

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 311: Her Revenge Target - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 311: Her Revenge Target

Chapter 311: Her Revenge Target

For the past few weeks, Carol has visited several places in search of the remains of the Duclan family members. Many members of the family were not executed by the imperial family at the time because they successfully escaped. Among them are elders and high-ranking commanders who remain loyal to the Duclan family and can only lament their fate that night.

Since then, these individuals have gone into hiding, not only from the Larson and imperial families but also from public attention. The Duclan name, once a source of pride, has been smeared by accusations, forcing them to conceal their identity as members of the family. Branded as traitors since that day, they are no longer seen as a respectable noble household.

They are the ones who believe that their family was betrayed by the Larson family. They all know there is no way Duke Duclan would have betrayed the empire by aiding the devils. For the Larsons to stab them in the back after they moved closer to Duclan family only proves that this betrayal was planned all along.

That's why, when the young miss they thought had died that night suddenly returned with the hope of revenge, they immediately joined her. She is the last descendant and the final bloodline of the Duclan family. If she seeks revenge, they will gladly assist her. They are grateful for her return, as they have longed for vengeance but lacked the power and connections to act on it.

She returned with a plan and enough resources to strike down the Larson family. She informed them that she had an ally whose goals aligned with theirs.

"Alright, we successfully completed our mission today. We will continue our operation tomorrow. Although I've warned you many times, I will say it again—remember to be cautious when moving around. Don't let the Larsons catch you. If you suspect that those bastards are onto your trail, head straight to the ambush point. Is that clear?"

"Yes, milady!" the people in the room responded in unison.

After that, everyone left the room except for Carol. She closed her eyes as if intending to take a nap. However, the door opened again, and she immediately opened her eyes.

Standing before her was a man in a black robe—Ghulani, a former member of the Larson family's intelligence organization.

Aldrian had sent Ghulani to assist Carol with intelligence matters. His presence made operations within the Larson Grand Duchy far easier than anyone had initially anticipated. However, many were skeptical of the man's integrity and true intentions when they learned his identity. Someone who had once been part of the Larson intelligence organization was, understandably, a red flag. They were reluctant to place their trust in him too quickly.

Carol shared the same concerns as her family's member, but she knew that Aldrian wouldn't have allowed this man to join them without good reason, especially considering his ties to the Larson family. Aldrian must have recognized Ghulani's value and ensured there was some form of guarantee preventing him from betraying them.

After observing the man's performance over the past week, Carol had to admit that all of his information was accurate, significantly simplifying their operations. It could be said that the success of their missions to expose the devils' positions within the Larson Grand Duchy was largely due to Ghulani's intelligence.

Because of this, Ghulani gradually earned the trust of the Duclan family. Carol, too, made an effort to trust him, though she remained cautious, keeping her guard up in case he had a change of heart.

"I've already placed *that* thing in the secret passage. It will activate instantly once you break this talisman," Ghulani said as he took a talisman from his storage ring and handed it to Carol. She accepted it with a nod.

"I also have information that Young Master Clark will be visiting the entertainment district tonight. From the looks of it, he's planning to visit the Flower's Fragrant Brothel. If he goes there, I can assume he'll try to meet his favorite woman, Elis. She's one of the people closest to Young Master Clark."

Upon hearing Ghulani's words, a cold gleam flickered in Carol's eyes. Clark Larson—the man she once believed she could trust—had proven to be a snake who destroyed her family. He was one of her primary targets for revenge.

"If we want to capture him, you'll need to bring elders with cultivation at the Duke stage. Young Master Clark will be accompanied by his personal guardian, who has a High Duke stage cultivation," Ghulani advised.

Carol nodded and rose from her seat. She patted Ghulani's shoulder briefly.

"Thank you," she said before walking past him. "Let's go. Now that he's finally out in the open, we'll take this chance to capture him."

With that, they left the room, leaving the dark space behind in silence.

Time passed quickly, and night finally fell. Larson City, like many other cities, was vibrant with activity. Despite the Larson family being plagued by rumors and their reputation hitting an all-time low, the lives of the common people in the city remained largely unaffected. They went about their routines without much concern.

At a food stall along one of the main roads, customers gathered to buy grilled meat—a local favorite. Among them was a young man with long black hair and a handsome face, seated at one of the tables. He appeared to be thoroughly enjoying the food before him.

Although there was nothing particularly conspicuous about him aside from his handsome face, his way of eating was refined, like that of a noble with graceful movements.

With each bite, his serene, handsome face nodded in satisfaction as he closed his eyes.

"Truly good meat," he thought. "It's so tender, and the seasoning is perfectly absorbed. No wonder this food stall is famous."

"This piece of meat is even more delicious than some dishes from the imperial palace. Maybe I should ask the owner for the recipe. Lorraine would surely like this."

Unbeknownst to those around him, the man was, in fact, one of the most famous individuals in the empire—the one and only son of Emperor Herman Avandi. He was none other than Prince Claude Avandi.

On his father's orders, he was sent here to investigate the problems surrounding the Larson family. The rumors of their involvement with the devils and their activities within the empire were a serious matter, and the imperial family had deemed it a top priority to address.

In disguise, he set out to uncover the truth about what had happened to the Larson family.

As the prince of the empire, he had many connections, and in this place, several informants were aiding him. He had received tons of information, and from his perspective, it seemed the Larsons indeed had some connection to the devils. However, he needed more solid evidence to support his theory before making any judgments.

A few minutes later, he spotted someone on the street—a young man followed by a Duke-stage cultivator acting as his guardian. As soon as he saw the young man, he pretended not to notice him, but his senses remained locked onto him. This was the target for tonight's observation: the young master of the Larson family.

Although the young man was handsome and carried an undeniable charisma, the way the people looked at him was far from respectful. They were more afraid than anything else, silently stepping aside and not daring to meet his gaze. Since the rumors linking the Larson family to the devils began to spread, the young master's personality had undergone a sharp change.

Many had once thought that young master Clark was a man of elegance and serenity. However, all of that changed a few days ago when he killed several people in broad daylight simply because they were gossiping about the Larson family. Since then, many have been afraid of him. After all, the Larson family is still a prominent noble house and the true sovereign of this territory.

Clark paid no attention to his surroundings as he walked with a smile towards the entertainment district. Once Clark had moved quite a distance away, Claude decided to follow him.

However, before he could rise from his seat, he sensed a few presences whose movements seemed suspicious to him. From their actions and direction, it appeared they were following the young master of the Larson family.

Their gestures and movements indicated they were not from the Larson family, and the most noticeable thing was...

"There's killing intent." Although these individuals tried to hide their killing intent, Claude could still sense the faint traces of it emanating from some of them, even while seated.

"Six on the rooftops, six blending with the crowd, three at the duke stage, and the rest are marquess and earl stages." It was a formidable composition for a group that seemed to harbor ill intent toward the young master of the Larson family.

Intrigued by this sudden development, Claude let them pass first before finally standing up and starting to follow them. He wondered what the identities of these people were, who dared to harbor intent to harm the young master of the Larson family.

Chapter 312: The Strange Performance

One of the most famous entertainment venues in Larson City is the Flower's Fragrant Brothel. This brothel specializes in women entertainers and is well-known among men. The three-story building, with its floral fragrance, attracts everyone's attention and entices them to visit. Even noblemen, such as the young master of the Larson family, are no exception.

Once Clark entered the brothel, he was instantly greeted by the manager. She was a middle-aged woman with a youthful appearance, dressed in revealing attire that stirred men's fantasies. Holding a fan in her hand, she gave a slight bow toward Clark.

"Welcome to the Flower's Fragrant, young master. Would you like to meet Elis directly and privately, or would you prefer to enjoy the girls' performance?" she asked with a warm smile.

"There's no rush. I'd like to enjoy the performance and take my time here," Clark replied.

"Very well, young master. I hope you enjoy your stay," she said before stepping aside gracefully.

After that, Clark sat at a vacant table that had been prepared for him. The other patrons noticed his presence and had their own opinions about him. However, they kept their thoughts to themselves, not wanting to risk offending him, and chose to ignore his presence.

This part of the brothel was a grand hall on the ground floor, designed for visitors to enjoy performances such as dancing and music. With numerous tables and a platform at the end of the hall, the venue could accommodate hundreds of people, offering everyone a clear view of the performers from their seats.

Before Clark arrived, many people were already gathered, eagerly waiting for the show to begin. As soon as he took his seat, the performance promptly started.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Flower's Fragrant! I know you've all been eagerly waiting to see the performance of our talented ladies. Fret not—you won't be disappointed! Without further ado, let's enjoy the first show of the night!" The announcer, standing on the platform, delivered her introduction with enthusiasm.

After her announcement, a group of women in beautiful dancing attire stepped onto the platform.

Leading the group was a woman with a transparent veil and striking silver hair—an uncommon hair color that made her stand out among the others. However, it wasn't just her hair that drew attention; her irises also shimmered with a silvery hue.

As soon as the audience caught sight of her, the hall erupted with excitement and chatter.

"That's Miss Elis!"

"She's like an angel. No wonder she's the icon of this brothel!"

Many in the audience began voicing their admiration for the group leader, who was none other than Elis.

Clark's eyes brightened when he saw her, and for a moment, he felt an urge to embrace her. However, he restrained himself, knowing it was better to watch her perform.

Elis glanced at Clark briefly, offering him a soft smile before beginning her dance with the group.

Every movement was elegant yet carried an alluring, erotic charm that captivated the visitors. The dancers' fluid motions and curvaceous figures formed suggestive poses, leaving many in the audience mesmerized and even drooling.

Even Clark, unable to tear his eyes away, felt a surge of desire. His thoughts raced as he watched the sensual performance, particularly captivated by Elis, whose seductive dancing seemed to draw him in entirely.

At one of the tables, Prince Claude watched the performance, silently admitting that the dancers were truly skilled in their craft. However, his gaze eventually focused on Elis, and a frown crossed his face.

"This woman... she's using a charm technique. It's like a hypnotic spell affecting these people," he thought.

With his strong soul strength, Prince Claude could easily resist the subtle influence of the technique. Unfortunately, the same couldn't be said for the other spectators. Many of them, being lower-level cultivators, appeared completely entranced by Elis every movement, unable to tear their eyes away from her mesmerizing performance.

Everyone in the hall seemed completely absorbed in Elis's dance, their focus solely on her captivating figure, oblivious to their surroundings. However, as Prince Claude observed the audience, his gaze settled on a pair of mysterious individuals seated at one of the tables, seemingly unaffected by the charm technique.

The pair consisted of a man and a woman. The woman had her hair concealed under a hood, making it impossible for him to discern her full features.

At that moment, he finally realized something unusual—he hadn't sensed this couple's presence until now! They seemed to be sitting there like ordinary visitors, but there was no way regular people could remain unaffected by the charm technique, which even influenced duke-stage cultivators. There was only one plausible explanation: this couple were experts.

His thoughts were interrupted when the man suddenly glanced in his direction and smiled before turning his attention back to the platform.

"Did he notice me watching them?" Prince Claude wondered, momentarily stunned.

He had already made an effort to conceal his presence, blending in with the ordinary visitors and refraining from releasing any aura. Confident that no one here would notice him observing others, he was caught off guard by the man's gaze. It made him uneasy.

He suspected that the man and the woman were at least at the king stage, like him. The man's senses were so sharp that he had detected his gaze.

The dance continued for another fifteen minutes before finally coming to an end. It felt like a cold bucket of water had been poured over the entire hall, as the audience was abruptly shaken awake once the women stopped their performance. For the duration of the dance, it was as if they had been trapped in a dream, with only Elis's figure in their vision, leaving no room for anything else. They hadn't even realized how long they had been lost in a daydream until the dance ended.

Afterward, applause resounded throughout the hall as the audience marveled at Elis's skill. They believed the beauty of her performance had bewitched them, and they were in awe of her ability. Clark, too, emerged from his bewitched state and joined in the clapping, feeling a sense of pride as he watched Elis showcase her dance skills.

"For the next performance, we have a special show by Elis herself. As many of you know, one of her specialties is music. Now, without further delay, please enjoy the performance of our pride, Elis," the announcer said.

The group then stepped down from the platform, leaving Elis behind as a retainer brought a guqin onto the stage. Once the instrument was ready, Elis took her position. Her fingers seemed to hover over the strings, as if feeling their presence, but she did not immediately play. Instead, she looked out toward the audience.

"Elis presents this music for the cultivators in this hall who have bravely left their homes to venture into the outside world, keeping their longing for home in their hearts. With this music, I hope to make you feel as though you are at home again," she said, her soft voice soothing the hearts of the listeners.

She began to pluck the strings one by one. At first, there was nothing particularly special about the sound of the music. Although beautiful, it seemed like a normal tune to everyone present. But as time passed, the sound seemed to come to life. The music enveloped them, and they suddenly felt as if they were being embraced by its melody. It took them back to their childhood memories, playing at home without a care in the world. The sensation was truly marvelous, so real that it felt as if they had returned to that moment in time.

All of the people were experiencing the same sensation, except for a few, including Prince Claude. However, he wore a solemn expression, as he could feel the powerful effect of the music.

"This is a sound technique—truly powerful at that!" he thought. "It can even bring forth inner memories and make all of our senses visualize them. Even my soul is affected by it, forcing me to be swept away by the sound. A truly terrifying technique... Who is this Elis?! There's no way she's just an ordinary woman entertainer at this brothel."

He decided to use his cultivation technique to dispel the effect of the sound technique. The fact that he had to resort to this only demonstrated how strong the technique was.

But then, he curiously looked at the mysterious couple from earlier, and to his astonishment, he saw that they seemed completely unaffected.

All of the people in the hall had fallen under the spell of the sound technique, as evidenced by their unfocused eyes and unmoving bodies. However, what he saw in the couple was nothing but expressions of curiosity and amazement. From his perspective, they appeared like bumpkins witnessing something new to them—something they had never encountered before in their lives.

However, this was no ordinary spectacle. The sound technique had even affected his soul, forcing him to use his own cultivation technique to repel the influence.

The music continued for the next fifteen minutes before finally stopping, causing the people in the hall to awaken from their entranced state. Once again, they felt as though they had been lost in their own senses and feelings, unaware that they had been under the influence of the technique. The only thing that lingered in their minds was the beautiful sound of the guqin, evoking memories of home.

The audience began clapping, and the atmosphere quickly turned boisterous. Elis smiled behind her veil, watching the crowd's reaction. However, for a brief moment, her gaze shifted toward Prince Claude and the mysterious couple.

"There are others who were not affected by my technique," she thought.

Chapter 313: Elis True Strength

After Elis' performance, she stepped down from the platform and headed backstage. For Clark, this was his cue to stand up from his seat and walk toward the backstage area. Prince Claude focused his senses on Clark. With his Middle King Stage cultivation, there was no way Clark or anyone else in the hall could know they were under his probe—except, perhaps, the mysterious couple and Elis if she is truly king stage.

He also sensed that a few unknown individuals following the young master of the Larson family had begun moving in a pattern that seemed to form a formation. He knew they were merely waiting for the right moment to launch their attack on Clark. He continued to monitor Clark until he moved to the second floor, where his senses were suddenly blocked by something.

Prince Claude narrowed his eyes, wanting to know what was blocking his senses, but he remained in his seat. The show continued with another group of women, but he no longer cared, as his focus was entirely on the movements of the unknown group. For a moment, he curiously glanced at the mysterious couple and was stunned to find that they were already gone! His senses couldn't even detect when they had left, leading him to conclude that they were far more skilled than he was in concealing one's existence.

Inside one of the private rooms on the second floor, Clark sat on the edge of the bed while Elis stood before him. He wrapped his arms affectionately around her waist, pulling her slightly closer. He nuzzled his nose against her stomach, as if trying to imprint her scent into his memory.

"My dear Elis, you are truly beautiful and talented. I'm so lucky to have you by my side," Clark said with a smile. In truth, he was already getting a boner, unable to resist the allure of her attire and captivating figure.

"Young master, how was my performance? Did you like it?" Elis asked as she gently stroked his head.

"Exquisitely done. No one can rival you in this regard," he replied. Suddenly, he lifted her effortlessly and placing her on the bed.

"Enough talk. Let me taste you today," he said as he began removing his clothes. However, before he could completely undress, he caught a whiff of something strange—a peculiar fragrance that appeared out of nowhere. He paused, his movements halting as he glanced around the room.

Suddenly, an overwhelming drowsiness washed over him. As the sensation deepened, he realized what the fragrance was.

"The sleeping incense!" The potent fragrance was strong enough to make him feel overwhelmingly drowsy almost instantly. He tried to circulate his energy to expel the effects, but before he could fully muster his strength, he collapsed into a deep slumber.

Moments later, the sound of commotion erupted outside the room. Suddenly, the door was flung open, and Clark's guardian was hurled inside. His chest was riddled with wounds, and blood poured from his mouth and nose. It was clear he was in critical condition.

In the hallway outside the private room, many of the brothel's staff lay unconscious, scattered across the floor. A group of individuals dressed in black robes entered the room. One of them immediately grabbed the unconscious Clark, intending to leave as quickly as possible.

However, his movements froze when he noticed Elis still awake—and even smiling at him.

"She isn't affected by the sleeping incense!"

The others who had entered also noticed this, and one of them immediately unleashed a palm technique aimed at Elis. However, she effortlessly caught his wrist, halting the attack in an instant.

His eyes widened in shock, but his comrades were already moving to assist him. One of them lunged forward, striking at Elis's head with a dagger. Yet, with her other hand, she easily blocked the attack as if it were nothing.

"What is she?! Did she conceal her true cultivation?!" one of the robed individuals shouted as he threw a small ball towards Elis.

Elis merely smiled as she watched the ball approach. With a swift motion, she broke the wrists of the two attackers in her hold and hurled their bodies toward the ball. The ball struck them and exploded, releasing a thick smoke screen.

Without hesitation, Elis snapped her finger. The sound of it echoed, and suddenly, all the intruders in the room froze, as if turned to stone. They could do nothing but breathe, immobilized by her power.

It wasn't just the intruders in the room—the ones hiding in the ceiling, positioned as backup, were also unable to move. Panic swept through them by the sudden turn of events.

As the smoke dissipated, the intruders in the room saw Elis walking toward them. A smile played on her lips, and her alluring figure remained as enticing as ever. However, to the intruders, she now resembled a demoness.

It was an unexpected turn of events. They had never imagined that Elis, a woman from a brothel, could be such a powerful cultivator. The way she had blocked their attacks so easily suggested she was at least at the Grand Duke stage.

"I truly wonder who it was that dared to target the young master of the Larson family," she said, her voice calm yet chilling. "To go after him, you must belong to the group that's been causing the commotion in the Larson Grand Duchy lately."

She stopped in front of one figure at the back of the group, standing as if she were protected by them.

The figure in front of her stood apart from the others, possessing a distinctly feminine shape. With a swift motion of her hand, Elis removed the head cover of the black-robed woman.

Upon seeing the person beneath the cover, Elis raised an eyebrow, her smile still in place.

"Well, well, what do we have here? This is truly surprising. The young miss of the fallen noble family is here, making such a bold move. Are you that desperate for revenge?"

Standing before her was Carol Duclane.

Carol's body was paralyzed, unable to move, but her mind was fully alert. She tried to look at Elis but couldn't. At that moment, realization dawned on her—she was facing an expert!

"Did Ghulani intentionally withhold this information?" Carol thought.

However, after thinking about it for a moment, she realized that Ghulani doesn't seem to know the truth about Elis either, as he found nothing unusual in Elis's past. When Clark approached Elis in the past due to her beauty, she had already been at the brothel.

He had checked her background, and all he found was that Elis was an orphan who entered the brothel thanks to the generosity of its owner. The brothel's owner was a mysterious figure, and even Ghulani couldn't find any information about her.

That was what Ghulani had found at the time, and he had already told her about it. If Ghulani truly didn't know the truth about Elis, then all of them had been deceived all this time! Elis had hidden her true strength so well, she even managed to evade the Larson family's intelligence up until now.

"I see, now it all makes sense. But I still don't understand how you managed to plan all of this. To create such a well-organized commotion within the Larson Grand Duchy, it would require many resources. There must be someone helping you, right?" Elis asked.

However, since she couldn't move, not even her mouth, Carol couldn't answer.

"Well, we can enjoy a private conversation tonight with your minions. I believe you'll talk to me, or one of your minions will do so. Tonight will be exciting, but before that..." Elis glanced at the door.

"I know you're listening to this. Why bother hiding?" she said with a smile.

As soon as she spoke, a young man entered the room with a calm expression. It was Prince Claude. He had decided to follow the group of mysterious intruders after sensing their attack on Clark's room and his guardian. He had predicted that whatever they planned tonight would fail if Elis intervened in their operation.

True to his prediction, they didn't stand a chance against her. How could a group, whose strongest member was only at the High Duke stage, possibly challenge someone

who could affect a King stage cultivator like him? To someone of king stage, these group of intruders were nothing more than ants. Based on the ease with which Elis incapacitated them and the power she displayed, he believed she must be a King stage cultivator.

Another thing that surprised him was the fact that the group of intruders actually had a connection with the Duclan family. He knew of their fall due to their ties with the devils, but how had the young miss of Duclan survived? Hadn't all the main family members of the Duclan family been executed? At the time, his little sister had handled the case, so he hadn't known the truth or the details. But now, he was determined to learn more.

"Miss Elis is truly mysterious to possess such strength while working as an entertainer in a brothel. I'm genuinely curious about your true identity," Prince Claude asked. He was prepared to battle if necessary, as he also had an interest in the Duclan family, and these intruders could serve as valuable sources of information.

"I'm actually quite curious about you as well, Mister—or should I say, Your Highness, Prince Claude? Unfortunately, you're also one of the targets tonight," Elis replied.

Upon hearing Elis's words, Prince Claude's expression turned solemn.

"How did she know?"

Chapter 314: The Sudden Battle in the Brothel

He was fairly certain that no one besides his father and his informant knew of his presence here in disguise. No one would suspect the prince of the empire to be undercover in an observation mission. For her to know his identity, there must have been a leak somewhere—either a traitor or an unintentional slip of information.

Whatever the case, this was a serious problem. This woman, who seemed close to the young master of the Larson family, could inform them of his presence. However, based on her words, it appeared she had been waiting for him. He decided to set aside his thoughts for now and focus on finding a way out of this situation.

"What are you talking about? Do you mean me? As Prince Claude?" he asked, his expression a mix of confusion and surprise. His reaction was convincing enough to sway most onlookers, but Elis continued to smile at him.

"Well, whether you are or not will be decided soon," she said. Then, suddenly, she clapped her hands. Prince Claude felt his ears ringing, and his energy circulation was thrown into disarray.

"She used sound to disrupt my senses and energy circulation." However, he calmly dispersed the effects of the sound technique with his aura. The aura of a middle king

stage cultivator radiated from his body, instantly nullifying the technique's effects—and more than that.

He unleashed his aura across the entire room, sending the members of the Duclan family hurtling to the walls. Their bodies slammed against the surfaces, but they were finally able to move again.

They gasped as they finally regained the ability to move and breathe more freely. Feeling utterly powerless before Elis's strength, Carol realized that pursuing Clark any further would be nothing short of suicide. Reluctantly, she decided to retreat for now. Their presence had already been exposed after tonight, and they would need a new plan moving forward.

Carol stood up and began helping her family to their feet. One by one, they prepared to leave the scene as quickly as possible.

Elis and Prince Claude did not attempt to stop them, as their focus was solely on each other. Both knew they couldn't afford to underestimate their opponent.

For the prince, he was unsure of Elis's true strength. As for Elis, she was well aware of Prince Claude's reputation. Although her cultivation was higher than his, she understood that he was still a formidable cultivator with cards up his sleeve.

Elis decided to strike first, throwing small needles attached to thin strings. She hurled them toward Claude, but he dodged them with ease and quickly countered with his own technique. A blue flame appeared in his hand, shaping into a dragon of fire that slithered toward Elis.

Elis remained calm. She straightened the strings connected to the needles and, with a deft pluck of her hand, produced a ringing sound that resonated through the air.

The needles embedded themselves into the walls after Claude dodged them, allowing Elis to straighten the strings and use them like the strings of a guqin. As the sound resonated through the air, the blue flames trembled before extinguishing entirely, while Claude felt a shudder deep within his heart and soul.

"A direct attack on my soul!" he thought, quickly preparing another technique.

Blue flames, similar to those of Princess Loraine but more intense and searing, erupted from his body and surged outward, spreading rapidly through the surrounding area.

Elis immediately sensed the increased intensity of the flames and swiftly swept her fingers across all the strings. The resulting sound clashed with the flames, but it wasn't enough to stop their advance entirely. The residual flames tore through the room, creating a massive hole that exposed the interior to the outside.

The people on the street where the brothel was located were stunned by the sudden rumbling sound and turned their gaze upward, their eyes widening at the sight of the brothel's destroyed side.

Elis glanced at the destroyed wall, then shifted her gaze to the prince, who now resembled a man of flame. With blue flames forming an armor-like shell around his body, he appeared like a flame knight radiating immense strength.

Despite the overwhelming sight, Elis smiled as she looked at the prince.

"You are truly strong, Your Highness," she said. "But this isn't a suitable place for our battle. The young master could be caught up in the chaos. You wouldn't want that, would you?"

Claude glanced at the still unconscious Clark, parts of his body buried under the rubble. He needed this man alive—if he died, there would be many implications. The Larson family would launch an investigation, and the problem would only grow. Not to mention, there was the mystery of Elis: her true purpose and her real identity remained unclear.

Elis then tugged the string, causing the needles to fly back into her grasp. Without hesitation, she flew toward the flat rooftop of the brothel. Claude followed, floating just behind her. He didn't hesitate for a moment. As soon as they reached the rooftop, he struck, his hands wreathed in blue flames.

Elis finally brought out her artifact—a black guqin—from her storage ring. With a sweep of her hand, the sound of the guqin shot toward Claude. Unlike before, this sound instantly dispersed the blue flames and struck at the prince's soul. The force was much stronger, causing Claude to feel as though his head might explode. He hadn't anticipated that this attack, combined with the guqin, would be so much more powerful.

His eyes changed, as if the blue flames themselves were emanating from them. With a swift of his will, he created a domain that enveloped both himself and Elis. As soon as the domain was formed, the effects of the guqin's sound disappeared.

Claude frowned as he looked at Elis, finally realizing her true cultivation—she was at the high King stage! No wonder her attack was so powerful, capable of overwhelming him. However, he didn't panic. There was something else that caught his attention besides her true cultivation. He could sense a distinct aura from Elis when she fully tapped into her energy to play the guqin.

"You're a devil!" he exclaimed, his expression cold. "To think a devil of your caliber would infiltrate so boldly. I assume the rumors about the Larson family being in cahoots with the devils are true."

"It seems we have much to discuss tonight," he continued. "You can tell me about your operations in this city and your cooperation with the Larson family, and in return, I'll grant you a painless death!"

Elis looked at Claude still with her smile, answered him.

"Is that so? Well, that's only if you can defeat me. I'm afraid tonight may be the end for you, Your Highness." She then closed her eyes.

Seven notes of the devils.

She plucked the strings, creating a beautiful sound. But beneath its beauty, the sound was a deadly attack aimed at Claude. He could already sense the power of her sound technique, so without hesitation, he used one of his techniques in response.

Suddenly, a giant half figure appeared above Claude. It resembled a knight wreathed in blue flame, carrying a fiery blade. This was Prince Claude's avatar technique, capable of unleashing the power of a peak King stage cultivator.

With a wave of the avatar, the fire surged toward Elis. The heat of the flames seemed to disrupt the sound from the guqin, threatening to overpower it.

The flame was so intense that it even burned the space around them, preventing the sound—which used space as a medium—from exerting its full strength. The sound tried to affect Claude but failed.

With her eyes still closed, Elis knew that the defense and offense of the avatar were formidable, so she decided to try another trick.

She channeled even more devil energy while continuing to play the guqin. The sound grew clearer, now unaffected by the heat of the flames. Claude noticed this shift and realized that Elis was now using her own energy as a medium to direct the sound toward him.

He then released even more flames from his body, and his avatar moved in sync with him, executing a powerful chopping motion toward Elis. He decided to counterattack instead of defending. It was better to disrupt Elis than continue defending against her troublesome sound attacks.

Elis stopped her attack and switched to defense. The sound of the guqin suddenly changed, and the flame blade stopped just before it reached her. She then swept the strings, causing the avatar to stumble backward. Claude felt as though the blade had struck a solid barrier. He looked at Elis solemnly while she kept her eyes closed, still playing her guqin. This was going to be a tricky fight for him!

The people could now see that a battle was happening on top of the brothel, with part of the building destroyed. Sensing the powerful aura of king-stage cultivators, many of them quickly fled in the opposite direction. The battle between king-stage cultivators was not something that low-level cultivators or mortals could meddle with. If they were caught in the crossfire, they would be killed without even knowing how.

Panic and chaos began to spread throughout the surrounding brothel. People ran blindly, not caring what was in front of them. Many slipped and fell, and some children became separated from their parents. They cried out in fear, and a few were almost trampled by the panicking crowd. However, the children suddenly disappeared and reappeared in a safe place, far from the danger of being crushed.

In this safe area stood a mysterious couple that Claude had seen earlier. The woman tried to comfort the children while the man observed the battle above.

"Truly unexpected," the man thought.

"But I think I can take advantage of this."

Chapter 315: The Troublesome Sound Technique

The man watching the battle is actually Aldrian, while the woman comforting the children is Sylphia. Aldrian has been in Larson City for four days, observing the Larson family's situation. He stands on the sidelines, watching as the Larson family's problems grow, curious to see how they will respond.

The assassins from the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion, whom he had ordered to assist with the Duclan family operation, informed him that the young master of the Larson family was likely to visit a brothel. Curious about the young master's character, he decided to observe him while taking Sylphia for a walk.

He wasn't really expecting much from his visit to the brothel tonight, but he was completely wrong. He saw Elis that actually a devil and the prince of the Vindas Empire in the same hall. To his surprise, a King-stage devil with special identity was hiding inside the brothel, disguised as an entertainer, and the prince was in disguise with an unknown purpose. He wondered if Princess Loraine was aware of this. Allowing the prince to be here seemed no different from exposing herself to danger.

If the Larson family later learned about the prince's presence here, and if the prince attempted anything that endangered them, Aldrian could easily imagine the Larsons informing Prince Claude about his little sister's actions. This would buy the Larson family some time, as the imperial family would be preoccupied dealing with the fallout of the princess's treachery being exposed.

"First Finger, Second Finger, block anyone from the Larson family from approaching the battle area," Aldrian said through a voice transmission.

"Yes, *master*," came the response.

Aldrian continued watching the increasingly intense battle. He saw a giant avatar swing its blade toward Elis, only for her sound attack to block the strike.

The cultivators from the Larson family were already on their way to the scene. A battle between King-stage experts was something they needed to address, especially since it was happening within their own city. However, the assassins from the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion were blocking their path, diverting their attention. By attacking the Larson family cultivators and creating chaos, the assassins ensured that the Larsons wouldn't have time to investigate the battle area.

The giant flame avatar was visible from five kilometers away, its massive form exuding tremendous pressure and strength as it repeatedly targeted the same spot with its blade. However, Elis's sound technique was exceptionally strong in both attack and defense, preventing Claude from even grazing her sleeve. He knew he couldn't prolong this battle much longer. This was a densely populated area, and reckless attacks would risk harming innocent bystanders.

Elis, however, didn't share Claude's concerns. She fought with the intent to kill, indifferent to the consequences. Without hesitation, she unleashed a technique that could harm many people in the area simply by hearing her music. He suspected that her sound technique had already claimed numerous victims.

Claude didn't have time to check on the innocents, as Elis's relentless and deadly attacks left no room for error; even a single misstep could be fatal. Resolving to end the fight decisively, he drew his artifact—a peak Heaven-grade sword, the Blue Solar Dragon Sword. His aura surged dramatically, so much so that anyone watching might mistake him for an Emperor-stage cultivator.

Using his movement technique, he closed the distance to Elis and attempted to strike her with his sword. The blade in his avatar's hand emitted a dark blue flame that incinerated everything in its path. Realizing the danger, Elis grew serious. She couldn't afford to underestimate this attack, which combined a powerful artifact and an advanced technique.

In response, she unleashed another technique and finally activated her domain

The Sound of Underworld

The sound of the strings changed once more, becoming terrifying instead of soothing. A sound unlike anything people had ever heard echoed across a wide area, reaching up to four kilometers away. This horrifying melody seemed to corrupt souls, making listeners feel as if they were being dragged into the underworld for an eternal nightmare. It was a sound capable of birthing inner demons in anyone who heard it.

Claude, taking the full brunt of the sound, felt his soul tremble. For a moment, his energy circulation descended into chaos.

"*Shit.*" This was the first time Elis's sound technique had inflicted such damage to his soul, causing his domain to tremble and begin crumbling little by little. However, he quickly crushed a talisman from his pocket, and a blue hue began to radiate from his body. The defensive talisman shielded him from any soul or karmic attacks.

Closing his ears was useless, as the sound was directly attacking his soul. The one-time-use defensive talisman was enough to shield him from the effects of Elis's attack for a moment. Unable to maintain his technique due to the overwhelming sound, he halted his assault and quickly distanced himself from her.

However, Elis wasn't about to let him escape so easily. She swept her hand across all the strings, and with the other, she threw small needles connected by thin strings. The sound from the strings distracted Claude for a split second, preventing him from noticing the needles flying toward him from his blind spots. The needles pierced his avatar, and Elis plucked the strings attached to them.

In an instant, Claude felt his body and soul tremble as the sound struck him with full force.

This time, because the string was directly attached to his physical technique, Elis's sound technique was even more fatal than before. Blood began to flow from his mouth as he struggled to break free from her attack by canceling his avatar. However, the moment he canceled his avatar technique, the sound from the guqin immediately assaulted him. Without the protection of his avatar, he became far more vulnerable.

He finally realized that continuing the fight in his current condition was not wise, as Elis was truly a formidable opponent with her troublesome technique and element. He decided using an escape talisman, but Elis had already anticipated this move with her own technique. Once again, she swept the strings of the guqin, and the sound immediately caused the space within her domain to tremble, as if the very sound was disturbing the fabric of space itself.

Claude, hearing the sound, quickly crushed the technique, but instead of teleporting to a distant location, he was thrown to the ground. He coughed up a mouthful of blood, feeling as though he had collided with a wall in the midst of his teleportation.

"The sound from her guqin can even affect the space itself!" he thought. *"The space becomes unstable, causing me to be instantly thrown out of the teleportation."*

He had to defend himself from her sound technique while also attacking and defending against her other strikes. Although her sound element and technique seemed simple, they were anything but easy to defend against, making the battle with her a tricky one. Moreover, she had a higher cultivation level than him. Even though he could battle

across levels, it appeared she could do the same, showcasing that both of them were geniuses in their own right.

As he was thinking of a way to escape the situation, he suddenly saw someone standing between him and Elis. Elis also seemed surprised by this person's appearance. They both instantly recognized him as the one from the brothel earlier, who had been unaffected by her sound technique.

Suddenly, Claude felt his entire body enveloped by a strange golden hue, which he immediately assumed to be the man's energy. The moment this energy surrounded him, he was shocked to find that the effects of the sound technique instantly vanished. Not only that, but his body also felt warm and rejuvenated.

Although he still felt a headache and pain from the wounds to his soul and body caused by the sound technique, this energy alleviated his pain tremendously. He no longer had to defend himself from the sound technique, as this energy seemed to be protecting him.

Aldrian finally decided that it was time to stop merely observing and intervene. If he didn't act, the prince would be in even greater danger. Additionally, this moment presented a chance to build a good relationship with the imperial family, starting with Claude.

Elis frowned as she observed this. She couldn't detect how this man had suddenly appeared. When he was inside the brothel, she couldn't sense his cultivation, but now she realized he was only at the low marquess stage. However, it should have been impossible for someone at the marquess stage to withstand her sound technique as though it was nothing. She decided to intensify the music, but before she could, he disappeared and reappeared right in front of her!

The moment was so fast, much faster than the blink of an eye, with no sign whatsoever. His hand was already touching one of the strings as Aldrian looked at her with a smile.

"I wonder what would happen if I pluck it like this?"

Twiiing!

Chapter 316: Battle Against Elis

Twiiing!

As Aldrian plucked the string, a piercing sound erupted, causing Elis's ears to ring with such intensity that her eardrums began to tear and bleed. Desperately, she placed one hand on the string to halt its vibration while stretching her other hand toward Aldrian's face in a swift palm strike.

This man was using her own guqin against her! Had he also comprehended the sound element and mastered sound laws?

Noticing the incoming palm strike, Aldrian calmly grabbed her wrist. Anticipating his reaction, Elis swiftly snapped her fingers right in front of his face.

Snap!

The snapping sound reverberated in Aldrian's ears, but his expression remained calm and unmoved. Without hesitation, his other hand reached out and gripped Elis's neck firmly.

Elis was stunned—her snapping sound, which should have caused immense damage, had no effect on Aldrian, even though he was directly in front of the sound's source. Refusing to give up, she quickly devised another move.

Her free hand, still holding the strings of the guqin, channeled all the energy she could muster in a single surge and swept across the strings in one powerful motion.

The resulting sound created a shockwave so intense that even Aldrian frowned slightly. He sensed the overwhelming strength of the sound—powerful enough to instantly kill anyone below the viscount stage who remained within its area of effect.

Fortunately, Aldrian had anticipated this move. The formations he had set up earlier effectively isolated the sound technique, ensuring it wouldn't travel beyond a four kilometers radius around them.

He attempted to inject his energy into Elis, aiming to incapacitate her. However, Elis suddenly exhaled something from her mouth. Reacting swiftly, Aldrian dodged it, but he was forced to release his grip on her neck and let go of her wrist for a split second.

Taking advantage of the opening, Elis used her agility to twist her body and put distance between herself and Aldrian.

She grabbed her guqin, leapt into the air, and floated gracefully, the instrument resting on her lap. Watching her escape his grasp, Aldrian immediately recognized what had come from her mouth.

"She can condense space into needle-like forms using low-frequency sound from her vocal cords," Aldrian thought, astonished by the skill Elis had demonstrated. The techniques she displayed were truly an eye-opener for him.

It became clear to him that there were countless ways to harness the sound element or master sound laws, sparking a desire within him to explore and learn them himself.

After escaping Aldrian's grasp, Elis gazed at him solemnly.

"This man is far more dangerous than Prince Claude!" she thought. He was the worst type of enemy for her—someone who comprehended space laws.

His strange teleportation ability was the most threatening aspect. He could suddenly appear close to her, disrupting her ability to play the guqin effectively. While she had techniques to handle close-range opponents, dealing with someone who could teleport was a far more difficult challenge.

After a brief moment of thought, she made her decision. She would end the battle by using the most powerful technique in her arsenal. She knew that hesitation now would seal her fate.

The Doomsday Notes

She began to play the guqin, each string producing an eerie sound that sent chills through the air. The vibrations carried an ominous aura, pulling listeners into an illusion where they witnessed the end of the world.

The most terrifying aspect of this technique was its inescapability. Once a listener heard the first note, they could not free themselves from the illusion, even if the music stopped. The effect was etched into their very soul. Trapped within a doomsday scenario filled with the relentless sounds of death, the victims would remain ensnared until their own demise.

Even blocking their ears was futile. Like her other high-ranked sound techniques, this one bypassed the physical sense of hearing entirely. As long as they shared the same space as her, the sound penetrated directly into their souls, whether they wanted it or not.

However, this terrifying technique came with significant drawbacks. The energy required to perform it was immense, so much so that even those at the king stage could sustain it for no more than 30 seconds.

Moreover, the technique demanded comprehension of sound laws, illusion laws, and karma laws—a complex combination. Its cost didn't stop at energy depletion; if the caster continued to forcefully play after exhausting their energy reserves, the technique would begin to drain their cultivation foundation. Prolonged use could cause their cultivation level to fall, leaving them severely weakened.

This technique was dangerous not only for its targets but also for the caster, yet its deadly effects were undeniable. As she plucked the first string, the space around her seemed to tremble, and her domain amplified the sound, transforming the surroundings into a vast, resonating theater.

The air and space quivered under the weight of the sound, and the entire four kilometers area was filled with the haunting melody of the guqin. No other sound could be heard—only the eerie resonance of its strings.

The formations Aldrian had created trembled under the immense pressure of the amplified sound but managed to hold firm. Prince Claude, despite being protected by Aldrian's energy, still felt the oppressive weight and the terrifying vibrations of the guqin's melody. Though Aldrian's energy shield significantly reduced the effect, Claude could still hear the unsettling tones, which filled him with an indescribable discomfort.

Aldrian, as the main target of the technique, bore the full brunt of its power. For the first time, he could feel the true effect of the music as vibrations coursed through his body and the sound infiltrated his soul. Despite this, the impact remained within his ability to endure. While the sensation was deeply uncomfortable, it lacked any lethal effect on him.

His keep his gaze to Elis, who continued to play with unwavering focus. Her body was gradually transforming into her devil form as she poured everything into amplifying the technique's strength.

"I think this is enough," Aldrian thought, his expression calm despite the intensity of the moment. He had wanted to experience battling an opponent like Elis, and now that he had faced such an opponent, he understood how to confront them in the future.

Aldrian finally unleashed his golden energy, sending it surging outward and dissipating the effects of the sound technique. Both Elis and Claude were stunned by the display. Unlike before, the golden energy no longer carried a soothing aura—instead, it radiated an overwhelming presence that demanded reverence.

Extending his hand, Aldrian pointed toward Elis, and a small spark of lightning flickered at his fingertip. He channeled a fraction of his domain's power into the attack.

Elis continued to play her music, but a deep sense of foreboding gripped her. The aura emanating from the tiny spark of lightning was terrifyingly powerful.

Suddenly, the small spark burst forth, hurtling toward her with incredible speed and tremendous force. As it approached, Elis could finally discern the sheer might contained within it.

"Heavenly lightning!"

She had no time to dwell on how Aldrian could wield something as formidable as heavenly lightning. Instead, she went all out to defend against the attack. Her body had fully transformed, now entirely red and marked with devilish characteristics, exuding a thick aura of devil energy.

Desperately, she attempted to use the *Doomsday Notes* as a shield, but the heavenly lightning showed no sign of stopping or weakening.

Elis's eyes widened in shock as the lightning, imbued with the overwhelming strength of the emperor stage, finally reached her. It struck her directly, slamming her to the ground with immense force.

Her body crashed into the earth, creating a small crater beside a nearby civilian building. Sparks of heavenly lightning flickered across her form, remnants of its devastating power. Her body convulsed from the shock, her clothes scorched and torn in places.

Elis's devil form dissipated on its own, leaving her visibly weakened and half-conscious. Aldrian approached her, his gaze still calm. She struggled against the lingering effects of the heavenly lightning, her body convulsing as residual sparks occasionally crackled across her skin.

Her alluring figure, now clad in tattered attire, might have been tempting to anyone else, but not to Aldrian.

As she continued to convulse, barely clinging to consciousness, Aldrian stood beside her and placed his hand firmly on her forehead. As usual, his intent was clear—he sought information.

After all, as one of the *Seven Devils of Annihilation*, Elis undoubtedly possessed valuable information.

Yes, Elis was actually one of the *Seven Devils of Annihilation*, and she stood as the most mysterious among them. Of all the members of the *Seven Devils of Annihilation*, there was one whose specialty and character remained largely unknown, mostly due to her inconspicuousness. The only thing most people knew was that this figure was a woman.

Aldrian knew Elis because he had read the memories of many high-ranking devils. Through this, he had gained insight into many secrets, including the hidden aspects of the devils themselves.

Elis couldn't resist when Aldrian broke her memory seal and began reading her memories. Her body trembled at times as he delved deeper into certain memories. After a few minutes, he released his hold on her forehead, allowing her to drop, and she finally fainted.

He watched her for a moment before turning his gaze to the surrounding area.

The destruction had been minimized because the entire area had already become his domain. While Claude and Elis fought, Aldrian had helped the innocent by teleporting

them out of the battle zone. The area, stretching over four kilometers, was now devoid of people—except for the children on Sylphia's side. This was something Claude and Elis hadn't noticed as they were focused entirely on their battle.

Aldrian sealed Elis's cultivation before turning his attention to Claude, who was slowly approaching him. His condition had improved significantly since earlier, thanks to a healing pill he had taken. The prince stopped and, to Aldrian's surprise, slightly bowed his head—an uncommon gesture for someone of his noble standing.

"Thank you for saving me," Claude said. "May I know your name, sir?"

Chapter 317: The Aftermath of the Battle

Aldrian smiled at Prince Claude. Since he had asked in such a polite manner, even slightly bowing his head, it would have been impolite not to introduce himself.

"This one here is Aldrian. May I know whom I have the pleasure of speaking to?" Aldrian asked, feigning ignorance.

Claude straightened his posture before replying to Aldrian.

"Due to certain circumstances, I must use this face. But let me introduce myself—I am Claude Avandi, the son of His Majesty the Emperor, Herman Avandi."

"Oh? It's truly surprising that the prince of the empire would come to this place. May I assume your presence here is related to the recent events in this territory, Your Highness?" Aldrian asked with curiosity.

Prince Claude sighed.

"More or less," he replied before shifting his gaze to the unconscious Elis. "Sir Aldrian, I understand that you were the one who defeated this devil. However, I must ask if sir Aldrian could hand her over to me—to the imperial family. She likely holds valuable information, and her connection to the young master of the Larson family may shed light on the true situation within their household."

"Of course, Your Highness. I would gladly hand her over to you. My job here is done. Ah, and for your information, she is one of the Seven Devils of Annihilation," Aldrian said before turning to walk away.

Claude blinked in surprise, but his expression quickly shifted to shock. Elis was one of the Seven Devils of Annihilation? He hadn't expected this revelation, as there were no detailed records of her being one of the Seven Devils of Annihilation. Could she be the member often described as the most mysterious of the seven?

Also, Claude couldn't help but wonder. Considering how strong Aldrian was and the fact that he had defeated Elis, Claude expected he would need to negotiate with some form of compensation. Yet Aldrian handed her over without a second thought. Did he consider that defeating one of the Seven Devils of Annihilation was no big deal?

"Wait, Sir Aldrian," Claude called out.

Aldrian, who had already walked a fair distance, stopped in his tracks. A faint smile appeared on his face as he turned to look at Claude.

"What is it, Your Highness?" he asked.

"Sir Aldrian, I would like to invite you to the imperial palace. Your tremendous service in defeating a devil of this caliber is worthy of recognition from the imperial family. I want Sir Aldrian to receive a reward from us," Claude said.

Claude's eyes gleamed as though he had discovered a rare gem he would regret leaving unclaimed. He was curious about the enigmatic Aldrian, having experienced firsthand the sheer power and uniqueness of his abilities. That strange golden energy and the heavenly lightning—this was the first time Claude had seen anyone with such an extraordinary combination of powers.

Someone who could wield heavenly lightning had to possess immense strength and background. Aldrian dared to wield and had even comprehended lightning typically exclusive to the heavens—a truly absurd ability and daring person. There would be no harm in building a relationship with someone as formidable as Aldrian.

"To the imperial palace? How could an unknown cultivator like myself be worthy of standing before His Majesty, Your Highness? I don't think I have enough confidence to face him directly," Aldrian replied.

Prince Claude, hearing Aldrian's response, immediately recognized the subtle meaning behind it. Aldrian had politely declined his invitation. Claude didn't take offense; in fact, it fell within his expectations. From the way Aldrian spoke, there was no hint of reverence—he treated him as though he were speaking to an ordinary person. This only served to highlight the sheer strength of Aldrian's background, and Claude wasn't ready to give up just yet.

"Then, can we meet again for another talk? At the very least, I want to repay you for saving me. If I don't repay you, I would consider myself an ungrateful person, and that's something I despise," Claude said earnestly.

Aldrian felt that this was enough, so he smiled at Prince Claude.

"Sure, Your Highness. We can meet anytime. Just let me know where you're staying or where you'd like to meet, and I'll come."

"No, no, I will come to you, Sir Aldrian. Just tell me the place, and I'll come. Like I said, I want to return your favor. Wouldn't it be more appropriate if I were the one to come to you?" Claude insisted.

"Alright, Your Highness," Aldrian replied. They continued to converse for a moment and agreed to meet tomorrow at the designated location before ending their conversation. Prince Claude then took Elis and disappeared, while Aldrian walked toward Sylphia, who was still with the children. At this point, he had already canceled all the formations he had set earlier, allowing the people to start returning to the area. Now, the people began to move back, sensing that the battle had come to a halt.

Aldrian then sent a voice transmission to someone.

"You want to catch the young master of the Larson family, right? I've already placed his body near the brothel. You'll need to act quickly before the Larson family arrives at the brothel. There's no one in the area, so you should be safe."

A woman, approaching the battle area with her group, was slowly stunned by the sudden voice transmission. She immediately recognized the source of the voice.

"Young Master Aldrian, you've been here?" Carol asked, surprised. She hadn't known that Aldrian was in the city at all, as the last time they communicated was before she left Flamecrest City a few weeks ago. Hearing his voice and realizing that he seemed to know her situation made it clear that he had been watching her and her group from the start.

If that's the case, then could he have been the one battling earlier? She wasn't sure—it was difficult to tell since she had already moved beyond 4 kilometers and could only watch the sudden battle unfold from a distance.

"Yes, now go quickly." With that, he ended the communication.

Carol, having received a clear signal, looked at her family members.

"Let's go. The area in front is already clear, and we can take the 'package.'"

With that, the group moved swiftly toward the brothel.

As the battle ended, the people began to return and observe the battle site. Many were confused, having been suddenly moved to a different location, as though they had been teleported against their will. Upon returning, they saw that the destruction in the area was minimal, with only a few buildings' top floors destroyed. The only building that had completely collapsed was the brothel.

Thanks to Aldrian, there were no casualties from the battle between Prince Claude and Elis—well, except for Clark's guardian, whom Aldrian allowed to be caught in the

crossfire between the battle and the collapsing building. Once the battle began and chaos spread, Aldrian, with his quick thinking, instantly teleported many people out of the battle zone without exception.

Even those enjoying a steamy night inside the brothel were not spared, and they were shocked to find themselves in a completely different location, surrounded by many others. Some of them had been ready to release their seeds when Aldrian teleported them away.

Aldrian and Sylphia stood on top of the rooftop, watching the children they had saved from the chaotic crowd. Their parents had finally returned to them, tears flowing from their eyes. They had feared they had lost their children in the battle—it was a clash between king-stage cultivators after all, and they thought the children would have no chance of surviving the crossfire. They were overwhelmed with gratitude, witnessing what seemed like a miracle.

Sylphia smiled as she watched their reunion, and Aldrian stood beside her, his hand resting gently around her shoulder.

"Let's go. They are with their genuine parents, so they must be safe. The Larson family is already on their way here," he said. He had already ordered the assassins to retreat, making way for the Larson family cultivators. The two then disappeared from the rooftop, leaving nothing behind except the remnants of the battle.

The battle at the brothel spread throughout the city like wildfire. The city's denizens began questioning what had truly happened there. Unfortunately, no one had the answers. The event unfolded so quickly, and with something—seemingly—'throwing' people out of the battle area, they had no time to witness the fighters involved.

The Larson family's cultivators were also clearing the brothel area. At this point, they had many questions and problems to contend with, but this event made them feel like they had lost their minds, especially Grand Duke Larson.

The next day, Grand Duke Larson stood amidst the rubble where the brothel had once stood. He knew that his son had been visiting the brothel before the fight broke out. When they couldn't contact him or his guardian, it was clear something was wrong.

"Do you still not have any word on him?" Grand Duke Larson asked, his voice seething with anger as he addressed the elder assisting with the investigation. His veins bulged on his forehead, the tension evident in his expression. Problem after problem continued to pile up, and now his son had disappeared. He refused to believe that this chaos was unrelated to the mysterious group that had been attacking his family.

"We still can't find the young master, my lord. While many witnesses saw him enter the brothel, and we've found his guardian's corpse, there are no traces of where he went. We're still searching other locations for any signs," the elder reported.

"Alright, keep looking," Grand Duke Larson replied, his voice tense. He knew better than to lash out in frustration here. He needed to focus on finding his son and ensuring his safety first. Clenching his fists, his eyes hardened with a cruel intent.

"Whoever did this to my family, I swear to the heavens, I will make you regret it. Every single one of you will regret offending my family," Grand Duke Larson vowed silently in his mind.

Chapter 318: New Comprehension

While the city remained in uproar due to the battle between mysterious King-stage cultivators, Aldrian stayed in his room at the inn. He had just finished a steamy moment with Sylphia. Now, with his eyes closed, he held his naked lover from behind, his nose buried in her shoulder as if her scent were his lifeline.

"It tickles," she said with a giggle, feeling his nose rub against her shoulder repeatedly.

"You smell so fragrant, even your sweat has a captivating scent," Aldrian murmured. He continued the motion for a few moments before finally resting his nose in her hair.

After a brief silence, Sylphia suddenly spoke.

"Dear, have you ever had dreams about strange things? Like not knowing where you are or not understanding anything in the dream, yet feeling as though you've already experienced it?"

Aldrian opened his eyes, caught off guard by the sudden question. He didn't answer immediately, only after a few moments of silence did he finally responded.

"Well, yes. To be honest, I've had many experiences like that. Strange things happen in my dreams, and I often don't know what to make of them. They're so weird, but at the same time, I feel like I know them very well."

Sylphia fell silent, contemplating his response. After a moment, she asked, "Aldrian, do you believe in reincarnation?"

"If you had asked me this when we first met, I wouldn't have been able to answer with certainty. Back then, I would have simply said I believed because it's the common belief across the continent. But now, after all this time, I truly believe in reincarnation. I'm certain that we've lived lives before this one."

"Why do you think so now?" Sylphia asked.

"I just know it. I know it sounds ridiculous, but the experiences I've had in my dreams don't feel like mere dreams. To me, it's as though I'm living a completely different life—one vastly different from my current one. It's hard to explain. I've never experienced the life I see in my dreams, yet at the same time, I feel like I already have. That's why I'm convinced my dreams are glimpses of my past life. And also..."

Aldrian fell silent, hesitating to continue. Sensing this, Sylphia turned her naked body to face him, her eyes meeting his. She could see the unspoken weight he carried—secrets he hesitated to share. Yet, she seemed to understand why. She recalled the words of the mysterious woman and was reminded of Aldrian's extraordinary origins.

She wrapped her arms around him tightly, smiling warmly.

"It's okay. I know you have secrets you can't share with me right now. I just hope that someday, you'll be able to tell me," she said softly.

Aldrian smiled back at her, though his expression held a hint of regret.

"I'm sorry, dear. I want to tell you everything, but the truth is, I don't even know how to explain it myself. What I can tell you is that I'm searching for answers. Until then, I can't fully explain my secrets," he said with a sincere, apologetic tone.

Sylphia continued to smile as she rested her head on his chest. After a moment, she looked into his eyes once more.

"Speaking of dreams, I've had similar experiences to yours. There's one dream in particular that felt so vivid—it was as if I was really there, not just dreaming," Sylphia said. She then recounted the dream where she met a mysterious woman with a giant tree visible in the distance.

As Aldrian listened to Sylphia's story, his brow furrowing. The woman and the scenery she described felt strikingly familiar to him.

"Wait," he said. "This woman in your dream—did she have elven ears?"

Sylphia froze for a moment, stunned by his question, before slowly nodding. "Yes," she replied.

"Did she wear a knee-length green dress and have golden hair?" Aldrian asked.

Sylphia's eyes widened in surprise. "Yes, how do you know?" she asked, astonished.

Aldrian pondered slightly as he answered her. "I met her once in Balin City. It was an unexpected encounter, though it wasn't a dream—it was a vision, I'd say. It happened after I picked a strange leaf. I still have it with me, even now."

He then recounted the brief meeting he had with the mysterious woman. Sylphia listened in awe as Aldrian told his version of the encounter. Could it be that the woman could appear in their dreams or visions at will, or was there something more to it?

Sylphia was left astonished by what Aldrian had shared. The woman had even kowtowed to him. Was there some deeper meaning to all of this?

In front of her, the mysterious woman had appeared as a reverend, motherly figure—someone to be placed on a high pedestal. Although Sylphia had never seen her before, that was the overwhelming sense she got after their encounter. She couldn't fathom such a figure suddenly kowtowing to anyone. Yet, as she thought about it, Sylphia wasn't entirely surprised. After all, the woman had mentioned that Aldrian was someone whose origin even she couldn't comprehend.

"I wonder what their relationship was in the past?" Sylphia thought, her curiosity piqued. However, as soon as the thought crossed her mind, a pout formed on her lips, and a sudden wave of jealousy washed over her. The mysterious woman was so beautiful—did she and Aldrian share a deeper bond than Sylphia had imagined?

Unable to quell the feeling, Sylphia buried her head against Aldrian's chest.

While Sylphia wrestled with her jealous thoughts, Aldrian's mind was occupied with something else. If Sylphia could see the woman in her dreams, then why now? Why could she only see her recently? Did it have something to do with him and Sylphia confirming their relationship? More than that, why had the woman approached Sylphia and not him? The only time he'd met her was in Balin City—so why was Sylphia the one to encounter her?

"Is it because of the karma connection?" he wondered.

As he and Sylphia confirmed their love for each other, their karma would undoubtedly grow stronger and more solid. With their fates intertwined, was it because of that? Aldrian closed his eyes, entering a state of meditation. Despite being naked and still holding Sylphia close, he was able to meditate.

After a few moments, Aldrian opened his eyes. Before him, he saw the karmic thread with Sylphia—a red thread, even redder than blood, symbolizing the depth of their love for each other. He had never seen his thread with Sylphia before, so this was his first time witnessing it. He observed it for a few seconds, but something seemed off. Above the red karmic thread, he noticed something strange.

He thought he saw something—a thin, transparent thread that appeared and disappeared in the blink of an eye. It was much smaller than the red karmic thread, and it only lasted for a few seconds before vanishing from his sight, not appearing again. However, the moment he saw that thin thread, something inside his mind seemed to

explode. A sudden wave of new comprehension washed over him. He closed his eyes, focusing on the sensation as it filled his mind.

Sylphia, still pouting from her jealousy, suddenly sensed something different from Aldrian and looked into his eyes. She saw him with his eyes closed, but she could feel his aura fluctuating. The feeling was hard to wrap her mind around—it was as if...

"He is here, but at the same time, he is not. He is the same, but at the same time, he is not," she thought.

She shook her head, trying to rid herself of the ridiculous notion. She thought she was going crazy, but then another thought crossed her mind.

"Did Aldrian comprehend something?"

At this moment, inside Aldrian's mind, he saw countless vivid visions. Some were familiar, ones he had already experienced, while others were entirely new. The visions were so vivid that he felt as if he could step into them, to feel the world within them.

Despite their differences, Aldrian noticed a similarity in all of them. In each vision, he saw different women, yet he recognized them all, as though they had shared a long history together. His feelings for each of them mirrored what he felt for Sylphia—yet even deeper. He witnessed countless moments spent with these women, experiencing different situations, each more profound than the last.

There were times when he was in poor condition, but she was the only one who came to him. There were moments when he was alone, yet she was the only one who stayed by his side. At times when he was so rich he lacked for nothing, he still found peace in her presence. Through countless situations, she was the woman who always appeared, standing by his side.

Looking at all of this, Aldrian reached his own conclusion—the same conclusion he had come to some time ago.

"These are the many different lives that Sylphia and I have experienced in the past. And that thin thread... it has something to do with karma."

However, Aldrian sensed that this was something even more profound than karma. Though it gave him a similar feeling, he could tell that it was different when he truly comprehended it.

The thread that connects everything—everything tied together, transcending time and space. You are the only one who can control this connection.

The Thread of Origin.

Suddenly, he heard a voice coming from nowhere. But it was a voice he knew all too well.

"The voice of 'that' person!"

Chapter 319: Conversation With Claude

That was the voice he recognized, the voice of the unknown man who had appeared in his visions on several occasions in the past. It had been there when he comprehended the symbol inside the golden box of the secret sword chamber in the Forgeheart Kingdom and again when he completed the forging of the unnamed divine sword.

This unknown man felt inexplicably close to him, and it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say Aldrian considered that man like blood family.

Aldrian was immersed in a state of comprehension as he pondered the thread of origin. That voice kept repeating itself, like some kind of recording playing inside his mind. His thoughts spun with the emotions he experienced when he saw the visions of himself and Sylphia, all while hearing the voice over and over again. At one point, he felt as if he could leap into one of the visions and enter that world, but he held himself back.

After more than half an hour, he finally opened his eyes. Something profound lay within Aldrian's gaze, as if he had witnessed countless lives, each shaped by different circumstances. His eyes seemed to radiate wisdom.

The first thing he saw after opening his eyes was Sylphia, gazing at him with curiosity. He smiled at her, leaned in to kiss her forehead, and held her more tightly. His love for her seemed to grow even stronger after this comprehension session. Although he had yet to fully grasp the entire extent of the thread of Origin, he chose not to rush it. He could sense that this thread was far more profound than simply witnessing the past lives of any beings or their connections to him.

"Done with your comprehension?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"You're truly a genius like no other. Even in this situation, you can enter a state of comprehension," Sylphia said, her tone teasing. "Many would struggle to achieve that without the perfect environment to support them, yet here you are—naked with your woman after having sex. What kind of comprehension did you gain this time? A new position?"

Aldrian suddenly adopted a mischievous expression and leaned in close, his lips brushing against her ear.

"Yes, I've already comprehended something interesting," he replied with a sly grin. Without warning, he lifted one of her legs and entered her from the front.

"Ah!" she moaned, her voice filled with surprise and pleasure. For the next hour, she was lost in carnal bliss, surrendering herself entirely to Aldrian's relentless passion.

Four hours later, inside one of the finest taverns in Larson City—complete with private rooms—Prince Claude in disguise sat alone, his eyes closed in quiet contemplation. Before long, Aldrian entered the room, prompting Claude to open his eyes and rise to his feet.

"Your Highness, you're already here? I thought I came too early, but it seems you were here before me. My apologies if I've kept you waiting," Aldrian said.

"No need to apologize, Sir Aldrian. I only just arrived myself, so you're perfectly on time," Prince Claude replied with a warm smile. "Come, have a seat. The drinks here are top-notch, so feel free to order anything you like—it's all on me."

Not long after, Aldrian finally received his order. As they began their conversation, Aldrian experienced a sense of déjà vu. People always seemed to ask him about his origins and similar topics. His answers were always the same when speaking to strangers who didn't know him well. But then came his questions—shaped by each individual's circumstances. This was where things became interesting for him.

"So, Your Highness, you came here to investigate the Larson family matter. Honestly, I'm surprised that it's you and not Princess Loraine, as she's usually the one who handles these matters. Moreover, you've come in disguise rather than in formal way. I suppose that's part of your plan—or perhaps his Majesty's?" Aldrian asked.

There was no way Princess Loraine would agree to something like this, so Aldrian thought either he or the emperor had initiated the investigation without her knowledge or consent.

"Yes, this case is quite different from the Flamecrest situation. With all the news about this territory and the number of places that have been hiding devils, we suspected that something much bigger is happening within the Larson Grand Duchy. If I had made a formal arrival, like my little sister usually does, it would have given the Larson family time to hide anything, especially if they're somehow connected to the recent incidents with the devils," Claude explained.

"Also, my little sister needs rest. After returning from the Flamecrest Grand Duchy, she entered seclusion. We didn't want to burden her with this matter when she already has her older brother to handle it."

Aldrian could see that Prince Claude truly loved his family, especially his little sister, Princess Loraine. However, no matter how much he loved her, there were things he needed to know about the secret actions of his sister. After meeting the prince last night, Aldrian had decided to give the imperial family a chance—a chance to judge one of their own.

Even more so after reading Elis' memories, Aldrian couldn't deny that Princess Loraine had already gone crazy. Leaving someone like that unchecked would be detrimental to the stability of the imperial family, no matter how close they were as family.

"Have you learned anything from Elis, Your Highness?" Aldrian asked.

"Not yet. We still can't wake her up since last night. Sir Aldrian, I think your attack was really fatal to her—it knocked her out to the point where we can't wake her, even after trying everything to force her awake. From what I understand, her soul is severely wounded, and it needs some time to heal before she can regain consciousness."

"I see. Where is she now?" Aldrian asked.

"I already sent her to the capital not long after we parted ways. I'm afraid this valuable target might slip away or something could go wrong, so I contacted my father to send someone to take Elis. What I've told you just now is what I've been informed of from the capital—she is still unconscious."

Aldrian nodded, but he could only lament Elis' fate. With Princess Loraine around, Elis' life wouldn't last much longer. The attack from last night was directly connected to the princess, and sending Elis to the capital was essentially a death sentence. Now, what he needed to do was warn Prince Claude about Princess Loraine's true nature.

"Your Highness, about your visit here—does anyone know about it?" Aldrian asked.

"No, this operation is known only by my father, myself, and the informant inside this city. The number doesn't exceed seven people."

"Then, do you know how Elis found out about your arrival here, Your Highness? Wait—no, let's step back for a moment. Why did she seem to know, or even expect, that you would visit the brothel? You went to the brothel because you were following the young master of the Larson family, correct? The brothel is her place, and you entered it without knowing her identity, yet she knew yours. That is the crucial question, Your Highness," Aldrian said.

Prince Claude was stunned, but he also frowned. That was the legitimate question that had been weighing on his mind since last night. From the way she spoke to him, it seemed he was the target. Didn't that mean she had already been expecting his arrival? His mind raced as he considered several scenarios to explain why she seemed to know of his arrival and was expecting him.

Then, the only thing that came to his mind was that the information he had received about the young master of the Larson family visiting the brothel had also reached Elis! She must have expected him to come to the brothel because the young master would be visiting there. His face darkened. Doesn't that mean the source of this information had also leaked the information to Elis?

"It seems I'll have to ask the informants about the source of their news," Claude thought.

Claude looked at Aldrian and sighed.

"Thank you, Sir Aldrian. I think I know how to proceed from here. Your question has given me new insight, and you've saved me time because of it."

"Don't mention it, Your Highness. I'm glad I could help," Aldrian replied.

After that, they continued their conversation for more than an hour before Aldrian and Claude parted ways. For Claude, the meeting with Aldrian had been very fruitful, and he was glad to have established a connection with such an expert!

At other place, under the darkness of the humid dungeon cells, Elis, bound to the wall, remained unconscious since the cultivators from the imperial family had brought her here the previous night. The security in this place was so tight that to reach her cell, one would have to pass through many checkpoints, each guarded by powerful cultivators.

However, at this moment, the guards stationed near the cells lay unconscious as a figure in black robes stood before the cell, gazing at Elis. The murderous intent in their eyes was clear, even in the dungeon's darkness.

Not long after, the sound of sirens echoed through the surrounding dungeon as many discovered the unconscious guards—and Elis, now dead.

Chapter 320: The Larson Family's Worst Situation

The next day, rumors began to circulate that young master Clark had disappeared following the fight between two mysterious king-stage cultivators. Many people wondered if the rumors were true, but the Larson family chose not to address them.

Instead, the public received another piece of news directly from the Larson family. They claimed that all the recent problems related to the devils were the work of an external organization. According to them, the remnants of the Duclan family were the true perpetrators. The Duclan family had returned, seeking revenge against the Larson family, whom they blamed for their downfall.

The reasoning presented by the Larson family was quite logical and seemed reasonable. However, without concrete evidence to prove that the remnants of the Duclan family were responsible for the devil-related incidents, it was difficult to convince the masses.

Many people scoffed at the claim, dismissing it as nothing more than an attempt by the Larson family to shirk their responsibility. Despite this, the Larson family paid no attention to public opinion and continued to push the narrative that the remnants of the Duclan family were to blame.

This continued for several days, with the Larson family presenting "evidence" each day, claiming that members of the Duclan family had actually become devils.

Although doubt lingered in the minds of many, the evidence presented by the Larson family felt like a bitter pill forcefully shoved down their throats. Gradually, the masses began to shift their opinions, wondering, *"Could it really be the remnants of the Duclan family behind all of this?"*

While the Larson family had not completely escaped their predicament, the growing shift in public opinion was enough to give them some breathing room and the opportunity to move forward.

At this time, in the Larson family's meeting room, only three people were present: the grand duke and two of the family's grand elders. Although the Larson family now had some breathing room, Grand Duke Larson's expression remained grim. For several days, there had been no sign of his son.

He still suspected that the mysterious group was behind the disappearance, believing they would eventually contact him with demands. But no such contact came. The group remained silent, offering no clues or explanations.

It was a confusing situation, and the uncertainty surrounding his son's fate was truly infuriating.

"Have you contacted Her Highness yet?" Grand Duke Larson asked one of the grand elders.

"Yes, I've already informed her," the grand elder replied. "She said she can't do anything about it since the emperor himself is monitoring this operation. If she keeps pushing to help us, she risks being discovered."

Grand Duke Larson clenched his fist.

"That woman, not only is she refusing to help us, but it feels like she's abandoning us entirely. Does she not fear the consequences if her actions become known to her family? It seems we're on our own in this." he thought angrily.

"What about the imperial family? Is there still no significant movement?" he asked again.

"Still the same as usual," the grand elder replied. "The imperial family, as a whole, hasn't made any drastic moves for now. However, some of the emperor's investigation teams have been dispatched to various territories under His Majesty's orders. They haven't delved too deeply into our main family and are primarily focusing on other areas where the devils appeared.

As of today, it seems they haven't uncovered anything that could be endanger us."

Grand Duke Larson sighed, but his frown remained after hearing the report. To him, the imperial family's actions seemed strange. Their response appeared more "restrained" compared to how they had handled the devil case within the Flamecrest Grand Duchy and Duclan Dukedom. Back then, they had even sent a member of their main family, with Princess Loraine volunteering to lead the investigation herself.

Why would they deploy someone of imperial bloodline just for an investigation?

That was meant to demonstrate the seriousness of the situation. Additionally, a member of the imperial family could deliver an immediate and authoritative verdict. If the family was deemed innocent, their declaration would significantly reduce the burden and accusations against them. However, if the family was found guilty, they would face a fate similar to that of the Duclan family.

However, the situation in the Larson Grand Duchy was significant—arguably even bigger than what had occurred with the Flamecrest family. So why hadn't they sent someone from the main imperial bloodline? Did they not take the Larson family's predicament seriously? Even the princess hadn't received permission from her father to act. This left Grand Duke Larson questioning Emperor Herman's intentions. What was he waiting for?

Suddenly, a thought struck him.

"Wait, what if the imperial family has already taken action without our knowledge? That would explain their lack of drastic movements."

But the problem was, even if Grand Duke Larson suspected that the imperial family had already taken action without their knowledge, so what? He still didn't know what they had done or what their plans were. It was all just speculation, with no solid proof. The princess hadn't shared any useful information either, leaving him in the dark about what to do next.

Knock knock.

A hurried knock on the door interrupted his thoughts. A cultivator at the Marquess stage quickly entered, bowing his head.

"My lord, bad news!" the cultivator exclaimed. "We have a situation on our hands. The mysterious group has made their move, and this time, they're even announcing their existence to the world. We finally know who they are, and they've shown something that could endanger us."

"What?!"

In various parts of Larson City, people paused in their activities, stunned by something utterly ridiculous. Suddenly, pamphlets and information crystals were scattered throughout strategic locations, available for anyone to pick up. Those who read the pamphlets or examined the contents of the information crystals couldn't hide their shock.

The pamphlets detailed the Larson family's treacherous actions against the Duclan family and how they had slandered them, leading to the Duclan family's downfall. The information crystals, also spread throughout the city, contained confessions from the young master of the Larson family, revealing their past deeds and their connections to the devils.

It was the members of the fallen Duclan family who had spread all the pamphlets and information crystals. Among the shocking revelations, the information crystal even revealed that the young miss of the Duclan family was still alive. This revelation stunned them, as the imperial family had previously claimed to have executed all the main members of the Duclan family.

When the people finished absorbing the information from the pamphlets and crystals, it sparked an uproar throughout the city.

Some of the people bold enough to oppose the Larson family appeared at their gates, demanding that the family take responsibility for their past sins. As the number of protesting cultivators grew, the Larson family's guards were forced to call upon their high-ranking cultivators to control the swelling crowd.

However, the cultivations of the masses varied, with some possessing strength equal to that of the Larson family's cultivators. As a result, the situation did not improve much. Instead, it led to the opposite effect—people began to revolt, and what started as a commotion quickly spiraled into chaos. Fights broke out in various parts of the city, and the unrest spread outward, reaching other areas of the Larson Grand Duchy.

By the afternoon, the revolt had spread across the entire territory of the Grand Duchy. Grand Duke Larson stood on the second floor of his mansion, his expression dark as he watched the unfolding chaos. In his hand were the pamphlet and information crystal that had been distributed by the members of the Duclan family. The contents of both were damning, filled with irrefutable evidence. It was further supported by his son's apparent voluntary confession, his pleading expression only adding weight to the accusations.

"How could they spread all of this under our noses?" Grand Duke Larson asked one of the elders standing nearby.

"There are witnesses who saw these pamphlets and information crystals suddenly appear on the streets," the elder replied, sweat rolling down his face. "However, due to the large crowd, they couldn't identify who dropped them. It also happened simultaneously in many parts of our territory."

Their plan to redirect the blame onto the Duclan family had backfired. The people now had a counter-argument to the Larson family's narrative. Grand Duke Larson gritted his teeth. To think that the Duclan family's young miss was still alive, and that the mysterious group was actually made up of Duclan family members!

They had initially thought of using the Duclan name to their advantage. After all, the Duclan family had been fallen for years, so using their name seemed harmless. But they never expected the mysterious group to actually be the real Duclan family! Now, the people's counter-argument was clear: everything the Larson family had said was nothing more than an attempt to cover up their past crimes against the Duclans.

With this development, it seemed over for them. There was no way they could escape this situation without great sacrificing. Grand Duke Larson expected the imperial family to soon pass judgment on them. Even if the princess intervened, it wouldn't change much—in fact, it would only affect the imperial family as a whole.

Grand Duke Larson covered his face with his palm, his eyes gleaming with cunning. He had finally made up his mind.

"Do you think I'll take this fall without doing anything? Wrong! I won't let it end so easily!"