

Death 931

Death... and me

Chapter 931: Must Be Here

Rean and Frin were obviously more curious now. Rean had guessed that it had something to do with the Bloodline Soul Mark, but that much was easy to connect to what was currently going on. That's why he and Frin were curious about it since it seemed to go further than that.

Duran noticed their expressions, with the exception of Roan, who seemed to have understood already. Nevertheless, he decided to explain, looking at Frin and asking, "Frin, you do know that our Zasfin race and your demon beast race had quite a similar standing in the past, right? I mean, before the Bloodline Soul Marks."

Frin nodded in response. Everyone knew that before the Bloodline Marks, both races were more or less equal in strength. This wasn't exactly a secret for the higher-ups of both sides.

Duran then continued, "This enemy gave the Bloodline Soul Marks to us so that we could restrain the demon beasts. I'm sure you've already figured that out since Rean just mentioned it. Now, that's the main point of the issue. While the demon beasts fought back, trying to stop the advancement of our Zasfin race, he closed the portal. After all, the Stage Nine Demon Beasts of your side didn't have time to worry about that."

Frin was taken aback. "I see...that's how he took control over the Bestial Sacred Land's formation. It was because we didn't have anyone to protect it. If we were right, he had to prevent anyone else from coming from the Realm of Gods after him."

Rean nodded as well, saying, "In the end, this long-lasting grudge between the demon beasts and the Zasfins was started by him. Now everything makes sense. After all, both sides needed each other so that they could improve their cultivation. That guy used the Zasfins' greed for power to break the balance. For one, he got to take control over the demon beasts' Bestial Sacred Ground. Two, he stopped all threats that were coming from above. It's perfect!"

Frin and Duran, knowing that everything was just a huge scheme that used their forces for countless years, were now seething in rage. "Doesn't that mean that all the deaths, sacrifices, and everything else that had happened so far were simply meaningless?" Naturally, they were having a hard time accepting it all.

Roan warned the group, though. "Don't forget that this is all speculation. We'll have to check it out if we manage to take that guy down."

Frin, Duran, and Rean agreed with Roan. "Then, let's head after the crimson spheres or whatever they're called."

Meanwhile, close to the center of the dimensional realm, far high in the skies, a pair composed of a Demon Bird and a Demon Plant was watching everything below. Of course, they were the only ones capable of seeing anything. No one else would be able to notice their presence even if they looked from the ground straight in their direction. After all, Kentucky was using Rean's Light bending skill.

Kentucky, who had the best eyes for long-distance view, could not help but comment, "There were quite a few scary demon beasts there before. However, most of them disappeared around a day earlier, and they haven't come returned anymore. Do you think Rean's group had anything to do with it?"

Celis nodded with conviction, responding, "They're the only ones who could possibly cause this sudden change. Don't forget that we have been here for a few days, and those demon beasts haven't moved a single muscle until that very moment."

"What do you think we should do, then?" Kentucky asked before continuing, "Maybe we can go and find them to tell them that most of the defenses have disappeared."

Celis shook his head in response. "No, let's stay here. Your connection to the twins isn't as good as theirs. You can't feel their positions at the moment, right? This dimensional realm is too enormous. Chances are that we won't even find their traces at all."

Kentucky narrowed his eyes. "I wonder if there are any more demon beasts hidden down there. Since we aren't going to look for Rean's group, how about I take a closer look? This is an opportunity we shouldn't miss since there are a lot fewer demon beasts."

Celis couldn't help but ask, "Weren't you the one complaining that you didn't want to do this risky mission? How come you're so eager to take a look now?"

Kentucky didn't expect those words from Celis, instantly thinking up of an excuse as he replied, "Ahem...as a Divine Demon Beast, I can't turn back in front of a challenge. This would sully the image of the Minokawas of the universe. Back then, I was just... just...right! I was just testing your resolve, telling you about the risks."

Celis's mouth twitched as he could not help but curse inwardly, 'Perhaps I chose the wrong Divine Demon Bird to make a nest on my branches...'

However, Celis quickly put those thoughts behind since he also wanted to take a closer look. It was just as Kentucky mentioned. They had to take this chance now that most of the demon beasts defending the area left. "Alright, make sure to use your Spiritual Energy to prevent the wind from blowing after you flap your wings. That way, Rean's Light bending skill should be enough to keep us hidden now that the number of demon beasts is sparse."

Kentucky immediately nodded as Spiritual Energy gathered around his body. Any sound coming from his wings was kept within a meter of his body, not being able to go any further than that. Of course, Kentucky was ready to flash away at any slight change in his surroundings.

However, after they passed a certain point, the scenario in front of them changed completely. The number of demon beasts was still sparse. However, what appeared under their vision was a gigantic blood pond. "This..."

"That's the Bestial Blood Pond Phex talked about!" Kentucky could not help but exclaim. Fortunately, his Spiritual Energy was blocking any sound from escaping. Otherwise, all the demon beasts there would have heard his voice. "So, it was here all this time. How come we didn't see it?"

"That's obviously an illusion formation doing its job. Pay attention. The number of demon beasts didn't change, but their positions definitely did. After all, they couldn't stand on the pond itself. Very clever..."

Kentucky and Celis also understood another point after that. "The World Beast Formation Rean and Roan talked about must be here."

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Chapter 932: The Island

Naturally, Kentucky and Celis knew a little about Rean and Roan's other objective in this place. The World Beast Formation was a name that only they knew about other than the red-eyed being. Obviously, that was because of the Soul Gem System.

"Let's fly around a bit," Celis said. "Try to stay within the limits of this illusion formation since we don't know if it has any other abilities."

Kentucky nodded as the two checked the place out after that. The Blood Pond was really huge, way bigger than the description given by Phex back then. That was another proof that the blood pond Phex's group knew back then was fake. In fact, calling it a pond was a huge understatement. It was definitely better to call it a huge blood lake.

Kentucky carefully avoided the flying demon beasts, which were the only ones capable of watching over the lake since, in this place, cultivation couldn't be used to fly. Of course, their numbers were also much smaller due to the intervention of Rean's group. Eventually, Kentucky saw something different in there, muttering in surprise, "Is that an island?"

Kentucky then pointed down for Celis to see once they got close enough for Celis to look at it. "That's definitely an island. But...what are all those floating things landing on it?"

There were many ethereal orbs, flames, and other forms entering that island. To be more specific, they were entering an aperture in the center of the island. "I have no idea. I can't use Spiritual Sense, so it's hard to guess. Could those be the souls Roan talked about?"

Celis nodded, responding, "It's possible. What we know is that the World Beast Formation absorbs the blood and souls of the demon beasts that die on the world. The blood is right below us, so those might really be the souls."

Kentucky and Celis looked at each other for a moment before they came to a conclusion. "That must be the place. Let's get out of here."

Somewhere else, Rean's group had reached another crimson sphere. However, they were being a lot more careful this time around. That being said, their group was divided in two.

One had Roan and Duran. They were the duo responsible for getting close to the crimson spheres without getting noticed. Of course, Roan could also use Rean's Light bending skill, so with his experience in moving stealthily, it wasn't hard at all. He was also the one with Dark Element Affinity, so he could fight the influence of the crimson sphere while Duran had his green pendant.

The other duo was obviously Rean and Frin. Rean used his Light bending skill and stayed far away from the Silver Fenrir, observing the surroundings. Their objective was to warn Roan and Duran way before another encirclement could close in on them.

Sure enough, the crimson spheres had demon beasts protecting them instead of not having any demon beasts in the vicinity. That was the only thing the red-eyed being could do to try and prevent the attack of Rean's group.

However, Duran sighed when he arrived near the crimson sphere. "As I thought, they were caught up by it." On the ground, close to the sphere, Duran could see two human bodies. One of them was Kumo, and the other one was Vance. Both of them were Transition Realm Zasfins. Just as Roan mentioned, these spheres only cared about the souls of demon beasts. Any other race would just be killed by its power.

Roan didn't seem too surprised at all. "Ignore that and destroy the crimson sphere. We don't know if the enemy has a way to find our presence once we get close to the sphere itself. Also, you better be prepared since we'll probably find more of your Zasfin forces as we destroy more spheres."

Duran then showed an expression of resolve as Wind and Lightning Element gathered with the help of his Spiritual Energy and Soul Power. Soon after, he released his skill as he grabbed Roan and rushed out of there as quickly as possible. He made it so that he would be out of there before the attack arrived.

Boom!

All the demon beasts in the vicinity noticed the huge explosion and rushed to where the sphere was. Unfortunately, the crimson sphere was already gone. As for Roan and Duran, they were nowhere to be seen. The good thing was that Duran didn't need to care about the sound of his movements. After all, the explosion of the crimson sphere and everything else around covered it. Roan still had the Light bending skill active, so their escape was even easier.

From a distance, Roan noticed that only a few of the high-level demon beasts disappeared after the crimson sphere was dealt with. "It seems like a lot of the demon beasts weren't connected to this specific sphere."

Duran nodded as he continued to make his way to where Rean and Frin were. "Indeed. However, that also means some demon beasts disappeared in other places as well. The enemy is probably randomly assigning the demon beasts to different spheres so that they could still deal with us on the off chance they fail to protect the sphere. Otherwise, as soon as we destroy the sphere, all the enemies around us would disappear like the others."

Roan agreed with Duran on that. "That's not bad either. It also means that many high-level demon beasts have now disappeared in other locations as well. I guess we can assume that the spheres with most of the protection are the ones that captured the souls of Darian and the others. After all, they have their real bodies and are Divine Demon Beasts. They pose the greatest chance of stopping us, so they must not let the spheres they're connected to be destroyed. They would lose its support and die straight away if that happens."

Not too long after, Roan and Duran arrived at Rean and Frin's location. "Alright, we still have a lot of work to do. Let's head to the next crimson sphere."

Everyone nodded as Duran, Roan, and Rean hopped on Frin's back. The Silver Fenrir then immediately dashed away, completely ignoring the commotion made by the demon beasts in the place where they destroyed the last sphere.

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Chapter 933: Extra Two

Because they had to pick out the crimson spheres at random and make sure they weren't being tracked, Rean's group took over twice as much time for each sphere. However, none of them cared about it. They had to keep themselves alive first before heading to the area Kentucky and Celis were keeping an eye on.

In any case, the method was effective. There were two instances where the demon beasts noticed their presence and tried to trap them. However, Frin howled from far away, using his Spiritual Energy to amplify his voice. With that, Roan and Duran immediately retreated before getting any closer to the crimson sphere. Rean and Frin, of course, left the area straight away as well. They didn't even try to come back to the sphere and instead chose another one.

They also found which sphere Darian and Xaon were protecting. After all, those two stayed very close to the spheres. To prevent any issues, they didn't try to force their way and destroy their sphere. Instead, they also ignored those spheres and switched straight away.

The red-eyed being almost cried, seeing each of his Soul Submission Orbs be destroyed. Of course, only it knew the spheres' name. However, it was as mentioned before. Rean's group didn't know of it, so they simply called it crimson spheres or red-eyed spheres. In any case, the creature could only see what the demon beasts in his control could or the area around the orbs. The realm was not his, and he wasn't in full control of it either. Because of that, Spiritual Sense was impossible for him as well. What really made him mad was Rean's Light bending skill. Because of that, he could never tell whether the twins' group was close or not.

One might think that with fewer crimson spheres, the creature could increase the defenses on the others since the demon beasts in those places were free. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. For each crimson sphere destroyed, all the demon beasts linked to it would disappear. In the end, he couldn't increase the defenses at all! Of course, those at the Stage Nine level would have their soul taken away by the red claws when that happened.

In the end, the creature could only think of another solution, which was to take more of the demon beasts protecting his dwelling to help defend the spheres. 'These are the only ones not attached to any Soul Submission Orb, so they won't disappear even if all spheres get destroyed,' he thought.

Kentucky and Celis, who were still flying at the border of the illusion formation covering the lake, immediately noticed their departure as well. "More demon beasts are leaving..."

Celis nodded in response. "It seems like everything is going as planned. However, could it be that the enemy in there isn't considering that he might become vulnerable?"

Kentucky pondered over it for a bit before saying, "From what Roan said, each destroyed crimson sphere would probably weaken the other party. It's more like he has no choice. He can't let all of the spheres be destroyed."

Celis had to admit Kentucky's words made sense. "Well, that's considering Roan is right on that part. Don't forget that the enemy might be doing that to attract us here."

Of course, Roan, Duran, Frin, and Rean also understood that possibility. Nonetheless, one thing was certain. The crimson spheres were absolutely important for the red-eyed being. Otherwise, he wouldn't have sent Phex, Xaon, and Darian to try and stop Rean's group.

However, Kentucky suddenly noticed something different near the border of the island, in a position where there weren't any demon beasts. "This..."

While all of that happened, there were two demon beasts who still hadn't fallen for the crimson spheres' soul-controlling properties. At the moment, these two demon beasts were very close to the Blood Lake as well. It's just that no one could notice their presence, Kentucky and Celis included.

Those two demon beasts were Red, obviously...and surprisingly, Gulan! As for how they got together, that's because Gulan was lucky. Back then, Red was making his way to the region below the centermost star when suddenly, he noticed the sounds of battle coming from the distance. He was very confident in his concealment skills, even more than Rean was on his own. Because of that, he approached the area without any worries.

It was there that he saw Gulan fighting the realm's demon beasts. Gulan seemed to be in pretty bad shape as well. Red then pondered over whether he should help Gulan or not and decided to do so. After all, this was an expedition with both the Zasfins and the Demon Beast Alliance doing their part. Any extra help for their side would be helpful. Besides, Red was also at the Stage Six level, just like Gulan.

Red delivered a fatal injury to one of the demon beasts attacking Gulan with his concealing ability, quickly tipping the scales. Gulan was delighted to see Red there and was also lucky that no other stronger demon beast had appeared so far. With both working in tandem, they were able to defeat the demon beasts before Red activated his concealment ability to hide him and Gulan together. It was basically the same thing as he did back with Rean when they entered the Zasfin city to talk with Sevinia.

However, it wasn't like Red and Gulan hadn't found the crimson sphere. In fact, they even got very close to one of those. But it was at that moment that Red's golden horn shone with golden lightning, destroying the soul-controlling power that assaulted him and Gulan at the same time.

Gulan was frightened by that power and immediately flew far away, carrying Red on his back. When Gulan asked how Red nullified that power with his golden lightning, Red shook his head in response as

he told him, "I don't know. My horn's power activated on its own. I'm as surprised as you. If not for that, I would have fallen victim to that power as well."

However, both Red and Gulan understood one thing. Red had no recollections of his past before the Blood Lake. However, Rean and Roan mentioned the possibility that Red might have come from the Realm of Gods. After all, Phex guaranteed that no one other than him or the other Stage Nine Demon Beasts should be able to enter that place. That theory seemed far-fetched in the past, but Red and Gulan started to think that it might actually be true.

However, they didn't dwell on that possibility for long and continued their journey. Eventually, they arrived at the real Blood Lake that Kentucky and Celis were watching. It's just that they got there way earlier than Kentucky and Celis did.

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Chapter 934: Red, Are You Here?

The reason they got there was because Red was right from the very start. The region below the centermost star on the skies was the center of this realm. It wasn't anything surprising that the Blood Lake could be found there as well. That's how they didn't come across any problems coming here. Also, Gulan was a Blue Luan, a Demon Bird, so Red could keep them concealed while Gulan flew their way over.

"I...remember this place," Red said in a low voice. "That doesn't make sense. The Bestial Sacred Ground that I remember should be the other one. The Blood Pond wasn't a lake either. Still, it's like the memories are popping up on their own."

Gulan looked at Red, who seemed somewhat lost, and said, "Isn't that a good thing? It means that you're getting closer to the truth of your identity. Perhaps you can find who you are in this place."

Red nodded. "Let's hope so."

"Then? What do you remember?" Gulan asked, changing the topic.

Red pondered over it for a bit before saying, "It's just pieces and fragments, but I remember something that looks like a...core? Maybe? It's situated on the north side of the Blood Lake."

"North?" Gulan was taken aback. After all, he and Red also found that island in the center of the Blood Lake when they were flying over it. Just like Kentucky, their presence was not felt due to Red's concealment ability. "Are you sure it's not on the island in the center?"

Red shook his head as he replied, "I don't know. It's like I said. These memories popping up are just pieces and fragments. I don't even know if they're actually real or not."

"Then...what is it that we can find in the center of the island?" Gulan was obviously curious about that. Too bad Red also didn't have the answer to that.

"I'm not sure, but I don't feel like it's a good place to head to. It might just be my feeling after my memories began to wake up, but I'm pretty sure that nothing good will happen if we enter that hole where we saw those things entering."

Gulan nodded after hearing that. "Alright. In that case, let's leave it aside. Instead, we need to think of a way on how to warn my grandfather and the others to not head there." Obviously, Gulan didn't know that other than Frin, all the Stage Nine Divine Demon Beasts were already dead. It's just that Darian and Xaon still had their bodies.

Red was worried about that part as well. "We came with so many Stage Nine Demon Beasts and Zasfin Ancestors, but none of them got close to this place after so long. I'm sorry to say this, but I don't think we'll see anyone. Don't forget that we only escaped that controlling power because of the special power in my golden lightning. I don't think the others have the same power."

Gulan's expression turned dark after that. After all, if Red was right, they might be the last ones in this dimensional realm. "We can't give up that easily. We need to think of a way of getting our groups' attention in the off chance we pass close by them."

Red obviously didn't want to be the last one here with Gulan, so he still agreed. "Alright. However, we're already in the best place possible."

"How come?" Gulan asked in response.

Red then explained, "Because this Blood Lake is situated at the center of this dimensional realm. Don't ask me how I know it since even I don't remember exactly. In any case, if the others are heading somewhere, it will be here. I believe everyone would eventually converge at the center of the dimensional realm once they understand their bearings."

Gulan was happy to hear that. "That's great! However, your concealment skill makes us invisible to everyone, doesn't it? How will we call the others' attention."

Red shrugged his shoulders as he replied, "It's simple. With my skill, we can simply stay hidden until we see someone we know. Then, we go and talk to them on our own. Easy peasy!"

Gulan had to admit that Red's idea was good. "Alright. But...what if they are using concealment skills as well? Rean and Roan seem to have something like that as well, no? At least my grandfather told me something about it. The other demon beasts might have something as well since everyone has secrets."

Red pondered in silence for a bit before coming up with an answer. "I know what to do."

Back in the present, while Kentucky was flying over the island...he had noticed something at the corner of the island where there weren't any demon beasts.

As for what he saw there..."This...Celis, that arrangement of rocks there...don't they look like a giant carrot?"

Celis was taken aback and immediately looked in the direction Kentucky pointed out. "It really looks like a giant carrot. If we weren't flying, we wouldn't notice it at all."

Obviously, a figure appeared in their minds as soon as they finished talking. "Could it be Red?"

Everyone knew Red by now. Even Phex's group knew him since Red was a Divine Demon Beast. One must remember that Rean and Roan explained how they stopped Red in the past. That said, they all knew how much this Golden Drohare loved carrots.

That was Red's idea. The demon beasts knew very well of his love for carrots, but the Zasfins didn't have any idea. Obviously, only the demon beasts would understand that signal and would come down to check. After all, one could only arrive at this island if one could fly.

Red simply rearranged the rocks on the ground to get the form of a carrot drawing. Since then, they have been waiting there to see if someone would come. It would be useless to watch the lakes' borders because it is just too big. Their best chance was to stay on the island in the center.

Kentucky and Celis looked at each other for a moment and came down. Of course, Kentucky kept the Light bending skill active and the Spiritual Energy barrier blocking the sound of his wings. Finally, when he landed on one of the rocks, he murmured in a low voice, letting it pass through the Spiritual Energy Barrier. Of course, it was only loud enough to reach the ears of someone close, not far away, where they could find a few demon beasts.

"Red, are you here?"

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Chapter 935: They Are Finally Here

Red and Gulan didn't expect to hear those words so soon. However, they controlled their emotions as they knew they were hiding here. Instead, Red simply used a small voice to answer Kentucky's question, saying, "Kentucky, is that you? Come to the thirteenth rock near the bottom left side. You will enter the range of my concealment skill if you do so."

Kentucky was happy to hear that and immediately did as Red told him. Of course, he was also prepared to escape at any moment, in case it was actually a trap.

In any case, Kentucky got close enough where he could finally see and sense Red. As one must remember, Red's concealment skill was unlike Rean's. Nevertheless, it was very good for this situation as well. Kentucky then spread out his Spiritual Energy around Red, blocking any sound from going out as he exclaimed in surprise, "Red! It's really you! Oh! Gulan is here as well!"

Red nodded together with Gulan. "So there really are more demon beasts alive in this place other than just us! Kentucky, it's good to see you again!" Red then looked at Celis on Kentucky's back, saying, "Of course, you as well, Senior Celis."

Celis nodded back at those two, saying in response, "Indeed. We thought everyone was gone by now."

Hearing that, Kentucky couldn't help but ask, "But...how did you avoid the crimson spheres?"

"Crimson spheres?" Red and Gulan did not know what to say to that. After all, they only felt the power of the sphere. They didn't see it before they left the areas with those spheres straight away.

"Oh. So, you don't know, huh?" Kentucky then explained what he was talking about.

"I see...so that power that tried to take control of our minds was this crimson sphere you talked about."

After that, Red, Gulan, Kentucky, and Celis spent some time exchanging information. Of course, Kentucky and Celis knew a lot more about what was happening. As for Red, he told them about the ability of his golden lightning that even he didn't know about. However, the thing that made Kentucky and Celis let out a lot of cold sweat were his last words. "The opening in the center of this island is not a place you should enter. If you do, you will only die. That's what I can tell with the awakened memories I got."

Kentucky and Celis wanted to tell Rean's group about it, thinking that the World Beast Formation was there. Obviously, it seemed like they were wrong. Even if they could get to the World Beast Formation there, Red's memories of a core on the island's north side made a lot more sense. The opening in the center of the island looked a lot more like a death trap now.

Celis nodded in the end, saying, "No wonder why we thought there was way too little defense here. At first, we thought it was because the enemy didn't have another choice. Right now, it might just be a death wish."

Kentucky then shook his head after that, saying in response, "Alright, that's enough for now. Although this island has a very small number of demon beasts, I would prefer to stay in midair near the border of the illusion formation covering the Blood Lake."

Red and Gulan, obviously, knew of the illusion formation as well. "Sure, let's get out of here."

Gulan carried Red while Kentucky did the same for Celis. With that, the group exited the island without any trouble. In the air, Red couldn't help but ask, "How will Rean and Roan find us?"

"Don't worry," Kentucky answered. "When we're close enough, I can feel their presence. At the moment, they're destroying the crimson spheres. Once they get enough of them down, they'll eventually come here. Our objective was to investigate the area while they attract the enemy's attention."

Of course, Kentucky didn't mention the World Beast Formation since this was something they found because of the Soul Gem System. Nevertheless, that was enough for Kentucky to at least not send Rean's group into their deaths when they arrive in this place.

Time passed in a flash and many days went by, soon turning into a week. Sure enough, a dimensional realm of this size and the choosing of spheres at random made the job take a lot longer. It wasn't before eleven days had passed that Rean's group finally reached the number they wanted.

"Alright, I can only feel 16 more spheres remaining," Roan said as he counted in his mind. "Two of them have Darian or Xaon protecting it. As for the others, they have a lot of Stage Nine Demon Beasts from the past. It seems like the enemy sent demon beasts that wouldn't disappear with the spheres' destruction."

Roan continued, "But that's for the better. We were already expecting it since it would give us a better chance against the enemy itself. I would prefer to take the number of spheres down to ten or less, but that would be too risky now."

Duran nodded in response as he also saw the lines of defense around the crimson spheres, saying, "Indeed, we should be happy we got this far. Our best option would be to go after him."

Frin and Rean agreed with the plan. "That's good. Kentucky is getting freaked out because of how long we're taking. At least I hope he found something while we were doing our job."

With that said, everyone jumped on Frin's back, who immediately shot into the distance. This time, he was following the direction of the highest concentration of Underworld Energy in this realm. Of course, Roan still kept saying it was energy related to his Dark Element since he couldn't tell Duran and Frin of his past as a Death Spirit.

Kentucky's group had been flying around the north side of the Blood Lake after they left the island in the center. However, they couldn't see anything out of the ordinary there. Their only clue was Red's memory, saying that the core was around this place.

In any case, they took several days to find a very well hidden entrance before they retreated once more to wait for Rean's group. Indeed, they wouldn't risk entering that place without Duran and Frin's help.

Suddenly, Kentucky felt something as he looked in a certain direction, muttering, "They're finally here."

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Chapter 936: Meeting

Little did the red-eyed being know, but the hidden entrance to the real core of the World Beast Formation had already been found. Red was right. The island in the center was just a death trap. The World Beast Formation did indeed use the demon beasts' blood, but there was no such thing as it using souls. That's something the red-eyed being added later to capture the Souls it needs.

If Rean's group really entered that opening on the island, they would meet with all the trapped souls in there. Be it the twins or even Frin and Duran, they would be assaulted by the souls all at once. After all, it wasn't as if there was enough demon beast blood for all the souls. Some of them had been in that place for almost as long as the red-eyed being was in the Dimensional Realm. One can only imagine the instinctual grievances they felt after being trapped there for so long. They didn't have sentience anymore, but their wrath still remained.

The red-eyed being left it there as bait. After all, everyone would think that the island in the center of the Blood Lake was the real deal. They would think that the key to getting out of this place was there.

Rean and Roan obviously felt Kentucky's presence as well. Nevertheless, they were more impressed by the enormous Blood Lake that appeared in front of them when they passed through the illusion formation. "This thing is huge!"

"This..." Frin was also just as shocked. "This isn't a pond at all. This is definitely a lake! Holy shit! The Blood Pond I saw before isn't even a hundredth of the size of this thing. Could it be that the previous one was fake?" Frin was one of the Stage Nine Demon Beasts, so he had entered the fake Bestial Sacred Ground with Phex and the others before.

Roan nodded in response, saying, "We already think that this dimensional realm is the real Bestial Sacred Ground, so this Blood Lake should indeed be the real deal. Though..." Even Roan was somewhat moved by the amount of blood there. In his previous life (or death) as a Death Spirit, such a scene wasn't anything common at all. At the very least, he hadn't seen it before.

Rean and Roan felt Kentucky approaching them with the connection between them. Of course, they could see it with the naked eye since Kentucky was also using Rean's Light bending skill. Eventually, they got close enough for Rean to take over and allow the two groups to see each other.

"Wait! Red? Gulan? You're still alive?!" Rean was genuinely shocked. After all, they even lost the Peak Stage Nine Divine Demon Beasts. It was hard to believe that Red and Gulan, who were at Stage Six, were still alive. "Could it be that you didn't get close to one of the crimson spheres?"

Red shook his head and explained the thing that happened to him and Gulan. He talked about his golden lightning and the memories that started to pop up in his head.

"I see..." Except for Duran, everyone knew that Red had lost his memories. "Have you remembered anything else since you found Kentucky?"

Red pondered in silence for a bit before saying, "I do remember a few places I've never seen before. Some places and creatures that I don't think exist in this world." Red participated in the war, so he had seen plenty of different demon beasts. "Besides, the bits and pieces of memories I have are from locations without any snow. That shouldn't be possible since this planet was covered in an ice age for thousands of years. I'm definitely not that old."

That pretty much confirmed Rean and Roan's theory that Red wasn't from this world, just like them. Then again, the part that puzzled them was the golden lightning being able to fight back the soul-controlling properties of the sphere. "Kentucky has Dark Element, so he can use it to destroy the crimson sphere's power, just like Roan and I. However, I didn't think that lightning could be used for the same thing."

Red shook his head, explaining, "It's different. My Lightning Elemental Affinity is not the same lightning you see on the others. To be more precise, golden lightning is an odd Elemental Affinity, just like your Dark and Light Elements."

Duran was still puzzled by most of the things they were talking about. "Can someone stop ignoring me and explain what you're talking about?"

Rean nodded and gave him a quick explanation about Red's issues. Only then did he understand what it was all about. "Now I get it. Anyway, we can think about this guy's past later. I'm more interested in his memories about the Bestial Sacred Ground."

Red nodded, knowing it wasn't time to think about his past. "It goes like this..."

Rean and the others narrowed their eyes as they listened. In fact, Frin even let out a bit of cold sweat a little. Back then, when they stopped Red's assault in the Underwater Palace, they wanted to kill Red straight away. However, Rean and Roan denied the idea, hiding Red in the Soul Gem Dimensional Realm. Only at this moment could he see just how correct that decision of the twins was. If not for that, they would have entered the opening in the island's center and probably died.

Duran then put those thoughts behind before saying, "Whatever. I've waited long enough to get rid of that guy. Since he isn't expecting us, or at least we think he isn't, we should go. After all, he'll notice something different if we take too long to appear in front of another crimson sphere."

Roan agreed with Duran. "Duran's right." He looked at Red after that, and asked, "Do you have any other memories regarding the location of the core?"

Red shook his head, replying, "No. So far, those are the only memories I have. However, they're surfacing little by little. If you wait, I might remember something else."

Everyone shook their heads in an instant. "Terrible idea. We need the element of surprise. Let's go."

Duran and Frin then took the lead while Rean and Red worked together with their skills to keep everyone hidden.

Death... and me

Chapter 937: It Will Take Some Time

The red-eyed being had been looking through the eyes of the demon beasts and the crimson spheres so far. At this point, he wasn't even angry anymore since he knew complaining wouldn't change anything. He lost countless years of work, and he could only sit down and start again. But first, he had to take care of the culprits. 'Come! I refuse to believe that I won't take at least one of you down with the number of demon beasts I have defending each remaining Soul Submission Orb. Let's see how you escape next time!'

However, Rean's group was far from any of the orbs. Instead, they made their way to the north of the Blood Lake, soon finding the hidden entrance Red talked about. Of course, Rean's group didn't think the enemy hadn't put any protection in place, so they moved carefully. However...nothing happened! It's just that they didn't know if it was because of Rean and Red's concealment abilities or not. After all, with both of them together, it was hard to imagine anyone finding their presence without the help of Spiritual Sense or Soul Power Scanning, which couldn't be used in this dimensional realm.

They appeared inside a cave, very similar to the one Roan was before. Seeing no danger, Roan said, "Let's keep going."

Frin and Duran acted as the frontline while the rest followed right behind. Rean and Red kept close to them to make it easier to conceal their presence. As for Roan, Kentucky, and Celis, they were at the back.

"Red, do you know how far we are from the core?" Duran asked at the front.

Red pondered in silence a bit before answering, "More or less. The memories are still a bit hazy to me. But I think that at this speed, we will need somewhere around 10 minutes to leave this tunnel and enter the area we're looking for."

He was right. It didn't take long for them to arrive at a huge cave area. Well, calling it a cave wouldn't be right. The area looked more like a bunch of ruins. It had something different, though. Instead of the predominant crimson color shining everywhere in the entire dimensional realm, the ruins shone brightly with a dark color instead.

Roan immediately narrowed his eyes before telling Rean through their Soul Connection, 'The Underworld Energy here is really thick. The enemy is definitely someone from the Underworld.'

Roan then looked at the others, saying, "As you can see, there's a lot of Dark Energy here, which looks very similar to my own. However, they aren't the same. Try to use your Spiritual Energies to keep them out of your bodies. I don't know if it has some detrimental effect on our bodies."

Everyone nodded and did as Roan said.

Rean then contacted Sister Orb in the Dimensional Realm, asking, [How is it, Sister Orb? Can you feel the formation now that we are here?]

[I always felt the formation,] Sister Orb replied. [It's just that I couldn't figure out where the core was located. However, Red was right. I'm now close enough to be able to say where all the energy of the World Beast Formation is gathering at.]

Rean and Roan were obviously happy to hear that. "So? Where is it?"

[Fifteen and a half kilometers ahead. All the ruins here look similar, but the one in the middle is slightly different. The core is definitely there.]

Rean then told Red Sister Orb's words so that Red could pretend he simply remembered that as well. Red knew of Sister Orb's existence, too, after all. "I remember now! It's ahead! Can you see that building with two pillars on both sides far ahead? The core is underneath it."

Duran and Frin looked at each other and nodded. "Then, we'll continue with the plan. We will keep walking as far as possible until the enemy notices our presence. Once that happens, we will fight it while Rean and the rest try to do something with the formation."

Rean told everyone that since this realm's formation was something the enemy created, perhaps he could make him lose control over it. The reason was simple. This creature had been here for countless years. If it didn't obtain full control until now, then things might not be as easy for it as they thought.

The thick Underworld Energy increased the more they got close. However, Duran and Frin were at the Peak Stage of the Transition Realm. Their Spiritual Energy was more than enough to keep it at bay. The others still had their own methods, like Rean, Roan, and Kentucky's Dark Element or Red's golden

lightning. The only one without anything was Gulan, but Red simply helped him as he had been doing so far.

The group arrived in the building in no time. Yet, they went all around it and simply couldn't find an entrance. "Let's go through the roof." They quickly mounted Kentucky, who flew them all above the enormous building. Well, all the ruins in this place were enormous anyway. "Nothing either."

Duran then shrugged his shoulders, saying, "If no one knows a way inside while keeping silent, then Frin and I will just blast our way through."

"Can you even damage these ruins? After all, they might be something made by the seniors of the Realm of Gods." Rean asked.

Duran and Frin had to admit he was right. With that being said, they came down once again and grabbed a small piece of the crumbled ruins. After that, Duran and Frin tried to destroy it with their Spiritual Energies...only to not leave a single scratch behind. "This..."

Rean could not help but let out a sigh from the result. "As I thought. We need to find another way in."

Roan then raised his hand, saying, "Let me try my Dark Element." In fact, that was an excuse. These ruins were bathed in Underworld Energy, so Roan was going to try to use his knowledge about it to drive the energy out.

His Spiritual Energy and Dark Element entered a wall by his side as he focused on a single point. 'Indeed, it's Underworld Energy, but it's very different than the one I know. It'll take some time...'

Death... and me

Chapter 938: Ahem...

As Roan worked on the wall of the building, Duran couldn't help but ask Rean, "Is his method working?"

Rean nodded and replied, "It is, but it'll take a while. All we can do is wait. He's trying to open a breach in that dark energy without alerting the other side. If that works, we'll be able to enter without the enemy noticing."

Duran nodded as he looked around. "Still, to think this place wouldn't have a single demon beast defending it. If not because we should have never found the real entrance, I would think this was a trap."

Rean agreed with him, saying, "Yes. However, we might have passed some detection formations without triggering them. Don't forget, Red's concealment skills could also pass through my own detection formations. I wouldn't be surprised if his abilities also work here. When you include my Light bending skill, we form a really strong pair when it comes to not being caught."

Rean was right. The red-eyed being did work on detection formations to stop others from approaching without it noticing. Unfortunately for it, they didn't work on Rean and Red working together. Also, it was his fault since it had all his attention on the Soul Submission Orbs outside. It knew that it was about time for Rean's group to appear once more to try to destroy another one. Well, they wouldn't appear.

As they waited, Rean noticed that Kentucky's attention was fixated elsewhere. "What is it?"

"Eh? Oh! It's just that I can feel the presence of Heaven-level ores here," Kentucky explained.

Rean nodded in response. Only food would take the bird's attention away in a situation like this. "We already have quite a few Heaven-level materials after all those trades. We can get more of them once we finish thi-" It was then that Rean froze for a moment. "Wait! Heaven-level materials? Where?"

Kentucky then pointed somewhere else, far away from the position they were at the moment. "It's inside those underground ruins, 21 kilometers or so to the west."

Rean's eyes lit up before he looked at Red, telling him, "Red, you stay here with them to keep them hidden. Roan will use the Light bending skill to help you while he also works on the wall." Rean then turned to Kentucky and said, "You, come with me. We'll fly there."

"Why? Is there something in that place? We shouldn't care about resources at the moment, you know?" Frin asked straight away.

Rean nodded in response as he answered, "Heaven-level materials. It wouldn't make sense that they're still around. The demon beasts of the past who knew about this place would have taken them away a long time ago. If they didn't, it was because they couldn't. If I'm not wrong, these Heaven-level materials, including the ores Kentucky can feel, are part of the formation we're looking for."

Duran narrowed his eyes as he could not help but say, "So what? We're after the core. If we destroy it, we don't need to deal with the rest."

Rean looked at Duran as if he was an idiot as he explained, "Hmph! No wonder you know nothing about formations. If the majority of high-level materials are there, that means a really important piece of the formation is also in the same place. If I'm not wrong, that's the place responsible for managing the energy that goes to the core. If I cut that off..."

Duran finally understood as he continued with Rean's train of thought, saying, "You will be able to stop the red-eyed being from using it for some time. However, would you be able to stop it?"

Rean shrugged his shoulders as he replied, "It's worth a shot. After all, I think it'll be a lot harder to interfere with the core itself since the enemy definitely has it close to him. Anyways, we'll be back if it's actually impossible to do that. At the very least, someone at my level will be a lot more useful that way."

Rean didn't even wait for an answer as he jumped on Kentucky's back and took flight. Roan didn't like that he had to take care of the Light bending skill, but he understood that it was necessary. His hair turned white and black, exchanging elements with Rean, which he used to activate the skill. Using Rean's Light Element was a lot better and faster than relying on his White Star.

Red then looked at Gulan, who didn't have a good expression, as he asked, "What's up?"

Gulan, who was still somewhat affected after knowing the fate of his grandfather, couldn't help but say, "I feel rather useless here. I don't have your or Rean's concealment abilities, nor do I have Senior Duran and Frin's strength. I wonder if I should have stayed out instead of coming here."

Red snorted in response. "But you came, didn't you? Don't play dumb. You just wanted to see the face of the guy who did that to your grandfather, the phoenix. I won't stop you, you know? To be honest, it doesn't change much whether you're here or not. Don't worry too much. Just do whatever you want. No one here will stop you, but we won't save your ass either."

On Rean's side, it didn't take too long to reach the place Kentucky mentioned. It's just that the area didn't seem to have anything out of the ordinary...if one considered any of this situation ordinary, of course. "Kentucky, where is it?"

Kentucky then pointed at the ground as he said, "It's right below us. I can feel a lot of Heaven-level ores and other metals there. They seem delicious."

Rean ignored Kentucky's last comment and used Earth Element to start excavating the ground. As mentioned several times in the past, everyone could use any element. It's just that they were a lot worse with elements that were not part of their affinity.

Fortunately, the ground itself wasn't filled with the Underworld Energy, so it wasn't hard to excavate. Kentucky also did the same, making the work move faster, actually.

Suddenly, the ground crumbled, which took Rean and Kentucky by surprise as they fell down.

Crumble...

Rean and Kentucky then got themselves out of the debris when they noticed that they fell right in front of...someone. Or, to be more specific, a certain red-eyed being. The other party also looked at Rean and Kentucky with a weird expression, not expecting to see them in this place at all.

That awkward moment lasted a few seconds until finally, Rean put a hand in front of his mouth as he spoke with an apologetic expression. "Ahem...we're just passing by. Don't mind us since we were just about to leave."

The red-eyed being's mouth could only twitch in response.

Death... and me

Chapter 939: There Is Something We Can Do

Rean was finally able to see the appearance of their enemy. It had a humanoid body and dark skin that emanated the same Underworld Energy Roan talked about. It had a horn on its forehead while its ears

were pointed. Last but not least, its hands were crimson red, just like the crimson claws that took the souls away when Stage Nine Demon Beasts died.

"You!!!" The red-eyed being obviously woke up from his trance as it attacked Rean and Kentucky. However...

Bang!

Just as its red claw was about to hit Rean and Kentucky, it was stopped by something that looked like a glass barrier. Rean and Kentucky didn't care about it, though. Rean quickly jumped on Kentucky's back, trying to look around as fast as he could while Kentucky took off to escape through the hole they had created.

"Wait just one damn second!" The red-eyed being didn't give up, though.

Bang, bang, bang, bang...

It hit the barrier in front of it nonstop, trying to break it. Unfortunately, all his efforts seemed to be for nothing, as the barrier didn't even budge. "Ahhhhhhhhhh! Don't think you can escape this place. I'll make you pay for my Soul Submission Orbs!" the being screamed as Rean and Kentucky flew away.

Obviously, Roan, Frin, Duran, and everyone else heard the huge sounds coming from the place Rean and Kentucky went. "Let's go!"

At the halfway point, Rean's group met up with Roan's, with the latter asking, "What happened?"

"Seems like I found our enemy. He isn't close to the core. Instead, he's down there in the hole Kentucky and I opened. However...he seems to be...locked down?" Only now did Rean stop and ponder over that situation.

He then thought about the area they entered and began to explain, "While Kentucky and I excavated ground, it suddenly crumbled. Because of that, we fell inside what looked like a huge chamber. There was a thing that looked like a giant transparent tube, and that being with the same red claws and eyes

we've seen before was inside. It tried to destroy the tube's glass to attack me, but the tube seemed to hold it back."

Rean continued, "That's not all. Do you remember the points of energy that we believe to be the Stage Nine Demon Beasts' souls? There were many of those all around the transparent tube. They were connected to the tube itself through some kind of red strings of energy. I don't know what they serve for, though. I can't tell if the tube is a prison or something the creature created for itself to use."

Duran and Frin didn't care too much about it. "Alright, you guys stay behind. Frin and I will go and try to finish things as fast as possible. After all, that thing will definitely call the other demon beasts back here." However...

Kaboom!!!

An enormous explosion of Underworld Energy suddenly came out from the place Rean and Kentucky visited. Shards of something that looked glass flew everywhere before a horned being came out of it with steady steps. It then looked at Rean's group in front of it before saying, "I don't know how you found this place, much less how you knew I was in this chamber. However, it was your misfortune to have forced me to break out of my healing container. I'll take the souls of each one of you to create more Soul Submission Orbs. This time, it won't be only demon beasts. I'll take all the Zasfin souls as well!"

Rean couldn't help but ask, "Just what are you? Why are you doing all of this?"

However...

Vup!

The creature disappeared in a flash of dark light, heading straight for Duran. Yes, it completely ignored Rean as it knew that Duran and Frin were the real experts of their side. It wanted to get rid of it as soon as possible.

'So fast!' Duran thought, just in time to bring out something that looked like a green shell. That shell suddenly expanded at a frightening speed before the red-eyed being hit it head-on!

Boom!

Duran was still not able to hold the strength behind the impact and was sent flying together with that protection equipment of his. The red-eyed being didn't waste time and darted right in his direction, using the chance Duran lost his balance to finish the job.

'Silver Moon Domain!'

'Silver Streak!'

However, just as he was about to deliver the hit, Frin appeared by his side, using one of his strongest skills. The red-eyed being narrowed his eyes and immediately changed the direction of his attack, aiming at Frin instead.

Bang!

Rean's group was also sent flying by the shockwave of the two attacks, showing just how big of a difference in cultivation they had.

The attacks reached a stalemate for a moment. However, that stalemate only lasted a second before Frin was sent flying as well, just like Duran. Nevertheless, that was enough for Duran to recover himself and counterattack.

'Thunderstorm Domain!'

'Wrath of the Heavens!'

Wind and Lightning Element spread everywhere as thousands of lightning bolts took form before attacking the red-eyed being. Duran knew that his Soul Severing Domain would be of little use against a creature that was obviously stronger in the matters of the soul. That being said, he changed it to his Lightning and Wind Element Domain. However, Duran was an oddity. It was very rare for anyone to ever

create more than a single Domain. That just went to show why he was considered the strongest Zasfin after Fikin passed away.

The red-eyed being was unfazed by Duran's attack, though. It simply raised its hand, creating a shield with the Dark Energy coming from its body. The lightning bolts hit it, and then... disappeared. No, maybe it was better to say that they were wasted. Of course, Roan was the only one who understood what happened. However, he had no intention of helping Duran or Frin at the moment.

Roan then quickly grabbed Rean and Kentucky before he ran away while speaking in a tone that only the two of them could hear, telling them, 'Duran and Frin won't be able to win if things continue out like this. Come with me. There's something we can do to help out.'

Death... and me

Chapter 940: I'm Not Helping You

Roan was right. Although it was hard to accompany the movement of those experts with his cultivation, he could at least tell after the first exchanges that Frin and Duran were already at their wits' end. And that was considering they might have weakened the enemy with the destruction of the crimson spheres.

Roan then jumped on Kentucky's back while Rean activated his Light bending skill. In the next second, they disappeared from everyone's vision. The red-eyed being didn't care since some Nascent Soul Realm ants posed no risk for him. Now that they've stopped his recovery, he had enough time to stay outside to hunt them down later.

Rean, obviously, asked soon after they began to fly in the direction Roan indicated, "And how exactly can we help them?"

Roan pointed behind where the creature was fighting. "Although you guys can't see it, I can. His power is not coming from his body alone. He's being fed by something to keep his body stabilized. That capsule or whatever was holding him seems to have the same purpose other than healing him."

Rean and Kentucky were taken aback, asking, "Is it the Underworld Energy?"

Roan nodded, responding, "Yes. From the looks of it, the energy is coming from that building with the core that Red talked about. I don't know if it's possible, but I believe he found some way of using that

core to contain his own Underworld Energy if he needed it later. We know he has been here for a huge amount of time as well. That being said, I doubt it'll run out anytime soon. Duran and Frin will be dead way before that."

Rean and Kentucky nodded in response, with Rean asking soon after, "So you want to destroy the core, is correct?"

"Yes," Roan confirmed. "That's the only method I can think of. Besides, we have limited time. If that guy isn't an idiot, he definitely called his Stage Nine Demon Beasts back. The only question is how long they'll take to arrive from the closest crimson spheres."

Rean narrowed his eyes in response as he could not help but say, "But that core is probably linked to the World Beast Formation. If we destroy it, the mission will fail."

Roan didn't seem to care. "The mission didn't give a death penalty this time, so fuck it. I would rather guarantee my survival."

Rean didn't say anything else anymore as Kentucky flew back to the building Roan was opening the way to. Because he was already in the middle of the process when Rean found the creature, he was able to continue from where he stopped. It's just that he didn't care about being careful this time and blasted the Underworld Energy with his own Dark Element.

The process only lasted a few seconds since all the power was focused on a small hole big enough for Rean and Roan to pass through. Kentucky, obviously, wouldn't be able to follow them inside due to his size. "Stay out here and warn us if you see any demon beasts coming. However, if you recognize that you need to leave, don't worry about us. We can manage."

"On it!"

Kentucky quickly activated Rean's Light bending skill and made it so that the hole couldn't be seen at all. Soon after, Rean and Roan rushed inside.

"This is quite impressive..." Rean immediately noticed many formations stacked on top of each other, forming a synergistic connection. There were many, many runes that he had never seen before. Not only

that, quite a few of them didn't seem like something a Heaven-level Formation Master could do. Perhaps even the realm above Heaven-level would struggle to replicate it.

"Stop admiring and help me find the core."

[I know where it is. Now that we're inside, I can feel it even more clearly. This building has five more levels below it, and the core is in the very last one.]

Roan nodded. "That matches my perception of Underworld Energy as well. Down we go." Roan didn't care if it would damage anything or not. Only the shell of the building was being protected by the red-eyed being's Underworld Energy, so the ground wasn't as hard to break as it looked in Frin and Duran's hands.

Bang!

Rean felt some pity as he could see a few runes breaking apart. Still, he followed suit and did the same thing. After all, they didn't have the time to look for the stairs down since they didn't even know if they existed. A moment later, the ground was wide open as the twins jumped inside.

The battle outside was reaching its climax as well. Frin and Duran joined together to fend off the creature. Thanks to the battles against the demon beasts at the crimson spheres, they were able to form a good level of cooperation. Nonetheless, Gulan and Red, who were watching from far away, could tell that those two were suffering quite a lot. "What to do? What to do? Rean, Roan, and Kentucky also disappeared all of a sudden."

Gulan, however, didn't seem to be afraid. Instead, he looked at the battle with a dark expression, saying, "Keep waiting. If there's a chance for us to help, we can only give it a shot." Obviously, seeing the target of his revenge in front of him wouldn't make him feel good.

Red could only nod as he kept his concealment skill activated.

Creeee!

Suddenly, they heard the sound of demon beasts in the distance. As Gulan and Red turned their heads, the shadows of a few flying demon beasts appeared near Duran and Frin's battlefield as fast as they could. "Sure enough, the flying ones are the first to arrive," Gulan said with a snort. After that, he left the range of Red's concealment skill and rushed towards those demon beasts.

Red was taken aback since Gulan was only a stage Six Blue Luan. Even if he goes all out, he would at most match an ordinary Stage Seven Demon Beast. "This crazy bird."

Red said he wouldn't save Gulan's ass, but he still jumped on his back as Gulan charged to stop the demon beasts. Naturally, Gulan was surprised. "Why are you coming with me?"

"Shut up! I'm not helping you. I'm only preventing them from reaching both Senior Duran and Frin. If those two die, then we'll die as well."