

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 171: The Moment of Serenity - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 171: The Moment of Serenity

Chapter 171: The Moment of Serenity

"What?" Arthur frowned. "Where did you get this information? I'm sorry, young master, but if you don't give me an answer, I'll take it as slander against the church's reputation, which would affect our relationship," Arthur said, his voice sharp.

"I'm glad to see you still have that spirit and loyalty, that's good. But I'm not joking about this. I got this information from a traitor on the dwarves' side. There's going to be an uproar in this kingdom because a few of their nobles are actually traitors. You know what I mean?" Aldrian replied.

Arthur raised his eyebrows. "A few nobles of this kingdom are traitors? Alright, let's hear your story first. I still don't understand this sudden twist with a traitor."

Aldrian then told Arthur about the 'ball' that the devils used to conceal their demonic traits, explaining how he tracked down its creator and learned how it was made. He also revealed Duke Badin's involvement, describing how the duke had aided the devils in creating this 'ball.' Within Duke Badin's memories, Aldrian found that, besides him, the devils had enlisted only dwarves already under their control to assist in crafting the ball. At one point, the devils even mentioned to him that there were individuals from the Alchemist Association and the Heavenly Direction Church who helped refine the ball into a complete infiltration 'device.'

Most of the pieces of the puzzle were almost in place. The blacksmith was from the Forgeheart Kingdom, and he had already captured him. The alchemist belonged to the Alchemist Association, and the one wielding holy energy was from the Heavenly Direction Church—something unimaginable to him. How could the devils have convinced someone from the church, someone blessed with holy energy from the heavens, to help them? And that traitorous fool had actually accepted the devils' offer? He could only uncover all the reasons if he could meet the traitor and ask them himself.

"If what you said is true, then I can't simply report it to headquarters because of the unknown traitor. Whether they're working alone or not, I have to inform His Holiness myself," Arthur said.

Aldrian nodded. "I'm counting on you. The sooner this traitor is caught, the sooner we can move freely without any hidden knife waiting to stab us in the future."

"Alright, but if I think about it, if there are traitors within the church, they're likely below the rank of archbishop. The devils seem unaware of your existence, and within the church, only my envoy group from that time, the three archbishops, and His Holiness, the Pope, know about you," Arthur said thoughtfully.

Aldrian raised an eyebrow. "So secretive?"

Arthur glanced at Aldrian. "Isn't that what you wanted? To avoid attention? Didn't you say you didn't want to be in the limelight?" Aldrian responded with a nod.

"The problem is, even if I tell His Holiness, he can't just mobilize the church without solid proof. And again, we don't know who the traitors are," Arthur added.

"It's alright. If the church can't act freely, at least you can make His Holiness aware of this hidden poison," Aldrian said.

"Anyway, that's all I wanted to tell you. I'll be going, then—"

"Wait." Before Aldrian could say goodbye, Arthur cut him off, looking at him with raised eyebrows.

"You're close to King Douwin, right? I need his help to get a look at the sword that's causing an uproar across the continent—the middle divine-grade sword," Arthur said.

"Hm? You mean the Eternal Spirit?" Aldrian replied as he took the Eternal Spirit Sword from his storage ring.

The moment the sword appeared before Arthur's eyes, he sensed its extraordinary aura—something he'd only felt when standing before one of the church's legacy artifacts. Arthur's eyes widened in shock as he looked at Aldrian in bewilderment.

"This is... the new sword? The middle divine-grade sword? Are you telling me *you're* the one who possesses it? How is that possible? Was Duke Valiard or even the king really so generous as to give such a valuable sword to an outsider?" Arthur asked, disbelief evident in his tone.

"I own this sword, but I also helped create it, so Duke Valiard and King Douwin let me keep it," Aldrian replied, placing the Eternal Spirit back into his storage ring.

Arthur slapped his forehead, muttering to himself, "You're a blacksmith too? What is this? Not only does he have extraordinary swordsmanship, but he's also a blacksmith who can help create a divine-grade artifact? Who are your parents to have given birth to such a monster?"

Aldrian could only smile at Arthur's reaction and waved his hand.

"All right, I'm really counting on you for this, Sir Arthur. I'll be off," Aldrian said before vanishing, leaving Arthur stunned. Despite keeping his senses focused on him, Aldrian seemed to disappear into the void without a trace. Sighing, Arthur scratched his head in exasperation. He was inclined to believe what Aldrian had said, as he saw no benefit for Aldrian to lie, so he decided to take the matter seriously.

"Well, looks like I need to head back to headquarters," he muttered. With the sword now in Aldrian's possession, he had no further purpose here. He resolved to depart for the church headquarters tomorrow before dawn.

Aldrian then teleported back to his room in the inn, finally able to relax his mind and body. The past few days had been filled with action, leaving him no time to unwind. However, as he appeared in his room, he sensed a presence. He was stunned to see a woman already on the balcony, her back facing him. He found himself mesmerized by her curvy figure and beautiful golden hair, which cascaded down to her waist.

She wore a casual green-and-white robe that reached her thighs, and when she sensed his presence, she turned to face Aldrian. Her face was illuminated by the moonlight, enhancing her beauty, which seemed otherworldly. She smiled at him, and he returned the smile; though no words were exchanged, Aldrian could see a look of relief in her eyes.

"Why are you here? Were you waiting for me?" Aldrian asked.

Sylphia simply nodded and walked toward him. Now much shorter than Aldrian, she had to look up to meet his handsome face, even though it was still disguised. Aldrian gazed deeply into her eyes, and the floral fragrance surrounding her filled his nostrils, feeling refreshingly sweet.

She then turned and walked toward his bed, speaking to him as she did.

"I've already heard from Sir Xin Haotian about what happened to you and what you did. You truly are a man who can't do anything in a 'humble' way," she said as she sat on the edge of the bed.

"Well, what can I do? Fate seems to have thrown me into moments where I need to act grandly to solve the problems," he replied, walking over to the bed and sitting beside her. There was a moment of silence before Sylphia asked him again.

"Sir Xin Haotian mentioned that this continent will face a catastrophe in the future, and its fate is uncertain. He said you were the one who told him."

"Hmm, we are facing an unprecedented catastrophe that could bring this continent to its end. To prevent it, I need to unite the entire continent to face the challenges that will

befall us," Aldrian said as he looked at the ceiling of the room. Suddenly, he felt a soft hand touch his head, guiding it to rest on Sylphia's thighs. He looked up at her, noticing how beautiful she seemed, her usual cheerful demeanor nowhere to be seen. He found himself appreciating this side of her and continued to gaze at her face from his position.

However, Aldrian could also see that Sylphia was shy, her face turning red. Yet she held her composure as her hand touched his forehead and stroked it gently.

"You always do something extraordinary on your own. You never stop moving, and even after all the time I've spent with you, I still can't fully understand what's on your mind. What makes you seem so rushed? What are you trying to pursue that keeps you moving without stopping? Is it the catastrophe? I don't think so, because it seems you only just learned about the kind of catastrophe that might befall us in the future," Sylphia asked in her soft voice.

Aldrian was silent for a moment before finally speaking.

"I have a few secrets that even I don't know how to explain, so the only thing I can say is that once I'm ready to share them with you, I will. But to put it simply, I seek to uncover the mysteries around me—the truth about myself."

Sylphia looked into Aldrian's eyes as she replied, "It's fine if you can't explain it to me right now. But at least can you show me a secret that you can share with me right now, like..." She then touched his face.

"Show me your real face."

Chapter 172: Their Blooming Feelings

Aldrian looked at Sylphia's beautiful face and without saying anything he canceled his disguise technique. His long red hair, like fiery flames, draped across her thighs, and his blue eyes became clearer, like the surface of the sea, reflecting her face. She was stunned as she finally saw the true appearance of this young man.

What Sylphia saw was a strikingly handsome man. Although his disguised form was already attractive, this true appearance was even more captivating and attention-grabbing due to his vibrant red hair, which would surely draw people's eyes. She gazed at him intently, engraving his face into her memory as she began to speak.

"You're better this way. Why do you have to hide this face of yours? Is there something that makes you keep such a handsome face hidden?" she asked, touching his face unconsciously.

"Well, there are many things that are easier to do in disguise. It's still not the right time for me to reveal my face to the world—it would bring countless problems that could be detrimental to my future plans," he replied.

"You're right. I just think it's a shame that this face has to be hidden from the world." She smiled, feeling her cheeks burn with shyness at how bluntly she'd said it to him.

Aldrian wondered what had come over Sylphia today—she seemed much braver than usual. Although he liked this side of her, he was curious about what was on her mind.

"Would you mind telling me, Sylphia? What is it that you want to say? What's weighing on your mind?" Aldrian asked, his voice gentle and reassuring. She was silent for a moment, but after taking a deep breath, she looked at him and spoke.

"To tell you the truth, after what happened today and hearing from the Sword Saint about what you did, I realized something. You never seem to take a moment to let go of the burden on your shoulders, to just stop—without anything weighing on your mind. Your thoughts seem different from others, you always keep them to yourself. You wander off on your own, without me or any of us, your friends knowing. You're like a lonely warrior, even in the midst of comrades. I worry about you, Aldrian. Can you just stop for a moment and enjoy your surroundings? To see that you have friends you can count on? To trust them—or at least, to trust me?" she said.

"Isn't it better to have many hands helping you, rather than relying on just your own? You're not a god, after all." She looked into his clear blue eyes, worry reflected on her face.

As Aldrian listened to Sylphia's words, he found himself reflecting. *"Not a god, huh? Even I'm not sure about that,"* he thought.

He didn't fully know who he was in the past, but from all the signs he'd encountered, he seemed to be something akin to a godlike figure, someone connected not only to the Heavenly Demon but perhaps even to the Heavens themselves.

But her words about him making Aldrian to truly reflect on everything. She saw things in him that he couldn't see in himself. The way he acted all this time had felt natural to him, as if it was simply how things were meant to be done. Yet now, he began to realize that his approach might be too rigid—that he'd been forcing himself to shoulder every burden alone because of his abilities, especially his domain power.

He never thought to ask his friends for help, his mindset firmly set on *doing it all alone*. To him, there was nothing wrong with this approach because he was confident he could handle everything, ensuring success and achieving it swiftly. However, he also recognized his own limitations. He wasn't yet at the point where he could do whatever he wanted. Much of his strength depended on his domain ability, which couldn't cover every place. Outside his domain, his choices would be limited, and in those moments, he might need help from others.

He might have been a god in the past, but now he was just a cultivator at the peak Earl Stage, possessing an abnormal domain ability. He was not omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient. Nevertheless, he sighed as he looked at Sylphia.

"I'm truly grateful to you, Sylphia. You are always looking out for me and caring for me. But the thing is, I feel that with the power I have, there is a thing that I need to do. It's like I have this power, and with it comes a responsibility. Everything happening around me is pushing me to act on my own. It's not that I want to keep things from you, but the challenges I face are always at a high level, and it would be dangerous to tell you or others about them. I don't want to worry and endanger you all. I'm sorry," Aldrian said.

As she listened to his explanation, her hands continued to stroke his head. She smiled and replied to him.

"If you think that what you face is beyond the ability of me or others, then please explain it to us, or at least to me, so that I can understand what you think and what you plan to do. You are not alone in this journey. Although you are strong, I don't want you to feel burdened by keeping it to yourself. You have me and others to support you."

Aldrian smiled and nodded. At that moment, Aldrian and Sylphia's feelings grew much stronger, a connection ready to bloom, woven together by a strong thread. Unbeknownst to him, the karma thread linking him to Sylphia began to change to a red, slowly painting it with warmth. Inside Aldrian's heart, a feeling he had first experienced in this life started to blossom as he savored the sweetness of the moment.

Aldrian closed his eyes, enjoying this time with Sylphia, forgetting all his problems and leaving them for tomorrow.

The next morning, as people began their daily activities, Aldrian stepped out of his room. For the first time, despite not being overly tired, he felt that he could have fallen asleep, thanks to the comfortable feeling he had around Sylphia. Behind him, Sylphia followed with a shy expression, unable to believe that she had also fallen asleep. She tried to cover her flushed face with her hands.

Xin Haotian emerged from his room and noticed Aldrian already outside, but his brows raised in surprise when he saw Sylphia standing behind him.

"Well, our young man has certainly grown up, hasn't he?" Xin Haotian said with a teasing smile.

Aldrian ignored Xin Haotian, but Sylphia's face turned much redder as she instantly shouted at him, "Sir Xin Haotian, it's not what you think!"

"Yes, yes, what a beautiful moment for the youth. I must admit, I'm envious," Xin Haotian replied, waving his hand dismissively.

"Don't you still consider yourself young at your age as an emperor-stage cultivator? Don't act like you have the wisdom of someone who's lived for tens of thousands of years, your words apply to you as well," Aldrian said.

"I'm a sword cultivator who pursues the path of the sword. I don't have time for other entertainments."

"Is that so? That's a relief, then. I thought your taste had 'bent' from the natural course," Aldrian replied.

Xin Haotian's veins bulged on his forehead, he really wanted to battle this young man, but he knew he would undoubtedly lose, which would only add to his embarrassment. They walked together in silence, but everyone could see that Aldrian had come out on top in this 'jab' competition.

They then walked to the front of the inn, where they met Eleine and Baek Ji-Min. They had already rented a carriage to take them to the royal palace. Aldrian only needed to take care of one last thing before they could continue their journey to their next destination, the territory of the Buddhist sect.

In the middle of their journey to the royal palace, they noticed a larger crowd than usual, buzzing with discussions about something they had heard from the palace. The king announced that Duke Badin was guilty of colluding with devils to endanger the security of the Forgeheart Kingdom. He would be executed in front of the masses at noon, and the Badin family would be stripped of their noble title and reduced to commoners.

Many people were in an uproar after the announcement, beginning to speculate whether Duke Badin was truly guilty of colluding with the devils. However, since the royal family did not seem to hold a grudge against the Badin family, they wondered if there might be some truth to the accusations, unaware of the kind of life Duke Badin led behind the scenes.

It came as a surprise to them that a long-standing noble family would be reduced to commoners because of the duke's betrayal of the cultivators on the continent. However, since they were talking about devils, there was no room for traitors who aided such evil entities, and they understood why the punishment was so harsh.

Aldrian ignored all of this, as he knew he was already close to the royal palace to fulfill his last purpose here: to finish the Divine Sword!

Chapter 173: Finishing the 'Divine' Sword

When Aldrian and the others arrived at the royal palace, they were greeted by a large crowd surrounding the vast field beside it. In the center stood a newly established platform, and everyone knew its purpose. This was the execution platform—a place where many fates had already been sealed, and today, it would seal yet another.

As they entered the royal palace, they were greeted immediately by King Douwin himself. He seemed more enthusiastic than usual, but Aldrian could sense what was on the king's mind. Although angered by the treachery of certain nobles within his kingdom, his optimism about the completed Divine Sword outweighed his frustration. This was a moment of truth for him and many of the Forgeheart Kingdom's nobles.

Duke Valiard and Mardred were also there, sharing the same enthusiasm, so Aldrian greeted them as well. Even though Mardred had already entrusted the matter of the Divine Sword to him, Mardred wanted to witness this historical moment firsthand. After all, he had overseen the sword's completion for many years.

As the king received them, he had already prepared a place where the sword could be completed, and he had moved the sword there as well. This location was an artificial secret realm, created by a space-element artifact shaped like a teleportation portal. It was a more complex version of a standard teleportation portal, broadening Aldrian's understanding of artifacts.

"This is our family's secret realm, where we forge the Divine Sword," the king explained. "Whenever there is a breakthrough in our research on the sword, we bring it here to continue the forging process, making it a continuous endeavor that has spanned millions of years. Inside this secret realm are all the necessities for forging the Divine Sword. I have already moved the sword inside, so you can begin as soon as we enter."

Aldrian nodded at King Douwin's explanation. Without further delay, they entered the secret realm. Inside, Aldrian saw a massive chamber filled with all the necessities for artifact forging. Countless tools—many of which he had never seen before—lined the space, and all were of at least low Heaven grade. He could even sense a few divine-grade tools among them. For any blacksmith, this would be a paradise, with nothing lacking.

Aldrian then spotted the Divine Sword, resting in its revered place atop a golden table. He walked closer to examine it, wanting to inspect it one last time before he began. Though he had examined it yesterday, he wanted to be absolutely certain. With the combination of his knowledge of the symbol and his Eyes of the Heaven, he felt confident he could complete the sword. He trusted his Eyes of the Heaven to guide him toward the best results in the forging process.

He took a deep breath and grasped the sword. Even though it lacked a grade due to being incomplete, he could already feel the immense power contained within it. He

marveled at the sword's beauty, crafted in the same form as the Origin Sword. A wave of sadness washed over him as he remembered the Origin Sword, but he quickly shook off the feeling.

The weight felt perfect in his hand, and he sensed an immediate connection with the sword, understanding what it was. The karma he shared with the blueprint and the Origin Sword was also linked to this sword. Once again, he felt as if he were being guided by invisible hands. However, he didn't mind, he needed this sword, and he was ready to claim it.

After Aldrian assessed what he needed to do, he took out the Divine Iron. As soon as the Divine Iron emerged from his storage ring, the incomplete sword seemed to resonate with it. Aldrian raised an eyebrow as he observed the sword, which, though not yet sentient, trembled in the presence of the Divine Iron. To him, it was as if the Divine Iron and the sword were like magnets, drawn irresistibly to each other.

King Douwin and Mardred widened their eyes at the sword's unusual movement; they had never seen it behave this way before. Witnessing this phenomenon, their optimism soared as they felt history being made in that moment. For Aldrian, he was once again amazed by the Dwarves' craftsmanship in forging this Divine Sword. Although it wasn't yet 100% perfect, the fact that it could resonate with the Divine Iron was a strong indication that the Dwarves were largely on the right path.

He then grasped the special hammer, which he sensed was a mid-level divine artifact, demonstrating that the best tools for forging were available in this place. He turned to the others and said,

"I will now begin."

"Are you sure you don't want any help?" King Douwin asked again, his concern evident as Aldrian had repeatedly refused assistance. Aldrian had insisted that the true way could only be understood by him and had asked the king to trust him. However, despite Aldrian's capabilities and reassurances, worry still lingered in King Douwin's heart.

Aldrian smiled and replied to the king, "I'm fine, Your Majesty. You can watch if you'd like. I will do my best to ensure this sword is completed."

He then manipulated the Divine Iron to soften it before hammering away a substantial chunk—about 50% of what remained. Next, he hammered the rock that encased the Divine Iron, along with all the impurities surrounding it. Thanks to the higher grade of the hammer compared to the one used to create the Eternal Spirit, it was much easier to remove the impurities.

He then placed the pure Divine Iron inside the large forge, which was significantly bigger than the one in Duke Valiard's workshop. As Aldrian opened the lid of the forge,

heat radiated outward, a level of warmth far beyond that of the blue flame. He understood exactly what kind of flame burned within this forge.

"The Sky Flame, the strongest flame grade on this continent," Aldrian thought.

He then infused his golden energy into the fire, controlling it with his fire laws. He knew that even though the Sky Flame was the highest grade on the continent, it still wouldn't be enough to heat the Divine Iron swiftly. If he allowed the fire to burn the Divine Iron continuously without his golden energy help, he would have to wait weeks for it to finally turn red, and even then, it wouldn't reach the right temperature.

By controlling the Sky Flame, he heated the Divine Iron in under ten minutes. Thanks to the higher grade and quality of the flame, the process was much faster. He then took the Divine Iron with a pair of tongs and hammered it to make it thinner. Throughout this process, he continuously released his golden energy, injecting it into the Divine Iron to keep it stable.

Clang, Clang, Clang

The sound of the hammer echoed continuously as he remained focused, following the guidance of his Eyes of the Heaven to ensure the Divine Iron could later be mixed with the sword. He lost track of time as he repeated the process of heating and hammering. Only when the Divine Iron was shaped according to his Eyes of the Heaven's vision did he pick it up and place it in the furnace.

Now came the most crucial part: mixing the blade with the Divine Iron. He had to be careful; if he failed at this stage, all the efforts of past generations of the Forgeheart Kingdom would be in vain, and the sword's mixture would be destroyed. At this moment, he was fully concentrated as he placed the blade of the Divine Sword into the furnace, injecting it with his golden energy. This was the correct way to forge this sword, and his golden energy was essential to its success.

Inside the furnace, the resonance between the sword's blade and the Divine Iron grew much stronger. Aldrian knew that if he didn't control it properly, the Divine Iron could 'devour' the blade instead of mixing with it. He remained amazed by this material, as it seemed almost like a living entity. Using his energy, he guided the blade and the Divine Iron closer together within the furnace.

He kept everything steady, and when the sword and the Divine Iron finally touched, he swiftly lifted both and placed them on the long anvil, positioning the blade atop the Divine Iron. Now, he was ready to employ a blacksmithing technique from the symbol, the most compatible method for creating this sword.

The Creation of Origin

The name was overbearing, but he was not surprised; this was the technique that had created the Origin Sword. For the Dwarves to forge most of this sword's parts without this technique was already an extraordinary feat worthy of respect. The only drawback was that, without this technique, blacksmiths would have to spend a long time merely shaping the blade and mixing the materials.

He then began to hammer them with his technique activated. Each time his hammer struck the Divine Iron, he experienced a sense of familiarity, as if déjà vu washed over him.

Chapter 174: There Is No One Worthy of This Sword Than You and Me

Clang! Clang!

In his sight, it seemed he was brought to a single point in time, hammering away at a blade that was exactly like the Origin sword. He kept hammering diligently when suddenly he caught another glimpse of a vision, and the scene changed as he found himself swinging the sword.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye and did not truly affect Aldrian, who was focused on hammering at that moment. However, it still gave him a sensation reminiscent of that time when he had done the same thing. He kept hammering as he sensed the divine iron and the blade beginning to meld together. Aldrian then returned the blade and the divine iron to the furnace to repeat the process once more.

Heated, hammering, heated, and hammering—he didn't know how many times he had repeated this process, but finally, he could feel the mixture of the divine iron and the sword blade beginning to balance each other. The divine iron no longer displayed its devouring properties. They resembled yin and yang, complementing each other's weaknesses. The blade was now able to receive all kinds of elements, while the divine iron had become less ferocious in devouring energy.

Aldrian did not stop there; he was now injecting a large quantity of his golden energy to perfect the mixture of the blade and the divine iron. His energy acted as a catalyst, allowing the materials to balance each other without destroying their characteristics. If he had forged this sword outside of his domain, he would have depleted his energy long ago. To create this sword, Aldrian had to inject his golden energy continuously, without even a moment's pause.

Even Aldrian doubted that an emperor-stage cultivator could forge this sword, considering the amount of energy he injected and how this sword resembled a devouring abyss. He is the only person on this continent who can complete its forging!

After an unknown amount of time had passed, he finally felt that the mixture of the blade and the divine iron was perfect. He swiftly lifted the blade from the furnace and, with

precise control, dipped it into a special oil called Northern Mountain Oil—an oil of the highest quality for the quenching process.

After that, he was ready for the final process: creating the sword's pattern. He reheated the blade to prepare it for the engraving. In his mind, armed with the full knowledge from the symbol, he understood the intricacies of the pattern like the back of his hand. Yet, despite comprehending the pattern, he was still shocked by its profound complexity.

"As expected from the pattern of the first sword, the origin of all swords," he thought.

After the blade had reached the right temperature, he lifted it and began to engrave the pattern. He engraved the sword with such care and precision that even the amount of energy he used to strike was meticulously measured; there was no room for even the slightest imperfection. At that moment, he completely shut himself off from his surroundings, focusing entirely on engraving the pattern. He entered a state of enlightenment, fully absorbed in his work and undisturbed by anything else in the process.

Tik, tik, tik, tik

The sound of him engraving the sword, with the gentle movements of the hammer, resembled the ticking of a clock with a fast tempo. His hands moved in various styles to ensure that the lines of the pattern remained unbroken. This was also the most difficult part of the process; unlike other swords, where a blacksmith simply engraved the correct lines to ensure the pattern functioned properly, this pattern required a much greater level of skill and precision.

In this case, Aldrian had to ensure that he never broke the lines. Once he began engraving the pattern, he couldn't stop the process until he had finished engraving the entire design. He could not afford to fail; he only had one chance. If he broke even a single line, the sword's grade would instantly drop, or worse, it would reduce the entire sword to nothing more than a sturdy blade without any grade.

His golden energy flowed continuously into the blade, making the entire process feel like double the work for him. In fact, the process of creating this sword, which began from nothing, would have been more perfect if this technique had been used from the start. However, now that the sword was mostly shaped, he could perfect it with the help of his Eyes of the Heaven. They guided him on where he needed to make adjustments and how much golden energy he needed to inject.

Regarding the amount of energy he needed to inject into the blade, the Eyes of the Heaven indicated a significantly larger quantity than he had expected based on his knowledge. He understood the reason: during the previous process, the dwarves had ignored the golden energy because they couldn't identify what kind of energy it was. As a result, the blade now demanded a greater supply of his energy.

In the midst of his enlightened state, his body moved with seamless fluidity, his eyes never leaving the pattern. He resembled a man entranced by the sword itself. Unbeknownst to him, as he completed each line of the pattern, the energies of heaven and earth also reacted. It was as if a natural response occurred because what he was creating was something beyond divine grade, prompting the forces of heaven and earth to acknowledge its nearing completion. Yes, based on his knowledge, the actual grade of the pattern could not be defined, but it was already beyond divine grade.

The special aspect of this pattern is that it can only be engraved on this sword, using these specific materials. In other words, this pattern is unique to this sword and cannot be engraved on other swords made from different materials! This is the distinctive pattern that the person who created this sword designed exclusively for it.

Tik, tik, tik, tik

The surrounding energies of heaven and earth began to tremble as the lines of the pattern neared completion. When the last line connected, finally shaping the complete pattern, the surrounding energy surged into the blade, drawn in alongside his golden energy. The space within the secret realm also seemed affected, becoming unstable as a result. However, Aldrian, having finally finished the pattern, ignored all of this and dipped the blade into the special oil one last time.

As he lifted the blade from the oil, it suddenly shone with a bright light, transforming its color from obsidian to a brilliant golden hue. The blinding light illuminated the entire secret realm, causing even the portal gate to the secret realm to radiate with the golden glow.

Aldrian's eyes, however, never left the blade, even as the golden light blinded him. He seemed unconcerned, frozen like a statue, because at that moment, he received another vision. In the midst of the blinding light, he saw a figure he recognized from not long ago—the same figure he had seen when he touched the symbol. Just as before, the figure's face appeared blurry, with only his smiling mouth clearly visible.

"You have already reached this point, I guess the Origin Sword is no more, at least at this point in time. Although it is gone, you possess its successor. You can wield it, treasure it, for it will help you. Once this sword attracts the heavenly tribulation, that will be the sign that you are ready to leave this world. Many will be drawn to this sword and will try to snatch it from you, but fret not. This sword is special to both of us, there is no one more worthy of this sword than you and me," the figure said with a smile before his form became increasingly blurry.

"Wait!" Aldrian shouted, wanting to ask who he was and whether he was the one behind everything that had happened. However, his vision was engulfed in blinding white light before he could get the answers he sought. When the light faded, he found the blade back in his grasp. He was stunned as he noticed a symbol already engraved on the blade, the same symbol that adorned the inside of the box.

He then realized that he was back in the secret realm. As he looked around, he saw only Mardred and King Douwin, their faces revealing shock as they still didn't know what had just happened.

"How much time has passed since I tried to complete the sword?" Aldrian asked them.

"You... you've been in this place for more than a month," Mardred replied.

"A month has already passed?" He was stunned, he truly couldn't feel the difference in time while focusing on the sword. He looked at the blade in his hand, now golden, and though it still lacked one final step, it was already exuding a pressuring might. Even while holding this sword, he could feel a powerful boost to his strength.

Mardred and King Douwin also gazed at the sword, mesmerized by its transformation. After a few moments, King Douwin looked at Aldrian and sighed.

"Do you have any suggestions for the sword's

Chapter 175: The Situation While He Was Busy

Aldrian tilted his head, looking at King Douwin.

"Are you sure, Your Majesty? You're asking me to name this sword?"

"Yes. Although this sword has been a long-standing project of our kingdom, seeing how you completed it made me realize something: we could never have finished it without you. The technique you used is too extreme, impossible for anyone else to replicate. Your golden energy, the sheer amount you can release, feels infinite. After pondering this for a long time, I've come to believe it was fate that brought you here to complete this sword," King Douwin said.

"You are a powerful swordsman, a talented blacksmith, and the one who gave this sword its finishing touch. There is no one more worthy than you to wield it," he added.

Aldrian's eyes widened. "Your Majesty, do you mean...?"

King Douwin nodded. "I will entrust this sword to you. I've already gathered all the nobles who were aware of this project—except for those traitorous dukes. When they saw how your work, their dwarven instincts took over, they were mesmerized by your technique and shared my sentiment. Without you, completing this sword would have been impossible. After a discussion, we decided to give you the honor of naming it, and we agreed that you are the most worthy one to wield it."

Aldrian hadn't expected things to turn out this way. He had assumed that King Douwin and the nobles would never be willing to give him the sword, which was why he had asked the king to lend it to him to face the impending catastrophe. Truthfully, he had

wanted to make the sword his own and had been prepared to offer the dwarves a deal they'd find hard to refuse.

"However, I had to tell them that you are the mysterious swordsman. Otherwise, a few stubborn nobles would still feel reluctant, and such doubts could be dangerous in the long run. I made sure they understood that no one is more worthy than you. If this sword can aid you in your journey and help protect our land from the catastrophe you spoke of, then please, use it. It would be the Forgeheart Kingdom's honor for this sword, forged over millennia, to become the blade that saves this continent," King Douwin said.

Aldrian looked at the sword, recalling the words of the figure.

"Once this sword attracts the heavenly tribulation, that will be the sign you are ready to leave this world."

He thought for a moment, then spoke to the king.

"I haven't actually decided on a name yet. And even if I had, I wouldn't reveal it now, as the karma shaped by that name would trigger the heavenly tribulation. I need to hold off until the right time, when it's truly ready to be completed."

King Douwin was momentarily stunned but nodded.

"You're right. If we trigger the tribulation now, it would cause chaos. A sword of this caliber has never been seen before on the continent, so it's bound to attract unwanted attention," King Douwin replied.

"That's right, it would be far too conspicuous. I can only imagine how the people of this continent would react. I'd wager even the devils would make their move," Mardred added.

Aldrian looked at the sword in his grasp and extended it toward King Douwin and Mardred.

"Your Majesty, Sir Mardred, would you like to hold it? The Forgeheart Kingdom has safeguarded this sword all this time, so I think it's fitting to keep it here until the moment I need it. Until then, the dwarves can study it as a learning tool. Once this sword reaches true divine grade, it may be difficult for anyone else to even touch it."

King Douwin and Mardred's eyes widened in surprise, not expecting Aldrian to still offer them the chance to keep the sword. They had assumed Aldrian would take it away immediately. King Douwin reached out and grasped the sword, but as soon as Aldrian released his hold—

DUM!

The edge of the sword dropped to the ground, shocking King Douwin, Mardred, and even Aldrian. King Douwin then summoned his strength to lift the sword. Only after exerting all his muscle power and circulating his energy was he finally able to raise it. He rested the sword on his shoulder to help support its weight. However, Aldrian could see that King Douwin had used everything he had just to hold the sword, and even now, he had to release his energy to help maintain control.

"What kind of sword is this? How are you able to lift it so easily, Aldrian?" King Douwin asked, his face red as he struggled to keep himself from collapsing under the sword's weight.

"Wait, let me help," Mardred said, stepping forward to assist King Douwin. He tried to lift the edge of the sword off the king's shoulder, but to his shock, it didn't budge. Mardred then used all his muscle strength and cultivation to help lift it, and only after that did the sword finally shift, with both of them managing to lift it together.

"This is crazy. How is anyone supposed to wield this sword? Forget about swinging it—just lifting it would require the wielder to use their entire strength!" Mardred thought.

Aldrian watched as both King Douwin and Mardred struggled to hold the sword, then he touched it before easily taking it from their grasp. Only then did they both sigh in relief. They were truly shocked by the sudden, drastic change in weight and began to wonder if it was due to the divine iron. Could it be that just one material had made the sword so immense in weight that even an Emperor-stage cultivator would struggle to lift it?

"I'm sorry, Your Majesty, Sir Mardred. I didn't realize the sword would be so heavy for others. I forgot that, in the end, this sword still contains divine iron as one of its material. It's because the divine iron has already formed a connection with me that it reacts only to my touch. My apologies. Let me place the sword in its designated spot," Aldrian said.

"Alright, let's return it to the Divine Sword Hall. It's safer there. However, I don't think anyone would be able to steal it with that kind of weight," King Douwin said, glancing at the sword.

Aldrian then stored the divine sword in his storage ring before they walked toward the place where it had been kept for so long. However, when Aldrian placed the sword on the sword platform, the platform instantly shattered under its weight. With nothing else able to support it and no other means of holding the sword, Aldrian simply stabbed it into the ground and left it there.

After they were done, they returned to the throne hall.

"Your Majesty, while I was finishing the sword, is there any news I should be aware of? I plan to continue my journey to the Buddhist sect's territory, and I want to know if anything has happened so I can prepare in advance," Aldrian asked after they arrived at the throne hall.

"Ah, yes. A lot has happened while you were finishing the sword. First, you should be cautious near the territories of the three duke families—Badin, Calas, and Lorf. After I executed Duke Badin last month, I suppressed the other two families and captured Duke Calas and Duke Lorf. I don't know what kind of reckless thoughts these families might have after that, so you'll need to be careful when you're near their lands," King Douwin said.

"In their mansions, we found proof of their collaboration with the devils, so they couldn't deny their crimes. The entire kingdom condemned them for it. Their families are in chaos, but I haven't yet chosen replacements for them. As of now, the kingdom only has the Valiard Dukedom as the remaining duke family. It's utter chaos and has caused me quite a headache, but it's manageable. Fortunately, we are not located in the red zone, where conflict could erupt at any time. While the absence of the three dukes is worrisome in terms of security, economy, and politics, it can still be addressed with some tricks."

"As for the Eternal Spirit Sword, you don't have to worry. I've already announced to the world that the sword is now in the hands of someone, and I've left people to only guess who it is. It's the only way I could get rid of those bothersome individuals who kept pushing themselves to investigate the sword. After that, many of them started leaving the kingdom."

Aldrian nodded in understanding.

"Oh, and there's one more thing that's quite shocking, and it's a very worrying situation," King Douwin said, his brow furrowed. Mardred, who knew what King Douwin was about to say, also wore a worried expression, though he glanced toward Aldrian.

"I don't know if it's just a coincidence, but while I've been occupied with resolving internal issues in the kingdom, the devils from the Devil Territory suddenly launched a massive attack on the Doria Empire. I've heard they've been pushed back on some fronts."

Chapter 176: Releasing His Killing Intent (Again)

"What?" Aldrian widened his eyes.

"Yes, the devils have suddenly launched a surprise attack along the border with the Doria Empire. I heard the northeastern border of the empire has been pushed back, and they've already lost some territory to the devils. It's strange, though, as this time the empire doesn't seem able to regain momentum," King Douwin said.

"What about the Rivas Grand Duchy? How are they holding up?" Aldrian's voice was laced with worry. He knew that the Rivas Grand Duchy bordered devil territory and was one of the Doria Empire's primary defenses on the northwestern side of the empire. He thought his mother might already be in her family's territory to take care of the situation.

King Douwin felt puzzled by Aldrian's question. *"Does this young man have some connection with the Rivas family?"* he thought but answered nonetheless.

"The Rivas Grand Duchy is still holding on to its northern territory, but the situation is precarious. I fear that could change at any moment. I've received reports that the devils have even deployed members of the Seven Deadly Sins in the Rivas Grand Duchy. This has put the Doria Empire in a difficult position, and the Durand imperial family has already dispatched their Imperial Judgment Battalion to support the northern front."

When Aldrian heard mention of the Seven Deadly Sins, his worry became more apparent.

"Oh, by the way." Suddenly, King Douwin remembered something. "Speaking of the Rivas family, I've heard that their successor, the Blizzard Witch, has been dispatched to the northern part of the Rivas Grand Duchy. She even encountered one of the Seven Deadly Sins. The devils have regarded the Blizzard Witch as a primary target for a long time, so I understand—"

King Douwin abruptly stopped speaking as he felt a terrifying killing intent radiating from Aldrian.

He felt goosebumps as he looked into Aldrian's cold eyes, feeling as though death itself stood before him. At the same time, the entire sky began to darken with thick clouds, and the atmosphere grew oppressively heavy. Everyone within Aldrian's domain could feel it—the killing intent that seemed to descend from the heavens, a force that, when sensed, brought a chilling glimpse of one's own death.

At that moment, every being within Aldrian's domain felt an intense chill deep in their soul, sending shivers through their bodies. Many cultivators inexplicably dropped to the ground, overwhelmed by the sudden, shocking wave of killing intent. Babies burst into cries, cattle made chaotic noises, and dark clouds began to gather, crackling with lightning.

In the throne hall of the Forgeheart Kingdom, where the source of this phenomenon resided, King Douwin and Madred looked at Aldrian with expressions of utter shock. For his killing intent to affect even the heavens and earth—it was unbelievable!

"Shit! This is bad!" Madred, who knew the truth about Aldrian's parents, hurriedly spoke to him.

"Aldrian, you don't need to worry! Irene Rivas hasn't been harmed at all. Even though the devils see her as a high-value target, she's not an easy opponent to kill or capture! She's heavily guarded by the Rivas family, and Grand Duke Rivas loves his daughter deeply—of course, he'll protect her!" Madred's voice trembled with anxiety. He didn't care about the sudden shift in the atmosphere; he was far more concerned about the change in Aldrian's mood. They couldn't risk facing this monster's wrath here.

They couldn't afford to risk the wrath of someone capable of withstanding the strongest heavenly tribulation and unleashing a sword strike powerful enough to destroy a quarter of the continent. In his urgency, he blurted out his thoughts without hesitation. Fortunately, this seemed to help Aldrian regain his composure, and the phenomenon within his domain began to fade. The atmosphere returned to normal, but King Douwin cast a questioning look at Madred. How did Madred seem to know there was a connection between Aldrian and the Blizzard Witch?

"Irene Rivas is Aldrian's mother!" A voice transmission suddenly reached King Douwin's mind from Madred, causing his eyes to widen in shock. For a moment, he seemed to forget the fear of the killing intent he had just felt.

"Wha—" he started to exclaim, but Madred cut him off, continuing urgently.

"For now, just work with me. We must do everything we can to keep him calm! We need to reassure him."

King Douwin still wanted to ask more, but when he met his best friend's stern gaze, he held back and turned to look at Aldrian.

"Yes, the Bliz— I mean, Irene Rivas is still in good condition. Although she's on the front lines, the Rivas family isn't foolish enough to leave their successor in danger. Her old man would never let his precious daughter go unprotected. And don't forget, her title as the Blizzard Witch isn't for nothing. She's a powerful cultivator and one of the geniuses of her generation, even on par with the 'Fire Apostle,'" King Douwin said.

Madred almost wanted to facepalm. After all, the Fire Apostle was the father of this young man. Instead, he simply nodded in acknowledgment of King Douwin's explanation. As for Aldrian, he narrowed his eyes at Madred, suspicion evident in his gaze.

"Since when did you know?" Aldrian asked while teleporting all the royal guards outside the throne hall. He wasn't stupid—at first, Madred seemed to know about the special relationship between him and his mother, Irene Rivas. The way Madred spoke about her, along with his gestures, and finally the voice transmission to King Douwin, which he had tapped using his own technique, confirmed it. One of his secrets had finally been revealed.

Seeing Aldrian's serious expression, Madred sighed and said to him.

"Since the moment I saw your true face without disguise, I could deduce your parentage from it. You possess incredible ability and extraordinary skill, so the first conclusion I made was that you must come from a noble bloodline. And if you have noble blood, there's only one characteristic that could match yours, don't you think? From there, I could deduce your mother's identity."

Aldrian nodded, finally understanding that the cause of this was his disguise, which had been undone after his heavenly tribulation. He could only sigh, knowing that once his true face was seen by anyone with a sharp mind, his origin would soon be discovered. Now his true face had been seen by the three men of his group on Dragon Back Mountain. They were geniuses, so it was inevitable that they would connect the dots about his origin based on his story and everything he had done in the past.

As for King Douwin, he was still in a state of confusion due to this turn of events. He hadn't even asked about the royal guards who had suddenly disappeared. He still couldn't grasp the news that Aldrian was the son of Irene Rivas.

"Then I can assume you already know my father?" Aldrian asked Mardred again.

Mardred nodded, while King Douwin continued to watch them in confusion.

"What is going on? Irene Rivas doesn't have a husband. How can she have a son, and this monster, nonetheless?" King Douwin thought. He rubbed his temple, trying to make sense of it all. Unfortunately, he didn't know the details about Aldrian, so he couldn't fathom how everything fit together—unless Irene had a son out of wedlock. The thought made him shudder, and he turned his gaze to the two of them.

"Wait, you two. I demand an explanation. What the hell is going on? How can you be the son of Irene Rivas, and who is your father? This is too shocking and confusing. I don't even know how I'm supposed to react," he said.

Mardred then shared his side of the story, explaining how he was able to infer that Aldrian was Irene's son just from seeing his true appearance. Aldrian listened carefully, acknowledging that Mardred's sharp mind had led him to this conclusion simply from the sight of his red hair. This also made Aldrian aware of what others might think upon seeing his true appearance. With this in mind, he knew he needed to act more cautiously in the future, ensuring that situations like this wouldn't happen again.

However, he knew that in the future, there might be events beyond his control, much like what he experienced in Dragon Back Mountain. He hadn't expected to comprehend death laws and attract such a powerful heavenly tribulation, which drained his energy, left him severely injured and caused him to faint. In the end, his face was seen by others, leading to this situation.

King Douwin gasped in shock after hearing Mardred's side of the story and looked at Aldrian with bewilderment. To think that this was the son of Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas—this would be sensational news for the entire continent! Aldrian decided to no longer hide his true face and canceled his disguise to reveal his true appearance to King Douwin.

King Douwin raised an eyebrow and then nodded in understanding.

"No wonder Mardred could infer that you are Aldrey's son. Even I would've thought the same once I saw your face. Your features are unmistakably like his, but your eyes, they're just like your mother's. You are truly their son."

Aldrian nodded as he looked at both King Douwin and Mardred.

"So, Your Majesty, Sir Mardred, I ask that you keep this fact hidden for now. If the time comes when my identity must be revealed, then so be it. But for now, I wish to keep it a secret. With the devils attacking my mother's hometown, I must go there to support her. It's better if only a few know my true identity."

Chapter 177: Convince Eleine

King Douwin, understanding Aldrian's situation, nods. He, too, doesn't wish to add unnecessary trouble for Aldrian. If Aldrian truly is the son of two conflicting families, then it might be better for him to remain silent.

"So, you're going to the front line? But aren't you trying to hide your existence from the Rivas family? There's a high chance that if you go, someone there might connect you to your mother."

"To be honest, I don't care about my mother's family, I only care about my mother, and truthfully, my mother doesn't even know I'm here—in fact, she's never known where I've been all this time."

King Douwin and Mardred raised their eyebrows in wonder. Aldrian's situation was clearly more complicated than they'd realized, but neither wanted to become too involved in his family's problems.

"Anyway, I have to go now, Your Majesty. I need to be by my mother's side as soon as possible," Aldrian said.

King Douwin nodded. "You can use the royal family's teleportation station to go directly to the capital of the Rivas Grand Duchy. It's more advanced and robust, capable of storing more destinations than any other teleportation station on the continent. This means you won't need to transit along the way. One of its destinations is Rivas City, which will save you both time and resources compared to using a common teleportation station," he explained.

Aldrian cupped his hands. "Thank you for your help, Your Majesty. I will never forget your generosity."

"What are you talking about? It's my pleasure to help you. Besides, we're the ones who've gained so much from you. It's only right that I repay you, at least in this small way, though I still feel indebted to you, to be honest," King Douwin replied with a smile.

"Then I'll gather my group first, Your Majesty." With that, Aldrian vanished from the throne hall, leaving the two dwarves alone to ponder what the future might hold.

Inside the inn where Aldrian's group was staying, Eleine sat on a chair in her room, looking troubled. For the past month, ever since the devils' sudden attack, she had felt increasingly anxious about Irene's situation. She was torn, unsure of what to do. Should she leave Aldrian and go help her master on the front line? Or should she stay here?

If she went to the front line, Aldrian would undoubtedly be able to track her with his mysterious abilities. She didn't underestimate his resourcefulness. But if she stayed, she would be plagued by worry and unable to concentrate. She wanted desperately to help her lady, leaving her in a true dilemma.

Suddenly, Eleine sensed a presence outside her room. After hearing a knock, she opened the door and was stunned to see Aldrian standing there, smiling. Quickly, she composed herself, putting away her anxious expression.

"You're already back? How did it go with the sword? Did you succeed?" she asked with a smile.

"Of course I succeeded. His Majesty and Sir Mardred even gifted me the sword as a reward," Aldrian replied, smiling. But despite her efforts, Aldrian could sense the anxiety behind her smile and knew the reason for her unease.

Eleine widened her eyes, but before she could ask more, Aldrian spoke. "Anyway, let's get ready. We're heading to our next destination." She nodded, but his next words took her by surprise.

"To the Rivas Grand Duchy."

Eleine widened her eyes. How had the Rivas Grand Duchy suddenly come into the conversation? Seeing Aldrian's smile, a wave of nervousness washed over her. She hadn't even noticed that they were already inside her room with the door closed, and his smile seemed somehow different.

"I already know, Eleine. So you can tell me," Aldrian said.

Eleine was stunned, not quite understanding what he meant. But as she thought about how Aldrian had brought up the Rivas Grand Duchy, her eyes widened in realization. She took a step back, her gaze trembling as she looked into Aldrian's smiling eyes. Though she tried to act oblivious and keep her composure, she knew it was impossible, her body's reaction was all too obvious to him.

"You don't have to be anxious or nervous, Eleine. I already know about the origin of father and mother, so you can act normally. There's no need to hide it anymore. I understand why you kept it secret, and I appreciate your effort. But now that something has happened to mother, we need to help lighten her burden."

Eleine fell silent for a moment before finally speaking. "Since when did you know, young master?" Her eyes cleared, and she calmed after hearing Aldrian's admission.

"I've known about father since we were still in the Ivory Empire. As for mother, I only found out recently," Aldrian replied.

Eleine was silent again, but it seemed like she had made a decision. She looked directly into Aldrian's eyes.

"Young master, even though you know about Lady Irene, I'm sorry, but I can't let you go there," Eleine said, her eyes filled with determination. Aldrian looked into her eyes, unoffended by her words, and simply asked,

"Why?"

"Because it will complicate things, young master. I know you're already strong enough to help the Doria Empire handle these problems, but the real issue isn't the devils—it's the situation within their own empires, especially within their own families. Believe me, young master, they're a stubborn bunch. If they find out who you are, I don't know what will happen to Lady Irene or Lord Aldrey. Even though the old master loves Lady Irene dearly, he won't be able to protect her from political pressure. The Rivas family will face setbacks, and Lady Irene will bear the full weight of it all."

Aldrian knew that what Eleine had said was reasonable and the most likely scenario if others in the Doria Empire learned of his identity. Sometimes, the most bothersome issues weren't related to strength, but to politics. Once people discovered that he was the son of a couple from two conflicting families and different empires, any other families with grudges against his parents would eagerly exploit it to their advantage.

Many would start doubting the loyalty of Aldrian's father and mother, despite their fame and the great merits they had earned for their empires. Their status would fall, and their family would be affected. The family, renowned as the guardians of the North, would come under scrutiny from many, and that wouldn't bode well for their relationship with the empire. Even the imperial family would be dragged into the situation.

That was the fate of a famous family like the Rivas family—if his connection to his father and mother were known to the world. However, despite all of this, Aldrian simply smiled as he looked at Eleine. He then spoke to her.

"Yes, that's true. I agree with what you said, but in this situation, with the Doria Empire's position on the border so uncertain, we can take advantage of it. Do you think the Rivas

family or any other families in the empire will be looking for trouble in the midst of all this? I doubt they'll have the time to do so." he said.

"Unless those families are stupid, they won't touch the Rivas family, especially with the devils on the front lines. The only scenario I can think of where some families might still choose to offend the Rivas family, even in the midst of this war, is if they have connections to the devils. Do you know why I came to this conclusion?" he added.

Eleine thought for a moment before raising her eyebrows.

"Because the devils are the ones who benefit the most from this?"

"Bingo. The Rivas family will face two kinds of pressure—one from the war and one from those families within the empire. We can't expect the Doria Empire to be free from the devils. We've already seen what the devils have planned throughout our journey, and I suspect the Doria Empire has many devil infiltrators, even among the nobles," Aldrian replied.

"Anyway, all of your worries and these scenarios can only happen *if* someone connects my relationship to my mother. If they simply consider me an unrelated man, outside of the Rivas family or Flamecrest, then these scenarios won't happen, right?" he added.

Eleine pondered for a moment, and she had to admit that she agreed with Aldrian's opinion. Most of her worries applied to a normal situation, but they were at war, and that changed everything. She couldn't rebut Aldrian's analysis. Still, she remained concerned about the unknown aspects of their journey to the Rivas Grand Duchy.

"Eleine, please trust me, trust in my abilities like you always have. I know you've always been watching over me, and I understand your worries. But even if somehow people come to know about my existence, mark my words, I will not let anyone sully my mother's honor, nor will I allow the burden to fall on her shoulders. I'm her son, and I'll take care of it."

Chapter 178: Before Departing to the Doria Empire

Eleine looked into Aldrian's eyes, which were full of confidence, and she could tell that he was truly serious. Throughout his journey, she had never seen Aldrian fail at anything; he always ensured that his purpose was achieved, no matter what path he took. To be honest, she had a feeling that Aldrian's appearance on the northern battlefield would bring chaos, and his high-profile actions would surely attract the attention of the imperial family. She feared that after this, it would be impossible to keep Aldrian's existence hidden.

She really couldn't decide, her mind was confused, but looking into his eyes, she felt like she could fully trust Aldrian in this matter. She gritted her teeth and said to him,

"Alright, young master, I will follow you, but please, I hope you can protect Lady Irene from whatever she may face in the future."

Aldrian smiled at her words.

"Of course, even without you saying that, I will protect Mother. I will ensure that, even if everyone on this continent knows of my existence, I will not let anyone endanger her or sully her honor. This is my oath as her son, as a man named Aldrian Aster."

Eleine just sighed, but she was stunned when Aldrian suddenly hugged her tightly. Her body, now much shorter than his, was enveloped by his warm frame. She could feel the hug full of affection and hear his voice beside her ear.

"Thank you for always being by my side, for watching me grow, and for always trusting me. Thank you."

Eleine remained silent, but her mouth shaped into a smile as she reciprocated his hug.

"Yes, he is 15 years old, but he already has a more mature mind and strength on par with the peak cultivators of the continent. He is no longer that boy who followed Lord Aldrey and Lady Irene."

No matter how many times she had seen Aldrian's development or how many achievements he had attained, she still felt worried for him. She was still entrusted by her lady to protect Aldrian and help him with whatever he needed, but she felt she wasn't doing a very good job. After they came out of the secret realm, it seemed like Aldrian had done everything on his own.

She felt guilty about it, but looking at Aldrian's rapid development—how he had already gained the power to dominate others and established connections with some of the sovereigns of the continent—she felt proud. Now that he wanted to return to his mother to help her, she, as his guardian, would also follow his decision.

Aldrian then released his hug and looked at Eleine.

"Let's go. We'll depart now. I'll tell the others first," he said. Eleine nodded, and they finally left her room. Aldrian then gathered his group in his room and explained his next destination.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here to tell you that there's been a slight change of plans. We will be going to the Doria Empire to help them fend off the devils," he said to Sylphia, Baek Ji-Min, and Xin Haotian. Sylphia and Baek Ji-Min were surprised by the sudden change, especially since the destination he had chosen was the empire currently at war with the devils.

As for Xin Haotian, he had already predicted that this would happen when the devils attacked the Doria Empire. He thought that the time when Aldrian could help his family unravel the mystery of the Everlasting Silent Forest would have to be postponed again, but he understood how Aldrian felt. Now, he could only feel pity for the devils for offending this singularity.

"Rest in pieces," he thought to himself but it directed at the devils.

"Aldrian, may I know the reason? We know that all of your actions have a purpose, but why do you want to go to the Doria Empire—and to the battlefield, no less?" Sylphia asked.

Aldrian smiled as he looked at her and the others in the room. He then dispelled his disguise, revealing the appearance of the handsome young man with red hair to everyone present. Baek Ji-Min widened her eyes, finally seeing the true face of the man who had always made her feel differently and drawn her to him. As for the others, they had already seen his real face, so they were not surprised.

"Let me introduce myself once more. I am Aldrian Aster, the son of Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas," he said, placing one hand on his chest, much like an elegant noble introducing themselves.

"As I thought, he is their child!" Xin Haotian thought. He wasn't surprised by his origin, as he had already guessed it with Duke Valiard and Mardred. However, that was not the case with Sylphia and Baek Ji-Min. Their shocked expressions couldn't be more evident, as this news was something they hadn't expected, the child of the successors of two conflicting families is something beyond their imagination.

"You what? Aldrian, can you tell me more? What do you mean you're their child?" Sylphia asked.

Aldrian then told them his story, from his origin in one of the secret realms of the Everlasting Silent Forest to the point when he finally came out of that place and made his way to the Ivory Empire. Xin Haotian, Sylphia, and Baek Ji-Min, who had never known Aldrian's entire story, finally understood the truth about his origin. Though they remained curious about his mysterious abilities, they couldn't deny that the genes of the two genius cultivators of the continent had resulted in this powerful, handsome young man—one capable of making the entire continent tremble.

Sylphia, now understanding the truth behind why he always used his disguise, nodded in understanding, as this matter was also connected to the situation of his parents' origin. She then looked at Eleine and asked her.

"Then I assume you are not his older sister, right?"

Eleine, feeling that there was no longer a need to hide the truth, placed her hands on her chest and slightly bowed her head.

"Yes, I'm sorry for lying to you, but I am actually one of Lady Irene's retainers—the guardian of Young Master Aldrian. I hope you understand our situation," she said.

"Oh no, I'm not offended by it. On the contrary, I'm glad that we can come clean with each other. Now that I know Aldrian and your origins, I will surely keep it to myself, so you don't have to worry," Sylphia said.

"Me too, I'll keep this secret with me!" Baek Ji Min added.

Aldrian nodded, smiling, glad that they could support each other. However, Xin Haotian looked at him curiously before asking.

"You seem not surprised that my reaction is not what it's supposed to be," Aldrian said.

"I already know that you knew my origin. This was to be expected, as my face can be seen after the tribulation. Also, Sir Madred already told his story earlier, so I know that you already knew my origin here."

"So, His Majesty King Douwin also knows about your origin now?" Xin Haotian asked.

"Yes, he already knows now," Aldrian replied.

The others, beside Aldrian and Xin Haotian, were stunned to learn that there were other people who knew about Aldrian's origin. They had never been told by Xin Haotian about this part after he came back from Dragon Back Mountain, so this was new to them.

Xin Haotian then finally told the ladies his side of the story, how he and the group that came back from Dragon Back Mountain learned about Aldrian's origin. Sylphia and Baek Ji Min could only sigh, realizing that there were others who had known Aldrian's secret much earlier than they had. But now, it didn't matter anymore, as they had finally learned the truth in the end.

"Now, this journey will be more dangerous than before, so I ask you again: do you want to come with me?" Aldrian asked, his gaze shifting to each of their faces. He especially looked at Sylphia and Baek Ji Min. These two ladies were about to enter the war zone, and it would be dangerous for the princesses of such powerful factions. He would surely protect them, but he wanted to know their opinion.

"Why are you asking that now? Of course, I will follow you! Wherever you go, I will go. Moreover, this time, the devils are trying to wreak havoc on the peace of the continent. I want to participate in pushing them back to their hellhole," Sylphia said with a smile.

"Me too. Although I've never been to the battlefield, I will also participate in this, as it is connected to the peace of the demon territory. If the Doria Empire can't hold off the devils, the chaos will spread to the demon territory," Baek Ji Min said.

"Do you want to hear my opinion?" Xin Haotian suddenly said, but Aldrian ignored him. Aldrian didn't need to hear from Xin Haotian, and he didn't care what he thought because he was pretty sure that Xin Haotian would follow him anywhere, and with his strength, he was needed to fend off the devils. Aldrian, sensing the ladies' determination, could only sigh and smile at them.

"Alright, our next stop is the Rivas Grand Duchy. Let's kill some devils," he said.

Chapter 179: The Condition of the Battlefield

As Aldrian's group traveled back to the royal capital in the carriage, he sent a voice transmission to the First and Second Finger.

"First Finger, Second Finger, I want both of you to go to the Doria Empire and gather information about the battlefield on the northwest side of the empire, especially within the territory of the Rivas Grand Duchy. Prioritize the status of the Rivas family's successor, Irene Rivas, and report back to me as soon as you have the information. Go!"

"Yes, Master," they answered simultaneously. They felt puzzled by this new order, as their master's sudden interest in the Doria Empire and the devils' war was unexpected, however, they still obeyed Aldrian's order without needing to ask why. They hadn't heard what Aldrian had discussed with his group in his room, as he had blocked the conversation from reaching outside, leaving them unaware of its contents.

After giving orders to the two Fingers, Aldrian then sent a voice transmission to Arson Vuran.

"What is it, Master?" Arson's voice resonated within Aldrian's mind.

"Send your other assassins to the Doria Empire. Have them kill as many devils as possible, establish an intelligence network, and keep an eye on any nobles who seem to have a grudge against the Rivas family. Report any important information about those families to me," Aldrian replied.

Arson Vuran was momentarily stunned, wondering why his master wanted to involve himself in the war and the affairs of the Doria Empire's nobles, but he still answered Aldrian's order.

"As you wish, Master." After that, Aldrian cut off the connection. With his own eyes and ears in the Doria Empire, anything he needed to accomplish there would become much easier.

After a short journey from their inn to the royal palace, they arrived and were promptly led to the royal family's private teleportation station. King Douwin, Mardred, and Duke Valiard were already waiting for them. Duke Valiard had been informed after Aldrian exited the royal family's secret realm, so he also went to inspect the sword. Upon hearing that Aldrian intended to go to the Doria Empire to involve himself in the war, he also came to see him off.

As one of the few who knew the truth about Aldrian's origin, Duke Valiard understood why Aldrian made this decision, so he didn't ask him about it. However, he couldn't help but feel a sense of sadness. The only person he had ever taught blacksmithing was leaving. Though their time together had been short, Aldrian's presence had already changed his life, and he had come to consider him a disciple.

Aldrian saw Duke Valiard smile at him and immediately bowed his head.

"Thank you for teaching me blacksmithing. I will never forget your generosity in allowing me to learn your techniques. You are the one who opened the path of blacksmithing to me and even let me learn the secret technique, 'Heaven's Hammer of Creation.' I will never forget it," Aldrian said.

Hearing Aldrian's words and seeing him bow his head, Duke Valiard wanted to stop him, but before he could move, Aldrian spoke again.

"Master."

Duke Valiard was stunned for a moment, then he smiled—a genuine smile that everyone there could recognize as one of pride. How could he not be proud? Aldrian was someone whose name would undoubtedly resound across the continent in the future. That was their belief, and it was only a matter of time. As Aldrian's master in blacksmithing, Duke Valiard had every reason to be proud. He would always remember that he had contributed to Aldrian's development.

Even though they were not formally master and disciple, Aldrian's voluntary call of "Master" was deeply touching to Duke Valiard. It showed that Aldrian truly considered him as his mentor.

"Be careful out there, young master. I hope you succeed in whatever you do," Duke Valiard said.

"Thank you." Aldrian then turned to look at King Douwin and Mardred.

"Until next time, Your Majesty, Sir Mardred," Aldrian said, and both responded with a nod. Without hesitation, he stepped into the teleportation portal, followed by Xin Haotian and the others. The three dwarves could only imagine the kind of chaos that would be unleashed by Aldrian's appearance on the northern battlefield.

As Aldrian's group stepped into the teleportation portal, the situation on the northern battlefield, along the border of the Doria Empire, was deteriorating. Much of the northern border of the Doria Empire was now under the devils' control, forcing local nobles to evacuate civilians deeper into the empire's territory. In the northeastern part of the empire, the situation was the most dire. This was where the devils had successfully breached the empire's defenses, advancing more than 800 kilometers from the initial border.

The smell of blood, the cries and shrieking voices of pain, and the countless corpses scattered everywhere had become the new normal. The area had turned into a hellish landscape. As the situation worsened in the northeastern region, the imperial family sent reinforcements to assist the local nobles in stabilizing the situation. However, the devils had their own plans. Using their overwhelming numbers and great strength, they rendered the incoming reinforcements ineffective.

There were even reports that the devils had dispatched members of the Seven Deadly Sins to the battlefield, causing the Doria Empire to suffer significant losses. In response, the Durand imperial family, as the rulers of the Doria Empire, announced to the rest of the empire's nobles to prepare for deployment if needed. Should the situation worsen, they would be required to assist the northern frontline.

However, not all of the border was easily breached by the devils. The northwestern region, where Grand Duke Rivas resided, proved difficult for the devils to conquer. Although they had started to gain momentum by pushing the Rivas family soldiers deeper into the territory, their progress was so slow that it could be said the devils had achieved little on the northwestern front.

However, with the appearance of one of the Seven Deadly Sins, the situation began to lean in favor of the devils. The Rivas family was losing ground at a faster pace, and they were forced to abandon some areas to avoid being surrounded by the devils for a pincers attack. The conclusion was clear: the situation had become increasingly unfavorable for the Doria Empire.

At this time, in one part of the Rivas Grand Duchy where the battle raged, the air was filled with the sound of war cries. Various elemental techniques were unleashed by both sides, but it was clear that the devils fought like rabid beasts. With their powerful bodies, they charged at the Rivas family cultivators, unleashing their own devastating techniques. They seemed unbothered by their wounds, caring little for their own lives even if struck by the enemy's attacks.

The Rivas family had been in turmoil because of this. They knew that the devils, especially those of lower cultivation, were often uncontrollable due to their inability to

manage the negative energy when cultivating the devil cultivation techniques. However, this time, their madness seemed to reach a new level. They fought like ferocious beasts, indifferent to their own lives. With their overwhelming numbers, they had become a terrifying force to be reckoned with.

BOOM!

"Keep unleashing your area-of-effect techniques! We need to hold them here, or we'll lose another sector! We have to secure this area until the town's evacuation is complete!" shouted one of the field commanders of the Rivas family.

"Damn you evil entities, die!"

"Hold your line! Don't let the devils break through!"

Whoosshh

"Argghh!"

The sounds of battle and destruction echoed everywhere, but the devils remained relentless. They unleashed their techniques while charging at the defense line with brutal force.

"Die, you weaklings!" one of the devils roared, launching a fire-element attack. A massive pillar of flame erupted, engulfing several cultivators and reducing them to ashes. Beside him, another devil wielded a sword, moving with lightning speed as he charged toward the defense line.

"They're members of the Seven Devils of Disaster! Activate the formation!" the commander shouted.

The moment he gave the order, the ground trembled, becoming soft and mushy, causing the devil with the sword to almost lose his footing. The cultivators of the Rivas family seized the opportunity and immediately unleashed their techniques. However, they were stunned when the devil, with nimble movements, stepped on the mushy ground as if walking on air. With incredible speed, he dodged their attacks and reached the defense line, where he began slaughtering the cultivators.

"Shit! Retreat 500 meters!" the commander shouted, but he froze in shock as a devil suddenly appeared in front of him.

"Got you!" the devil sneered, his smile twisted and with a swift motion, he slashed at the commander's head with his hand, now shaped like a fiery blade. But before the blade could decapitate the commander, his hand was suddenly trapped by ice walls that erupted from the ground, halting his strike. The commander quickly retreated, silently thanking the heavens for his narrow escape.

The devil stared at his hand, now encased in ice, and with a wave of his hand, he shattered the ice wall. His gaze then turned to the beautiful woman standing not far from him.

"The Blizzard Witch," he

Chapter 180: Irene's Misfortune?

Her beautiful face remained unblemished by the dirt and debris of war. She wore silver-white armor that made her look like a goddess of war, her cold expression as chilling as a winter night, freezing everything in its icy wind. Then, she commanded her signature element—one few could master on this continent, the element of ice.

She created an icy prison cage, trapping the sword-wielding devil who had been slaughtering the defensive line. The devil didn't panic when the ice prison appeared; he merely twisted his body and slashed at the cage with his power, instantly shattering it. He then turned to look at Irene, now locked in battle with his comrade from the 7 Devils of Disaster. The devil's fire element tried to burn her, but she shielded herself with ice armor and counterattacked with her ice spear.

As soon as she appeared on the battlefield, the soldiers' morale soared, and they shouted a war cry.

"Push back! Lady Irene is here!" the commander shouted at the top of his lungs.

The soldiers then launched a counterattack, their confidence bolstered as Irene held back the threat of the 7 Devils of Disaster. The battle intensified as Irene fought against the fire-element devil and created a clone to confront the sword-wielding devil. She was now facing two formidable opponents on her own, which came as a relief to the defensive line, as their burden was lightened.

Her movements were beautiful as she danced, dodging and striking at the devil with her ice spear. Every motion was elegant yet deadly, and the temperature around her had already dropped, causing parts of the ground to freeze. The fire-element devil was being pushed back, yet his expression showed no anxiety—instead, he looked amused.

"You are truly powerful, Blizzard Witch—no wonder Lord Lust Devil is so mesmerized by you and desires you so badly. Why don't you join us? In the end, we are the victors. Your orthodox and unorthodox cultivators will have no place once our 'god' descends," he said.

Irene ignored him, continuing her relentless spear attacks and coming within inches of decapitating him with a precise slash. She then created some distance, and her clone, who had been battling the sword-wielding devil, also pulled back to stand by her side. The two devils now stood side by side, facing Irene, and the fire-element devil turned to the devil beside him and asked a question.

"How is she, Karius?"

"She's much stronger than last time. As expected of the Blizzard Witch, but her growth is truly concerning—she nearly overwhelmed me, even with her clone. How about you, Rexith?"

"I agree. She's already much stronger than us. Even if we use our Devil forms, we'd still be weaker than her. From my calculations, she's already at a strength on par with the 7 Devils of Annihilation," Karius said. However, he frowned as he watched Irene. She appeared to be preparing a technique, dispelling her clone in the process. When he sensed the surrounding energy being drawn toward her and the immense cold spreading outward, he realized what she was about to do.

"Shit, stop her! Don't let her unleash this technique!" he shouted. But even without him saying that, Karius had already dashed toward Irene, moving at a speed too fast to be seen by the naked eye. To their shock, Irene had already completed her preparation and instantly unleashed her technique.

Ice Forest.

The area in front of her instantly transformed into a vast ice field, with ice spikes of varying sizes protruding from the ground. The temperature dropped below -300 degrees Celsius, freezing everything in its path—the landscape and all living beings, making it seem as though the area had been covered in ice for ages. A stretch of about four kilometers ahead of her had become a frozen wasteland, filled with devils who had no time to react to Irene's attack. Even their faces remained twisted in crazed expressions, frozen by the sheer speed of the attack.

There is no escape from this technique for cultivators weaker than the Duke stage. Even the slightest touch of the cold will freeze them to death. As for Duke stage cultivators, it depends on the toughness of their bodies. If they cannot withstand the cold, it can be deadly for them.

Irene looked at her masterpiece with a serene expression, but her brow furrowed as she glanced at the two surviving devils—members of the 7 Devils of Disaster. They were using their defense techniques to shield themselves, and despite trembling from the cold, they showed no signs of desperation or anxiety. In fact, they were grinning.

"We're done here. You're truly a great cultivator, Blizzard Witch, but unfortunately for you, our purpose wasn't to face you," Rexith said. "Someone has already arrived to pick you up," he added.

Irene frowned deeper, a sense of unease creeping over her. Instantly, she spread her senses to the maximum, and when she scanned the vast ice field she had created, she detected someone standing there. He was a handsome man with black hair and a black cloak, his skin unnaturally pale, as if lacking blood. His red irises locked onto Irene's

direction, and his smile, though enhancing his handsome features, only appeared sinister to her.

Irene was stunned to see that this man was here, in the heart of the battlefield!

"Wasn't the report saying that the Lust Devil was on the other side of the border, outside the Rivas Grand Duchy? How is he here?!"

she thought. Without hesitation, she tried to escape using an escape talisman, but she shuddered as she felt the space around her grow heavy. She knew exactly what it was.

"His domain! This is bad!" she thought. The Lust Devil's domain could block any kind of escape, so his opponents had no choice but to defeat him or leave the domain area. Without hesitation, she dashed in the opposite direction. She knew facing the Lust Devil would be suicide, and if he caught her, it would be over—she would face a fate worse than death.

She then took out an artifact shaped like a pyramid, emanating a faint low divine grade aura, before activating it. As soon as the artifact was activated, her body was enveloped in light, and a new set of armor appeared to protect her. With this, she could reduce the influence of the Lust Devil's domain. Looking around, she saw that all of her family's soldiers were frozen in place, as if under the effect of a hypnotic spell. They were sitting ducks, slaughtered without resistance by the devils.

Irene gritted her teeth in frustration at her powerlessness. If not for the low divine-grade armor, she would have been affected as well. This was one of the terrifying properties of the Lust Devil's domain: its illusions and hypnotic powers. Opponents trapped within his domain had to contend with his powerful illusions and hypnosis. The illusions could take many forms, all controlled by the Lust Devil, and he could hypnotize his foes to do his bidding—for example...

Irene dodged an incoming attack from her side as she ran. When she saw the attacker, she realized it was the commander of the Rivas battalion. His eyes were unfocused, clearly under hypnosis, and he continued to attack her, preventing her from escaping further. At that moment, she was faced with a choice, either kill her own people or lose any chance of escape.

Not wanting to kill her own people, Irene decided to incapacitate the commander with ice, though it would take longer than simply killing him. However, the situation didn't stop there. More of her own soldiers began to surround her, trapping her. She gritted her teeth but kept using her ice to trap them, continuing to run with her movement technique.

"Oh, Blizzard Witch, you are truly worthy of becoming one of my harem! Come to me, dear! Let me pamper you to the fullest, and I will show you pleasures you will never

forget!" Irene heard the Lust Devil's voice, and a chill ran down her spine as the voice seemed to grow closer.

She pushed her movement technique to the limit and finally sensed that the edge of the Lust Devil's domain was near. She didn't know why the Lust Devil seemed so relaxed, but she didn't care. She kept using her movement technique, but suddenly, she felt a presence on both sides of her.

"Did you forget about us?" Rexith said as he attacked Irene with fire, while Karius struck her with his sword technique. The attacks didn't affect Irene due to her armor, but they were enough to distract her for a moment. In that instant, her eyes dilated as she saw the Lust Devil standing right in front of her, his hand reaching toward her face.

"I've got you now, my dear."

In Rivas City, the capital of the Rivas Grand Duchy, the atmosphere was far from usual. The citizens could feel the tension of the ongoing war with the devils. The city's security had been tightened, and anyone wishing to enter had to pass thorough checks, including those arriving through the teleportation station.

At that moment, a footstep echoed as someone stepped out from the teleportation portal, revealing a handsome face. His blue eyes that common in this area, scanned his surroundings with a serene expression.

Aldrian had finally arrived at his mother's hometown!