

Death 721

Death... and me

Chapter 721: Possible Conflict

Meanwhile, back in the Soul Rulers' headquarters...

Most of the buildings had been reconstructed while the remains were cleaned out. If one looked at the location right now, no one would even believe that an enormous explosion had happened at this place just a few months ago. However, it didn't matter much. After all, the Soul Rulers only found a few kids with high Soul Purity during this time. Besides, it was useless since all the Bloodline Trial Control Formations were gone. To rebuild them, it would not only take a few months but several years!

In the same hall as before, the elders of the Soul Rulers gathered once again, discussing the issues with Celis's disappearance and the reconstruction of the formations. However, the main topic today was something else.

"What about the Demon Beast Continent?" one of the elders asked in the hall.

A man then stepped forward in the middle of the hall and gave his report, stating, "We have noticed strange movements in the territories of Stage Seven and higher demon beasts. They seem to have gotten quite restless. However, we can't tell what they're just planning yet."

"Hmph!" Fikin, the top ancestor of the Soul Rulers, snorted as he said, "What else would those beasts there be planning? They obviously noticed the sudden change in the planet's Spiritual Energy. Only an idiot would not link that and the melting ice to the World Swallowing Cedar. The fact that they haven't come and ask about it yet proves that they're aware of its disappearance."

The other ancestors and elders couldn't help but show a dark expression after hearing that. Their position in the world was all thanks to Celis, and now, he was gone. They knew that the demon beasts would take action soon, trying to reclaim the areas that used to belong to them.

Fikin then looked at another group of Zasfins before asking, "How's the search for the World Swallowing Cedar going?"

One of the Zafins stepped forward to answer, responding, "There are still many isolated areas we haven't looked into. As for the ones we did, we left scouts behind to make sure they wouldn't be used. In any case, we still haven't found any clue that they have passed by one of them."

Fikin nodded after hearing that and then looked at the group responsible for watching the Demon Beast Alliance on Gartrin Continent. "How about you guys? Have you obtained any information related to them? They used a demon beast during the day they took the kids away, so the demon beasts might be related to it."

However, the Zafins shook their heads. "So far, nothing had been found about those two humans and the demon bird. It's too hard to find since we don't know what color or unique characteristics it has. As the ancestors know, Demon Birds at Stage Five aren't anything hard to find in the Demon Beast Continent."

The reason they didn't know of Kentucky's real appearance was obviously because of Rean's Light bending skill. Back then, the Zafins could tell that Rean and Roan were riding a Demon Bird. Unfortunately, it was only possible to be seen through Spiritual Sense. Things like features, color, size, and so on were just too hard to distinguish with Spiritual Sense alone. As for Rean and Roan themselves, thanks to Roan's 'make-up skills,' the appearance they showed themselves in was different during their time there.

Fikin narrowed his eyes in response. It was exactly because there were too many Demon Birds at that level that it bothered him. "Keep your eyes on the Demon Beast Alliance and increase the number of people watching there. There aren't many places that can hide something as big as a Stage Nine World Swallowing Cedar. It has to have appeared somewhere after being teleported away."

"Yes, Ancestor Fikin." The Zafins nodded after that before stepping back again.

After that, Fikin mentioned something else, saying, "Although there's a good chance that the demon beasts were involved in the World Swallowing Cedar's kidnapping, I don't believe so. After all, they could have used it to cut out our supply of Spiritual Energy, just like we did with the rest of the world. However, the world has a lot more Spiritual Energy now, which doesn't make sense. Why would they refrain from using Celis in their favor while they prepare to attack? Last but not least, I couldn't feel the Demon Beast Alliance's Mark on that demon bird. There's definitely something else going on."

The elder and other ancestors went silent for a moment. They had to agree that Fikin was right. If it was them, they would have definitely done so. Especially since they were talking about demon beasts, who wouldn't care about using such an advantage?

Fikin then shook his head as he placed all thoughts at the back of his head. "Alright, just keep continuing the search." After that, he gave more orders, telling them, "Except for the Zasfins looking for Celis, I want all forces to be ready for battle and stationed in the main areas that the demon beasts would try to attack first. If we don't find Celis, war will become inevitable. That being said, we simply can't give up the territories that are rightfully ours, the Zasfins."

"Yes!" Everyone agreed as they began to draft plans to contend against the demon beasts.

Back on Rean and Kentucky's side, they had finally finished talking about their own world.

The old man Phoenix then went silent for a moment as he pondered over the issue. "A world dominated by humans. I know that there were bound to be worlds out there controlled by other races, but it's still surprising to hear about it. After all, I've lived on this planet as far as my memories go. But to think that it was destroyed by a single attack. It was definitely the doings of someone far above the Transition Realm."

As soon as the old man Phoenix said the words, the world around him tried to attack his body. The Spiritual Pressure in the area increased, trying to smash him to bits.

"Hmph!" The Phoenix snorted as his own Spiritual Energy burst out. It counterattacked the power of the Universe, preventing it from harming him. A few moments later, the strange energy disappeared, leaving the Phoenix alone.

"As always, the Universe truly hates it when we talk about the realms above." The Phoenix then shook his head and looked back at Rean and Kentucky, who had surprised expressions. That was the first time they had seen such a thing. "Oh, you've never heard the name of the next realm above Stage Nine and Elemental Transformation, right?"

Rean and Kentucky nodded, waiting for the old man to continue. Fortunately, the old man Phoenix delivered, saying, "Don't ever say the name of the realms above without being at that level yourselves."

Otherwise, the Universe's power will crush you down. With your meager cultivations, you would die in less than a second." He then looked at Gulan as he reminded him, "The same goes for you."

"Yes, grampa," Gulan immediately nodded as he replied. He already knew about it and had seen such a thing happen before. Nevertheless, it was never bad to be reminded about how dangerous it was every once in a while.

The Phoenix then looked back at Rean and Kentucky, telling them, "Alright, for now, you can just call me Phex." His eyes then narrowed before he asked, "There's one thing I need to ask. Do you know anything about the World Swallowing Cedar?"

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Chapter 722: Special

Rean and Kentucky already expected that question, so they had an answer prepared. "Yes, it's the Demon Tree that the Soul Rulers use to control the Spiritual Energy of the world. Gulan told us that it's because of that that the Demon Beast Alliance is staying on this continent." Sure enough, since Gulan already talked about it, they might as well use it.

However, that wasn't the kind of answer Phex expected, soon clarifying what he meant by asking, "What I meant was, have you seen it before or not?"

Rean showed a pensive expression before saying, "Do you know what it looks like? Perhaps we have seen it and didn't notice."

Phex kept his Spiritual Sense focused on Rean and Kentucky, trying to catch any signs of falsehood. However, both Rean and Kentucky seemed to not show any signs of that. "Forget it. If you did, you would have noticed it since it was enormous." Phex then changed the topic as he soon asked himself, "Now, what should I do with you two?"

Kentucky then raised his wing, responding, "There isn't much for you to do with us. After all, Gulan should know why we came here in the first place."

The Blue Luan noticed its grandfather's gaze, knowing that he was waiting for an answer. "Well, the reason why they wanted to come here was to join the Demon Beast Alliance," Gulan responded soon after.

Phex narrowed his eyes as he asked in response, "Why?"

Rean smiled as he pointed at Kentucky, explaining, "That's because Kentucky will only be safe if he obtains as big as a background as Gulan does. Gulan told us that the Soul Rulers wouldn't even try and touch him even though he's a Divine Demon Beast, and that's because he's part of the Alliance. What Kentucky and I want is the same type of protection." Rean shrugged his shoulders as he continued, "In the end, our intention was to be part of your forces anyway. It's just that I wasn't planning to talk about my own situation."

Although Phex had his doubts, he had to admit that Rean was right. The Soul Rulers would definitely pursue a Divine Demon Beast if they find out that the Alliance had nothing to do with it. As a Divine Demon Beast himself, Phex definitely didn't want to see another one being captured. "That isn't impossible. However, what can you offer me in return?"

Kentucky looked at Phex as he replied, "Well...we don't have anything we think a Stage Nine Demon Beast like senior could possibly want. All we can do is fight for the Alliance if a need presents itself one day."

Rean agreed with Kentucky, saying, "We're quite strong ourselves...well, not to senior's level. However, we can pretty much guarantee we wouldn't lose to anyone in our respective cultivation realms."

Phex didn't find it strange. After all, Rean did have a connection with the Minokawa. Divine Demon Beasts had always been much stronger, after all. Phex then looked at Gulan and asked, "You know them longer than I do. What do you think?"

"Eh?" Gulan was taken aback, surprised that his grandfather would even ask for his opinion. "Uh...well, we've made quite a serious deal a while ago, and they kept their word even though they had little to gain from it. I can't tell that they're trustworthy just because of that, but I guess it's something..." Gulan was planning to trade those Heaven-level ores. It was a big help when Rean's group told him where the deposit was located and didn't tell anyone else.

Phex nodded after hearing that as he looked at Rean, saying, "To be honest, I hate the fact that a human has this type of connection with a Divine Demon Beast. If possible, I would kill you straight away to set the Minokawa free. However, it's obvious that you protected and helped it to cultivate until now. His foundation is very sturdy, so it's a very good job. Not to mention that this connection isn't that between a master and a subordinate. Also, I don't know if killing you would cause any harm to the Minokawa due to this connection. Last but not least, this Minokawa seems to care a lot about you, which is quite a shame for a Divine Demon Beast."

Phex then sighed as he continued, "Since you also helped my grandchild somehow, I'll give it a chance. However, you will be given tasks to prove yourselves while being part of the Alliance. Don't think I'm forcing the issue. A demon beast has to improve, and such tasks would be perfect for that." Phex then looked at Kentucky and asked one more question, "Do you have any complaints?"

Kentucky immediately shook his head, responding, "I'm not idiotic enough to complain in front of senior. Whatever it is the Demon Beast Alliance needs, I'll do my best to complete it. Of course, that's as long as you aren't sending me to a suicide mission."

Phex nodded, replying, "I wouldn't do such a thing to another Divine Demon Beast."

Soon after, Phex lifted his finger before a ray of red light shot out of it. Kentucky couldn't even react before it hit his chest and entered his body. However, there was no pain or anything like that. Nevertheless, Rean and Kentucky could tell that it was there, although they didn't know what it was.

Noticing their puzzled expressions, Gulan explained, "That's the Demon Beast Alliance's Mark. If any member of the Soul Rulers finds you, they will feel this Mark's presence and refrain from causing trouble for you. Of course, that's only as long as you don't cause trouble for them first. I also have the same Mark inside me."

Rean finally understood why Gulan was so sure that the Soul Rulers wouldn't try to capture him. The Mark probably also served as an additional method to warn the Demon Beast Alliance if Gulan or Kentucky were in danger.

Phex then added, "Just so you know, very few demon beasts have this Mark. That being said, it won't work as protection against other demon beasts without it. We are demon beasts. Combat is in our blood. That being said, we don't stop conflicts between different races, including the Zasfins. It only serves as protection against the Soul Rulers and their subordinates. It will be of no use if you show it to anyone else since they won't even know what it is."

Roan, who was in the Dimensional Realm, was satisfied with that as he thought, 'This is definitely good for training.'

"Alright, are there any other questions you want to ask?" Phex asked as he prepared to leave.

Immediately, Rean raised his hand and responded, "Senior Phex, I don't understand. How come there are two Divine Demon Beasts on this planet other than Kentucky?" Sure enough, that was something Rean, Roan, and Kentucky's group were curious about. Let alone the Minokawa, Phoenix, and Blue Luan. There was also the World Swallowing Cedar. Thanks to Kentucky's connection with it, Rean was sure that it was at the same level as the Minokawa. That being said, it should be some sort of Divine Demon Plant or something similar.

Phex shook his head in response, soon saying, "It seems like you definitely know nothing. This planet is...special for demon beasts like us."

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Chapter 723: Better be Ready

Rean was quite surprised to hear that, saying, "How so? If anything, this planet was pretty bad until a few months ago. Only recently did the ice disappear from what I know."

Phex shook his head as he explained, "I'm not talking about the environment. You might not know this, but this planet was very green in the past. It's simply returning to its original form. Of course, it'll take a very long time before it can compare to what it was back then."

Phex continued, "Anyway, the reason why the planet's ice is melting is still unknown. What I want to talk about is the planet's connection to the Divine Demon Beasts. No one knows why, but having a Divine Demon Beast bloodline in this world allows you to gain a few benefits." Phex looked at Kentucky right after and asked, "Have you never noticed? Your cultivation was probably increasing a lot faster than what it did back on the other planet."

Kentucky shook his head, responding, "I was only a Stage Three Demon Beast back then. With that said, I still didn't have sentience. I don't know if my cultivation is faster here than there. However, Rean told me that the Spiritual Energy around us right now is definitely denser than what it was for him in the other world."

Rean nodded, continuing where Kentucky left off as he said, "It's true. The Spiritual Energy before the ice melted was severely lacking. But now that the ice is melting, its concentration far surpasses our previous planet. It wouldn't be wrong to call it a paradise for cultivation."

Of course, Rean avoided mentioning that Kentucky's cultivation speed didn't increase. That's because his cultivation was limited to the twins' speed. Even if his cultivation could be faster on this planet, there would be no way to know unless the connection with the twins was cut. However, it wasn't that bad either. After all, Kentucky's cultivation would be pushed forward if he fell behind thanks to the same reason. He would be able to match the twins' cultivation quite quickly.

Phex nodded soon after hearing that. "Well, it makes sense that you didn't notice the difference because of the recent events. However, it's definitely there. That's why we have this many Divine Demon Beasts. It's not only my grandchild and me. There's also a Black Tortoise in the Sea Beasts' territory, a Basilisk who also lives in our Demon Beast Continent, and a White Fenrir who lives at the South Pole. This Minokawa is the sixth Divine Demon Beast on our planet at the moment."

While listening to Phex, Kentucky could not help but find something strange as he soon asked, "Wait! What about Gulan's parents? You're a Phoenix, and I know Blue Luans are connected to them. That being said, shouldn't his parents also be Divine Demon Beasts?"

"You're wrong," Phex replied as he shook his head. "Gulan's Grandmother was not a Divine Demon Beast. Also, Gulan's parents are common Demon Birds. Obviously, my and Gulan's grandmother's child wasn't a Divine Demon Beast due to her ordinary bloodline. However, as long as there's a hint of a Divine Demon Beast bloodline inside their blood, their offsprings have a chance of being born as one. Thus, I now have Gulan."

Rean and Kentucky nodded after listening to his explanation. It was a piece of new information that even Elder Reliance didn't know. At the very least, Elder Reliance had never told them about that. "So that's how it is. Still, six Divine Demon beasts...it makes sense that the Soul Rulers don't dare to try and take control over you either."

Phex snorted, saying, "Hmph! If not for the World Swallowing Cedar, they definitely wouldn't be like that right now."

Rean immediately took that chance to ask, "What will happen now that the Spiritual Energy is back to normal in the world?"

Gulan also nodded, saying, "Yes, grandfather. That's why I came to see you this time around. For the Spiritual Energy to have returned back to normal, something must have happened to the World Swallowing Cedar! Could it be that it has finally died of old age?"

Phex already expected that question, replying, "You're forgetting the part where it might also be a trap created by the Soul Rulers. What if we decide to take this chance to appear again, and they play a dangerous card?"

Kentucky shook his head as he soon said, "Who are you two fooling here? We're demon beasts! I refuse to believe that we would just sit back and do nothing when such a chance has appeared, even if it's a trap."

Phex was surprised by Kentucky's words. However, he immediately laughed out loud after that. "Hahaha! Indeed, you know us very well. Alright, all I can tell you right now is that we're preparing for it. When the time comes, you better be ready."

Phex then turned around and headed in the hut's direction. "Well, we're done here. You can ask Gulan anything else about the Demon Beast Alliance. Also, Gulan, make sure to visit me more often."

Gulan nodded as he replied, "Yes, grandfather." Following that, he opened his wings as he looked at Rean and Kentucky, telling them, "Time to leave, let's go." Gulan immediately took flight after that.

Rean jumped on Kentucky's back and took flight as well. At the same time, he took out another slave collar from the Dimensional Realm to put on his neck. After all, only Phex and Gulan knew that his pretense as a slave was fake.

Their group flew for over an hour until finally, they returned to the same mountain range from before. Of course, that only made Rean and Kentucky more impressed. One must remember that Phex flew all this distance in just a few seconds while carrying them!

Gulan then pointed in a certain direction as he told them, "Alright, you will find the main city where the Zasfins and Demon Beasts do their trades if you head in that direction. As for me, I'm heading to the Alliance's territory to exchange these Heaven-level ores for a few cultivation resources."

Rean couldn't help but ask, "What about the tasks your grandfather told us? Shouldn't we go with you to take them?"

"There's no need," Gulan said as he shook his head. "When the time comes, you will receive the order. To be honest, any tasks given by the Demon Beast Alliance will probably be related to the confrontation against the Zasfins, so you best be ready."

Rean and Kentucky nodded as Rean soon responded, "Alright. We're going ahead, then."

The two sides then exchanged a few more words before they headed in different directions.

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Chapter 724: The Cave

Rean and Kentucky then flew away from the mountain range as they talked about what happened with Roan. 'That was quite scary. I didn't expect that the connection between Kentucky and I could be sensed by others.'

Roan nodded in the Dimensional Realm as he felt the same. 'Indeed. However, that's probably because Phex is a Divine Demon Beast with very high cultivation. His senses are definitely many times better than the Blue Luan. If our cultivation was similar to his, I believe he wouldn't be able to feel it that easily.'

Kentucky couldn't help but sigh, saying, 'Still...to think that so many Divine Demon Beasts exist on this planet. Too bad this planet's special environment for them is of no use for me.'

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he said in response, 'You have nothing to complain about. Don't forget that you aren't nearly as old as Gulan, but you're already at Stage Five. Thanks to the Soul Gem System's support and our connection, I believe your cultivation is even faster than what this planet could provide you.'

Kentucky nodded, responding, 'I know that. Still, if I could also use the planet's special ability, it would be even better.' Kentucky then changed the topic as he soon said, 'Anyway, let's leave that aside for now. What about this war that will happen between the beasts and the Soul Rulers? Are we really following their orders?'

'Of course,' Roan replied as if stating a fact. 'Our cultivation is quite high now, so these kinds of missions will be perfect for finding opponents at our level. It's not because we can't run into the Dimensional Realm anymore that we'll just hide in a shell. You better be prepared. I'll increase the difficulty of your training routines from now on.'

Rean and Kentucky felt like crying after hearing that. Roan was too much of a battle maniac.

"Okay. But before that, we need to obtain the Heaven-level ores for our weapons. Kentucky, have you found any deposit during these past two weeks here?" Rean asked, slightly expectant.

Surprisingly, Kentucky nodded. "I did, however...it's in the direction of the city of Zasfins and demon beasts that Gulan mentioned before. Most likely, they aren't natural deposits, but accumulated ores that are being protected or used in trades."

"Well, the Blue Luan did say we could go there if we wanted to. Should we pay a visit?" Rean was quite curious about this city that had both Zasfins and demon beasts.

Roan agreed with the idea before Kentucky changed directions and headed towards the city. Although it was the biggest trading city between both sides, it was still quite far away from the mountain range. It took Kentucky and Rean two more days to arrive there.

As Kentucky looked from a distance, he saw many demon beasts flying in and out of the city. Not only that, but it was also possible to see Zasfins doing the same thing. Rean and Kentucky looked at each other and nodded before Kentucky also flew over.

The city had many guards, both Zasfins and demon beasts. The streets were extremely large, while the buildings had ridiculously big entrances. However, that made sense. This was a place where Zasfins could trade with high-level demon beasts. Naturally, those demon beasts were very big and needed a similarly big place to conduct their businesses.

No one stopped Kentucky from entering the city, though. From the looks of it, as long as one didn't cause trouble, one was free to enter and leave at any time.

However, what surprised them was the fact that the city had some humans as well. It's just that their numbers were several times lower than the average cities outside the Demon Beast Continent. Not only that, with their Spiritual Sense, Rean and Kentucky saw many of them not having slave collars. Not to mention that he saw a few at the Core and Soul Fusion Realm and, surprisingly, two at the Nascent Soul Realm, just like him!

Puzzled by the view, Rean asked Kentucky to ask one of the demon beasts in the area about that.

"Oh, that? Here in the Demon Beast Continent, we don't need slaves. We only care about strength. That being said, your race matters little. Naturally, you'll see a few humans who survived in this dangerous environment. It's that simple. Nevertheless, compared to the number of Zafins and demon beasts here, they count for almost nothing. Well, it's definitely better than being a slave in any other place," a Green Colored Lizard explained, who was taking care of one of the buildings. Obviously, he was also at Stage Five.

Rean then took a deep breath before stepping out of Kentucky's back. This time, however, the slave collar he replaced was nowhere to be found as Rean sent it to the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Of course, he still used a different appearance as always, just to be safe. "To think I would be able to walk on a city without pretending to be a slave..."

Kentucky didn't care much about that, though. All he could think about was the delicious Heaven-level ores that he sensed in this place. "Can we go take a look at the ores already?"

Rean nodded before they made their way to one of the stores. Well, you couldn't call it a store exactly as it was more like a cave heading underground. If not for the sign at the front, Rean would think it was some demon beast's lair.

After heading down, they arrived at a dim space where a few Earth-type demon beasts and Earth Affinity Zafins conducted trades. Kentucky's eyes couldn't help but light up as he looked around him. From the looks of it, there was no lack of Heaven-level ores in this cave. "Rean, Rean! There are a lot of Heaven-level ores here. They go from Low to Peak-level ones! Quick, let's see if they wanna trade!"

Rean laughed and nodded, saying, "Alright, alright. However, my limit is only Heaven Middle-level ores. I can't work on Heaven High or Peak-level ores yet. Besides, they'll probably be too expensive for us, so be prepared if we can't get any."

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Chapter 725: Certainly

Kentucky nodded and immediately pointed at one of the demon beasts. It looked like a snake, but it had three tails. Each tail end was made of sharp bone, not to mention that they seemed to contain poison as well. Obviously, just like all the demon beasts here, the snake was at Stage Five or higher. "Alright, let's check that guy over there. The ore in his possession seems very tas-ahem... good for a Heaven Middle-level ore."

As mentioned before, the Demon Beast Continent didn't have its Spiritual Energy affected by Celis. With that being said, although it was still frozen due to the rest of the planet's condition, which affected its weather, it was still very good for cultivation. However, that wasn't all. It also meant that the birth of Heaven-level ores and other types of materials stayed at the same level.

That was one of the reasons why the Soul Rulers conducted trades here. After all, this was the best place to find those kinds of ores. It also explained Kentucky's excitement. He could sense a lot of them.

Rean nodded in response, and soon, they paid a visit to the three-tailed snake. "Hello, sir. Do you have any Heaven-level ores for trading?" Rean asked with a smile.

The snake, who seemed to be sleeping, opened its eyes as it got up. It was a little surprised to see a human with cultivation at the Nascent Soul Realm since they were very rare. Nevertheless, it quickly put those thoughts behind as it asked Rean and Kentucky by his side, 'I do have some that I found a few weeks ago. Can you pay for it?'

Rean and Kentucky nodded, with Rean replying, "We believe so. However, we need to see what kind it is first."

The snake nodded before using one of its tails to grab a small chunk and passed it to Rean. It had a bluish color, obviously an effect of being exposed to the cold environment for a long time. It was the first time Rean saw a material like this one. After all, this was a different planet. Besides, Spiritual Energy created all kinds of wonders, so there was nothing wrong about Rean not knowing that ore was.

In any case, Rean was quite pleased with what he could feel with his Spiritual Sense and Soul Power. "Very good material. It's at the very peak of what a Heaven Middle-level ore could be. It's not too heavy, but it's very sturdy. The most important part is that it's easy to work with. It's definitely good for the creation of Yin Energy-related weapons and armors. Say, what's it called?"

The snake answered straight away, 'Blue Star Ore. Unlike most of the ores, this one must continue to be exposed outside to take form. It will then absorb the Stellar Energy and the Yin properties of the environment. No one found this guy before because of the ice that covered the surface of the area where it took form. It made the mineral itself look like just some ice in the middle of the snow, so no one paid attention to it. It was by luck that the snow and ice finally began to melt that I noticed its presence. Naturally, I took it for myself.'

Rean nodded after hearing the snake's words. In the blacksmith books he read back in Sunkan Planet, it mentioned that some ores needed to be exposed to certain conditions to take form. It might be the sun, storms, or even stars, which was the requirement for this ore. Rean then passed the small chunk back to the snake before asking, "How much are you asking for it? Can services be included?"

The snake was just about to answer when Rean mentioned the word 'services.'

'What do you mean by services?'

Rean then pointed at himself as he used a Spiritual Sense Message to answer, saying, "I'm a Heaven-level blacksmith. If there's something you wish to forge, we can use it as payment for the ore. Of course, if you don't want anything forged, then we can talk about a price for it."

'You? A Heaven-level blacksmith?' The snake was at Stage Five, so it could only use Spiritual Sense Messages to start with. 'Can you prove it?'

The snake was planning to trade it for high-level Spirt Stones or some wood, poison, or bone-related resources. However, if it could craft something for its tailbones, that would be the best thing. One must remember that Heaven-level equipment could change size. That being said, even if its cultivation increased and its body became bigger, it would still be able to use the equipment.

Rean, of course, cleared up the snake's doubts by saying, 'Of course! However, you know very well that Heaven-level blacksmiths are as hard to find as the ores themselves. After all, the world doesn't have that many Heaven-level ores for one to practice to start with. That being said, if I craft you the equipment you desire, I won't pay anything else for the Blue Star Ore. My work will be my payment.'

The snake didn't even need to think twice since it knew Rean was telling the truth. 'Deal!' Soon after, it grabbed an enormous horn from some creature and showed it to Rean, telling him, 'I got this horn by chance, and it's very compatible with my tailbones. The owner of this horn was definitely a Stage Seven Demon Beast. That being said, it can become an amazing addition to my poison tails. What I want you to make is to forge it in the shape of my tails without obstructing the release of poison. Can you do it?'

Rean hovered a little and took a good look at the horn. After assessing it with his Spiritual Sense, he nodded with a smile, responding, 'Yep, it should be doable. In fact, I don't need to use the entire horn. Two-thirds should be enough for your Stage Five and Stage Six sizes if you reach it. There isn't a point in forging it to match your Stage Seven size since your tails would already be at that level when the time comes. Besides, forging something to match your Stage Six size is my limit as well.'

The snake still had its doubts. However, it was just too hard to find Heaven-level blacksmiths in this world. 'Very well. I have a place here in the city where you can work. Can you come and forge it now?'

Rean and Kentucky nodded, with Rean responding, 'Certainly.'

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Chapter 726: More Deals

Rean and Kentucky were brought to a workshop. Like all other buildings in this city, this one also had a giant structure to support the ingoing and outgoing of Demon Beasts. Surprisingly, there were a few demon beasts who tried their hands on blacksmithing. The only problem was that their enormous bodies made it hard to work with due to their high stages.

Of course, there were also rooms made for Zasfin blacksmiths. It's just that those were almost empty. The Zasfins that came to this city all had to have the necessary cultivation to do so. Not only that, but they also had to know about the existence of the Demon Beast Continent, which was only a small percentage of the world. It obviously didn't help at all with the number of available high-level blacksmiths. Last but not least, the Zasfins who stopped in this city were only here to trade. Even if they were blacksmiths, they would head back to their homes before starting to work.

Fortunately, Rean didn't need to pay to occupy one of them. "Alright, this one is enough." Rean then headed in the direction of one of them. "By the way, I'm Lian, and this one is Feintuck. What's your name?" Naturally, Rean didn't use their real name here.

Well, the snake couldn't care less whether 'Lian's' name was real or not. "Just call me Kilimanjir," the snake replied with a relaxed expression.

Rean nodded before he asked Kilimanjir to stay outside for a moment. "I'll organize everything as I see fit inside. Once I'm ready, I'll tell you to come inside with the horn." Obviously, Rean would bring out the equipment from the Dimensional Realm, so he didn't want others to see it happening. Well, he only had a hammer from the Soul Gem Blacksmith Workshop due to it being at Level 1. Other than that, he brought out the material used for tempering and things like that.

Of course, he also took some time to check the room's equipment, making sure it didn't have any issues during the forging process either. Eventually, he called Kilimanjir to come inside. "Alright, this should be about enough. Give me the horn so that I can work on a design."

Kilimanjir nodded in response, not afraid of Rean trying to escape with it. After all, this was Demon Beast City. Any other race would have no chance of escaping if they started giving problems.

Rean soon went straight to work. He examined both the horn and Kilimanjir's tailbones. After a few hours of testing and discussion with the snake, he decided that it was worth giving a shot. The forger was then turned on as Rean began to work. Of course, since the one using the tail bone weapon was Kilimanjir, Rean asked him to infuse the element he was most familiar with inside the horn during the process.

Rean and Kilimanjir stayed in the workshop for three days straight, while Kentucky went outside to check the city. After all, it wasn't every day that he could see a city made for demon beasts.

Clack. Clack. Clack...

Rean eventually finished one of the pieces, which was quite big, and put it on the snake's tail. At first, it seemed smaller than Kilimanjir's tail bone. However, the inscriptions on it suddenly shone as the equipment increased in size due to Kilimanjir's Spiritual Energy. In the end, it fit perfectly with Kilimanjir's tail.

Vup! Vup! Vup...

Kilimanjir waved his tail in an erratic manner, trying to get a feel of how the equipment fit. "Oh! This is really nice work, I have to say."

Vup! Bang!

Soon after, the tail hit the ground, which made the whole area tremble. Of course, Kilimanjir received several Spiritual Sense Messages after that. They warned that if he did that again, the other demon beast blacksmiths in the area would take his head and sell his tail as gifts. After all, they were also working. Naturally, Kilimanjir didn't dare to try such a thing twice, apologizing hastily. "Hehe...my bad, my bad."

Kilimanjir then looked at the equipment, which didn't even have a scratch on it after hitting the ground, before nodding with a satisfied expression. "So sturdy! As expected of Heaven Middle-level equipment. Even the inscription that alters size suffered no damage whatsoever."

Rean smiled in response, saying, "Of course! I told you that Heaven Middle-level was my limit. However, that doesn't mean I'm bad at making them. Try using your poison."

Kilimanjir immediately nodded and used the pores that could be seen in his tailbones to release the poison. Surprisingly, the equipment Rean created had extremely tiny 'tubes' that connected the real bones to the surface of the equipment. Not only did the poison come out without issues, but it was also spread over the equipment a lot easier. "Great! This one will suffice. Now, I need two more of these for my remaining tails."

Rean smiled as he extended his hand, replying with, "Sure, as soon as you pay one-third of the price." Naturally, he knew he was in Demon Beast City, so he couldn't risk losing in this deal.

Kilimanjir didn't mind at all. If anything, he wanted to make friends with this human in case he needed to ask for help again in the future. "Hahaha! Let alone one-third, I'll give you the full payment already." Kilimanjir immediately stretched his tail and grabbed the entire box containing the Blue Star Ore.

Rean was quite surprised to see that. First, he could tell that there were at least 30 kilograms of ore available, which was more than he expected. Second, he didn't expect that Kilimanjir would pay for everything after finishing just a single piece. 'I really like the demon beasts' straightforwardness.'

Sure enough, Rean's opinion of Kilimanjir had gotten a lot better. "Alright. Now that I already know how to make the equipment, it shouldn't take long before I finish the two other tails."

Rean and Kilimanjir then worked on them for the entirety of the next day without stopping. Eventually, the other two pieces were completed before the two of them exited the workshop. Following that, Kilimanjir and Rean went to another place where the snake could test them. Of course, with Rean's ability, all three pieces turned out to be superb pieces, which greatly satisfied Kilimanjir. "I guess our deal is concluded then. Say, are you staying in the city for longer?"

"Why?" Rean asked in response.

Kilimanjir smiled as he replied, "It's because I know a few demon beasts that would love to trade their Heaven-level materials for your services. Don't worry. I can guarantee their end of the deal."

Rean's eyes shone after hearing that. However, he asked Roan about it first. 'Do you think we can afford to stay in his city for longer? It would be great if I can stock up some Heaven-level materials for forging and for food for Kentucky.'

Roan didn't seem to mind, replying, 'It's fine. Sooner or later, we'll have to leave that valley for long periods of time. There's no way we can take care of all the kids forever, so you might as well do it as a test. Let's see how they turn out when we head back later.'

Rean agreed with Roan before he nodded at Kilimanjir. With that, he responded, "Very well, let me see them."

Death... and me

Chapter 727: Stocking

One month passed in a flash as a sudden rumor began to spread in the city. There was a human Heaven-level blacksmith who asked for Heaven-level materials in exchange for his services. As long as one had

them, he would forge something for them. Some asked for claws, others for armors, others for helmets, and so on. It all depended on which type of demon beast one was and what one needed.

During this time, Rean only stopped to cultivate with Roan. Other than that, he spent all his time forging equipment and accumulating Heaven-level materials. It wasn't only ores, though. He also got some rare Heaven-level herbs for Roan's herb garden, Heaven-level wood with different uses, and a few other things he deemed necessary.

At some point, the queue of demon beasts with Heaven-level materials had become so long that Rean couldn't hope to finish everyone's tasks even if he had an entire year to work on their requests.

However, that also brought him problems. He was fine as long as he stayed in the city since the agreements ensured his safety. However, many eyes were focused on him, waiting for the very moment he stepped outside to rob Rean of his possessions.

'Hehe! They think I'm just a fat sheep, ready to be killed. Too bad that this city's considered a safe zone,' Rean thought with a smile as he felt the many Spiritual Senses focused on him. Since the city was a safe zone, the Soul Gem System considered it safe as well. That being said, it wasn't blocking Rean's entrance into the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Obviously, Rean could use the Circuitry Teleport Formation to teleport at least 1000 kilometers away before making his way back to the valley.

Rean quickly put his thoughts at the back of his mind before he finished covering a Fire Unicorn's horn with a crystalline cover. "Alright, the product in this crystal should fix the crack on your horns in a few months. Make sure you keep it filled with Spiritual Energy so the process won't be stopped all of a sudden."

Since Rean could work on horns to make equipment, he could also fix them for those who already had one. It wasn't anything far from repairing a piece of equipment made of horn materials.

The Fire Unicorn was a Stage Six Demon Beast, so he was able to talk back to Rean without Spiritual Sense. "Oh! I can tell with my Spiritual Sense that it's really filling the gaps. To think that my horn can absorb such a thing as time goes on." The unicorn then looked at Rean, saying, "Usually, I would ask you to stay around to make sure you weren't tricking me. However, I have seen all the other demon beasts with the pieces of equipment you forged for them. Those are all legitimate equipment, so I will trust you that you made it as it should be."

Rean nodded with a smile, responding, "Of course! However, it's not like I won't come back to this city. That being said, if you find out that something happened during the repair, you can come and look for me another time."

The unicorn nodded before he passed him a bag, saying soon after, "Inside, you can find two and a half kilograms of Lunar Lime. It's at least three hundred years old, which should prove very helpful for the forging of Heaven-level equipment."

Rean sent his Spiritual Sense inside before nodding his head, thanking the unicorn. "I have indeed received my payment. Thank you very much for the deal."

"Hahaha!" The unicorn laughed in response. "I'm the one who should thank you. This is a very small price to pay for my horn to be fixed. If I did it on my own, it would take me at least twenty to thirty years to finish. As a Stage Six Demon Beast, you never know when you might need to go all out in a battle, especially in times like this."

Rean knew what the unicorn meant by that. After all, the tension between the Zasfins' Soul Rulers and the demon beasts seemed to be increasing as time passed. It was still far from a real confrontation since both sides were feeling the other reactions. Nevertheless, most of the demon beasts of the Demon Beast Continent could tell that this balance wouldn't last forever.

"Well, I'm just a human who has nothing to do with the conflict between Zasfins and demon beasts, so I'll probably just watch by the side. In the end, the human race is too weak to give their opinions on the matter," Rean said as he shrugged his shoulders.

The unicorn nodded before making his way outside Rean's room. As soon as he left, another demon beast entered, flying. However, this one wasn't a customer, but Kentucky instead.

"Rean, look at what I got." Kentucky then threw another bag in Rean's direction. When Rean opened it, he saw 5.2 liters of Humin Water inside a big bottle. It was another Heaven-level material that Rean could use in the tempering process. Not only that, but it could also be used in a few formations that needed cooling.

"It seems like your challenges are paying out quite well. Good job, Kentucky!" Rean praised the Minokawa. A week after Rean started making equipment for the demon beasts, he passed Kentucky a

few kilograms of Heaven-level ores. It wasn't for Kentucky to eat, though. Instead, Rean told Kentucky to challenge other Demon Beasts and bet the ores against their materials. Kentucky was a Divine Demon Beast, so any demon beast at his level wasn't a match for him.

"However, I don't think I can do it anymore. The other demon beasts already noticed that I'm a lot stronger than what my cultivation shows. It was very hard to make that scorpion accept my challenge, and that's already considering the scorpion was at the peak of Stage Five." Kentucky couldn't help but sigh since it meant less Heaven-level ores for himself.

Rean didn't find it bad, though. During this time, Rean didn't just get Heaven Initial and Middle-level materials. He was also able to get some at the High-level, which he would be able to work on once he reached the Soul Transformation Realm. "It's fine. We've obtained a lot more than I could have thought. I didn't expect that Heaven-level blacksmiths were in such high demand in the Demon Beast Continent that they even paid with Heaven-level materials. With your own gains through battle, we're safe for at least a few years. Of course, if you don't eat anything, we'll be safe for several times longer."

Kentucky immediately shook his head, saying, "No can do! I also help a lot, so I want my food!" Sure enough, the bird might not be fat anymore, but that didn't mean its hunger for Heaven-level materials disappeared. If anything, Kentucky could eat a lot more and digest them a lot faster now.

Rean couldn't help but laugh as he said, "Hahaha! Alright, alright! I know that your strength will help us a lot more than a few pieces of Heaven-level materials. Since you also got a lot on your own, I'll let you eat them for the time being."

He then warned Kentucky, "However, you can only eat the ores I allow you. If you take some ore that I need, I'll make sure you won't touch another Heaven-level material for the next ten years."

In the end, Heaven-level materials were too important. Rean had to make sure that the supply he got now wouldn't disappear that quickly.

"Alright, I promise I won't touch them. But you must leave enough for me to eat, okay?" said Kentucky, unwilling to starve. Well, starving was too strong of a word, though.

Suddenly, Roan contacted Rean from inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, asking him, 'How are the Spiritual Senses on you?'

Rean nodded before replying, 'The number is increasing by the day. Just yesterday, I felt a Stage Seven Demon Beast's sense who has been waiting until now. However, no Zasfins are watching me so far. Oh, talking about Spiritual Sense, there seems to be a human's sense on me. Not only that, but this person is also at the Nascent Soul Realm.'

Roan understood, saying, 'Well, this is a place where a human can be free if they're strong enough. When another human starts to stand out, the others will naturally want to check him. Did you feel any killing intent coming from that human?'

'No.' Rean shook his head, responding, 'I don't think this person has any ill intentions.'

Roan pondered for a bit before shaking his head. 'Alright, leave it be. You already got enough materials to work with, right?'

'Yes, it should be enough for the time being,' Rean replied.

'In that case, let's head back to the valley. The Blue Luan probably warned the other demon beasts there to not bother us. However, it's better to prevent Celis from taking action in case someone appears. Besides, Burio and the kids are probably getting worried even though we said we would stay out for some time. It would be bad if they tried to leave the valley at this moment.' Obviously, Roan didn't want more problems to surface.

'Alright.' Rean then looked at Kentucky. "We're leaving."

Following that, Rean activated an Anti-Spiritual Sense Formation that he had built in the room during the month he stayed here. Because the room was very small and Rean had obtained a lot of materials, it wasn't hard for him to create a sturdy one. Sure enough, everyone watching Rean noticed the barrier, not knowing if they should and check. After all, it was against the rules to cause trouble in this city.

Unfortunately for them, even if they went there right now, Rean and Kentucky would be nowhere to be found. Those two had already entered the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm and used the Circuitry Teleport Formation to leave the city.

Death... and me

Chapter 728: Black Star

To make things safer for the two of them, Rean and Kentucky flew as high as possible while keeping the Light and Spiritual Sense bending techniques active. With that, even if someone with higher cultivation than them checked the area, they would probably be too far away for their Spiritual Senses to break through Rean's skills.

However, there wasn't much reason to worry. That's because the demon beasts who kept observing Rean's workshop back in the Demon Beast City refrained from entering it. They understood that there was a formation blocking their Spiritual Senses. Hence, they simply thought Rean was working on something he didn't want others to see.

With that being said, it wasn't before an entire week went by before the demon beasts waiting to ask Rean to forge equipment for them to enter the room. Naturally, Rean and Kentucky had long since gone and even exited the Demon Beast Continent by now. Those who had their equipment made by Rean sighed in relief that they reached Rean in time. As for the others, they could only shed tears. Of course, there were also those waiting for Rean to leave the city to rob him. Those beings felt even more dejected.

Two weeks after Rean's group left the city, they had finally returned to the valley. Considering the time to head to the continent, stay, and come back, their group had stayed out for two months already. Fortunately, the valley was still covered by the mist in the distance, which probably meant that no one tried to enter it.

"The Blue Luan really told the others to not bother us, it seems," Roan said.

Rean and Kentucky nodded in response.

Once they arrived at the protection formation, it quickly opened, letting Rean's group enter. After some time, they were able to see how things changed inside the protection formation.

Celis was still at the center of the valley, absorbing Spiritual Energy from the surroundings. However, the surroundings changed a lot during this time. The houses looked a lot more comfortable. Some farms were planted and were growing well thanks to the rich Spiritual Energy. After all, they couldn't rely on Celis to feed all the children forever.

A lot more arenas appeared, and Roan could see most of the kids training according to his instructions, much to his satisfaction.

Rean noticed that a larger wooden building appeared, and it seemed like many injured kids were there as well. 'Oh, right! Without me here to heal their injuries, they have no choice but to recover naturally.' Roan's training routine was anything but safe, so it was normal to see so many there.

However, Rean decided that he would only work on the kids with severe injuries. As for the rest, he left them to recover by themselves. That was something they needed to get used to since he or Roan couldn't be in the valley all the time either. That also helped the kids pay more attention to their own safety.

As for cultivation, Roan had left strict orders that no one was allowed to rush through the ranks. He didn't want them to have broken foundations, impacting their future. At the moment, those with Purple Color Aptitudes were all in the Middle or Late Stages of the Energy Gathering Realm. Unsurprisingly, the group of twelve-year-olds, Malo included, were the ones at the Late Stage.

Roan then checked their foundation for a moment and had to admit that Purple Color Talents were truly freaks. Even though they reached this level in just two months, he couldn't sense any problems whatsoever. Their foundations were as stable as they could ever be. "Very good. I can see that all of you have been following my order to the boot. I'll revise your training routines so that they can be more compatible with your current level."

As for Kentucky, he went to see Celis before the two soon continued to work on Kentucky's nest. After all, Kentucky had very little time to work on it since they arrived in this place. "Look, Celis! I brought quite a few nice items for the nest from the Demon Beast City. They're all Yin and Yang Energy-related, perfect for the balance of my affinities." It wasn't because Rean was looking after Heaven-level materials that they had to ignore the others. Kentucky made sure to grab anything that would be of use for himself with his own rewards from his battles.

"Those are great stuff! Well, at least they're great for my current level. If I was still at Stage Ten, they would be quite lacking." Nevertheless, Celis was happy as he and Kentucky kept building the nest. Rean and Roan decided not to bother those two for the next few days since they have wanted to work on that thing for a long time already.

After Rean finished healing the most severe injuries among the kids, he left the building, leaving the rest for the adults to take care of. Rean then went to check on the formations of the valley, making sure that they were working fine. Roan was the one taking care of any training and cultivation issues, so Rean didn't even bother with those.

With everything running as expected, Rean finally decided to work on his and Roan's new swords. He headed straight into the Dimensional Realm and entered the workshop, which was already equipped. Since he didn't need to work in front of others, there was no need to work in a workshop outside.

"So many materials. However, most of them are Yin-related Materials. Well, that's to be expected since this planet was covered in ice for a long time. Nonetheless, there are enough Yang materials as well." Rean couldn't help but feel excited since he didn't have to work with a single material alone. Instead, he could try to make an alloy with different Heaven-level materials.

"Alright, let's start with a combination of Lavio Absall Ore, Blue Star Ore, and Deep Purple Sea Lime." Rean then looked at Sister Orb outside and said, "Sister Orb, I'll need your help during this time."

[Oh! That's right, you can't have anyone else inside anymore other than Roan, Kentucky, and Celis. However, they're busy outside. Alright, your Sister Orb will help you.] Rean always had people giving him a hand during the process, so it was normal that he asked Sister Orb.

Following that, Rean took a bit of each material and started to work on it. The furnace turned on, the tempering liquids were prepared, and the hammer began to strike. For the next two weeks, Rean didn't step out of the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm at all.

Out of nowhere, Roan received a message from Rean through their Soul Connection, telling him, 'Hey, come inside. I'm forging my sword now, and I need your Dark Element.' Just like the previous Black and White Stars, Rean would use the one with Dark Element, while Roan would use the one with Light Element. With that being said, he needed Roan to infuse the Dark Element during the forging process. He could use Dark Element as well, but Roan was specialized at it, so the result would be better if he was the one to infuse it.

Roan didn't waste time and entered the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. There, he saw a very tired Rean. His eyes were red, and his face pale. From the looks of it, he hadn't stopped working on the new swords for even a second. "Shouldn't you rest first before we forge the sword?"

Rean shook his head in response, replying, "No can do. It took me a long time to find the perfect balance between the ores and the material to temper the metal. I can repeat the process, but I'll lose this material I'm using right now. I would rather not waste any Heaven-level materials if possible."

[Don't worry, I'm supplying Rean with the outside world's Spiritual Energy. He won't run out of it for the time being.] Sister Orb also confirmed that they could go ahead.

[Besides, I'm bored already.] It's just that her real reasons weren't as honorable.

Roan ignored Sister Orb's last words and focused his Dark Element on the alloy that Rean was forging. Rean was very careful, not caring about how long it would take to finish at all. That being said, he, Roan, and Sister Orb spent the next two days on his Black Star alone. Eventually, the sword was ready...as Rean collapsed on the ground.

Well, Roan completely ignored the guy and left the Dimensional Realm. The Black Star was Rean's weapon, so he would need to wait for Rean to forge the White Star.

Inside the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm, Sister Orb used the Spiritual Energy to grab Rean and put him on a bed in there. [Well, at least he's doing all he can.] She then left since there was nothing else to do now.

Rean then slept for another day, which was quite impressive considering his cultivation. It showed just how much effort he put in the forging of his Black Star. "Holy shit! I don't even remember how I passed out." Rean quickly assessed his body's condition before muttering to himself, "Well, it seems that I'm fine anyways."

Following that, he quickly got up and headed back to the Soul Gem Blacksmith Workshop. There, he found his Black Star lying on the ground. 'Those two could have at least picked it up and put it on the rack, no?' Rean thought for a moment. However, he knew the quality of his sword, so he wasn't afraid of anything damaging it.

At the very next moment, Rean appeared outside the Dimensional Realm while holding his new Black Star as a grin appeared on his face. 'Hehehe! My first Heaven Middle-level sword. If everything has gone accordingly, it should be as strong as a Heaven High-level one.'

Rean couldn't wait to go out and test it.

Death... and me

Chapter 729: You Are Naturals

However, Rean noticed a small problem. 'Now that I think about it, where would I be able to test it? Should I head back to the Demon Beast Continent? I don't want to fight the demon beasts of Koran Forest since they are under Gulan's territory. Fighting with Roan or Kentucky wouldn't make much of a difference since I'm used to it already.'

It was then that Rean had an idea. 'Right! I can change my appearance and challenge the experts of the tribes in the Tribes' Zone! As long as they can't tell that I'm not a Zasfin, they'll think I'm just someone from another tribe trying to take their territory or something like that.'

Rean then sent a message to Roan, explaining his idea through their Soul Connection. Soon, Roan responded, 'That's not a bad idea. In fact, this would be a good chance to try everyone's strength. First, finish my White Star, then we can head out together.'

Rean nodded, replying, 'Sure. Are we going after the same tribe?'

'No,' Roan replied as he shook his head. 'We don't need to always be together. Now that we can't enter the Dimensional Realm during dangerous situations, we need to get used to not relying on it. Kentucky, you, and I are going to find some different tribes to challenge.'

Rean couldn't help but add, 'Hey, if that's the case, let's see who can bring the best reward back. It's only valid to get something from the tribes after challenging their experts. We'll let Celis decide who got the best item.'

Roan didn't care about that, though. 'If you want to do so, then go ahead. I just want the training that comes along with it.'

Kentucky, who had been listening to the conversation nearby, snorted as he said, 'Could it be that Roan is afraid to lose?'

Rean immediately nodded, replying, 'Obviously. After all, he would have me and you to go against.'

Roan obviously noticed the cheap provocation, saying not long after, 'Do you think I'll fall for this shit?'

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he replied, 'Whether you fall for it or not doesn't matter. The point is that you can't beat us in this challenge. Am I right, Kentucky?'

Kentucky agreed with Rean, saying, 'That's very obvious.'

[Hahaha! To think I would see the day that Death would be afraid to lose.] Sure enough, Sister Orb added oil into the fire. She wanted nothing else than to see the house burn into ashes!

Of course, Roan still understood that they were just provoking him. Nevertheless, the smug expression on their faces irritated him very much. With that, he acquiesced to their wishes, saying, 'Hmph! So be it. Let's see what you'll bring back then. Don't come back complaining that it wasn't fair later.'

With that settled, Rean headed straight into the Dimensional Realm once again and began to work on Roan's White Star. Both White and Black Stars were quite similar swords in their forms. Still, they had very different materials. In any case, the materials he had obtained from the Demon Beast Continent were more than enough for Rean, who didn't take long to finish Roan's sword.

Rean then came out and threw the sword at Roan, saying to him, "Take a look and see if it's comfortable to use. I made a few modifications based on the reports you gave me about the Earth-level one."

Roan swung his sword a few times while using a few skills. In the end, he nodded with satisfaction as he said, "It has improved quite a bit. Not only that, but the amount of Light Element it can gather has increased a lot."

Rean smiled in response, saying, "Obviously! There was Luminous Ore on this planet, so I added it to the alloy during the forging process. That's a very good ore for absorbing Yang-related elements. In this case, my Light Element. Not to mention that this is a Heaven Middle-level sword, so it would naturally absorb more Light Element than your previous sword anyway."

Kentucky, who was atop of Celis, then called the twins through a Spiritual Sense message, asking, 'How is it? Can we head out already?'

Roan was just about to nod in agreement when suddenly, Sister Orb intervened. [Of course not! Hey, you two! Have you forgotten how many Destiny Points you have? It's about time for you to buy something.]

Sure enough, Rean and Roan agreed with Sister Orb as Rean said, "Oh, that's right! Let's go inside and check it."

The twins then quickly entered the Dimensional Realm and touched the Soul Gem Orb before sending their Spiritual Energy and Sense inside. Soon after, they accessed the reward list.

[Authority Level 30 detected. Opening new reward options]

[Soul Power and Spiritual Energy Fusion - 20000 Destiny Points] (New)

[Nascent Soul Revival - 20000 Destiny Points] (New)

Rean and Roan already expected new rewards to be added, but they still were taken aback. "Fusion? Nascent Soul Revival? What are those things, Sister Orb?"

[Let me check. Hmm...oh, there we go. Soul Power and Spiritual Energy Fusion. It has only one level, and as it says, both power will be merged. That way, you'll be able to cultivate both abilities at the same time. If you improve your Soul Power, your cultivation will improve as well. If you cultivate, your Soul Power increases. Both powers will always be at the same level, though it's highly dependent on your cultivation level.] Sister Orb explained.

Rean and Roan were quite surprised to hear that. Soon, Rean asked, "Wait! Doesn't that mean if we buy it right now, our Soul Power will increase all the way to match our Nascent Soul Realm cultivation?"

Sister Orb confirmed their suspicions, replying, [It's exactly that. However, that's not all. Kentucky is connected to you, so you'll also pull him together once you do so. After all, you guys always pulled each other together with your cultivation.]

[Last but not least, when you use your attacks from now on, they'll always have the full support of your Soul Power. There's no need for you to concentrate on it since it'll be natural. You can think about it as if your Spiritual Energy had always contained Soul Power or vice versa.] Sister Orb finished her explanation by dropping that bomb.

Kentucky couldn't help but feel excited as he said, "Great! This is a huge improvement in combat power without any drawbacks! Doesn't matter what you do. Make sure you buy this one first!"

Obviously, Rean and Roan had the same idea. "Indeed. Considering our safety, this is definitely the best option. Even if it costs 20000 Destiny Points, it's totally worth it. However, why do I feel like this reward didn't exist before?"

Sister Orb agreed with their words as she laughed. [Hahaha! You're right. This is a result of the System's upgrade. I told you I analyzed Soul Power after you got your marks, right? Naturally, that's the same thing as saying that the System did it. If you guys haven't found about Soul Power in the past, Authority Level 30 would only give you the Nascent Soul Revival option.]

Rean had to admit it made sense. "Well, that's good for us. When Roan and I exchange elements, we can fight an entire realm above our cultivation. I wonder how much we'll improve with this natural fusion."

Sister Orb disagreed. [Not really. The difference between stages at the Nascent Soul Realm is a lot bigger than the difference between stages of the realms below. I doubt you would be a match against an Initial Stage Soul Transformation Realm cultivator or a Stage Six Demon beast. And that's already considering your Soul Power in the mix. If I'm not wrong, your power in the Nascent Soul Realm will allow you to evenly fight Peak Stage Nascent Soul Realm opponents. But if you really buy the fusion, you should be able to match a cultivator at the Initial Stage Soul Transformation Realm.]

Roan agreed with Sister Orb, saying, "We haven't fought against a Soul Transformation Realm opponent yet, but after seeing how much our Spiritual Energy Pool increased after our breakthrough, I thought that was the case. At most, we would only be able to hold back while focusing on defense. Of course, buying the fusion reward is still very much worth it."

Rean nodded, saying not long after, "Alright, the first thing we'll buy is decided. Now, how about the remaining 14402 Destiny Points? After all, we got 34402 after we completed the mission."

Roan shrugged his shoulders, responding, "We can think about that after finishing this upgrade. Perhaps we might change the idea after completing it, so let's do it first."

With that said, Rean and Roan selected the Soul Power and Spiritual Energy Fusion.

[Soul Power and Spiritual Energy Fusion - 20000 Destiny Points]

[Confirm Purchase?]

"Yes!"

[Purchased confirmed.]

[Destiny Points: 34402]

[Initializing Upgrade...]

In an instant, Rean and Roan felt like their heads were being split in two. Not only them, but Kentucky also put his wings on his head as he fell down to the ground in pain. Well, it wasn't as if they didn't expect it. Two humans and a giant demon bird then kept rolling on the ground while holding their heads.

As for Sister Orb, one could only see several flashes while she imitated the sound of a camera taking shots. [Good! Good! Now, curl down a bit more. Perfect! Now, pretend you're a snake that was hit by an arrow and is contorting in pain. Impressive! You guys are naturals! These images will be kept for posterity.]

The twins didn't know which one was harder to bear, the pain or Sister Orb's antics. 'I hate that orb!'

The process lasted for an entire hour until, eventually, it was over. As always, the pain disappeared as it had never been there. If not for the sweat on the twins' bodies, no one would be able to tell something like that happened. In any case, they got through it.

Death... and me

Chapter 730: What to Choose?

Rean and Roan then looked at Sister Orb, who pretended to not notice it. [Oh, congratulations! You now have your Soul Power and Spiritual Energy fused. Now, brace yourselves for the Spiritual Energy.]

Kentucky, Rean, and Roan were confused for a moment when out of nowhere, the Soul Gem Orb began to shine. The black and white threads that connected Rean and Roan through the Soul Gem Orb then appeared. However, there was another link there, one that connected Kentucky and the twins.

Following that, the Soul Gem Orb began to absorb Spiritual Energy nonstop. Following that, Rean, Roan, and Kentucky's connections shone as well as some kind of ethereal light passed through it, entering their heads.

Only then did Rean and Roan understand that the Soul Gem System was transforming Spiritual Energy into Soul Power. Their Soul Power Strength soon began to increase at breakneck speeds after that. Fortunately, there was no pain this time. It felt the same as a breakthrough when their Spiritual Energy Pools increased in size.

It was also a lot faster. Kentucky, who already had higher Soul Power, was the first to finish, taking only ten minutes. As for the twins, the Soul Power entering their Souls stopped after fifteen minutes. Nevertheless, they could tell just how much strength their souls now had. If they activated their Soul Marks, it would become even stronger...or so they thought.

Out of nowhere, Kentucky, Rean, and Roan's Soul Marks appeared on their foreheads. The Soul Gem Orb then shot a few strands of Spiritual Energy and Soul Power that connected with the marks. After that, they watched as those marks began to leave their foreheads and separate from their Souls.

Crack...crack...crack...

Shatter!

Eventually, those marks couldn't resist the Soul Gem Orb's power anymore and shattered, turning into specks of ethereal light before disappearing completely.

"This..." The trio was confused. Why would they lose their Soul Marks? That thing could increase their Soul Power a lot during battle, so they obviously wanted to keep it. "Sister Orb, what just happened?"

[Oh! Didn't you notice? Check your Souls and your Dantians. In Kentucky's case, check your Demon Core] Sister Orb told them.

Rean, Roan, and Kentucky immediately did as Sister Orb said. Sure enough, they saw something new there. There was some kind of threads now connecting their Souls with their own energy cores. It was fixed directly into their Spiritual Energy Pool. Some threads kept sending Spiritual Energy up to their Souls. In contrast, the others brought Soul Power into the Spiritual Energy Pool.

Rean couldn't help but say, "So this is how our Soul Power and Spiritual Energy are connected, huh?"

[Exactly.]

Roan still couldn't understand, though. "That's good and all. However, why was the Soul Mark removed?"

[Simple. The Soul Gem System marked it as a harmful power. From what I can see, the fact that the Soul Mark was made with someone else's Soul made it incompatible with your own. That was one of the reasons. The second reason was that the mark can only increase your Soul Power, not your cultivation realm. Now that your Soul Power and Spiritual Energy are connected, forcefully increasing one will be detrimental if the other can't follow suit. This imbalance of powers could even make your Soul break apart or destroy your Spiritual Energy Pool.] Sister Orb explained after checking the Soul Gem System.

Kentucky then asked something else after Roan was done. "Doesn't that mean that we're losing strength instead?"

Sister Orb immediately shook her body, responding, [Of course not! Do you have any idea how perfect this fusion between the two energies is? I might as well tell you this. Even a Rank Ten Soul Mark

wouldn't match this fusion of yours. Otherwise, why do you think you can jump the barrier of the Nascent Soul Realm to fight someone at the Soul Transformation Realm? You're only a couple of Initial Stage Nascent Soul Realm Cultivators and an Initial Stage Five Demon beast. If you don't believe me, try to compare your Soul Power Number, which is fuelled by Spiritual Energy, against a cultivator or demon beasts at the same level as you.]

Seeing how confident Sister Orb looked, Rean and Roan really felt like asking a Nascent Soul Zafin to show them their Soul Power for comparison. However, they had never asked anyone before, so they didn't know the average number without activating a Soul Mark.

Rean then took out the Soul Measurement Orb, saying, "Well, let's take a look at how strong our Soul Power is at the moment. We can ask some random Zafin in the future. No, even better, we can ask the Zafins in those tribes once we head there to challenge them."

Kentucky and Roan agreed with Rean as they waited for him to test his Soul Power first. Sure enough, the result appeared after a few moments.

-Soul Power, 3961-

"Holy shit! Almost 4000!" Rean was truly taken aback. "Isn't this a little overpowered?"

Sister Orb laughed in response, saying, [Hahaha! It has to be if you want to fight a Soul Transformation Realm cultivator with your current cultivation. However, it's a little wrong to think of your Soul Power like that now.] Rean's group looked at Sister Orb in confusion, waiting for her to continue. [The Orb is giving you a number. However, your Soul Power shouldn't be measured in numbers anymore, but in realms. In a certain way, you could say that you're at the Initial Stage of the Nascent Soul Power Realm. Of course, I just invented this name up on the spot. You can change it if you want.]

Roan understood. "Indeed, that makes sense. After all, we can't improve our Soul Power individually anymore. It will always follow our cultivation realm and vice versa. Using numbers is only useful if we need to deal with Zafins."

Rean shrugged his shoulders, saying not long after, "Well, the term Nascent Soul Power Realm fits pretty well, so I don't see a need to change it. I'm already more than happy enough to know that cultivating with Spiritual Energy is enough to increase my Soul Power."

"Alright, it's my turn!" Kentucky was already losing his patience with all those words, so he pulled Rean aside and put his wing on the Soul Measurement Orb.

-Soul Power, 3811-

"What?! Why?! I always had more Soul Power than any of you!" the Minokawa complained.

Ouch!

Roan kicked Kentucky's leg in response, saying, "Shut up! Rean is a full Light Element Affinity cultivator. Even if your Soul Power Cultivation was faster, you're not as compatible with it as him. Look at mine. It should be smaller than yours."

Roan touched the Orb, and sure enough, the result was smaller than Kentucky's.

-Soul Power, 3703-

Roan then looked at Kentucky, saying, "See? Half of your Elemental Affinity is Light, so you still get some advantage from it. However, I only get Light Element from my connection to Rean. It's not like I have an affinity with the Light Element myself. Naturally, I'm the worst between the three of us."

Kentucky sighed in relief after seeing that as he soon uttered, "Well, at least I'm better than you."

Roan's mouth twitched, saying not long after, "Oh, is that so? Then, why don't we have a bit of sparring? My hands have been itching to try out my new sword."

Kentucky looked away, pretending that he didn't hear anything. "Ahem...look at how beautiful the Soul Gem Realm's sky is right now. Truly a wonder..."

Roan snorted after hearing that but didn't pursue the issue. As for Rean and Sister Orb, they just laughed by the side. The bird was just too shameless.

Eventually, Rean calmed down from his laughter before saying, "Alright, alright. We still have 14402 Destiny Points. Let's see what else we can buy."

Roan nodded in response, and they once again touched Sister Orb before accessing the reward list.

[Soul Power and Spiritual Energy Fusion - 20000 Destiny Points] (Bought)

[Nascent Soul Revival - 20000 Destiny Points]

[Soul Gem Dimensional Realm Pass - 10000 Destiny Points] (New)

[Dragon Bones - 5000 Destiny Points]

[Spiritual Energy Absorption Upgrade Level 3 - 10000 Destiny Points] (From 10% to 15% more Absorption)

[Soul Gem Dimensional Realm Upgrade Level 4 - 50000 Destiny Points]

[Yin Yang Bathhouse - Reward from Destiny Strugglers Title]

[World Essence Formation - Reward from Grade 2 Efficiency Title]

[Soul Connection Range Upgrade level 4 – 20000 Destiny Points] (10000km)

[Soul Gem Blacksmith Workshop - 1000 Destiny Points]

[Soul Gem Alchemy Workshop Upgrade Level 3- 3000 Destiny Points]

[Soul Gem Electrical Formations Repository Upgrade Level 3 - 3000 Destiny Points]

[Destiny Points: 14402]

"Oh, right!" Rean immediately looked at Sister Orb and asked, "What is this Nascent Soul Revival?"

[Isn't that pretty self-explanatory? If your Nascent Soul dies, you can revive it. Well, it's really expensive, so I wouldn't let that happen if I was you.] Sister Orb explained.

However, that wasn't what Rean meant. "Wait! What I wanted to say is how exactly do you get your Nascent Soul killed without dying? Is that even possible?"

Roan pondered a bit before answering, "Oh, are you talking about in the off chance our Dantians are destroyed?"

However, Sister Orb shook her body right and left as she replied, [No, idiot. If that happens, you'll need to cultivate from the very start. Naturally, an Energy Gathering Realm Dantian couldn't possibly hold a Nascent Soul. It's too powerful.] Sister Orb sighed before continuing, [In a situation of life and death, a cultivator is able to draw out his Nascent Soul and transform it into pure energy. For a very limited time, you'll surpass your limits, being able to fight two or maybe even three stages higher than normal. However, that also spells the death of the Nascent Soul. Fortunately for you, the System can revive it. It's that simple.]

Sister Orb also added, [You can check the method to do it in the System, though. It's quite rare to find someone who knows how to do it. At least I don't think anyone on this planet knows how to do that.]

"Oh!" Rean and Roan were quite surprised by that. Sure enough, there were a lot of things regarding cultivation that they still didn't know. "Alright, this is a nice power. However, let's leave it aside for now. So, what should we choose?"