

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

c 821

[1,570 words]

"What do you mean?" Madam Elysia asked Sir Ferix.

Why did he make this sound so difficult? Couldn't he just refuse the offer?

Sir Ferix couldn't help but show a bitter smile to his wife. "What do you think would happen if I refused Elder Ignar's offer? What would Munez think if someone like me, who has a strange sickness that prevents me from advancing in cultivation and even causes my cultivation to drop, refused? What if a man whose wife is in a coma, who is known to love her deeply and wants to heal her, refused?"

After Sir Ferix said that, Madam Elysia widened her eyes and finally understood what he meant. The news of a miracle herb was like a message sent from heaven for a man like Ferix. He was known to be desperately searching for a way to heal himself and his wife.

What would happen if that desperate man suddenly refused such a good chance to obtain the miracle herb? People would start to wonder what made him change. As for Munez, he would certainly grow suspicious that something had changed Sir Ferix's mindset.

Other people might just think that perhaps Sir Ferix had already given up on finding a way to heal himself and his wife. They might believe he simply wanted to live as things are.

However, that wouldn't work for Munez. He knew his little brother's character, and such a sudden shift in behavior would make him look for the cause of the change. He might tighten surveillance in this manor by sending more spies, which would further restrict their already limited movements.

That would be bad news for them.

The avatar nodded, agreeing and understanding what Sir Ferix meant. This was indeed a difficult choice—no, in fact, Sir Ferix did not have a choice. Like it or not, he had to accept the offer.

After thinking for a moment, the avatar finally said to Sir Ferix,

"Just take it, Sir Ferix. I'll come with you as well to see what they're planning this time. From what you said, I believe this team was truly prepared especially for you. Munez is

planning something, and you are the key to his plan. It's better to see what he's up to now that he seems to be making the first move himself."

Sir Ferix was stunned but then frowned. "If Your Majesty follows me, then what about my wife? I'm afraid Munez might do something here while I'm gone. Forgive me, but I don't think this is a wise decision, Your Majesty."

The avatar smiled. "You don't have to worry about that. I can call another helper."

Sir Ferix and Madam Elysia looked confused when they heard that. The avatar seemed to be sending someone a voice transmission. It lasted for about a minute before another figure suddenly appeared beside him, leaving Sir Ferix and Madam Elysia astonished.

Who was this person? They hadn't sensed his arrival at all.

The figure was wearing a mask, so they couldn't see his face, but they could tell that he was not an ordinary person.

Was this what the avatar meant when he said there was nothing to worry about?

"Who is this, Your Majesty?" Sir Ferix asked.

"This is another me," the avatar replied, making Sir Ferix and Madam Elysia widen their eyes.

"His Majesty Aldrian can create two avatars?" he couldn't help but blurt out.

The lone avatar that had helped him all this time was already extremely capable and possessed many mysterious techniques, but Aldrian the Great could actually create two of them?

The avatar nodded. "This is another avatar of my real body. It will stay here while I accompany you to the Poison Valley. This way, nothing will be missed while we're away from the manor."

He had just contacted his real body and shared his memories with it while standing here. This was another thing that made Aldrian's avatar technique so special. Aldrian could share memories between his real body and his avatars, and even among the avatars themselves.

Even if one of his avatars comprehended something new, that comprehension would be transferred to the real body.

It was truly an incredible technique, and not too surprising, since Aldrian had created it based on a god's incarnation. Aldrian's avatars were not merely clones but separate

beings. Such a thing could only be created by divine beings, yet Aldrian had managed to create it, though in a much simpler form.

In the perfect version, the gods could create many incarnations of themselves with their own flesh and souls. They truly created new lives for themselves, lives they could fully control.

After Aldrian learned what had happened and understood what the avatar had in mind, he decided to send the other avatar to help. Sylphia was already safe, and staying in the most secure place. Since she also needed to take care of Sylvia, she would have to remain under the World Tree.

Because of that, he thought he could send the avatar that served as her guardian to assist with the matter in the Akares Star.

It was an easy thing to do, as Sir Ferix's manor had already become part of his domain. He simply teleported the other avatar there.

With that, the problem of lacking manpower was resolved.

Sir Ferix and Madam Elysia looked at both avatar with astonished expressions. Just how many avatars could Aldrian the Great create? If he could make so many avatars, each duplicating his abilities, wouldn't he possess his own unstoppable army?

The thought made Sir Ferix's heart tremble, but he didn't ask anything. He sighed and nodded instead.

"Alright, if Your Majesty says so, then I will join the team."

Madam Elysia's expression turned anxious as she touched his hand. "Be careful. Always be wary of that bastard's schemes."

Sir Ferix smiled at his worried wife. "I know. I will keep that in mind." Then, his expression turned puzzled.

"But I truly wonder, why is Munez suddenly planning this? Why has he turned his attention to me now? All this time, he didn't seem to care about me as long as I knew my place. Yet suddenly, he sent Elder Ignar and offered me this kind of opportunity," he said with a contemplative expression.

"Well, whatever he's planning, I can guess that it might be connected to the recent events on the Barisan Continent. I think the failed surprise attack by the devils, combined with other factors, has pushed him to act. I would even say he's quite desperate with this plan," the unmasked avatar said.

"This kind of plan might look perfect if Sir Ferix and Madam Elysia were still cursed. But once you're healed and we look into it more closely, the plan is full of holes. It's even laughable, as if they're trying to bait a child with candy."

Sir Ferix nodded in understanding. Later that day, he informed Elder Ignar that he would join the team. Elder Ignar didn't stay much longer after hearing his answer and soon returned to the capital.

In the capital, inside the main manor of the Barevisk family, Munez had already heard about Sir Ferix's decision and couldn't help but smile.

'Good. As expected, he accepted the opportunity I offered, even though it came from the man he hates,' he thought.

'Little brother, don't blame me for what's about to happen. You're an important piece in my survival.'

The next day, Sir Ferix and the unmasked avatar arrived at the capital and began their journey toward the Barevisk family's main manor. The avatar observed the city as they walked after stepping out of the warp gate. Both he and Sir Ferix wore brown robes with their hoods fully covering their heads to avoid attracting attention.

There was no carriage waiting for them, nor anyone sent to greet their arrival.

Normally, someone of Sir Ferix's status would be treated with great respect by his own family. Others would look upon him with reverence, as they would toward a high-ranking noble.

However, ever since Munez took the seat of patriarch and Sir Ferix's cultivation stagnated, causing him to lose his reputation as a genius, his light had faded. Most people began to distance themselves from him to maintain a good image before the new patriarch, who clearly disliked his younger brother.

Although his situation was truly pitiful, that was the fate of the weak and defeated within a harsh noble family.

The only ones who truly maintained their relationship with Sir Ferix were those who had followed him back when he was still a candidate for patriarch. They believed the family would have been far better under his leadership and never trusted Munez's rule.

Even now, many of these people still placed their hope and loyalty in Sir Ferix—especially after seeing what the Barevisk family had become. The family now resembled more of a vassal house, a dog serving the Valroy family.

These were the people whom the avatar and Sir Ferix had already contacted and asked for support when the time to overthrow Munez from his seat as patriarch arrived.

After walking for more than thirty minutes, they reached the special teleportation formation that led to the floating land where the manor was located.

The moment the guards stationed there saw Sir Ferix, one of them couldn't help but show a trace of pity, though he quickly maintained his professionalism.

"Welcome back, Elder Ferix," he said. Sir Ferix only nodded in response.

A few moments later, they arrived on the floating land where the manor stood. It was the very place where Sir Ferix had once lived, before he was forced to leave behind all his former glory.

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Chapter 822 - 822: Trying to Humiliate Him

[1,524 words]

Sir Ferix looked at the large gate of the manor not far from him with a calm face. Although he had once lived in this place, he did not have many happy moments here. There were almost no noteworthy memories that made him feel like he wanted to return.

This place was more like a hell than a home to him.

He would rather live a peaceful life with Elysia and his daughter in their own territory. The three of them could live a normal life without having to meet any of the people in this place. Without having to worry about Munez's machinations or any trouble that might arise from here.

Sir Ferix did not stand still for long and began walking toward the gate. The two guards who saw the two figures appear from the teleportation formation and approach wanted to stop them to ask for their identity.

However, when they finally saw Sir Ferix's face, they stopped and showed a smile. But the avatar knew that their smile was more mocking than sincere.

"Welcome to the Barevisk family manor, Elder Ferix," one of the guards said, but then he glanced at the avatar behind him. He slightly narrowed his eyes, as he had never

seen this man before and wanted to ask his identity. However, Sir Ferix did not give him the chance, as he simply kept walking, trying to pass them.

But then the two guards blocked Sir Ferix's path with their hands.

"Hold on, who is this person, Elder Ferix? I've never seen him before," the same guard asked as he looked at the avatar.

"He is my personal guardian. I hired him last night since I didn't have one. Well, I need someone to help me in the team, right?" Sir Ferix said convincingly.

The guard still narrowed his eyes. The avatar's face, at this moment, was hidden behind a disguise technique, showing the appearance of a middle-aged man. The guard could sense the avatar's cultivation at the low pseudo-immortal establishment stage. He couldn't help but mock inwardly that someone like Sir Ferix could only find a guardian at this level.

Normally, members of the main family had enough resources to hire even a pseudo immortal cultivator. That was why the guard mocked Sir Ferix. After observing for a moment, the guard suddenly smiled.

"Then we have to check him. We are not sure if he has brought something dangerous into the manor, and his identity itself is dubious."

Hearing that, Sir Ferix frowned. "He is my guardian, and I guarantee that he is trustworthy and has not brought anything harmful into this place."

The guard still shook his head, firmly standing by his stance.

"I'm sorry, Elder Ferix, but this is the rule of this place. Although you know this man, we do not. We still cannot be certain if he is safe or not."

Sir Ferix frowned even deeper, feeling inwardly irritated. To think that even the mere guards of this place dared to trample his dignity like this. If this were a normal procedure, he, as a member of the main family, should have been given privilege. He, or anyone he brought in, should not need to go through any inspection by guards.

The guards must also know about this rule, yet they deliberately blocked his path and gave such excuses. Sir Ferix knew that these two guards only wanted to humiliate him.

He felt fuming inside. Although he had already fallen from his former status, he was still a main member of the family, the direct bloodline of the Barevisk family.

Did they think they could act freely just because Munez was behind them?

He would not yield before mere guards.

He would give these two guards a lesson they would never forget.

But before he could do anything, the mocking expressions on the guards' faces suddenly turned expressionless. They then opened a path for him. He was stunned when they suddenly kowtowed before him.

"My apologies, Elder Ferix. Please come in. We truly respect you as we respect our patriarch," they said, leaving Sir Ferix astonished. He couldn't help but turn his head toward the avatar behind him.

"Just keep going, Sir Ferix. These flies are not worth your time," the avatar sent through voice transmission. Sir Ferix instantly knew this was the avatar's doing and nodded. He smiled as he stepped forward and entered the manor grounds.

After they entered, the two guards, who were still in a kowtow position, suddenly stood up and looked at each other in confusion. Why had they done that? They were conscious when they kowtowed, and at that time, it had seemed completely normal to bow before Sir Ferix.

But now, they felt disgust and humiliation as they realized they had just kowtowed to someone who had been cast aside by the patriarch. They could not understand why they had done such a thing. Looking toward the manor, where they could still see the backs of Sir Ferix and the avatar, they could only grit their teeth.

As Sir Ferix and the avatar walked inside the manor, the avatar carefully observed the place in detail. He had used a hypnotic technique on the guards so that they could enter quickly without attracting further attention that might lead to more humiliation.

'It seems Munez or whoever ordered those guards wanted to show their dominance and humiliate Sir Ferix. They just wanted to remind him of his place here,' the avatar thought.

As they walked deeper into the manor grounds, passing beautiful gardens and pavilions, they drew attention from everyone who passed by. The sight of Sir Ferix within the manor was rare, and most had already forgotten the last time he visited the main estate. Some showed pity, some showed contempt, and some showed respect.

'Well, at least there are still some who respect Sir Ferix,' the avatar thought.

Suddenly, Sir Ferix stopped walking when a young man approached them. He was a handsome young man with short black hair, wearing noble attire. His cultivation was at peak pseudo immortal establishment stage.

The young man seemed slightly stunned when he saw Sir Ferix, but he quickly adjusted his demeanor and continued approaching.

The avatar also stopped his steps and listened as the young man spoke to Sir Ferix, slightly bowing his body.

"You are finally here, Uncle. I'm glad to see you after so long. Father is already waiting for you on the training field with the team. We were only waiting for you, and now we're good to go."

The avatar recognized the young man's identity. He was Munez's son, Diaz Barevisk, said to be his father's successor and a genius cultivator deemed more than worthy to be the next patriarch.

"Thank you," Sir Ferix replied shortly, walking past Diaz without looking at him again. The avatar followed closely behind and, for a brief moment, glanced at Diaz. Although this young man appeared polite and harmless, he knew it was all an act. He had already heard this son's story from Sir Ferix.

A young man who appeared polite on the outside but was actually cunning and vicious within. He was the type of wolf in sheep's clothing, hiding his true nature until the right moment. His pleasant words and refined demeanor could fool anyone who did not know his real self.

Those who were aware of his true nature were few, and even within this manor, not everyone knew who he really was.

Sir Ferix had learned of Diaz's true nature when he met him privately in the past. Since that time, he understood how cunning and dangerous this young man could be.

However, for Aldrian, there was something else that caught his attention after meeting Diaz in person. He felt an irritation when he was near him, a feeling he recognized all too well. It was the same reaction his true body had whenever it encountered anything connected to those invader gods.

In Diaz's case, it reminded him of when his real body had met Randolph and his group. That thought made him wonder whether this young man might be cultivating the same technique as them.

After Sir Ferix and the avatar walked past Diaz, his polite expression turned cold.

'What a useless bunch. To think they couldn't even hold that Ferix at the gate for a moment,' he thought.

He had already said to the guards stationed at the gate, informing them that Sir Ferix would be visiting the manor. He had ordered them to delay him at the entrance and, if possible, humiliate him until he arrived. He had wanted to see that man's humiliated face for himself and take the chance to disgrace him even further.

'Tch, ah well, whatever. Father's plan comes first anyway.'

After that, he walked in the same direction as Sir Ferix and the avatar.

The training field was a wide area located about fifteen minutes away from where they had met Diaz, on the western side of the manor grounds. When Sir Ferix and the avatar arrived, they saw many people already gathered there. From the number, it could be tens of them and all were cultivators at the immortal transition realm.

Sir Ferix and the avatar's attention was drawn to one figure who seemed to be in the middle of a conversation with several others.

'Munez Barevisk, we finally meet,' the avatar thought.

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Chapter 823 - 823: To the Poison Valley

[1,522 words]

The moment Sir Ferix and the avatar arrived at the training field, everyone there instantly turned their heads toward them. There were two kinds of expressions shown once they saw Sir Ferix. The first was mocking, and the other was respect.

There was no need to be told who were the ones that showed respect to Sir Ferix. They were the ones who still believed in him, although their number was few compared to those who held him in contempt.

Sir Ferix ignored those people and kept walking forward until Munez turned his head toward him. Munez's gaze briefly shifted to the avatar before returning to Sir Ferix, and then he walked toward them.

"Ah, little brother, it's good to see you again. I was afraid that you would deny my offer because, you know, our past," he said amicably.

"Of course, I would accept the invitation. How could I refuse it when it concerns the news about the miracle herb, the Celestial Angel Flower? I just hope that I can get at least one to heal Elysia later," Sir Ferix replied.

"That could be discussed later, brother," Munez said. Since earlier, he had already observed Sir Ferix and thought that his cultivation had dropped again to the Immortal

Foundation Stage. However, he found something strange about his cultivation that made him feel odd.

'Why do I feel his aura seems stable and not in chaos? The last time I saw him, his aura was truly in chaos, and his cultivation fluctuated,' he thought. It was as if Sir Ferix was faking his cultivation using an old trick, but Munez knew that whatever trick he used would be useless because of the curse.

He was the only one who knew the true effect of the curse, the curse that had been placed by someone to harm Ferix, causing him to fall from his status and allowing Munez to become patriarch.

'Did he break the curse and hide his cultivation? No, that's impossible. Young master said there was no one in this world who could break it, and it's already been so long, yet no one has managed to.'

Munez put aside the oddity about his little brother's condition and turned toward the avatar. This one was what made him frown inwardly. The unexpected appearance of someone unknown even to his spies in his little brother's manor was troubling. There had been no report of Ferix being in contact with anyone, and it was as if this man had suddenly appeared today.

He did not like it one bit when something was beyond his knowledge or outside of his calculations, and this unknown person was exactly that. How could his little brother recruit someone as his personal guardian without anyone knowing? He had only just received the information from the front guards, and it had surprised him.

Although this personal guardian was only at the Low Pseudo Immortal Establishment Stage, he still did not like that someone could slip past his surveillance.

However, he buried his displeasure as he thought that this guardian, being only at the Low Pseudo Immortal Establishment Stage, would not make much difference to his plan.

"Who is this man, brother? I have never seen you with him until today," Munez asked.

"This is my personal guardian. I recruited him last night since I thought I needed someone's help. With my cultivation right now, I don't think it would be good for me to take this journey alone. You don't have to worry about him, as he is trustworthy and I can guarantee it," Sir Ferix answered.

Munez felt even more strange. For his little brother to put so much trust in this man meant that he had known him for a long time. But Munez knew there was no one like this man among his little brother's past acquaintances.

This suddenly made Munez uneasy, but he put that aside and nodded. His little brother's reason was still reasonable.

"Alright, since you're already here, let's all depart. We don't want any unknown factors to appear during this journey, and we can't afford to waste time, so we have to move quickly," he said before looking at the others.

"Let's depart!"

Not long after that, they had already returned to the city and were flying toward one of the warp gates.

As people saw the large group from the Barevisk family flying toward the warp gate, they wondered what could have happened to make so many family members travel at the same time.

While the group was flying in the direction of the warp gate, a person approached Sir Ferix and the avatar. It was an old-looking man with white hair and a beard, possessing cultivation at the Middle Pseudo Immortal Stage. With such cultivation, he was one of the most important family members and among the strongest.

The avatar who saw him recognized the old man's identity from the memories he had seen from Vars in the past. He was one of the grand elders of the family, the nephew of the past patriarch, and also one of Sir Ferix's supporters.

Grand Elder Javier Barevisk.

He was one of the reasons Sir Ferix's faction had not entirely disappeared. As a grand elder and the past patriarch's nephew, his influence and power were immense, and it seemed only Munez could restrain him. Because of his great influence, even Munez could not do much against him despite being far stronger.

He was also one of the most crucial figures in their plan to overthrow Munez from his position as patriarch.

"Ferix, how have you been all this time?" Grand Elder Javier asked after arriving beside Sir Ferix.

"I'm good, Grand Elder, I'm good," Sir Ferix replied.

Grand Elder Javier nodded before glancing toward the avatar, then looking back at Sir Ferix.

"Ferix, would you like a more capable guardian? If you don't have the resources to hire a stronger one, just tell me. I have some acquaintances outside the family who are

trustworthy and much more powerful than your current guardian," Grand Elder Javier said through voice transmission.

Sir Ferix couldn't help but smile. He knew that Grand Elder Javier had no ill intent and was only worried about him.

"It's alright, Grand Elder. This guardian is enough for me. Even if someone at the Peak Pseudo Immortal Stage wanted to be my guardian, I would still choose this man instead. Don't underestimate him because of his cultivation level, he's far more dependable than he appears," Sir Ferix said.

Grand Elder Javier raised his eyebrows and glanced once more at the avatar. For Ferix to give such high trust and praise, who was this man? It made him curious, but he knew it wasn't the right time to ask.

"Is that so? If that is your opinion and decision, then I suppose my offer was useless. However, be careful on this journey. I can sense that Munez is planning something. All of this feels like it came out of nowhere and is far too coincidental."

"I will, Grand Elder. I know this journey might be a trap, but I still chose to join. I want to see what Munez is planning this time," Sir Ferix answered.

Grand Elder Javier nodded, but then his expression turned puzzled.

"Ferix, have you already recovered from that unknown ailment? Your cultivation seems much more stable now."

Sir Ferix didn't answer and only smiled, but that alone was enough for Grand Elder Javier. His heart trembled as his guess was confirmed, Ferix had already recovered from that mysterious sickness.

His cultivation, which had been continuously declining as if something were consuming it, had been incurable for so long.

Even though he had already tried to call some of the best physicians and anyone who claimed they could heal Ferix, all of them eventually gave up. It had become one of the unresolved mysteries, even for him. Although something had gone wrong with Ferix's cultivation in the past, with their resources and connections, they should have been able to fix it and restore him to health.

But Ferix remained sick, and his condition only worsened, causing many people to abandon him until today.

"Grand Elder, I want to discuss something with you later if there's time. It's an important matter for me," Sir Ferix said with a solemn expression, which made Grand Elder Javier raise his eyebrows. It seemed to be a serious topic, and he wondered what it could be.

"Alright."

They finally arrived at the warp gate and were directed toward their destination by the operator before all of them stepped into it. The moment they emerged on the other side, they found themselves in a completely different environment.

The avatar observed his surroundings. This place looked much more barren, with little greenery around.

Still, many people were walking here and there, and all of them instantly made way once they saw the group.

'So this is Iberi Town, the closest town to the Poison Valley,' the avatar thought.

This was a well-known place where anyone planning to journey into the Poison Valley would stay. Although the Poison Valley was a dangerous place, many still ventured there for various reasons.

In the distance, a line of hills could be seen, and further beyond, a white fog obscured the view. That was the Poison Valley.

"Let's go. We'll head straight to the valley," Munez said.

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Chapter 824 - 824: The Poison Environment

[1,537 words]

As the group flew toward the Poison Valley, the avatar observed the distant valley that kept getting closer. The Poison Valley, sometimes called the Valley of Death by many, was a valley region located in the southern part of the Barevisk family's territory.

The vast valley separated the southern region of the territory from the other powers of the planet. Because of the existence of this region, anyone who wished to travel traditionally without using a warp gate from the southern powers had to take a longer route by circling around it.

The Poison Valley, just as its name suggested, contained poison, and it was not ordinary poison. The poison within this place could even kill a peak pseudo-immortal stage cultivator. That alone was enough to deter many from entering the region.

However, as it always is in the world of cultivators, not even the most dangerous places could stop everyone from venturing in. There were still some who tried their luck in this region, seeking opportunities for their cultivation or wealth, whether to find rare herbs or uncover lost treasures.

Just like many dangerous places in the cultivation world, this place indeed contained treasures for cultivators, even rare ones. Especially for those who had comprehended poison laws, this place was practically a heaven for them, if they did not push themselves too hard of course.

The Poison Valley was divided into three regions to differentiate the danger zones. The first and safest was the outer region, which contained poison tolerable even for a Marquess stage cultivator. Next came the inner region, which was dangerous even for Emperor stage cultivators.

The last and most dangerous was the core region.

The core region had never been fully explored, not even most parts of it, because of its harsh terrain and the deadly poison that spiked greatly compared to the other regions. The poison in this area could easily kill someone like Munez, which was why it was called the Region of Death, named for how lethal it was.

As for the location of the so-called miracle herb, the Celestial Angel Flower was located within the core region, not far from its border with the inner region.

"I received a report that the one who saw the herb said that he wanted to try entering the core region at that time. Mind you, this guy was a low pseudo-immortal cultivator who had comprehended poison laws. He was actually from the Purple Ring Planet and came here seeking adventure," Munez explained as they continued flying.

"He flew for about five minutes into the core region before he had to land because he became disoriented by the poison fog that obstructed his view. While he was trying to find a way out, he happened to see the Celestial Angel Flower."

"That man said the flower was surrounded by a giant red-headed cobra with middle pseudo-immortal stage cultivation. From the looks of it, the cobra seemed to be protecting the flower, maybe it wanted to consume it, waiting for the right time, though we don't know for sure."

"Because the poison became unbearable for him, he decided to turn back. He was lucky he didn't lose his way due to the limited visibility caused by the fog."

"We'll be meeting him shortly at the place we agreed upon near the outer region. At this moment, the group led by Ilona has already secured an area near the core region as a safe zone. That will be our starting point." Munez then stopped speaking.

A few moments later, they finally arrived at a line of hills that seemed to act as a barrier for those who wished to enter the Poison Valley region. The moment they flew past the hills, they could finally see the terrain of the valley and the white fog in the distance. The fog rose high into the sky, as if merging with the clouds.

The avatar could also feel the change in the surrounding atmosphere. He began to sense that the oxygen and the heaven and earth energy were mixing with some kind of harmful substance.

"We are starting to enter the region of poison. Although we have not yet arrived at the Poison Valley, this is a sign that we are almost there," Sir Ferix said through voice transmission.

The avatar gave a slight nod. It had taken them six hours to fly from Iberi Town to reach this point, quite close considering the normal flying speed of someone at the Immortal Transition Realm. As they continued toward the valley region, they finally saw three figures ahead.

One of them was Ilona, another was a member of her group, and the last was a pale-skinned man with a bald head. The avatar could not use his system, so his "investigation tools" were quite limited. He could sense that this bald man indeed possessed cultivation at the low pseudo-immortal stage.

He was said to have comprehended poison laws, and his pale skin might have been a side effect of experimenting with poison. Some poison users were known to have eccentric and reckless personalities. They often consumed poisonous substances to advance their poison comprehension and strengthen their resistance.

"Patriarch," Ilona greeted Munez with an expressionless face as they arrived. Munez smiled and asked,

"How is the situation? Is there anything I need to know?"

"There is nothing, Patriarch. The area is secure, and no one has entered our safe zone. We can proceed as soon as possible," Ilona replied.

The avatar, who watched their interaction, couldn't help but commend Sir Ferix and Ilona's patience. He could only imagine the humiliation they felt, having to show respect to the man who had made their lives miserable. They must have felt bitter, disgusted with themselves, wanting to do something all this time but unable to act.

"You're the one who said you found the Celestial Angel Flower, Godard Lizenski?" Munez asked the bald man.

"Yes, I am. It's truly an honor to meet the patriarch of the Barevisk family directly. I've already heard about your reputation, and I didn't expect you would come personally," the bald man replied.

"That's nothing, Mister Godard. Well, without wasting any time, let's go. We'll head to the safe zone first, then discuss how we'll proceed to enter the core region," Munez said.

They continued flying, and after another ten minutes, they entered the outer region of the Poison Valley. The avatar observed the valley below. The terrain was harsh, filled with steep cliffs and uneven ground. The land was covered in sharp, rocky paths that would be troublesome for anyone unable to fly.

The poison in the air kept growing thicker as time passed, forcing everyone to cover themselves with a thin layer of energy to protect their bodies from the poison seeping in. The poison could enter not only through inhalation but also through the skin.

After flying for more than three hours, they finally reached the inner region. The poison here was truly deadly for anyone below the Emperor stage, and even Emperor stage cultivators had to remain cautious. The air felt heavier, and their surroundings began to change, covered by a thin layer of white fog.

As time passed, the poison even began to affect those at the pseudo-immortal foundation stage. Without covering themselves in protective energy, they would feel a burning sensation on their skin and in their lungs. With prolonged exposure, they could begin to hallucinate, and their skin would gradually develop burn-like scars.

If they underestimated the poison, they would suffer a slow and painful death, their skin and internal organs corroded beyond recognition. The avatar, observing the poison in this place, realized that its properties were a mixture of hallucinogenic and corrosive effects.

As they drew closer to the core region, everyone gradually noticed that one person among them seemed completely unaffected by the poison. He flew calmly, without any visible discomfort, as if moving through a normal environment. Even the bald man did not dare underestimate the surroundings and had already activated his energy barrier for protection.

They glanced toward the avatar and saw that he had not formed any barrier. They assumed he must be a master of poison, his body naturally resistant to toxins of this level. Still, they did not think much of it and continued to fly.

Perhaps, they thought, he had simply never visited this place before and was underestimating its poison.

Too bad for them, the reason the avatar did not create any energy barrier to protect himself from the poison was simple—he did not need to.

His body, composed of a congregation of golden energy, was the bane of any poison. He even believed that if he entered the core region right now, he could do so without much trouble. The golden energy within him could neutralize any poison after all, something that others would find truly absurd.

The avatar had no intention of explaining anything and continued flying in silence.

After another three hours of flight, they finally arrived at the edge of the inner region bordering the core region. Before them was a thick fog, which was actually a dense congregation of poison. They were greeted by members of Ilona's group, who had been waiting for them atop a high ledge beside a cliff. This was where they needed to land.

Once everyone had landed, Munez finally spoke.

"Alright, from this moment onward, we move according to plan."

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Chapter 825 - 825: Planning

[1,535 words]

After the group landed, they observed the thick fog that completely obstructed their sight not far ahead. Even in this place, they already felt goosebumps, as the poison in the air had already reached a dangerous level for even pseudo-immortal establishment stage cultivators.

The avatar had to act as if he were protecting Sir Ferix, since at this moment Sir Ferix appeared to others as being only at peak of the pseudo-immortal foundation stage. The avatar knew that Sir Ferix could still hold on by himself here, but he still placed a hand on Sir Ferix's shoulder to create the image that he was protecting him.

"I've already arrived at the Poison Valley," the avatar said through voice transmission to his real body.

A moment later, Aldrian's consciousness entered the avatar, allowing him to observe his surroundings. The instant his consciousness entered the avatar's body, the avatar's

memories automatically merged with his own, and he knew exactly how to act in this moment.

As Aldrian took over the avatar's consciousness, he could finally use his system here and build his domain. At first, he created his domain while the others observed their surroundings.

However, many turned their attention toward Aldrian. At this moment, they were truly astonished that Aldrian still appeared calm despite having been exposed to the poison in the air for long time. He had not created any energy barrier to protect himself since earlier, and at this place, cultivators at his level should have already felt the effects of the poison.

No matter how great his mastery or comprehension of poison laws was, he should have been affected by this level of poison density. The poison in the Poison Valley was unforgiving and unlike any other poison that existed in the world.

Even they knew that as time passed, an energy barrier alone would not be enough, and they would still need special means to defend themselves against the poison.

Munez also glanced at Aldrian for a moment, and he could not help but think there were two possibilities to explain Aldrian's situation. Either that man's resistance to poison was exceptionally high, or he was hiding his true cultivation, which made him appear strong on the outside.

He narrowed his eyes as he finally sensed that this guardian might be more troublesome than he had predicted. However, they had already arrived here, and it was too late to turn back now. He could only improvise if something went wrong later.

Aldrian, who had already finished creating his domain, then observed Munez—the person who had been bothering him for the past few months.

"Alright, here's how we'll do it. Mister Godard cannot tell the exact location where he found the Celestial Angel Flower because of the thick fog. As you know, he was only lucky to find that flower once, and he doesn't know the exact direction to reach the same place again," Munez said.

"However, he still remembers the time it took him from the edge of the core region until he found the flower, as well as the possible area where it might truly be located. So, to make the search quicker, we'll have to split into groups of three after Mister Godard guides us to the last point before he lost his way."

"Each group will have to stay together, and to avoid getting lost in the fog, each of you will carry this artifact that allows you to track each other's positions. This artifact emits a strong energy wave that can be detected by anyone within two kilometers," Munez said as he took out a small, ball-shaped artifact.

It was red in color, and when Aldrian used his system to check it, he confirmed that it was indeed a genuine artifact for locating positions. The elders assigned to distribute the items began handing them out to everyone present. They also distributed talismans, which were actually teleportation talismans, along with a pill.

"If you cannot detect a group's presence, that means you've already gone beyond the two-kilometer range, as the energy will be corroded by the strong poison inside. If that happens, it's best to step back and look for the others. If you still can't sense anyone after four hours, or if the situation turns dangerous, break the talisman to instantly teleport back here safely."

Aldrian observed the talisman and found nothing wrong with it.

"Now, the pill in your hands is a special one created to make your body resistant to the poison in the core region for four hours. Inside the core region, relying on an energy barrier alone won't be enough," Munez explained.

"You'll exhaust your energy before you realize it, because the poison there can quickly break through any energy defense, forcing you to recreate your barrier repeatedly. The poison in the core region is far different from what we've encountered so far."

As Munez explained, Aldrian also observed the pill in his hand. It was brown in color with three stripes, indicating a half-excellent grade. When he checked the pill's information through the system, the pill was exactly as Munez described, it truly was a type of poison resistance pill. However, he discovered something that made him smirk.

"If any group manages to find the place where the Celestial Angel Flower is located, don't try to take it on your own. Be careful of the giant red-headed cobra. That creature is one of the most dangerous beings in the Poison Valley—if not the most dangerous, unless something even stronger exists deeper within the core region," Munez continued.

"Once you find the flower's location, inject your energy into the artifact that shows your position. It will send a signal by blinking light to the other artifacts. However, as I said earlier, you must remain within the two-kilometer range. It's useless if you're outside that distance, as we won't receive any signal."

"Once the flower is located, we'll regroup and plan according to the situation. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Patriarch!" the others replied, and Munez nodded.

"Alright. Remember, we have four hours before we must return. Now, for the group division, I'll travel with my little brother, his guardian, and Mister Godard. The rest of you can form your groups now so we don't waste time later."

After that, the others began organizing themselves, and after a few moments, they were finally ready. Ilona and her group would remain to guard the safe zone, preventing anyone from entering it or approaching the surrounding search area.

"Now swallow the pill, and we'll be ready to depart," Munez said as he swallowed the pill himself. The others followed. Aldrian also swallowed it without hesitation, though he noticed Sir Ferix glance at the pill for a moment before doing the same.

Since Aldrian was using the avatar's body, it naturally lacked a digestive system. However, the avatar's body had its own way of eliminating anything that entered through the mouth. Once inside, any food or drink would be dissolved by energy and converted into energy itself, though the amount was so minuscule that the avatar would not feel it at all.

After Aldrian swallowed the pill, he placed his hand on Sir Ferix's shoulder and injected his golden energy into him, which immediately surprised Sir Ferix. He looked at Aldrian in confusion, but before he could ask, Aldrian already sent him a voice transmission.

"This pill contains a substance that can block your dantian and meridians. Basically, it will make you unable to use any energy. The effect won't appear immediately, but I predict it will start later, after we've been inside the core region for some time. Right now, I'm neutralizing that substance inside your body."

Sir Ferix was stunned. He did not show much outwardly, but inside, he was fuming.

"As expected, there's something wrong with the pill. I already suspected that Munez would try something, and the pill might be one of his methods."

"It's alright. With this, we've confirmed that he truly planned something—and that it involves incapacitating us inside the core region. That also means he needs you alive, Sir Ferix. If he wanted you dead, he could easily do it himself inside the core region, where no one would witness his actions," Aldrian said.

Sir Ferix nodded, and before they could continue their conversation, Munez shouted to the entire group.

"Alright, depart!"

With that, all of them took to the air.

"Don't worry, Sir Ferix. I'll keep an eye on everything. Just act naturally and improvise later if there are any new developments," Aldrian said, and Sir Ferix responded with a silent nod.

They kept flying until they finally reached the border between the inner and core regions, where the fog was so thick that they could see no more than two meters ahead.

The density and properties of the poison suddenly became many times more dangerous.

The corrosive effect of the poison grew so intense that even a pseudo-immortal stage cultivator would have their energy eroded rapidly if they formed an energy barrier here. The poison also became far more lethal.

Without any protection, the corrosive poison in this area could kill a pseudo immortal cultivator within a minute, melting their body into a pool of goo.

Everyone present could sense the danger, even after consuming the poison resistance pill. It made their skin crawl, but they still trusted the pill and continued flying, until at last, they entered the core region!

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Chapter 826 - 826: Inside the Core Region

[1,493 words]

The group finally entered the dense fog, and the moment they stepped in, they could immediately feel an extreme burning sensation spreading across their bodies. Their bodies tensed, knowing this was the moment they had to be extremely careful not to let even a trace of the poison seep inside.

Although they had already swallowed special poison resistance pills, they did not entirely depend on them. Their bodies remained tense and ready, prepared to protect themselves in case the poison suddenly entered their bodies.

They had already stepped into a killing zone. If something went wrong with their pills effect or if they ran out of energy here, then they could say goodbye to their lives.

Even a small amount of the poison fog entering the body could cause extreme agony, enough to make even a pseudo immortal stage cultivator lose control of their energy flow and even rupture their meridians.

Munez also wore a solemn expression. He knew he could not underestimate this place, as it could easily kill him. Even his spiritual sense could not pierce through the dense fog, for it was being corroded by the poison, and at most, he could only sense two kilometres around him.

The only one who remained calm despite the poisonous environment was Aldrian in his avatar body. He flew without using any barrier at all. Although he could still feel a pricking sensation on his skin, once the poison entered his body, it instantly disappeared.

At this moment, he was also protecting Sir Ferix from the poison by creating a really thin layer of golden energy around him.

When he detoxified the poison from the pill inside Sir Ferix earlier, the pill's effect might have been weakened and might not provide the protection Sir Ferix needed here. That was why Aldrian had to actively protect his body.

With visibility reduced to no more than two meters, they could not see all the members of their group. They had to fly in a tight formation so that no one was left behind.

They flew at the same pace as Godard, not too fast and even slightly slower. It seemed that Godard was trying to fly at the same pace as he had during his previous visit here.

After five minutes of flight, Godard finally landed, followed by the others. They descended slowly, and once they touched the ground, they were greeted by flat rocky terrain littered with sharp stones that could easily cut through flesh.

"From here, I just didn't know where to go and simply wandered forward. I had to change direction many times, so I don't really remember the exact path. I walked for about two hours before I found the Celestial Angel Flower, so the location must be about two hours from this place," Godard said to Munez.

Munez nodded and looked behind him. The only ones he could see were Sir Ferix and Aldrian, while the others were hidden behind the fog.

"From this point, we have to proceed on foot. Just as we planned, spread out with your groups. The Celestial Angel Flower should be located two hours from here. Be careful of anything in this place!" Munez shouted.

"Yes, Patriarch!" more than fifty people shouted before spreading out in different directions. The sound of their footsteps, initially noisy from so many gathered together, gradually faded into silence as they dispersed according to instinct.

The atmosphere turned eerily quiet, leaving only Aldrian, Sir Ferix, Munez, and Godard remaining in the area.

"Let's go. We also have to move. I think we should head forward first and see if we can find anything later," Munez said.

Without saying much else, they began to walk.

As a minute passed and Aldrian continued forward, the terrain beneath his feet proved truly unpredictable. Sometimes it was rough like sharp stone, and other times it felt slippery, as if covered by moss. If they were not careful, they might slip and fall among the jagged rocks.

Aldrian observed everything he could within the limits of their visibility. The place was utterly barren, and he had not seen a single creature, not even the smallest one. The poison was also becoming stronger.

Still, although this place was truly dangerous, it would be a good place for any poison cultivator to deepen their comprehension, if they liked a challenge.

He already possessed a deep understanding of the poison laws, thanks to the comprehension he had absorbed from his past followers within the core region of the Eternal Sanctuary Forest. He knew that the poison here was different, strange, even.

For the entire region to be engulfed in such deadly poison, there must be something sustaining it, something hidden deep within this valley. Although the poison here could have formed naturally, it would need something massive to cover the whole region.

For example, there might be a vast field of poisonous plants, or perhaps a poisonous being large enough to cause all of this.

However, the problem with these two possibilities was that he had seen no signs of either since stepping into the fog. He had not seen any indication of a large field of poisonous plants. He had only seen or sensed a few small poisonous herbs.

As for a being capable of producing enough poison to cover the entire region this vast, it would have to be far stronger than a pseudo immortal stage cultivator, something impossible to exist within the First Heaven.

'There are still two other possibilities. The first is that an extremely poisonous material might have fallen from the higher heavens and coincidentally landed in this region. The second is that this is a deliberate act by someone—someone who created this region to be this way,' Aldrian thought to himself.

If someone had truly created a region like this, they must have built a large scale formation as complex as the one that covered the entire Eternal Sanctuary Forest. In other words, it could have been made by a god.

Aldrian suddenly felt intrigued and wanted to explore deeper into the valley. What kind of mystery did this place hold?

As they walked deeper, they eventually came across a high cliff.

"Wait, I didn't encounter this cliff before. Let's take another route," Godard said as they stood before it. They turned in another direction and continued walking. Their journey was accompanied only by silence, yet none of them seemed to mind.

They had already been walking for an hour, and while Aldrian continued to observe their surroundings, Sir Ferix spoke to him through voice transmission.

"What do you think, Your Majesty? Why hasn't Munez done anything when we've been inside this place for so long?"

"I think he's waiting for something—either the right time or the right place," Aldrian replied.

"That Godard is also suspicious. Although he looks like he's searching for the flower's location, to me it seems more like he's leading us somewhere. It's highly possible he's involved in this."

Sir Ferix nodded. His body remained tense and wary as he waited for his older brother to reveal his true face to him.

As they continued walking, they eventually heard the sound of flowing water. Hearing this, Godard said, "I passed a river before. I think we're heading in the right direction."

They followed the source of the sound, and as it grew louder, they finally reached a flowing river. The water was murky, its surface tinted blackish brown, and Aldrian could sense a strong poison emanating from it.

The water passing through this area was already heavily contaminated with poison, turning its once clear color into the color it now carried.

They decided to fly across it, gliding just above the surface. The current was swift yet calm on top, a sign that the river ran deep.

Aldrian kept his eyes on the surface. He could sense the depth of the water and everything within it clearly, and deep water often hid surprises, most of them undesirable, such as ambushes from water beasts.

As he prepared to react to anything, something moved beneath the surface.

'Speak of the devil...' Aldrian thought, and suddenly—

Splash!

A giant mouth suddenly emerged from beneath the water, attempting to swallow them all. It was filled with terrifyingly sharp teeth capable of shredding anything into pieces.

Aldrian was about to evade and take Sir Ferix with him through teleportation, but before he could act—

Swish!

Munez swept his hand, and the enormous mouth instantly split in two. The creature, which carried the aura of a low pseudo immortal, was revealed to be a giant fish. Its body, along with the water behind it, was cleaved apart so deeply that Aldrian could see the riverbed below.

The split stretched for nearly six kilometres, even parting the poison fog before both the water and the mist rushed back to fill the gap.

Black blood splattered everywhere, hissing as it contaminated the water, evidence of its deadly properties. The once calm atmosphere erupted into chaos as waves crashed outward on both sides.

Aldrian, watching Munez's strike, shifted his gaze toward Munez's hand. He held a spear formed entirely from his energy, its surface coated with powerful force that Aldrian immediately recognized.

'Spear intent, huh,' he thought.

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Chapter 827 - 827: Found Something Unexpected?

[1,522 words]

Spear intent was just like sword intent, except that it was derived from the spear. A spear user with deep mastery and comprehension of spearmanship would naturally comprehend spear intent.

In fact, any weapon could lead a cultivator to comprehend intent, will, and heart according to their weapon's comprehension. The difficulty varied, but the concept remained the same—to become one with the weapon and understand it deeply enough to unleash far greater power.

Anyone who had comprehended such a level was truly worthy of being called a master of their weapon and a powerful cultivator.

Aldrian actually knew some people who had reached this level with their weapon, which was not the sword. For example, Emperor Ladwin had comprehended bow intent, making each of his arrows devastating compared to normal shots.

There was also Pope Claudius, who had comprehended spear intent. With the Heavenly Direction Church's legacy artifact, the Heaven's Punishment Spear, he could be said to be one of the most powerful Emperor Stage existences.

Many people mostly heard about sword intent and sword will, but not about others like spear intent or spear will. The popularity of swords among cultivators was truly high compared to other weapons, which was why they only heard about the sword intent or will.

Still, whatever the weapon was, those who had comprehended the intent or will of their weapon could not be underestimated and were far stronger than their peers.

If someone at Munez's level had comprehended spear intent, the power he could unleash would be truly devastating. With just a swift, ordinary swing, he could instantly kill a giant fish the size of a house, one that possessed low pseudo-immortal stage cultivation.

Regardless of the fact that Munez was his enemy, Aldrian had to admit that Munez was a genius and a powerful cultivator.

"Let's continue. There might be stronger beings underwater, and it will be troublesome if there are many of them," Munez said as the spear in his hand disappeared.

The others said nothing more before continuing their journey. The river was quite wide, and along the way, they encountered another beast with much stronger cultivation at the middle pseudo-immortal stage. Munez did the same as before and killed it with ease before they finally reached the other side of the river.

After landing, they continued walking in search of their goal. Along the way, they occasionally encountered powerful beasts, but they were still able to kill them. The beasts here were all guaranteed to be powerful and poisonous due to the environment. Every beast they met had at least pseudo-immortal stage cultivation.

It was not surprising, considering that these beasts had to survive in such a harsh environment. They had to be powerful and were mostly huge, as all of them had reached the pseudo-immortal stage.

Most of the ones they encountered were from the insect and arachnid kinds, such as scorpions and spiders.

These beasts were another factor that made the valley even more dangerous. Cultivators had to fight them in this kind of environment, and if they were trapped in a

prolonged battle, they would quickly exhaust their energy. That would be the worst-case scenario here, as it was basically a death sentence for anyone without something like a poison resistance pill.

Another hour finally passed, and it was around the time Godard had mentioned he found the Celestial Angel Flower in the past.

"There is still no sign of the flower, but we still have two hours before the effect of the pill runs out," Munez said as he looked around. Their visibility was still terrible, and it had not changed even a bit since earlier.

After observing the situation and the environment, Aldrian strengthened his belief that the story about the flower might be false and that there was no Celestial Angel Flower here at all. The Celestial Angel Flower could grow in this kind of environment because the herb was capable of filtering any toxic substance. As long as the conditions for its growth were met, it would grow anywhere.

At first, based on the avatar's analysis, the chance of the story being fake was seventy percent. Now, Aldrian believed ninety-nine percent that there was no flower in this place. With such poor visibility and so many strong beasts around, it was nearly impossible for Godard to have had such a fortunate encounter with his low pseudo-immortal cultivation.

Unless he had heaven-defying luck, there was no way he could have fought all those beasts alone. He would have been dead before he even knew it.

"Wait, I sense something nearby, this way," Munez suddenly said as he pointed in one direction. The others stopped, and Munez continued,

"Let's check it."

They walked toward the direction Munez had pointed, and after about fifteen minutes, they finally arrived at the side of a cliff. Sir Ferix raised his eyebrows when he saw the cliff wall because there was actually a cave entrance there.

"This... I don't think I passed this place before, so let's not—"

"Wait, do you feel it? This energy..." Munez cut off Godard, narrowing his eyes at the cave entrance.

Godard and Sir Ferix focused their senses, probing the entrance and deeper inside. They finally understood what Munez was referring to.

"This... this is devil energy," Godard said with a shocked expression. "How could there be traces of devils here, in the deep core region of the Poison Valley?! What are devils doing in this place?"

Munez frowned as he looked at the others. "It seems we've found something unexpected here. With devil energy present, I'm afraid the devils have been operating from this place for who knows how long," he said with a solemn expression.

"At this moment, we have two choices. We can ignore this place and continue searching for the flower, or we can enter the cave and investigate the devils' presence here. If you ask me personally, this might be our chance to eradicate the devils hiding in this area. Maybe this is their base, which allowed them to remain hidden for so long."

"If we go back now, we might never find this place again, and the devils could continue to hide here." Munez's expression was filled with righteousness.

"We can check it quickly, and if there really are devils inside, we'll kill them as fast as possible before continuing our search for the flower. So you don't have to worry about me abandoning our main purpose for coming here. I know that you're here for the Celestial Angel Flower, after all," he added, glancing at Godard and Sir Ferix.

Sir Ferix did not say anything and only looked at Munez calmly. This made Munez wonder in his mind whether his little brother simply did not care about the miracle herb and was just following his lead. He neither spoke nor showed any expression, which felt strange.

Although their relationship was bad, the existence of the Celestial Angel Flower should have been good news for his little brother and should have stirred some reaction. Munez had expected to see the same anxious and hopeful expression he once had in the past, but what he saw instead left him disappointed.

"If Patriarch Barevisk says so, then I will follow you," Godard said, prompting Munez to nod.

"Alright, if that's the case, then let's enter now," Munez said as he approached the cave entrance.

As they entered, Aldrian couldn't help but snort inwardly at Munez.

'What a great act. So this was his intent from the start, to bring Sir Ferix here, to a place with traces of devils,' he thought.

However, he was actually quite surprised that there were traces of devil energy in this place. The devil energy deep inside the cave was real, which meant this might have been a former hiding spot for the devils.

This area was still within the domain he had created before entering the core region, and when he probed inside, he confirmed that there were no devils remaining, only traces of their presence.

"I think this is it. Munez's plan might begin once we're already inside this place," Aldrian sent through voice transmission to Sir Ferix.

"Yes, Your Majesty. I think so too. This kind of trick is rather sloppy since we already know Munez's intent," Sir Ferix replied.

They finally entered the cave, and the devil energy could be sensed even more clearly inside. Munez and Godard both showed wary expressions, while Aldrian observed their surroundings with a calm face. He wondered how the devils had managed to live in such a place and where they had gone.

As they continued walking, the shape of the cave slowly turned more artificial. The rough stone walls gradually transformed into smooth concrete, forming a hallway. Aldrian could sense complex formations embedded within the walls, designed to protect the place from the surrounding poison.

They kept moving until they finally reached a fork in the path, one leading to the right and the other to the left.

Munez looked at both sides before turning his gaze toward the right.

"Let's take this way. Stay together, we don't know what might be waiting for us here, and it's better not to split up for now," he said before stepping forward.

Aldrian and Sir Ferix followed behind him, while Aldrian quietly wondered what Munez's plan was in bringing them to this place.

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Chapter 828 - 828: Showing His True Colors

[1,378 words]

Only the sound of soft footsteps from four people resounded in the hallway. The hallway was illuminated by crystals on both sides, bright enough to reveal its long stretch.

At this point, they no longer felt any effect from the poison, which meant this place was indeed designed to be a long-term base. As Aldrian observed the hallway, he thought that this place had likely been abandoned for some time. The devil energy, although still dense, was gradually dissipating, meaning that nothing remained to sustain it.

With a good place like this, the devils should have utilized it and stayed here. Yet, there were no devils around, as if they had abandoned it. With the limited movement space they had in this star, this one could have served as a good hidden base.

As far as he knew, the devils' appearance in this world in particular was not as brazen as in other worlds. Many said this was because of the Valroy family, especially after the rise of the current young master, Randolph.

Aldrian did not doubt that the limited activities of the devils in this star were due to Randolph's existence, the apostle of a different god from Tarius. This also strengthened his guess about the possible disharmony between those invaders. With Randolph's ability and his system, he might truly have been able to eradicate the devils' influence in this star.

After walking for about fifteen minutes, they finally found a door at the side of the hallway. Munez, moving carefully, decided to open it. The moment they did, they found a messy room with tables and chairs in disarray, some of them overturned. The layer of dust showed that this place had not been taken care of for some time.

"There is nothing here, and from the signs, it seems this place was abandoned for quite a while," Munez said before deciding to continue walking.

Aldrian and Sir Ferix followed. They found several more rooms across the hallway, all in the same state of disorder. It was as if everything important had been ransacked, leaving only useless things behind.

"Are the devils here already gone? From the looks of it, this place seems to have been abandoned," Godard said.

"I think so too. The devils seem to have abandoned this place. But why would they leave it? This is a good place for them to hide, and yet they just left it behind?" Munez replied.

Sir Ferix, who had only watched their exchange, glanced at Aldrian.

"Your Majesty, why is Munez still acting? There should be no problem for him to act now when there's no one here he thinks could stop him, right?" he sent through voice transmission.

Aldrian did not immediately answer. He glanced at Munez for a moment before finally replying, "I think he's waiting for the pill to take effect on us."

Sir Ferix raised his eyebrows and nodded in understanding. He almost forgot that the pill given to him and Aldrian was said to prevent them from using energy. He did not know why Munez needed them to be incapacitated first before taking action.

'What the hell are you trying to do, Munez?' he thought to himself.

"That's why, after this, we should act as if the pill has taken effect. We'll see what he plans to do, and if the situation turns dangerous, I'll take you and escape. This body of mine has no way to fight someone at Munez's level, but escaping? I doubt he could even catch me," Aldrian said, and Sir Ferix nodded.

They continued walking deeper until they saw an open set of double doors at the end of the hallway. As they passed through them, they were greeted by a large hall with a high platform standing in the center. The platform was empty, as if its purpose was for battles while the spectators stood below it.

There were stairs on the side of the platform leading upward. Munez, still acting as if he was wary of his surroundings, began walking toward the stairs, his eyes briefly glancing at his younger brother and Aldrian.

'The pill should be taking effect around this time,' he thought to himself as he climbed the stairs.

"What's happening? Why can't I control my energy?" Sir Ferix suddenly said in a shocked tone, which made Munez smirk. Godard also glanced at Sir Ferix, noticing his panic. Aldrian showed a frown as if he was experiencing the same thing.

"It's the same for me," Aldrian said before looking at Munez and Godard. "Do you not feel the same?"

There was a brief silence after Aldrian's question.

"What happened? What do you mean you can't control your energy?" Munez turned his head and looked toward Sir Ferix with a smile—a cunning smile that Sir Ferix knew too well. A smile that hid Munez's true face.

"I just can't control my energy, as if something is blocking my meridians from the dantian. Do you not feel it? I think we entered some kind of hidden formation," Sir Ferix said. His face showed confusion as he looked at Munez's smiling expression.

Munez then walked toward Sir Ferix, and as if something had dawned on him, Sir Ferix's expression turned to shock.

"You... did you do this?" he asked, but Munez did not answer and kept walking closer. Seeing that Munez stayed silent, Sir Ferix gritted his teeth and took a step back.

"What are you going to do, Munez? What are you planning right now?!" he shouted. He knew he was powerless against Munez, but he would still fight. He refused to be a coward.

"Well, I need something from you one last time. After this, you might be free from me once and for all, and I won't disturb you again," Munez said.

Aldrian wanted to move to protect Sir Ferix, but suddenly Godard moved swiftly, appearing behind him and pressing his blade against Aldrian's neck.

"Uh-uh. You just stay here and let the patriarch talk to that man," Godard said.

Aldrian slightly turned his head and looked into Godard's eyes, which made him freeze. Godard couldn't help but feel uneasy looking into those calm blue eyes. Then he frowned, realizing that Aldrian's face showed far less reaction than he expected. In fact, since the first time he had seen Aldrian, he had rarely seen any expression from him at all.

Aldrian was too mysterious, and that unsettled him. At this moment, he thought back on how Aldrian had behaved throughout their journey. He hadn't said much or done much, the one who handled most matters was the patriarch. To Godard, that had made sense since Aldrian's cultivation was only at low pseudo-immortal establishment stage.

There was not much he could do inside the core region. He was like an ant here. Yet despite that, he did not act like the low cultivators usually did in this place. He showed no wariness toward others and seemed too relaxed for someone who was both the weakest cultivator here and a guardian.

'Is it just his character that makes him show so little expression, or is there something I don't know?'

In his opinion, Aldrian seemed more like someone powerful who had come here to observe rather than a mere guardian.

He shook his head slowly, putting those thoughts aside and focusing on assisting with the patriarch's plan.

"What do you need me to do now? You've already taken everything from me, and I haven't even interfered in your affairs as patriarch. I don't have anything that could help you," Sir Ferix said angrily. He wanted to draw his spear from his storage ring, but remembering that he was in the middle of acting as if he couldn't use his energy, he stopped himself.

He had to appear helpless and desperate. He raised his fists in a fighting stance as if he were ready to resist.

Aldrian, watching how Sir Ferix acted, couldn't help but commend him inwardly for his performance.

Munez kept smiling, as if amused by how his little brother react at this moment. He used his energy to immobilize Sir Ferix, lifting him into the air. Sir Ferix tried to resist, but it was futile as his body seemed to move on its own. Munez finally stopped in front of him, his gaze locking directly onto Sir Ferix's eyes.

"Of course you have something I need, my beloved younger brother, something that can save me," Munez said, his eyes glistening.

"That is your life."

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Chapter 829 - 829: Truly Angry

[1,531 words]

"My life? What do you mean?" Sir Ferix asked through gritted teeth.

Munez turned his body and walked toward the platform.

"You see, due to certain circumstances, I have a bad premonition that I will likely die in the near future if I do not do something to prevent it. Something that even the Valroy family will not recklessly intervene in, which is really irritating because it is them who put me in this predicament," he said while also bringing Sir Ferix along.

Sir Ferix's body floated, following Munez toward the platform.

Hearing Munez's answer, Sir Ferix frowned. "What do you mean? What kind of circumstance have you fallen into?"

"Well, it has to do with the recent event at the Ancient Blue Gate World. You will know after this." Munez then turned to look in Godard's direction.

"Bring him here as well. This will strengthen the evidence later," he said. Godard nodded and pushed Aldrian.

"Move," he said, and Aldrian walked at a normal pace toward the platform.

Sir Ferix frowned again as he heard Munez's answer.

'Recent event in the Ancient Blue Gate World? I see. Just like His Majesty Aldrian said, this has something to do with him. Munez must be anxious right now because of Aldrian the Great,' he thought.

"Recent event at the Ancient Blue Gate World? I see. This must have something to do with Aldrian the Great, right? Let me guess: because of the Valroy family you somehow offended Aldrian the Great in the process, and whatever you are planning to do to me now is to get out of that situation?" Sir Ferix said as he looked back at Munez.

He suddenly chuckled before bursting into a boisterous laugh.

"Ahahaha. Munez, Munez, you finally reached the point where you have to use your own brother life. Your life as a dog of the Valroy family will bring your own destruction, and now you have to use your blood brother to save yourself. Well, I expect nothing less from the man who killed his own father."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows upon hearing this, while Godard was stunned. They had never heard this information before. Munez did not stop his steps as he climbed the stairs without saying a word, but Sir Ferix continued.

"You are the one who killed our father in the past. He did not suddenly pass away while choosing you as his successor," Sir Ferix said angrily. "You must be wondering how I know about this? Well, too bad for you. You never knew all of Father's tricks before you killed him. He had already gave the news to me before he died."

After a moment of silence from Munez, he finally opened his lips.

"I have already had huge suspicions, but... I see, it's Elysia, isn't it? She was actually Father's underling, and she came to you to deliver the message and to protect you. No wonder there was still a woman willing to become your wife despite all of that. Now it all makes sense," he said.

"In the end, you fell in love with her and married her. What a touching story. But don't worry, brother, your wife will also follow you later. You don't have to feel lonely."

Sir Ferix narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean—" he suddenly widened his eyes. "Are you doing something to my wife right now?!" he shouted.

Munez stopped and turned his head, showing a smile. "Who knows?"

That was the face he wanted to see, the face of anger and desperation. Watching his little brother like this was truly refreshing for him.

Munez continued walking, while behind him Sir Ferix gritted his teeth but then could not help sighing in relief, which from Munez's thought looked like a sigh of resignation.

'Fortunately, His Majesty sent another avatar to guard Elysia. If not, I would really be in trouble right now,' Sir Ferix thought.

"Well, like I said, your wife will follow you later. Anyway, let's not talk about that. We've already arrived," Munez said as he stepped onto the platform.

Sir Ferix finally saw the surface of the platform, and it made him frown. There was a large formation engraved there, still bearing traces of devil energy.

The engraved symbols and each lines of the formation created an ominous, giant pattern, and from its style, Sir Ferix knew it was a devil's formation. Godard and Aldrian also arrived on the platform, and Aldrian immediately observed the formation. From the style, he recognized it as a complex devil formation.

He also noticed a small hollow space on the floor, as if something could be placed there.

Standing on the platform, he thought it was used as a place for some kind of ritual. He did not think much further, as Godard pushed him forward into the formation. Munez brought Sir Ferix to the center of the formation and placed him there. Aldrian was also pushed forcefully until he stood beside Sir Ferix.

After bringing both of them to the center, Munez and Godard's figures disappeared and reappeared outside the formation. Munez then took out something from his storage ring. It was a large red crystal that exuded a strong devil energy. He placed the crystal into the hollow space on the floor outside the formation.

The moment he set the crystal in place, the entire formation lit up with a red glow, and a barrier instantly formed around it. As Aldrian observed the change, he sensed that the barrier contained powerful spatial laws, making it nearly impossible for anyone inside to escape by any means.

Suddenly, the formation exuded a thick wave of devil energy that filled the space within it. Aldrian felt his mind being invaded by negative thoughts and whispers of temptation. It was truly like the devil's whisper, trying to lure him into the devil path.

The devil energy also tried to enter his body, as if it sought to corrupt them and turn their bodies into those of devil cultivators.

Aldrian, with his strong mind and soul, managed to resist the whispers. His golden energy easily purified the devil energy inside him. He glanced at Sir Ferix and saw him struggling to withstand the mental invasion. Aldrian moved closer and placed a hand on his shoulder.

Slowly, he channeled his golden energy into Sir Ferix to help clear his mind and purge the devil energy that tried to seep into his body.

Munez and Godard, watching from outside the formation, did not notice that Aldrian was channeling energy into Sir Ferix. They only thought Aldrian was helping Sir Ferix endure the effects of the formation, which in their eyes was pointless.

Sir Ferix, finally able to breathe a little easier thanks to Aldrian's help, looked at Munez with a fuming expression.

"Munez! Why do you have the devils' possession?! What the hell are you going to do to me?!"

"You just need to stay in this place for the time being, and need to endure until I say otherwise. You will become a new person after this formation drop, and you will have a new life—oh well, if you have life after that," Munez replied.

"You bastard! To think that you even have a connection with the devils! A fucking traitor! You will die a horrible death, Munez! You will die when karma strikes you!" Sir Ferix shouted in rage. This one truly angered him to the core.

He had already been told about the possibility of Munez's connection to the devils from Aldrian's avatar.

At that time, he truly hoped that Munez did not really have any connection with the devils. Although he truly hated Munez because of their past, for the sake of the family's history, he really hoped that Munez did not build any connection with the devils. That would tarnish their family's bloodline because one of their own now had ties to the devils.

Now, for Munez to have a red crystal that exuded strong devil energy, and for him to know what kind of formation this was and how to activate it, there was no more doubt. Munez likely had a connection with the devils and had already visited this place in the past.

He couldn't help but feel ashamed to be his brother. He wondered when things had gone wrong. Why could his own blood brother go that far? Was it because of the Valroy family again?

Munez smirked as he saw his little brother's angry face. He understood his brother's fury, but he did not care. He turned to look at Aldrian.

However, he raised his eyebrows when he saw Aldrian's calm expression. Those eyes looked at him calmly as Aldrian placed his hand on his little brother, as if trying to help him endure.

That sight finally made Munez frown. He thought something must be wrong with this man!

He didn't seem to be affected by the formation at all!

The formation that could even turn the most powerful cultivator into a devil cultivator with the mindset of the devils themselves, seemed to have no effect on this mysterious guardian.

A bad feeling rose within him, but he tried to calm his mind.

'Relax, there's nothing wrong with the plan. He can't change anything.'

But then he saw Aldrian smile, which deepened his frown. Aldrian opened his lips.

"I have to thank you for showing your true face, Munez. At least this problem will be taken care of much faster."

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Chapter 830 - 830: The Platform of the Devil God's Baptism

[1,543 words]

"I have to thank you for showing your true face, Munez. At least this problem will be taken care of much faster." Aldrian said.

Munez, upon hearing that, could not help but feel an increasing sense of unease, and his heartbeat quickened. The way this guardian spoke was truly unpleasant and menacing.

Still, as a peak pseudo immortal stage cultivator, he had his own pride and confidence in his strength. Although his instincts told him that there was something wrong with the man beside his little brother, he would not simply run away without knowing who this person truly was. If he had to fight, then so be it.

"Since earlier, I've already been suspicious of you. You must be hiding your true cultivation, right? But to think that you would say such presumptuous words to me while you are in your current situation, I think you still don't understand what kind of situation you are currently in," Munez said with a smile.

Aldrian smiled as he looked down at the formation. "This platform is used by the devils as the baptism site for new devils. What is it called? Ah yes, the Platform of the Devil

God's Baptism. Those who wish to join the devils must be baptized on this formation to be blessed by the Devil God. How could I not know?" He said.

"Although it has a much more complex formation style, I recognize it, as there are similarities with the simpler version used for weaker cultivators. This one here is a much stronger version, and I thought this platform must be used for those at least at the pseudo-immortal stage."

"The ones who want to become devil cultivators but are already at the pseudo-immortal stage have to be baptized on this platform, isn't that right, Patriarch Barevisk?" Aldrian asked with a smile, emphasizing "Patriarch Barevisk."

Munez and Godard could not help but tremble upon hearing Aldrian's explanation. He knew about the Platform of the Devil God's Baptism?

All the time, the devils who successfully built their own territories would continue to expand them. The other powers found it difficult to stop them, which made the devils' territories grow even larger. Their power was immense and seemed unstoppable. With the blessing of the said Devil God, they could become truly powerful cultivators.

That kind of strength is what many people seek, and many will take the devil's path if needed. That is why the devils' strength never dwindles, in fact, it keeps growing. The world never lacks those who desire only power or possess a nature bent on destruction and corruption.

To become a devil, there is a first step before one can truly be considered a true devil cultivator. They have to be baptized on the Platform of the Devil God's Baptism.

This platform is said to shape anyone who wishes to become a devil cultivator into the "true" devil cultivator. It forges their karma with the Devil God before they are recognized as true devil cultivators, giving them the mindset and nature of one.

This is also one of the devils' methods to ensure no spies from other powers can infiltrate their ranks. No one can disguise themselves as a devil cultivator. Anyone attempting to impersonate one will be exposed, as there will always be clear signs that they are not true devil cultivators.

Even if someone tries to become a devil cultivator while still holding allegiance to another power, it will not work.

They cannot simply take the devil cultivation technique, cultivate with it, and be done. They must possess the same mindset as the devils. That is what they gain when they enter the platform of baptism. They are brainwashed, and their bodies are reshaped into those of devil cultivators.

Their original cultivation becomes corrupted by devil energy or even destroyed before they begin cultivating the devil's technique.

Once they become true devil cultivators, their loyalty belongs solely to the Devil God. They abandon their morals and sever all ties with any other power on their own.

Now, what truly shocked Munez and Godard was that the information about the Platform of the Devil God's Baptism was known only to those who had entered the devils' main base or their main territory.

That was because the devils always placed these platforms deep within their main territories. As many had already experienced, once the devils established a territory, there was little chance of reclaiming it. Those lands would become the devils' new home.

Thanks to their cunning nature, seemingly endless and powerful manpower, and unity under a single purpose, the devils were nearly impossible to defeat entirely once they had taken root on a planet.

Almost no one knew about the existence of the Platform of Baptism due to the limited information that could be obtained from the devils. Those captured would rather die than speak, and even if they were caught, they would not easily surrender.

The mind seals placed within their brains by high-ranking devils were complex. This made searching their memories extremely difficult, as the seals would likely break and kill them in the process.

With such limited knowledge of how the devils operated, those who opposed them could only study and analyze their behavior from the outside. The only ones who truly knew the steps to become devils and the secrets related to it, were the devil cultivators themselves.

The others would have no way of knowing about the platform unless they saw it with their own eyes, which was almost impossible since it was placed deep within the devils' territory. Everyone knew how dangerous it was to enter those lands, and even pseudo-immortal stage cultivators were no exception.

"You... who are you? How did you know about the Platform of the Devil God's Baptism?" Munez asked, finally recognizing Aldrian as a threat. He was certain this man was not a devil cultivator, which meant he either had some connection with the devils or had seen the platform himself.

If it was the latter, that would mean this person was an incredibly powerful cultivator, one capable of entering and leaving the devils's main territories alive.

As for Aldrian, he only smiled and gave no answer. How could he not know, when he had already seen such things through countless memories of the devils? The platforms on the Barisan Continent had already been destroyed during the war, even before anyone understood what they truly were.

Whenever it involved the devils, the sites were destroyed before anyone could learn the platforms' true purpose. Most people assumed the platforms were used for some kind of sacrifice ritual or a summoning formation.

Hearing no answer from Aldrian and seeing that Aldrian was not affected by the formation, Munez finally made his decision.

'No, he was too dangerous. I have to kill him,' he thought.

He wanted to strike with his technique. Energy already gathered in his hand, but suddenly he could not move his arm at all!

In fact, his body went stiff, immobile as stone. Godard felt the same, which shocked him. He tried to turn his head toward Munez, but he couldn't.

Munez, who did not understand what had happened, suddenly heard footstep behind them.

Step.

Then another...

Step, step, step.

At this moment, Sir Ferix's expression was filled with shock at the sudden appearance of the figure. The avatar beside him only smiled, while Munez, seeing his little brother's shocked expression, realized that whoever stood behind him must be someone known to his brother.

He could not comprehend how anyone had appeared behind him without being noticed. Godard felt the same, his heart trembling as he realized he had not sensed a thing. Whoever was behind them must have been a powerful pseudo immortal stage cultivator skilled in concealment.

Not even Patriarch Barevisk could detect the figure until it was too late. They could not move at all, bound by what appeared to be the figure's technique.

Both he and Munez instantly recognized that the force restraining them was space laws. The figure behind them had hardened the surrounding space and locked them in place.

The only part of their bodies they could move was their eyes, which they used to glance to the sides. The sound of footsteps drew closer and closer until, finally, a figure appeared at the edge of their vision.

The figure placed a hand on both of their shoulders and spoke.

"To be honest, this is unexpected. I did not plan to come here in the first place, but because of you and this place, I found myself interested enough to come personally."

The figure was a man with long red hair, dressed in regal imperial attire. He looked at the red crystal on the floor before bending down to pick it up.

The moment he did, the barrier trapping Sir Ferix and the avatar slowly faded away. Sir Ferix immediately took a deep breath in relief, though his gaze remained fixed on the figure. Judging by the man's attire, he knew this was the real body, and not the avatar.

'Aldrian the Great! How could he appear here?' he thought.

Aldrian the Great, in the flesh, stood not far from him. He had come personally.

When Munez finally saw the man's face, his heart nearly stopped. This was the very man he wanted to avoid the most, the one who had driven him to do all of this in the first place.

'Aldrian the Great! How the hell did he get here?!' he screamed inside his mind.

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