

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 401: Planning Another Trick - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 401: Planning Another Trick

Chapter 401: Planning Another Trick

The others turned their heads toward Wilmar and remained silent as they awaited his decision.

"I have decided to hold our operation on the eastern side and withdraw any troops stationed there. We will temporarily abandon the eastern region of the empire and consolidate our forces from the rest of the empire after they successfully subdue the remaining rebels. It is better for us to focus on suppressing the rebels first; only then can we consider a solution, even if it means confronting that man," he said, a flash in his eyes.

After thinking it over, he might have a chance to face that man if they gathered their troops and devised a proper strategy. He wouldn't have to sacrifice many soldiers if they could set a trap to lure that man in.

The first step he needed to take was to eliminate the rebellion on the other side of the empire, as long as it didn't encroach on that man's territory.

The only thing that still worried him was how much that man would involve himself in the civil war. What if he was truly supporting the rebels? What if he didn't allow him to eliminate them? He could simply cross to the other side of the empire and slaughter his army—that would be disastrous!

However, he did not have many choices. In the end, he was still reluctant to hand Cardinal Carsius over to that man. If Cardinal Carsius revealed his connection to the devils, he would be as good as dead, given that swordsman's reputation for killing devils and anything related to them.

For him, this was the best choice for now, even if it was a gamble. His only hope was to swiftly eliminate the rebels on the other side of the empire and then shift his focus back to that man. In his mind, this plan had a much higher chance of ensuring his survival.

Hearing their emperor's decision, most of them wore nervous expressions. It was merely postponing the inevitable confrontation, and they still hadn't found a direct solution. However, they also agreed that eliminating the rebels as quickly as possible would be a significant advantage before they had to face that man.

"Your Majesty, may I suggest something?" a voice suddenly rang out. Everyone immediately recognized it as the voice of Grand Duke Donovan.

Grand Duke Donovan was one of the empire's grand dukes and ruled a territory in the north. Having successfully subdued the rebellion in his domain, he had come to the imperial palace upon hearing the news and to report directly to second prince about his victory.

Wilmar looked at the middle-aged man with a burnt battle scar on his face. He was one of the most important nobles supporting him. Wilmar appreciated the man's quick thinking and experience, both of which had helped him make crucial decisions.

"What is it, Grand Duke Donovan?" he asked.

"I just want to add that Your Majesty's decision to retreat from the eastern front is a wise one, as we don't want to suffer another major loss. Given that man's temperament that always seems to keep his word—he has a habit of following through on every warning he gives, according to the testimonies we've heard." Grand Duke Donovan said.

"From what we understand, that mysterious swordsman or rather, that young man is looking for Cardinal Carsius, correct? We could lure him onto our turf and trap him to the point where he's completely powerless. "

Wilmar frowned at the suggestion.

"That is a good idea, but it's easier said than done. With his tremendous power, I don't think trapping him will be easy," he said.

"We can use the same artifact we used on the late Emperor Tacson to trap him. As Your Majesty said, that artifact could even affect a peak Emperor Stage cultivator, right? Then we can use it against that man. No matter how strong he is, there's no way he surpasses a peak Emperor Stage cultivator."

Wilmar slightly raised his eyebrows but still found the suggestion lacking. He shook his head.

"How do we ask someone we tried to kill to come to the imperial palace? I don't think he's foolish enough to just walk in because we say, 'we will hand over the traitor.' The moment he hears he has to travel here, he'll immediately suspect it's a trap prepared for him," he replied.

"Besides, that artifact can't be used for another month, and I'm afraid that by then, he might do something detrimental to us. If he wants to, he could help the rebels win this civil war."

"That is true. However, what if we persuade him using one of the imperial family's artifacts? For someone of his caliber, we need a significant bait to lure him in. We can offer it to him first as a show of goodwill and then invite him here to receive additional compensation. We will present ourselves as regretful of our past actions and intent on repairing our relationship with him," Grand Duke Donovan said.

"As for the time we need before we can use the artifact again, we can keep him occupied until then. We still have two weeks until next month, and I have an idea to delay him. We can manipulate those trying to move toward Caritas or the Weilmар Barony, using a plague to divert his attention and prevent him from attacking our forces elsewhere."

"Plague?" Wilmar was momentarily confused before his eyes widened.

"I see, I see. That is quite a good plan, Grand Duke Donovan! Although I didn't want to resort to 'that,' with that man's appearance, I believe there is no other way. Well done! I will greatly reward you once all of this is over," he said, his expression appreciative.

"Thank you for your generosity, Your Majesty. I merely did what I could to assist you," Grand Duke Donovan replied with a slight bow.

The others who overheard their conversation still didn't fully understand the details of Grand Duke Donovan's plan. However, they chose to go along with it, admiring his brilliant mind and beginning to offer their congratulations and praise.

Wilmar sighed as he finally found another way to handle the situation. With the new plan taking shape in his mind, he could execute it immediately. He grinned at the thought, what they were about to do could also be detrimental to his own faction, but he had no other choice. It was the only way he could think of to buy time until they could use the artifact again.

"Let's see if you can still run rampant in my territory after this."

The sun had already begun to sink toward the western horizon, but Aldrian and Baek Jimin were still in Weilmар. Right now, they sat atop a hill outside the city, where they could see its sprawling streets and buildings. The large city stretched before them, bathed in the golden hues of dusk. The serene atmosphere, combined with the gentle breeze refreshing their spirits, made them reluctant to leave.

They had come here after spending hours strolling through the city, enjoying the various entertainments Weilmар had to offer. Although this city was not as large as those capital city within the grand duchy or the empire's capital, it still provided many new experiences such as local food and drink, beautiful scenery, and unique specialties.

Without realizing it, they had already spent hours together, and now the sun was about to set. To end their day, Aldrian had decided to bring Baek Jimin here. Although today's activities wasn't part of his promise to take her on vacation, he still wanted to give her a memorable experience.

They sat in silence, watching the sunset over the vast city below. Yet, the silence was not awkward, it was filled with tranquility and quiet enjoyment.

Baek Jimin reflected on the day's events with Aldrian. Whenever she was by his side, she felt safe, and the negative emotions weighing on her seemed to fade. Ever since the incident with the Envy Devil, a lingering sense of envy had been buried deep within her heart.

An envy directed toward Sylphia because she could spend more time with Aldrian. Envy that Sylphia had met him earlier than she had. Envy that they could openly express their love for each other, something Baek Jimin hadn't thought about seriously until she saw them acting lovey-dovey.

At the time, she had always considered Aldrian a friend, she interested in him because of his unique being's essence. But if that was truly all it was, then why did she feel envious when she saw him in love with another woman? Why did being by his side feel so different—so comforting? She even found herself wishing that time would slow down whenever she was with him.

Baek Jimin thought about it carefully and came to a conclusion that made her heart pound erratically. She didn't want to admit it, but she had no choice, this was a new feeling, one she had never experienced before.

She stole a glance at Aldrian's side profile, which, at this moment, looked unbelievably handsome in her eyes. Her face flushed deep red, and she quickly lowered her head.

"Is this what they call love? Is this what it feels like to be in love?"

Chapter 402: Their Feeling

Love—

A feeling that bonds two people, a force that transcends time and space. For the first time in her life, she felt this way, and the mist that had long shrouded her heart slowly dissipated. What she experienced was a blossoming sensation, one she wished to embrace. It was the feeling of looking at a man in a way she had never looked at anyone before.

As a child, she witnessed the deep bond between her father and mother—how they supported each other, how they remained true to themselves even among demonic

cultivators. In a world where betrayal was commonplace and trust was a luxury, her parents stood apart. They were able to rely on each other.

However, once her father went missing, her mother became a different person. She lost her affectionate side and grew cold and indifferent, resembling most demonic cultivators. She didn't know what had happened to her father, but his disappearance deeply affected both her mother and her own life.

Over time, she, too, became more aloof and indifferent toward others. Added to that, having no true friends after comprehending the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, her heart hardened, becoming unyielding to anyone. As compassion and affection gradually eroded, her sole focus became growing stronger and escaping the situation that had trapped her.

However, when she looked at Aldrian for the first time back then, she felt something different. She saw something intriguing, something almost mind-boggling. It was the first time in her life that she had witnessed such a thing within someone being's essence. She knew he was special, and from that moment on, she felt drawn to him. Yet, she convinced herself that it was only because of his unique being's essence.

When she finally left the demon territory and stepped into the much wider world alongside him, she experienced many new things and even gained friends. Friends she could truly call genuine because she had seen their being's essences as well.

Sylphia, Eleine, Xin Haotian—everyone around Aldrian had simple, untainted minds, with nothing ominous hidden beneath the surface. They were all good people who either followed Aldrian wherever he went or supported him on his journey.

Along the journey, she watched how Aldrian acted, how he communicated with others, and how he built relationships. As time passed, she became more impressed by him and felt increasingly comfortable by his side. At some point, she began to feel differently toward him—her attraction to him growing stronger with each passing day.

A feeling of envy also started to surface when she saw how effortlessly he interacted with Sylphia. The way they spoke with ease, their natural intimacy, the way they joked around—she found herself wanting to experience the same connection Sylphia had with him.

When the Envy Devil attacked them in the Doria Empire, she was caught within the effects of his domain for some time, and during that moment, her envy spiraled out of control. A dark desire even surfaced, the urge to kill Sylphia so she would never have to see or feel such things again.

Even after the Envy Devil was killed, its lingering effects remained deep within her heart. She could only suppress them as much as possible, refusing to let her envy

consume her. She believed she had succeeded—until she saw Aldrian and Sylphia become true lovers.

Something inside her heart felt like it was about to explode, yet she tried to hold it back. The envy began to rebel once more. She had suppressed it for so long, but watching their interactions as lovers made her heart ache with jealousy.

However, Sylphia was her friend, and she genuinely wanted to see her happy. So she kept burying those feelings deep within her. But even then, a part of her still longed for that happiness.

She wanted to experience that feeling. She wanted to talk to Aldrian the way Sylphia did, to interact with him the same way. But then, not long ago, a thought struck her—one that made her question everything.

Why did she feel this way toward Aldrian? Why did she feel this way toward Sylphia? Why did she want to experience what Sylphia felt? Why did she long to be by Aldrian's side?

That was when she realized she might have already taken a step she hadn't noticed for a long time—one she was only now becoming aware of. Perhaps her feelings for Aldrian were more than just friendship. That would explain the intense envy she felt toward Sylphia and the deep comfort she found in Aldrian's presence.

Sylphia often talked about him, but not long ago, they had a conversation that left her feeling strange. Sylphia seemed to be giving her hints—encouraging her to spend more time with Aldrian and talk to him more to strengthen their bond. It felt odd coming from a woman who appeared to love her man so deeply.

Yet, deep in her heart, she was grateful for Sylphia's words. It reassured her that she wouldn't have to feel guilty if she spent time with Aldrian in the future.

Today was the day, and she felt something she had never experienced before. Butterflies fluttered inside her heart and stomach, filling her with happiness. The envy that had once clouded her heart had finally dissipated, replaced by the warmth of being by his side. He truly cared for her, accommodating her every wish.

This was the most beautiful day of her life—a moment so precious that she wished time would stop so she could savor it forever. And in that moment, she finally understood.

Her feelings for Aldrian went beyond ordinary friendship. The envy, the jealousy—she now knew the reason behind it all.

She had fallen in love with him.

Unknowingly, the karma thread that connected her to Aldrian, once blue with many tainted red, slowly turned completely red. The transformation was rapid, visible to the naked eye if Aldrian were to activate his karma laws.

She lifted her head after her brief moment of shyness and stole another glance at Aldrian. Her eyes shimmered as she admired his side profile.

"Do you like looking at my face that much?"

His voice suddenly broke her daze, making her snap back to reality. Her face turned an even deeper shade of red as she quickly looked straight ahead.

"Who... who likes looking at your face? No, I—" Her voice trailed off, growing smaller until she finally buried her face in her knees.

Aldrian smiled at her reaction as he glanced at the beautiful girl beside him. Although he hadn't yet developed romantic feelings for her, he already felt comfortable in her presence, without any awkwardness when it was just the two of them. Thanks to today's time together, he felt even closer to her.

This was only the beginning—they still had plenty of time in the future to find the conclusion of their relationship.

The sun had almost fully sunk below the horizon, and the sky on the opposite side had already darkened, scattered with countless shimmering stars.

Aldrian stood up from his seat, dusted off his butt, and looked at Baek Jimin.

"Let's go back," he said with a smile, extending his hand toward her.

She looked at Aldrian's smiling face, then at his outstretched hand. A soft smile formed on her lips before she took his hand and stood up beside him.

Not long after, they disappeared from that place, leaving behind the memory of their first sunset together.

Back at Caritas, Sylphia stood on the balcony of Aldrian's bedroom. His room was on the second floor, and ever since they had become lovers, they had shared the same room. She gazed at the sunken sunset, a faint smile on her lips.

"What are they doing right now? Is she enjoying today's chance?"

She truly wondered if today had helped bring them closer.

Truthfully, this kind of thinking was far from common—especially for an elf. As a race with immense pride, elves, particularly female elves, were highly protective of their partners and would never consider encouraging them to grow closer to another woman. That was why, throughout elven history, only a very small number of elves had ever been part of a harem.

The elves who accepted being part of a harem did so only because they were able to set aside their pride and truly loved their partners enough to allow them to have another woman. No man could ever force an elven partner into such an arrangement—if pressured, an elf would rather oppose him, even at the cost of their own life.

For Sylphia, it was even more difficult. As a noble and more importantly, a princess of a great empire, she had been raised with an unshakable sense of pride. Her upbringing dictated that if she were to have a partner in the future, it would have to be only one man, of the same race, who would have her as his only woman.

However, with the appearance of Aldrian, all of that changed. Her heart belonged entirely to him, and if he were to ask her to sacrifice herself, she would do so without hesitation.

She knew that her parents supported her, this was something she realized after reflecting on it following her confession of love for Aldrian. After all, her parents never have allowed her to journey alongside him in the first place if they hadn't held some hope for her future with him.

She believed that their decision to let her go was a silent approval of her romantic relationship with Aldrian.

The prophesized figure of the elven race and a powerful cultivator, who wouldn't want such a person? Her parents must have thought the same. Even if it meant breaking the long-standing tradition of marrying only within their race, they had already accepted Aldrian as part of their family.

Sylphia then looked up at the sky, now dark and adorned with countless shimmering stars, making it even more breathtaking. Her gaze lingered on the vast expanse, her eyes reflecting the starlight.

"The brightest star is always the most captivating,"

All she needed to do was stay by that star's side and continue accompanying it—forever.

Chapter 403: The Arrival of Thunderous Shadows Pavilion

On the next day, at the western entrance of Caritas City, a group of ten figures stood silently, observing the bustling activities of the people. They did not speak, only turning their heads occasionally to glance at the passersby.

Their gazes then shifted into the distance, where the remains of destroyed flying fortresses lay scattered. Many corpses were being tended to by volunteers, while others searched for treasures among the wreckage.

With such a large army, there must have been many valuable artifacts, and the people were trying to scavenge whatever they could. When some representatives of the populace attempted to meet with Aldrian to ask what should be done with the area where the flying fortresses had fallen, they instead met a female elf.

The female elf, who seemed to be part of the same group as their city lord, permitted them to take anything they could find from the remains at the site.

To Sylphia, she knew that nothing in that area would interest Aldrian, if there had been anything valuable to him, he would have taken it long before.

Since then, many people had gathered at the site, searching for any valuable items they could find. Their efforts were not in vain, as the massive army of the Second Prince had been laden with treasures. Even the armor worn by the troops was considered an artifact, ranging from earth-grade at the lowest to heaven-grade. For most, such an opportunity was impossible to pass up.

An old man, who appeared to be the leader of the group, looked at the scene speechlessly. He knew exactly what kind of debris lay in that area—it was the wreckage of a flying fortress. From the looks of it, there was more than one, and judging by the sheer number of corpses being gathered, tens of thousands had perished.

At this moment, he finally understood that the Second Prince had already sent his troops here. However, it seemed they had been annihilated before they could even reach the city.

The old man then stopped a passerby who was also heading toward the wreckage.

"Excuse me, young man, but what happened here? Did the Second Prince attack the city? Why are there so many corpses and even destroyed flying fortresses?" he asked.

The young man stopped in his tracks, looking at the old man for a moment before tilting his head.

"Ah, you must have just arrived, old man. Let me tell you—yesterday was a day I will never forget in my life. Our new city lord is an unstoppable force, I tell you! It was like a god had descended, his golden light obliterating the entire army of the Second Prince.

At that moment, he unleashed the most beautiful yet most destructive sword technique I have ever seen," he said, his expression filled with fanatic admiration.

"At first, the Second Prince came to attack this city with four flying fortresses and tens of thousands of troops. They were completely determined to kill our city lord or even destroy the city itself—going so far as to fire their lightning cannons." His face showed fear, but then his expression shifted.

"But then, something incredible happened. He blocked that lightning cannon and then, he unleashed that golden light."

"He cut through four flying fortresses with ease, as if they were mere paper, and killed tens of thousands of troops. The entire city trembled because of it, and even our swords were pulled into the sky, filling it with countless floating blades. It's a pity you arrived a day late, old man—if not, you would have witnessed that spectacular sight." The young man sighed.

"To think that our city lord is the mysterious swordsman... It truly feels both incredible and prideful."

He then glanced at the old man. "Anyway, I have to go. I'll be late if I don't hurry." With that, he continued walking toward the wreckage.

Hearing the young man's words, the old man and his group could only stare after him in silence. Finally, one of the men in the group spoke.

"Doesn't that mean... what we saw yesterday was the sword technique of this mysterious swordsman? But—" He trailed off, his gaze shifting toward the scene of destruction before them.

"To think that even the flying fortresses ended up like that... Truly incredible."

While they were still in the nearest town to Caritas, waiting for nightfall to continue their journey, they all saw a golden light on the horizon. A brilliant pillar of gold shot into the sky before suddenly plummeting in a single direction. They watched in awe, clearly recognizing it as some kind of golden pillar, and wondered what had happened—especially since it came from Caritas' direction.

"All of you, let's go in. We'll settle inside the city first. I will speak with the person arranging our shelter," the old man said.

This old man was none other than Arson Vuran, and the figures accompanying him were the Nine Fingers of the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion. Arson had not revealed his slave status to the others until today. Of course the only ones aware of it were the First and Second Fingers, who shared the same fate as him.

"Follow the plan. Enter in groups, keep them small and spread out," he sent a voice transmission to someone outside his immediate group.

Unbeknownst to the public, a vast group of assassins was lying in wait at the forest's edge near Caritas, their eyes fixed in Arson's direction. They were all awaiting the next move.

All of them wore ordinary attire and disguises, ensuring that anyone who saw them would assume they were nothing more than travelers, merchants, or even beggars.

As soon as Arson entered the city, he immediately attempted to contact Aldrian through a voice transmission.

"Master, I have arrived in Caritas. I just passed through the western gate. Where are you?"

"Oh, you've already arrived? Just come to the mayor's mansion. I'll be waiting for you there,"

Aldrian's reply came through.

"Alright."

After asking for directions from the city's residents, Arson and the Fingers made their way toward the mansion. It took them nearly an hour of walking before they finally arrived. Upon reaching the entrance, they were immediately greeted by a pair of guards stationed outside.

These guards were survivors of Marquess Parus's torture, having once captives who had suffered in his torture chamber. After Aldrian had healed them, they had chosen to remain and serve him, determined to assist him for as long as he stayed in the city.

Seeing no issue with this, Aldrian allowed them to stay, even providing them with resources as recognition of their resilience and unwavering loyalty.

"Stop! This is the mayor's mansion, where the city lord resides. If you have no business here, then please—"

"Let them in."

A sudden voice transmission cut off the guard's words. Despite the interruption, the guard responded with reverence.

"Yes, my lord."

He then turned to Arson. "My lord has granted you permission to enter."

With that, they were escorted to a guest room, where a lone figure stood by the window, gazing at the scenery outside. From their position, they could only see his back, so they thought nothing unusual of him at first. However, their expressions subtly shifted when their leader, Arson, stepped forward and bowed deeply.

"I have arrived as you ordered, master."

Except for the First and Second Fingers, the rest of the group was shocked by the scene before them. They knew what kind of person their leader was. He had a hard personality, never showed fear, and rarely respected anyone.

Arson was a man who sought entertainment in the thrill of the hunt. As one of the strongest assassins on the continent, with cultivation at the middle Emperor stage, there were only a handful of people capable of evading his assassination.

That was why he never accepted assassination missions again because none of them piqued his interest. However, they had heard that he took on one mission a few years ago, only to return without explaining anything.

Coincidentally or not, ever since that day, their organization's operations had changed. It now functioned more like a group under a higher authority, with their leader acting as the bridge between them and that unseen force.

Watching their leader now, bowing in such a manner, they couldn't help but wonder, was this the person giving him orders?

Their eyes shifted toward the figure standing by the window. When he finally turned his head, they involuntarily widened their eyes in shock.

A young man, no older than his early twenties.

Was this the new city lord? The one who obliterated the second prince's forces? The one that they called the mysterious swordsman?

So young!

"Finally, we meet again, Arson," Aldrian said with a slight smile.

Arson straightened his posture. "Yes, Master. It has been almost three years since we last met."

Aldrian nodded, then shifted his gaze to the group standing behind Arson.

"Are these all the Fingers?" he asked.

"Yes, Master. They are all the Fingers."

Aldrian observed them carefully, noting the unfamiliar faces. He already knew the First and Second Fingers, but the rest were new to him. Each of them was at the low Emperor stage, a truly formidable group. Combined with their King-stage assassins and lower-ranked members, it was no surprise that the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion was one of the strongest assassination organizations on the continent.

"How many people did you bring this time?"

"Reporting to Master, I brought my entire hideout—around 134 assassins. They are entering the city as we speak."

Aldrian nodded. "Good. Once they've all arrived, have them blend in with the city's residents. They can do whatever is necessary to conceal their identities—establish businesses, open entertainment venues—anything to avoid exposure. They should be capable of that much, right?"

"Yes, Master."

"If you lack resources, just let me know. I will provide whatever is necessary."

"Thank you, Master," Arson said with a bow.

"Now then," Aldrian turned his gaze back to the Fingers.

"All of you, follow me."

With that, he walked past them and exited the room.

Chapter 404: Test for Himself

All the Fingers followed Aldrian to an area near the mansion that had a small forest. This forest surrounded the mansion, acting as a barrier between it and the rest of the city's residential areas. Because of this, the mansion remained secluded despite being located within the city.

They stood at the forest's edge, wondering why Aldrian had brought them there. As they watched, he turned to face them.

"I've heard of the reputation of the Nine Fingers of the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion and couldn't help but want to experience it firsthand. The forest before you will serve as the site for that."

Then, he continued, "You will try to kill me inside the forest. Use everything you have—don't hold back."

Aldrian turned his gaze toward Arson Vuran. "That includes you."

Hearing Aldrian's words, all of them were astonished. Even Arson looked at him with a strange expression. What is it this time? Why would his master do something like this?

To be honest, he was also curious about his master's ability to defend himself against assassination attempts. They had all heard of Aldrian's overwhelming prowess in direct combat, so much so that Arson believed even if he and the other Fingers worked together, they would ultimately fail to take him down.

But assassination was different. It relied on clever and cunning methods to eliminate a target. The victim often wouldn't even realize death was upon them—sometimes, they wouldn't even realize they were already dead.

The Third to Ninth Fingers turned to Arson, waiting for his command. But he simply glanced back at them before speaking.

"You heard him. Kill him with everything you've got. I don't care how you do it—just follow the master's orders."

He didn't understand what Aldrian intended, but he would act accordingly.

The others nodded and turned their gaze toward Aldrian. In an instant, their entire presence shifted, they became like ghosts. Their auras vanished completely, and their presences masked so thoroughly that even the wind seemed undisturbed by their movements.

Although they stood right in front of him, fully visible to his eyes, Aldrian couldn't sense them at all. It was as if they had merged with the environment itself. This was what made assassins truly terrifying—if they could conceal themselves to the point where only the eyes could perceive them, then their ability was beyond extraordinary.

If they were to hide, their target would be dead before even realizing it.

Aldrian was genuinely impressed by what he witnessed, though not entirely surprised. These were the finest assassins of the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion, and all of them had reached the Emperor stage.

The only way to track them beyond his line of sight was to rely on his domain.

"Now," he said.

In an instant, all the assassins vanished, leaving Aldrian alone.

He smiled at the sight and waited for thirty seconds before stepping forward into the forest. These assassins were truly killing machines, following orders without hesitation. One command from Arson was all it took, they executed it without question. Just

moments ago, they had released their killing intent toward him before disappearing completely.

Aldrian hadn't walked far, only about 500 meters when he suddenly stepped on something. Before he could register what it was, thin darts shot toward him from the nearby trees behind him.

Sensing the incoming darts, he instinctively reached out to catch them. However, his danger sense flared, warning him. Without a moment's hesitation, he ducked just as two flying daggers sliced through the air, narrowly missing his head. They stabbed themselves into the ground just a step ahead of where he had been standing.

The darts nearly struck him due to his slightly delayed reaction, but he managed to block them with his spatial shield. As they collided with the barrier, they lost all momentum and fell harmlessly to the ground.

However, Aldrian had no time to relax—he sensed another deadly attack incoming.

This time, he saw an assassin drop down right above of him, a dagger aimed straight for his head. Just as the blade was about to strike, the assassin's body suddenly froze in midair.

Suspended in space, unable to move, he hovered above the ground, his expression filled with shock. Then, he heard Aldrian's voice.

"Truly impressive. In just thirty seconds, you've already set up a trap like this. Your adaptability is remarkable, you also ensure the target never expects what's coming next. Just as they think they've defended against one attack, you follow up relentlessly until the kill is secured."

Aldrian's gaze sharpened. "Good... but still not enough to kill me."

Aldrian then placed his hand on the assassin's head and sent a surge of lightning energy through him. The assassin convulsed as pain wracked his body, not only from being electrocuted but also from the searing agony within his very soul. Aldrian's lightning directly attacked his soul.

Unable to withstand it, the assassin lost consciousness. The moment Aldrian released his spatial lock, his body dropped limply to the ground.

Kneeling beside him, Aldrian began casting his slave seal, the Everlasting Demonic Follower. Once the process was complete, he rose to his feet and continued deeper into the forest.

A satisfied smile played on his lips. This was his true purpose in bringing the Fingers here. Beyond demonstrating his overwhelming power and proving that the many rumors

about him were more than just stories, he had another goal—to cast his slave seal on the rest of the Fingers as well.

Although all the assassins operated under Arson's direct orders, Aldrian was not ready to place his full trust in them without proper safeguards. These people would now serve under him, but he needed time to assess their loyalty.

They were seasoned killers, having taken countless lives, and if they ever turned their backs on him, they could become a threat, not to him, but to those around him. That was his real concern.

As he walked another kilometer, he sensed a slight disturbance in the wind. Reacting instantly, he kicked behind him, deflecting a set of flying needles aimed at him. However, the attack didn't end there.

A faint tremor ran through the ground, and before he could fully process it, a figure burst forth from beneath him, emerging right under his face.

Because of his position after kicking behind him, Aldrian had to tilt his body, bringing his head closer to the ground. The assassin seized this moment, aiming to pierce his eye with a dagger. At the same time, he sensed arrows incoming from the side.

In that split second, everything around him seemed to slow down. He slapped the dagger away just before it could reach his eye and twisted his body to the side, narrowly avoiding the arrows as they flew past him.

It was just like the time he had faced Elena, when she had suddenly attacked him out of nowhere upon their first meeting. Back then, every time her strikes came close to landing, the world around him had seemed to slow.

After much reflection, he had finally found the answer.

Time.

With his focus heightened, he realized he could slow down time for a split second. The first time he noticed this, he was astonished, he had never felt himself comprehending the time laws.

But then he remembered something.

It all traced back to when he first comprehended the thread of origin. What if, in that moment, he had unconsciously grasped the time laws as well?

That was the only explanation for why he could sense time itself and manipulate it, even if only briefly.

From everything recorded on the continent, he had never heard of a cultivator comprehending time laws. He knew time laws because of the vast knowledge that had surfaced in his mind over the years through countless visions. This was the power of time laws, one of the most elusive and difficult laws to comprehend.

Aldrian didn't give the assassins a chance to recover. He grabbed the hand emerging from the ground, lifted the assassin's entire body, and slammed him hard onto the surface.

The assassins hadn't expected their combined surprise attack to be evaded so effortlessly. The one who had been hiding underground felt the force of the impact rupture his organs, dizziness overtaking him.

Without wasting a moment, Aldrian turned his gaze toward another direction. Using the power of gravity laws, he forced another hidden assassin, concealed within the high bushes, to drop heavily to the ground.

He dealt with the assassin beneath him first, sending a surge of lightning through his body to render him unconscious. Then, without pause, he teleported toward the second assassin, who was struggling to escape. However, under the force of gravity, his movements were slow and sluggish, his body too heavy to flee.

Aldrian delivered a swift punch to the assassin's gut before slamming his head into the ground, knocking him out instantly. Just as he had done with the first assassin, he cast the Everlasting Demonic Follower on both of them before continuing deeper into the forest.

He walked and walked, yet no disturbances came.

Thirty minutes passed—nothing happened.

An hour passed—still nothing.

He deliberately refrained from using his domain sense. If he activated it fully, he would detect every movement instantly, but that would take away the challenge. Instead, he wanted to test the sharpness of his senses and instincts against assassins of this caliber. This was as much a trial for himself as it was a hunt.

After walking for a while, he finally sensed something—something fast, moving straight toward him!

He wanted to trap it with his spatial technique, but before he could act, something suddenly emerged from the ground beneath his feet—binding him in place!

Chains wrapped tightly around his legs, holding him firmly. Just as he tried to react, he sensed a figure emerging from the trunk, as if the tree itself had come to life. In an instant, the figure leaped onto him and slashed at his neck.

Chapter 405: The Visit From Capital

Like before, he focused his full attention, his mind working in a split second. Just before the slash could cut his neck, he tilted his head slightly. When time resumed its normal flow, the slash missed him, but he still sensed danger from above.

Reacting instantly, he used spatial lock to hold the incoming attack above him, but at the same time, he felt another threat from his right side.

Suddenly, a figure emerged from the shadows between the trees, slashing a sword toward his legs.

From behind him, something moving at incredible speed was already dangerously close—a shadowy figure attempting to stab him from behind. All of this unfolded within the split second after he had slowed time.

At that moment, he was under attack from above, the left, the right, and behind. His feet were also bound by chains, which he suspected to be an artifact.

There was no time to create a spatial shield, as the assassins were already too close, launching their surprise attack. He suspected they had watched him take care of their comrades earlier and devised this tactic, which was undeniably impressive.

They had to ensure he was immobilized and attack him from close range, giving him no time to raise his invisible defense. To overwhelm him, they coordinated their strikes to land almost simultaneously, forcing him into a state of confusion, unable to decide which attack to defend against. Even a split second of hesitation would be enough to kill him.

However, unfortunately for them, the assassins did not fully grasp the extent of his abilities or strength. Although he couldn't form a spatial shield in time, he had something else with a much faster activation speed.

Before any of the attacks could land, his mind worked swiftly, and he unleashed heavenly lightning around his body. Bolts of lightning erupted in all directions, surging through the air and even reaching the sky, repelling the incoming strikes.

Rumble!

He could unleash lightning instantly, and although he didn't have time to gather its full strength, its power was enough to weaken and deflect their attacks, and that was all he

needed. The assassins' strikes were repelled by the sudden surge of heavenly lightning from his body.

They attempted to retreat, but Aldrian used his gravity laws to prevent them from escaping too far. As their movements grew sluggish, he turned his attention to the chains binding his feet.

With his death laws, death energy gathered around his legs, corroding the chains and drastically weakening their durability. In an instant, he broke free with ease.

The assassins, still stunned that Aldrian could block their attacks even at such close range—let alone counterattack—were even more shocked by the ominous presence of his death energy. However, that moment of hesitation proved fatal. It gave Aldrian enough time to unleash his lightning with enough power to harm them.

Rumble.

The heavenly lightning struck their bodies directly, sending them crashing into their surroundings. The assailants on his left and right were flung into several trees, while the one above him was electrocuted midair before plummeting to the ground beside him. The attacker behind him was hurled several hundred meters away, only coming to a stop after colliding with multiple trees.

Now that he had successfully countered, Aldrian could finally see them more clearly—two women and two men. Their bodies convulsed as heavenly lightning crackled around them before they lost consciousness.

Even the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion assassins, renowned for their mastery of lightning laws, could not withstand the heavenly lightning that struck them directly. Once it entered their bodies, its violent and overwhelming power became too much for them to endure.

Without hesitation, Aldrian cast his slave seal on them before turning his attention to three figures emerging from behind the trees.

They raised their hands as if in surrender. Aldrian tilted his head.

"What are you doing?"

Arson, along with the First and Second Fingers, stepped forward, seeming to concede defeat after witnessing how effortlessly Aldrian had anticipated and countered the assassins' attacks.

"I give up, master. You're too strong and too fast even for us. We'd rather save ourselves from embarrassment," Arson admitted.

"Yes, you are far too great for us. You seem to have no weaknesses at all, master. We observed everything—your movements and senses are incredibly precise and efficient," the First Finger said.

"Indeed," the Second Finger added. "And we also witnessed that terrifying law of yours—it made our very souls shudder. There's no way we could focus on an assassination if you were our target, master."

Aldrian smiled at them and nodded.

"Is that so? Then I suppose there's no point in continuing this. Let's head back to the mansion to discuss your next course of action."

With that, he turned, as if ready to walk away, making his way toward the edge of the forest.

Arson and the other two eyes flashing with intent. Hidden behind their raised hands were concealed flying knives, waiting for the perfect moment. They had been waiting for Aldrian to turn his back to them, but just as he did, he suddenly vanished from their sight.

A chilling sensation crept over them as they instinctively realized someone was already standing behind them.

"That's what you wanted me to say and do, right?"

Aldrian's voice sent shivers down their spines. They whirled around, instinctively trying to retreat—only to be met with the crackling surge of heavenly lightning radiating from his body once again.

"*Well, shit,*" they all thought.

No more than five seconds later, three more unconscious figures lay scattered across the forest floor.

Aldrian looked at the scene with satisfaction. From this test, he could confirm that these assassins were truly formidable and terrifying. Even he had to admit that, without his domain power boost and time laws, he would have died twice.

With a leisurely stride, he walked toward the edge of the forest, feeling relaxed after this impromptu training. His battle with these skilled assassins had provided him with valuable lessons.

Aldrian walked out of the forest and headed toward the mansion, but then he noticed something that puzzled him.

From his vantage point, he could see and hear a commotion on the other side of the forest, where a road connected the residential area to the mansion. Anyone visiting the mansion had to pass through that path, yet at this moment, a carriage was making its way along it—drawing the angry attention of the city's residents.

The crowd glared at the carriage and its entourage, some even throwing small objects at it.

Focusing his attention, Aldrian tried to determine what was happening and who was inside the carriage to provoke such hostility. When he finally understood the situation, understanding dawned on him.

The person inside had been sent by the Second Prince. Naturally, the people of this city harbored resentment toward them.

However, he found the situation amusing. What was the Second Prince planning? His curiosity grew as he observed the scene.

Just then, a soldier came running toward him, stopping right in front of him, gasping for breath.

"My apologies, my lord, but I have news," the soldier said between ragged breaths. "The envoy from the capital has arrived. The one sent by the Second Prince is already near the mansion."

Aldrian nodded. "Alright, thank you. Just return to your post—I'll wait for him in the guest room."

He patted the soldier's shoulder and walked past him.

A glint flashed in Aldrian's eyes. He was truly curious—what was the Second Prince up to this time?

Inside the carriage, two figures sat facing each other, their gazes fixed on the outside scenery. One wore noble attire, while the other was clad in knight's armor.

The middle-aged man in noble clothing maintained a cold expression as they traveled down the road since they emerged from the teleportation portal.

As expected, the moment the city's residents recognized him and his entourage, hostility flared. The people openly glared at them and hurled curses in their direction.

His guardian knight had immediately took out a carriage from his storage ring, hitching it to the horned horses they had brought from the capital. The rest of the escort had done the same, bringing their own horses to avoid seeking transport in this city.

Along the road, the nobleman experienced something that had never happened in his life. He watched as the city's people, filled with hatred, brazenly bared their fangs at him and his entourage. Some even dared to throw pebbles and rotten fruit at his carriage, making his expression grow even colder.

"They dare to show such ugly expressions toward us and even curse our presence here. It seems the existence of that mysterious swordsman has emboldened them," the nobleman said coldly.

"It can't be helped, my lord. With the strength of the mysterious swordsman, these people have gained the courage to defy us. As long as he remains in this city, they feel secure and fear nothing," his guardian knight replied.

The nobleman scoffed. "Not for long. Once that bastard is writhing under His Majesty's feet, these people will be the first to suffer my wrath."

His eyes flashed as he gazed outside at the passing scenery. The forest soon gave way to a vast estate—his destination.

He would make sure this visit proceeded exactly as the Second Prince had planned!

Chapter 406: The Spirit of Great Path

Once the nobleman arrived at the front door of the mansion, the carriage door opened, and his guardian knight stepped down, followed by the nobleman himself. A maid was already standing in front of the door, but even from outside, it was clear that she did not appreciate their arrival. Without much regard, she turned away and said,

"Follow me."

The nobleman, already in a foul mood, grew even more irritated. Her indifferent and disrespectful attitude made his anger flare, but he forced himself to remain composed and followed her, his guardian knight trailing behind.

They were led to the guest room, where a man was already seated on the sofa, leisurely sipping his tea, as if he had been expecting them.

At first, they were confused upon seeing the young man. Who is he? But their question was soon answered when the maid bowed to him.

"My lord, they are here."

Aldrian nodded. "Good. You may return to your post."

The maid bowed once more before retreating without sparing a single glance at the envoy from the second prince.

As the door closed, sealing the room for a more private conversation, the envoy remained frozen in astonishment. Even though they had already knew that the mysterious swordsman was a young man, seeing Aldrian in person was an entirely different matter.

They still couldn't believe that someone so young could possess the power to shake the entire empire. His achievements were spoken of everywhere, leaving no doubt about his strength. However, how could he have accomplished all that at such a young age? Was he just an old man in disguise?

"Have a seat, gentlemen. I doubt you came all this way just to stand there speechless and waste my time."

Aldrian's sudden voice pulled them from their thoughts. The nobleman frowned slightly but still offered a small bow. He had been furious at the commoners outside for their lack of respect, yet here, he dared not act rashly. He knew that with Aldrian's power, the young man could crush him without a second thought—and the second prince would do little, if anything, in response to his death.

The fact that Aldrian was still willing to receive them as guests, despite their previous attempt to kill him, seemed like an act of generosity. They were relieved to be welcomed instead of having to beg for an audience like mere vagrants.

"My apologies. We arrived unannounced, but we had no choice. We feared that Your Excellency would refuse us before we had the chance to explain ourselves," the nobleman said, while bowing before taking a seat on the sofa across from Aldrian.

There was no drink offered to him, but he paid it no mind. It was only when he finally sat before Aldrian that he truly felt the invisible pressure surrounding him. It was as if he were seated before someone far beyond his rank—a man who stood at a level he could never hope to reach.

And when his gaze met Aldrian's serene blue eyes, an unsettling sensation took hold of him. He felt as though his entire being had already been laid bare, as if there was nothing he could hide from those eyes.

He lowered his head as sweat rolled down his forehead. Swallowing hard, he tried to hide his nervousness. The arrogance he had shown when speaking about others was nowhere to be seen. Now, he understood without a doubt that a single misstep or offense toward this young man would be no different from signing his own death warrant.

His guardian knight sensed his master's unease but chose not to question him. Instead, he remained on high alert, watching Aldrian with wary, scrutinizing eyes. Even without Aldrian releasing any aura, the sheer pressure of his presence alone was enough to set off every instinct in the knight's body, screaming of danger.

This young man was the real deal!

"Do you want me to start the conversation, envoy from the capital?" Aldrian's voice resounded once again.

The nobleman was momentarily stunned, realizing he had been rude by remaining silent out of nervousness.

"My apologies, Your Excellency. I was simply astonished by your greatness—I can hardly find the words now that I am seated before you. Once again, I apologize," he said, offering a slight bow before looking at Aldrian again.

"Enough with the flattery. What brings you here?" Aldrian replied.

The nobleman nodded. "Very well. But first, allow me to introduce myself, Your Excellency. I am Marquess Xavier Arliando. I have been sent by His Majesty, the Emperor, to meet with you regarding the events that have transpired between us in the past few days."

Aldrian took a sip of his tea, closing his eyes as if savoring the taste before opening them again. Yet, he remained silent.

Xavier took this as a sign to continue explaining his purpose.

"We understand that Your Excellency has had some disagreements with us on certain matters, and we acknowledge that we were the ones who offended you. With my visit here, we hope that Your Excellency can forgive our past presumptions and let bygones be bygones. As a gesture of goodwill, we have prepared something to compensate you."

Xavier then retrieved a box from his storage ring.

The box was quite long, measuring over a meter in length and about twenty centimeters in width. Aldrian's curiosity was piqued.

Xavier placed the box on the table and pushed it toward Aldrian before opening it to reveal its contents.

Aldrian, observing with interest, slightly widened his eyes as he saw the quality of the item inside.

A high divine grade artifact!

He was inwardly shocked.

Before him lay a guqin—an exquisitely crafted guqin that radiated a hidden yet formidable power. Aldrian could also sense the lingering traces of divine energy emanating from it!

But then, he suddenly felt his mind transported to a moment in time—a scene where he stood beneath a towering tree, gazing at the breathtaking expanse of the world. A realm of serenity, where nature flourished and countless beings lived in peace.

He also heard the beautiful sound of a guqin playing behind him. The melody was soothing, bringing a sense of serenity to every heart that listened. Even the wind and the surrounding nature seemed to respond, swaying in harmony with the enchanting tune. It was as if the world itself welcomed the music, showing its appreciation through subtle signs.

The guqin's melody continued, filling the air with its mesmerizing sound, until it finally came to a stop. In that instant, the world seemed to return to its natural state.

"How was it, Your Majesty? It's good, isn't it?" a woman's voice resounded from behind him.

He smiled and turned his head toward the woman. Though he couldn't see his own face, he knew he was smiling warmly at her.

What he saw was an extraordinarily beautiful woman with red hair and striking red eyes. She wore elegant red robes adorned with a phoenix pattern, accentuating her graceful curves. Everything about her—from her fiery gaze to the deep crimson of her attire—made her seem like a living embodiment of a raging flame.

"You're good. You're not far from what I can do," he said.

The woman shyly looked at him.

"Ah, no way. I'm still far from Your Majesty's level—you're exaggerating," she said, though the joy in her eyes betrayed how much his compliment meant to her.

"This piece is something I composed based on Your Majesty's music—the one you played at the highest level of the Heavenly Garden."

"So that's why I can hear some resemblance to my style," he replied with a smile.

"Did you ask Vaneris to create this guqin? It suits you perfectly."

"Yes, I didn't want to disturb Your Majesty, so I could only ask Vaneris to create a guqin that suited me—and he did not disappoint. Although it's not as great as Your Majesty's Guqin of Origin, I truly love this instrument," the woman replied, gently stroking the guqin in front of her with tender affection.

This was the guqin she had named with the intent to follow the path of the man before her.

This was the guqin she had hoped would allow her to embody even a fraction of his brilliance.

This was the guqin she had wished would forever keep her close to him.

"What is this guqin called?" he asked.

The woman smiled. "The Spirit of the Great Path."

The moment she spoke its name, Aldrian felt himself pulled back to the present—back to the room where he now sat, staring at the guqin before him.

It was identical to the one from his vision. There was no doubt.

His heart trembled as he activated his Eyes of Heaven to confirm it.

"The Spirit of Great Path."

The Shining Star Above The Heaven #Chapter 407: I Think You All Have Misunderstood Something - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 407: I Think You All Have Misunderstood Something

Chapter 407: I Think You All Have Misunderstood Something

Seeing Aldrian staring speechlessly at the guqin before him, Xavier could only inwardly smile in satisfaction. Even though the young man was a formidable cultivator even capable of battling high emperor-stage beasts, he was still human, with desires like anyone else. This artifact was something the second prince believed would demonstrate their "sincerity" and entice the young man to take the bait.

Who wouldn't want a high divine-grade artifact? It had been millions of years since the last successful creation of one. Such artifacts were highly coveted, and Xavier was certain that only the sovereign families of empires possessed them.

Seeing Aldrian rendered speechless by the artifact before him, Xavier already knew that he—no, the second prince had already succeeded in captivating this young man. With this, he only needed to push a little further and lure him to the capital.

"Where did you get this artifact?" Aldrian's voice resounded in his ears.

Xavier wanted to answer, but for some reason, when he looked into Aldrian's eyes again, he felt that something had changed. Pushing aside his curiosity, he replied,

"This artifact has been passed down for millions of years within the Losaris imperial family. I don't know its exact origin, but it is said that one day, the imperial family suddenly came into possession of this high divine-grade artifact, causing a great uproar at the time."

"Many rumors about its origins have circulated since then. Some say that the imperial family secretly created it over many years and only revealed it after their success."

"There is also another rumor suggesting that the artifact was given to the imperial family by unknown noble family. However, this claim lacks strong evidence, as no noble family in recorded history has ever possessed an artifact of this caliber."

Aldrian, hearing Xavier's answer, nodded inwardly—there was no lie in his words. It seemed he would have to investigate the matter himself, as the artifact before him was the real deal! This was the same guqin the woman had played in his vision. He looked at the guqin's information again.

The Spirit of Great Path

Description: A guqin crafted by the ancient great forgemaster Vanaris at the request of the first ancestor of all phoenixes. A guqin imbued with boundless intent to follow the great path of the ultimate ruler, as reflected in its name. Currently, the guqin is sealed, causing its quality to drop to the high divine grade. The seal can be lifted once the required conditions are met.

Level: High Divine Grade (Sealed).

The guqin was in a sealed state, which made him wonder what kind of requirements were needed to unseal it. Considering it was an artifact crafted by an ancient

forgemaster from the higher heavens, he knew this wasn't its true quality. It was no surprise that the artifact remained powerful even in its sealed state.

Now, the real question in his mind was—how did an artifact of this caliber, once used by a legendary figure like the first ancestor of the phoenixes, end up in the hands of the Losaris imperial family—in this continent?

Suddenly, he remembered the origin sword he had found within the secret realm inside Dragon Back Mountain. He sighed inwardly—why should he be wonder that an artifact like this guqin was here? Even the first sword in existence was on this continent, so why wouldn't the guqin used by the first ancestor of the phoenixes be here as well?

With this information, he also understood that the woman who had played the guqin was actually the first ancestor of the phoenixes or in other words, the very first phoenix to come into existence.

From 'his' conversation with her, it seemed that 'he' had his own guqin, known as the Guqin of Origin. He was almost certain that everything connected to him and 'that figure' would always have 'origin' in its name.

He also recalled that the first time he had met 'that figure,' he had seen him playing a guqin beneath a peach blossom tree.

That was one of the mysteries he wanted to uncover—why? Why did everything bear the name 'origin'?

Origin Sword.

Thread of Origin.

Guqin of Origin.

Was it because that figure was a truly ancient being, far older than anything else, having witnessed the first emergence of countless things and thus naming them 'origin'?

His hypothesis about his real past identity and its connection to that figure kept growing stronger, all pointing to one conclusion. Despite the vague answers that figure had given him at the time, he remained convinced that this conclusion was correct.

Seeing Aldrian remain silent for a long time, Xavier assumed he was contemplating whether to accept the artifact or not. He knew that giving away an artifact of this caliber was not something that could be brushed off as mere compensation. This was a truly magnificent treasure. Unless there were special circumstances, anyone would question the intent behind offering such an artifact.

In his opinion, Aldrian might have felt that the situation did not justify receiving a high divine-grade artifact. That was why Xavier believed Aldrian might be suspicious of the second prince's true intentions and was carefully considering how to respond.

"Your Excellency, you don't have to worry about our sincerity. We offer this to you as compensation because we are truly sorry for our actions. This is the least we can do to ease your anger and mend any enmity between us. It is also a gesture to show our intent to repair our relationship and build a more amicable connection with Your Excellency," Xavier said, his voice filled with persuasion and sincerity.

Aldrian, upon hearing this, merely sneered inwardly. Xavier's expression and tone, seemingly full of sincerity, might fool others but definitely not him.

Every word he spoke was a lie!

Yet, Aldrian simply smiled as if he agreed with Xavier and gave a nod.

"I see. I'm truly impressed by the lengths the second prince has gone to in order to mend our relationship—even offering me such a valuable treasure. I can truly see his sincerity," he said while stroking the guqin with his fingers.

As he touched it, a strange sense of familiarity washed over him, as if he held this guqin in the past. The smooth surface was proof of how well-maintained it was, though that was hardly surprising. After all, this was a priceless artifact.

An urge to play it stirred within him. It felt as if this had been his hobby for a long time, and now that he finally had the chance, he wanted to indulge in it. However, before that, he needed to deal with the person in front of him. After seeing the guqin, he had completely lost the interest to continue this charade any longer.

Hearing Aldrian's words, Xavier felt truly satisfied and was about to persuade him further, but the words caught in his throat the moment he saw Aldrian's expression turn serene. Those blue eyes, void of any emotion, reflected his own startled face.

"That is what you wanted me to say, right?" Aldrian said.

Xavier suddenly realized that the atmosphere had shifted. Something was different about Aldrian—his mood had changed entirely.

Before he could react, his body was slammed into the table, shattering it instantly, and his head hit the floor with a thud. His guardian knight suffered the same fate, his body suddenly feeling unbearably heavy before crashing hard onto the ground.

"Argh!" Xavier groaned in pain, blood streaming from his broken nose and the fresh wounds on his face caused by the shattered table. It had happened so fast that he had

no idea what was going on. Struggling through the pain, he forced himself to look at Aldrian.

"Your Excellency... what... is the meaning of... this?" he asked, struggling to speak. Right now, his body felt unbearably heavy, so much so that he could barely lift a finger.

The sudden "attack" had caught him completely off guard, leaving him with no time to defend himself. His energy was in chaos, making it impossible to circulate, further rendering him vulnerable.

Aldrian didn't respond. Instead, he calmly stood up and carried his cup of tea which he had saved before the table shattered to a smaller table nearby.

Xavier felt a deep sense of terror creeping over him. Had he unknowingly offended Aldrian in some way?

"You came all this way just to lie to me. I have truly seen the intent of the second prince," Aldrian said as he walked closer to Xavier.

Seeing Aldrian approach, Xavier was overcome with horror. He wanted to move away, but he couldn't—gravity held him in place. His guardian knight was equally helpless. Their king-stage cultivation was useless after being caught off guard.

As Aldrian drew nearer, a surge of adrenaline coursed through Xavier's body, giving him the strength to slowly push himself up from the floor. He wanted to speak, to say something, anything, but before he could, his entire body froze. Even his mouth refused to move.

Aldrian had placed a spatial lock on him.

"I think you all have misunderstood something here," Aldrian said as he stopped in front of Xavier.

From his position, Xavier could only see Aldrian's body, not his face. But then, he felt his hair being yanked, forcing him to look up into Aldrian's piercing blue eyes.

"I already told you all my demand, to hand over that traitor. Yet here you are, on behalf of the second prince, talking about 'amending' our relationship. No, no, I have no need for you all to amend our relationship. What I want is that traitor."

"Forget about your so-called apologies after offending me. Instead of taking my warnings seriously, you all dared to plot against me again?"

Aldrian's voice sent a chilling sensation down Xavier's spine. He wanted to speak, to beg, but only muffled sounds escaped his lips.

"You all really want to see this through to the end, don't you?" Aldrian continued, his tone calm. "I'll play along. I want to see just how far the second prince will go to keep that traitor from me."

Chapter 408: Like He Already Played It

Xavier felt a chill run down his spine as he realized they had been completely wrong in predicting this person's movements based on logic.

When they came to Caritas to apologize and mend their relationship with Aldrian, they believed that offering a high-grade divine artifact would be enough for him to forget past grievances or at least appreciate their gesture.

However, they were mistaken. They had overlooked one crucial factor about Aldrian—his character.

With Aldrian's strength, presenting an artifact of this level to him was no different from handing it to him on a silver platter—without requiring him to even consider their offer or intent. Aldrian could simply take the artifact and still attack the second prince afterward.

They had been wrong to assume that Aldrian would show them any courtesy for their attempt to mend their relationship.

This young man wanted only that traitor—nothing else! Even if he had to fight the entire faction alone, he would not waver. His only goal was that traitor, and that was it!

The only thought in Xavier's mind now was how to escape from this place. But before he could act, a sharp pain shot through his back—Aldrian had punched him precisely where his dantian was located. His spine broke instantly, and his dantian was shattered.

"Hggnnhh!" Because of the spatial lock, he couldn't scream—only a muffled groan escaped as he writhed in unbearable pain. His eyes welled with tears, his complexion turned deathly pale, and his skin wrinkled as if he were aging at an accelerated rate.

With his dantian shattered and his life cultivation dissipating at a rapid rate, the foundation that had sustained his life began to collapse, forcing him to revert to a mortal as his true age caught up to him.

If this continued, Xavier would be dead by today or tomorrow at the latest, as his real age was far beyond what a mortal body could endure.

Xavier, unable to bear the pain any longer, finally fainted. While he was unconscious, Aldrian decided to read his memories before he released the spatial lock, causing Xavier's body to drop to the ground while his guardian knight regained movement.

The knight's body were already drenched in sweat from the tense situation. Because of his position having fallen behind the sofa, he couldn't see Xavier and could only hear Aldrian's voice.

A chill settled in his heart. Aldrian had completely disregarded their efforts and continued to push forward in opposition to the second prince. Then, a sharp cracking sound reached his ears. The moment the spatial lock was lifted, he scrambled to his feet, desperate to check on his lord.

What he saw sent a chill down his spine.

Xavier's hair had already turned white, and deep wrinkles covered his body. The knight could sense his lord's cultivation leaking uncontrollably, his power rapidly fading. In that moment, he finally realized that Xavier's cultivation was slowly dissipating.

Aldrian had crippled him!

"You! What did you—"

"You draw your sword, and I'll send the second prince two bodies as my answer."

Before the knight could lash out and unsheathe his sword, Aldrian's voice cut him off. The knight's hand, already gripping the hilt and poised to strike, froze mid-motion as he realized what he was about to do.

It had been pure reflex, his instinct to fight after witnessing his lord's condition, but he knew the truth. This young man was far beyond his league.

His trembling fingers loosened, and at last, he released his grip on the sword. Lowering his head, he dared not meet Aldrian's gaze.

"You heard what I said. Go back to the second prince and relay everything I've told your lord," Aldrian said.

He then walked toward the window, gazing out at the scenery beyond.

"You can leave now."

The guardian knight immediately rushed to Xavier's side and lifted him up. He stared at his lord's aged face and frail body for a moment before glancing at Aldrian's back. Gritting his teeth, he turned toward the door and strode out.

He needed to report this madman's response to the second prince, this man could not be reasoned with or negotiated with.

After Aldrian was left alone, he looked at the guqin still resting on the broken table. Walking toward it, he ran his fingers over its surface as if trying to feel its texture once more. Then, he closed the box and stored the guqin inside his storage ring.

Not long after, two maids entered the room. Aldrian instructed them to clean up the mess before making his way to the mansion's vast back garden.

At the center of the garden stood a large tree, its dense canopy casting a wide shadow, shielding everything beneath it from the sunlight.

Aldrian approached the tree and sat down beneath it. He retrieved the guqin's box, took out the instrument, and stored the box back in his storage ring.

In this life, he had never played the guqin even once. Yet, it didn't feel foreign to him. There was no awkwardness, no hesitation, only a deep familiarity, as if he had played it for years and was now simply picking it up again after a long absence.

He closed his eyes and ran his palm across the guqin's strings, as if trying to feel the intent within it. This guqin had been created to follow his path, and he could sense it with his heart.

It was as if the first ancestor of the phoenix stood before him, conveying the instrument's purpose in silence.

Without realizing it, Aldrian plucked the first string. A stirring sensation welled up in his heart—an indescribable feeling. Then, he plucked the second string, then the third, until all seven strings had been played, weaving together a melody. He followed his instincts, plucking according to his will.

At first, the notes were slightly off, disrupting the flow of the music. But as time passed, the melody grew smoother, more harmonious, more beautiful.

It was as if he had played this song long ago and was now simply recalling its notes, bringing them to life once more.

The music grew more beautiful as he immersed himself in it, even though he had never played before. His hands moved instinctively, each motion becoming smoother over time, no longer as rigid as before.

As he indulged in the sound of the guqin, unaware of his surroundings, phenomenon began to unfold. The wind blew gently toward him, as if it, too, was enjoying the melody. Birds drew near, seemingly drawn by the beautiful sound, as if they wished to listen and appreciate the music.

All kinds of flowers released their fragrance, filling the air with a refreshing blend of scents that spread across the garden. The heaven and earth energy flowed more

slowly, as if unwilling to pass up the chance to listen to the music. Even the heavens within his domain seemed to stay still, and the people in Caritas could sense a subtle change in the atmosphere.

Inside the mansion, the sound of the guqin finally reached the ears of those within, making them wonder who was playing such a mesmerizing melody. Drawn by its beauty, they made their way to the vast garden, where they found their lord seated beneath the shade of a tree, playing the guqin as a gentle breeze accompanied him.

For a moment, their eyes glimmered at the breathtaking sight before them, then they closed them and let themselves be swept away by the music.

Sylphia and Baek Jimin also heard the music and turned toward Aldrian beneath the tree. They had been in the middle of a conversation, discussing Baek Jimin's experiences in Weimar City with Aldrian.

Drawn by the melody, they walked closer but kept a respectful distance, afraid to disturb his playing. Instead, they stood quietly, closing their eyes to fully take in the music.

Everyone who listened felt a deep sense of peace, as if all their worries had faded away. This feeling was especially profound for those who had been saved by Aldrian from Marquess Parus and now served under him in the mansion.

For the men, the torture they endured under Marquess Parus's rule left deep scars. They had felt utterly helpless, forced to rely on the mercy of their tormentors.

For the women, the trauma ran just as deep. Marquess Parus's forces had treated them as mere playthings, reducing their existence to nothing more than the fulfillment of carnal desires. Many believed they were already tainted and felt as though their self-esteem had been completely shattered.

Though they all tried to move on and focus on their work under Aldrian, the pain and trauma remained buried deep within their hearts. Such unresolved feelings could be dangerous because they could fester into an inner demon or perhaps they had already unconsciously created one, something that could jeopardize their future cultivation.

However, at this moment, under the beautiful melody of the guqin, they felt their past grievances slowly dissipating. A sense of peace washed over them, one they had never experienced before.

Unknown to them, the inner demons that had already begun to take shape were now being suppressed. As they listened to the music, a sense of enlightenment dawned upon them, allowing them to reflect on their painful experiences.

The past could not be changed, but the future still awaited them. If they remained trapped by their past grievances and thirst for vengeance, they would gain nothing and might even destroy themselves in the process.

Moreover, the ones who had caused their suffering were already dead, killed by the very man now playing this music.

Then, all across the mansion, a remarkable phenomenon occurred—one after another, many people suddenly broke through to a higher level of cultivation!

Chapter 409: Baek Jimin Worries

Many of the people Aldrian saved were already at the peak of their cultivation stage. They only needed a slight push to finally break through. The music from the guqin put them at ease, allowing their energy to circulate more smoothly. It also granted them enlightenment, clearing their minds and dispelling doubts in their hearts. All of this combined enabled them to break through much faster and more smoothly than they had expected.

All they did was listen to Aldrian's guqin playing, which only proved that even without realizing it, he had already reached a stage where his music could influence nature itself, to the point where heaven and earth resonated with his melody. That was why the energy within these people began to flow effortlessly, even without them deliberately using their cultivation techniques.

The music continued for another hour before finally coming to a stop. Nature returned to its normal state a few seconds after the music ended. Birds happily soared across the sky above the mansion, some even starting to build their nests in the trees, as if they did not want to miss the chance to hear that music again in the future.

All the people finally emerged from their entranced state, slowly opening their eyes. They were stunned and shocked to realize that they had broken through while simply listening to the music. Although not all of them had achieved a breakthrough, those who hadn't still gained enlightenment from Aldrian's guqin playing, which would be invaluable in the future.

"I broke through!"

"I thought I would never reach another breakthrough in this lifetime!"

"What a beautiful piece of music and masterful guqin playing, Lord Aldrian is truly a man of miracles."

Many voices filled with admiration were directed toward Aldrian as they turned to look at him. Then, one by one, they knelt and kowtowed before him, expressing their gratitude, devotion, and reverence.

Aldrian felt a strong surge of faith energy flowing toward him, their emotions clearly transmitted to him, making him truly understand just how deeply they worshipped him.

He then looked at the two beautiful women standing side by side not far from him. They smiled at him, their expressions radiant. The sunlight that day was neither too hot nor too bright, making it comfortable to stand outside without discomfort. The gentle light illuminating their faces only enhanced their beauty, making Aldrian's heart flutter.

"Why are you just standing there? Come over here—it's much cooler under the shade of the tree," he said.

The ladies approached him without hesitation.

"Since when could you play the guqin? This level of mastery isn't something one can achieve in a short time. I've never seen you play before, and I'm certain you never have. So how is this possible?" Sylphia asked as she sat on his left.

Baek Jimin sat beside Sylphia, also looking at Aldrian with curiosity.

The beautiful music and masterful technique Aldrian displayed were something only a person who had dedicated their life to music or a high-level cultivator specializing in the sound element could achieve with the guqin. His playing influenced the surroundings and resonated with nature—an extraordinary feat for someone playing an instrument.

But beyond that, they could also sense that Aldrian's music affected a vast area, a clear testament to his strength in this regard.

"I've heard guqin playing from someone famous in the demon territory known by the title *Sound of the Sky Demoness*. She is renowned for her artistic music, capable of affecting an entire city and even making nature itself seem as though it were listening. I don't think what you just played is lacking in any way compared to hers," Baek Jimin added.

Aldrian smiled at them, then looked at the guqin and gently touched its strings.

"Well, what can I say? I really am a genius. Even though I've never played the guqin before, the moment I touched it, inspiration just kept flowing nonstop," he replied in a teasing tone.

"How cheeky. Anyway, where did you get this guqin? It's so beautiful, and the guqin—" Sylphia's eyes widened before she could finish her sentence.

Baek Jimin, confused by her reaction, turned to look at the instrument as well. But the moment she sensed something from the guqin that they hadn't noticed earlier, her eyes also widened in shock.

"This is a high divine-grade artifact! Where did you get this guqin?!" Sylphia asked in astonishment.

At first, Sylphia and Baek Jimin hadn't realized it. They had been too captivated by the beauty of Aldrian's music, completely absorbed in it even after it had ended. It wasn't until they finally shifted their focus to the guqin that they sensed the powerful aura emanating from it.

"This? I got it from a philanthropist who generously gifted me his treasure. He's a really great guy," Aldrian replied, his teasing tone unchanged.

Sylphia and Baek Jimin instantly knew there was no way that was true.

A philanthropist? Who are you trying to fool?!

This was a high divine-grade artifact, something so rare and difficult to create that only the imperial family could possibly possess it!

Sylphia knew this because Ivory empire also possessed a high divine-grade artifact, securely stored beneath the World Tree in Evergreen City.

As for Baek Jimin, although her sect didn't have any high divine-grade artifacts, the Thorny Flower Garden did possess a middle divine-grade artifact. Yet, the aura emanating from this guqin was far stronger than what she had ever sensed from her sect's legacy artifact.

Sylphia narrowed her eyes at Aldrian.

"You got this from the envoy of the Second Prince, didn't you? They must have given it to you for whatever reason," she said with certainty.

Aldrian smiled at her. "You're so smart, dear. Yes, this was their compensation for their presumptuous actions toward me. They want to make peace and build a relationship with me."

Hearing Aldrian's words, Sylphia and Baek Jimin felt odd and looked at him with doubtful expressions.

Based on their understanding of his character, they had no doubt that Aldrian was not someone who could be swayed by an enemy simply because of a gifted artifact. Many might call it blind faith, but they firmly believed that he would never change his stance or build a relationship with an enemy, not even if a high divine-grade artifact was placed before him.

Right now, his primary focus was the traitor from the church. That was the very reason they were in this empire. Because of this, they strongly doubted that Aldrian would simply let the Second Prince go without securing the traitor.

"Make peace with you, huh? That's to be expected. After what you did in this city and Weimar, the Second Prince must have a serious headache. But honestly, I'm more inclined to believe that you just took this guqin from them instead. They gave it to you, but you didn't give them what they wanted in return, did you?" Sylphia asked.

Aldrian simply smiled at her, making Sylphia sigh.

"As I thought, you're truly mischievous," she said before turning to Baek Jimin. "See? He's always like this. I have to endure his shamelessness all the time."

Baek Jimin giggled at their interaction. In the past, she might have felt envious of this closeness. But now, all she felt was a sense of serenity. Ever since their stroll through Weimar yesterday, she no longer felt left out by Aldrian. In fact, she even found herself looking forward to what their relationship might become in the future.

She and Sylphia had already talked a lot before this, and Sylphia kept hinting that she should stay close to Aldrian. Baek Jimin could only feel grateful to Sylphia and she was determined to get closer to Aldrian whenever she had the chance. Now that she had come to understand her own feelings for him, she wanted to stay by his side.

But then, another concern arose in her mind. She worried about what Sylphia truly thought and, more importantly, about Aldrian's feelings. She knew how much they loved each other, yet now that she had fallen for Aldrian as well, what did that mean for her future? How should she proceed with this love?

She wanted to talk to Sylphia about it first but she didn't dare.

Although Sylphia had given her the green light to get closer to Aldrian, Baek Jimin feared that she might have misunderstood her intent, risking a rift in their friendship. She already regarded Sylphia as a true friend, and they already shared many of the same values and views. The thought of damaging their relationship over a misunderstanding, especially by accidentally confessing her feelings for Aldrian, terrified her.

That would be both embarrassing and disastrous!

Aldrian glanced at Baek Jimin for a moment before turning to Sylphia.

"My love, I want to discuss something with you later."

Chapter 410: The News Reach Outside

At the imperial palace of the Losaris Imperial Family, the atmosphere was tense and grim. In front of the second prince, who wore a dark expression, lay Marquess Xavier, seemingly on the verge of death. He remained unconscious, his condition worsening as his cultivation continued to drop. Once powerful, his cultivation had already fallen to the duke stage and was still deteriorating.

His guardian knight knelt before Wilmar, delivering a report on the failed negotiation. The news cast a heavy silence over the room, turning the expressions of the second prince and everyone present grim.

"We were too careless. I thought that by giving him a high-grade artifact, he would come to us out of a sense of superiority and courtesy, acknowledging our sincerity. But he is more decisive and principled than I expected," Grand Duke Donovan said.

He then looked at Wilmar and bowed slightly. "My apologies, Your Majesty. I overlooked something, which led to us losing an artifact and crippling one of our people. I deserve to receive harsh punishment."

Wilmar's eyes remained cold as he observed Marquess Xavier's condition before turning his gaze to Grand Duke Donovan. He was furious at Aldrian and how their seemingly perfect plan had failed. And to make matters worse, he had lost a high-grade divine artifact!

Although that artifact was more for display, as no one in his family could fully unleash the true potential of the guqin, it was still a high-grade divine artifact! His heart ached at the thought of that bastard simply snatching it away without giving anything in return.

He wanted nothing more than to strangle Aldrian for his arrogance and Grand Duke Donovan for suggesting such a plan, but he forced himself to calm down. After reconsidering, he realized that Donovan couldn't be entirely blamed. He had agreed to the plan himself, believing it to be flawless—surely, Aldrian would take the bait.

After all, who wouldn't want further compensation after receiving a high-grade divine artifact? He had been certain that Aldrian would come to the capital.

However, he had never expected Aldrian to be so decisive and ruthless. Not only had he snatched the artifact without hesitation, but he had also crippled the envoy he had sent. Marquess Xavier hadn't even gotten the chance to mention the traitor to lure Aldrian to the capital! Aldrian had shown him no respect, despite his supposed gesture of "goodwill."

He sighed, trying to calm himself once again.

"You are not entirely to blame for this, Grand Duke Donovan. I also thought your plan was flawless, but we underestimated that young man's principles and decisiveness. We overlooked them—and paid a heavy price for it," he said.

Grand Duke Donovan straightened his posture and let out a sigh.

"Yes, Your Majesty. It seems we cannot judge that man using common logic," he replied.

"Although the plan to lure that man to the capital has failed, we will proceed with the other one. Even if he refuses to come, we can still buy time with the 'plague' plan. How is it progressing?" Wilmar asked.

"We began yesterday, as per Your Majesty's orders. At most, we should see its effects within a week," Grand Duke Donovan replied.

"Good. At least this plan will remain unknown to him, and he'll have his hands full dealing with it. I want to see if that man can truly handle this problem on his own," Wilmar said, his eyes flashing as he thought about the future.

"At least until that 'thing' can be used again, we are in a passive position. But it's still worth trying. We'll wait for the results next week—then, we can decide our next course of action," he added.

Before long, the nobles left the throne hall—except for Carlson Harris, whom Wilmar ordered to stay behind.

"This is just a precaution, but be prepared to abandon Carsius if all our efforts fail," Wilmar said to Carlson.

Carlson was stunned. "You plan to abandon him, Your Majesty?"

This concerned him as well, after all, the three of them were already tied to the devils. If something went wrong, he would be dragged down with them!

"This is only a last resort," Wilmar explained. "If everything we do only fuels that man's wrath and costs us countless troops, it would be no different from handing the rebels the strength they need to strike back. If our losses become too great, it's not impossible for the rebels to push all the way to the capital. Before that happens, sacrificing Carsius would be the better option. It's a far better price to pay than losing the civil war."

Carlson pondered for a moment before nodding. "Alright, Your Majesty. I will take care of it."

With that, he excused himself and left the throne hall.

Now alone in the vast hall. Wilmar clenched his fists, gritting his teeth.

"That mysterious swordsman bastard! I will find your weakness—I will be the one to have the last laugh!"

The loss of a high-grade divine artifact still stung, but there was nothing he could do about it now. Dwelling on regret would accomplish nothing. What mattered now was securing his power as emperor and crushing the rebellion once and for all.

In the neighboring Atria Empire, the Vindas Empire was far more stable compared to the previous year. Since the downfall of the Larson family, the emergence of the giant beast, and the revelation of the truth about the Duclan family, the people of the empire had become much more aware of the devils' presence. It was now clear that they had already infiltrated the empire and were operating within it, aided by numerous traitors.

The purge carried out last year by the imperial family, with the support of noble houses, had successfully uprooted the devils' network within the Vindas Empire. The results were shocking to the masses, several big bases had been uncovered in different territories, some even within noble domains.

Chaos ensued as certain nobles were stripped of their status, but the emperor swiftly redistributed their titles to more deserving families, restoring order and strengthening the empire's foundation.

The Duclan family, whose status had been elevated to a grand duchy, also played a crucial role in assisting the imperial family in eliminating the remaining devils within the empire. Many saw the matriarch, Carol Duclan, as a woman with both a vast heart and a strong, assertive nature.

People knew that although the imperial family had been deceived by the Larson family, they had still played a role in the downfall of the Duclan family years ago. Yet, despite this, Carol Duclan continued to assist them in their efforts to eradicate the devils.

Many believed that the Grand Duchess might still harbor a grudge, but she had chosen to bury it for the sake of confronting the devil threat. This only deepened people's admiration for her generosity and determination in dealing with the devils, as she was able to set aside her personal resentment for the greater good.

Unfortunately, no one knew that it was Aldrian's persuasion that led Carol to let go of her grudge against the imperial family. After learning that Emperor Herman had punished Princess Loraine, she tried to bury her resentment, following Aldrian's suggestion—though it took her quite some time before she could truly suppress the bitterness in her heart.

This was why the Duclan family joined the imperial family's efforts to eradicate the devils within the empire. Carol understood that the devils were the ones truly responsible for everything. In the end, it was their cunning schemes that had led to her family's downfall and forced her to endure so much—until she finally met Aldrian.

At this moment, Carol Duclan was inside the cultivation room of the grand mansion that had once belonged to the Duclan family. She had just finished her training, and her body was covered in sweat, making her skin glisten. Dressed in a simple cultivation robe that accentuated her curves, she looked undeniably sexy. Her captivating beauty, combined with her ponytail hairstyle, made her a fatal temptation for any man's heart.

After changing into a more appropriate robe, she stepped out of the cultivation room. However, before she could walk far, a maid approached her.

"Milady, there is a report from the Atria Empire that might interest you. The documents are inside your study," the maid informed her.

"Alright, thank you," Carol replied.

Not long after, she walked toward her study. Inside, she found a scroll and, without hesitation, unrolled it to read its contents. Her eyebrows lifted as she took in the report—it detailed the appearance of the mysterious swordsman in the Atria Empire and his involvement in the empire's civil war.

According to the report, the swordsman was described as a young man, seemingly in his twenties. Attached to the scroll was a sketch of a face, supposedly depicting the mysterious figure.

Carol, of course, already knew that the so-called mysterious swordsman was Aldrian. She was surprised to read that he had acted so openly, even allowing others to see him directly. Although the sketch differed slightly from Aldrian's actual face, it still bore some resemblances to him.

She then took out a communication artifact and spoke into it. "I want our intelligence network to monitor developments in the Atria Empire. Keep a close watch on the movements of the mysterious swordsman and report to me immediately if there are any updates."

"Yes, milady," came the response from the other side.

Now that Aldrian had revealed himself after all these years, he was undoubtedly planning something. Carol intended to pay close attention to these developments. As the savior of her family, he had earned her unwavering loyalty, and if he ever needed her help in the future, she would be ready to assist him in any way she could.

At the imperial palace of the Vindas Empire, Emperor Herman and Prince Claude had already received news from the Atria Empire the day before. They also wondered what Aldrian would do next. Since they knew the mysterious swordsman was Aldrian, this development came as a surprise to them.

However, at this moment, they had no time to dwell on the matter, as a special guest had just arrived at the imperial palace!