

# **The Shining Star Above The Heaven**

## **#Chapter 371: Another One - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 371: Another One**

### *Chapter 371: Another One*

"Too late," Aldrian said as the entire formation lit up with an ominous reddish glow, and the ground trembled. Aldrian could feel that this summon was vastly different from any he had encountered before, given the sheer magnitude of sacrifices and energy required. He counted twenty King-stage devils channeling their energy just to activate the formation, making him wonder what kind of beast was about to be summoned.

His devil energy was strong, having already been strengthened by his golden energy after being absorbed. The devils attempting to stop Aldrian had no time to react as, suddenly, a massive silhouette of a beast's head emerged from the formation.

A black flame exuded from its head, striking terror into those who beheld it as its searing heat spread instantly throughout the underground hall. Even the Great Peng, waiting at the entrance outside, sensed its presence. His heart pounded, and sweat rolled down his forehead, an astonishing reaction, considering his own immense power.

He could feel the extraordinary presence emanating from the underground base, its sheer force affecting even him. He realized that the entity appearing below came from the same place as he did, yet it was far more powerful than him.

At the summoning formation, chaos had already erupted. Many King-stage devils had perished, consumed by the sudden black flames that engulfed the entire hall. The fact that these flames could easily kill King-stage beings made it clear—the summoned beast was at least at the Emperor stage. The formation's protective barrier had already collapsed under the intensity of the flames, and the beast's full form began to emerge.

It had a massive beak and two piercing red pupils that locked onto Aldrian with a menacing gaze. Standing right in front of it, Aldrian frowned as he sensed the beast's presence. This was the most intimidating spiritual beast he had ever encountered—far more terrifying than the Great Peng. Yet, at the same time, it felt familiar. He had seen this head many times before... in his visions.

*"So this is a phoenix... but what kind of phoenix is it?"* Aldrian wondered as he examined the information that appeared before him.

*"A clone of the Golden Phoenix?"* If his memories from his visions were correct, the Golden Phoenix was one of the great clans among the Phoenix lineage.

However, just like the Golden-Winged Great Peng's clone outside, this one looked nothing like a typical Golden Phoenix. The eerie black flames surrounding its body were unlike anything he had ever encountered—something that felt as if it had emerged from the depths of hell itself. And the heat... it was no joke.

Right now, Aldrian was already using the power of his domain to form a spatial shield, protecting himself from the scorching flames. At the same time, he reinforced the spatial barrier covering the underground base. He hadn't expected the summoned being to be a phoenix—let alone one with such overwhelming strength.

Screech!!!

The phoenix's cry echoed through the entire underground base, causing the spatial barrier Aldrian had created to tremble under its sheer force. A peak Emperor-stage aura erupted from its body, pressing down on Aldrian with immense pressure.

Although the phoenix seemed aware that he was the one who had summoned it, there was clear reluctance in its demeanor—it had no intention of obeying him so easily.

Aldrian found this rather interesting. Deciding that this confined underground hall was too small for what was to come, he prepared to move it to a much more expansive space. He already knew this beast was far larger than the Great Peng—just its head alone nearly filled the entire summoning formation.

With his will and mastery over space, Aldrian created a massive spatial gate on the ceiling of the hall, directly above the giant beast. The space split apart, opening like a doorway to another world, revealing a completely different scenery on the other side.

The surviving devils stared in shock. Controlling a gate of that magnitude required both precise spatial manipulation and an immense amount of energy. Only a cultivator stronger than middle Emperor-stage with a deep affinity for spatial elements could achieve such a feat.

The phoenix, noticing the vast expanse beyond the gate, instinctively tried to free itself from the summoning formation. After a few moments of struggle, it finally managed to break free. However, due to its sheer size, only half of its body had passed through, while the other half remained within the underground hall.

The phoenix instantly leaped into the air, soaring past the spatial gate and into the vast, desolate forest beyond. Aldrian had specifically chosen this location—a remote area still within church territory, spanning 2,000 kilometers without a single inhabitant.

Finally freed from the confines of the underground hall, the phoenix ascended into the night sky, its dark flames flickering under the moonlight, making it both breathtaking and menacing.

Screech!!!

Its cry echoed across the entire region, its overwhelming aura surging outward like a declaration of its arrival. From above, the phoenix gazed down, locking eyes with Aldrian. In an instant, it dived toward him, as if preparing to strike.

However, Aldrian exerted his will, commanding it to obey. The powerful force of his authority stopped the phoenix mid-air, forcing it to hover in place.

Screech!!

Aldrian sensed the phoenix's lingering reluctance—it still refused to obey him, making him frown. Were beasts summoned through the formation not always guaranteed to be under the summoner's control?

Deciding to assert his dominance, he unleashed his golden energy, infusing it with the power of his domain.

His presence was completely different now—no longer as he was before. He stood like a divine being, unwavering, with none worthy of standing above him.

Sensing Aldrian's immense strength and golden energy, the phoenix trembled. Its defiance faded as it flew down in a more submissive manner, landing right in front of him. Its red eyes quivered as they met his gaze.

Aldrian tilted his head in confusion. Through their summoning connection, he could sense the phoenix's emotions—chaotic, confusion, and... fearful?

"Change into your human form."

With his commanding presence and overwhelming aura, his words carried the weight like heaven's mandate, impossible to disobey.

The phoenix closed its eyes, and the flames surrounding its body gradually extinguished. A black light enveloped it, shrinking its massive form bit by bit until it took on the shape of a human.

From within the fading glow, a feminine silhouette emerged. As the light disappeared completely, a woman stood before Aldrian. He raised an eyebrow slightly, stunned by the phoenix's human form.

She possessed a mature, breathtaking beauty. Sharp captivating eyes, perfectly arched brows, and plump red lips. Her alluring, curvaceous figure was wrapped in a tight black dress with a high slit along her leg, revealing smooth, flawless skin. Her ample bosom naturally drew many attention, making it impossible to ignore her seductive presence. Every aspect of her appearance embodied perfection by any man's standards.

In conclusion, she is Femme Fatale

Yet, despite her outward confidence, she looked at Aldrian with trembling eyes. He could sense the turmoil within her through their summoning connection—but he still couldn't understand the source of her chaotic emotions.

"Can you speak?" he asked.

The woman seemed to understand his words and nodded.

"I... speak... barely." Her speech was slow and imperfect, but it was enough for him.

With a peak emperor-stage phoenix clone under his command, Aldrian had gained yet another powerful asset. Now, with two emperor-stage spiritual beasts at his disposal, he had another hidden card to play when the time came.

"Cripple them and bring them here. I want to check something," he ordered, pointing toward the devils who still stared at them in horror. The devils had also been moved to this forest by Aldrian, unable to resist as they were helplessly teleported here.

Hearing Aldrian give the order to the phoenix, the remaining devils who could still move felt a chill run down their spines. In desperation, they tried to escape, flying at full speed. However, the phoenix merely released her oppressive aura, forcing all of them to the ground.

Without hesitation, she activated her movement technique, black flames igniting beneath her feet as she shot forward with terrifying speed. As she passed each devil, her palm, wreathed in black fire, struck their abdomens with pinpoint precision—shattering their dantians instantly.

There was no escape. No matter how fast they tried to run, none could outrun a peak emperor-stage phoenix. One by one, they were crippled, each palm strike sealing their fate.

The low emperor-stage devil also attempted to escape, but before he could fly again, his gaze met the woman's eyes. In that moment, his body froze, and the next instant, his fate was the same as the others. The gap in strength was far too vast—neither he nor any of the devils here had any hope of resisting or fleeing.

After finishing her task, the woman used her energy to carry the ten surviving devils before Aldrian. She looked at him with a nervous expression, which he found amusing.

"Good job," he said.

Her face lit up with joy, her nervousness instantly replaced by excitement. Aldrian smiled at her before shifting his gaze to the devils sprawled on the ground, their bodies weak after losing the power they had cultivated for a lifetime.

"Let's check on them first before we go back."

*Chapter 372: Another conjecture*

One by one, Aldrian checked the devils' memories, and once he was done, he killed them by crushing their souls. He then pondered over the information he had gathered.

*"Yep, they didn't know that traitor's location. That traitor never visited this hideout."*

He found this understandable, given that traitor's experience in the Buran Village hideout.

*"However, at least I got some information about a few spies in this city."*

Nodding to himself, Aldrian shifted his gaze to the woman in front of him. Unlike earlier, when she had been overwhelmed by chaotic emotions, she now looked at him with curiosity.

This change made him ask, "Tell me about yourself."

The woman tilted her head in confusion.

"Tell me about yourself—your life and the place you come from." He said again.

She finally understood what Aldrian meant.

"Darkness... full of darkness... I couldn't see a thing... just waiting in that place for a long time," she said, her tone slightly depressed.

Aldrian frowned at this. Did she mean that the place she was in before the summoning was completely shrouded in darkness? Had she spent her whole life there, merely waiting to be summoned?

Stepping closer to her, he said, "Let me check something."

The woman was confused by Aldrian's words, but she was stunned when he suddenly touched her forehead, sending a tingling sensation through her brain. She didn't react much as Aldrian delved into her memories, allowing him to check freely.

As she gazed at Aldrian's face up close, an unexpected shyness washed over her. Her cheeks flushed, and she instinctively tried to lower her head, but she couldn't as Aldrian

was still holding her forehead. She didn't understand why, but the feeling came over her all the same.

After a few seconds, Aldrian removed his finger from her forehead and inwardly shook his head.

*"She really comes from the darkness. There is no light whatsoever where she was before. She and the other summons... are they all from that place?"*

That place was filled with absolute darkness, even he couldn't see anything. At times, he could hear beastly noises, but he had no way of identifying what kind of creatures they were. No matter how far back he traced her memories, he found nothing. That meant she had been there since birth!

With this, he knew that these beasts were in a special place, seemingly designed specifically for them to wait until they were summoned.

Aldrian frowned as he thought about that place. Something about it unsettled him, and that is, the possibility that it existed in an entirely different realm or even at higher heavens.

His conjecture aligned with why the devils needed to use a special formation granted by the devil lord, along with significant sacrifices. What if the devil lord's summoning method could weaken the law of causality, allowing beasts from higher realms or heavens to descend?

Aldrian's expression turned solemn. This was bad news. And at that moment, something finally clicked in his mind.

*"Then... does that mean that 'thing' was able to come into this world because the law of causality has weakened? Is that why?"*

He was finally beginning to see the bigger picture regarding the prophesied time. If his thoughts were correct, then that time would mark the moment when the devils had completed their preparations.

At that point, the connection between this world and the upper heavens would grow stronger, and the law of causality that separated them would weaken to a certain extent. The law of causality was what prevented beings from the upper heavens from descending recklessly—it was one of the universe's mechanisms for maintaining balance.

However, if the devils—or more specifically, the devil lord—had discovered a way to weaken the laws of causality, then it was no wonder that "thing" could descend into the lower world.

*"Although this is still just my guess, I think it's the most plausible scenario right now. But I still don't understand what kind of requirements or conditions the devils need to weaken the laws of causality. It seems like only the devil lord knows."*

Lowering the law of causality to the point where that "thing" could descend must require an immense price, yet he had no idea what that was.

Was it similar to the summoning formation?

He shuddered at the thought. If the process was the same, then just how many sacrifices and how much energy would be needed to weaken the law of causality in this part of the world?

Aldrian's face grew grim as he thought about the future. He needed to unite all the powers on the continent as soon as possible.

He then turned to the woman but was confused by her expression. Her face was flushed, and her lips trembled slightly before she spoke the words that made his eyes widen.

"Your... Majesty."

He grabbed her shoulders and looked directly into her eyes.

"You... who are you? Why did you call me that?" he asked, his voice serious. Yet, beneath his stern gaze, a slight tremor could be seen.

His usual calm demeanor was nowhere to be found. And it was understandable—there were only a few who had ever called him that, and they were all figures from his visions or moments of enlightenment.

For this spiritual beast to address him that way... it could only mean she had met him in the past or knew him personally.

However, he grew even more confused. She had been in that place full of darkness since birth—there was no way she could have met him. So how?

The woman trembled, looking at him with a slightly fearful expression. Aldrian's sudden outburst had startled her. She thought she had done something wrong and that he was berating her.

"I'm sorry," she said in a trembling voice.

Her reaction made Aldrian realize what he had done. He quickly released his grip and took a deep breath to calm himself. Then, he gave her a reassuring smile.



"Alright, I'm sorry for startling you. You didn't do anything wrong, and I wasn't scolding you, so don't worry," he said gently, trying to put her at ease. "I just want to know—why did you call me 'Your Majesty'?"

Seeing that Aldrian wasn't angry with her, the woman relaxed and answered him.

"I don't know... you, Master... but... you are... 'Your Majesty.'"

Aldrian frowned, trying to make sense of her words. From what he could understand, she didn't seem to know why she called him that either. But if that was the case, how did she know to address him the same way some of the people in his visions had?

He wanted to press her further, but through his connection to her, he could tell that she was just as confused as he was. She had spoken purely on instinct, which meant it was something ingrained in her since birth.

He still didn't know how these clones had been created, but if she somehow knew about him, then the only possibility was that the main body—the original—was the one who knew him. After all, their essence was the same.

Aldrian sighed, there are many things he needed to do in the future. But for now, his priority was returning to the hunt for the traitor.

"Let's go back. We've already taken too much time."

With that, Aldrian teleported them back to the underground hall where the summoning formation was located. The spatial gate had already been closed by him after the giant phoenix fully emerged from the underground base, he had done so to prevent any unnecessary commotion.

As they reappeared in the hall with the bodies of the devils he had just killed, Aldrian immediately noticed Arthur and the other Paladins. They were already there, cautiously observing the area.

The sudden appearance of Aldrian startled them, and they nearly attacked, but they quickly stopped upon realizing it was him.

They stared in confusion at the dead bodies of the devils, but what unsettled them was the unfamiliar woman standing beside Aldrian. The moment they laid eyes on her, an instinctive tremble ran through their hearts. She was breathtakingly beautiful, yet something about her presence felt like bad news. Her mere aura made their bodies and souls tremble.

"Young Master, who is she?" Arthur asked.



Aldrian smiled. "Let me introduce her to you. She is the same as the beast I summoned in Buran Village earlier—another spiritual beast in human form."

The others widened their eyes slightly. Aldrian had successfully tamed yet another powerful being? Then... was the screech they had heard earlier from her?

The memory of that sound made them tremble. The sheer pressure and overwhelming aura of a peak Emperor Stage being were no joke. They had previously experienced the Pope's aura, who was at the same level, but what they had sensed earlier felt even more intimidating, more powerful.

However, that terrifying aura and pressure disappeared shortly after. Once they had finished dealing with their side, killing every last devil in their path, they had hurried in this direction, hoping to assist Aldrian.

But what they found instead was the black flames, its origin unknown to them. Even without touching it, they could sense the terrifying power it contained. The mere thought of those flames burning them sent a shiver down their spines, they were certain it could kill them with ease.

The woman glanced around at the scene. With a simple wave of her hand, the remnants of the flames were extinguished. The suffocating heat vanished instantly, making them sigh in relief.

"Let's return to the surface. I can already sense a few presences approaching this place. Martinez and Gloria seem to be bringing people from the city," Aldrian said.

Arthur and the others nodded before quickly making their way out.

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At the entrance, the human form of Great Peng stood motionless, gazing at it. He remained there with his aura and energy fully retracted, ensuring that others would not sense his devil characteristics.

As he waited for his master's return, he suddenly felt several presences approaching. His eyes shifted in that direction.

They were flying toward him at high speed!

*Chapter 373: Continuing the Investigation*

A few seconds later, a group of cultivators led by Martinez and Gloria arrived at the entrance of the underground base. They were escorting seven people, the strongest among them being at the middle emperor stage. The most powerful of the group was a middle-aged man with a blonde mustache and sharp eyes. He wore armor exuding

peak heaven-grade energy, golden mayor mansion's insignia and red cape, a clear display of his status as the mayor of Arbares City.

He was accompanied by several knights, all of whom were at the king stage, a truly formidable composition. The mayor had personally come to verify the shocking news he had just received. When two members of the Paladin Knights had approached him with claims of a devil base near the city, his first instinct was to dismiss it as absurd.

How could the devils have created such a massive underground base, housing thousands of them, with an emperor-stage devil as their leader, all without anyone noticing? If they had managed to build such power right under his nose, it would be a humiliating blow to his face.

However, he couldn't simply dismiss the report from the Paladin Knights, especially since the vice-captain himself had come to deliver it. With the captain of the Paladins already leading an assault on the base, he needed to see it for himself. A base of such size and strength would undoubtedly cause chaos, and the ensuing battle could easily affect the city.

He ordered the city guards and knights to secretly prepare an evacuation plan in case the Paladins' report was true. After that, he followed the two Paladins to the location they claimed to have discovered the devils' hideout.

When he arrived with his knights, he was astonished to see that there was indeed an entrance to an underground base. However, his attention was quickly drawn to a black-haired man standing near the entrance, as if guarding it.

The moment he laid eyes on the man, an overwhelming sense of discomfort washed over him, as though he were facing something repulsive. He couldn't understand why he felt this way, but his instincts as an emperor-stage cultivator warned him that this man was dangerous. The same unease was evident in the knights behind him—they, too, felt something was off about the mysterious figure.

"He is with us. Don't worry," Martinez assured the mayor and his knights.

He then turned his attention to the entrance, seeing it for the first time. From where he stood, he could sense something ominous emanating from within. Glancing at the others, he spoke.

"Let's go. They might need our help—" However, before he could finish his sentence, he sensed several presences emerging from the underground. A wave of relief washed over him as he recognized familiar auras. Moments later, Aldrian and the others emerged from the underground base.

But then, Martinez froze. Among them was an unfamiliar face—a strikingly beautiful woman. The sight of her left him momentarily stunned, and he wasn't the only one confused by her appearance.

The mayor of Arbares City also took notice of the woman, and in an instant, the discomfort he had felt earlier intensified. The unsettling sensation he had when looking at the black-haired man was nothing compared to what he now felt. A cold sweat ran down his forehead, yet he forced himself to suppress his unease.

To steady himself, he turned to Arthur, someone he knew personally and greeted him, hoping that the exchange would help him shake off the bad feeling.

"It's truly a surprise to see that the investigation team from the capital was led here. How is the situation inside, Sir Arthur?"

"I'm merely following the young master and assisting him in the investigation. All the findings are thanks to his efforts and knowledge," Arthur replied, signaling toward Aldrian.

The city mayor turned his gaze to Aldrian and couldn't help but be surprised by how young he was. He had already heard about the prophesied one—the man who cured His Holiness of his mysterious illness, strengthen the church's holy energy and triggered the phenomenon in Heavenly City. However, seeing him in person, he found it hard to believe that someone responsible for such incredible feats was still so young.

Naturally, he had no intention of getting on Aldrian's bad side. Stepping forward with a respectful demeanor, he slightly bowed in greeting.

"I have already heard of Your Eminence and the miracles you have performed. I even traveled to the capital once in hopes of meeting you, but at the time, you were still in seclusion at the Shrine of the Beginning. It is truly an honor to see you now, Your Eminence. I am Franco Mardini, the mayor of Arbares City," the mayor said.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Mayor Franco. Though our meeting takes place under troubling circumstances, your involvement as the city's leader is crucial. I had to act swiftly to prevent the devils from having time to react, which is why I was unable to coordinate with you earlier. My apologies," Aldrian replied.

"Ah, it's quite alright, Your Eminence. However, what about the devils? Is it true that there are thousands of them down there?" the mayor asked, glancing toward the entrance.

Aldrian suddenly took out several corpses, each one exuding a sinister devil energy. The sight made the mayor and his knights widen their eyes in shock.

From the lingering aura and remnants of energy, he could tell that these devils were at least at the king stage, even one of them is emperor stage, confirming that an underground base had indeed existed just outside the city.

"These were some of their higher-ups," Aldrian said. "All the devils inside have already been eliminated. There was also a giant summoning formation—identical to the one that appeared in Larson City. If you wish to inspect the site, there's no danger anymore; I've already disabled all the trap formations."

The mayor's eyes widened in shock before he quickly turned to his knights.

"Van, return to the mansion and bring more men. The rest of you, check inside."

"Yes, my lord," the knights responded before swiftly carrying out their orders.

Aldrian looked at Mayor Franco. "I need to discuss something with you. It would be best if we spoke in a more appropriate place."

"Alright, let's go to my mansion. It will be much more comfortable there."

Aldrian glanced at the human forms of the great Peng and Phoenix.

"You two stay outside the city. Don't wander too far, and avoid being seen."

"Yes, master."

With that, the two figures vanished, making the mayor unconsciously sigh in relief. Standing near the black-haired man had already made him uneasy, but the woman's presence was even more suffocating.

They flew to the mayor's mansion, and upon arrival, Mayor Franco immediately led Aldrian and Arthur to his luxurious office, while the others remained outside. Once they were seated, and the maids had served their drinks, the mayor turned his gaze to Aldrian.

"So, Your Eminence, what is it that you wish to discuss?"

"It's about the traitor—Cardinal Carsius."

At those words, Mayor Franco let out a weary sigh.

"The investigation team led by Cardinal Frost from Heaven's Judgment Order visited me several times more than a year ago. I already provided him with testimonies regarding the traitor. But if you're asking whether I know his whereabouts, I have no idea where that traitor went," the mayor said.

"Can you explain in more detail?" Aldrian asked.

The mayor nodded. "Although I supported him within his faction and even backed him to become the next pope—especially when we believed His Holiness could not be healed—I am, above all, a member of the church. When news of him being hunted by the main church reached me, I still had to do what needed to be done. So, I followed the will of his holiness and was prepared to detain Cardinal Carsius if he ever came here. However, the problem is... he never once visited me."

Arthur frowned upon hearing that.

"What? But the investigation showed that Cardinal Carsius was seen walking toward your mansion," he said.

Mayor Franco sighed again.

"That's why I'm so confused. How could someone have visited my mansion without me knowing? None of my butlers, maids, or guards saw him either, which only added to my confusion. At first, we thought the investigation team had mistaken someone else for Cardinal Carsius, but after speaking with several witnesses, I had to conclude that he did, in fact, come to my mansion."

"Were you at the mansion at that time?" Aldrian asked.

Mayor Franco shook his head. "No, I was in the capital on business. That was also when I visited the main church and attempted to meet Your Eminence."

Aldrian sensed that Mayor Franco was not lying. He pondered for a moment before turning his thoughts to a few individuals within the mansion.

"Mayor Franco, can you summon these people?" Aldrian asked as he took out a piece of paper, quickly writing down several names before handing it to the mayor.

Mayor Franco accepted the paper and, upon reading the names, frowned slightly before looking back at Aldrian.

"Of course, Your Eminence. But these individuals are just one of my butlers, a guard, and the operator of my private teleportation portal. Why do you want to meet them?"

"If we want to uncover the truth about Cardinal Carsius's whereabouts that day, they might have the answers we need."

Mayor Franco frowned deeper, confused by Aldrian's reasoning. It was true that these people might have some knowledge about Cardinal Carsius, but he had already questioned them, and they seemed unaware of anything. However, if Aldrian was this certain, did that mean they had lied to him?

"Alright, I'll call them right away," Mayor Franco replied. He then retrieved a communication artifact from his storage ring and issued orders to summon the individuals.

A few minutes later, three men entered the room, looking confused as to why they had been called. However, their unease grew when they noticed Aldrian watching them with a smile that gave them a bad feeling.

#### *Chapter 374: Short Interrogation*

After they entered the room and were ordered to stand facing Aldrian, who was already waiting for them, they watched as he slowly approached, his gaze sweeping over them one by one. His smiling face, paired with eyes that seemed to pierce into their very souls, made it feel as though he could see through any deception.

After a moment, Aldrian stopped and returned to his original position.

"I'm sorry to disturb your nightly activities, but allow me to introduce myself. You can call me Aldrian. I'm from the main church, here to investigate the traces of the traitor, Cardinal Carsius. I have a few questions for you, and I hope you will answer them truthfully," he said.

Their hearts tensed at his words, but they did their best to suppress any signs of unease. Instead, their expressions showed only a hint of relief, as if they had just heard something reassuring.

"Of course, my lord, we will help and answer to the best of our ability. I thought we had done something wrong, which is why we were called here. Please, ask anything," one of them, a guard, said with a slight bow.

"Me too, my lord," the other two echoed.

However, Aldrian only smiled at them, watching with amusement. Though they spoke with confidence, inside, their hearts were gripped with nervousness, a chill creeping through them like ice. They knew something was wrong. The fact that all three of them had been summoned at this hour could not be a coincidence. They knew each other, shared a connection to Cardinal Carsius—and to the devils.

If they had all been called together, then the church must have already uncovered something that pointed to them!

Aldrian didn't know why, but he enjoyed moments like these—feigning ignorance only to strike with undeniable facts when his "victims" believed they were safe. His gaze shifted to the man standing furthest to the left. He was a middle-aged man dressed in a butler's attire.

"Mister Moris."

"Yes, my lord."

"You have served as the butler here for a long time, haven't you? And from my understanding, you never leave this mansion without Mayor Franco's permission, correct?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then, can you tell me what you did in the days following the rumor of Cardinal Carsius's arrival in this city? Specifically, when Mayor Franco was away in the capital?"

"I simply carried out my usual duties—overseeing the mansion, managing the maids, and ensuring everything remained in order. If there was nothing urgent to attend to while Lord Franco was away on business, I spent most of my time cultivating. That is what I did during that period as well, my lord," Mister Moris replied.

Aldrian nodded. "I see." He then turned his gaze to the man in the middle. "Guard Paz, you have been guarding the side of the mansion all this time, correct?"

The man in the middle, clad in armor, straightened his posture and answered, "Yes, my lord!"

"You didn't see anyone or anything suspicious during the time when Mayor Franco was in the capital?"

"No, my lord."

"Alright." Aldrian then shifted his attention to the man on the far right.

"Mister Zavi, you are the one responsible for operating the private teleportation portal inside this mansion. To use the portal, anyone who wishes to pass through must have the mayor's permission, correct?"

"Yes, my lord, that is correct," Mister Zavi answered. Aldrian responded with a nod.

Mayor Franco also looked at the three men. After hearing Butler Moris and Guard Paz's responses, he already knew what to expect—these were the same answers he had received before. In fact, all of his subordinates had been questioned in the same manner, and every one of them had given the same response. The point was clear, they all claimed to know nothing about Cardinal Carsius.

"Nice answers from all of you, and there seems to be nothing wrong with them," Aldrian said, causing the three men to sigh in relief. But then, he continued.



"But why are you lying to me? Didn't I tell you not to lie when answering my questions?"

A chilling sensation ran down their spines, and Mayor Franco narrowed his eyes.

"My lord—" Butler Moris wanted to speak something, but Aldrian ignored him and turned his gaze to Mayor Franco.

"Excuse me, Mayor Franco. Although these are your people, I must take action against them."

Mayor Franco met Aldrian's eyes before giving a nod.

"It's okay, Your Eminence. They are at your disposal."

"Good."

Suddenly, the three men began to tremble, their eyes unfocused as if they were seeing things in multiple places at once. They remained frozen where they stood, and moments later, their bodies started convulsing. Blood trickled from their noses, ears, and eyes.

Watching this, Mayor Franco and Arthur narrowed their eyes. From the looks of it, they seemed to be under some kind of illusion, a powerful one, strong enough to affect reality itself.

It was clear they were experiencing intense torture, their bodies reacting to the unseen torment. But then, a question arose in Mayor Franco and Arthur's minds, what had these men done to deserve such punishment? Aldrian had not explained anything to them, yet they chose to wait and see what had led him to take such drastic action.

They glanced at Aldrian, who simply observed the three men expressionlessly, as if waiting for something. He leaned casually against the large desk in Mayor Franco's office, showing no urgency or concern.

A few seconds later, the three men stopped trembling and collapsed weakly onto the floor. Blood stained their attire, but they paid no mind to it as they desperately struggled to crawl toward Aldrian.

"Please spare me! I'll talk, I'll talk!"

"Please spare me!"

"Have mercy on me!"

Their voices trembled with desperation as they clung to Aldrian's feet. However, unlike before—when he had worn a smile—Aldrian's expression remained completely blank as he looked down at them.

"Then talk," Aldrian said.

"I did meet with Cardinal Carsius at George's Inn," Butler Moris admitted. "He contacted me at the time, saying he wanted to escape to the north. He reached out because of our connection to the devils, and I thought this was part of his or the devils' plan. So, I helped him enter the mansion to use the mayor's private teleportation portal. He couldn't use the public teleportation station anymore for obvious reasons."

"Yes, I also saw him enter the mansion," Guard Paz added. "At the time, they came through the gate I was guarding, and since we belong to the same faction and share ties with the devils, I let Cardinal Carsius in. I assumed he was carrying out something important for the devils' plan. I even directed them through a path that no one else used to avoid witnesses."

"Cardinal Carsius did, in fact, escape through this mansion's teleportation portal—and I was the one who operated it," said Mister Zavi, the portal's operator. "Since we share the same connection to the devils, I assumed he was carrying out something in line with their plan."

Hearing their confessions, Aldrian turned to Mayor Franco. As expected, his expression was truly ugly, his face contorted with fury, though he forced himself to hold it in. Aldrian was certain that if he stepped outside right now, Mayor Franco would beat these men to death on the spot. There was no way someone like him would tolerate being fooled by his own subordinates.

"There you have it—the answer we were looking for," Aldrian said.

Mayor Franco took a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down.

"I truly did not expect that some of my own men would betray me and have ties to that traitor and the devils," Mayor Franco said after calming himself down. His expression remained ugly as he slightly bowed toward Aldrian. "I deserve punishment for my negligence."

However, Aldrian simply waved his hand.

"It's fine. This isn't something just anyone could have known. They could lie through their teeth and control their expressions and reactions, making it nearly impossible to detect their deception. If they were easy to expose, they wouldn't have been able to act as spies in the first place. Besides, you trusted them, so you had little reason to be suspicious," Aldrian replied.

He knew about the three of them because of the memories he had read from the devils in the underground base outside the city—the ones he had killed. These three were, without a doubt, spies for the devils, and they had also been connected to Cardinal Carsius.

After Cardinal Carsius passed through the private teleportation portal in the mansion, Moris, the butler, went to the devils' base outside the city to report on the cardinal's movements. However, it was then that they discovered Cardinal Carsius had no real connection to the devils' plan—the devils there knew nothing about his actions.

Realizing they had all been deceived by Cardinal Carsius, they found themselves in a difficult position. They couldn't report this to Mayor Franco, as doing so would expose their own involvement. Having already lied to both the investigation team and the mayor, they knew they would undoubtedly be dragged into serious trouble.

"Where is he? Where is that traitor?" Aldrian asked, looking down at Zavi, the teleportation portal operator.

"I... I don't know his exact location right now, but at that time, he went to Caritas City in the Atria Empire."

Aldrian narrowed his eyes—he hadn't expected this. He had already escaped outside the church's territory!

#### *Chapter 375: Return to the Capital*

Hearing Zavi, Mayor Franco and Arthur widened their eyes. If the traitor had already gone beyond the church's border, then things would become more complicated! Moreover, this was the Atria Empire, which was currently engulfed in civil war. If the church were to send someone there, it could lead to many misunderstandings.

The church could be seen as a supporter of either the second prince or the other faction, depending on its actions in that region.

"This is truly problematic. If he had gone to the Doria or Vindas Empire, we could have coordinated with their imperial families to capture him, but it had to be the Atria Empire that already consumed by civil war. I have to admit, he is very clever," Arthur said.

Mayor Franco nodded. "Yes, with Cardinal Carsius there, our hands are basically tied because of the situation. With things still uncertain, if we were to send an envoy to the second prince's faction for help, it could be perceived as support for them from certain perspectives. This is not good, as we must maintain our neutrality in this matter."

Aldrian also found the situation troublesome, but not to the point of annoyance. He already had plans to visit that place anyway, so this development would simply hasten his trip. He looked at Arthur and Mayor Franco.

"This is enough for now. I already got what I need. There's no point in asking for more information since I know they have nothing else useful about the traitor." He turned to Mayor Franco. "I leave them to you, Mayor Franco. Thank you for your cooperation."

"No, Your Eminence, it is my honor to assist you in your investigation," Mayor Franco replied.

Aldrian nodded and walked toward the door, brushing off the hands that tried to grab his feet.

"I've already taken too much of your time, so I'll excuse myself. You don't need to escort me, Mayor. I believe you have far more important matters to attend to," Aldrian said, glancing at the three people who had seemingly resigned themselves to Mayor Franco's judgment, which was sure to be severe.

Aldrian stepped outside, followed by Arthur and the other Paladins, and before long, they were already soaring beyond the city. As soon as they passed the city walls, the human forms of the Great Peng and Phoenix instantly appeared before Aldrian.

Aldrian looked at them and nodded. It was good that he hadn't brought them inside, as the city was filled with protective formations highly sensitive to devil energy. If detected, these formations would immediately trigger, causing unnecessary trouble. He preferred to avoid misunderstandings, so it was best they remained outside.

"We'll return to the capital and report to His Holiness first. This matter has already gone beyond our jurisdiction," Aldrian said to the Paladins. "Well, specifically for you all—because of your status and ranks in the church. If Paladins were to suddenly appear in the Atria Empire, it would cause major trouble."

He then turned to the two spiritual beasts in their human forms.

"As for you two, I'll teleport you outside the city just like this. Remember, don't draw attention to yourselves, and under no circumstances should you enter the city—or I'll have to take action myself."

"Yes, Master," they answered with conviction.

With that, all of them vanished from the area and reappeared in the Heavenly City. Arthur and the other Paladins appeared outside the main church, while the two spiritual beasts appeared beyond the city walls. This was the capital of the Heavenly Direction Church, a place far stricter and more fortified than Arbares City when it came to protection against devil energy, so they had to be much more careful.

Not long after, Aldrian and Arthur met with Pope Claudius in his chamber and explained the findings of their investigation. Upon hearing their report, the pope frowned, his fist clenching tightly.

"That bastard was truly clever in choosing his escape route! With him there, our options are severely limited. We can only move freely once the civil war's outcome is decided and we establish ties with the victor," he said.

Although the second prince's faction seemed the most likely to win the civil war, as they continued to push back the other factions, the pope did not want to reach a conclusion too soon.

"Actually, Your Holiness, I had already planned a visit to the Atria Empire, and fortunately, this development aligns with my schedule. Those outside the main church are unaware that I am the prophesized one, nor do they know my face, so outsiders will not be able to connect me to the church in any way," Aldrian said.

"Your Holiness, while I'm there, allow me to capture that bastard as well. If I move alone, it will be much easier to act. Even if that traitor has seen my face, I highly doubt he would expect anyone to pursue him all the way to the Atria Empire."

Pope Claudius pondered Aldrian's words before letting out a sigh. He looked at Aldrian and grasped his shoulder in appreciation and affection.

"Young Aldrian, I'm truly grateful to have you by our side. You've always helped us, and if you're willing, I will leave this matter in your hands. However, if it becomes too troublesome, please let me know. I won't hesitate to come to your aid," Pope Claudius said.

Aldrian simply smiled at the pope and replied, "I appreciate your concern, Your Holiness, but there's no need for that. It would only make things messier for the church, and in the end, the devils would have the last laugh. I will ensure that the church remains uninvolved in this matter. You don't have to worry."

The pope smiled and sighed.

"Alright, but still, my offer stands at any time. If you ever need the church's assistance, report it to our branch there, and we will support you to the best of our ability. Even if I have to personally go myself, I will."

As he spoke, he retrieved a token from his storage ring and handed it to Aldrian.

Aldrian received the token and examined the golden emblem bearing the church's symbol. From it, he could sense a unique holy aura and energy that belonged specifically to Pope Claudius. He knew that if he presented this token at any church branch, he would instantly become their highest priority.

"Thank you, Your Holiness," Aldrian said before storing it in his storage ring.

"Ah, right—before I leave, I want to give something to Angelica. But I'd like you to be there with me when I give it to her," he added.

Pope Claudius was momentarily puzzled by Aldrian's words but nodded nonetheless.

"Of course. If you want me to see it, then I will."

"Alright. Tomorrow, I'll return here with her before heading to the Atria Empire," Aldrian said. Then, he turned to Arthur, standing behind him.

"Good work today, Sir Arthur. I appreciate your help."

"It's my honor to be of service to you, young master," Arthur replied with a slight bow.

Aldrian nodded before disappearing.

Arthur and Pope Claudius gazed at the spot where Aldrian had just stood and sighed.

"What do you think? After spending time with him, you must have finally experienced Young Aldrian's greatness firsthand," Pope Claudius said.

"Yes, Your Holiness. Although I've long known of his abilities, this time, having worked alongside him on the same mission, I was able to witness his brilliance directly. He never ceases to surprise me," Arthur replied.

As the night deepened, Arthur shared his thoughts on Aldrian to accompany Pope Claudius in their evening conversation.

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Aldrian appeared in front of the inn and walked to his room. On the way, he checked on Sylphia and the others. They were still deeply engaged in their conversation, completely absorbed in their discussion, and it seemed unlikely to end anytime soon. Not wanting to disturb them, he quietly entered his room and sat on the cultivation mat.

He still had a few hours before morning, so he decided to spend the time cultivating his comprehension. Although he had just emerged from seclusion at the Shrine of the Beginning that morning, he felt it was better to make use of his time while Sylphia and the others were occupied.

A cultivator at his level didn't require much sleep unless experiencing extreme fatigue due to certain circumstances.

*"Tomorrow will be a beautiful day for her, and it's also the perfect time before I leave for the Atria Empire,"* he thought as his mind drifting to Angelica.

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Outside the walls of the Heavenly City stretched a vast, dense forest as far as the eye could see. Under the shadow of the night, two figures perched atop a tree, unmoving as

they silently observed the city's scenery. Though they kept their distance from each other, their focus remained the same, the city where Aldrian was located.

Many wild beasts, driven by curiosity, wanted to approach them, but their instincts screamed of danger, forcing them to stay away.

These two figures were the human forms of the Great Peng and the Golden Phoenix.

They had remained silent since their arrival, just as they had in Arbares City, where they had quietly waited for their master.

However, after what felt like an eternity of silence, the Great Peng finally decided to speak.

"So... what are you?"

*Chapter 376: Giving the Gift to Her*

The phoenix did not answer the great peng and remained silent. The great peng did not find this offensive, so he did not press further and continued to wait in silence.

"I don't know," the phoenix's voice finally broke the silence.

The great peng glanced in the phoenix's direction before turning his gaze back to the city.

"I also... do not know... who I am," he said.

Another silence followed before the great peng spoke again.

"Then... what are we?" he asked.

Hearing his question, the phoenix seemed to ponder. But then, she recalled the golden energy Aldrian had shown her—the energy that made her body and soul instinctively obey and worship him. She did not know why she reacted that way, but she followed her instincts and submitted before Aldrian.

"What do you... think... of Master?" She did not answer his question but asked him instead.

The great peng remained silent for a moment before answering.

"He is... Master... the absolute one," he blurted out without much thought. He simply spoke whatever came to his mind, and to him, that was the undeniable truth.

The phoenix's eyes widened slightly as she looked at the great peng.



"I... feel the same," she said.

The great peng glanced at the phoenix before turning his gaze back to the city.

"Master... the absolute one," he repeated.

After that, they remained silent for the rest of the night.

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When morning came, Aldrian opened his eyes. He was still in a meditative position inside his room. He inhaled and exhaled before spreading his senses throughout the entire inn.

He looked at Sylphia and the others and was stunned to see them already on the ground floor, seemingly enjoying food and drinks. They were still engaged in conversation, and he wondered what kind of discussion had kept them talking for so long.

However, he noticed that they seemed much closer to each other based on how they spoke. Sylphia and the others were also comfortably calling Angelica by her name. Their ages were not far apart after all, though separated by a hundred years, for cultivators that was not a significant gap, with Sylphia being the youngest.

Aldrian stood up and stretched before walking out of his room to meet them. It was time for him to return to the main church and give Angelica a gift!

"Hello, ladies. You look like you're having fun by yourselves. May I join you?" Aldrian asked as he reached their table, standing beside Sylphia.

"No, this is special for ladies only. Shoo, shoo, don't disturb us," Sylphia said, waving her hand as if trying to chase Aldrian away. The others just giggled at her reaction.

However, Aldrian simply smiled and suddenly grabbed Sylphia's hand, kissing it. She was so shocked that she instantly pulled her hand back.

"You..." Her face flushed as she hadn't expected Aldrian to tease her like that. But all she could do was watch him smile at her before turning his attention to the others.

"Ladies, I apologize for interrupting your happy time, but it looks like we have to go somewhere today. After what I discovered last night, it's best if we move as soon as possible."

He then sat down between the ladies and told them about what he had found and what they would be doing today.

After hearing about the events of the previous night, the ladies understood the situation and could only lament that their time here had come to an end. Sylphia and the others had only met Angelica yesterday, yet they had already shared many conversations and built a close bond. But now, they had to part ways again.

Sylphia, Eleine, and Baek Jimin looked at Angelica, feeling that it was a shame she couldn't follow them.

Sensing their reluctance, Angelica smiled at them.

"It's okay, we can still meet each other in the future. Young Master Aldrian has already become an inseparable figure in our church," she said despite her own reluctance. She also felt sad about having to part ways when there was still so much she wanted to discuss with Sylphia and the others. To be honest, she still wished to talk with them more—and even join their group on their adventures.

After hearing Sylphia and the others share their stories about their adventures with Aldrian and everything he had done outside, Angelica found herself longing for the same experience. She wanted to embark on an adventure and follow Aldrian. The warmth and sense of safety she felt whenever she was near him were things she did not want to forget or let go of.

*"If only my legs and eyes—"*

"Alright, ladies, I'll take Angelica back first. After that, we'll head to the Atria Empire," Aldrian's voice suddenly cut off Angelica's thoughts as he looked at her with a smile.

"However, don't be shocked when you see Angelica next time," he added.

All of them felt confused, but he seems not to intend to explain further. Instead, he moved behind Angelica's wheelchair and grabbed the handles.

Still smiling, he and Angelica suddenly vanished, teleporting away and leaving Sylphia and the others in confusion.

He seems to be in a hurry and excited?

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Aldrian and Angelica appeared right inside Angelica's bedroom, the first place in the church he had entered when he arrived at the main church more than a year ago. Although it had already been over a year since he came to this place, it felt like just yesterday due to his seclusion in the Shrine of the Beginning.

He pushed her wheelchair outside and headed toward the pope's working chamber, where he sensed that Pope Claudius was reviewing some documents.

When they finally arrived, the pope was momentarily stunned before smiling at their arrival.

"Ah, young Aldrian, you're already here," Pope Claudius said with a smile as he stood up from his seat. "How was it, my dear? Did you enjoy it when young Aldrian took you outside? Was there any trouble?" he asked Angelica.

She simply shook her head with a smile.

"No, Father, I really liked it. I made many friends and had so many wonderful conversations with them. They were all very kind to me. I'm grateful to Young Master for bringing me to meet them," she said.

Aldrian looked at her and then at the pope before finally speaking.

"Alright, since we're already here, I'll give Angelica her gift now."

The pope looked at Aldrian with curiosity, wondering what kind of gift he intended to give Angelica. Meanwhile, Angelica wore a confused expression. Aldrian hadn't mentioned anything about a gift earlier, and he hadn't brought up the topic at all since yesterday.

And now, all of a sudden, he wanted to give her a gift?

A sense of anticipation welled up inside her. After all, who wouldn't like to receive a gift?

"Angelica, can you close your eyes?" Aldrian asked.

Angelica's confusion deepened. She didn't understand why he would ask her to close her eyes when she couldn't see anything to begin with. Even if he pulled out the gift right in front of her eyes, it wouldn't make a difference. Still, she obeyed him and closed her eyes.

Pope Claudius was also puzzled by Aldrian's request, but then he saw Aldrian gently cover Angelica's eyes with his hands from behind.

Angelica was stunned—she hadn't expected him to touch her like this. She held herself still, feeling her face grow hot with shyness. But then, she felt something stirring within her eyes.

At that moment, Aldrian also closed his eyes, focusing entirely on the process he was about to attempt for the first time—the process of creation.

He would make it so Angelica could see and walk like a normal person.

Angelica felt a warmth spreading through her eyes, accompanied by a tingling sensation, as if tiny creatures were crawling within them. At first, she didn't understand what Aldrian was doing, but then something clicked in her mind, making her thoughts tremble.

*"Could he be trying to—"*

She didn't dare finish the thought. She didn't want to get her hopes up, only to be disappointed. She had long accepted that her condition was different from an illness, something even the pope couldn't fix. She knew better than anyone that her eyes and legs weren't like those of others—they couldn't simply be healed.

She had always believed her condition was a fate decreed by the heavens, a burden she had to bear as the Saintess in exchange for her ability to glimpse the secrets of the heavens.

But the strange sensation in her eyes, combined with Aldrian's words about giving her a gift, stirred something deep within her.

Could it be... that he was about to grant the very thing she had longed for all this time?

Pope Claudius also understood what Aldrian intended to do, and he couldn't help but feel his heart tremble as anticipation rose within him. He had already examined Angelica's condition before—her eyes and legs weren't something that could be healed. They had developed prematurely, missing essential muscles and nerves.

For her to see or walk, someone would have to create what was missing within her eyes and legs—an impossible feat for any mortal. Only a divine being could accomplish such a thing, and so he had resigned himself to lamenting Angelica's fate.

But now, watching Aldrian, he felt a sudden surge of hope.

Maybe... just maybe, he could actually do it.

No—he *would* do it.

*"Yes, he can do it! If anyone can fix Angelica's condition, it's him,"* Pope Claudius thought.

*"He is the prophesized one, after all. He is heaven's chosen one."*

*Chapter 377: A Problem?*

Aldrian focused his energy and infused it with his life laws. He was trying to recreate the internal structures of the body, such as muscles and nerves, with as much detail as

possible. The object of his creation was something he was familiar with—a human anatomy and its intricacies.

Throughout his journey, he had examined many bodies, allowing him to gain a thorough understanding of their structure.

His creation using life laws was based on what he already knew, down to the smallest cells and molecules. With his incredible senses, he could perceive all of the details, and in fact, all high-level cultivators could do the same. However, this was also the only limitation of his "creation" technique—he could not create something he was not familiar with.

If he pushed himself to create something beyond his knowledge, there were only two possible outcomes. Either the result would be imperfect and unlike the original, or he would fail to create it entirely.

Now, all he needed to do was use his life laws to recreate what he knew and guide the golden energy to carry out his will. Life energy and life laws merged with the golden energy, swirling within Angelica's eyes. She felt no discomfort—only a warm, ticklish sensation.

How could she not, when all of Aldrian's energy at this moment was pure positive energy or a yang-type energy?

Inside Angelica's eye sockets, at the most minuscule level, there were parts of her nerves that had never fully formed since birth. Now, under the bath of Aldrian's golden energy, a faint movement began at that microscopic level. Slowly, it became more visible to the naked eye, and finally, a new line of nerves started to take shape.

One, two, three—one after another, nerves formed, connecting her eyes to her brain. Although this was his first time performing such a feat, Aldrian was relieved that his theory and experiment had succeeded. Even though he had simulated the process countless times in his mind and believed he could fix Angelica's condition, he still feared disappointing her. Fortunately, everything worked just as he had envisioned.

He continued creating each part necessary for Angelica's eyes to see when he suddenly sensed something strange. He was already more than halfway through when he noticed an obstruction interfering with his restoration process.

Frowning, he tried to push forward with his "creation" technique, but the resistance grew stronger the closer he got to fully reconstructing Angelica's vision.

*"Don't tell me..."*

Aldrian maintained his focus and activated his karma laws. At last, he saw the problem—transparent black karma threads binding her eyes, extending into the void.

The threads were incredibly strong and he had encountered something similar before when he healed Pope Claudius.

*"A curse? How can there be a curse inside Angelica? Does that mean she was already cursed while still in her mother's womb? Or were her parents cursed, and the curse extended to her as well?"* he thought.

He kept pushing forward with his restoration, but soon, his "creation" technique came to a halt, and the process stopped entirely. Worse, the karma began to fight back, attempting to destroy what he had just created.

*"Whatever it is, or whoever is behind this—how dare they block my efforts to heal someone I've chosen to fix? Let's see if you can stop me!"*

With that, he channeled his church territory domain power into his body and energy. Angelica immediately sensed a shift in Aldrian's energy—it no longer felt purely warm and comforting. Instead, it had become overbearing, different from before.

The black karma threads began to slow down before finally stopping from destroying his creation. However, Aldrian still couldn't push his restoration process forward, leaving him astonished. The curse before him was incredibly resilient and powerful.

He then added the Doria Empire domain, which allowed him to push back the karma slightly, but he knew it wasn't enough.

One by one, he integrated the power of his domains until, at last, he unleashed his full domain. The entire heaven and earth within his domain merged with him, strengthening his power to suppress the curse. Finally, he could see the curse peeling away, little by little.

He continued until the threads covering Angelica's eyes completely disappeared, and his "creation" technique was able to proceed, unobstructed.

He sighed in relief inwardly, still astonished by the sheer strength of this curse—it was many times stronger than the one afflicting the pope. Fortunately, his domain was enough to erase it for now, but it made him wonder: who could have cast such a powerful curse on Angelica? He doubted that even a peak emperor-stage existence was capable of something like this.

*"Is it the devil lord again?"* He brushed the thought aside as he continued the process of creation.

After a few more minutes, he finally finished reconstructing Angelica's eyes. He carefully checked once more to ensure he hadn't missed anything. Once he was certain there was nothing wrong, he opened his eyes.

He let out a quiet sigh of relief and withdrew his hands from her closed eyes.

*"The moment of truth,"* he thought.

"Angelica, you can open your eyes now," he said.

Angelica's eyes trembled for a moment before she slowly opened them. At first, all she saw was blinding light, but it gradually receded, allowing her vision to clear. The first thing she saw was a person staring at her with a shocked expression.

Although she had never seen him directly before, she immediately knew who he was—Pope Claudius.

"Father?" Her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Angelica..." Pope Claudius's voice was also unsteady. He could immediately see the difference in her eyes. The pale color that once marked her blindness was gone, replaced by a pair of beautiful golden eyes.

He knew—without a doubt—she could finally see him. Her gaze was focused on him, no longer unfocused like before.

For Angelica, who could finally see for the first time, tears began to fall unknowingly before turning into a steady flow. She looked at her own hands and body, not bothering to wipe her eyes. Then, she turned her head to look back and finally saw a handsome young man.

He was smiling at her, and at this moment, his handsome face was dazzling in her eyes.

At last, she could see the person who had always given her a different feeling. He was the one who had appeared in her vision, the one heaven had shown her—the prophesized one. Even in her visions, she had never seen his face and only recognizing him through the description of his energy.

But now, for the first time, she could see him with her own eyes.

Aldrian moved to stand in front of her and knelt down. Her eyes never left him, following his every movement.

He kept his smile as he gently wiped the tears from her eyes, and she let him. She didn't care about anything else—she only wanted to keep looking at him, to engrave his face in her mind. Even though she knew he was in disguise from Sylphia and the others, she still wanted to remember this face.

"Don't cry. It will stain your beautiful face," Aldrian said softly.



Angelica didn't respond—she only gazed at him in silence. But Aldrian didn't mind.

Meanwhile, Pope Claudius was already in tears, wiping them away as he watched. He still couldn't believe it—Aldrian had truly fixed Angelica's condition.

If this wasn't a miracle, then what was?

"Excuse me, Angelica," he said as he slowly lifted the bottom of her dress to reveal her legs.

Angelica finally moved her hands, helping him hold up her dress so he could focus on fixing her condition.

Aldrian's gaze fell on her smooth, beautiful legs—legs that, unfortunately, could not walk. From the outside, they appeared perfectly normal, but beneath the surface, it was a different story. Key muscles and essential nerves that should have allowed her to feel and support her legs were missing.

Aldrian also saw the same curse that had afflicted her eyes, the same curse, woven deep within that attempting to block his creation technique.

He scoffed inwardly at this as he placed his hand on one of her legs.

He would fix them one by one, starting with her right leg.

This time, he would focus on each leg individually, allowing him to concentrate his domain's power more effectively and break the curse more quickly.

Just as he had done with her eyes, he injected his golden energy and combining it with his life laws. Although Angelica had never been able to feel her legs fully, she could sense warmth spreading through her right leg—something that should have been impossible due to her missing nerves.

A few seconds later, a tingling sensation coursed through her right leg, and with it, her tears flowed even more.

As time passed, she began to feel more of her right leg, and soon, it felt as though she could start to control its muscles.

However, just like with her eyes, the curse fought back fiercely once Aldrian had completed more than half of the process. But with the power of his domain, he successfully broke through it.

A few minutes later, he finally released his hand from her right leg and looked at her with a smile.

"Can you move your right foot?"

*Chapter 378: Thank You*

Angelica then moved her feet, trying various movements. She couldn't believe that her legs—something she had never been able to feel since birth—were now moving according to her will. Aldrian and Pope Claudius did not disturb her as she continued moving her feet, as if trying to absorb this new sensation.

Pope Claudius felt as if he could die happily at this moment. He had always considered Angelica his own daughter, and witnessing this miracle, he felt there was nothing that could make him happier. Lately, his life had been filled with one joyful event after another.

After finishing with her right leg, Aldrian moved on to her left. It didn't take as much time as when he restored her eyesight because he worked on one leg at a time, allowing his power to be more concentrated and effective in breaking the curse.

After more than a minute, he finally completed the reconstruction process and stopped. He stood up and looked at her with a smile. Her tears continued to fall as she felt the entirety of her legs for the first time.

After a minute of trying to move both feet, she gathered her courage and attempted to stand. She held onto the wheelchair for support, but Aldrian immediately stepped in, holding her so she wouldn't fall. It was her first time standing in her life, so she needed some assistance. Angelica didn't refuse his help and instead held onto his hands.

When she finally managed to stand, a new sensation washed over her. She felt like a little bird perched on the edge of a branch, ready to take flight for the first time. She tried to steady herself, and when she was finally able to stand on her own, Aldrian gently let go. She wobbled slightly but remained standing.

Through tear-stained eyes, she looked ahead where Pope Claudius stood, five meters away. She then glanced down at her feet and the floor before finally taking her first step—a step that would change her fate. As she moved forward, she struggled to steady her wobbly body, using her hands for support.

At this moment, she was like a toddler learning to walk for the first time. The little bird had begun flapping its wings, testing the wind, adjusting to the sensation of freedom.

A second step—her body was still unsteady, but she remained standing.

A third step, then a fourth... Though each movement was stiff and her strides remained small, she was finally walking on her own. The bird had leaped from the branch, soaring into the vast sky at last.

Angelica walked toward Pope Claudius, and when she finally reached him, he immediately took her hands and pulled her into a hug. At that moment, he couldn't hold back his tears—there had never been a happier moment in his life than this. For so long, he had lamented the fate of this child.

Though Angelica had been granted an ability bestowed directly by the heavens, it felt as if the heavens had taken something from her in return, as compensation for her gift. He had been powerless to change her circumstances, able only to support and comfort her so she wouldn't feel sorrow over the fate she had been given. But now, seeing her stand, walk, and see the world with her own eyes, a wave of relief unlike any he had ever known washed over him.

Angelica hugged Pope Claudius tightly, burying her face in his chest. Her sobs broke free, unable to be held back any longer. At last, she had done something she had always dreamed of.

She no longer felt envy toward those who could see the world around them. She no longer felt envy toward those who could walk freely wherever they wished.

Now, she could see with her own eyes. Now, she could walk on her own.

Aldrian watched the scene unfold, his expression touched. Yet, along with that emotion, he also felt relief and pride in himself. While his goal had been to help Angelica fulfill her dreams to give her the ability to walk and see again—this moment also served as a proving ground for him. With this, he was one step closer to becoming what many called a divine being.

Even though he now possessed the power of faith and the life laws, he still felt that he still lacked to truly reach divinity.

Aldrian sighed, yet his smile remained. His heart felt lighter as he watched Angelica, and with that, he knew it was finally time for him to leave.

"Your Holiness, Angelica, it looks like I have to go now," Aldrian said, his voice cutting through the moment. Both Angelica and Pope Claudius turned to look at him.

"I've done all I can here at the church, and I am truly grateful for everything the church has given me." He gave them a slight bow before straightening once more.

Angelica released her hands from the pope and took a step toward Aldrian. Though her steps were still slightly wobbly, they were much steadier than before. She kept walking until she stood right in front of him, gazing up at him with glistening eyes, still watery from her tears.

She stared at Aldrian's handsome face, but for some reason, she suddenly felt as if she were seeing another figure overlapping with his.

This figure appeared even more dazzling, with long, radiant red hair.

"Can I see your real face?" she asked without hesitation.

Her beautiful golden eyes locked onto his blue ones, her steady gaze softening his heart as if she had cast a spell on him. He still didn't understand why Angelica affected him so much—but he didn't mind it.

Without a word, Aldrian dispelled his disguise technique, revealing his true appearance to Angelica and Pope Claudius. Their eyes widened slightly as they took in his real face.

An unblemished, strikingly handsome face. Long, red hair that burned like flames. Sharp eyes that seemed to see through everything.

The moment they saw his true face, they could feel the difference in his presence. His bearing and aura felt completely transformed—like a monarch destined for greatness. There was no doubt in their hearts. He was the prophesized one.

*"Truly the best of the Flamecrest and Rivas bloodlines combined. He resembles his parents, yet shines even brighter,"* Pope Claudius thought.

Angelica smiled at him.

"I feel like the world is missing out if you keep hiding your face," she said, a slight blush coloring her cheeks.

"I will let the entire world see this face when the time comes," Aldrian said with a smile.

However, he was stunned when Angelica suddenly hugged him—something he hadn't expected. Even Pope Claudius widened his eyes slightly before smiling.

"Thank the heavens that you were the one who came. You are the chosen one."

"Thank you for everything you did for my father and me."

"Thank you for giving me my own wings so I can fly on my own."

Aldrian smiled at her and let her hold him for as long as she wanted. Although he felt a bit awkward and unsure of how to respond, he gently patted her back, acknowledging her heartfelt words.

After a minute, Angelica finally released her embrace. Only then did she seem to realize what she had just done. A deep blush spread across her face, and she quickly lowered her head as much as possible, as if trying to hide from Aldrian's gaze.

Aldrian smiled, finding her reaction adorable.

"Now, I believe there are many things you want to do now that you can see and walk, so I won't take up any more of your time," he said to Angelica before turning to Pope Claudius.

"Take care, Your Holiness. I will make sure to bring that traitor to you."

"Yes, you too. Be careful."

Aldrian nodded, then looked at Angelica one last time.

"You take care as well."

With that, he vanished from the room.

Pope Claudius let out a sigh as he watched Aldrian disappear, then turned to Angelica.

"Truly an extraordinary young man... Everything about him exudes greatness. At times, I wonder if he is even human like us. He is simply too perfect."

Angelica didn't respond to Pope Claudius at first, her gaze still fixed on the spot where Aldrian had stood. After a moment, she finally turned to the pope.

"Father, teach me how to fight—or at least how to defend myself when needed."

Pope Claudius widened his eyes, surprised. Of all the things she could have asked for after gaining her sight and mobility, he hadn't expected this.

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Aldrian appeared near the inn and began walking toward it. As he moved, he focused his intent, attempting to connect himself to the heavens.

*"Are you the one who placed that curse on Angelica?"* he sent his thoughts outward.

When he reconstructed Angelica's eyes and legs, he had sensed something familiar in the curse—something similar to what he had felt when healing Pope Claudius. However, there was a distinct difference. This presence was much stronger, far more complex, and carried a slightly different energy.

He didn't know exactly whose power it was, but one thing was certain—it wasn't from this continent. Within the curse, he could also sense a faint trace of different divine energy from what he had encountered before in the Doria empire.

That was why he suspected that the heavens themselves might have played a role in this.

The heavens, sensing the displeasure in Aldrian's tone, attempted to send their intent to him, not wanting to be misunderstood.

Receiving the response, Aldrian frowned.

*"Not you? Then who is it?"*

However, the heavens fell silent, ceasing all communication. Aldrian's frown deepened, but he decided to set the matter aside for now. At the very least, he now knew that the heavens were not responsible for what happened to Angelica.

Even though it wasn't directly his doing, he didn't know why, but he felt deeply sorry for her—almost as if he were apologizing on behalf of the heavens for what had been done to her.

He sighed, pushing those thoughts away, and moved on to the next topic.

*"As the heavens, you must know all things, right? Then tell me—where is that traitor? What is the exact location of Cardinal Carsius?"*

*Chapter 379: To Caritas City*

The heavens replied to Aldrian, making him raise his eyebrows.

*"What do you mean you know but at the same time don't know?"*

Aldrian wanted to pull his hair in frustration, he couldn't truly understand the true meaning of the heavens' intent. He sighed and kept focusing on the heavens as they had yet to finish.

*"Obstructed, losing control? Something is disturbing you?"* Aldrian raised his eyebrows.

Something that even affects the heavens? Does that mean they are under some kind of influence and aren't in their proper state? He continued to focus on the heavens' intent.

*"In... my... domain. Ah, you mean that only inside my domain do you regain full control of yourself, without any obstruction?"*

He finally understood something and stopped walking toward the inn.

*"Wait, the loss of purity in the church's holy energy, the heavens, my domain, my power..."* Aldrian felt as if he was touching upon one of the truth about his domain's power.

*"After the church came under my domain, the holy energy from the heavens was restored—and even became stronger. I myself am connected to the heavens and have strong karma with them. The heavens said they only have full control when they are inside my domain."*

*"Why am I at my most powerful state within my domain? Why can I do things more easily than outside of it? Is it because whatever is obstructing the heavens beyond my domain is also indirectly obstructing me?"*

He felt the fluctuation of intent from the heavens, but he did not know what it meant. However, he couldn't stop thinking about this matter. If what he thought was true—if someone or something was affecting even the way the heavens operated—then didn't that mean his domain was the one negating whatever was interfering with them?

Didn't that mean he was restoring the heavens to order? Yet, inside his domain, the heavens seemed to favor him, treading carefully around him. He could even say, with a touch of arrogance, that the heavens were submissive to him.

The heavens' intent called him 'Your Majesty,' and praising all his glorious titles, the same ones spoken by many of the people in his visions.

Aldrian continued walking while lost in thought. Didn't that mean that, within his domain, he was essentially the heavens' monarch? He only smiled at the idea.

When he thought about it, he found the idea not so bad, it was just another title after all. He had already been called many names, like 'The Absolute One' and 'The Absolute Ruler.'

If his domain was what restored the heavens' control, then he would gladly continue expanding it. It aligned with his pursuit of strength, after all.

*"Truly, my mind and character have become more arrogant since I met that man,"* Aldrian thought to himself.

Meeting that figure and cultivating for so long inside the Shrine of the Beginning had truly changed his mindset. More and more, he felt like a higher being, one who soared above and viewed all others from a greater height.

Aldrian arrived at the inn not long after. Even before he stepped onto the second floor, he could already see that his group was ready. They seemed to have been waiting for him, which made him smile.

"Let's go to our next destination," he said.



They all smiled in response before setting off toward the nearest teleportation station. After more than a year, they were finally about to embark on a new journey into new territory once again.

Upon arriving at the teleportation station and stating their destination, the station operator paused and looked at them for a moment.

"You'd better be careful. Caritas City is under Baroness Charoline, and she belongs to the faction opposing the second prince," the operator warned. "I heard that Caritas has already fallen under the second prince's faction and is now under martial law. Everyone must obey their arrangements."

"Is the situation that dire for those opposing the second prince?" Aldrian asked.

"I've heard that some noble families have already fallen to ruin. Many travelers from Atria empire say the same. As for Baroness Charoline, she's at her wit's end—only a small part of her territory and army remain in Weimar City."

"Alright, thank you for the warning," Aldrian said.

While waiting for their number to be called, Aldrian connected himself to the Great Peng and the Phoenix outside the Heavenly City.

*"You two, the Pope already knows about your existence and will come to meet you. He has his own arrangements for you until I return, so you'd better behave until then,"*

he sent a voice transmission.

"Yes, Master," the two of them responded.

Once Aldrian's group was called, they wasted no time stepping into the teleportation portal, leaving the territory of the Heavenly Direction Church.

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As Aldrian's group stepped out of the teleportation portal, the sight before them was unlike anything they had seen before upon arriving in a city through the teleportation portal.

Destruction was everywhere, the streets were quiet. Few people could be seen, and there was barely any sign of daily activity. Soldiers patrolled the area, moving back and forth. It truly felt like a city that had just experienced a great war.

They were immediately met by a checkpoint, where soldiers were already waiting for those arriving through the portal. Every traveler was thoroughly inspected before being

issued a clearance token, allowing them to roam the city—though always under the watchful eyes of the guards.

When it was finally Aldrian's turn, the soldier responsible for taking notes glanced at him for a moment. He could immediately sense the powerful aura of a Duke-stage cultivator emanating from Aldrian, placing him among the upper strata of cultivators on the continent. Aldrian himself deliberately did not hide his aura, allowing others to sense it.

Realizing this, the soldier subtly adjusted his posture, not wanting to appear disrespectful.

"Your name, sir..." the soldier asked.

"Aldrian."

"Purpose of your visit?"

"Looking for someone."

The soldier paused for a moment before looking at Aldrian again.

"May I ask who you are looking for?"

"A traitor," Aldrian replied without hesitation.

The soldier was momentarily stunned but quickly composed himself, writing down what he had heard. After a few more questions, Aldrian received his token. The rest of his group went through a similar process, answering nearly identical questions before they, too, were given the same token.

With their clearances secured, Aldrian led the group out of the plaza.

Once their silhouettes had faded into the distance, the soldier who had processed them took out a communication artifact and sent a voice transmission.

"A suspicious group has arrived. They're looking for a 'traitor'... Yes... They just arrived... Understood, Commander."

After ending the transmission, he kept his gaze fixed on Aldrian's retreating figure until it disappeared between the buildings. Then, he returned to his duties.

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After they had walked a fair distance from the teleportation station, Aldrian glanced at Sylphia and the others.

"It looks like we've already found a clue, even though we just arrived," he said.

Sylphia tilted her head. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"The soldier who gave us the tokens—he seems to know something about the 'traitor.'"

"How do you know?"

Aldrian smirked. "It's a secret."

Sylphia pouted, but Aldrian simply smiled, letting her show her cute expression.

Of course, he knew the reason. When he had answered the soldier's question with "traitor," he had sensed the reaction from the soldier's heart—his heartbeat had skipped for a brief moment, as if he had heard something important enough to take note of. The way the soldier looked at him, as if trying to engrave his face into memory, was another sign.

That kind of reaction wasn't normal for someone whose job was merely to take notes and distribute tokens.

There were a few possible explanations, but the most likely one was—

*"That soldier was already ordered to take note of anyone suspicious who seemed to be looking for someone."*

Why had the soldier been ordered to take note of anyone looking for someone—especially when the word "traitor" had clearly triggered a reaction? Aldrian had a theory, but he needed more proof before he could be certain. Fortunately, he had an easy way to test it.

"Let's head to the church branch in this city," Aldrian said. "We'll stop by for a moment before gathering information elsewhere."

Not long after, he finally sensed several presences trailing behind his group. Xin Haotian noticed them as well. The figures trailing them hid themselves among the surrounding buildings since there weren't many people on the streets.

If they simply followed from a distance, they would appear inconspicuous.

However, Aldrian and Xin Haotian quickly saw through their act. Their movements followed a distinct pattern, and their line of sight repeatedly drifted toward Aldrian's group—clear signs that they were being watched.

After asking a passersby for directions, Aldrian finally found the way to the church branch and headed there. Under the watchful eyes of their stalkers, his group appeared oblivious, strolling leisurely and casually observing their surroundings.

After taking a few turns, Aldrian finally spotted the church branch in the city.

This was a bait, a way to confirm whether his suspicions were

No data found.

### *Chapter 380: The Only Customers*

Aldrian and the others entered the church, where they were immediately greeted by a priest. Given the tense situation, the church had to ensure its safety, so a priest stepped forward to offer his assistance.

"May I know the purpose of your visit?" the priest asked.

"We simply wish to pray for a safe journey. We have business in this empire, and with the current state of affairs, we hope the heavens will grant us their grace and protection," Aldrian said.

The priest nodded, but he still found it strange as he looked at Aldrian's group. Among them was an elf, which was unusual. According to common knowledge, elves worship the Heavenly Tree of the world directly and using the World Tree as their medium to receive its blessings. So why had they brought an elf to the Heavenly Direction Church?

"The heavens hear each of our prayers. You may pray as much as you like—have faith, and you will be blessed," the priest said.

"Thank you, Father," Aldrian replied before he and the others took their seats in the nave.

At the far end of the nave stood the church's symbol, depicting the heavens. Aldrian gazed at it for a moment. Though different, it still bore some resemblance to the symbol of the absolute ruler—the symbol of his power.

"My dear, you didn't come to the church just to pray to the heavens, did you? What are you planning?" Sylphia whispered to Aldrian. The others also looked at him curiously, eager to know what he had in mind.

Aldrian smiled at her. "Like I said earlier, that soldier who recorded the arrival of travelers at the teleportation station seemed to know something about the traitor. Visiting the church is just a bait to confirm whether the traitor is Cardinal Carsius and not someone else. Think about it—what would they assume if I visited the church with all those eyes watching us?"

Xin Haotian smiled and closed his eyes.

"I see. You're trying to make them believe that we were sent by the main church to hunt for a traitor. If they really are involved, we can expect them to take action against us. But if they ignore us, then it might just be a misunderstanding," he said.

"Exactly! Wow, it's not like normal you to have such a quick and sharp mind," Aldrian said.

Xin Haotian ignored him and kept his eyes closed, unwilling to entertain Aldrian's joke. Sylphia and the others finally understood the true purpose behind this visit and nodded to themselves. This was the most effective way to ensure that neither side misunderstood the other and to confirm whether their suspicions were correct.

After a few minutes of sitting inside the church, Aldrian finally stood up.

"Let's go. I think this is enough to make them believe we were sent by the church. Now, we wait and see whether they take action or not."

They left the church and continued walking without any particular direction. Roaming the city, they observed the situation, occasionally stopping to ask passersby about certain places before moving on. Their actions were no different from those of travelers sightseeing in a foreign city.

However, given the current state of the city, their behavior seemed unusual and suspicious. They were even stopped by patrolling soldiers a few times because of it. But that was exactly what Aldrian wanted—to leave a stronger impression on those tailing them, making it appear as if they were searching for someone.

Aldrian continued this act until noon before leading the group to a restaurant. It was the only one still open despite the destruction the city had suffered. The owner seemed unfazed by the war and kept the place running, and Aldrian's group were the only customers to step inside.

A waiter approached them to take their order after they settled at their table.

"Sir, are you travelers from outside the empire?" the waiter suddenly asked Aldrian after noting down their orders.

"Yes, I am. Is there something wrong?"

"No, sir, it's just... I wanted to warn you to be careful of the second prince's faction. This territory used to belong to the Weimar Barony, a noble family that opposed the second prince. Because of that, many people here have

suffered persecution from his faction. Countless individuals have been falsely accused of hiding rebels or harboring rebellious intent—and executed because of it," the waiter whispered.

"Is that so? A truly terrible situation. Then why is this restaurant still open despite all of this?"

"That is because—"

"That is because this is my pride."

A deep voice interrupted them. Aldrian turned to see an old man emerging from the back kitchen, walking toward them.

An old man with a white beard, white hair, and a white chef's attire stood before them. From his presence alone, he seemed like a highly experienced cook.

"I have never closed this restaurant since the day it was founded, and I won't close it now, no matter the situation," the old man said as he stepped behind the waiter.

"Bring them our best drink first," he instructed.

The waiter immediately responded with a nod and excused himself.

"I'll give you those drinks for free," the old man continued. "Consider it a gift for being the first customers in days since those bastards arrived."

Aldrian tilted his head.

"You don't seem afraid of the soldiers from the second prince's faction at all."

"Why would I be afraid? This is my place, my territory, and I'm free to say whatever I want. They came here, destroying this city and the lives within it—why should I be polite to them? If they come for me and kill me, then so be it. I will only lament that as the end of my life and fate," the old man said in an irritated tone.

"Ah, where are my manners? I was just so happy to finally have customers that I started talking without introducing myself. You can call me York," the old man added.

"I'm Aldrian."

"I heard you came from outside the empire. Given the empire's current state, it's rare for outsiders to visit this city. If you've come all this way, it must be for something important," York said.

"Yes, it is. We're looking for someone."

"Someone?"

"Yes—"

Before Aldrian could finish his sentence, the waiter returned with their drinks, placing them on the table before excusing himself. Aldrian glanced at him, then smiled at York.

"You have a loyal employee, Sir York."

"Ahahaha, yes, he is truly loyal to me. Even after all the other employees resigned due to the current situation, he was the only one who stayed. Maybe it's because I gave him a job when he had nothing and was starving."

Aldrian took a sip of the drink, savoring the sweet and refreshing taste on his tongue. His eyes widened slightly as he glanced at the golden-yellow liquid.

"This is really good, Sir York," Aldrian praised.

"Isn't it? This is my restaurant's specialty—a drink made from the essence of golden-winged bee honey, mixed with spiritual herbs to enhance its refreshing effect."

Aldrian closed his eyes, taking another sip as he immersed himself in the flavor. When he slowly opened them again, he noticed old man York frowning as he stared toward the restaurant entrance.

Not long after, a group of people entered the restaurant. They were clad in armor, each bearing the emblem of a noble family, with red capes draped over their backs. However, one man stood out, he was not wearing armor but instead dressed in noble attire.

The man exuded the aura of a Duke-stage cultivator, while the twelve knights behind him radiated Duke and Grand Duke-stage cultivation.

He was a young-looking man with black hair, quite handsome at first glance. However, despite his good looks and the charm he exuded, Aldrian already had the urge to punch him. There was just something about his face that felt incredibly punchable.

As the group entered, the young man in noble attire glanced in Aldrian's direction. At first, his gaze fell on the old man York, before shifting to Aldrian and the rest of the group. However, when his eyes landed on Sylphia, they widened as if he had just seen something precious. Without hesitation, he began walking toward them.

*"This is bad. That man is the young master of the Xadian family, one of the noble houses supporting the second prince. It seems he's taken an interest in*



*your group. I'll try to hold them off while you escape.*" Old man York's voice echoed in Aldrian's mind through a voice transmission.

*"What about you? You'll put yourself in danger if you against them,"* Aldrian responded.

*"My customers come first. Besides, you're the first customers I've had in days, so I consider you special,"* Old man York replied.

Hearing York's response, Aldrian smiled and turned his gaze toward the approaching group.

*"You don't have to worry about us, Sir York,"* he said, his smile suddenly taking on an eerie chill.

*"Because I've been waiting for them."*

Sylphia and the others, upon seeing that seemingly harmless, handsome smile, felt a shiver run down their spines. They knew all too well—there was no way that smile wasn't dangerous.

For anyone who became Aldrian's target, it was always a very, very bad sign.