

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 111: Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon's Request - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 111: Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon's Request

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Kang Yong-Jin cupped his hands, his eyes showing both respect and determination. He knew he needed to cultivate further to grow stronger. His new target was clear—to one day beat Aldrian. This battle had been a valuable experience, as it was the first time he faced someone who wielded space laws. His hands still trembled from the impact, serving as a vivid reminder that he was not yet strong enough.

As for Aldrian, he looked at Kang Yong-Jin with newfound respect. Typically, young lords like him would let pride cloud their judgment, failing to see the bigger picture. But it seemed Kang Yong-Jin's passion for cultivation was strong enough to keep his pride in check. Recognizing his own limits would only drive him to work harder to break through them.

Aldrian smiled and cupped his hands in return.

"You are truly an admirable opponent, and there's no need to be humble. You are indeed tough and strong. This is my honest opinion, and I hope you continue to maintain this spirit."

Kang Yong-Jin was momentarily stunned, but he smiled before he stepped down from the platform. Despite his loss, no one mocked him, for they all knew how powerful he was. It was simply that he had encountered a monster even stronger than himself.

The group from the Black Dragon Pavilion was equally surprised and impressed by the rising name that had emerged from nowhere. They had heard of Aldrian, the man who had become a focal point of the three great sects over the past year. After seeing him yesterday at the Temple of the Heavenly Demon and today's sparring match, they finally understood why the three sects had given him such significant attention.

Aldrian stepped down from the platform, intending to blend back in as an ordinary spectator, though he knew it was now impossible. He walked toward Sylphia and the others when he noticed Baek Ji-Min looking at him with a smile. He responded with a smile of his own, but then she sent him a voice transmission.

"I've received a reply from my mother regarding your request to read the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture."

Aldrian was momentarily stunned but continued walking toward his group, waiting for her to finish.

"She said she will allow you to read it."

Hearing this, Aldrian smiled, though his expression was directed toward his group.

"Good. Thank you for the information," he responded.

Turning to his group, he spoke.

"Guys, after this, we'll head back to the Thorny Flower Garden. We've stayed here long enough, and I have some final business there. After that, we can continue our journey to the Forgeheart Kingdom."

"Why are we going back to the Thorny Flower Garden?" Sylphia asked, narrowing her eyes.

"It has to do with the Heavenly Demon's scripture. What? Did you think I had something else in mind?" he replied with a teasing smile.

"No... no, do whatever you need to," She quickly answered.

"Then it's settled."

Aldrian then went to meet with Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae to inform him of his plan to leave the Piercing Heaven Sect today.

"You're already leaving? Why such a rush? You could take advantage of the peaceful environment here to cultivate," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said.

"Unfortunately, I have my own journey to follow, so maybe next time I'll have more time to enjoy the Piercing Heaven Sect more thoroughly."

"Where are you heading? Would you like one of our grand elders to accompany you for support?"

"I'm going to Forgeheart Kingdom, and no, I don't need any elders to follow me. Don't you think that's a bit much? Having a grand elder just to assist me seems excessive. You don't need to worry sect master."

Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae sighed.

"You are right, with your strength and even the sword saint in your group, there is no problem that can stand in your way except it involved peak sovereign of the empire, I'm just worried for nothing."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows that Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae knew about Xin Haotian, while the sect master looked at him with an expression that suggested it was already obvious.

"What? Did you think his disguise could hide him from me? The Sword Saint's aura and energy are unmistakable, thanks to his famous light laws. As for you, I can't quite see through your disguise. Your golden energy obstructs my vision. I know you're hiding your true appearance, but I can't see beyond that."

Aldrian nodded; as expected of the Sect Master of the Piercing Heaven Sect—one of the strongest on the continent—there was nothing that could deceive his eyes.

"Well then, that settles it. Thank you for your hospitality and support, Sect Master. If you ever need my help in the future, don't hesitate to ask. I'll do my best to assist you or the Piercing Heaven Sect."

"Your promise is more than enough. At least I know I'll have a reliable ally."

Aldrian went outside and headed to visit Baek Ji-Min to discuss their upcoming visit to the Thorny Flower Garden's Temple of the Heavenly Demon.

"My mother said she will grant you permission, but you have to meet her in person. That's what she told me," Baek Ji-Min said once they were inside her room.

Aldrian nodded. Although he didn't know why Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon wanted to meet him personally, he was confident that he could gain her approval.

"Then I'll head to the Thorny Flower Garden now. Do you want to come with me, or do you have other matters to attend to?" Aldrian asked.

"No, I'll come with you," Baek Ji-Min replied.

Aldrian then gathered his group and informed them of their departure. Once they were ready and joined by the entourage from the Thorny Flower Garden, they swiftly left the Piercing Heaven Sect without further delay.

A few hours later, inside the Sect Master's room at the Thorny Flower Garden, sect master Baek Ha-Yoon gazed at the small box in her hands filled with old mementos. Among the items was a drawing of a woman and a man, its style making it clear it had been drawn by a child. A faint smile crossed her lips as she studied the drawing, her eyes reflecting a range of emotions.

While she was immersed in her thoughts, a knock suddenly came from the door.

"Sect Master, the young miss has arrived with the guests," came the voice from outside.

Baek Ha-Yoon immediately composed herself, her serene expression returning as she glanced at the drawing one last time before carefully placing it into a drawer in her work table.

"Send Young Master Aldrian and Ji-Min in, and take the others to their guest rooms," she ordered calmly.

Moments later, the door opened, and Aldrian and Baek Ji-Min walked in. The Sect Master greeted them with her usual expressionless face.

"I've heard of your remarkable achievement in comprehending the Heavenly Demon's Scripture. Congratulations—you are truly extraordinary. I have no doubt that your name will echo across the entire continent in the future," she said to Aldrian.

"Sect Master, you're exaggerating. It just so happens that I have a natural compatibility with the Heavenly Demon's Scripture. It has little to do with my abilities," Aldrian responded modestly.

"You're too humble, Young Master. The Heavenly Demon's Scripture is not like other scriptures. It requires more than just fate and fortune—you also need the capability to wield it," Baek Ha-Yoon said, her gaze turning questioning.

"But why do you wish to read the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture when you've already comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Scripture? It's quite unusual. Ji-Min only told me that it's somehow connected to both you and the Heavenly Demon's Scripture."

"Yes, that's correct. When I comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Scripture, I encountered something beyond my knowledge. I believe the information I need is written in the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture," Aldrian explained.

Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon pondered his words for a moment before speaking again.

"I will allow you to read the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, but only if you agree to this request of mine."

"I'm listening," Aldrian replied, his expression calm.

Without a change in her demeanor, Baek Ha-Yoon continued, "You must take Baek Ji-Min with you on your journey. Wherever you go, she will follow."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows at this unexpected request. He was ready for anything she wanted to say to him and prepared to negotiate to the best of his ability. But to think she would give him a request involving her daughter? That took him by surprise.

Baek Ji-Min was shocked by her mother's unexpected request.

"Mother, what are you talking about? Why do I have to follow Young Master Aldrian?" she asked, her voice laced with confusion, embarrassment, and a touch of anger. Though her relationship with her mother wasn't what it used to be, she still held some respect for her. But now, hearing her mother's request, Baek Ji-Min couldn't help but feel as if her mother was trying to distance herself.

By sending her off with Aldrian's group, Baek Ji-Min would be far away from the sect—and from her mother. A sadness crept into her heart. The idea that her mother might be pushing her away caused her pain, not for herself, but for her mother.

Chapter 112: What is My Truth?

Baek Ji-Min didn't know why, but ever since her father went missing, her mother's personality had changed. Her father had disappeared even before she comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, and one day her mother's behavior suddenly shifted. Baek Ji-Min wasn't sure what had happened, but she suspected something occurred to her father on that day.

Since then, her mother had become colder toward others. She had grown more distant, taking on her role as sect master with increased ruthlessness. If Baek Ji-Min used her eye technique, she could tell her mother had her own agenda, though the details and when it all began remained a mystery.

Aldrian watched as Baek Ji-Min asked her question. He also observed the sect master, who seemed cold on the surface. He didn't know what she was like in the past, so he refrained from commenting—after all, this wasn't his family's business.

"It's for your own good," Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon said to her daughter. "It will also give you the opportunity to experience the outside world, rather than always being trapped inside Demon territory."

Baek Ji-Min wanted to argue, but her mother cut her off.

"Besides, this is what you wanted, right?"

Baek Ji-Min fell silent because her mother was right. For a long time, she had wanted to explore the world. She was already fed up with staying in the Thorny Flower Garden or within Demon territory. She needed to clear her mind somewhere, and since meeting Aldrian, that feeling had only intensified. But how had her mother figured it out when no one else knew?

Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon then turned her attention to Aldrian.

"What do you think? Do you agree, young master?"

Aldrian looked at her for a moment before replying, "If Miss Baek is okay with it, I will gladly take her along with my group."

Hearing Aldrian's response, Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon nodded. She glanced at her daughter, who now wore a sad expression, but ignored her and stood up.

"I will bring you to the temple of the Heavenly Demon," Baek Ha-Yoon said.

She then led them toward the temple. They passed many areas and walked deeper into the sect. Along the way, they had to cross a giant gap between towering cliffs before finally arriving at the temple of the Heavenly Demon. Unlike the temple in the Piercing Heaven Sect, which was situated high in the sky, the Thorny Flower Garden's temple was hidden between the steep cliffs.

The temple was quite large, its structure enveloped in the shadows of the cliffs, but the darkness did nothing to diminish its grandeur. Aldrian marveled at its beauty as he watched Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon walk toward a massive red door and place her hands on it. What he saw was strikingly similar to the entrance to the Heavenly Demon temple in the Piercing Heaven Sect.

Once the door opened, Aldrian noticed that the architecture and hall design were nearly identical, with the only major difference being a large symbol of the Heavenly Demon with a flower beneath it, placed behind the giant altar. After they entered the temple, Baek Ha-Yoon proceeded to do exactly what Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae had done to summon the scripture. As Aldrian expected, the scripture was also engraved on a stone tablet.

Once the stone tablet was in position, Baek Ha-Yoon signaled to Aldrian, giving him permission to begin. Before he could approach, however, one of the grand elders appeared from behind them, eyeing them with puzzled expression.

"Sect Master, why are you bringing the successor of the Heavenly Demon's scripture to our scripture?" the elder asked, her voice filled with concern.

Initially, the elder had dismissed the event as an ordinary visit to the temple with the sect master, but involving their most secret scripture changed the situation.

"He just wants to see it. There's nothing to worry about," Baek Ha-Yoon replied, still focused on the stone tablet.

"But—" the elder began to voice her opinion, but immediately fell silent when the sect master shot her a cold look with piercing blue eyes. The elder dared not voice any further objections.

Aldrian paused briefly to observe the exchange. *"So, she agreed to my request to look at the scripture without informing the others,"* he thought, standing before the stone tablet.

As he studied the beautifully engraved words, he had not yet fully comprehended the scripture, but he immediately noticed the differences from the Heavenly Demon's Scripture.

"There are still some of the same words from the Heavenly Demon's Scripture, but these lines..." Aldrian murmured as he focused on a few unfamiliar lines that were not present in the Heavenly Demon's Scripture.

"The beings under the Heavens each hold their own truth. Their souls are merely a veil over the essence of their being. You can deceive the soul, but you can't avoid the truth. You may live many lives and mask your soul, but you can't avoid the truth."

He studied the sentence carefully.

"The Beings under the Heavens have their own truth refers to the being's essence. Their souls are merely a veil over the being's essence is literal, meaning the soul is just the outer shell. You can deceive the souls, but you cannot escape the truth likely signifies that while the soul can be altered, the truth cannot. You may live many lives and even mask your souls, but the truth is inescapable—this must be referring to reincarnation."

He continued reading the next set of lines.

"The truth will always follow you, but not at the same time. The truth resides within you, but not always in the same form. You will never fully know it, if you never seek it. The only way to understand the truth is to feel it for yourself, to immerse yourself in your 'truth.'"

Aldrian read the rest of the stone tablet, but all the remaining lines were the same as those found in the Heavenly Demon's Scripture. Pondering for a moment, his mind drifted into deep thought.

"This is the abstract part of the being's essence, I need to understand what the being's essence truly is from these lines." he considered.

"The truth will always follow you, but not at the same time. The truth resides within you, but not always in the same form. You will never fully know it, if you never seek it," he thought, analyzing the words carefully. *"That must mean the truth is always within us, but it doesn't always take on a physical or spiritual form. Or perhaps it can be one, or even both?"*

His attention shifted to the last part. *"The only way to know the truth is to feel it yourself, to immerse yourself in your 'truth' what does that mean?"* He continued pondering.

Aldrian kept his eyes fixed on the sentences, trying to piece it all together. *"The truth about myself, to immerse in my truth... Wait, before I was brought into my being's essence, all I felt was rage. And my pride... It didn't take it lightly when that 'thing' appeared and made me feel fear. Does my truth have a connection to my pride?"*

He recalled the emotions that had surfaced, stemming from his inner personality—his pride that refused to accept the humiliation he had experienced at that moment. The hidden pride, the unexpected rage that he never thought he could express, all of it was something he hadn't fully known about himself until then.

"At that time, I was consumed by my own pride and rage. Is this what it means by seeing it for myself, immersing in my 'truth'—the parts of me I didn't fully recognize?"

"Is allowing myself to be consumed by my own emotions the only way to visit my being's essence?" Aldrian wondered. *"No, if that were the case, many people would have discovered their essence and visited that place. So what else could it be?"* He furrowed his brow, thinking deeply. *"At that time, I didn't feel anything but rage and pride. Is it only through these emotions that I can access that place?"*

Despite reading the lines again, he still couldn't find his answer.

"But why would my truth be connected to rage and pride? What is the meaning of that void space with the golden light above it? The space of nothingness—I'm part of it, yet not at the same time. The golden light is a part of me, yet not at the same time."

As he delved deeper into his thoughts, Aldrian unknowingly entered a state of comprehension, his mind fully immersed in the mystery of his being's essence.

He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, he found himself in a completely different space. This time, it wasn't the white realm where he had encountered the Heavenly Demon. Instead, he stood in a vast field of flowers, with countless types of flowers surrounding him. The fresh scent of the flowers filled his lungs, and the gentle breeze brushing his face made him want to lie down and relax, but he couldn't.

That was because, not far from him, stood a woman with her back facing him. She wore a plain white dress as pure as snow, and her long black hair flowed gently in the wind. Even from behind, Aldrian could tell that this woman was incredibly beautiful.

Suddenly, the woman turned to face him, revealing a stunningly beautiful smile and red eyes that captivated him. Yet, there was something familiar about her, a feeling that tugged at his consciousness. She lowered her gaze respectfully before speaking in a soft voice.

"Welcome."

Chapter 113: The Woman of the Flower

Aldrian was stunned as he recalled all those visions where many people regarded him as their leader. He remembered that one of those voices matched the woman's voice before him. Could she be connected to his past reincarnation? Among all the memories and visions, one of the most vivid was when he treated like an emperor or sovereign. People revered, adored, and even worshipped him. Was she someone from that time? He set the thought aside, feeling confused.

"Who are you, miss? Why are you here when this is supposed to be the Heavenly Demon's domain?" Aldrian asked.

The woman lifted her head and gave him a warm smile. Her sharp eyes and small lips added a unique charm to her features.

"This is both my husband's and my domain, so it's only natural for me to be here."

Aldrian nodded in understanding, but then something clicked in his mind. His eyes widened in shock.

"Wait, you're the wife of the Heavenly Demon?! What?!" He was astonished, having believed the Heavenly Demon to live a reclusive life, detached from worldly desires. But now, this woman in front of him was claiming to be his wife? He tried to probe deeper into her identity, but the results were the same as when he tried to understand the Heavenly Demon—nothing.

The woman giggled at Aldrian's shocked expression, but behind that laughter, a flicker of sadness briefly crossed her eyes before disappearing, too quickly for Aldrian to notice.

"You don't need to be shocked. My husband is still a being with his own characteristics and personality. He has desires, just like any human," she said, her voice full of admiration and affection.

"Because this is the scripture that my husband and I wrote together. I contributed my knowledge to it, ensuring that the next generation could carry on our legacy," she explained.

Aldrian felt enlightened by this revelation, realizing that another person had helped create the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

"If the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture was a joint effort between the Heavenly Demon and his wife, then did the Heavenly Demon's Black Dragon Scripture was also a joint effort between the Black Dragon and him?" he wondered. But that was as far as his curiosity went; he wasn't interested in the Black Dragon Scripture. He was here for his own reasons—his interest in the Being's essence.

"If you want your legacy to continue, why make such a difficult scripture to pass on? I mean, with all that stuff about fate bearers and whatnot," Aldrian asked.

"We didn't intend for it to be that way," she explained. "It's because everything my husband creates carries his karma, which imposes a heavy burden on anyone who uses or comprehends it. It's like the universe's balancing system, keeping the order intact."

"In fact, everything a 'higher being' leaves for their successors comes with this kind of burden. It varies based on the extent of their role and karma in the universe," she added.

Aldrian finally understood the reason behind the puzzle that had been stuck in his mind.

"So the universe itself intervenes. It makes sense now—anything created by a higher being would have immense power, and the Heavenly Demon's creations are no exception. That's why only those capable of bearing the responsibility are allowed, and deemed worthy enough, to wield such power." He thought, then asked his next question.

"Then why don't I bear the Heavenly Demon's name destiny?"

"What if I told you that you bear a greater destiny than my husband? I can't tell you the details, but you'll find out in time. It's not good for you to know right now," she replied.

Aldrian was shocked by her answer. He had a greater destiny than the Heavenly Demon? Now he truly wondered what kind of person he was, to hold a fate greater than one of the strongest experts of ancient times, whose legend still echoed to this day.

He at least now understood why the 'thing' he felt trying to reach him after comprehending the Heavenly Demon's Scripture dissipated when it touched him. The greater destiny he carried would reject anything that could interfere with it.

He looked down at his hands, feeling lost and uncertain. His past seemed complicated, and with all the hints and directions he had followed, he could sense the immense burden on his shoulders. He glanced at the woman's red eyes, noticing the same pattern he had seen in both the Heavenly Demon and Baek Ji-Min. With a sigh, he realized he could only take things one step at a time.

"Do you know why I was drawn to the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture?" he asked.

The woman, who hadn't disturbed his train of thought, pointed at him.

"You want to understand the 'truth'—or more specifically, *your* truth, right? You want to visit that place—your Being's essence."

Aldrian was silent for a moment before nodding. In truth, he wanted to learn how to access his Being's essence, but he knew that by understanding and embracing his own truth, he would achieve the same result.

"As I wrote in the scripture, you must come to know your true self and fully immerse in it—or, to put it simply, you must embrace it," she said.

"How am I supposed to know my truth or my true self if I don't even know what my truth is? If I knew how to immerse myself in it and understand my true self, I wouldn't need to be here trying to comprehend the Being's essence," Aldrian replied, frustration creeping into his voice.

"Who told you that you don't know your true self? You already know yourself, even if it's only a very small part of it. You can immerse in that and embrace it. Isn't that why you were able to visit your Being's essence?" the woman said.

Aldrian felt confused, but he tried to understand her words. He had already embraced and known a part of his true self without realizing it. Even though it wasn't his entire true self, it was still connected to his Being's essence. He pondered this for a few moments, then suddenly slapped his forehead as he remembered something.

Stretching out his hand, he focused on releasing his golden energy. He wasn't sure if he could summon it here, but he decided to try—and he succeeded. The golden energy enveloped his hand, and he gazed at it with a complicated expression. The woman briefly glanced at the energy with glittering eyes, but only for a split second before returning to her usual composure.

"How could I forget! The golden energy is a part of me, and without realizing it, I always thought it was an external power that somehow slipped into my body. I never once considered it my own. Deep inside, I've always wondered about its origin, and never once considered that I was its owner. When I saw that 'thing,' I felt nothing but rage after fear, and in that moment, I couldn't think clearly. I just embraced all my power and became one with it to suppress the fear in my heart," he thought.

"If this golden energy is really part of my true self, and I'm the bearer of a greater destiny than the Heavenly Demon, then who am I? If all those memories are from my reincarnations, which one is the real me?" he wondered, feeling like he had taken a small but significant step closer to understanding his true self, even if it was just the beginning.

Aldrian had already begun to embrace a small part of himself, trying to piece together the puzzle of his true identity. Now, he felt himself picking up the pieces, each one slowly forming a larger picture. Suddenly, an epiphany struck him.

"You must embrace your true self first before you can solve this puzzle. Only by becoming one with it can you truly understand," he realized.

"I'm sorry, but it seems we must end our conversation here," the woman's voice broke through his thoughts, waking him from his contemplation. "Our time is almost up."

He then looked at the woman with gratitude, cupped his hands in respect, and even gave a slight bow. The woman nearly moved to stop him but restrained herself.

"Thank you for the epiphany. It's been truly helpful, and now I know what I must do and where my path lies. I wish we could talk longer, but I've already taken up too much of your time," he said sincerely.

The woman simply nodded with a smile before offering her parting words.

"I believe you will find your true self, and when you do, I hope you'll discover your answers. And also don't blame yourself when you reach the end of the road. May glory always follow you wherever you go."

Aldrian nodded in return as his figure dissolved into particles of light. Once he was completely gone, the woman stared at the empty space where he had stood. Then, lowering her head, she bowed deeply towards the emptiness.

"Your Majesty."

Chapter 114: Six Months

Aldrian slowly opened his eyes, and the first thing he saw was the stone tablet of the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture. He felt new knowledge settle into his mind, and he finally understood the Being's essence more deeply. The concepts that had previously eluded him vanished as if they had never existed, thanks to his comprehension of the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

He had received the crucial information he needed, all thanks to the woman—the wife of the Heavenly Demon. He bowed to the stone tablet before turning around to look for the sect master and Baek Ji-Min, but neither of them was there.

"Don't tell me I've been here for a year?" he thought, hoping that nothing had gone wrong while he was in that space.

He then approached the large double doors, now closed. Just as he was about to touch them, the giant doors slowly open, revealing the sect master, who looked at him with a mixture of amazement and shock. Aldrian smiled before approaching her and cupped his hands toward Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon.

"I'm sorry if I took too much time. I hope nothing went wrong while I was in my comprehension session."

"You need not worry," Baek Ha-Yoon replied. "Although six months have passed, everything has remained in order."

Aldrian was stunned by her words. Fortunately, it had only been six months, though it was still longer than he had anticipated. Now he understood why cultivators could remain in seclusion for years—the flow of time felt different while cultivating, passing much faster than expected.

He then looked to the sect master's side, where Baek Ji-Min gazed at him as if he were her ancestor. In fact, not only her—several grand elders nearby regarded him as though he were an anomaly. When they first heard that the sect master had granted permission for the successor of the Heavenly Demon's Scripture to view their secret scripture, they were filled with doubt and even displeasure.

The thought of an outsider studying their sacred scripture was seen as disgraceful, regardless of the fact that this outsider was the chosen successor of the Heavenly Demon's Scripture. The grand elders had urged the sect master to provide an explanation. They even warned her, she could face backlash in the form of the elders' judgment. Her position as sect master would be at risk, and she might even be replaced.

But who was Baek Ha-Yoon? She simply let their protests go in one ear and out the other. She essentially ignored them, indirectly telling them, "Go fuck with your opinions." As the leader of one of the three great sects of the Demon territory, she had the power and authority to back her decisions.

She knew that not all of the elders liked her, but she didn't care. In demon territory and among demonic cultivators, strength was everything. There were no "ancestors" or other figures of authority to keep her in check within this sect—she was the strongest here!

After Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon had put the elders in their place, there was little they could do. They couldn't push her too far, as they still relied on her strength. Though some had the same level of cultivation as her, her power was widely recognized throughout the demon territory and beyond.

Now, as Aldrian emerged from the Heavenly Demon's temple, the grand elders, who had once doubted him, were shocked. They realized he had comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture. How did they know? Because Aldrian's eyes had turned a bright, fiery red.

After opening his eyes earlier, Aldrian had activated the Heavenly Demon's Eyes of Truth. Although he could use this technique after first comprehending the Heavenly Demon's scripture, he had chosen not to, feeling it wasn't necessary. However, now that he had also comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, he felt compelled to test the technique with his newly gained knowledge.

The knowledge of this technique and the Being's essence in the Heavenly Demon's Scripture wasn't as complete as in the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture. This made him wonder if the Heavenly Demon's wife was the creator of the technique and an expert in the spiritual elements of the Being.

As Aldrian looked around, he could now see things that had been hidden from him earlier. Some of the elders had smiling faces but rotten hearts, while others wore serene expressions, yet their inner selves were twisted. Each one of them concealed something beneath their outward appearance, and it became clear to him that they all had their own secrets.

When he turned his gaze to Baek Ji-Min, he saw a different image—a flower, a beautiful flower standing tall in the middle of a thunderstorm.

"That must be her representation, a lone flower, fighting against the storm that rages around her. It also symbolizes the Heavenly Demon's Flower." he thought.

What puzzled him most, however, was the image he saw surrounding Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon. Behind her calm and detached demeanor, he saw a thorny rose. This rose was surrounded by rotten corpses, making it appear as though she was the last thing standing amidst a slaughter. The thorny rose hidden behind her eyes revealed a darker, more dangerous side to her that she concealed from the world.

Aldrian suddenly understood what Baek Ji-Min must have experienced. She had gained this ability in her teens. If she had been seeing the world like this for most of her life, she could easily have gotten lost in her own thoughts, potentially developing an inner demon from the overwhelming sight of others' hidden natures.

"She's truly a tough woman, with an incredible strength of will," Aldrian thought to himself.

He then deactivated the technique, causing his eyes to return to their original blue, a sight that left Baek Ji-Min visibly shocked.

"How did you do that?" she asked through voice transmission.

"It's a secret," Aldrian replied, his tone playful.

"Sect Master, I would like to stay here for today. Is that okay? If not, then I'll be on my way," Aldrian said.

"Of course you can stay. Your companions are already in their accommodations, waiting for you. You're welcome to stay as long as you wish," Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon replied.

"Thank you for your generosity, sect master. I'll excuse myself to my room, then. I need to consolidate the gains I've made from the scripture, if I may."

Baek Ha-Yoon gave a nod to one of the elders, who motioned to lead Aldrian to his room. Baek Ji-Min watched him go, then quickly followed, but not before bowing to her mother. Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon watched them walk away, a small smile forming on her lips—a smile unseen by anyone else.

As they made their way to his room, Baek Ji-Min bombarded Aldrian with questions.

"How did you change your eye color back to normal?"

"How did you manage to comprehend the scripture?"

"Why wasn't there a phenomenon like when you comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Scripture?"

Aldrian waited until they were seated in his room before answering.

"How did I change my eye color? Hmm, let's just say it returned to normal without me doing anything."

"As for how I comprehended the scripture, I just... did. There wasn't anything stopping me."

"And why wasn't there a phenomenon? I'm not sure."

Of course, he couldn't reveal the deeper truth—that it had to do with his own rage when he looked at the 'thing' and his connection to his domain, something he kept carefully guarded as one of his secrets.

Hearing his answer, Baek Ji-Min felt like pulling her hair in frustration. It seemed like Aldrian was teasing her, not giving proper answers. Yet, the way he spoke—so calm and without a hint of a joke—made her doubt her initial reaction. Maybe he was being serious, but his vagueness left her feeling unsatisfied. Aldrian didn't offer any further explanation, simply telling her what he felt she needed to know.

"By the way, when you comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, did you meet a woman?" Aldrian suddenly asked.

"A woman? If you mean the silhouette of a woman, then yes, I saw her," Baek Ji-Min replied.

"You didn't talk to her?"

"Of course not. I felt like I couldn't speak. It was only for a moment that I saw her, and I have no idea why her silhouette appeared when I comprehended the scripture."

Aldrian pondered her response.

"So, the experience of meeting the Heavenly Demon and his wife... that was just me?" he wondered silently, setting the thought aside for now.

The conversation shifted, and they discussed various aspects of the scriptures. Naturally, Aldrian didn't reveal everything, keeping some knowledge to himself.

Soon, Sylphia, Eleine, and Xin Haotian joined them, and the room filled with chatter. Over the past six months, Xin Haotian and the others had grown closer to Baek Ji-Min, forming a strong bond.

As day turned to night, Aldrian was finally left alone in his room. He sat cross-legged on his bed, reflecting deeply on the insights he had gained from the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

Chapter 115: Continuing Their Journey

Aldrian pondered over his gains today. While they might not have directly increased his strength like his experience in the temple of the Piercing Heaven Sect, they were still invaluable. The knowledge he gained would undoubtedly help him in the future.

"What Baek Ji-Min said about the Being's essence wasn't far from the truth, It's impossible to visit something that has an abstract nature and no fixed form. A Being's essence is merely the embodiment of their true self, something even they might not fully understand." he thought.

"Each Being's essence holds its own truth, and that truth can take many forms. It is shaped by our past actions and the origin that always follows us—the karmic ties that persist, even through reincarnation cycle."

"Luckily, I have my golden energy, which is connected to my past and my true self, and it has led me to my Being's essence, allowing me to visit it. Essentially, you must find a part of your true self, embrace it, and acknowledge it for what it is. Only then can you step into that realm. The challenge is that it's almost impossible to find your true self."

"You need deep meditation and introspection to discover it, but with so many distractions inside and outside the body, one could easily spend an entire lifetime searching. Most people don't bother to search it. And even if they do find their true self, they won't acknowledge it."

Aldrian placed his hand on his chin and pondered,

"With these systems that shape us—even connected to our past lives—does Heaven want some of us to reflect and introspect on how we've become who we are today?" He understood that, with such a system and its limitations, not all beings have the privilege of self-reflection, as if Heaven reserved it for the chosen few.

He didn't have the answer yet, but he felt he was heading in the right direction. Closing his eyes, he immersed himself in self-introspection, recalling the moment when the golden energy became his own, not just some external power, but a part of his origin. Time began to slip away, and soon he felt his body lighten, as if floating in space.

When he opened his eyes, he was back in the dark space, the same place he had been before awakening from his comprehension state in front of the Heavenly Demon's Scripture. He could still see the distant lone star, shining its light as if trying to guide him down the right path. But this time, he chose not to move toward it.

Instead, he remained still, focusing on his surroundings. Even though he couldn't sense anything at first, he was determined to feel everything—even if that meant embracing the void, embracing the nothingness.

"This is all part of my truth, part of my origin. Who was I in the past to have a Being's essence like this?"

He recalled the words of the Heavenly Demon and his wife: *"If you find your answers in the future, don't blame yourself."* They clearly knew him, and they knew his past. *"What did I do for them to warn me not to blame myself?"*

He continued to reflect, and after what felt like hours, he decided it was time to wake up from this state. Before leaving the dark space, he glanced at the distant star once more before disappearing from the void.

When he opened his eyes, sunlight was already streaming into his room. He stood up and stretched, easing the tension in his muscles.

"It's much easier to enter my Being's essence now that I understand how to do it," he remarked to himself.

He then spread his senses throughout the entire sect until he spotted the three girls in one of the gardens. They seemed to be discussing something, and although Sylphia and Baek Ji-Min still had an occasionally awkward dynamic, they appeared more harmonious than before. At this point, they were aware of his agreement with Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon and had adapted to it.

He also looked at Xin Haotian, who was cultivating in his own room, detaching himself from the world. Everyone seemed to be doing well, and now that his business here was complete, it was time for them to continue their journey to the Forgeheart Kingdom!

After gathering all the group members, Aldrian informed them of their departure for Forgeheart Kingdom, but then he noticed Baek Ji-Min looking restless.

"What's wrong? Is something bothering you? Do you want to stay here?" Aldrian asked.

"No, I'm just nervous because it's my first time leaving the Demon territory. And I keep thinking about my mother. I want to leave with you, but I'm also worried about her. It's the first time I've seen her push me to go beyond the Demon territory. I've never been so far away from her, and I don't know what she plans to do once I'm gone."

"Do you want to hear my opinion?" Aldrian asked through a voice transmission. Baek Ji-Min responded with a nod.

"Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon is stronger than you think. You've already seen her other side, haven't you?"

She nodded again.

"Your mother seems to be hiding secrets and an agenda, but don't you think she might be doing that to protect you from the shadows?" Aldrian suggested.

"What are you talking about?" she asked, puzzled.

"I've been thinking," Aldrian continued, *"after I looked at your mother's Being essence. Maybe we saw the same thing, but I viewed it from a different perspective. This is just a hypothesis, but her cold demeanor, from the time your father disappeared to the moment she allowed you to leave with me, might be her way of protecting you."*

Baek Ji-Min remained silent, her mind processing his words.

"I don't know what she's planning, but with you in the sect, you could be her weakness. I suspect that once you're outside Demon territory, she'll be able to take care of business she couldn't handle while you were here."

There was another reason Aldrian had reached this conclusion. When he agreed to Baek Ha-Yoon's request to take her daughter with him, he sensed a wave of relief from her. He didn't fully understand why, but he guessed it had something to do with her own struggles. It was as if she had been waiting for the right time to let her daughter go.

Aldrian couldn't figure out exactly what Baek Ha-Yoon was planning or thinking, so he couldn't provide more details. However, he firmly believed it had something to do with her own personal matters that required Baek Ji-Min to leave the Demon territory.

Baek Ji-Min's eyes widened as she considered his words. What Aldrian said made sense. Her mother, who had always maintained a cold demeanor and rarely showed any emotion, had never truly placed her in difficult situations, except for the time she brought her to the scripture. Her life in the sect had otherwise seemed normal. The only difference was that she became isolated, and the nature of the people around her almost drove her mad.

"Did you ever ask her about why she sent you out?" Aldrian asked.

"As usual, she didn't say much," Baek Ji-Min replied. "In the end, I can only trust her."

"Then that's all we can do—trust her. We can't do anything if she doesn't want to reveal her intentions," Aldrian said reassuringly.

Baek Ji-Min nodded in agreement. Xin Haotian and the others noticed the silent exchange between Aldrian and Baek Ji-Min through voice transmission but didn't interfere, understanding that it was a personal matter concerning Baek Ji-Min's mother.

"Alright, let's get going! We're departing for the Forgeheart Kingdom!" Aldrian announced.

Everyone smiled upon hearing this. After more than a year and a half in Demon territory, they were finally resuming their journey.

When they departed, there weren't many people escorting them out—just a few elders. Even Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon gave them only a brief farewell before returning to her duties. Now, they were already inside the carriage, leaving the Thorny Flower Garden and heading toward Blooming Flower City to use the teleportation station.

Unbeknownst to most of the group, though not to Aldrian, who sensed it as he looked back at the Thorny Flower Garden, Sect Master Baek Ha-Yoon stood on a high cliff, smiling down at them. It was a genuine smile, full of affection.

Aldrian sighed to himself, knowing that he could only wait for future events to unfold. What would this thorny flower do next?

Meanwhile, as Aldrian's group traveled to the Forgeheart Kingdom, at a hidden assassin hideout, an old man read through a report from one of his men. His eyebrows raised in surprise as he finished, then he destroyed the paper with a flick of lightning.

"The rumor about the Golden Swan Commerce being in cahoots with devils has been spreading recently from Demon territory, what a bold move from them, leaking such a

sensitive rumor. Even if it's just gossip, it will tighten the shackles on the Golden Swan Commerce, restricting their freedom of movement."

He leaned back, contemplating the implications.

"'He' will be busy dealing with the rumors, so there won't be any significant moves from 'him' for a while. Well, that's good—he won't have time to pay attention to master."

Chapter 116: Looking for a Blacksmith

One thing that makes the dwarves famous is their ability to craft artifacts from almost any material. Unlike other races in the field of blacksmithing, the dwarves seem to be born for it. Their affinity with the earth and fire elements, combined with their innate skill and talent in blacksmithing, enables them to create artifacts of exceptional quality.

Even today, their services are sought after across the entire continent. While blacksmithing is not exclusive to dwarves, their craftsmanship remains highly valued, and their products are still preferred by many. Even some of the legacy artifacts held by major clans or noble families bear the mark of dwarven craftsmanship.

Whenever a dwarven blacksmith master creates an artifact, it is eagerly sought after and commands a high price, affordable only to cultivators with deep pockets. Thus, not every cultivator is fortunate enough to possess an artifact made by the dwarves.

There is a small kingdom, though it has the smallest territory on the continent compared to its neighboring powers, that holds significant status. The Forgeheart Kingdom, a landlocked territory located south of the Everlasting Silent Forest, is bordered by demon territories to the east and south, and by Buddhist sect territories from south to the west.

This kingdom is the place where cultivators from all over the continent come to find the artifacts they need. From the smallest village to the largest city, blacksmithing is a central activity throughout the kingdom.

When Aldrian and his companions stepped out of the teleportation station in Valiard City, the second-largest city in the Forgeheart Kingdom, the first thing they saw was many dwarves passing by. The sight of so many beings shorter than the continent's average height amused Aldrian, who was seeing them in such numbers for the first time.

Although he had encountered a few dwarves during his journey from the Ivory Empire to here, seeing so many in one place gave him a fresh experience. Their tanned skin and sturdy, muscular bodies—shaped by vigorous activity—looked impressive on their short frames.

Baek Ji-Min, also leaving the Demon territory for the first time, wore a look of curiosity and amazement. Her once-white hair had been dyed black to avoid drawing too much

attention, though her red eyes remained visible. She now wore a veil to conceal most of her face from others.

"Didn't you want to find a blacksmith master to fix your sword? Let's check this place out. Since this is the second-largest city in the Forgeheart Kingdom, we might get lucky and find a blacksmith who can repair your sword quickly," Xin Haotian suggested to Aldrian.

The blacksmiths capable of creating or repairing Heaven-grade artifacts were few in this city, and making an appointment with them could take an unknown amount of time. They were always busy, and their skills were constantly in demand.

Since Aldrian was already in the city, he decided to search for a skilled blacksmith to fix his sword and, if lucky, perhaps find a way to upgrade it. His Heaven-grade sword was no longer sufficient to handle his techniques.

It was already noon, so they decided to find a tavern first, both to rest and gather information on a good blacksmith. After some searching, they found one of the largest taverns in the city and stepped inside. What greeted them was a lively mix of different races. Aside from the dwarves, many others were enjoying their food and drink.

Without paying much attention to the crowd, they made their way to an empty table. Once seated, they placed their order with a dwarf who came to serve them. As they waited, Aldrian scanned the room and listened in on the conversations around him. Most of the discussions were about searching for artifacts, which didn't interest him much. However, one topic that caught his attention was the rumor surrounding the Golden Swan Commerce.

"Have the three great sects made their move?" he wondered to himself.

He put his thought aside when the waiter returned with their food and drinks, Aldrian asked, "Excuse me, do you have any recommendations for a good blacksmith who can fix a broken Middle Heaven-grade sword, or even upgrade it?" He handed the man a tip, which he accepted with a smile.

"If you're looking for the best blacksmith in the city, it's definitely Duke Valiard. His skills are recognized by the king himself, but unless you have connections, it's nearly impossible to meet him. So, I'd suggest going to the second best: Sir Boliv. You can visit his workshop, which is located in the northern part of this street. It's quite famous, so you should find it easily. Just be prepared—the queue will be long," the waiter replied.

After thanking him, Aldrian decided on their next plan. They finished their meal and, with their destination clear, set off toward the workshop.

Packed with people—that was their first impression upon arriving at the Boliv Workshop. Those seeking the workshop's services were so numerous that the queue nearly blocked the entire street. Aldrian could only sigh as he decided to join the line, while the others wandered off to explore the city's scenery.

Just when Aldrian thought it would take a long time for his turn to come, he was astonished to see the queue moving rapidly. It turned out that the Boliv Workshop was selective with its clients. If they accepted everyone, they would be overwhelmed by the workload. As a result, they only worked on certain grades of artifacts—mostly Heaven-grade and occasionally peak Sky-grade.

The cost of their services was also quite high, making it unaffordable for many. Those who were unlucky or couldn't afford the prices had no choice but to leave disappointed and seek another blacksmith.

When Aldrian's turn finally arrived, he entered the workshop and approached the receptionist, a female dwarf.

"Welcome to Boliv Workshop. How can I help you?" she asked.

"Yes, I'd like to have my sword repaired," Aldrian replied.

"What grade is it?"

"Middle Heaven grade," he answered.

"May I see your sword?" she requested. Aldrian pulled the sword out from his storage ring and placed it on the table. The receptionist inspected the sword with sharp eyes. After a few moments, her expression grew puzzled. The longer she examined it, the more confused she seemed. Finally, she looked up at Aldrian and asked,

"Why do you want to repair this sword here?"

"Because someone recommended this place to me," Aldrian replied. "I'm new in the city, and when I asked where I could get my sword repaired, they directed me here."

The woman nodded. "I see, but are you aware that your sword has a unique style associated with the Valiard family? Given its level and the fact that it was crafted by them, it would be more appropriate for you to have them handle the repair."

Aldrian was stunned by this new information—his father's sword was created by the Valiard family?

"If I may suggest, it's better for you to take this sword to them. If we attempt to fix it, it could cause misunderstandings with the Valiard family, as all owners of artifacts made by them typically return to their craftsmen if something happens to their artifacts."

"Alright, thank you for the information. By the way, which direction is the duke's mansion?" After being given the mansion's location, he left the workshop. He paused for a moment before heading toward the northwest side of the city. After half an hour of walking, he finally spotted the large mansion, the residence of the ruler of this city and the Dukedom of Valiard. Despite being a noble family's estate, he could see a large workshop inside the mansion grounds, close to the street.

The front gate was guarded by two dwarves at the Marquess stage. Aldrian approached them.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he called out.

The guards immediately focused their attention on Aldrian, scrutinizing him closely.

"I'd like to inquire about the Valiard family's blacksmith services. I need their help to repair a sword," Aldrian said.

"Who are you? Do you have an appointment with Duke Valiard?" one of the guards asked.

"I'm just a vagabond, and no, I don't have an appointment with the duke," Aldrian replied.

The two guards' expressions shifted to one of exasperation, and one of them quickly waved his hand dismissively.

"What do you think this is? You can't just show up and request Duke Valiard's services on a whim! Not everyone can demand his attention. You'd better leave if you have no reason to be here, and find another blacksmith," the guard said firmly.

Aldrian put on a look of confusion. "Is that so? But what if I want Duke Valiard himself to repair this sword? Can I use his services then?" Aldrian asked as he took out his sword.

The two guards raised their eyebrows as they sensed the aura of the sword—a Middle Heaven-grade artifact. They examined it closely, and their eyes widened in shock.

"This sword... it carries the distinct style of the Valiard family. There's no mistake, this sword was crafted by Duke Valiard himself!" one of the guards exclaimed.

Their demeanor shifted instantly, their eyes now filled with respect.

"Young master, why didn't you show us this sword earlier?" the other guard asked.

"Yes, with a sword like this, you can request an audience with Lord Valiard directly. Please, come in, we'll inform him of your arrival," the first guard added.

Aldrian smiled at the sudden change in their attitude, storing the sword back in his storage ring before walking into the mansion.

Chapter 117: Duke Valiard

Aldrian was guided by a butler as they walked through numerous hallways. Along the way, he noticed many artifacts on display, mostly armaments and defensive items, lining either side of the corridors. When he arrived at the guest room and sat down on a sofa in the luxurious space, he inspected the room, finding it filled with various kinds of artifacts.

He even detected a hidden mechanism, which he surmised to be part of a defense or attack system. Unlike formations that draw upon heaven and earth energy to function, the mechanism here seemed to operate like a giant artifact, triggered by some sort of mechanism without the use of energy.

Aldrian was amazed by the intricacies of the mechanism, as it was his first time seeing something like it. It differed from the formations he could create by simply shaping heaven and earth energy. While he marveled at the artifacts around him, the guest room door opened, and a dwarf dressed in casual clothes entered.

The dwarf appeared to be middle-aged, with reddish hair and a beard that reached his neck, tanned skin, and well-defined muscles typical of his kind. Aldrian also noticed traces of sweat on the dwarf's skin and the faint scent of a furnace lingering on him.

"Darvin Valiard, he was probably in his workshop just now." Aldrian thought

Aldrian smiled as the dwarf approached.

"Welcome. I heard from my guards that you have a sword crafted by me that needs repairing. Please, take out the sword so I can inspect the damaged part," the dwarf said.

"Duke Valiard, it's an honor to meet you." Aldrian gave a slight bow before continuing, "Please, take a look at this sword." He retrieved the sword from his storage ring, presenting it to the duke, whose eyes widened in surprise.

"You're the owner of this sword?" Duke Valiard asked, his eyes narrowing.

"Yes, but I'm not the original owner, I'm a close acquaintance of the sword's original owner. mister Aldrey. I received it after he passed it on to me. Since it was damaged, he directed me to you for the repair." Aldrian replied, fabricating a story.

Duke Valiard looked Aldrian with suspicion, his gaze sharp.

"Aldrey just gave his most trusted sword to this young man? What kind of relationship would make him do that, even if the sword was broken?"

After a moment of contemplation, the duke nodded and took the sword. He unsheathed it, carefully inspecting the blade before channeling his energy into it. Once his inspection was complete, he sheathed the sword again and handed it back to Aldrian.

"This sword is beyond repair, though it looks fine on the outside, the inside is a complete mess. Its inner structure and durability have deteriorated beyond saving. Fortunately, my technique has kept it intact, preventing it from crumbling. The only option now is to melt it down and forge an entirely new sword, but that will cost more." Duke Valiard said

Aldrian raised his eyebrows, surprised to learn that the sword was beyond saving and would need to be melted down. He felt a pang of sadness—this was the sword his father had given him. It was the only weapon he had at the time to unleash the 'Slash of the End.' He had hoped to repair it, but now it seemed he would have to let it go. The sword was part of his father's legacy, but Aldrian understood the bigger picture. He needed a functional weapon, not one kept for sentimental value.

"By the way, how did the sword end up in such a condition?" Duke Valiard asked, frowning. "I designed and forged the Fire Dragon Sword to withstand the full force of a Low King stage attack. Did Aldrey encounter someone in the Everlasting Silent Forest during the years he was lost there?"

"I don't know the full details, but the sword was already broken when he returned from the Everlasting Silent Forest, he mentioned fighting someone from the devils, and the sword was damaged during the battle." Aldrian replied.

Duke Valiard narrowed his eyes. "I heard Aldrey was trapped in the Everlasting Silent Forest because of the devils. Judging by the state of the sword, the devil he faced must have been one of the successors of the Seven Deadly Sins. Did he not tell you who it was?"

"No, he didn't share those details," Aldrian said, steering the conversation back to the matter at hand. "Anyway, if there's no way to repair this sword, I can only ask you sincerely, Duke Valiard, to reforge it into a new one. I will cover all the material costs."

Duke Valiard studied Aldrian for a moment before shifting his gaze to the sword now in Aldrian's hand.

"A sword is like an extension of your hand," Valiard began. "To craft the right sword, I need to understand your preferences and your battle style. If I can see your sword technique firsthand, it would be even better, as I can then choose the proper materials for its creation."

"So, I just need to show you my sword technique?" Aldrian asked.

"Yes."

Aldrian then thinking for a moment.

"This will become my most obvious trace as the mysterious swordsman, I can feel that sooner or later, some people will have their nose towards me."

He only can face all those troubles that will come to him in the future. The most important thing now is for him to have his own sword that he can use.

"Where should I show you my technique?" Aldrian asked.

"Follow me."

Duke Valiard led Aldrian to a vast hall beside a workshop, different from the one Aldrian had seen earlier near the mansion's entrance. As they arrived and stood in the center of the hall, patterns along the walls briefly lit up before the room transformed. The walls shifted, turning into a gleaming white material, making the hall resemble a massive, pristine chamber. Duke Valiard pulled out a sword radiating the aura of a peak Heaven-grade weapon and handed it to Aldrian.

"Show me your technique," Valiard said. "Preferably the one you're most proficient in or use most frequently in battle. Don't worry about damaging this place. The materials used in this hall can withstand even a Middle Emperor stage attack."

"I'll show you a downgraded version of it, is that alright?" Aldrian responded.

Duke Valiard looked confused. "Your full-strength technique exceeds a Middle Emperor stage attack?"

"Yes."

Duke Valiard wasn't sure if the young man was joking or serious. Given Aldrian's youth, it seemed impossible that he could be at the Emperor stage. But that wasn't the duke's concern. What he needed to evaluate was Aldrian's movement and attack style.

"Alright, go ahead, even a downgraded version will be enough for me to assess the kind of sword that suits you." Valiard said.

Aldrian nodded, turning his gaze toward the far end of the hall. He placed his hand on the sword's hilt, concentrating as he attuned himself to the weapon. After a moment, he released his sword intent.

Duke Valiard, who had already stepped back to a safe distance, was immediately shocked by the sheer intensity of Aldrian's sword intent. Instinctively, he raised an energy barrier, his Middle King stage cultivation kicking in to help shield him from the oppressive aura.

"What a terrifying sword intent! The sharpness is so potent I can feel it cutting through the air, and he's only at the Middle Earl stage!" Valiard thought, his heart racing.

The sensation was like being stabbed repeatedly by invisible blades, causing Valiard's skin to tingle. He was stunned. That someone of Aldrian's level could wield such immense sword intent marked him as a supreme genius in the art of swordsmanship.

In all his life, he had never witnessed such talent. The way he saw it, Aldrian had the potential to join the ranks of the great swordmasters of the continent! He watched Aldrian intently, but a sudden chill ran down his spine as Aldrian revealed his sword will. At the same time, his storage ring reacted strangely. When he checked, he was shocked to see all the swords stored within trembling violently.

He looked at Aldrian in shock as he unsheathed the sword and executed a diagonal slash. It appeared to be a simple movement, but the moment Aldrian unleashed his technique, the entire hall trembled, and space itself collapsed, creating a gap to the void and almost causing a spatial storm. The slash hurtled toward the wall, accompanied by a booming sound that reverberated throughout the hall. Despite the chaos, the structure remained standing.

After several chaotic moments, the trembling ceased, and the spatial crack healed as Aldrian controlled it using his mastery over space laws. A hundred meters away, on the wall, a thin, long slash mark remained—clear evidence of the power behind Aldrian's strike.

Aldrian observed the result with a satisfied expression. He had wanted to test his 'Slash of the End' outside of his domain, and even with a peak Heaven-grade sword, the power was satisfying. It could even wound a Low King stage cultivator. Turning toward Duke Valiard, Aldrian saw the duke staring at him as though he were a monster.

Chapter 118: Teach Me

In the cultivation world, a cultivator's innate talent and potential often determine their future path. Some may find smooth sailing, while others face endless obstacles and struggles. But what Duke Valiard saw in the hall of his mansion went beyond the realm of talent or potential—it was sheer absurdity, an impossibility.

He wouldn't be surprised if someone could fight across cultivation levels. After all, many geniuses on the continent can do that. One minor realm, two minor realms? He even knew of people who could battle with a gap of almost four minor realms! But to possess the strength of a King stage cultivator while still in the Middle Earl stage? This wasn't about talent or potential anymore—this was absurd! And Aldrian even claimed this wasn't his full power?!

Duke Valiard had thought Aldrian was joking when he said his strength could surpass the Middle Emperor stage. If that were true, then what was his full power? Could it be at the High Emperor stage? Or even the Peak Emperor stage? He couldn't fathom it.

"You?! Who are you really? Are you truly just an Earl stage cultivator?" Duke Valiard asked, his expression full of shock.

"Are you using some kind of forbidden technique?" he added, suspicion filling his voice. If Aldrian was indeed only at the Earl stage, then perhaps some heaven-defying technique could explain this strength. Forbidden techniques, shunned by many, were often practiced by devils.

He had never heard of a forbidden technique granting such power, but he couldn't think of any other explanation.

Aldrian, seeing Duke Valiard's reaction, calmly raised his hands.

"You don't have to be so wary of me, Duke Valiard. I mean no harm. I don't want to brag, but I'm truly an Earl stage cultivator, and my strength comes from myself. Let's just say I'm unique. And do you really think, with this kind of energy, I'm using a forbidden technique?" Aldrian said as he released his golden energy.

The moment the golden energy manifested, Duke Valiard was stunned, captivated by the beautiful radiance unlike anything he had ever seen. The energy within his own dantian stirred, and he felt a slight pressure, as if his body instinctively wanted to reverse the energy. It radiated warmth and purity—an energy he had never encountered before.

Duke Valiard's eyes widened as he suppressed the feeling with his cultivation. For a split second, the urge to kneel before Aldrian flashed through his mind, leaving him horrified.

"What kind of energy is this?!" he thought, realizing his own energy had been suppressed by Aldrian's golden aura, which seemed to invoke a desire to worship it. With a slight effort, he brushed it off using his cultivation. He glanced at Aldrian, who remained calm as he retracted the energy.

"Do you believe me now?" Aldrian asked.

Duke Valiard looked at him solemnly. What Aldrian said wasn't wrong—his energy was so pure that even thinking it could be the result of a forbidden technique felt like blasphemy. The duke sighed and steadied himself before cupping his hands in respect.

"I apologize for my misunderstanding. This is my first time experiencing something like that, so I hope you understand, young master."

"It's fine. I'm used to it by now," Aldrian replied. "No need to be so formal, Duke Valiard." After all, this dwarf had crafted his father's sword, and Aldrian wanted to maintain an amicable relationship with him.

"So, what do you think? Do you think you can forge a sword using that kind of technique?" Aldrian asked.

Duke Valiard wore a troubled expression and sighed.

"Truthfully, I'm ashamed to admit that I'm not confident I can forge a sword worthy of your strength. If what you've shown isn't even your most powerful strength, then we're talking about the creation of a divine weapon—something that hasn't appeared in a long time. Crafting such a weapon isn't just about materials; luck plays a huge role as well. And I've never made a divine weapon, at least not on my own."

Aldrian looked puzzled.

"What do you mean by 'at least not on your own'? Have you created a divine weapon with someone else's help?"

"Yes, I have. But he hasn't been around for years, and I have no idea when he'll return. He's the only one who could help me forge a divine-grade weapon," Duke Valiard explained. Aldrian pondered for a moment before looking directly at the duke.

"Are you talking about the blacksmith who disappeared 14 years ago?" Aldrian asked.

Duke Valiard's eyes widened in surprise.

"As expected," Aldrian thought.

"How did you know that?" Duke Valiard asked, his voice filled with shock. The disappearance of *him* was a closely guarded secret, known only to the highest ranks of the Forgeheart Kingdom. To the outside world, they claimed he had gone into seclusion for a time, and most people believed it, as it wasn't uncommon for cultivatorsto enter long periods of seclusion. For blacksmiths their seclusion even can be a sign when working on something extraordinary.

Aldrian smiled. He had learned about the blacksmith's disappearance from Olivia, the spirit of the World Tree in Balin City. As for how Olivia knew, he wasn't sure—perhaps it was just her own conclusion, drawn from suspicion due to the long absence of one of the master blacksmiths and the events that had unfolded in Balin.

"I have my own sources of information, and it wasn't difficult to connect the dots from what you said," Aldrian replied.

Duke Valiard nodded solemnly.

"Yes, you're right. He's the only one who can help increase the success rate of creating a divine weapon. My elder brother is a genius blacksmith unlike any other. To be honest, the Fire Dragon sword also owes some credit to him—he helped me perfect my tempering technique, shaping me into the blacksmith I am today."

"Wait, the blacksmith who disappeared is your elder brother?" Aldrian asked, surprised.

"Yes. I thought you already knew? Everyone knows that the dwarf in 'seclusion' is my elder brother," Duke Valiard said.

Aldrian shook his head. "I didn't know the details. I only knew that a master blacksmith had disappeared."

Duke Valiard froze for a moment, realization dawning on him.

"I let it slip! He didn't know 'who' the blacksmith was!" he thought, mentally berating himself. He wanted to slap his own forehead, but with the information already out, he could only sigh and let it go.

"Yes, as I mentioned, my elder brother is a genius. With his help, even though I'm not sure we could create another true Divine grade weapon, we could at least come close—something like a pseudo-Divine grade weapon."

Aldrian felt a wave of frustration wash over him. To think that acquiring a sword would be such a complicated journey. Initially, he had hoped to simply repair and upgrade his current sword, but now it was clear that he would need a completely new weapon. Based on Duke Valiard's evaluation, he knew the duke wasn't wrong—Aldrian needed a divine-grade weapon.

Suddenly, an idea came to his mind, and he looked at Duke Valiard.

"Is there no one else who could replace him?" Aldrian asked.

"No," the duke said, shaking his head. "In fact, the only Divine grade artifact to appear in the last 70,000 years was created by our combined efforts. Even then, luck played a significant part. That artifact is now stored in the capital city."

Aldrian sighed.

"What a shame that I came at the wrong time. I thought I could ask for help to fix or create my sword using this."

With that, Aldrian took out the Divine Iron. The moment it appeared, an aura of divinity swept across the entire hall, startling Duke Valiard. Aldrian released his control over the iron, and with a loud *boom*, the Divine Iron dropped to the floor, cracking it.

Duke Valiard was stunned by the sudden surge of aura. He had never encountered anything like this before. Just by being near it, he felt his comprehension of his earth and fire laws increasing exponentially.

He approached the Divine Iron, examining its surface with eyes filled with vigor and a thirst for knowledge. This was a material he had never seen before, and the excitement of researching it to further his blacksmithing skills consumed him. The sheer sturdiness of the material sparked a desire within him—to shape it into a powerful artifact.

Aldrian smiled as he watched Duke Valiard's reaction. One of the Dwarves' unchanging traits was their insatiable thirst for knowledge when it came to blacksmithing. Aldrian intended to use the Divine Iron as bait—a bargaining chip for his next move.

Duke Valiard began brushing, touching, lifting, and examining the Divine Iron in every possible way. After a few moments of intense focus, he looked up at Aldrian, his expression filled with awe and intrigue.

"Young master, what kind of material is this?" Duke Valiard asked, his eyes wide with awe. "It's incredibly sturdy and hard, but it radiates so many laws. I've never seen anything like it. And it's so heavy—I can't even lift it. Where did you find this?"

"It's called Divine Iron," Aldrian replied. "I'm sure you can understand how valuable it is. As for where I found it... I'm afraid that's a secret I can't share."

"Ah, of course. My apologies," Duke Valiard said, returning his attention to the Divine Iron, inspecting it closely once more.

"I'll give you a chance to research this material as much as you like," Aldrian continued, "and I'll even let you have a small piece of it."

Duke Valiard's eyes lit up with excitement. "Is that true?"

"Yes," Aldrian nodded, "but on one condition."

"And what's that?" the duke asked eagerly.

"Teach me how to be a blacksmith," Aldrian said with a smile.

Chapter 119: Learning Blacksmithing

Duke Valiard's face froze, his smile becoming rigid as he looked at Aldrian.

"Excuse me?" he asked, incredulously.

"Yes," Aldrian replied. "Teach me how to be a blacksmith. I want to learn, and maybe—just maybe—I can also create my own weapon."

It was as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over Duke Valiard. His face, which had been full of excitement moments ago, now reflected pure disbelief as he stared at Aldrian like he was mad.

"Are you serious, young master? We're talking about blacksmithing here—one of the most demanding professions. It requires years of training and commitment! You want to become a blacksmith? If you're only interested because you want to create your own sword, then forget it. Blacksmithing isn't something you choose on a whim. It's a lifetime commitment," Duke Valiard said, his voice solemn.

Aldrian smiled slightly. "I think you misunderstand me. I'm not interested in blacksmithing because of some passing fancy. I'm genuinely fascinated by the craft. I don't mean to sound arrogant, but I have a knack for absorbing knowledge quickly and applying it almost instantly. I don't want you to feel insulted—I know blacksmithing is no easy profession. Quite the opposite, actually. It's a complex and intricate field of study, which is exactly why I'm interested."

What he said was half true. While Aldrian was indeed curious about blacksmithing, the frustration of being unable to obtain a Divine-grade sword had sparked this idea in his mind. If they lacked the help to create the sword, perhaps *he* could be that help. And where better to learn the craft than in this very city? Of course the duke himself!

But Aldrian's desire to learn blacksmithing wasn't solely due to his frustration. He truly had a thirst for new knowledge. His curiosity was never satisfied, always seeking out something new to learn. He wasn't lying when he said he was genuinely interested in the blacksmithing profession.

Duke Valiard looked into Aldrian's eyes and saw no hint of doubt or jest.

"How about this, Duke Valiard, Let me watch you create an artifact, and you can explain each step to me. I'll only ask this once. I know you're a busy person, so I won't take up much of your time. Afterward, I'll try to replicate your process on my own. And, of course, I won't ask for your knowledge for free. Even if you're not satisfied with my performance, I'll still give you a small portion of the Divine Iron." Aldrian said.

Duke Valiard's expression grew conflicted, but after another glance at the Divine Iron, he finally sighed.

"Alright," he agreed, "I'll let you try this once. But remember, young master, this will be a one-time demonstration. You'll have to work on your own from there. Also, I've never had a disciple, so I'm not used to teaching."

"Thank you for agreeing. Don't worry—I'll pay full attention, and you won't need to keep helping me after. I just need you to show me the way of blacksmithing."

With a nod, Duke Valiard activated the mechanism, returning the hall to its original state. They could now see the private workshop in the adjacent building. Duke Valiard pointed toward it.

"Let's go to my workshop," Duke Valiard said, leading Aldrian. Once they entered, Aldrian saw various tools neatly arranged for tempering, forging, and melting, all organized to make the work easier. He also noticed several forges, their heat palpable even though the forge lids were closed.

On one side of the workshop, Aldrian noticed several unfinished artifacts—swords, shields, and armor. Despite their incomplete state, he could already sense the distinct aura of Middle Earth-grade artifacts emanating from them.

"Amazing. Even his unfinished works are already exuding the power of graded artifacts. Truly a remarkable blacksmith," Aldrian thought, marveling at the craftsmanship. His attention then turned to Duke Valiard, who had stripped off his outer garments, revealing his toned, muscular physique.

"I'll show you how to make a simple dagger. I think that's a good place to start. Pay close attention," Duke Valiard said with a solemn expression, and Aldrian responded with a nod. Unbeknownst to the duke, Aldrian discreetly extended his domain to observe and absorb the process more thoroughly.

"Since you're new to blacksmithing, I'll provide you with a simple dagger blueprint. It's a basic artifact that can be completed quickly—less than half an hour. Take a look at it first." Duke Valiard handed Aldrian a drawing of the dagger, and Aldrian examined it carefully, memorizing its shape, composition, and key features.

He then watched as the duke picked up a long, dark iron bar and placed it on the table, showing it to Aldrian.

"This is dark steel, a common material for crafting artifacts. You can find it in many parts of the continent," Duke Valiard explained, lifting the steel bar. "First, you must heat it in the earth flame—a kind of flame that hot enough to melt this kind of steel. What I have in these forges is blue earth flame, the highest quality of earth flame. I was lucky enough to acquire it during one of my adventures, so shaping the steel with this will be easy." He opened the forge lid and carefully placed the steel inside.

After a minute, the steel emerged glowing with red and a faint blue hue, radiating heat nearly as intense as the forge itself. Using a pair of tongs, Duke Valiard placed the hot steel onto the anvil and grabbed a hammer that was also an artifact in itself. With steady, rhythmic strikes, he began to shape the steel.

Clang, clang.

"To taper both sides evenly, you need constant strength—neither too strong nor too weak," Duke Valiard instructed while hammering. "Too much force, and you'll crack the artifact; too little, and it won't take the proper shape. You must keep the pace steady to ensure the dagger's durability is same throughout. And, of course, we insert our energy into the steel as we shape it."

Aldrian watched with deep concentration, observing not just the hammering but also sensing the flow of energy around the steel and the hammer. To him, every movement seemed to slow down, revealing subtle patterns that gave him insight into how blacksmiths infused energy into their work.

Each hit carried the same amount of power and energy, and the duke's energy seeped into the heated steel. This infused energy helps the steel attune to the Heaven and Earth energy, preparing it to become a container for energy during the finishing phase.

After nearly ten minutes of intense hammering, the steel began to take the shape of a blade, complete with an area for the handle. Duke Valiard reheated the steel in the forge for about fifteen seconds before lifting it again and moving it to a special sanding plate, designed to smooth the edges of the steel.

Once satisfied with the edge, he reheated the blade and began hammering it again, this time with a gentler force. He channeled his energy through the hammer with each strike, creating intricate patterns on the blade's surface. "The energy pattern is crucial in crafting artifacts," Duke Valiard explained, not breaking his rhythm. "It directly affects the grade of the artifact. The more complex the pattern, the higher the grade. It's similar to formations, but in this case, we embed the pattern within the artifact itself."

After a few more minutes of precise work, he completed the pattern and swiftly dipped the blade into a special oil. When the blade was lifted from the oil, Duke Valiard examined it for a moment, then infused his energy into it. Instantly, the aura of a Middle Earth grade artifact radiated from the blade, filling the workshop with a potent energy.

Aldrian, having watched the entire process without blinking, nodded in realization. *"It's not that different from formation work, but the pattern here ensures the energy is distributed evenly across the blade, making it more durable and able to withstand powerful techniques,"* he thought.

"This is how you create a simple dagger," Duke Valiard said, holding up the finished blade. "For your first time, you'll need to at least manage to craft a low Earth grade artifact. But remember, one wrong step, and your dagger will turn into nothing more than a piece of scrap." His tone carried the weight of experience.

"Now, why don't you try it yourself?"

Without hesitation, Aldrian picked up a piece of dark steel, feeling its weight and sturdiness in his hands. He followed Duke Valiard's earlier steps, placing the steel into the forge. As the heat began to engulf the metal, Aldrian's thoughts something.

"I've grasped the basics, but it would be much faster and more efficient if I could use my Eyes of the Heaven to guide me."

Suddenly, as if responding to his thoughts, he felt something through his eyes. A screen materialized in his vision, revealing the intricate structure of the dark steel in front of him, every weak point, every section that required more attention, was highlighted clearly.

"Oh?"

Chapter 120: The Result

Aldrian was astonished as the screen in front of him pinpointed exactly which parts of the steel to hammer and how much force to apply. He examined the intricate details of the steel and couldn't help but praise his Eyes of the Heaven for providing such precise information.

"Well, as expected from my mysterious abilities," he thought.

He inspected the steel, now glowing red from the forge, and glanced at the screen, which also displayed the optimal steps and the best temperature for heating. According to his Eyes of the Heaven, the steel was nearing the perfect temperature.

Once it reached the exact perfect heat, Aldrian swiftly grabbed the steel with a pair of tongs and placed it on the anvil. Duke Valiard raised an eyebrow at Aldrian's precise movements and keen sense. He could feel that the steel's heat was ideal for tempering and silently praised Aldrian for quickly grasping one of the most critical aspects of forging.

Aldrian then picked up a hammer, carefully positioning himself.

Clang!

As the hammer struck the steel, Duke Valiard immediately noticed that Aldrian had used less force than expected but chose not to comment. He continued watching.

Clang, clang!

With each strike of the hammer, Aldrian's blows was nearing perfection, and after a few more moments, the duke could sense that Aldrian had already mastered the exact amount of force needed for each strike. Making Duke Valiard's surprise grew.

It was truly baffling to Duke Valiard how Aldrian could so quickly identify the necessary adjustments to his strength, fine-tuning it to the exact amount needed—despite the force being stronger than usual by his standards. Yet, even with the increased power, the steel's durability remained unaffected.

What amazed Duke Valiard even more was Aldrian's consistency. As he observed the tempering process, he noticed that Aldrian maintained a steady, precise amount of force with each strike, never faltering. Every hit was confident and flawless, as if Aldrian instinctively knew which part of the steel required attention.

"Amazing! His sense for controlling his strength is remarkably sharp. After just a few strikes, he already understands how to adjust perfectly. Most beginners need days, even weeks, to maintain such consistency over time," Duke Valiard thought in awe.

Meanwhile, Aldrian glanced at the power bar displayed on his screen, showing a perfect 10/10. Earlier, when he had used less force, the number had shown 8/10. After adjusting his power, he finally reached the right amount. He struck the exact spot 20 times, just as his Eyes of the Heaven indicated, before moving on to the next area.

Each section of the steel displayed a different number, indicating where Aldrian needed to strike and how much force to apply. He realized that each type of steel likely had its own unique numbers and requirements. Following the precise instructions, he struck the indicated spots with the exact force required.

The result became apparent shortly after he completed all the steps shown on his screen. The shape of the steel was nearly perfect, needing only one more round of tempering to further refine its quality.

After finishing, Aldrian saw that the blade's shape was already perfect in his eyes. All that remained was to create the pattern on its surface. With a gentler force, he began carving a design that almost exactly matched the blueprint Duke Valiard had provided. "Almost" because certain parts had a slightly different flow than the original pattern.

"If this is the perfected version of the pattern, then..." Aldrian thought.

He followed the pattern on the screen, carefully infusing his energy little by little, just as Duke Valiard had done, allowing the artifact to absorb the energy of heaven and earth. Duke Valiard, who had been watching in amazement, was initially impressed, but as he observed how Aldrian was shaping the pattern, he frowned. After a few moments, he silently shook his head.

"In the end, he's still a beginner. Did he forget the pattern?" Duke Valiard thought. *"With that variation, the energy flow in the blade will be less efficient, lowering the dagger's grade."*

Even so, he kept watching quietly as Aldrian completed the pattern and quenched the blade in special oil. Once the process was finished, the final product lay before them—a blade seamless and flawless in shape.

Even Duke Valiard, who had seen countless weapons, regarded this blade with a solemn expression.

"Although the pattern is slightly off, I have to admit, the outer appearance is perfect—neater and harder than what I usually create," he thought, turning his gaze to Aldrian. *"Have I just met a genius in blacksmithing, someone with great natural talent?"*

Duke Valiard watched as Aldrian performed the final step, injecting his energy into the blade. When the energy enveloped the blade, completing the process, a sudden surge of aura and power radiated out, sweeping over Duke Valiard and leaving him stunned once again. Today had been filled with surprises, but this final shock made him question his own capability.

"Low Sky grade! How is that possible?!" Duke Valiard's mind raced, the situation in front of him just as absurd as where Aldrian, still in the Earl stage, had unleashed an attack at a King stage level. The blueprint for the dagger was only designed to allow for a maximum potential of Middle Earth grade. This dagger was meant to be affordable and easy to produce so that more people could access such an artifact.

No matter how much effort you put into tempering the blade, it would only ever reach middle Earth grade at best. Even if by some miracle it achieved peak Earth grade, it would only hold that level briefly before crumbling, as the material—without any special mix or enhancements—simply couldn't withstand the higher intensity energy flow required for peak Earth grade.

Unless you use better materials and a more complex Sky-grade pattern, it's impossible to upgrade a blade to Sky grade. Yet, the blade in front of him, made from cheap dark steel, had somehow reached low Sky grade, which was beyond his comprehension.

Yet here it was—a low Sky grade blade made from basic dark steel. It defied all logic.

Duke Valiard approached Aldrian, unable to take his eyes off the blade. He grabbed it from Aldrian's hand, examining it closely with sharp, practiced eyes. He rubbed the surface, stroked the blade, and infused it with his energy. What he found astonished him—it was an artifact without a single flaw, perfect in every aspect.

As his energy enveloped the entire blade, he finally understood the incredible discovery before him.

"The pattern! The very pattern I thought would disrupt the energy flow has, shockingly, made it smoother and more efficient. There's no excess energy wasted into the air." He

marveled at the blade's sturdiness and durability, both far greater than he had ever imagined possible.

Duke Valiard guessed that while Aldrian's hammering technique wasn't particularly special, his precise control over the power and accuracy of each strike made all the difference. Even the slightest millimeter can make a huge impact in blacksmithing!

"This is truly a marvelous creation!" Duke Valiard exclaimed inside his mind, turning to Aldrian with eyes full of admiration, as if he were gazing at a rare gem. His intense stare gave Aldrian goosebumps.

"How did you do it?! I mean, how did you know what to modify to create this blade? With a grade this high using only basic materials, you could revolutionize the entire artifact market and have your name written in history!" Duke Valiard asked, overwhelmed with amazement.

"After watching your technique and understanding its intricacies, I was able to shape the most effective method to create the blade," Aldrian explained, crafting his words carefully to make Duke Valiard believe in him. "As I've said before, I can grasp and apply knowledge instantly."

He continued, "Even though the material is common and cheap, I could make it sturdier through precise hammering and by using stronger force, compacting every part of the steel."

"As for the pattern, you mentioned it's like a formation, and since I'm somewhat of a formation master, I made small modifications to the blueprint. This helped the pattern flow more smoothly and allowed the dagger to store more energy, which is why it jumped in grade."

Duke Valiard's eyes shone with excitement as he listened to Aldrian's explanation. In that moment, he made up his mind.

"I must train him to become a master blacksmith! With his potential, he could be the one to forge the next Divine artifact!"

"Young master, if you don't mind, would you like to try creating another artifact? This one will be of a higher grade and involve a more complex process. With your talent and potential, I have no doubt that you are a genius blacksmith. I must admit, you are exceeding all of my expectations—no, it would be an understatement to say that; what you've accomplished is beyond anything I could have imagined," he said, trying to convince Aldrian.

Aldrian simply smiled at the duke's eagerness.

"Success."

