

## Death 671

Death... and me

### Chapter 671: Two Paths

'If there's a formation responsible for creating the Soul Stones, it'll be up to you to get close to it, Rean. These guys seem to want to bring you into their group because of your expertise in formations. Perhaps you can use it to get you there as well.' Roan could only make do with that for the moment. 'As for me, I'll be sent to where the kids are...or so I think. That being said, we will operate in two different fronts.'

Rean agreed with Roan, saying, 'I understand.'

Rean then looked at Palaris and Ophele, who seemed to be discussing his current situation before asking, "Do you think I will also become another Soul Stone?"

"I'll try to prevent it. However, don't misunderstand. I'm not doing it because I feel bad for you or anything. You are, after all, just a human. The only thing that interests me is your knowledge in formations," Ophele replied, not showing a hint of respect for Rean. "Of course, you would first be sent to control the Bloodline Trials, so it wouldn't happen anytime soon to start with."

Well, it wasn't as if Rean wanted it anyway. "Fine by me. As long as I can survive, I don't care how it happens."

Palaris decided to change the topic after that. "Alright, that's enough. Rean, you'll have to earn the right for Ophele to go seek the help of her mother. That being said, let's go back to the formation runes you were talking about. Show the two of us that it wasn't a mistake going this far."

Rean faintly smiled before returning to his scribbles on the ground, returning to explaining his theories. As for Roan, he didn't find anything else of interest in the rest of the Airship, so he sat in a corner at some point and just cultivated.

The same way it took one day for the Soul Rulers to arrive in Vanesi, it also took another day for them to return. What surprised Rean was the speed at which the airship moved. He flew with Ancestor Zuan, who was a Saint Realm expert back in Sunkan Planet. However, Zuan simply couldn't compare to this airship's speed. They were in completely different leagues. That only piqued Rean's curiosity even more towards the formations of the airship, making sure to record everything about it with Sister Orb's help.

Eventually, they arrived back at the Soul Rulers' headquarters. It turns out that their headquarters was located at the extreme north of the planet, directly above the pole. If it was already cold everywhere before coming, then how cold would it be here.

Roan even went out to check the temperature and was surprised to see that the cold energy was able to pierce through his Spiritual Energy barrier as if it didn't even exist. He had to constantly use his Spiritual Energy to keep sending it out of his body. If it was anyone else at their level, escaping this place might really have been an impossible mission. After all, they would freeze to death since there would be no shelter for them to recover from the cold energy.

However, the headquarters had the same system as the cities they visited before, a giant protection formation covering everything. It kept both the strong weather and cold energy outside. Not only that, but Rean and Sister Orb could tell that it wasn't just good at protecting against those things. It was definitely very strong against preemptive attacks and...preventing others from leaving.

[Do you want me to try to take control over it?] Sister Orb asked as she looked at it.

Rean shook his head, replying, 'No, just focus on the Soul Stone Formation or the Bloodline Trial Control Formation.' Rean thought that he had no need to allocate the Soul Gem System's processing power on something that could be overcome by their Circuitry Teleport Formation.

The airship quickly descended to the ground as the twins were gathered on the deck. There, Gila, Ren, and Vio took the two and brought them inside the giant building in front. As the twins had expected, the area was simply too big, with security almost seen everywhere. There were cultivators flying in the skies, patrols in almost every corner, not to mention the hundreds of Spiritual Senses slamming against the Spiritual Sense Bending Skill.

However, what truly shocked the twins was the concentration of Spiritual Energy in the air.

'Terrifying! Spiritual Energy here is so condensed that I can even see it,' Roan said as he moved his hand on the air. Where his hand passed, a faint wave of brilliant power spread forward due to his actions.

Rean, of course, was just as impressed. 'Are Spirit Stones even necessary in a place like this? If I draw an Energy Gathering Formation, I can probably cultivate faster than when I use Rank Four Spirit Stones. No, maybe even Rank Five Stones can't hold a candle to this thing.'

Sure enough, Rean and Roan reached the same conclusion in the end. 'We were right. There's something very strange about the lack of Spiritual Energy on the entire planet. Perhaps...the world's main powers have found a way to take most of the planet's energy for their own use, leaving less than half of the natural amount outside.'

Along the way, Palaris and Ophele followed the twins. Before arriving at the headquarters, it seemed like Ophele had used a Thoughts Transmission Talisman to contact her mother ahead of time. She was expecting to meet her halfway to where the Bloodline Trial Control Formations were.

"Ophele." Sure enough, a woman appeared on their way there, stopping Gila, Ren, and Vio in their tracks. She then looked at the white-haired boy before asking, "Is this the human you talked about?"

Ophele quickly came forward and nodded, replying, "Yes, mother. Grandfather and I have already verified his talents. They're the real deal. We truly wish to keep him instead of using him as a simple core of a Bloodline Trial Control Formation. It'll be even more of a waste if he's turned into a Soul Stone."

Gila couldn't help but intervene as she said, "Lady Sevinia, these twins are a special case. We can't let you take any of them like that."

Sevinia was obviously the name of Ophele's mother. Nevertheless, she just smiled at Gila before taking a token out. As soon as Gila, Vio, and Ren saw that, they immediately went quiet.

"I already talked with the Head and got his permission to take this human here. As for the other one, you can do whatever you want with him." Sevinia then grabbed Rean's arm and pulled him aside, leaving the path open for Gila and the others to continue.

Gila, Ren, and Vio looked at each other and just nodded as one of them responded, "Since the Head has already agreed, we will leave him in your care, Lady Sevinia."

The Head's token was almost absolute inside the Soul Rulers. It could only be refused in case some of the ancestors came out to do it. However, that almost never happened.

"Great! Have a good day." Ophele, Palaris, and Rean then headed in a different direction with Sevinia as Roan proceeded forward with the others.

Death... and me

#### Chapter 672: Meeting

Roan was not brought to where the kids with high Soul Purity were located. But instead, he was delivered to some kind of research room. There, one could find a few of the elders from Soul Rulers already waiting. As soon as they saw Roan, their eyes lit up.

"Is this the human you talked about?" one of the elders asked, who seemed to be the leader of the group.

Gila immediately nodded while maintaining a respectful expression as she replied. "Yes, Elder Puan." Following that, Gila passed the same deep blue oval gem for Roan to hold. Sure enough, it lit up with bright blue light.

\*Wow!\*

All the elders were surprised to see that. After all, it was the first adult human with high Soul Purity they had ever seen.

"Impressive. Would we be able to replicate it?"

"I don't know. But there's a chance, right?"

"He also has quite good cultivation for his age. It might be related."

The elders discussed some things while Roan simply stood there with an indifferent expression.

Eventually, Puan raised his hand to stop the others from talking. "Alright, Gila. Start talking about everything you know about this human. The more, the better," Elder Puan said as he used his Spiritual Sense to inspect Roan.

Gila nodded and began to go over the information she had. He was a twin, and his brother had the same trait. Other than that, both brothers had a never seen before Light and Dark Element Affinity. She then talked about the information given to her by the Asume Clan, which concluded her report.

"I understand." Puan nodded as he narrowed his eyes, asking, "However, where's his twin? You couldn't have left him behind, right?"

Gila shook her head, replying, "Of course not. He came with this human as well. However, Sevinia got the Organization Head's permission to take one of the twins for herself. From the looks of it, the other twin has some incredible talent at formations, and she wants to use them."

"You're kidding, right?" Puan found that hard to believe. After all, they were talking about adult humans with high Soul Purity. "How could the head accept that?! These twins might be the breakthrough we've needed for the Bloodline Trials. Isn't he being too biased towards Sevinia?" Puan was fuming in anger as he thought about it.

However, he quickly calmed down as he remembered something Gila mentioned, "Wait, both twins have different Elemental Affinities?"

"Yes," Gila confirmed straight away. "This one has Dark Element Affinity, while his brother has Light Elemental Affinity." She could see that Puan also understood the problem with the twins.

One of the elders sighed as he shook his head, muttering, "Light and Dark...twins...Elder Puan, the chances that their High Soul Purity is linked to these two factors is..."

Puan raised his hand again, stopping that elder from talking as he responded, "I know. If their Soul Purity is related to this, there's no way we can possibly replicate it."

Zasfins would also have offsprings that would be born with some weird elemental affinity, not just humans. Of course, they were just as rare. Nevertheless, they never cared that much about them. All

they knew was that such an offspring would not be able to pass on their Elemental Affinity. They forced humans with these rare Elemental Affinities to procreate as many times as possible, using many different methods. But in the end, these Elemental Affinities didn't carry over to their offsprings either. Be it back in Sunkan Planet or in this planet filled with Zasfins, the fact still stands that none of them could control the Elemental Affinity one was born with.

"However, let's do a few other tests. We need to check if there is anything else different with his Soul." Puan was unwilling to give up so soon. "Also, try to convince that idiot that we need both twins." Although Puan said that, he was pretty sure that Rean was a lost cause already.

Roan was listening to everything since they didn't care about hiding it with Spiritual Sense messages. However, he didn't seem to care either as he said, 'Sister Orb, I'm counting on you.'

[It's so rare to hear that from you. Well, Sister Orb here is happy. Don't worry, I'll make sure they won't find anything different within your Soul at all.]

Roan mentally nodded and let the elders there do whatever they wanted.

Back at Rean's side, he was brought into another building where the concentration of Spiritual Energy was even more terrifying. 'Such extravagance. There's no way they can make the concentration of Spiritual Energy be this high with Rank Four or Five Spirit Stones alone. They must have a way to control the planet's natural spiritual energy.'

Sevinia didn't know what Rean was thinking, nor did she care. She simply looked at her daughter before asking, "Are you absolutely sure that he has the abilities? This is nothing but a human. I find it hard to believe that he's such a genius." Sevinia couldn't help but think about her compromises to get the Organization Head to accept her request. If Rean turned out to be useless, she would definitely fall from favor.

"Don't worry, Senior." Surprisingly, Rean was the one to answer her question. He needed to obtain enough trust to get close to the Soul Stone Formation...if there was really one anyway. That being said, he had to take the initiative. "I definitely don't want to die. Also, I consider this as a great opportunity for a puny human like me. I'll do my best to not let the Zasfins down."

Ophele and Palaris were satisfied to hear that. If he suddenly decided to not help anymore, it would make things complicated. They might be able to use torture and other methods to force him to speak. However, it would obviously be much better if he worked out of his own volition.

Ophele then assured her mother. "That's right, mom. We already check his aptitude with formations. I believe it will greatly help with the Bloodline Trial Control Formations in the future. As a human, this is the greatest honor he could ever have."

Palaris also nodded, saying, "I'll be sure to show results. Just what he showed so far is enough to convince anyone who might come complaining."

Sevinia faintly smiled as she nodded, responding, "Very well, I'm counting on you two. Make sure this human doesn't go to waste."

Death... and me

Chapter 673: He Will Have To Pay For It

On Roan's side, the elders seemed to have multiple formations that tapped into one's soul. Not only that, but Roan could also see quite a few humans locked inside formations, although he didn't know what they were being used for. Some seemed to be under extreme pain, while others were simply sleeping inside the formations. There were also those that were awake and did not feel anything wrong going on. Unsurprisingly, there were some formations active around those cases as well!

Puan then brought Roan to another formation that shone with blue light. There, he was locked down before the elders took several positions around him inside the formation. "Activate the formation. Remember to focus on the compatibility of the Soul Power with our current design for the Bloodline Trial Control Formations."

Soon after, the blue light of the formation seemed to form a blue stream that entered Roan's head. Not long after, Roan's expression changed as he was feeling extreme pain...or so the elders thought.

[Good, good! As always, you're really good at pretending when it comes to situations like this,] Sister Orb said as she made sure the blue light didn't affect Roan's soul at all.

'Shut up. Can't you see I'm concentrating here?' Roan, of course, wasn't the least bit happy with Sister Orb's compliment.

Sister Orb then had an idea, suggesting, [Fine. Then, what if I let you taste just a bit of the formation's power, huh? Perhaps you'll learn how to be more respectful in front of your Sister Orb.]

Roan mentally snorted in response as he said, 'Hmph! As the System AI, your mission is to protect us. You definitely wouldn't do anything that could harm me.'

[Tch...you're no fun.] Obviously, Sister Orb's plan failed.

A few hours later, the light in the formation disappeared as Roan fell to the ground as he gasped for air. From the 'looks' of it, the experience was very taxing on him, while the elders were forced to stop, afraid that they might kill him.

Seeing that, Puan had a dark expression. "Nothing! There's absolutely nothing different in his soul other than its high purity." Naturally, he didn't like that since it pointed out that Roan's high Soul Purity was really due to his Elemental Affinity or the fact that he was twins with Rean. Perhaps, even both at the same time. "No, it's too early to give up. Once he recovers, let's try to cut a piece of his soul for analysis."

The elders were taken aback after hearing that. Soon, one of them asked, "But Elder Puan, that might affect his Soul Purity forever. Wouldn't it be a waste if he can really keep his Soul Purity for life?"

Puan didn't seem to care as he replied, "So what? We might always be in need of human kids with high Soul Purity. However, it's not like we will be affected that much since this human would be able to control just a single formation at a time. If we can find a way to replicate his Soul Purity or extend the kids' time of use, it'll be totally worth it!"

The elders looked at each other and nodded in the end. Sure enough, a single Roan wouldn't make that much difference since he was just one person.

Roan, who pretended to be in bad shape, took the chance to ask Sister Orb, 'Cut a piece of the soul...Sister Orb, is that possible?'



[Of course! However, I'm impressed that they can do it at their level. Those Soul Runes in the formations are a lot more useful than I thought in the past.] Sister Orb replied as if it wasn't a big deal.

'I see. If they do that, will that affect me in any way?' Obviously. That was the next question.

[No. After all, they won't be able to do so. Your souls are protected by the Soul Gem System. There's no way any of these formations can cut a piece of them.] Sister Orb seemed very confident in her statement.

Nevertheless, there was a problem. 'I understand. I have to think about what to do when they find out they can't do it.'

Rean, who was listening to everything through their Soul Connection, had an idea as he suggested, 'That's quite simple, no? Just pretend to be near death when they try to do it. With that, they'll understand that not only does their method not work, but they will also obtain the fact that you might die in the process if they try again. Injure yourself a bit. It's not like you've ever had a problem with pain before. Once they're finished, use my Instant Recovery to heal yourself.'

Roan pondered a bit over the idea and nodded in the end. Rean was right. Pain was far from being something that bothered Roan.

Sure enough, Elder Puan tried to cut a piece of Roan's soul once he recovered. However, Roan once again kept up a facade, pretending to be almost dying. He also used his Spiritual Energy and Dark Element to self-injure himself as the process continued. Once it looked like he was almost dead, Elder Puan was forced to stop as Roan was covered in a pool of his own blood on the ground.

"Fuck! What's happening here?! Not only did I not get even close to pulling out his soul, he's practically dead now! Did someone notice anything different?" Puan asked, fuming in anger.

However, all the other elders looked at each other before shaking their heads. Puan was the one controlling the formation to cut a piece of Roan's soul, and even he didn't find a problem. That being said, how could they have noticed anything? That was ridiculous.

Puan then looked at Roan before giving the order, "Fix him. I want him back here as soon as possible. I won't give up with just one or two tries." Soon after, he turned around and left the room. A few subordinates then came forward and helped Roan up before bringing him away.

[It seems like the plan is working. The fact that Roan can't feel pain is really helpful.]

Roan's mouth twitched after hearing that. 'Couldn't feel pain, your ass! I'm good at resisting it, but I can definitely feel it, idiot!'

Rean laughed before adding, 'Well, try your best since that guy is in it to give you quite some pain.'

'Hmph! There will come a time where he will have to pay for it.'

Death... and me

Chapter 674: Letting Clad Out

While Roan was having 'fun' with Puan and the other elders, Rean spent his days going over his theories for new Runes. As mentioned before, he didn't make them as perfect as he did back in Sunkan. Instead, he left multiple flaws, which would be expected of 'new' runes.

Nevertheless, Palaris was truly impressed. "This... Three Into One Current Rune that you came up with is just too useful. It can make up for three paths of Spiritual Energy at once, saving a lot of space and making it a lot more efficient."

Ophele, who was also there, couldn't help but show a dark expression as she thought to herself, 'How can a human be this good? It already far surpasses my level. He's definitely an Earth Peak-Level Formation Master.'

There was one thing that made her feel better, though. 'Well, at least it's very obvious how much he lacks in Soul Runes. If he was better than me on them, I should just kill myself.'

Rean, oblivious to Ophele's thoughts, laughed after hearing Palaris's words, saying, "Hahaha! That was the idea! However..."

He then narrowed his eyes as he continued, "It's obviously flawed. In the end, my theories are just that, theories. Look." He then pointed at the runes, adding, "The Rune is leaking Spiritual Energy. Perhaps the material I came up with isn't strong enough, or the construction of the Rune isn't perfect yet. In any case, it can't be used as it is."

Palaris didn't seem to mind, saying in response, "Don't worry. The initial prototype has been made, so we can improve it as time passes. Now, let's work on the Bridge Connection Runes..."

Time passed in a leisurely manner until eventually, Rean received a message from Rean. 'Those idiots finally gave up trying to figure out how to make more High Purity Souls. It seems like they're sending me to the Bloodline Trial Control Formations.'

Rean was taken aback, responding with a hint of optimism, 'Really?! Great! Try to see if you can find Liza and Luna.'

'I know that, idiot. But in any case, I wouldn't be able to take them out right now. We can only hope that there will be enough time for Sister Orb to analyze the Bloodline Trial Control Formations.' Roan replied with an annoyed tone. 'By the way, have you found the Soul Stone Formation already? Does it even exist? If you haven't, I'll have Sister Orb start working on the Bloodline Trial Control Formations first until you discover something.'

Rean nodded in response, saying, 'Alright, let Sister Orb do your thing for now. I haven't found the Soul Stone Formation yet. Well, I do have a plan, though. Once I get some results, I'll let you and Sister Orb hear it.'

He then changed the topic, telling them, 'By the way, I found a way to let Clad come out without anyone noticing anything different.'

Clad, of course, was Firmel's son. Rean and Roan had brought him along, and he had been inside the jail inside the Dimensional Realm for quite a few days already.

'What's your plan?' Roan asked.

'There seems to be a new batch of Zasfin workers every week. I'm planning to deliver Clad inside one of them as if he was one of those ZASFins. That way, he can go around and investigate the place. At the same time, we won't need to keep him inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm.'

Roan pondered over the idea a bit and found a problem. 'But what if he tells on us? After all, he'll understand where we are and might think it's worth talking about what he knows in exchange for rewards. The poison I had him swallow might not be enough to stop his greed.'

Rean shook his head as he replied, 'Don't worry. I already talked to him and explained the situation. He's a Zasfin under the control of humans. Do you think he'll let others know about such a shameful thing? Chances are that he will be punished or most likely killed because of that. Besides, I let him experiment with the Spiritual Energy in the air by guiding some into the Dimensional Realm. If he isn't an idiot, he should know that his cultivation will progress many times faster as long as he's here and keeps his mouth shut.'

Roan nodded, not trying to interfere anymore. 'Alright, then. But if something goes wrong, it's your responsibility to clean it up.'

'It won't go wrong unless Clad wants to give his side of the Imperial Family even more problems to deal with,' Rean said with a smile.

Rean had been listening to the ZASFins around him and also asked a few questions of his own. Because of his position as Sevinia's protegee, the other ZASFins didn't treat him badly. Well, it was not like they respected him either. Only those who had been helping Palaris, like Ophele, recognized him a little because of his talent in formations.

Nevertheless, that was enough for Rean to obtain some information about it. Another good thing was that Rean received a token that allowed him to walk around in the place. In fact, it wasn't too uncommon to see human slaves doing chores here and there. Then again, he was one of those that had more liberty. That's how he found about the excavation.

Of course, one thing still puzzled Rean, and Roan also noticed that problem. 'How come they're using ZASFins for the excavation instead of humans?'

Rean nodded, responding, 'I was also curious about it. If I'm not wrong, that's because humans don't have cultivations. I guess the place that needs to be opened needs a lot of Spiritual Energy if they want it.'

Rean shrugged his shoulders after that, saying, 'Well, Clad will find that out for us.'

Following that, Rean finished another day of formation research with Palaris and his team before he was allowed to move once again. Using that chance, Rean went to the port where the airships arrived and left. Of course, he knew that Spiritual Senses were locked on him all the time, and their owners would immediately stop him if he tried to escape.

Rean didn't mind, though. He just had to be a few decameters away from that ship and use his Spiritual Sense to find a blind spot among the new Zasfin workers. Then, once they came out of the ship, Rean would use the crowd to hide Clad's appearance in between.

'There they come.'

Death... and me

Chapter 675: Arrival

Rean then connected to the Dimensional Realm and warned Clad, 'I'm going to bring you out in the middle of the crowd of workers.'

Clad nodded, though he couldn't help but ask, 'Why would you want to mess with the Soul Rulers? You do know that even your Celestial Land can't contend against them, right?'

Rean laughed in response, saying, 'Hahaha! Tell that to my elders, not me. I'm fine with anything my master wants to do. If not for him, I would just be another human slave, after all. In any case, it's not like you will leave without any benefits. Just the time you will spend here is enough for your cultivation to skyrocket. That's why the workers are swapped here every year or so.'

Indeed, that was the main reason why Clad didn't complain too much. He already knew what kind of environment the place had. Even if he had to do some heavy work, just the Spiritual Energy alone was more than worth it. Rank Four Spirit Stones were hard to get, even for someone like him. But now, he would have the opportunity to cultivate in a place that had Spiritual Energy equivalent to Rank Five or

higher! How could he let this chance pass up? First of all, he was on this journey with the twins as a gamble for his Imperial Family Branch. That being said, he might as well go all out.

Using his Light Element and Spiritual Sense Bending Skills, Rean soon brought Clad out of the Dimensional Realm in the middle of the crowd of Zafins. All of them had at least Core Formation Realm cultivation, so it wasn't hard to blend Clad among them.

The Soul Rulers were keeping an eye on Rean, but he seemed to only want to look at the movement. As long as he didn't try anything to escape, they wouldn't capture him either. Little did they know that their focus on Rean only made his job easier.

Rean then used his Spiritual Sense to talk with him, telling him, 'Clad, just follow them and do your job. I already gave you enough antidotes for you to keep the poison at bay for at least half a year. Don't let this chance pass up and use every second you have to cultivate when you're not working.'

Rean also asked something else, adding, 'One more thing. Try to find out what this excavation is for. I really want to know why they aren't using humans to do it.'

Clad nodded as he followed the Zafins, replying, 'No problem. As for my escape, I just need to inject Spiritual Energy into this collar you gave me, right?'

'Yes,' Rean replied. He had made a collar for Clad that had the same effect as Agis's one. Once Spiritual Energy was sent inside, Light Element would gather around him. Rean was the only one other than Roan who could feel Light Element due to his affinity. That being said, it was more than enough for him to find Clad's location as long as he wasn't too far away. 'From what I know, the Zafins participating in the excavation will come up for rest every week of continuous work. Just use the collar, and I'll be able to tell where you are. We can talk through Spiritual Sense when that happens. The day the Zafins get swapped, I'll stop by to bring you out of that batch and put you in the next one in a different place.'

Clad had his doubts and fear about these crazy plans. However, he still decided to roll with it. 'Alright. Roan gave me the training schedule as well, so I'll make sure to make good use of it.' This was another part of the deal Rean offered. With Roan's routine, Clad was bound to cultivate both Spiritual Energy and Soul Power much faster. Of course, there were no demon beasts' regions for them to go out and battle. On the other hand, the amount of Spiritual Energy alone more than made up for it.

Clad then disappeared in one of the excavation entrances and left the range of Rean's Spiritual Sense. He would only know more about him once he surfaced in the next few days.

Rean then contacted Roan, telling him, 'Although I planned for everything, they might find out that Clad wasn't part of the group that came along. I heard the Zasfins say that they just grabbed anyone and that it didn't matter. However, be ready to run if you feel anything strange.'

Roan agreed with him, saying, 'Obviously.'

Following that, Rean went to walk around again as if he didn't have any exact destination in mind. Eventually, he felt tired and returned to Sevinia's estate.

Back at Roan's side, he was sent into some kind of bath rich in Spiritual Energy. A few other humans washed him from top to bottom, making him as clean as possible. It seemed like the place where the Bloodline Trial Control Formations required it. Well, it was not like he cared about it anyway.

Once that was finished, Roan received a thin robe before he was enveloped by Spiritual Energy and pulled through the air by an elder of the Soul Rulers. Their methods were so thorough that they didn't allow him to even walk there. That's how clean the place was.

Roan noticed he was brought into a ridiculously enormous building at the very center of the Soul Rulers' headquarters. At first, he didn't notice that since it didn't appear so much. But now that he was inside, he understood just how big it was. That's because most of the building was underground! 'Those excavations should be part of the reason why this building is like this. Then again, this Spiritual Energy concentration...'

The Spiritual Energy concentration outside was also impressive. However, the one here was simply on another level. 'Rank Six... maybe Rank Seven even?' Roan thought to himself for a moment.

The Zasfin flying with him then arrived at a giant closed gate. There, Roan could see around ten or so kids that used the same clothes as him, waiting in front of it. 'Seems like I'm finally here.'

Another Zasfin then approached the one who brought Roan and asked, "Is this the famous adult human with high Soul Purity?"

"Yes. Elder Puan already did all the tests necessary, so he can be sent inside already," answered the Zasfin responsible for Roan.

The guy nodded in response, saying, "Very well, he was the last one anyway." Soon after, he turned around and gave the order, "Open the gates!"

Several inscriptions lit up on the gate as it began to slowly move. Obviously, it was protected by many formations. All the kids looked at it, not knowing what was behind. As for Roan, he looked at it as if nothing was happening.

Eventually, Roan was able to see the world behind it. The underground facility extended as far as he could see to the front. Everything shone with a faint blue light, just like the gem used for the Soul Purity Test. Once the gate opened completely, Roan noticed that the facility was like a huge straight tunnel. On the ground, he could see the formations responsible for that blue light. It didn't take long for him to notice that at the very center of every formation, there was a human kid.

In that tunnel, the formations were separated by what seemed to be age. On his right side, there were smaller formations with very young kids, no more than five or six years old. As he continued to look leftward, their age increased to what seemed to be ten to twelve-year-old kids. The size of the formations increased as well. That being said, there was a smaller amount of older kids than there were young ones.

As Roan passed through the door, he noticed another group of ZASFINS bringing eight young humans with them. The Zasfin responsible for Roan's group then looked at the other ZASFINS in front before asking, "Is this the batch of Soul Stones this time?"

The guy in front nodded, saying, "Yes. Their Soul has already reached the limit of what they can operate. We can only use them for Soul Stones now."

Roan narrowed his eyes for a moment but let it go. However, Rean, who was watching everything through his Soul Connection, had a dark expression. 'Indeed. There's no coming back for humans with high Soul Purity. Once they're finished with the Bloodline Trials, only the option of becoming a Soul Stone is left.'



One of the young humans couldn't help but tug on the Zasfin's clothes as he asked, "Uncle Iago, what do you mean by becoming Soul Stones?"

The Zasfin, by the name of Iago, crouched down in response and patted the kid's head with a smile as he replied, "Hahaha! That means you'll be able to help us even more than now. This is a great honor that only the best kids of the Soul Paradise can have."

\*Wow!\*

All the kids immediately became excited as the ZASFINS responsible for them laughed. However, Roan could tell that those smiles from the ZASFINS were as fake as they could be. 'It seems like, to maintain the kids' Soul Purity for as long as possible, the ZASFINS have to treat them well. It's obvious that they don't like doing it at all. Too bad these kids can't see the difference.'

Roan then warned Rean, 'You better not try anything stupid. Not only would you not be able to save these ones, but you'll also be putting the rest in danger.'

Rean then took a deep breath as he watched the kids being brought away through Roan's eyes, saying, 'I know. Don't worry.'

Death... and me

Chapter 676: It's time!

Roan was brought ahead and passed through many of those formations. Without a doubt, Roan was the oldest human there since he was the first adult human with high Soul Purity. That being said, he was brought to the very end of the tunnel, where one could see several free formations on the left side.

After some time, he looked at the Zasfin by his side before asking, "So, what do I do here? Spare me the pleasant bullshit, alright? Just be straight."

The Zasfin, who had been keeping the same fake smile as the others, suddenly changed his expression as he replied, "Hmph! At least you aren't an idiot. As a human, you probably heard about the Bloodline Trials before. We use humans with high Soul Purity to control the trials. You don't need to do anything. We will simply use your Soul as a way to connect the participant and the sacrifice. Now, get inside."

Roan snorted but went inside anyway. Soon after, some kind of ethereal power enveloped his body, locking it in place. The blue light in the formation then formed a stream that entered his forehead, connecting him to the formation below.

[Oh...so that's how it works. Hey, Rean. Can you see it?]

Rean nodded somewhere else, responding, 'Yes. I guess I kind of know now what the excavations those Zafins are working on are for.'

Roan wasn't an idiot. Even though he didn't know much about formations, he could guess what was happening through Rean and Sister Orb's conversation. 'Simply put, the tunnels those Zafins are excavating are what connects the Soul Rulers' headquarters to the Bloodline Trials around the world. Am I correct?'

[Exactly! No wonder they needed high-level Zafins to do the job. After all, excavating tunnels deep enough to not be affected by what happens above all the way to the empires would take too long for humans to do. Only cultivators with high amounts of Spiritual Energy could make this project feasible.] Sister Orb then added, [I'll start working on the main formation that's controlling all of this. But I won't stop its process unless you tell me to do so.]

Rean was satisfied with that. After all, breaking the formation would only leave the Zafins with no choice but to use the human kids to create Soul Stones. 'Good. I'll do my best here on my side.'

Roan then took that opportunity to talk about something else. 'We will spend a long time here, so let's use this opportunity to cultivate. I want to reach the Core and Soul Fusion Realm before we leave.'

Rean didn't mind, saying, 'Sounds good to me. I think I can use an excuse to see the Soul Stone Formation after I obtain enough trust from Palaris and the others.'

Rean and Roan discussed a little more before they went back to focus on their own things. Seven days later, Rean went out to talk with Clad after feeling the Light Energy coming from his collar. Sure enough, Clad confirmed to Rean that the excavation was extremely long. He couldn't even guess how many thousands of kilometers the tunnels extended.w

'The tunnels are all filled with a weird blue light that looks very much like the gem used to test Soul Purity. There are a lot of them with several divisions on the way. The only reason my group reached the excavation site faster was that there were a ton of teleport formations to jump all the way to the end. Even so, just the process of teleporting back and forth takes at least a day.'

Clad continued, 'However, those teleport formations have no need for Spirit Stones. Just the concentration of Spiritual Energy in the air far surpasses what is needed to teleport. I have to admit, I've been doing the excavation, but I don't feel the slightest bit of regret. The Spiritual Energy is just too dense that I can cultivate even if I sleep. I progressed more in cultivation this past week than I did in the past month. This is crazy!'

Rean wasn't surprised by that. He and Roan were having it even better since their dwelling places were considered important locations. They saved at least a month and a half in their past week of cultivation. 'I know. Anyway, that confirms my suspicions. Have you noticed anything different?'

Clad nodded with excitement as he replied, 'Yes. Once we go down, there are many paths to choose, as I've mentioned earlier. However, there's one special path that's being guarded by many ZASFINS with very high cultivations. I might be wrong. However, I think that no one there is below the Saint Realm level.'

Rean was surprised to hear that, prompting him to ask, 'Why?'

'I think the source of all this Spiritual Energy that fills the tunnels is in that direction. That's because the Spiritual Energy is the thickest when we pass by there,' Clad responded with a serious expression. He couldn't help but imagine what was capable of generating so much Spiritual Energy.

Roan, who had been listening to everything, was very interested in whatever it was. 'Ask him the exact direction of that entrance. Perhaps we can try our luck with the Circuitry Teleport Formation to teleport right inside and take a look once we've finished everything here.'

Rean nodded and asked Clad that same question. Clad shook his head in response, though. 'I don't know the exact direction. That's because we're heading down by using another teleport formation here on the surface. I don't know in which direction it's teleporting us to.'

Rean nodded in response before saying, 'It's fine. If you find anything else, let me know.' They would spend a very long time here, so Rean wasn't in a hurry. However, it was at that moment that Rean noticed an opportunity. 'Wait! Roan, we already know that these tunnels go all the way to the various empires to connect to the Bloodline Trials, right?'

Roan faintly smiled when he heard those words. 'I see...that's definitely a pretty good idea.'

Clad was confused, unlike those two. So, to clear up his confusion, he asked, 'What are you talking about?'

'Simple.' Rean almost laughed out loud as he replied. However, he had to restrain himself to not attract too much attention as he explained the things to Clad. 'It means we don't need to stay here to make use of the Spiritual Energy. All we need to know is where these tunnels are connected to. After that, we can sneak down and access the tunnels without anyone noticing. We can cultivate very quickly, go out to train, and then go down once again to cultivate. We just need to keep up this loop, and our cultivations will soar! Not to mention that we will be a lot safer than we are here.'

Clad's eyes widened from the idea. Though, he was quite pessimistic of its success as he said, 'But...those tunnels are heavily guarded. We see patrols coming and going all the time, and they don't use the teleport formations. They literally fly through it. What if they find us? Wouldn't that be dangerous?' Clad thought that since Rean and Roan could use that incredible Spatial Equipment (Well, it was the Soul Gem System Dimensional Realm, though), the Soul Rulers definitely had something similar or better. That being said, they definitely had a way to find them if they were found.

Rean and Roan nodded in response to Clad's woes as Rean said, 'Don't worry, we have our own tricks. In any case, this is a plan for the future, not now. We will spend a long time until we conclude our master's mission first.'

Clad then took a deep breath and nodded before saying, 'Alright. I need to go back now since they keep a close eye on all of us. I can already see a few Zafins looking carefully at everyone here on the surface.' After that, Clad moved away, leaving the range of Rean's Spiritual Sense.

'Okay. My next step is to find the Soul Stone Formations...if they really exist,' Rean thought as he headed back to Sevinia's estate.

The days passed by in a flash as Rean kept working with Palaris and Ophele's team, building their trust in him. Roan also got used to controlling his formation and had helped many Zafins go through their trials. To not raise suspicion, Roan even helped a few of them pass the test with Sister Orb's help. After all, if all the Zafins that took the trial he was controlling failed, he would probably be discarded way earlier.

Soon, over a year had gone by. Roan had seen many kids being brought away as well as many others taking their places. Nevertheless, he was patient. Once the right time came, they would take everyone out. Today, however, Roan had another thing to do with Rean. 'Alright, this definitely was a lot faster than we expected. It's time to enter the Core and Soul Fusion Realm.'

Rean agreed with Roan. He, too, was at the peak of the Core Formation Realm. 'Indeed. However, won't the Zafins on your side stop you from doing that?'

Roan shook his head, saying, 'They won't even see it. Next time they pay attention to my cultivation, I'll be in the next realm already.'

Suddenly, Roan's hair turned black and white as both Light and Dark Elements gathered around him.

'Death Style, Fifth Form, Mirage Assault!'

Sure enough, Roan used the same trick just like in the past and entered the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm straight away. Only his clone was left behind after that. 'I'll make my breakthrough here in the Dimensional Realm. No one will notice anything.'

Rean nodded in satisfaction. 'Cool. I don't need to do it since no one will try to stop me. Instead, Palaris is looking forward to me making a breakthrough so that I can help more with the formations. Anyway, we can start straight away.'

[Very well, you two. Access your cultivation manuals and follow my lead.]

Death... and me

Chapter 677: Ukay!

The process of breaking through the Core and Soul Fusion Realm was already on the name itself. One had to fuse one's Soul and Core inside one's dantian together. Of course, it wasn't the entire Soul, but just a small piece of it.

[Simply put, you guys will be cutting off a small part of your Soul and feeding it to the Core. Now that you two are at the peak of the Core Formation Realm, the Core has reached the necessary requirements to hold and nurture that piece of Soul.] Sister Orb said as Rean and Roan began their breakthrough.

Rean and Roan understood why as one of them replied, 'The Soul being nurtured will then grow all the way to the peak of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. Once we reach that level, it will give birth to a Nascent Soul. Is that correct?'

[Exactly! It's a very simple process...well, at least for you two, it is. It's not as easy for the others since they don't have the Soul Gem System's Cultivation Manual and support. How about you thank your Sister Orb for these blessings?]

'Alright, Roan. Do you have enough Spiritual Energy?' Rean soon asked, completely ignoring Sister Orb.

'I do. Let's start.' Roan nodded in response as he replied.

[Hmph! You're lucky your Sister Orb has a big heart, so I'll let this one pass.] Obviously, Sister Orb was angry at them for ignoring her.

Of course, they weren't the only ones going through the process. At the very moment Rean and Roan started their breakthroughs, a certain snoring demon bird woke up at the corner of the Dimensional Realm.

\*Creeee!\*

Obviously, that bird was none other than Kentucky. The limit of his cultivation was always based on the twins' cultivation level. Thanks to that, his breakthrough started at the same time as the twins did. Kentucky immediately opened his wings as he cried out loud. Surprisingly, compared to Rean and Roan, Kentucky began to absorb the Spiritual Energy in the surroundings in massive waves.

[I guess that's why he's a legendary demon beast.]

Rean and Roan also heard that and nodded. However, they didn't pay attention to Kentucky for long as they continued to absorb Spiritual Energy for themselves. 'According to the Soul Gem System's Cultivation Technique, we need to redirect the internal energy of our Core to our Soul in our heads.'

After recalling that step, the two did just that. As always, the cultivation manual explained everything perfectly. All the meridians, the ratio of energy, what to expect, everything was there. Their Core began to released a milky-white and pitch-black energy that found its way into their own Soul.

'Sister Orb, if I remember correctly, the formation used by those Zafins weren't able to cut a part of Roan's Soul. Can we not do that as well?' Rean asked in the middle of the breakthrough process.

[Don't worry. It was the System that prevented Roan's Soul from being damaged. Now that you're in the middle of your breakthroughs, not only won't it stop you, but it'll even give support.] Sister Orb answered straight away.

Sure enough, as soon as Rean and Roan's Core Energy touched their Souls, it began to absorb them. This process only lasted a second, and the pain they expected was nowhere to be found. Once the energies took what they wanted, they immediately headed directly back to the Dantians. From there, the absorbed piece of Soul was taken into the Core.

\*Bzzzzz!\*

As soon as that happened, the Core began to swell, increasing to at least three times their previous sizes. Not only that, but Rean and Roan's Spiritual Energy Pool had also grown in size proportional to the Core's new size.

[Great! Now everything will happen naturally. Just keep absorbing Spiritual Energy.] Sister Orb was very satisfied with the result.

\*Creeeeeeeeee!!!\*

Rean and Roan's cultivation wasn't the only one to start increasing. Kentucky's breakthrough happened at the same as theirs, with his cultivation rising as even more Spiritual Energy flowed into his body. Following that, his body followed suit, growing ever larger. Kentucky was now transforming into a Stage Four Demon Beast!

Outside Rean's room, the people using their Spiritual Senses to check on him noticed what was happening and reported to Palaris.

"What? Breakthrough? Why didn't he tell me? I could have helped him! What if he doesn't know how to do it correctly? Doesn't he know how important his formation skills are to us?" Palaris said as he rushed back to Sevinia's estate.

However, just as Palaris was about to enter Rean's room, a burst of Spiritual Energy emanated from it.

"This..." Palaris was left at a loss for words. He hasn't entered the room yet, but his Spiritual Sense could already tell that Rean had officially entered the Core and Soul Fusion Realm! "So fast!"

Ophele, who also received the information and came to check, was just as shocked. "Is he that good?" Naturally, she didn't like the feeling, seeing someone at her own age surpass her cultivation level. On top of that, the one that surpassed her was a human. Well, she was part of the Soul Rulers, after all.

Back in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, Roan had finished his breakthrough together with Rean. 'Sure enough, the boost in Soul Power was only at the start. Now it has reached the same speed as our Spiritual Energy cultivation. Zasfins are better at Soul Power, while Lakures excel in Spiritual Energy. I guess I can consider humans to be balanced in that regard,' he thought as he checked his body.

Sister Orb warned Roan not long after that, saying, [Alright, Roan. You should head back outside before your clone disappears due to the lack of Spiritual Energy.]

Roan nodded and immediately disappeared from the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Not long after, in one of the Bloodline Trial Control Formations, Roan's clone disappeared, with Roan's real body taking its place. As for the clone, it crumbled inside the Dimensional Realm right after. From start to finish, no one noticed anything strange happening to Roan. 'It'll probably take some time before those idiots notice my increase in cultivation.'



Inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, a giant Kentucky flapped his wings. Even though his size increased over two times with this breakthrough, his body looked a lot more slender now. There were basically no chubby parts anymore. \*Chick!\* Kentucky wanted nothing more than to go out and fly for a while to adjust to his new breakthrough.

Rean noticed that and couldn't help but sigh. He connected to the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm before saying with a slightly sad expression, 'Sorry, Kentucky. We're in a tight situation at the moment, so we can't let you out. There's even a small possibility that someone might identify you now. Just stay in there for a bit longer.'

\*Chick...\* 'Al-alri-ti...'

'What?!' Rean's eyes widened when he heard that. Just now, he felt Kentucky's Spiritual Sense connecting to him through the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, giving him an answer.

He wasn't the only one. Since the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm was used for that, Roan also heard Kentucky talking. With that, he asked, 'Hey, fat bird. Can you convene thoughts through Spiritual Sense now?'

\*Chick! Chick!\* Kentucky flapped his wings in anger as he replied, 'I-I'm nut... fot!'

Rean couldn't help but ask, 'What's happening here? Aren't Demon Beasts only able to gain sapience at Stage Five? Kentucky has just entered Stage Four, you know!'

[Well, he's a Minokawa, after all. Legendary Demon Beasts like him are in a completely different league compared to normal ones. Besides, we can't discard the possibility that it was the Soul Gem System's fault.] Sister Orb responded to Rean's query, not thinking it was any big deal.

Rean laughed out loud in response as he soon said, 'Hahaha! Kentucky, it's great to be able to talk to you now.'

Though not long after, Rean thought about something else. 'Oh, right! What's the level of a Demon Beast's intelligence that has gained sapience for the first time?'

[Well, normal demon beasts would have the intelligence of six to seven-year-old kids. To be more exact, it would be at the level of a newborn baby. However, this is only the case for demon beasts who lived in the wild without the influence of other intelligent beings,] Sister Orb explained.

Rean understood what Sister Orb meant by that. 'I see...simply put, Kentucky's six to seven-year-old level intelligence is because he lived most of his life with intelligent beings around him. Because of that, his intelligence culminated in all that he had memorized during this time after the breakthrough. Otherwise, he would be more like a newborn baby, having to take his time to learn language from the very start.'

\*Chick?\* Kentucky heard all of that but couldn't understand very well due to the complexity of their words. 'I dunt inderstand...'

Roan shook his head as he said, 'His vocabulary needs a lot of work. In any case, we finally have a job for our lazy Sister Orb.'

[Who's lazy?! Who do you think is working on analyzing all the Bloodline Trial Control Formations, huh?] Obviously, Sister Orb didn't take those words lightly

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he said in response, 'Sister Orb. Even though you're doing that, you can still talk with Kentucky and us normally. Since it's only teaching proper vocabulary, it shouldn't intervene in your analyzing abilities.'

[And why should I waste my time doing that?] Sister Orb soon rebuked.

Rean smiled right after as he replied, 'Of course! That's because Sister Orb is the best teacher in existence! Our Sister Orb is the mighty Soul Gem System's AI, so how could such a simple thing bother her? There's simply no one better in the Universe for this task.'

[...]

[Ahem...well, when you put it like that, I guess it can't be helped.] Sure enough, Sister Orb's tolerance on compliments was still weak

'Great!' Rean nodded with satisfaction as he said, 'We're counting on you, Sister Orb!' He then turned his attention to the Minokawa before saying to Kentucky, 'Kentucky, be a good bird and learn everything, okay?'

\*Chick!\* 'U-ukay!'

Death... and me

Chapter 678: Teasing

Not long after that, Palaris and Ophele finally decided to enter Rean's room. They didn't do so until now because they were afraid of disturbing him since that might cause a backlash while he was still in the process of calming his foundation down.

Seeing that Rean looked fine, Palaris sighed in relief as he said, "Sigh...boy, you really succeeded."

Though, his expression turned dark right after as he continued, "What the hell were you thinking? There are no such things as Light or Dark Element cultivation manuals. This breakthrough you did was definitely high-risk. What if you failed and destroyed your cultivation?"

Rean looked back at Palaris with confusion as he responded, "Why would that be a problem? I'm just a human. Even if something happens to me, none of the Zasfins would care that much."

Ophele snorted as she said in response, "Hmph! Usually, that would be the case. However, your talent and ideas when it comes to formations are just way too important for us. We can't have you losing your cultivation and be unable to work on formations anymore, let alone dying."

She then continued, not caring about Rean himself, "If that really happens, then we'll send you straight to your brother. Understood?"

Surprisingly, Rean kneeled down in front of Ophele before saying, "Yes, your majesty! This humble human understands how worried you are about this subject. Unfortunately, our standings are just too far apart. For your own good, this human can't accept your love."

Palaris and the people watching Rean through Spiritual Sense could not help but open their eyes widely! Love? What love? Could it be that something happened to these two while they weren't looking?

Hearing that, Ophele's face changed between various shades of dark and red, not knowing whether to feel furious or embarrassed.

\*Bang!\*

She immediately kicked Rean away soon after, stopping the act. "Fuck you! Who the hell would love a human? Say that one more time and see if I don't cut your head myself! Who the hell would fall in love with a slave? Hmph!" Ophele immediately turned around and left after that.

Rean, on the other hand, was laughing out loud inside. 'Hahaha! So funny. As expected, she's all bark but no bite.' Rean then used his Light Element to heal the injury in his chest internally before getting up.

Palaris, on the other hand, sighed as he told him, "Rean, you better not joke like that anymore. My granddaughter is pretty much the spitting image of my daughter-in-law. She gets angry very fast and wouldn't hold back when punishing others." Palaris felt that he had to warn Rean. Sure enough, everyone understood that Rean was just messing with Ophele a moment ago.

Rean nodded as he laughed, saying, "Hahaha! It's fine, it's fine. I'm just a human, so she won't be angry for long. She'll just think that I'm not worth her anger and go back to normal."

"This..." Palaris had to admit that Rean was right. "Well, try to hold back a little since it'll be bad if she suddenly decides to kill you." After that, Palaris changed the topic as he said, "In any case, she's right. You can't risk things like that. Your talent in formations is just too important to us. That's why you're treated this well even though you're a human. You must understand that Sevinia had to pay a high price to have you on our side."

Rean smiled in response, saying, "Alright, I'll try to not tease her too much. By the way, there's no need for Senior Palaris to feel afraid of my breakthroughs. I wouldn't try to do it if I wasn't sure that I could succeed. Even without a cultivation manual for Light Element Affinity, I'm still quite good at cultivating without it."

Even though Rean assured his worries, Palaris felt that it was still dangerous. However, he didn't say anything since Rean wouldn't make another breakthrough anytime soon. After all, he was just in the Initial Stage of the Core and Soul Fusion Realm. He still had three stages to go through before trying to enter the Nascent Soul Realm. "Very well. Now then, come with me. Since you're in the Core and Soul Fusion Realm now, I want you to look into Earth Peak-Level Formation Runes. Your foundation is definitely chaotic because of your breakthrough, so it's better if you don't cultivate for a while."

Roan, who was listening to everything, agreed with Palaris, saying, 'That guy's right. Let's refrain from cultivating for the next three to four weeks. Instead, practice your Soul Cultivation during this time. Our Souls have become stronger with this last breakthrough, so it should reflect in our Soul Power cultivation.'

Rean agreed with Roan, responding, 'Alright. I'm also going to try these next few weeks if I can have Palaris show me the Soul Stone Formations.'

Roan and Rean then focused on their own things from that point onwards as Sister Orb taught Kentucky better vocabulary. As Rean mentioned, he came up with an excuse to ask about the Soul Stone Formation two weeks later. "Elder Palaris, would it be possible for me to see how Soul Stones are made? I believe they're also formations, just like the Bloodline Trial Control Formations, right?"

Palaris's group became puzzled as one of them asked, "Why would you ask to see that?"

Rean answered right after, "I want to use it as a base for the Soul Runes. If I'm not wrong, it transforms human souls into Soul Stones. There's definitely some conversion being made there. I want to use the idea behind those formations to make a Spiritual and Soul Convergence Rune."

Palaris shook his head as he responded, "It'll most likely be useless. Without Soul Power, you can't create Soul Runes, so there's no point in showing you that."

Ophele, who was there as well, nodded as she continued where Palaris left off, "Grandfather's right. Don't waste your time on meaningless things. After all, your time is also our time."

Rean looked at them with confusion as he said in response, "What are you talking about? I can also use Soul Power, you know?" Soon after that, Rean's Soul Power manifested around his body, albeit slightly weaker. Nevertheless, it was definitely Soul Power.

"Impossible!" Everyone screamed at the same time. "Humans should not be able to use Soul Power!"

Rean narrowed his eyes as he asked, "Why?"

"Because you aren't a Zasfi-" It was then that an idea surfaced on Palaris's mind. "Wait, could it be...Still..."

This time, even Rean was surprised. He had already thought of an excuse to show his Soul Power. Nevertheless, it seemed like Palaris already had an idea himself, so he waited to see what Palaris wanted to say.

Palaris wasn't the only one. Ophele also had the same idea as him as the two approached Rean and looked deeply at him. "He looks slightly different than the human slaves we have, no?"

Rean could not help but let out a bit of cold sweat from that, thinking to himself, 'Could it be that they found out I'm not from this world?'

Ophele and Palaris then brought a few more humans to stand on Rean's side. Sure enough, although they were very similar, Rean did have a few traits that the other humans here didn't. It couldn't be helped. After all, Rean was born on another planet. In fact, it was quite a surprise that humans of this planet only looked a little bit different. Nevertheless, the difference between him and them was there. It's just that none of the Zasfins or the humans cared to pay attention before.

"Ahem...is anything wrong?" Rean asked that as he prepared to enter the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Roan also did the same as he looked at the current situation through their connection.

Suddenly, Palaris nodded as he asked, "Rean, you...you said that the Zasfin who raised you wasn't really your father, right? Tell me, do you have any memories of your parents back then?"

"This..." Rean was taken aback. However, he quickly understood what was happening and gave up escaping to the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. "I don't remember. Why?" Rean quickly changed his plans as he asked that.

Ophele then explained, "It isn't anything out of the ordinary. Sometimes, there are a few disgusting Zasfins that feel attracted to their human slaves. It happens more times to the male Zasfins than the female ones, of course. In any case, it happens on both sides."

Rean mentally smiled as he kept an expression of shock, asking them, "Are you saying that I might be half-Zasfin and half-human?"

Palaris confirmed with a nod. "Exactly. Only that would explain why you can use Soul Power."

Palaris's words also helped Roan understand another point. 'Judging from their surprise, it seems like there are really no humans on this planet that can use Soul Power. I can't tell if it's because the humans had been slaves for too long or if it's a special trait of this world's humans to not be able to use Soul Power.'

Rean agreed, responding, 'Indeed. Well, that's mostly because the Zasfins don't let humans obtain high-level soul marks. Anyways, let's leave it aside for now.'

Rean then scratched the back of his head as he responded, "I really have no idea. I just know that at some point in our life, my brother and I could use it." Of course, that was a lie, but Rean wouldn't tell the truth either.

Palaris pondered over the situation for a bit as he muttered, "I know about the hybrids between humans and Zasfins. The majority is killed before being born with their mothers or right after they come out if the mother is a Zasfin. Nevertheless, there are exceptions. It's just that those who manifest Soul Power are extremely rare, even between those hybrids."

Ophele shrugged her shoulders as she said, "So what? Look at the strength of his Soul Power. It's ridiculous! Well, I guess it's still good since he can help with the Soul runes. As for the fact that he can use Soul Runes, let's keep that between us. It would be annoying if that geezer Puan demands to take Rean back."

Rean's expression became as bright as the sun as he smiled at Ophele, saying, "Thank you, Miss Ophele. I knew you couldn't bear to part with me!"

Ophele almost vomited blood after hearing that! "Who the hell cares about you?!"

Rean already understood that Ophele was just too easy to be teased. With that in mind, he had an idea on how he could make use of this flaw in the future.

'Don't blame me since it's not like you think that well about humans either,' Rean thought with a playful smile.

Death... and me

Chapter 679: More Complicated Situation

Rean then changed the topic, saying, "Anyway, this should be enough for me to take a look at the Soul Stone Formations, right? I really want to see how it works. Besides, it's not like I can flee and tell this secret outside." Rean then smiled at Ophele, who felt the urge to blow his head as he continued, "Or could it be that a Soul Ruler like Miss Ophele is afraid that a human like me would be able to escape from your grasp?"

Ophele wasn't an idiot. She knew that Rean was doing that to provoke her and get what he wanted. Nevertheless, she couldn't help but follow his wishes. After all, the other way around would be akin to her proving that the Soul Rulers would really allow Rean to escape if he wanted to. "Hmph! As if such a thing could ever happen. There are so many eyes on you that you can't even breathe without us knowing."

Ophele turned around and made her way to the exit as she responded, "Come, I'll take you to check it out."

Palaris, on the other hand, narrowed his eyes as he warned him, "Rean, are you sure you want to see the formations that transform human souls into Soul Stones?" He was afraid that Rean might give up helping him with formations after seeing that.

Rean laughed in response as he replied, "Senior Palaris, you're thinking too deeply into it. Does it look like I can worry about others? What's preventing me from becoming a Soul Stone is my talent in formations. That's why I want to check it. As for the other humans, there's nothing I can do for them. Simple as that."



"Hmph! It's good that you understand that," Ophele said as she also heard Rean's words.

As Rean followed Ophele, he also communicated with Sister Orb, telling her, 'Sister Orb, make sure to not forget where the formation's located since I probably won't be able to stay there for long.' Rean didn't want Sister Orb to lose track of it after coming back.

[Don't worry. As long as I know the exact location and we're in the same area, I can do the analysis. I only need one chance to check it out. After that, you don't need to stay in the area anymore. Of course, try to stay there for a while longer so the Zafins won't suspect you. It would be weird if you just glance at the formation and leave straight away,] Sister Orb warned Rean.

Rean nodded after hearing that. "Very well."

Rean's group then passed by a few different buildings and finally reached the same one Roan was brought into. However, instead of going to the tunnel where Roan was located, they took a different tunnel. Eventually, they arrived at a big hall where Rean could see many formations set up. Each of them was linked to each other, forming a web of connections.

"This is the formation...or formations. To create the Soul Stones, you need several types of Soul Formations working in unison," Ophele explained as she pointed at them.

At the same time, a guard came out to Ophele and Palaris and asked, "Is this another human that's ready for extraction?" Naturally, he had never seen a human come into this place if not for creating Soul Stones, so he thought Rean was just another one of them.

Palaris shook his head as he responded, "No, he's here to attend us. Don't worry, we already obtained permission to be here. If there are any issues, you can report to Sevinia's estate."

The guard found it strange that someone would come here just to look at the formation, though he didn't intervene. Since they had permission, it was not in his place to say anything. "Then, have a good stay. Please be aware that the formations are delicate, so be careful."

Ophele and Palaris nodded in response as they began to walk with Rean between the formations. After that, Palaris started to use Spiritual Sense to talk with Rean about the Soul Runes of each formation. 'This Soul Rune here is a Splitting Soul Energy Rune. It's present in most of the formations that make up the whole system. The material we use to...'

For the next few hours, Ophele and Palaris explained everything, hoping that Rean would come up with new ideas for the formation research they were doing.

However, while Rean was going through the various formations, the hall's doors opened once again. A group of Zasfins soon came inside with a small group of five humans no older than 10 or 11 years old. That guard from before already understood why they were there and came forward to receive them.

"A new batch?"

"Yes. Their Souls have become too chaotic to operate the Bloodline Trial Control Formations. We can only use them for Soul Stones now."

The kids, who seemed to be impressed with the place, didn't understand what was going to happen. With that, one of them asked, "Uncles, is this where we will be sent to Soul Paradise?"

The Zasfin leading that group laughed as he patted the kid's head, saying, "Hahaha! But of course. Once you enter the formation, you will be transported to where all the other kids before you went. You worked very hard so far, so it's only proper that you get the honor to be with them."

"Great!" The kids all became excited.

However, Rean's expression turned as cold as ice after that. If his hair was completely black, one wouldn't be able to tell him apart from Roan at all. 'Sister Orb, is there a way to stop them?'

[No. I've just started to analyze the formations making up the system. It'll take a lot of time before I can do anything about it.] She then warned him, saying, [Rean, don't do anything stupid. If you use the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm to suddenly transport those kids away, all the Zasfins here will know about your abilities. You'll be basically sacrificing everyone else to save these five.]

Rean clenched his fists but nodded in the end. 'I know... don't worry.'

The kids were soon sent inside the center of the plethora of formations as Rean, Palaris, and Ophele watched. At this moment, Ophele looked at Rean's expression and could see that he didn't look as playful as before. 'Hmph! You better look at the process very well. That's how you'll turn out if you disappoint us.'

Rean glanced at Ophele for a moment, his expression changing into a bright smile as he replied, 'Sure enough, Miss Ophele is the one who cares about me the most.'

A vein popped out of Ophele's head as she did her best to not beat Rean to a pulp. She was clearly provoking him, but how come she was always the one fuming while he was smiling? 'Let's see how long you can keep your smug smile. Hmph!'

The formations soon activated, and the kids at the center, who looked excited a moment ago, suddenly fell to the ground. Not long after, the same faint blue light came out of the formations and entered their heads. However, unlike the Bloodline Trial Control Formations, Rean could see that something was coming out of the kids' heads through the stream of blue light.

Those streams of blue light then passed through the various formations in the area before gathering at the front. There, several Spirit Stones began to melt. Rean could tell that each of those Spirit Stones was at least a Rank Six one.

The melted material then began to mix with the Spirit Stones, fusing together. Rean looked at that as the process took over an hour to complete. Eventually, three clear stones finished forming in the air before the formations came to an abrupt halt.

The clear stones then began to fall until the Zasfin, who was controlling the formation, used his Spiritual Energy to catch them. He looked at the stones with his Spiritual Sense and Soul Power for a quick moment before putting them away. "Sigh...it's really hard to obtain high-level Soul Stones. These humans were quite useless to the very end. Anyways, someone clear the trash left behind."

The Zasfin that had patted the kids' head before the formation activated came forward after hearing that and lifted the kids' corpses into the air. Following that, he used his Spiritual Energy to burn them

down. With his cultivation, it wasn't anything hard to burn those kids' corpses to the point that even ashes weren't left behind. "For fuck's sake. I hate pretending to be nice in front of these humans."

A friend on his side shrugged his shoulders as he consoled, "Well, at the very least, you can vent your anger by wiping them out. Don't tell me that you don't feel satisfied burning them down."

"Hahaha!" The guy nodded with a light chuckle. "That's true. It's definitely satisfying." He then turned around and made his way out of the room while saying, "Let's go. We might get a few more today."

He and the Zasfins who brought the kids before left the room, leaving only the Zasfins responsible for taking care of the formation behind. Of course, Rean, Ophele, and Palaris were also there.

Rean then made sure to burn the guys' face in his head as he thought to himself, trying his best to control his emotions, 'There will come a day when you'll pay for that.'

Palaris then looked at him and sighed before using Spiritual Sense to tell him, 'That's why I didn't want you to come here. Although I'm not in favor of it, that's how things work in the Soul Rulers' territory. However, believe it or not, it's a lot better now than before.'

Rean took a deep breath before asking, 'Better? How can it be better than anything else?'

Such words were hard to believe after what Rean saw. However, he would find out that things were a lot more complicated than that.

Death... and me

Chapter 680: How Long

Ophele wasn't interested in that, though. 'Who cares? They're just a few humans. Stop wasting time and let's continue revising the runes here.'

[This woman isn't the least bit better than the Zasfins from before. Rean, you really need to get rid of her if you get the chance.] Sister Orb said. She was furious after seeing how things worked, let alone after hearing Ophele's words. However...

'No, this is just a pretense. Am I right, Roan?' Rean asked.

Roan agreed with Rean as he observed everything through their Soul Connection, responding, 'Yes. This Ophele or whatever is just pretending to not care. However, she can't conceal it from me. She's also trying to hold her emotions while she watched the process.'

Sister Orb was truly surprised to hear that. [You're kidding!]

Rean agreed to Roan's words, continuing where he left off, 'I also found it weird. Why would she go as far as to use her mother to let me stay out of the Bloodline Trial Control Formations? It didn't look like a good idea, even if you consider my knowledge in formations. After all, most of the Zasfins with very pure Bloodlines like her are too prideful to accept a human's help. However, she's doing exactly that with the formations, and so is Palaris.'

[Are you telling me that this annoying girl doesn't hate humans?] Sister Orb found that hard to believe.

'I don't know,' Rean replied as he shook his head. 'What I can only tell is that she's at least many times better than the guys from before.'

As Ophele explained more of the runes to Rean, Palaris took the chance to tell him more about the Soul Stone Formation. Of course, he left Ophele out of the conversation through Spiritual Sense this time.

'The process of extracting one's Soul and transforming it into Soul Stones is terrible. Can you imagine the excruciating pain it would give you if you were awake? However, most Zasfins couldn't care less if the human kids were suffering or not. Because of that, the kids transformed into Soul Stones would be having the worst moment of their lives until the very end of the process.'

He then continued, 'However, not all Zasfins found pleasure in watching it. After a lot of work, we modified this formation so that their Souls would fall into a state of deep sleep before the process started.'

Rean narrowed his eyes as he said, 'I can't believe Zasfins would accept changing the Soul Stone Formation just so the kids would suffer less.' Indeed, it didn't make much sense, considering how important the formation was.

Palaris agreed with Rean, replying, 'You're right. They didn't. Only after we proved that a calm soul would have a higher chance of becoming a higher quality Soul Stone did the higher-ups allow us to change the formation. Otherwise, you would have seen an even worse scene.' After that, he let out a sigh, thinking about the past.

Rean was taken aback after he noticed something was off with Palaris's words. 'Us? Does that mean Senior Palaris helped with the modification?'

Palaris smiled as he replied, 'I did. To be more specific, it was our Hafel Clan who did the modification. Did you notice that quite a few of the Zasfins in the area don't like us?'

Rean nodded in response. He did notice such a thing before. It was as if the Soul Rulers weren't that unified, and he always wondered why. 'Just because your clan didn't let the kids... suffer? It seems like a small reason for others not to like you.'

Palaris shrugged his shoulders as he said, 'Well, there are a few more things that became the reason for this treatment. For example, the fact that the actual Organization Head is part of our faction as well.'

Rean couldn't help but ask, 'Could it be that Senior Palaris would prefer to save humans instead?' Rean found that hard to believe. However, Palaris had always been quite a weird guy who could even cry because of something he said. He was a human, so that was weird, to say the least. Other than the Asume Clan, he hadn't seen a single Zasfin group that cared about humans so far. It was hard to believe that such a group would exist within the Soul Rulers' Organization.

Palaris shook his head in response, saying, 'Save? Hahaha! That's not possible. At most, we can give them some help while we're here. The world revolves around human slaves, you know? There's no way to save them, so we don't try anything overboard.' Palaris then looked at Ophele before saying, 'Just don't hate my granddaughter. Although she has a terrible mouth, she's one of those who does her best to help the humans in the organization. It's just that she doesn't have any power, so no one cares about what she does.'

Palaris's words only confirmed what Rean and Roan already knew. Ophele was only pretending to not care. 'I guess Senior Palaris's presence in the Airship and you taking me under your Hafel Clan's wing wasn't just a coincidence, huh?'

Palaris bitterly smiled as he nodded, responding, 'Yes...however, our power is limited. Although the Organization Head is a member of our faction, he can't act as he wishes. The Soul Rulers is just too big. Besides, most Zasfins still consider humans as nothing more than slaves. That's why taking you in was our limit. We couldn't save your brother.'

Rean almost laughed out loud after hearing that. Save Roan? If they only knew that there was no need for such a worry. 'It's fine, Senior Palaris. As I said, I'm already doing my best to be worthy of your faction's help. My brother and I already understood the risks of this situation, so neither of us blame you for that. If anything, I'm happy to know that there's also a group in the Soul Rulers who like humans. It shows that our father wasn't the only Zasfin to think like that. Isn't that already a good thing?'

Palaris was satisfied that Rean thought like that, saying in response, 'That's good, then. Perhaps we can still save your brother. It takes a long time for a Soul to become unfit to control the Bloodline Trial, usually around three to five years in general. Who knows, if your accomplishments become big enough in the future, we might convince the other Zasfins to at least let your brother out for your sake. As long as it's for the organization's sake, the other factions won't stop it.'

'I'll do my best,' Rean responded with a smile. Of course, he wasn't worried about it at all.

Well, there was one thing he was worried about, but it had nothing to do with the actual situation. Rean then talked with Roan and Sister Orb once again through their Soul Connection. 'Sister Orb, isn't it risky for Roan to stay in that Bloodline Trial Control Formation? It seems like it can affect the human soul, after all.'

Roan had already made that question, though. Nevertheless, he ignored it and let Sister Orb answer. [Don't worry. Your souls are protected by the System. The formation won't cause anything to Roan.]

'Oh, is that so? That's good, then.' With that said, Rean put his attention back to the Soul Stone Formation, trying to forget what happened to the kids.

Eventually, they finished their observation and decided to head back to Sevinia's estate. On the way back, Palaris decided to ask Rean about what he saw. 'So, have you figured anything out of the Soul Stone Formations?'

Rean nodded, responding, 'I have a few ideas here, especially regarding the Mediator Soul Rune. I think I can implement it in the Three Ways One Path Rune I showed you before.'

Palaris and Ophele were satisfied to hear that. It showed that their trip there wasn't for nothing.

At the same time, Rean asked Sister Orb in the Dimensional Realm. 'How was it, Sister Orb? Have you locked down the location of those formations?'

[But of course!] Sister Orb said with confidence, feeling quite good about herself. [I was truly impressed with the array of formations that make up the whole thing. However, individually, they aren't that complicated. It will take some time to analyze their full purposes, but I have an idea in mind. To be honest, it'll be a lot easier to take control over the Soul Stone Formation System than it will be for the Bloodline Trial Control Formations.]

Rean mentally nodded, not finding it hard to believe. 'That's to be expected. After all, the Bloodline Trial Control Formations encompass the whole planet most likely. The Soul Stone Formation might be incredible, but it isn't as big.' Rean's expression then turned serious as he told her, 'Sister Orb, revert the Soul Gem System's full processing power to analyze those formations. I want to stop them from being able to create Soul Stones before anything else.'

Roan, who was listening to everything, narrowed his eyes as he rebutted, 'Out of the question!' He obviously hated the idea. 'If you do that, they will connect what happened to the Soul Stone Formations to your appearance there. Don't forget, if you're too rushed, not only will you not save anyone, you'll condemn a lot of the kids instead.'

Rean sighed but could only agree with Roan. With that, he instead asked, 'Alright. I was being too hasty. Instead, Sister Orb, how long will it take before you take control over both the Bloodline Trial Control and Soul Stone Formations?'

Sure enough, that was the question that mattered most to Rean and Roan.