you use a Yang Energy Cultivation Technique, these two girls use a Yin Energy Cultivation Technique as well."

Rean smiled but didn't answer. He did have a Yang Energy Cultivation Technique, which he obtained from Zuan. However, he only used it to learn the skills in it. His real cultivation technique was far above that.

"So we are both Yang Energy users, that's quite nice. I hope we can learn a few things from each other during our time together."

"Sure thing."

Roan then looked at the two.

"Are the best buddies done chatting? If so, then let's go."

Everyone nodded and immediately made their way out of there. They intended to train against the Lakure Race members, but they would first spend their time cultivating since their foundations were already as sturdy as they can be. Roan wasn't sure about Wano, but that wasn't his problem. Since the guy didn't say anything, it probably meant he can also cultivate at the moment.

Rean took the free time they had while they were moving and asked Malaka about Kentucky.

"Did Kentucky eat the whole red crystal?"

Malaka nodded in response.

"He did. He went to the point of carrying it away with us. For real, this guy gave us a fright when he charged into those Lakure Race cultivators. Fortunately, the enemies underestimated our strength by a

lot. Not to mention that the Formation Masters around the crystal were not fighters. Otherwise, we might have really died there."

Rean nodded as he looked at Kentucky.

Chick?

"Well, it doesn't seem like it was a bad thing for him. Roan, can we focus on those Red Crystals after we finish cultivating?"

Roan nodded.

"I was already intending to do that. From what they told us, the Lakure Race Members have a ton of these things. That also means we can easily find them with that."

To make sure that they wouldn't be found by coincidence, the group moved quite far away from the place they were previously. They all used the Earth Element to move the earth on a small cliff, creating a cave inside. They might not be Earth Element users, but it wasn't so hard to do something like that as long as they put in the effort. After concealing it with the forest's vegetation, they entered inside and created a few separated rooms for each of them.

Rean then used his knowledge to make a few Anti-Spiritual Sense Formations, both inside and outside the cave. Inside because he didn't want Wano checking on them, and outside was obviously for the enemies. Finally, Wano went to his own cave room and sealed the entrance. As for Rean's group, they went to another one.

"So, Malaka, Calina, what can you tell me about Wano?"

Calina and Malaka shook their heads as they said.

"We already said what we knew. He's much stronger than those at his level. He also noticed that Kentucky was anything but simple. However, when Malaka also asked about his strength, we both agreed to not ask too many questions."

Calina, however, seemed to be pondering about something.

"Is there something wrong?"

"Hmm... I don't know. I just felt a bit of familiarity from his abilities."

Roan narrowed his eyes.

"Did you see his skills before?"

Calina shook her head as she answered.

"Not really. It's more related to his cultivation instead."

Rean couldn't help but ask.

"You mean he's someone from the Imperial Family?"

"I can't be sure. After all, there are way too many techniques in the Imperial Family's repository. It could very well be that. However, I've seen many other powers demonstrating their skills on several other occasions, so it might have been someone else. Or maybe it's even the subordinate clans since they're very close to us."

Roan nodded.

"That's already good enough. Before you came to Dalamu, you lived your life in the Capital and only traveled to the surrounding countries there. That means he most likely came from there as well. It's also obvious that he's hiding his identity. In any case, let's keep an eye on him from now on. We might find out something interesting."

Everyone nodded, agreeing with Roan. In any case, having a Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator as strong as Wano around wasn't such a bad thing. Of course, as long as he didn't become an enemy.

"Alright, then. This natural formation turned out to be a blessing for us. We needed time for Calina to train, and now we've got it. I hope this natural formation keeps up as long as possible."

"So we will just ignore this race that's coming out? Wouldn't they try to conquer the other countries and things like that?"

Roan shrugged his shoulders as he said.

"And what do you think we can do about it? It's already obvious that they have at least Soul Forging Realm cultivators on their side. Most likely, even someone at the Saint Realm. We're powerless against them. That being said, let's make use of what we can use. As for the rest, this will be an issue for the Sasamil Imperial Family to deal with. Understood?"

Calina, Malaka, and Rean nodded.

"Good! Then, let's start cultivating."

Death... and me

Chapter 499: Wear Out

Time began to pass as everyone cultivated. Every now and then, Rean's group would practice some combat between themselves just to stretch a little. After all, cultivating full-time was extremely monotonous and dulled one's senses. Wano also participated in that, and it was clear how much stronger than everyone here he was.

Nevertheless, he was really surprised by the power of Rean's group. When Rean and Roan joined hands, they could totally fight around the Core and Soul Fusion Realm's Initial Stage level. It made his own ability to jump two stages higher to fight look like a joke. Well, he still had a huge advantage since he could display a Peak Core and Soul Fusion Realm cultivator's combat power.

It's just that both Rean, Roan, and Wano thought that the other part's power wasn't all they could do. In Rean and Roan's case, that was true. After all, they already could push themselves to the Initial Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm when they were in the Core Formation Initial Stage, let alone now that they were in the Middle Stage.

During this time, Rean revised the Circuitry Formation job on his mind, trying to move a step forward even though he wasn't directly working with it. Roan did the same thing in his mind with Alchemy.

Roan also made sure to give Calina and Malaka proper training other than just cultivation. That being said, the two girls had been having quite a harsh time.

And just like that, six months went by.

Of course, that was only the case inside the natural formation. Only a little less than eighteen days passed on the outside. It was also at this time that the Sasamil Family's experts arrived at the natural formation.

Kocej, obviously, went ahead to receive them.

"Thanks for coming, my friends. I'm happy you arrived this quickly."

There was a total of ten experts present in the Sasamil Family's group. Three of them were at the Saint Realm, with one at the Late Stage of that realm. As for the others, they were all Soul Forging Realm experts. Other than then, another small group of Formation Masters came to check the natural formation as per the Imperial Family's request.

"Let's not waste time with pleasantries. I'm Ernian Sasamil. The other two Saint Realm experts are Oreve Samikil and Oi Taran from the ten clans. I also brought the experts of the Formation Master Guild Main Branch."

Another man came forward after hearing that.

"I'm Fobi Versavol, a Heaven High-Level Formations Master. The others are my assistants."

Kocej nodded and then turned around.

"The natural formation is right in front of you, as you can see. Please come with me."

Everyone then went to the barrier to check it.

Qia was still there, so she immediately came forward to receive the family's experts too.

"Long time no see, Senior Ernian."

Ernian looked at her and nodded.

"The fifth prince's granddaughter, right? I heard that you married someone from the Dalamu Sect. Anyway, what are you doing here? You should have been left in the sect instead of risking your life here."

Qia shook her head as he said.

"My husband is inside this formation, so I can't leave without knowing what's happening."

"Your husband?"

Ernian pondered for a bit and finally remembered the boy from the reports he received about Qia's marriage.

"Then, I can understand. However, your cultivation is still too low. Stay behind and do what I say."

"Yes, Senior Ernian."

Even though he wasn't a direct descendant, Ernian was one of the family's elders, so he had a higher position than Qia due to his status and cultivation. She had to follow his orders. Nevertheless, Qia had been thinking about a way to enter this formation all this while. Unfortunately, even Droman couldn't do anything to it since the properties of the formation changed. Of course, with Rean trapped inside, he also stayed there, refusing to go back to the sect.

Zuan and everyone else then explained everything they knew about the formation and what had happened so far. After hearing their tales, Ernian gathered all the Saint Realm experts in this group. Following that, he gave the order for them to attack the formation together.

Kocej and the others had tried it already, and it didn't work. However, since Ernian had the highest cultivation between them and he had two more Saint Realm experts with him, they decided to follow his orders.

"Focus on a single point. Attack!"

Explosions of Spiritual Energy and several other elements soon burst around. The place they focused on turned into a forbidden zone for anyone below the Saint Realm. Unfortunately, even after an entire hour of relentless attacks, the formations didn't even do as much as tremble.

"What a sturdy formation. It's not something that Saint Realm experts can overcome at all."

Kocej and the others nodded.

"We tried it in the past as well, but it was useless. We hoped that with more power, something would change, but it seems like it was useless."

Ernian nodded and then went to see Fobi. The Formation Masters were a few kilometers away, working on analyzing the formation. Droman and the other Formation Masters were also helping them with what they could.

Fobi noticed Ernian came closer to them, so he could already imagine what happened.

"It seems like brute force didn't work, right?"

Ernian nodded.

"Indeed. This thing is extremely sturdy. I'm sure that it won't matter how many Saint Realm experts we have. It won't fall."

Fobi agreed with him.

"I just reached the same conclusion a few minutes ago. The core of this Natural Formation is really powerful. I can't help but feel pity that it's being used in this way. If we could acquire it before it ran out of energy, we might have been able to power up the capital's formation for a hundred or more years."

"If you find a way to open the formation, we will obviously try to obtain that core. So, how are things going?"

Fobi shook his head.

"This is still a natural formation, but it has been modified. Whoever did this put a huge effort to keep everyone outside. I'm sorry, but I don't see us breaking through it anytime soon. Just the analysis alone will probably take a lot more than just a month."

Fobi then glanced at the formation before continuing.

"Of course, this natural formation still has a limit. If someone strong enough comes, he might be able to break through it."

Ernian narrowed his eyes.

"Are you talking about an Elemental Transformation Realm expert?"

All the Saint Realm experts present then looked at Ernian.

The Elemental Transformation Realm. That was a realm that most of them dreamed of reaching but had no hope of doing so. It was quite common for Saint Realm experts to die at the Initial or, at most, the Middle Stage. People like Ernian, who reached the Late Stage, were incredibly rare between Saint Realm experts, let alone Peak Stage ones.

As for Elemental Transformation Realm experts, they were the peak existences in the world. A single one at that level could create a country on his own, and no one would stop him. That was precisely what had happened in the past in Jialin. The Purple Colour Talent, Zef Jialin, was one of those Elemental Transformation Realm experts. It's just that he had already passed away a long time ago. Since then, none of his descendants had reached that realm again.

However, Fobi shook his head.

"Elemental Transformation experts are indeed powerful. However, judging by the energy contained in this formation, I think they might not be enough."

This time, everyone really felt shocked, including Ernian. Elemental Transformation was not enough. Those were not light words for sure. Ernian then took a deep breath as he looked at the natural formation. The moment Fobi spoke those words, his awareness regarding this event increased many folds.

"Elemental Transformation is not enough, huh... If that's the case, only a..."

"Elder Ernian!"

In an instant, Ernian closed his mouth before saying the words. Naturally, that piqued everyone's attention—the level above the Elemental Transformation Realm. That was considered taboo in this world. It is said that only those at the Elemental Transformation Realm were allowed to know about it. Of course, a few exceptions existed. Ernian, as an important elder of the Sasamil Imperial Family, knew a little about it as well.

"It's okay. I won't speak any further."

Ernian then looked at Fobi.

"In any case, there's no way we can call for such a monster to come. We will have to do with what we have. First of all, we need to know who's responsible for it. Do any of the cultivators inside have Thoughts Transmission Talismans?"

Kocej immediately nodded.

"Of course. However, this natural formation is completely blocking the passage of information. We can't get in contact with the people in there."

Ernian wasn't surprised by that.

"Fobi, if we keep attacking it, will the energy be consumed faster?"

Fobi nodded.

"It will. However, considering the natural formation's sheer size, the core sustaining it has a frightening amount of energy. The effects of constant attacks will be quite low. As for attacks coming from those below the Saint Realm, it might not make any difference at all."

Ernian didn't mind.

"It's fine. The faster we can take it down, the better. You focus on trying to break the formations through your own methods. The other Saint Realm experts will start attacking it in turns."

Ernian then turned to his Soul Forging Realm subordinates and passed to each of them a token.

"Go to the surrounding countries affected by this formation and pass my order. Tell them that all the Saint Realm experts must attack the formation. The more we have, the better."

"Yes, Elder Ernian."

And with that, the plan to wear out the formation had begun.

Death... and me

Chapter 500: Sana

Meanwhile, Tiria and Juvian led the cultivators of the Dalamu Sect to investigate the valley's surroundings. Unfortunately, the defense there was really tight. Every time they got close, at least one Soul Forging Realm Lakure Race member would be there waiting for them.

Tiria and Juvian had to do their best to simply flee from those unfortunate situations. However, they soon noticed one thing. Every time they arrived at a certain distance from the valley, the Lakure Race experts would stop the pursuit and return. From the looks of it, they were a lot more worried about leaving the valley unprotected than killing the cultivators who entered the natural formation.

Tiria and Juvian couldn't tell if it was a good thing or not. After all, it all depended on what they were trying to do. They did succeed in capturing some low-level cultivators of the Lakure Race. Unfortunately, none of them knew much about the plans of the higher-ups. The higher-ups, obviously, had cultivations too high for them to succeed in capturing.

Without any other choice, they could only go back to the formation's border from where they entered to see if they had some way of communicating with the outside world. Too bad that the barrier was completely sealed. It wasn't possible to see the other side at all. Sound and Thoughts Transmission Talismans also didn't work.

Of course, the Dalamu Sect's group wasn't the only one. The other sects and the Royal Family soon understood the same principle. However, that wasn't too bad since they could use that opportunity to gather with a few of the other groups to discuss. Of course, they didn't stay together since they couldn't guarantee that the Lakure Race members won't come after them.

The problem was that they were all at a dead end. Attacking the valley was out of the question since their previous attempts to get close to it showed how many more experts the Lakure Race had. They simply lacked the number and the cultivation to do such a thing.

While they worried about it, Rean's group had completely given up on even thinking about it. They were too weak to make any difference in this situation, so why should they care? These six months of cultivation made a huge difference for them. The main figure in this meantime ended up being Calina. Her cultivation was ahead of the twins, and she was close to breaking through.

Deep in her cave room, Calina absorbed the Spirit Stones' energy without stopping as she attacked the bottleneck. Malaka, Rean, and Roan were also there, waiting to see if she would need any help. Finally, a burst of Spiritual Energy came from her body as her cultivation began to rise. The process ended up being very smooth, so Calina had entered the Late Stage of the Core Formation Realm without mishaps.

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

Roan nodded and threw her a bottle with a few pills.

"Those are the same cultivation stabilizing pills. Swallow one of them every three days for the next month. It should help alleviate the chaotic energy in your foundation faster."

Calina smiled and immediately put one of them in her mouth. Following that, she concentrated on the pill's effect as she guided the energy into her dantian. She was already used to Roan's pills, so she was able to absorb it quickly. Sure enough, Roan's pill energy quickly mixed with her foundation's energy, helping in the calming process.

"Done. However, I would rather try battling to get it under control faster."

Rean and Roan nodded. They had been cultivating for quite a long time, so it was time to go out and test their improvements.

"By the way, Rean, Roan. How far are you from the Late Stage?"

Rean pondered for a bit before saying.

"At our current speed, we would probably need another half year to nine months. Don't forget that your cultivation is higher than ours."

Rean then looked at Malaka.

"What about you?"

Malaka had the weakest cultivation between them, which made her sigh.

"I'm still far from the Middle Stage. You were all in the Middle Stage for quite some time when I made my breakthrough to the Core Formation Realm. I'm pretty sure Rean and Roan will enter the Late Stage before I reach the Middle Stage."

Roan narrowed his eyes as he said.

"Stop complaining. That's more than good already."

Malaka already expected such words from Roan anyway.

Calina then patted Malaka's head with a smile.

"Alright, alright. There is no need to be sad. Don't forget that many cultivators out there would die of jealousy if they saw how young you are with your Core Formation Realm cultivation. You should be grateful for that."

Malaka couldn't help but hug Calina after that.

"Calina! You should marry me instead! Just forget the ice block. He doesn't deserve you."

Calina's face immediately went red. How the hell did she shift into that topic? However, Roan didn't seem to have any kind of reaction whatsoever.

"Are you two done with the play? If yes, then let's go."

Roan turned around and left the room. Seeing how clueless the ice block made them feel quite sad for Calina, though. They could only put their hand on her shoulder.

Rean then glanced at Malaka, who immediately noticed his eyes. Immediately, they reached a taciturn understanding.

Caline had a tinge of sadness on her face after seeing Roan ignoring Malaka's words. However, it was at this moment that Rean said.

"Calina, I have to say that I'm quite disappointed with you."

"Eh?! What are you talking about?"

Calina was taken aback by those words.

Malaka was then one to continue.

"Isn't that obvious? It has been around half a year since we entered this place. That means it has been six months since you got to stay together with Roan. However, you haven't tried anything until now."

Calina's face went red again.

"T-Try something?"

Rean nodded as he replied.

"Exactly! Six months without a single attack. Tell me, how do you expect to conquer my brother like that? Are you really going to let this chance slip? As far as we know, this natural formation might stay up for several years. Are you going to keep looking at Roan without doing anything?"

Calina didn't know what to say.

"I..."

Pah!

Ouch!

Suddenly, Malaka slapped Calina's butt with quite some strength.

"Why did you do that?"

"Why? To wake you up, of course! Every time Roan is clueless about your feelings, I can see how sad you get. However, you're destined to be like that forever if you keep waiting for him to answer back."

Rean and Malaka nodded at Calina.

"You need to attack!"

Calina felt helpless about that.

"But..."

"No 'buts!' You already went as far as getting naked in front of him, didn't you? So why would you care about anything else now?"

Calina's red face immediately became ten times hotter. However, she quickly noticed something.

"Wait! You two just want to see me try something crazy again so you can watch, right?"

Rean and Malaka's expressions instantly changed into that of dejection.

"How could you say something like that?"

"Do you think we would go this far just to have fun?"

Calina nodded without even thinking.

"Yes, I do."

Rean then shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, you're right. I wanted to watch the show. I'm really looking forward to what you will try next."

Malaka agreed with him.

"Exactly! Last time was so fun with you and Luina jumping in the river naked in front of Roan. I couldn't stop laughing for a long time."

"Fuck you! Who the hell will play the idiot role just for you?"

"Oh, is that so?"

Rean then got close to her.

"Let me tell you something very interesting, then."

Even Malaka didn't know what Rean wanted to say, so she got close as well.

"Back in the Capital, just before our mom and dad were about to leave..."

Rean then told Calina and Malaka about how Roan was put in a tight corner by their parents. Rean then saved him from the two by saying that he already had two girls interested in him. Obviously, Rean was mentioning Luina and Calina herself.

"He will be forced to bring someone home sooner or later, so shouldn't you take this opportunity even more seriously now?"

Calina narrowed her eyes.

"Is this true? No, you don't need to answer. There's someone else who can confirm it for me."

Calina then looked directly at Rean but not exactly at him.

"Sister Orb, did that really happen?"

Suddenly, a voice echoed in the three's heads.

[Yep. I was there too, after all. You should really grab this chance, girl.]

Rean couldn't help but mentally compliment.

'Well done, Sister Orb!'

Calina couldn't help but now consider that possibility. If Roan really had to bring someone back to show his parents, she definitely wanted to be the selected one!

"Then... Then, I will try."

"Great!"

"You can count on us!"

Calina narrowed her eyes after hearing Rean and Malaka's responses. Something told her that getting their help would only make things worse.

"Shut up! I don't want your help. I... I will think about something."

"Ehhhh? That's no fun."

Calina's mouth twitched.

"Fuck you! You just want to see me getting embarrassed in front of Roan again."

Rean and Malaka laughed as they nodded.

"Alright, alright. We won't intervene. Happy? Let's see what you will show us in the future."

Calina sighed in relief.

Suddenly, Roan's voice came from outside.

"Can you fucking come out already? How long will you make me wait?"

Rean and Malaka smiled and immediately left the room. Calina followed the two right behind. However, she also remembered something else, so she asked Rean through a Spiritual Sense message.

'By the way, how's Sana?'

Sana was the baby Rean rescued half a year ago.