

Void 831

Chapter 831 War [7]

"Why are you here when you're so weak?!"

Damien grasped his chest in shock. He never expected that today, in a battle against an enemy so powerful, he would catch a stray.

"Don't be so rude to your savior. If I want to be here, who can stop me?" He pompously declared.

Rilia glared at him suspiciously. She didn't care about his strange personality, but his entire existence in this moment was confusing her.

"Who are you and why have you come here?" She asked.

Damien sighed and introduced himself. "Well, you can just call me Damien. As for my reason for coming here, just call it simple curiosity. Looking at this baby, I think it was worth it."

Damien glanced over at the strange barrier as he spoke the last sentence. The power fueling the barrier was magnificent, and the breath of space emitted from it was so sophisticated that even Damien felt like he could learn something from it.

'I never expected there to be a spatial expert among the Nox Demigods...'

"This barrier is strange, but it's definitely not something you or I can touch. Since it's been conjured with the power of a Demigod, at least its defensive capabilities will mirror this fact properly." Damien said without waiting for Rilia to speak.

"However, it isn't all bad. A barrier of this level definitely can't be maintained for long by a lower existence. The longer it stays up, the more damage the caster will take."

"And you know this because...?"

"I'm something of a spatial expert of myself."

"I see..."

Rilia nodded her head without questioning him. The only way for someone weaker than her to evade her perception was indeed to utilize space to a terrifying degree, so she didn't have any mind to question him.

"Then, man named Damien, what do you propose we do now?" She asked as if testing him.

Damien's brows furrowed. He looked off into the horizon as he spoke.

"We should prepare."

"Prepare?"

Damien nodded. "Right, it looks like something big is going to happen soon..."

It was invisible to other people. Damien could only smile wryly at their blissful ignorance.

If they could see the same scene as him...

They surely would have fled as far as possible already.

'Well, that's not to say that I'm not interested in what's happening. Let's sit back and watch for now.'

He'd already taken care of the traitors on the battlefield, so unless there were extraneous circumstances, his help on the main battlefield wasn't necessarily needed anymore.

'It'd be great if I could see inside the barrier...'

Damien glanced back over at it. He felt like he could just barely perceive the fluctuations of battle taking place within, but it wasn't enough for him to understand the situation.

But if there was one thing he did know, it was that the current situation of the two trapped guild branch managers couldn't be good.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

"JEAN, DODGE!"

Geralt's booming voice sounded within the explosions. Jean immediately moved backward, narrowly avoiding a strange formless intent that tried to tear through him.

Geralt appeared before him in the next instant, great axe in tow.

HAAAAA!

Geralt roared with all his strength and spun the great axe on its one axis, turning it into a rotating saw with terrifying cutting power.

SCREEEEEEECH!

As the spinning axe came in contact with the formless intent, the sound of metal clashing against metal rang out strongly. Sparks flew in every direction, and if one looked closely enough, one would be able to clearly see the axe being slowly ground to nothingness.

"Khhh...!"

Geralt swallowed back the blood pooling in his mouth, refusing to move.

"Jean, it's up to you! I'll do my best to block him until then!" He roared.

Jean gritted his teeth in frustration, glaring at the corrupted form of the Nox Commander before him. It had already been half an hour since the barrier was erected, and the situation wasn't optimistic at all.

Both Jean and Geralt had sustained heavy injuries from the space around them. Now, they'd finally acclimated enough to deal with the invisible attacks, but that didn't mean they were safe.

Aarish no longer looked humanoid, no, he'd completely embraced the monster within him. He had eight sharp legs like a spider and the upper body of an ape. The massive black holes acting as his eyes were constantly wide open, and the roars coming from his mouth were enough to pierce one's eardrums.

'So this is the true nature of Demonic Providence...' Jean thought as he winced in pain.

He stood up off his knee, clutching his bloodied left shoulder.

'I can't move this arm anymore, but it shouldn't inhibit my mobility too much. I must find an opening.'

Jean's eyes focused on Aarish's form with utmost precision. He burned his mental power trying to find a gap in the monster's defenses.

But no matter how he looked, it seemed impossible. The spider legs gave Aarish extreme mobility and flexibility, while his abdomen was mammalian and scaled, offering him armor-like protection.

'We must make the opening ourselves.'

At this moment, Geralt finally made his move.

HA!

His muscles bulged like they would explode as Geralt slammed his axe to the side, redirecting the force of Aarish's formless attacks.

BOOM!

His body shot forward like a meteor, the golden aura around his axe coalescing and compounding on itself.

"Die, monster!"

Along with a spirited shout, Geralt made his attack. He wielded his axe like it weighed nothing at all, swinging it through the air and even forcing it to twirl to match his attack pattern.

"Kekekeke! Stupid human, you cannot defeat me!" Aarish exclaimed zealously. He whipped his legs through the air, causing dozens of formless spatial attacks to charge towards both Geralt and Jean.

Geralt's eyes narrowed.

He didn't stop moving.

CLASH!

The axe made heavy contact with the spider monster's carapace. After the first time, tens and even hundreds of strikes followed.

A golden light began to form on Aarish's body.

At the same time, the formless intent reached Geralt.

Piu! Piu! Piu!

It sounded like silenced bullets. The strange intent entered through one side of Geralt's body and exited through the other, littering the man's body with coin-sized holes.

And one of those holes...

...was only mere centimeters away from his heart.

"AGH!"

Geralt let out a sound of pain, but didn't halt his movements. The axe moved and moved and moved, and seeing Geralt's refusal to move, Aarish began targeting him more seriously too,

A slash that severed the chaotic void. This was the next attack aiming for Geralt's head.

Rather than formless like its predecessors, this slash was glittering as if it was filled with countless stars.

But despite its beauty, Geralt knew that this slash would spell his death.

His eyes hardened. "Jean, do not mourn for me! Complete the task in front of you!"

He grinned madly. "I, Geralt, have always been a warrior. Today, I shall die a death worthy of my stature!"

The light on his axe concentrated on its blade.

The golden line on Aarish's body shone with splendor.

And finally, the two forces met.

Chapter 832 War [8]

BOOOOOOOOM!

The ringing of the explosion signaled the beginning of a single second that Jean considered more important than his entire life leading up to the moment.

Geralt's axe made contact with the golden line he'd drawn on Aarish's body.

The two forces resonated, and by some means unknown to anyone but Geralt, a terrifyingly massive force was emitted by their meeting.

The explosion rang out because of this.

Rampant waves of energy spread in all directions, and while most of the formless intent in the air was destroyed by these chaotic fluctuations, one attack continued its trajectory unhindered.

Jean watched it move in slow motion.

Its flight path was perfectly blocked by Geralt's neck.

'Bastard...'

Jean gritted his teeth.

He had to move.

Otherwise, even if Geralt truly died here, his sacrifice would mean nothing.

The claymore in his grip felt heavy. With one hand, it was far more difficult to wield.

But the responsibility on Jean's shoulders was far heavier.

His eyes opened wide. His attention focused on the chink Geralt opened in Aarish's defenses.

'I must pierce it.'

He readied his sword.

'I must pierce it.'

Mana swirled within and around his body, forming a natural barrier that pushed away any external force in his vicinity.

'I must pierce it.'

The mana and sword became one. A beautiful holy aura covered Jean's sword as his eyes slowly closed.

Yet, the environment around him was clearly reflected in his vision.

'I must...pierce it!'

He moved.

His body blurred, becoming a force that space couldn't impede.

HAAAAAAA!

He roared like a wild beast. The blood vessels in his neck bulged and pulsated from the pure amount of spirit he was putting into the shout.

He arrived next to Geralt in an instant.

His eyes moved to look at his old friend.

Geralt was smiling.

It was the same bloodthirsty and wild smile he held whenever he enjoyed a battle to its greatest potential.

Jean sighed inwardly.

His sword began its swing.

Then, as the second came to an end, multiple things took place at once.

The terrifying spatial slash finished its flight path.

A head went flying into the air.

A sword pierced through the tiny chink in Aarish's armor.

A wave of foreign mana clogged the Nox Commander's systems and aggravated his injuries.

Blood spurted.

And a spider leg moved...

...to pierce through another body.

VOOOOOOM!

A strange energy-like sound resounded.

The golden barrier separating the main battlefield from Aarish and the guild branch managers flickered and faded, becoming almost negligible.

Damien's eyes narrowed as he looked back at the barrier.

'One has died.'

Damien gritted his teeth. 'My spatial suppression feels insignificant, but it's doing a good job balancing the fluctuation of that strange prison realm. However, it looks like it's about to be much harder to maintain...

Damien was essentially forcing the chaotic spatial aura to stay inside a box of his creation. However, this box only had five sides. The fifth was substituted by an already existing wall.

This wall became an important support pillar that allowed Damien to expand his influence to a greater range without worrying about leakage.

And now that it was collapsing...

'The rampant spatial mana has begun spreading into the main battlefield. I have to stop it.'

Damien teleported away without paying any mind to Rilia's exclamations that followed him. He arrived where the massive golden light barrier once stood and spread his arms.

'My Grand Heavens Boundary...will not lose this war!'

OOOOOOOOM!

His mana raged like a tsunami. For the first time in a long time, Damien put his entire mana capacity to use.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The pure quantity of mana tore a hole through the atmosphere. Damien then forcibly turned the newly formed back hole into a medium for Devour, recklessly taking everything that couldn't be contained by his barrier into his own body.

"Argh...!"

Damien bit his lip in pain. The foreign spatial mana raged through his body like a pack of wild bulls.

'As expected, even if it only has a trace of Divine Mana, anything blessed by a Demigod is troublesome.'

Despite his calm thoughts, Damien was actually quite surprised by the situation of his body. Rather than the damage, he was curious about the slow reaction of his Void Physique.

Even if its processes were no longer totally automated, it was still second nature for Damien to cleanse his body with Void Mana whenever a situation like this occurred,

This time, however, the mana was allowed to rampage on its own for a few seconds before it was tamed and recycled by the Void.

'This fucking hurts...'

Damien glanced back at the battlefield behind him with a wry smile.

'Well, at least you guys can fight without worry, just remain blissfully ignorant for now. No matter what's coming, it can't be good.'

"What the hell do you think you're doing?!"

A shout of rebuke snapped Damien out of his cynical thoughts.

"Hm? Can't you see I'm saving people?"

"You...just what kind of monster are you...?"

The person who appeared was none other than Rilia. And with her level of strength, she could clearly see what was happening to Damien.

"Saving people? What's the use of saving people if you die? Don't you know the value of a genius in this era?!" Rilia yelled.

"Uhm...I'm not dying tho—"

"Truly, you kids in the younger generation have no appreciation for life!"

Rilia gritted her teeth and moved behind Damien, placing her hands on his back.

"Accept my mana and use it to regulate the chaos within you!"

"No, listen to me, I'm really not dy—"

"Don't waste energy on talking and refine the wild energy!"

Damien sighed. It seemed Rilia wasn't planning to listen to him,

'Well, I'll take this kind of refusal to cooperate over any other...'

Damien shook his head wryly and continued regulating the energy as best he could, but...

It was simply impossible for him to perfectly control energy that leaked for millions of kilometers with his current strength,

RUMBLE!

Damien's face turned dignified.

He stopped his actions and moved away from Rilia.

He was able to protect the main army before the event itself took place, but now...

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The black sky split into countless pieces and shattered.

Crash!

Pieces of the glass ceiling rained to the ground. As soon as they touched, the earth rose into several dozen pillars that formed a strange pattern if viewed from above.

This is...'

Damien studied the symbol with furrowed brows. From it, he could feel the fluctuation of all elements, yet at the same time, there was no fluctuation at all.

At this time, the situation experienced another change.

The earth pillars lit up like a rainbow of various colors, shining like beacons that painted the sky in a splendorous hue of iridescence.

By this point, all sounds of battle had halted. Those with spiritual intelligence couldn't take their eyes away from the mystical phenomena, and even those without it were enamored by the strange fluctuations emitted by it.

Damien's eyes widened.

The shattered sky...wasn't it swirling like a portal?

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!

An inhuman bellow emitted by an object rather than a being.

A horrifying suction force appeared.

A light spread as far as the eye could see and made it so the eye could see nothing at all.

And when the light disappeared...

All those existing within several thousand kilometers of the phenomenon disappeared from the face of the earth.

The only thing remaining in their wake was a strange swirling sky illuminated by beacons of multicolored light.

A man watched this happen from the distance.

His eyes turned cold.

"It seems that Eien will become active again for the first time in many years..."

He turned around and began to leave.

"I must go prepare, or I'll definitely get left behind."

"How rare, how rare..."

"To think that in my life, I'd be able to personally experience a Void Corridor!"

Chapter 833 Void Corridor [1]

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Tens of light blurs streaked through the air, delivering a rain of hell to those below.

After Damien's departure, the Roaring Dragon Cavalry took a central role on the battlefield, and Ezio took command of a majority of the troops to bring them to victory.

The airbikes were the core of the new army formation. After the Roaring Dragon Cavalry set up a canopy to both injure and confuse the enemy, the second wave of aerial troops would follow to land killing blows. Any that were left afterward were left to ground troops to finish off.

This strategy was much better than the disorganized mess that the battlefield had turned into for a moment, but even with this, it was difficult to secure the win.

'The Nox troops are too many in number. For every one we take down, another ten pop up. And in this environment, it's impossible for us to completely exterminate every enemy, so rebirths are taking place as well.'

Ezio narrowed his eyes and observed the battlefield from above before handing down his command.

The Nox were currently fighting in small groups rather than as a whole entity. Without the oppression of a Nox Commander to keep them in place, their unruly and independent nature came out in full force.

This was extremely advantageous for Heaven's Army, as it made it far easier to cope with the pure number of enemies.

ROAR!

SKREEEE!

The cries of beasts resounded as the affiliated cavalry units made their move.

The battlefield itself spanned for several hundred thousand kilometers. At this time, the cavalry units covered that entire circumference with their forces as if to confine their enemies.

"Fire!"

Countless beasts roared and let loose their strongest wide-area attacks.

Ezio focused his mind to its maximum potential and peered into the proceeding explosions, observing the Nox within.

'There are...160 that act as leaders. As long as they can be taken down, the rest won't be trouble.'

Still, 160 was a large number.

Ezio's body jolted.

"Shit!"

He rapidly swerved his airbike to the side and abandoned it. In the next instant, a terrifying projectile swerved to follow him and directly collided with the bike.

BOOM!

The machine exploded on impact, making Ezio shed a tear as he regained his balance in the air. However, before he could even properly mourn the loss of his baby, the projectile charged through the explosion, headed straight for him!

"Dammit, why me?!"

Ezio gritted his teeth and galvanized his mana, setting up a fortified defense. At the same time, he gathered mana in his arms and enhanced his strength manifold, pulling his fist back in preparation to receive the hit.

BOOOOOOOM!

"Kak!"

Ezio's fist came in contact with the yellow light. He coughed out blood as he was sent by the force.

The yellow light, on the other hand, merely halted in its tracks.

"Keuk...!"

Ezio rapidly readjusted and grabbed his shoulder in pain as he glared at the light.

'That is...why is that here?!'

Ezio's eyes widened. Unexpectedly, he recognized the force that attacked him.

His face turned pale.

The yellow light expanded with the passing of time, revealing its form as a beautiful orange-gold phoenix that was emitting a fierce killing intent.

Ezio gritted his teeth and pushed his mana. 'Dammit! There are still Nox strong enough to directly control the Infected on the battlefield!'

The phoenix in front of him wasn't a Nox being, rather, it was a beast who'd been corrupted by them. And its entrance meant...

'If we can't deal with them quickly, we'll be besieged by a second wave!'

"Everyone, attention! Focus on the 160 targets I've marked! Take them down as fast as possible while I hold back the strong beasts!"

Ezio immediately relayed the order and refocused on the phoenix.

'It's a late-stage 4th-class beast. Since it arrived by itself, I'm sure there won't be other beasts as strong as it in the coming tide. As long as I can get rid of it...'

There was no need for further thought. Ezio pushed his mana to its furthest and shot at the beast. Earthly mana covered his fists and turned them into terrifyingly dense blunt weapons that he swung with the weight of stars.

BOOM!

The impact of his fist on the air rang out, sending an ear-piercing clap into the surroundings. The phoenix, however, sensed the attack's danger from the start and dodged perfectly.

The beast bared its talons and flapped its wings powerfully, making an impossible maneuver to fly into Ezio's blind spot and slash him.

SHING!

The sound of flesh tearing was loud. Ezio's blood went flying into the air, forcing him to grit his teeth to force down the scream building in his chest.

"ARGH!"

The beast's talon ripped almost all the way through Ezio's body before he could respond. But in that final moment, Ezio had no plan of remaining idle.

He grabbed the beast's outstretched leg with all his strength, his muscles bulging as if to increase their power to aid him. His earthly mana blazed into the surroundings unlike its usual peaceful appearance, and under Ezio's strict control, it directly pressured the phoenix and attacked its wings.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

SKREEEE!

The phoenix was forced to back away to avoid the attack. Ezio grinned, ready for his counterattack when...

XIU!

The world seemed to turn white.

Ezio barely moved his head in time.

A thin red line appeared on his neck, dripping blood onto the rest of his body thereafter.

A cold sweat poured down his back.

He almost died.

'There was...another one...?'

Ezio's pale face turned a shade whiter.

If this beast was able to arrive, then...

RUMBLE!

His worst fears came true. The sound of the earth quaking was so loud that it felt like Eien was on the verge of collapse.

A plethora of powerful auras expressed themselves from the distance, intimidating their enemy into submission far before their arrival.

'Then...the phoenix was just a diversion...?'

The phoenix and the newly arrived flying panther beast both looked at Ezio with a look of contempt, as if mocking him. They didn't attack during this time, clearly enjoying the feeling of despair spreading through Heaven's Army.

AHHHHHH!

The first scream signified the start of a slaughter.

The 3rd classes on the subsidiary battlefield were the first to die. Under the rampaging force of countless 4th class beasts, how could they stand a chance?

The screams of agony that entered Ezio's ears felt like scars in his heart. Every single one of them was another comrade lost in battle.

'But it seems...I will be joining them soon.'

Ezio smiled wryly.

'What a shame, I just found a great successor candidate too...'

He grinned in lament and took a fighting stance.

If he was going to die anyway, he was going to take as many enemies down with him as possible!

Ezio lifted his injured body and began gathering power, but before he could even make a move, his mana was disrupted and canceled.

'Something else?!'

He almost gave up all hope.

But at that time, he realized that the screaming stopped.

He looked down, and then he followed the gazes of those below to the sky.

His eyes almost fell out of his skull.

'That...'

His thought wasn't even allowed to end before he disappeared off the face of the earth.

The beast tide, the Nox, and the remains of Heaven's Army all disappeared with him.

A figure watched it take place from the distance.

This figure existed millions of kilometers away from the battlefield at the peak of a mountain in a completely different section of Eien.

He smiled.

He curled his fingers, giving way to many black wisps that melded into the air for reasons unknown.

The man's lips curved into a malicious smile.

'As expected, you came here. Someone the Lord appreciates cannot be average...'

"Damien Void, enjoy the gift I've prepared for you! I pray you do not die too early."

Chapter 834 Void Corridor [2]

A Void Corridor.

The news of its existence was far more valuable than what was originally taking place in the Blood-Drenched Wilderness. Within a single day, all forces within several hundreds of millions of miles were made aware of it.

Somewhere 300 million or so kilometers from the Blood-Drenched Wilderness was a territory known as the Misty Wildlands. The forces here were far stronger than those in the Blood-Drenched Wilderness. Several 9th Revolution experts headed the top forces, and even a few Demigod Avatars were present.

Demigod Avatars were extremely rare. They were the product of universe denizens observing and deconstructing the Nox technique of Avatar creation and attempting to replicate it.

Sadly, Nox techniques were almost exclusive to the Nox. Those Demigods who'd succeeded in creating Avatars were rarer than colored people at a Klan meeting!

Nevertheless, the strength of forces congregated in the Misty Wildlands was evident. Among these forces, one of the strongest was Arcadia, a small guild consisting of only 20 members.

However, every member was an extreme peak powerhouse, and the weakest was a 4th revolution master.

Currently, in the guild headquarters, a commotion was taking place.

"Void Corridor?! Are you certain?!" A woman shouted unwittingly before covering her mouth.

The girl in front of her nodded her head profusely. "Right! I heard that there was a big war going on and the collision caused a Void Corridor to open! Big sister, are we going over?"

"Go, go! Of course, we'll go! How could we miss such an event?!"

The woman immediately jumped out of her chair and sent a talisman to inform the rest of the guild of her movements.

They would surely catch up to her once they received the transmission.

'To think I'd be lucky enough to experience a Void Corridor in my lifetime.'

The thought she had was shared by countless people, almost everyone who heard the news.

After all, the existence of a Void Corridor was too rare,

It was common knowledge that Eien was a place lacking in opportunities. Due to its closeness to the Abyss, it was impossible for secret realms or other alternate spaces to exist, and it was even less likely for resources to naturally appear in Eien's terrible climate.

Void Corridors were a concept that completely went against this reasoning.

Void Corridors could be considered top 10 on a list of the rarest phenomena in the universe.

In essence, they were secret realms, but in reality, they were far greater than just that.

Void Corridors were strange portals that led to even stranger and more mystical realms completely outside of the universe's jurisdiction. The treasures found within were nonexistent elsewhere, and the opportunities were even greater.

There were even records of Void Corridors opening the way to God-level Inheritances.

The cause behind their existence had yet to be realized after countless years. In the past few hundred thousand years, only 3 Void Corridor openings had been recorded.

It was obvious how important the current opening was.

The two women from Arcadia were both powerful experts, with the stronger of the two being at the 6th revolution, but they were only small characters in the grand scheme of things.

Forces were gathering towards the Blood-Drenched Wilderness at a rapid pace, and the mass migration raised questions in territories further from the source of information, which eventually led to their involvement as well.

Eien's ring spanned the entirety of Grand Heavens Boundary. It was possible to walk its length and make it from Soul World to Hephaestus, one side of the universe to the complete opposite, and back by merely walking forward.

And the forces moving towards the Void Corridor...

...consisted of those from an entire half of this ring.

"Sister, we're finally here! This is the edge of the Blood-Drenched Wilderness!" A feminine voice rang out in the void, followed by the appearance of a mature woman.

She looked in her late 20s with short brown hair and green eyes. Her figure wasn't amazingly proportioned, but she had a toned body that was built from countless years of battle.

The beauty she held was undeniable.

This woman was named Alexandra, a 6th revolution expert from Arcadia.

The woman who traveled with her was her younger sister, Alice, a 5th Revolution master.

Both were several thousand years old already, but it seemed like Alice would never mature. Even after all this time, she still clung to her big sister like a child.

Alexandra smiled wryly as she spread her awareness.

"It looks like we're a bit late."

3 days had passed since the news originally spread. Even with the fastest personal teleportation devices in hand, it still took them this long to arrive.

And now that they had, it was clear that they were many steps too late.

The numbers were easily in the millions. From the most common foot soldier to Eien's top experts, anyone who was close enough to reach this place before 3 days passed was present.

As for the rest, they had no chance at all.

Alexandra's eyes narrowed as she further inspected.

'There are at least 6 Holy Land level influences present, and an even greater number of those that are just below that level. It seems that we won't be lacking extreme peak experts within the rift.'

Her attention shifted past the denizen forces, into the blackness of the Abyss.

'They've arrived too.'

With the number of forces convening in the area, it was impossible for the Nox to not realize the situation, but their response was fast...almost too fast.

'There are several High Commander and Executioner auras in their ranks. If it's a Supreme...then I am not yet qualified to feel their presence. I can only hope that too many haven't appeared.'

Alexandra could sense the chaos that the current event would stir, and her feeling only became stronger as she got closer to the crowd.

With so many Heaven's Army and Nox forces in one place, was peace even an option...?

It was a laughable thought.

Anyone with sense understood that the importance of this Void Corridor didn't merely lie in its benefits.

No, the true importance of this Void Corridor was the "opportunity" it created.

How long had it been since the denizens and Nox met with such gusto?

How long had it been since the two sides clashed without worry about tactics or consequences?

The Void Corridor was a pathway to an unknown land, a land separate from the universe.

It was the perfect location...

For a purge, that is.

The atmosphere alone was enough to prove it. The two sides didn't even need to meet.

Only one would be exiting.

If the other side wasn't completely purged, leaving the y known realm was pointless.

Alexandra and Alice reached the Heaven's Army base camp and walked in, saying their greetings to the familiar experts within.

While Alice trailed off halfway through the walk to take care of her own business, Alexandra continued until she arrived at the largest tent in the vicinity.

Walking in, she was immediately struck by the disorientation of entering a spatial expansion, but it didn't take any time at all for her to readjust with her level.

Finally, her eyes caught sight of what she came for.

The sources of the strongest auras in the camp, the leaders of the strongest forces that'd congregated in the Blood-Drenched Wilderness...

This was where they gathered to discuss their plan on how to proceed.

Chapter 835 Void Corridor [3]

Alexandra's gaze panned around the room, taking note of the most important characters present.

By her observation, the forces of roughly 15-20 territories had come. Even taking the entirety of Eien into perspective, this was a massive force unlike anything that'd been assembled in the past.

Among the territories of Eien, there was a sort of unspoken hierarchy that one would learn as one grew. For the most part, this hierarchy followed strength and influence alone.

Therefore, of the forces present, only five truly mattered, and even among those five...

Alexandra's eyes widened as a certain emblem came into view.

'The Ancient God Clan...'

The Ancient God Clan was one of the most mysterious and powerful forces affiliated with Heaven's Army. In truth, their people had remained in Eien for countless eons, protecting the universe from outside threats even before the forgotten war 100,000 years ago.

It was rumored that they held an innate bloodline that gave them mythical power and the ability to grow far faster than their peers. Their eyes were said to see through the mysteries of reality, as such, their younger generation was always the greatest, and the oppression of their experts couldn't be denied.

"Could it be the Young Master of the Ancient God Clan has come to participate in this Void Corridor opening?"

Alexandra's ears perked up as a man approached the Ancient God Clan Elders that were sitting quietly in the corner of the room.

The elders, who refused to give anyone face, actually opened their eyes to look at him.

"The plans of our Young Master are not for you to know. Just know that we will not participate in your silly scheme. Take the rest of these fools with you if you wish to die."

"Hahaha, elder, you jest. How could I push anyone to their death? I merely wish to do for our universe as our universe had done for us and save it from harm."

"Presumptuous."

The man's smile almost cracked. Behind his plastic expression, he was seething in fury.

'Tch, how dare these mere elders look down on me?!'

A vein popped in his forehead, but nobody called attention to it. After saying their piece, the elders also closed their eyes and returned to meditation.

Alexandra watched the man storm away with curious eyes.

'He should be the leader of Asuran Gate. Since it's a subsidiary of the Blood Asura Holy Land, its power is clear, but it seems the Ancient God Clan doesn't even place them in their eyes.'

As she continued observing the surroundings and the interactions between the many forces, she managed to pick up a good deal of information about what happened before she arrived.

Firstly, Asuran Gate was seemingly attempting to organize all present forces under their command to attack the Nox within the unknown realm, but they were having a difficult time convincing those forces who couldn't be suppressed with force.

'It seems he was so angry because the Ancient God Clan is his last hope. If not them, none of the other three great influences will follow either.'

Alexandra shook her head in disappointment. 'It's not like the idea is bad, but the entire execution is off. As the Ancient God Clan elders said, it is merely leading innocent troops to their death.'

'Rather than that, perhaps the most curious thing is the Ancient God Clan's Young Master.'

Aside from Asuran Gate, this was the topic that gained the most traffic amongst the experts present.

The Ancient God Clan was already a mysterious existence, but their Young Master was even greater. Their form had never been witnessed by outsiders before, and their strength was wholly unknown.

Even the fact that the Ancient God Clan had a Young Master was only confirmed after a dozen years of effort.

Now that it was almost confirmed that such a personage would be entering the Void Corridor, how could people not get excited?

The atmosphere turned strange as two different intents took prevalence: alliance and murder.

Alexandra's eyes narrowed. With a sigh, she stood up and exited the tent.

'I thought there would be some sort of discussion, but it's merely the usual sophistry. Every force is attempting to take control, and as a result, they've divided themselves even further. At this rate, the chaos in the unknown realm will be severe.'

From what she heard in the tent, the Void Corridor was still unstable after its initial formation. It was likely that a majority of those who were originally sucked in by its force were shredded to death by chaotic spatial storms.

The stabilization process was supposed to take 3 days, and now that it was already the third day, it looked like the process would come to an end at any time.

'Then, we can finally get to work.'

Alexandra was part of a guild, but their guild acted more like an extended family than an organization. She was far from used to all the sophistry of the upper class, especially since she'd reached her current level through blood and sweat alone.

She was born and raised in Eien.

'I guess I'll take a stroll and try to find Alice for now. It isn't a bad idea to survey the comprehensive strength of our troops either.'

Alexandra did exactly as she intended and took a casual stroll around the camp, surveying the forces while also taking note of the Nox force that had gathered several thousand kilometers away.

'Our two forces don't even need to interact to enter the Void Corridor because of its size. Whether or not conflict will begin before we enter the realm depends on others, but both sides will likely prioritize benefits over slaughter for now. Still, it's concerning.'

There were far too many powerful Nox gathering. Dealing with them was already a problem, but if they were ever killed without being truly exterminated, they'd merge into a truly terrifying monster not much worse than a Demigod in power.

'I'll keep note of them for now. There's nothing I can do on my own.'

"Big sister!"

At that time, an exclamation rang out, drawing Alexandra's attention.

"Alice!" She exclaimed as she turned around, her eyes widening in the next moment. "Who's this?"

Alice returned in one piece, which was a relief considering her usual luck, but she'd brought with her a strange companion.

"This is Xinyue! I just met her while I was exploring and decided to take her on an adventure!"

The girl named Xinyue bowed slightly upon introduction, the stoic expression on her face never changing.

Alexandra smiled wryly. "Alice, you didn't kidnap someone again, did you?"

Alice jumped back like a startled cat. "H-how could I do something like that...?!
Ha...hahaha...hahahaha..."

"Haa..."

Alexandra rubbed her forehead as she looked over at Xinyue. "Xinyue, right? Are you okay? Alice didn't take you against her will, did she? If there's someone waiting for you, I can take you back now."

Xinyue quirked her head. "This...is a common thing?"

"Ahhh! No, it's not common! Not at all!"

"Absolutely. Alice has a track record of accidentally kidnapping people."

Alexandra covered Alice's mouth as she spoke, refusing to let the latter make excuses.

Xinyue nodded understandingly. "I see. Alice, is bad person. But, strangely good bad person. I will accompany Alice."

"Haha...yeah, I guess you could say it like that. If she isn't troubling you, then it's not a problem. Nice to meet you, Xinyue."

Alexandra scratched her head in embarrassment and held her hand out for a handshake.

As for Xinyue, she quirked her head once again as she looked at the hand.

"You...you don't know what a handshake is...?"

Chapter 836 Void Corridor [4]

"You...you don't know what a handshake is...?"

Alexandra asked hesitantly.

Seeing Xinyue shake her head, she sighed.

Taking a second look, this Xinyue was quite the beautiful girl.

She didn't look a day older than 19, with pale skin like white snow. Her body wasn't overly proportioned, rather, her bust and waist were perfectly curved to match her slim figure, which actually added a greater charm than large assets ever could.

However, the divinity of her body proportions wasn't her greatest feature. Looking at her, Alexandra's attention was immediately drawn to her hair and eyes.

Hair so beautifully white that no snow could match its purity, and eyes sparkling blue like diamonds. They were piercing yet comforting, making one uncomfortable from the overload of sensation one would feel if they stared for too long.

'What a strange girl.'

Alexandra quickly got acquainted with Xinyue and moved with her and Alice to a different location. As she spoke more, she noticed that, rather than being reserved as she'd initially thought, Xinyue was instead extremely naive and indifferent.

It was as if she'd truly grown up under a rock, but if that was so, how could she gather the strength to participate in this operation?

While pondering the question and familiarizing herself with Xinyue, Alexandra slowly passed the time until finally...

The air began to swirl.

"It's starting."

Xinyue's sparkling eyes went up to the sky. "We go?"

Alexandra shook her head. "Not quite yet."

"Why?"

Instead of responding, Alexandra pointed to the sky.

Already, the forces of Asuran Gate and the other three great influences besides the Ancient God Clan were standing in the air.

At the helm was the man she saw earlier, Lucas Streem. He was now donning a set of ferocious black battle armor, pointing his spear at the Nox in the distance.

VOOOOM!

The mana around the Void Corridor raged, barely resisting the suction force that was beginning to form.

At the same time, a commotion broke out within the Nox camp.

A man floated into the air, standing on equal grounds with Lucas.

"Human, are you sure you wish to provoke us now?" The Nox High Commander said mockingly.

"Hmph! Why should I be courteous to scum like you?"

Lucas slashed his spear through the air, whipping up terrifying wind storms that flew at the Nox High Commander.

However, the latter merely swept away the attack with a single hand.

"Is this it, human?" The Nox asked again.

Lucas grinned. "Right, that's it. I want to see how you act arrogant when we're in the unknown realm...hahahaha!"

Without another word, Lucas charged into the Void Corridor. His forces followed right behind him, vanishing from existence entirely.

"I guess we can go now," Alice said.

"No, we need to leave immediately." Alexandra corrected.

She grabbed Xinyue and Alice's wrists without hesitation and flew into the air with all her power.

It only took her an instant to vanish into the Void Corridor with her companions.

However, that instant was life-saving.

RUMBLE!

The Nox High Commander in the air felt something strange about the previous interaction.

He turned around to look at his own force.

And his killing intent raged.

The spear wind that he'd casually blocked earlier had diverted its course and struck the Nox Army. Several million Lesser Nox and even a few Higher Nox were killed by its impact.

"So you're playing dirty!" The High Commander growled through gritted teeth.

"I see! Good, good, good! Traitorous humans dare to act like they are the greatest, you are no better than dogs! Hahahaha!"

BOOM!

The High Commander's mana blazed into the surroundings, burning a hole in space.

His cold gaze was like a predator eyeing its prey.

He turned towards the camp where countless Heaven's Army troops were still beginning to enter the Void Corridor.

He grinned. It was a malevolent grin that seemed to freeze the atmosphere.

As the Nox Army flew into the air to enter the Void Corridor, the High Commander switched places with them and returned to the ground.

His figure flashed.

He appeared in the Heaven's Army camp in an instant.

His eyes panned over the surroundings.

He grabbed hold of the first person he saw and crushed their throat in a single move.

Without hesitation, he moved on, beginning a killing spree that could no longer be stopped, as all of the experts had already entered the portal.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

The High Commander laughed maniacally.

"Hahahaha! All of you that are about to die, blame that foolish human for your fates!"

Just like that, the Void Corridor event was kickstarted by slaughter.

And it wasn't just outside the unknown realm.

Even when the forces of both sides made it inside...

They realized that they heavily underestimated the reality of these unknown realms.

This place...

While it was truly filled with opportunity, it was also a hell on earth surpassing any other.

"Haa...haa...haa..."

"Xinyue, are you okay?!"

"Okay."

"Alice?!"

"All good!"

Alexandra winced in pain as she opened her eyes. The surroundings were smoldering. It was so incredibly hot that even a 6th revolution master like her felt like she was melting.

"If you guys can hear me, move towards my voice! Let's gather before moving anywhere else!"

Alexandra grunted as she pushed against the ground.

She'd taken Alice and Xinyue into the Void Corridor before the tragedy she was expecting happened, but when she came back to her senses, she was stuck in a strange crack in the earth.

"Dammit! Let me out already!"

BOOM!

Alexandra slammed her fist against the ground and shattered the earth around her, jumping out of the crack with ease.

At this time, Alice's call could also be heard from far away.

"Big sister, where are you?!"

Alexandra smiled and opened her mouth to reply, but just before she could speak...

Her face paled.

"Shit!"

Boom!

She slammed her foot into the ground and took off with acceleration force that instantly surpassed the speed of sound.

'Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!'

Alexandra cursed endlessly in her mind as she sprinted away as fast as she could. Before long, she came up on Alice and Xinyue.

"Big sis—"

"We're running!"

Alexandra grabbed Alice and Xinyue under both her arms and continued sprinting without a single break in her flow.

"Big sister, what's happening?!" Alice asked in a panic.

But Alexandra didn't have to answer.

"Ah..."

Xinyue let out a small exclamation and pointed her finger in the direction Alexandra came from.

When Alice's eyes arrived there as well...

"Ahhhh!"

A piercing shriek left her mouth.

"Shut up! I'm the one running here, don't distract me!" Alexandra yelled in a panic.

And for once, Alice shut her mouth as she was told.

After all, she saw it.

A magma geyser dozens of hundreds of thousands of kilometers high was spewing burning mana and lava everywhere. Every blob of mana that impacted the ground from that height was like a nuclear missile.

And this geyser...just so happened to be opened by a certain heavy impact force hitting a crack in the earth.

Thus, the current situation.

With her two companions under her arms, Alexandra ran as fast as she could to escape the magma hell around her...

All while lamenting her luck that landed her in such a situation.

Well, if there was one thing that was certain...

This unknown realm would not be a boring place in the slightest.

But if she wanted to experience it, she had to escape the wrath of the spewing magma hole first!

Chapter 837 Void Corridor [5]

"Haa...haa...finally...escaped."

The rough breathing of two women echoed through a small cave in which they rested. After a full hour of running, they were finally able to escape the blast radius of the giant geyser.

"What a strange realm!"

Alice was the first to speak, and she said exactly what was on everyone's minds.

"It truly is strange. The change in atmosphere was far too sudden, almost as if there are thousands or even more biomes present here." Alexandra added.

She looked outside the cave, but her vision was completely blocked by a blizzard, roaring winds and snow turning the air into abstract art.

The blizzard started exactly where the geyser's blast radius ended. The switch from heat to chill was so rapid that the bodies of the three women almost failed to adapt, leaving them with several internal injuries that they were forced to rest to heal.

"Strange realm, very big. Many risks, but many opportunities." Xinyue muttered.

The other two nodded in agreement. They knew this principle as well as anyone else, it was just a shame that after escaping the harrowing natural phenomena, they didn't get any rewards at all.

"There have only ever been 3 Void Corridor openings recorded in history, so there is nothing confirmed about this place. Whether it be the time, the exit method, or even the opportunities and risks, we are in the dark about them all."

"W-what?! We don't know how to leave this place?!" Alice immediately exclaimed in shock.

Alexandra cracked a small smile. "Relax. Even if the method to leave is unknown, we at least know that leaving is possible. The only question is whether that exit will be manual or automatic."

Whatever the case, it was impossible for there to be a "fixed exit" in this realm due to its size. Either all living beings remaining within after the time limit would be automatically ejected from the realm, or new gates would spawn to aid their exit.

The latter added far more risk, since anyone who couldn't find a gate would be trapped inside the realm, but neither was something the group could worry about at the moment.

Leaving the realm wasn't something they had any plans to do at the moment, so rather than mulling over it, it was better for them to gain their bearings within the realm and start searching for opportunities.

"Xinyue, does your elemental affinity have anything to do with ice or water?" Alexandra suddenly asked.

Xinyue shook her head in denial.

Alexandra rubbed her chin in thought. "It's the same for me and Alice. It's unlikely for us to find any proper benefits in this blizzard biome, so I suggest we first find a better location and then start searching."

"Great!"

"Okay."

Receiving their confirmation, Alexandra stood up from her position and stretched.

"Good! Are the two of you rested up?"

"Big sister, we've been ready for forever! Just say the word and we'll follow!" Alice responded excitedly.

Alexandra grinned. "Great, but be prepared. The ride from here on is going to be a little bumpy."

"What do you mean bum—kyaaaaa!"

Alexandra didn't wait for her sister to finish before picking her up like a sack of rice and throwing her over her shoulder.

"Xinyue, you want a ride too?" Alexandra asked teasingly.

Xinyue quirked her head. "Can walk."

Alexandra smiled wryly. 'It looks like I won't be able to communicate with her so easily.'

Shaking her head, she walked to the exit of the cave and stared out.

WHOOOOOOOOSH!

The wind roared with such fervor that one would believe a Godbeast resided in this tundra. The flakes whipping through the air were merely snow, but each one was incredibly sharp and had enough momentum to easily bisect anyone below mid-stage 4th class.

And Alexandra...

Stepped into this chaos without hesitation.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

She charged mana into her legs and jumped, using the force of each leap to go further with the next one. If anyone saw her at the moment, they'd be hard-pressed to not compare her to a frog.

'Khh...this wind...!'

Xiu! Xiu! Xiu!

Alexandra covered her face with her arm. The further she went into this biome, the fiercer the winds got. She could feel the small lines of blood dripping down her face from the cuts formed by the empowered snowflakes.

"S...sister..."

Alice's weak voice came from behind. Alexandra turned to look at her sister, only to find the girl covered in multiple bloody wounds.

"H-how did this happen?!" Alexandra cried.

She had been holding Alice the entire time, and made sure to protect her under an umbrella of mana. How did all of these snowflakes manage to cut her?!

"Sister...keep going..." Alice said weakly.

Even she was unaware of what happened. The cuts all happened at the same time, instantaneously.

But Alice was an extreme peak 4th class master in her own right. Even if her combat capability wasn't the highest, in terms of vitality, she wasn't lacking at all.

Alexandra's eyes hardened as she realized her sister's intentions.

'I can't let her sacrifice herself for me. Also, I can't safely proceed forward without knowing how Alice got wounded...'

Alexandra spread her awareness to its limits and scanned the terrain in search of a cave to hide in.

Xiu! Xiu! Xiu!

The terrific snowflakes continued to attack her as she moved, piercing her mana shield and brushing past her body with ease, leaving small cuts littering her form.

By themselves, these cuts were nothing, but when accumulated...

"There!" Alexandra suddenly exclaimed.

She changed course and dove at the ground, aiming for a cave she'd sensed on the periphery of her perception.

Shing!

The sound of something swiftly moving through the air was prominent, but only in Alexandra's ears. The slash felt like a devil's whisper, and following it could only be...

The devil's touch.

Alexandra's body jerked.

Blood sprayed into the air.

Just as had happened to Alice a few moments prior, Alexandra's body was suddenly assaulted by thousands of small cuts, cuts that compounded on her previous injuries and caused far more fatal wounds to form.

"Sister...?"

"Sister!"

Alice's panicked cries were the last thing that graced Alexandra's fading consciousness before it completely succumbed to darkness.

The pair of sisters plummeted to the ground.

The winds whipped around them, tearing their clothes and slowly encroaching on their bodies, evidently with the aim of tearing them apart before they could touch ground.

But the winds weren't granted such an opportunity.

Voom!

A divine blue light shield suddenly encompassed the two women. As the winds struck this shield, it was soon made clear that they didn't have the slightest ability to penetrate it.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The furious winds became fiercer, almost exclusively attacking the divine blue shield and ignoring all else in the surroundings.

But the winds weren't nearly strong enough to accomplish their goal.

Clash!

Skreeeeeeee!

The wind screamed like it was sentient, but in the end, it was unable to do anything. The blue light shield descended to the ground and floated gracefully into the nearby cave that Alexandra spotted earlier.

Once it entered the cave...

Pop!

The shield popped like a bubble and dispersed, leaving the two sisters on the cave floor, unconscious.

However, all of their wounds were gone.

They'd been healed to the point where one would believe they'd never been in a single battle before in their lifetimes.

And as time passed with no signs of the caster's appearance, Alexandra's eyes finally fluttered open.

"Mm..."

Chapter 838 Void Corridor [6]

"Mm..."

Alexandra groggily rubbed her eyes. For some reason, she felt like she'd just had the best sleep of her entire life.

But...wasn't she in the middle of something?

"Ah!"

The memories came rushing back to her like a tidal wave.

"Alice!"

She shot up but wobbled and fell back to the floor. She was still too disoriented to move.

Luckily, she spotted her sister sleeping on the cave floor not too far away before she did anything drastic.

'What...happened to us...?'

Considering their previous predicament, both of them should've been dead. Alexandra and Alice both fell unconscious near the end, so protecting themselves and reaching this cave was absolutely impossible.

'Somebody helped us...?'

If so, it was proper to be extremely wary at the moment. Such a powerful force who waited until the sisters were on the brink of death before saving them, it was normal to doubt their intentions.

Alexandra sighed and sat down.

'This place really makes me question if I actually reached the 6th revolution or not.'

Environment damage? Fatigue? The events she'd experienced so far made Alexandra feel like a newbie adventurer just setting off on their path to greatness.

It was a thrilling feeling, but it was also terrifying. After all, after so many years, she'd forgotten this feeling.

That is, the feeling of being "mortal."

Alexandra clenched her fist, looking down at the cave floor absentmindedly.

'Mortality...how long has it been since I've faced my mortality...?'

Her thoughts swirled. She felt like she was on the verge of epiphany, about to realize something crucial for her future progress.

"Oh, finally found you."

A voice suddenly rang through the cave.

Alexandra's eyes shot open. She jumped up and stood before her sister's unconscious body, her aura flared.

"Who?!"

Under Alexandra's sharp gaze, the figure revealed themselves.

She sighed in relief.

"Xinyue, it's just you!"

Alexandra plopped onto the floor and sighed again. "Where have you been all this time?"

Xinyue tilted her head curiously, a reaction that seemed to be her most common, and spoke, "was following, lost track of Alexandra, searched and finally found."

Alexandra nodded in understanding. It was easy to lose track of people in the almost negligible visibility of the blizzard, and considering that this was the only cave present for several hundred thousand kilometers, it was completely normal for Xinyue to find them here.

Only, others would have just as easy of a time.

"Xinyue, did you find any secrets to the blizzard on your way here? We must leave immediately, but I'm afraid Alice's body can't take it with her current condition."

Xinyue rubbed her chin in thought, imitating Alexandra's movements. "Average storm. Eye is peaceful, best bet."

Xinyue raised her thumb cheekily, but the lack of change in her expression made the gesture a bit strange.

"Pfft...!"

Alexandra laughed unwittingly. Really, in a tense atmosphere like this, Xinyue's accidental comedy was a great pick-me-up.

"Alright, since you say the eye of the storm is safe, I'll trust you. Let's rush there as fast as we can!"

Xinyue quirked her head. "This is eye. We are here."

Alexandra's face fell. "H-huh?"

"Eye of storm, very small, only this cave."

It was bad news, extremely bad news.

If that was the case, how were they supposed to escape?!

The eye of the storm was the safest place for them, but it also put them furthest from any possible exit. The journey was definitely not something Alice could handle with her injuries!

'Shit. I need to think of something...'

Alexandra's awareness spread once more, but before she could even do anything, Xinyue moved.

She walked to the back of the cave and crouched on the floor, feeling the soil with her hands.

In the next instant...

Bang!

She slammed her palm down, causing the floor to shatter entirely.

A hole several meters wide was revealed, and within, a staircase descended into darkness.

"New path," Xinyue said with an air of accomplishment.

"Nice," Alexandra responded with a grin.

She didn't know where this strange passageway led to, but anywhere was better than remaining in this cave.

After all, there was no way to tell when the blizzard would end, and before it ended, staying in the cave was suicide.

'As the only safe zone within several hundred thousand kilometers, it will become a place where everyone who passes by this area stops.'

If so, then the opening Xinyue created was likely an inheritance or at least a treasure site of some sort.

'Opportunity and risk together, eh?'

Alexandra smiled. It would definitely be dangerous below, but it was better than nothing, especially if there were rewards involved.

"Hup!"

Alexandra let out a small grunt as she slung Alice over her shoulder again.

"I'll take care of her until she wakes up. Xinyue, let's go together."

Xinyue nodded and the two women immediately made their way down the stairs.

Rumble!

As they vanished into the depths, the cave rumbled slightly.

The rocks began to move, rearranging themselves until the floor became one piece again, indistinguishable from its previous appearance.

However, there was indeed something different about it.

Because under this floor...

There was only solid rock.

It was incredibly damp, almost to the point where it felt like the inside of some creature's stomach rather than an underground area.

Atop that, there was no light at all. Even mana lost its light in this darkness, forcing one to descend the seemingly endless staircase blindly.

But that was only the start.

Alexandra was an experienced fighter, so moving without her eyes wasn't difficult at all.

Around 100 steps down, however, she felt something change.

20 steps later, she realized she could no longer smell the damp air around her.

Her eyes hardened. She tightened her grip on Xinyue's hand.

If anything happened, this grip was her assurance that she was still alive.

200 steps down, another change took place. Alexandra's mouth was already numb due to the lack of olfactory input to her brain, but that numbness become complete at some point, helping Alexandra realize that her sense of taste had also disappeared.

Besides her eyes, the two senses she'd lost so far didn't affect her perception much. As long as she could still use her perception, taste and smell were inconsequential.

Their loss, however, didn't bode well for the future.

As Alexandra expected, as she passed the 300th step, she could no longer hear the sound of her and Xinyue's footsteps.

The only confirmation she had of the latter's existence was the firm grip she felt on her hand.

And despite knowing the hell that she was about to descend into, Alexandra kept moving.

She closed her eyes even though they were useless at the moment.

She focused on the feeling of Xinyue's cold hands in hers.

She focused on the feeling of Alice's warm body on her back, and the movement of her chest as she breathed.

100 steps were crossed in what seemed like an instant.

Alexandra's foot stepped on the 401st step.

Or did it?

She had no way of knowing.

Was Alice still in her hand?

Was Xinyue's hand still entwined with her own?

She had no idea.

She couldn't feel it at all.

She could only trust in object permanence and keep walking forward.

Or at least, complete the action she believed was walking forward.

However, at this moment...

Even the weakest beast could kill Alexandra.

She was left completely defenseless, forced to descend the endless staircase mindlessly in hope of some sort of salvation.

Chapter 839 Tomb [1]

How long had it been?

Time was incomprehensible without the five senses to send input to the brain. Even with the mystical abilities of a practitioner, being completely deprived of sensation made it difficult to perceive the outside world.

After all, the perception of a practitioner, the awareness that all beings possessed, was an ethereal sense developed with the five bodily senses as a basis.

What would happen if one was made to forget what those base sensations felt like?

Naturally, they wouldn't be able to properly perceive the sensory input they gain through awareness, making the skill more harmful than helpful.

Alexandra found herself combatting this problem far sooner than she expected.

Even without senses or perception, she didn't expect her body clock to distort so rapidly.

Then again, she had no way of knowing the time in the first place.

For all she knew, it might've been years since she started walking.

Total silence.

Total darkness.

Without a sense of direction or feeling, Alexandra didn't even know if she was still walking.

However, there was nothing she could do besides continue. If continuing couldn't help her regain her senses, she'd eventually descend into madness.

'Focus...'

Alexandra's thoughts were loud as if she was speaking them. They were her only company, and her only measure to maintain sanity.

'Focus...concentrate...try to feel the surroundings...'

Alexandra focused her mind on a single invisible point of her choosing. She didn't know what exactly she was doing, all she knew was that it made her feel more secure.

'This point...this is my lifeline...'

Time passed.

It was like an eternity, filled with absolute nothingness.

At some point, Alexandra's thoughts stopped altogether.

Her mind fell into a sort of stasis as her consciousness traveled out of her body.

Flicker!

It was the sound of a tongue of flame whipping lightly through the air.

'Ack!'

Alexandra exclaimed inwardly. Even though the sound was extremely quiet, it resounded in her ears like booming drums.

The light from the flame blinded her eyes in the next moment. Her nose burned from the sudden influx of sensation, and even her mouth started tasting sour as the sensation from her nose rebounded.

"Haa...haa...haa..."

Alexandra panted heavily as she tried to acclimate to the senses she'd long forgotten. At the same time, she observed her current state.

'I am not truly present. This type of ethereal state...is it something like astral projection...?' She wondered.

After many minutes passed and her senses finally readjusted completely, she finally got the chance to understand the surroundings.

That single torch with the dancing flame atop it was merely one of many lining a long hallway with no end. In the opposite direction, one could see the staircase Alexandra was originally on, the one she still believed she was descending.

'Then I...'

Her attention finally went to the floor.

Her face turned pale.

There were three bodies there. Xinyue and Alice were immediately noticeable by their features, and it didn't look like they'd taken much damage.

Alexandra on the other hand...

'How...how am I going to recover from this?!'

Her body was a mangled mess. There were several large holes in her body, and her stomach was completely torn open. Her organs spilled out onto the ground below and formed an especially gruesome image.

And as if the damage to her body wasn't enough, her skull was cracked as well. Her head was bleeding in multiple places, and the skin and muscles of her face were drooping like melted plastic.

Alexandra went into a slight panic. In any normal circumstance, it would've been strange to even consider her alive at the moment. But...wasn't she alive?

If not, then had she become a ghost...?

The pale color of Alexandra's face became impossibly whiter.

'Impossible. I cannot die yet!'

As long as Alice was still a young girl at heart, she couldn't die. She couldn't leave her only family alone in this world.

'Then...'

There was nothing she could do with her abilities to heal her body.

However, she was currently in a strange ethereal state.

If she could enter whatever treasure site was beyond the hallway before her and find a miracle treasure, she might have a chance at healing herself.

'Good. I can also scout so I can come back with Xinyue and Alice to loot the place.'

Alexandra's eyes hardened. She immediately moved to traverse the infinite hallway, but before she could move...

"Alex...andra...?"

A confused voice came from behind her.

'Oh no...'

She panicked once more. If the two girls woke up and saw her body, how would they react?

'There's no way for them to see my current form, but I need to assure them of my safety. Otherwise, at least Alice will do something reckless.'

Alexandra slowly turned around while trying to figure out how to solve this dilemma.

Xinyue was the one who woke up. She sat on her knees and curiously looked at Alexandra's corpse without any aversion.

And then...

Her eyes turned to the spirit form.

"How?"

It was just a single word, but it hit Alexandra like a truck.

'She can see me?!'

"Yes. I can see you."

'She can read my thoughts?!'

"You are in spirit form, so your thoughts and words have no distinction."

'Oh, I see...wait, you can talk normally?!'

"Minor details."

Alexandra backed away in shock. Was this the same Xinyue she'd gotten to know over the past few days? For some reason, her aura seemed far different from usual.

"And so? How did this happen?"

Alexandra shook her head in defeat. 'I don't know. I was doing focus exercises to keep hold of my sanity in the sensory deprivation state, and somehow ended up like this. I only noticed my body's condition a few minutes before you woke up.'

Xinyue put her hand over her mouth in thought.

"This place is too strange to be a regular treasure cove. It must be the inheritance of some great emperor. However, for it to force you into spirit form...is this a blessing or a curse?"

Alexandra furrowed her brows in confusion. She had absolutely no clue what Xinyue was insinuating.

However, the latter didn't give her a chance to ask questions.

"Our first priority should be healing your body. Come with me, let us explore this inheritance site and try to find some healing medicines. There should be no small amount if this is truly the tomb of a great emperor."

Xinyue began walking, but was quickly stopped by a spirit who intercepted her path.

'Wait! We can't leave Alice alone here.' Alexandra said solemnly.

Xinyue glanced over at the unconscious Alice. "She is a good person, but she lacks grit. Even if she is a healer, she needs to develop her physical ability to protect herself. Otherwise, she will only ever be a burden."

'What do you mean by that?!' Alexandra demanded.

Xinyue shook her head. "I mean only what I have said. I appreciate Alice's personality. She has allowed me to experience many things I didn't know beforehand. However, I do not wish for her to die. For this purpose, she must develop her mentality."

Alexandra frowned. She wanted to argue, but she couldn't say anything.

The other party's critique came from good intentions alone, despite the coldness in her tone.

And truthfully, Alexandra knew she was right.

'Haa...this problem can be dealt with later. For now, you stay with her while I explore the area.'

"No need."

Xinyue swept her hand through the air, causing a current of mana to envelop Alice. Through its guidance, she vanished completely, no trace of her left in reality.

"She can rest in my spatial treasure for now. Spirits like you are easy targets for those who specialize in spiritual intent. As you are mainly an elemental practitioner, you will not be able to defend against them."

Xinyue walked forward without waiting for Alexandra's response, entering the infinite hallway with confident strides.

Alexandra watched her back for a moment and sighed.

She didn't know what provoked Xinyue's change in demeanor, nor did she understand the latter's strange abilities...

But at least she knew that the snow-white goddess was on their side.

'Fine! I'll just follow you!'

Alexandra's spirit form soon caught up to Xinyue, trailing behind her ever so slightly as they walked.

Within an instant, the power dynamic of the small three-person group completely shifted.

Chapter 840 Tomb [2]

Tap!

Tap!

Tap!

Xinyue's footsteps echoed through the silent hallway.

Time had been passing slowly for so long already, yet she never stopped walking.

Alexandra was forced to doubt her intentions.

'We've already passed several doors with powerful auras behind them. Along with that, there were three ancient steles and even a Law Comprehension area that could massively boost one's abilities. Yet...she hasn't stopped at a single one.'

How could she not be confused? Even the most stalwart genius wouldn't be able to sit still in front of such a grand array of treasures.

But no matter how much Alexandra wanted to ask, she couldn't find the courage to do so.

Something about the current Xinyue rang major alarm bells in her head.

Alexandra suddenly remembered Xinyue's words from before they entered this hallway.

'Right now, anyone skilled with spiritual intent can kill me like a chicken...'

Alexandra's eyes moved to Xinyue's cold and indifferent back figure.

'Is she...one of these experts?'

Her body shuddered at the thought, but it didn't seem like an unlikely possibility. Especially since Xinyue could see her spiritual form and even knew so much about spirits in general.

'She couldn't be thinking of enslaving me, could she?'

Events would change depending on one's perception of them.

So far, Alexandra had only viewed Xinyue as a friend. She was a friend who was willing to protect Alice and even accompany her in search of medicinal treasures to heal her body.

But if she swapped the lens with which she viewed the situation...

Xinyue currently had Alice hostage in a spatial treasure under her command. She was possibly a spiritual master who was aiming to kill or even enslave Alexandra for her own benefit.

Alexandra found herself in a dilemma. Which of these sides was she to adhere to?

Before she realized it, Xinyue had halted her steps.

She stared at a large monument. It was a figure of a domineering man covered in bloody battle armor. Headless corpses littered the ground around him, and the heads that belonged to them decorated his spear tip. The spear itself pointed towards the heavens as if declaring war on them after killing all of its enemies.

"Sky Emperor Wu Mo," Xinyue muttered.

'You know this man?' Alexandra asked.

"Mm, he is an important figure in our universe's history. The Sky Emperor was the only person in existence to harness the power of the sky to defeat his enemies."

"He was a human genius that played an immense role in the forgotten war that took place 100,000 years ago. Unfortunately, all traces of him vanished at some point, and even the ancient experts were never able to find him."

"In the end, the Sky Emperor was declared deceased, and an empty grave was erected in his honor. I never would have expected to see a monument depicting his figure here."

Xinyue's eyes and tone didn't carry a single hint of expression, but Alexandra felt like there was something hidden beneath that indifference.

Only, she wasn't in a position to find out what that was.

'Is this place the legacy tomb of the Sky Emperor?' She asked

"It should be," Xinyue confirmed with a nod. "There is no possible reason for this monument to exist other than to remind the future generations of his existence."

'I see...he was truly an unfortunate soul.'

"You could see it that way."

Xinyue walked up to the base of the monument and placed her hand on the small plaque decorating it.

"Sky Emperor, we, the descendants of Grand Heavens Boundary, have come to seek your guidance."

She pushed a trace of mana into the plaque, and immediately, it went alit with bright blue splendor.

Rumble!

The statue quaked slightly, and unexpectedly, its stone eyelids fluttered, giving way to two orbs of divine light that substituted the statue's eyes.

"Entrants...identified..."

A booming voice rolled through the air, causing the wind to tumble.

The statue's neck twisted, causing debris to fall off and crash against the floor.

Its head turned to look down at Xinyue and Alexandra.

"The skies stand second to the Heavens. I stand above the skies, therefore I am the Heavens!"

The words were powerful, so powerful that they sent the mana in the atmosphere on a chaotic rampage.

"Worthy descendants of our Great Mother, obtain my inheritance and protect her from all harm!"

The chaotic mana swirled around Xinyue and even the ethereal Alexandra. Their bodies turned light, and the scenery around them shifted like a movie playing in fast-forward.

When the nauseatingly blurred surroundings cleared, they'd been moved to an entirely different location.

"Stay wary. We have no idea about the trials to come." Xinyue warned.

Alexandra nodded and prepared her defenses. Even if she was weakened in spiritual form, she wasn't weak.

She wouldn't be a burden to anyone.

The duo walked forward together, and the scenery around them began to change.

The surroundings had no face at the beginning, but as she continued walking, Alexandra started to see many familiar scenes.

The happy memories she shared with her guildmates, the peaceful life she lived before the start of the war, and...

A family of four resided happily in a mountainside cottage in the middle of nowhere. Their faces were decorated with pure smiles, unlike anything one would see in Eien.

'Father...Mother...'

The sky turned red.

Demons descended onto the world and began to wreak havoc.

The biggest kingdoms and influences fell first. Their rulers and experts were executed down to the last.

But the demons didn't end their rampage after taking over the world, no, the inhabitants of the world were a scourge they couldn't stand.

Even a small family living quietly in the mountains wasn't spared.

Two little girls no older than 10 and 4 returned to their small cottage only to be met with the reeking smell of blood.

It splattered across the cottage walls, it pooled in the well, it stained the grass crimson.

From the small tree that the two girls used to swing from every day, a body hung, lifeless.

The man was a husk of his former self. His body was hardly even human anymore, and the expression of frozen insanity on his face made it evident that his death wasn't a good one.

Further into the house was a woman.

Her body was in better condition than the man's, but her expression was dull as if she'd had her spirit sucked out of her.

A knife protruded from her neck, leaking blood onto the bedsheets.

She'd been defiled and impregnated by the demons. Unable to bear this weight, she chose to kill herself rather than let the corrupted child be born into the world.

The couple's two daughters were only 10 and 4.

The younger of the two was too young. She'd forgotten a majority of the event's details as she grew older.

The elder sister, however, never forgot.

The incident was stained in her memory for eternity.

Alexandra's eyes went red.

Her mana flared unwittingly, pushing fierce winds into the surroundings.

Pah!

A crisp slap landed on her cheek.

Her incorporeal state didn't seem to hold any weight against this slap.

Her eyes cleared from the sheer shock of the impact.

The first thing that came into view was Xinyue's ice-cold gaze.

"Focus. Do not get distracted by mere illusions."

Alexandra's body shuddered.

That was all...just an illusion?

It was so real that she couldn't resist its pull even with her 6th revolution strength, and the scene it decided to show was exactly the scene that would provoke the greatest reaction from her.

She couldn't imagine merely shrugging it off as if it never existed.

She floated in the air behind Xinyue, keeping her attention on the latter's back so as to not fall prey to illusions, but seeing how steady she was walking, Alexandra was forced to wonder:

Just what was Xinyue seeing?

And just how could she remain so indifferent?