

# **The Shining Star Above The Heaven**

## **#Chapter 491: That is If I'm Just a Normal Cultivator - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 491: That is If I'm Just a Normal Cultivator**

### **Chapter 491: That is If I'm Just a Normal Cultivator**

After Kwon Hana shouted her order, the entire training ground suddenly shone with a yellow light, creating a pillar that trapped Aldrian and Baek Jimin inside. The pillar shot toward the sky, and in an instant, the entire sect was covered by a protective dome with the pillar as one of its foundations.

Baek Jimin and Aldrian felt pressure from the pillar and their energy was sucked into it, as if the energy inside their bodies was being used to fuel the foundation of the dome. As a result, they could not circulate their energy, and instead, it was rapidly sucked away.

Baek Jimin then tried to get out of the pillar quickly by slamming it with her palm, but the pillar was like solid transparent iron, and Baek Jimin could not break it with her raw power.

She then used her technique to try to break the pillar.

From her palm, white flame suddenly appeared. However, the strange thing was that the flame was not hot but instead felt cold. She then pushed her hand toward the pillar, and the white flame shot with intensity toward it, to the point that everyone near the vast training ground could feel the cold, despite being separated by the transparent yellow pillar.

The white flame hit the pillar, and the place where it struck became engulfed in ice. Baek Jimin then finally used her palm again to strike the part of the pillar that was engulfed in ice.

Slam!

However, the pillar did not budge, which made Baek Jimin grit her teeth in frustration. Her energy was draining quickly, and releasing her technique just now only made it drain faster.

The people watching her were truly amazed by the power she displayed and couldn't help but think that she was truly the daughter of Sect Master Baek. Even under the effect of the formation—one that they could slightly feel despite being outside of it—she

was still able to unleash such a powerful technique. She was a genius and a powerful cultivator, the likes of which rarely appeared in the sect's history.

Aldrian, who had seen it all, turned his gaze toward Kwon Hana.

"I see. So you took advantage of the sect's defensive formation and slightly modified it to create this formation that sucks in every bit of energy inside the pillar, no matter the source, even if it is from a living being. It also threw our energy flow into chaos because of it. You truly have a genius formation master if they can modify a formation of this caliber. I wonder if I can meet them?" Aldrian said calmly.

Kwon Hana trembled as she looked at Aldrian's calm face. He was the factor that kept her on edge. He was the greatest threat and the most dangerous variable in all of her mother's plans. He was someone powerful enough to battle the entire sect alone, and even though he was trapped inside the formation, it did nothing to lessen her anxiety.

To be honest, she was truly jealous. She was jealous of Baek Jimin and all of her accomplishments. She knew how much of a genius Baek Jimin was, and she was also one of the few who knew that Baek Jimin had comprehended the most treasured cultivation technique of their sect, the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

She was confident that she could do what Baek Jimin did if she were given the same chance. Her mother was the most famous grand elder of the sect, and she also wanted to bring pride to her mother and to herself. However, she was still not as privileged as the daughter of the sect master, and her mother was not the sect master, which made her direct her resentment toward Baek Jimin and Sect Master Baek.

Now Baek Jimin even had someone like Aldrian behind her, and from the way it seemed, they were very close. This made her jealousy burn even stronger. How could Baek Jimin have all the privilege and fortune, while she could not even show her true potential?

She tried to steel herself in front of Aldrian's calm face.

"Even if you know about it, what can you do? The sect's defensive formation has already been modified to withstand a peak emperor stage cultivator! Even if you can fight someone at the peak emperor stage, this defensive formation is specialized to withstand any attacks at that level, no matter how many times you strike it!"

"There is no way you can keep attacking the defensive formation with your limited energy! That pillar will keep sucking your energy until your dantian is empty. You will be powerless by then!" she shouted, her expression turning slightly crazed.

However, the panic she expected from Aldrian did not appear. Instead, Aldrian continued to look at her with his calm expression.

"True. I can sense that this pillar does have the strength to withstand a peak emperor stage attack, and I am going to run out of energy before I can break this pillar," Aldrian said, which left many people stunned. Kwon Hana was also stunned; she could not believe it. That was it? Was he really this easy to trap?

Suddenly, her confidence shot through the roof.

"Then—"

"That is if I'm just a normal cultivator." Before Kwon Hana could say anything, Aldrian had already cut her off.

Suddenly, Aldrian's aura spread across the entire training ground, causing everyone to freeze in shock as even the pillar trembled under the pressure of his aura.

The people below the duke stage instantly collapsed under the pressure. Those at the duke stage and grand duke stage struggled just to stand. Even the king stage and emperor stage cultivators were in better condition, but they still had to fight against the pressure.

As for Kwon Hana, who was only at the low earl stage, her face had already kissed the ground the moment Aldrian released the aura of his full domain.

Aldrian could sense that the pillar was truly strong, and he needed to get slightly serious to destroy it. He channeled the full power of his domain into his body and clenched his fist.

His fist released a golden hue, and with the power of his entire domain gathered into it, he punched the pillar.

Boom! Crack!

The pillar trembled for a split second before cracks spread across its surface and it shattered instantly.

Rumble!

Following the shattered pillar, the dome that covered the entire sect also collapsed, and the formation spread across the sect's grounds cracked in many places, severely damaging the sect's defensive formation. This situation was fatal for the headquarters of any major organization because it left them vulnerable to attacks from the outside.

The elders who were still standing and watching all of this felt a chill run down their spines. The king stage and emperor stage elders, who had initially planned to attack Aldrian once he ran out of energy, now hesitated after witnessing his power.

In the midst of their hesitation, the pressure suddenly disappeared. Aldrian retracted his aura, but then he stretched his hand toward Kwon Hana, shaping it into a grasping motion. In an instant, Kwon Hana's body vanished from where she was and reappeared right in Aldrian's grasp.

Aldrian choked her, forcing her to her knees as he pressed her body to the ground.

"Stop!" Seeing Kwon Hana already in Aldrian's grasp, some of the elders at the king and emperor stages decided to jump in to save her. But Aldrian didn't even look at them, he simply used spatial lock on their bodies to freeze them in place, while remaining focused on the woman in his grasp.

"Gngnh... dongh... kihll... me," she tried to beg Aldrian between her choking breaths.

Aldrian looked into her eyes calmly, then touched her forehead and delved into her memories. Her eyes rolled back as he was not gentle in his search. After a few moments, he was done and released his grasp, letting Kwon Hana's unconscious body slump to the ground. She fainted from the pain in her mind as Aldrian harshly infiltrated her memories.

Baek Jimin, who had slightly gasped from her energy nearly being drained, could only smile in gratitude toward Aldrian. Fortunately, she had come back with him; otherwise, she didn't know what her fate would have been.

Aldrian then looked at Baek Jimin.

*"Your mother seems able to escape from the fight. Though this woman doesn't know the details of the fight, it appears your mother might be able to escape somewhere without being detected by Kwon Mira or anyone,"* Aldrian said through sound transmission.

Baek Jimin's expression shifted to one of worry. She gritted her teeth, feeling frustrated and couldn't help but blame herself for her current lack of ability.

Aldrian saw through this and his eyes softened slightly.

"Hey, don't you have me? I'll help you, so you don't have to worry." He said.

Baek Jimin sighed and couldn't help but smile. But then Aldrian fell silent, which made Baek Jimin tilt her head in confusion. After a few seconds of silence, Aldrian suddenly closed his eyes. After another moment, he focused on her again, but his expression was now frowning.

"I found your mother, but her condition... I think it's not good."

Hearing Aldrian, her heart tightened, and panic surged through her.

"Where is she? How bad is her condition? What happened—?"

"Shh, shh, calm down. Let's go to her now, but I hope you can hold yourself together when you see her," he said, pulling her into his embrace.

She was stunned as Aldrian suddenly embraced her, but she still nodded at his words. After that, they disappeared, leaving many people who had witnessed their interaction, noting Aldrian's affection toward Baek Jimin.

## **Chapter 492: Sect Master Baek's Condition**

Aldrian and Baek Jimin appeared in the middle of a forest surrounded by many hills and steep, high ravines, making it clear they were in the lowlands of the valleys. Not far from them stood a simple wooden hut among the tall trees, and Aldrian walked toward it, followed by Baek Jimin.

Aldrian did not hesitate to open the entrance to the hut, which was covered only by a single piece of cloth. Once they stepped inside the hut, they finally saw what was within, and it made Baek Jimin widen her eyes before her eyes turned red as she covered her lips with one hand.

What she saw was her mother lying with her eyes closed on top of a simple piece of cloth spread across the ground. However, she no longer showed the beautiful, mature appearance that had once attracted many men. Instead, she looked like an old woman, her face covered in deep wrinkles. Her body was so thin it seemed as if there were no flesh beneath her skin.

One of her arms had been cut off, the wound bound with a simple strip of white cloth that was now stained and dirty. Her cultivation had already dropped to the Earl stage, and they could sense that it was still steadily falling—a sign that her dantian had been badly damaged.

Her breathing and heartbeat were also weak, as if she had little time left and was only waiting for death.

"Mother!" Baek Jimin instantly rushed toward her mother. Although her face was no longer easily recognizable because of how much she had aged, Baek Jimin knew it was truly her. Besides the faint resemblance still left in her features, the robe she wore was the same one she usually wore during her daily activities as sect master.

Baek Jimin gently touched her mother's face, unable to hold back her tears. She stroked her face a few times while softly calling out to her, but there was no response.

They could see sweat rolling down her aged face and body, soaking the robe she wore. Her closed eyes were slightly furrowed, and from time to time a pained grunt escaped her lips, as if she was enduring unbearable pain.

Aldrian did not stay still either. He approached her mother and touched her remaining hand, the one that was still intact. Seeing Baek Jimin cry like this made his heart ache, and he hated it.

He checked Sect Master Baek's condition with his senses and energy, and his face slightly frowned after he finished his scan.

*"Poison, a damaged dantian, many severed meridians, her body rotting from within. Her condition is even worse than it looks on the outside,"* Aldrian thought.

"Aldrian."

Baek Jimin's voice made him look at her. He saw her red eyes, as if silently asking him, "How is she?"

He did not want to make her even sadder, so he smiled softly and touched her cheek with tenderness.

"Your mother is not a lost cause. Do not worry. Although her condition is very bad, it is still curable," he said gently.

Baek Jimin finally released a sigh of relief. If Aldrian said that, then her mother could still be saved. She trusted him more than anyone right now.

Aldrian then injected his golden energy into the sect master's body. Her body emitted a faint golden hue, which reflected in Baek Jimin's red eyes as she watched the healing process.

Aldrian's golden energy first purified the poison that had already spread throughout her internal organs, dantian, and meridians. Once the poison was purified, the energy then began healing the damaged organs.

Then the golden energy flowed through the meridians and dantian, swiftly repairing any damage or fractures. The sect master's cultivation finally stopped leaking and stabilized at the middle Earl stage.

Aldrian could sense that her cultivation foundation had been weakened by the poison, so he strengthened it further with his energy.

In the midst of the healing process, the sect master's eyes suddenly trembled and slowly opened. She felt a warmth spreading through her body, comforting her and easing her pain, bringing her back to consciousness. The warmth that spread through her was unlike anything she had ever felt before. It was a feeling she hoped to experience forever.

Her eyes finally settled on Baek Jimin, who was looking at her with tears in her eyes.

"Is this a dream? Is this a hallucination as I'm about to die?" she whispered, her voice hoarse, as though she hadn't spoken in a long time.

Baek Jimin smiled and gently touched her mother's cheek, resting her forehead against her mother's.

"No, you're not going to die. We've come to save you. You'll live for a long time and see the future. You'll keep watching me as I grow stronger," she said softly.

Sect Master Baek was momentarily stunned, but then she turned her head to the other person in the room. She hadn't realized that Aldrian, the source of the warmth, was beside her. She had been so focused on Baek Jimin that she hadn't noticed Aldrian had been touching her hand, seemingly healing her.

"Sect Master Baek, stay still and relax. Let me fix your body. Once this is done, I promise you will return to your previous condition—and even be better than before," Aldrian said reassuringly.

Sect Master Baek smiled at his words and nodded, then looked back at her daughter's face.

"You can sleep peacefully for now, Mother. Just leave the rest to Aldrian," Baek Jimin said softly.

Sect Master Baek smiled at this and closed her eyes. It was clear that she was in much better condition now, as her eyes no longer showed any signs of pain. Her breathing became steady, and her heartbeat returned to normal— a stark contrast to earlier when it had seemed like she was already dying.

After healing her body from all the damage and ailments, Aldrian then focused on her severed arm. He carefully grew a new one. As the new arm began to grow, Aldrian took great care to ensure the process was slow and gentle, so as not to make the sect master uncomfortable. If he had grown the arm too quickly, the sensation would have been sharp and stinging, possibly waking her up.

When Aldrian had tortured Wilmar and the others, the process of growing limbs had not been without pain. Every time new limbs grew, they experienced a stinging pain due to the rapid movement of muscles, nerves, and bones growing from the severed wounds. By growing the sect master's arm more slowly and gently, Aldrian minimized the pain.

Once the new arm was successfully grown and Aldrian felt that there were no issues, he released his hand. The sect master remained asleep, but her face was peaceful, as if she were in a comfortable slumber. Although her face still appeared aged due to her significantly weakened cultivation, there was already visible improvement—her aging had stopped.



However, she was not fully out of danger. For her to be completely safe, she needed to regain her past cultivation so that her vitality would return to its former state. Because her cultivation had dropped so drastically, her age limit was almost catching up to her.

But that could be easily fixed—once she resumed cultivating, she would regain her past cultivation in no time, as she had been there before. Aldrian had already repaired her foundation and even strengthened it, so she could advance more quickly.

Baek Jimin smiled as she saw that her mother's condition had improved greatly. She had never seen her mother in such a state before, which had broken her heart. That had been the most severe condition she had ever witnessed from her mother.

She gently touched her mother's new hand, stroking it a few times. Then, she looked at Aldrian, her eyes filled with both a smile and tears.

"Thank you, for saving my mother."

Aldrian shook his head.

"Don't mention it. How could I let someone so precious to you suffer in front of me?"

Baek Jimin simply smiled and then looked at her mother's sleeping face. Noticing that Baek Jimin seemed to want to stay by her mother's side, Aldrian then stood up and quietly walked out of the hut. He surveyed his surroundings and finally sensed that a defensive and illusionary formation covered an area of 500 meters around the hut.

From the looks of it, this place had been prepared in advance, likely as a refuge where Sect Master Baek had escaped to after losing the fight. This location was still within the Thorny Flower Garden's territory, more than 9,000 kilometers from the main sect. The scenery was beautiful, and the terrain made any search challenging. With the illusion formation covering the hut, Sect Master Baek was safe here.

He observed the surrounding scenery for a few minutes before he saw Baek Jimin emerge from the hut and approach him. He smiled at her, but suddenly his eyes widened as Baek Jimin kissed him on the lips and hugged him, burying her face in his chest.

He blinked a few times but then smiled and hugged her back. It seemed he really needed to be wary of Baek Jimin's tendency to surprise him—she was much different from Sylphia, who was more predictable.

They stayed in that position for more than half a minute before suddenly sensing movement from the hut, as Sect Master Baek seemed to wake up and try to sit up. Baek Jimin instantly rushed inside the hut.



"Mother, you should rest. Don't push yourself too much," she said, sitting beside her mother, who was already in a sitting position.

Sect Master Baek smiled at her daughter and then looked at Aldrian, who had followed behind. She gazed at her daughter again and stroked her head with tenderness.

"I didn't think I'd see you again. I thought that time was the last time I'd see you in this life," she said.

### **Chapter 493: The Truth of the Past**

Baek Jimin touched her mother's hand and brought it to her face.

"Of course you will continue to see us. You will live a long life, and you will live a fulfilling life, so do not keep saying ominous things," she said.

She was truly happy, not only because her mother could be saved, but also because she was finally showing different emotions, like smiling, instead of being cold and expressionless like in the past.

Since her father had gone missing and her mother had changed, she had never been the same, no longer showing her smile to her. Now that her mother was smiling again, it gave her a sense of nostalgia.

Sect Master Baek smiled at her daughter and then looked at Aldrian.

"Thank you for saving me," she said.

Aldrian shook his head while smiling.

"Do not mind it. It was truly fate that we came back to Thorny Flower Garden and discovered that something had happened to you, Sect Master. Baek Jimin was so worried about you."

Sect Master Baek sighed and looked at her daughter again.

"Child, do you not hate your mother? Why did you come back?"

Hearing her question, Baek Jimin froze for a moment, but she still showed a smile. She gently rubbed her mother's hand against her cheek and closed her eyes.

"Maybe I hated you in the past. But after hearing from someone that you might not be as you seemed, and after thinking about it thoroughly, I realized there are so many things I do not know about you. I was too ignorant to judge you, Mother," Baek Jimin said. She then opened her eyes and looked at her mother's face.

"That is why my hatred towards you faded as time passed. Now, I only miss you."

Sect Master Baek could not help but be touched by her daughter's words. She looked at Aldrian, believing he was the one who had helped Baek Jimin change. She gazed at him with gratitude.

"Mother, what really happened to you? Why were you fighting with the elders? How were you injured?" Baek Jimin asked with a concerned expression.

Hearing her question, Sect Master Baek sighed, and her expression turned serious. She seemed to be thinking carefully about how to explain it before finally opening her lips.

"This matter is connected to your father."

Baek Jimin froze, then her eyes widened and began to tremble.

"What?"

Sect Master Baek sighed and looked elsewhere, as if trying to recall the events of the past.

"Your father was actually captured by the devils."

Baek Jimin was shocked, and Aldrian continued listening, wanting to hear the details.

"And not just ordinary devils. Your father was captured by one of the Seven Deadly Sins, the Sloth Devil."

Hearing the name of the perpetrator, Aldrian narrowed his eyes. The Sloth Devil? It seemed there was more happening behind the scenes, and something even larger brewing if the Seven Deadly Sins were involved.

"The day your father and I set out on our journey to the Piercing Heaven Sect to attend the Three Great Sects Meeting was the day everything changed for me," Sect Master Baek continued. "In the middle of our journey, we were suddenly attacked by a group of devils. It was a complete surprise, as we never expected devils to infiltrate so deep into demon territory."

"We managed to hold on for a few moments until she appeared — the Sloth Devil," Sect Master Baek said through gritted teeth. "That bitch, with her lazy and uncaring face, was terrifyingly strong. Her undead army and other summons, which included many beings at the King and even Emperor stages, were overwhelming. We were instantly crushed. All of our escorts were killed, leaving only me and your father."

"She did not even give us time to use our escape talisman, and—" Sect Master Baek paused slightly as she remembered her husband's face.

"In that desperate moment, your father tried to sacrifice himself to give me a chance to escape. But that woman—" Her eyes filled with intense hatred. "She was playing with us. Like a predator toying with its prey. Your father, who was ready to sacrifice himself, was easily stopped by her, and she captured him."

"However, he did not give up and kept resisting, doing everything he could, even if it meant sacrificing his limbs. He shouted for me to escape, but in my hesitation, I overheard the Sloth Devil talking about you, which made my heart grow cold." She looked into Baek Jimin's eyes.

"She said she wanted to capture you, and she would do it one way or another. At that moment, I decided to stop hesitating and abandon your father to escape using the escape talisman."

"After I returned to the sect, I searched for you, and fortunately, you were fine, just playing with your friends. I decided not to tell you anything and instead gathered all the elders to declare an emergency. However, at that meeting, I discovered a truth." Her eyes turned hateful again.

"The majority of the elders, who are also part of Grand Elder Kwon Mira's faction, considered the tragedy I experienced to be just a 'normal' tragedy in the cultivation world. They believed there was nothing they could do since it involved one of the Seven Deadly Sins."

"I was furious at the time, almost on the verge of rampaging, but then Grand Elder Kwon Mira brought you into the picture and threatened me using you. That's when something finally clicked inside my mind."

"Grand Elder Kwon must have been working with the devils. She's their asset inside the sect, their dog. She must have been the one who gave the devils the schedule of my movements to the Piercing Heaven Sect. No wonder the devils were able to ambush us in a place we never expected."

"When I confronted her about the devils, she just smiled at me and whispered that if I wanted to keep you safe, I would have to follow their demands, do everything they wanted. She also said that if I told the other great sects about the devils' presence in the demon territory, Sloth Devil would come personally to take you."

"At that time, I realized that after the devils failed to kill me during the journey to the Piercing Heaven Sect, they resorted to another method to turn me into their puppet. Knowing it would be difficult to kill me within the sect's grounds, the devils used that bitch's hands to control me by threatening me with your safety."

Baek Jimin's eyes trembled, and she felt a heaviness settle in her heart. Is this the truth about her father's disappearance? No wonder, no wonder she changed after that trip!

More or less, she finally understood her mother's thoughts after all that experience and why she treated her the way she did.

"Since that time, I felt lost and didn't know what to do. When I tried to think about your future, I finally came to a decision — the best one I could think of — and that was to strengthen you as quickly as possible. And the quickest way to increase your strength was to comprehend the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture."

"Although I don't know if you'll succeed or not, I still wanted to try. Even though many generations have failed to comprehend it, I still wanted you to try, even though I knew you would have to bear immense responsibility and suffering afterward. At least, for me, it's much better than you being taken by the devils."

"Like the Heavenly Demon hearing my prayer, you actually managed to comprehend it — something that became big news among the higher-ups of the Three Great Sects. After a long time, someone finally managed to comprehend one of the Three Heavenly Demon Scriptures. With this, the other great sects will also take notice of you, and the danger you face from the devils or anyone who wants to harm you will be greatly reduced." Sect Master Baek showed a proud expression.

"I also planned for your future escape, and I had to act cold toward you all the time. I needed you to hate me for my plan to succeed. My plan was simple: to make sure you wouldn't hesitate to leave the sect and roam the world, far from the devils and their chaotic influence in the sects or anywhere else."

"Even though you successfully comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, your existence inside the sect will always be in danger, and the best option is for you to create your own identity outside. With your strength, I believe that in the future, you will finally be free from any danger."

"Many years later, when Aldrian came to the sect, I thought it was the perfect time to send you away. With him and the Sword Saint by your side, you would be safe on your own. Finally, I could do something I couldn't do while you were inside the sect. I sent you away secretly, with only my most trusted people knowing about it, and without Grand Duke Kwon or anyone from her faction finding out. So, when I finally purged them, they realized that you were no longer in the sect."

Sect Master Baek paused, noticing her daughter was already in tears again. Baek Jimin didn't hesitate to hug her mother, sobbing as she had no idea her mother had been through so much. Her mother hadn't even been able to show her sadness after her husband was captured and had been out of her life for so long.

She couldn't imagine how her mother must have felt, keeping all of that to herself. Did she not feel tired and broken? But then, Baek Jimin realized that the fuel keeping her mother moving forward was her — her mother had always thought about her, and once she was safe, her mother could finally unleash everything hidden inside her heart.

Baek Jimin felt guilty for not knowing all of this and for having hated her mother because of it.

Sect Master Baek smiled and gently stroked her daughter's back to calm her. After a minute, Baek Jimin finally pulled away, and Sect Master Baek turned to Aldrian, then back to Baek Jimin.

"From the night I purged them, I found something even more troublesome than I initially thought."

#### **Chapter 494: Bigger Trouble May Be Awaiting**

Aldrian narrowed his eyes while Baek Jimin looked at her mother, wondering what she had found.

Sect Master Baek sighed.

"It looks like there is an outside family working with Grand Elder Kwon. And with her connection to the devils, I assume the devils also have a connection to that family." Baek Jimin narrowed her eyes.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"It's the Tang family," Sect Master Baek said, then looked at Aldrian. "I believe that when you healed me, you could sense a dose of poison spread across my body?"

Aldrian nodded. The poison was fatal to Sect Master Baek. For a poison potent enough to affect a cultivator of Sect Master Baek's caliber, it could not have been an ordinary poison. If the Tang family was involved, then it made sense.

From what he knew, the Tang family was famous for their mastery of poison in the demon territory and was one of the most feared families because of it. With their mastery, they could create many kinds of poison, from ones used for curing to those used for killing.

"When I did my purge, I successfully killed many of the elders from Grand Elder Kwon's faction. With my strength, it was an easy thing to do. For them to face me, they had to work together and trap me using formations, but I made sure to kill them one by one without giving them a chance to coordinate or gather."

"When I finally reached Grand Elder Kwon's place and fought her, I almost killed her. But suddenly, she spread poison powder at me, making me flinch and back off. However, it was too late, as I had already inhaled some of the poison. The poison took effect immediately, and I felt pain throughout my body while my organs burned."

"I could not circulate my energy properly. My dantian and meridians felt like they were drying up. In that moment, I tried to escape, but that bitch managed to cut off one of my arms when I dodged her fatal strike." Sect Master Baek spoke with a furious gaze, remembering how her hand had been severed.

"When I was nearly surrounded by other elders, I decided to escape using an escape talisman. The escape place was known only to me and your father," she said to Baek Jimin, then looked around at her surroundings.

"This place was built by us and only known to us. We wanted a place to relax, far from the sect's or the cultivation world's problems. We wanted a peaceful place just for the two of us, and with the beautiful scenery, this was the best place." Her eyes softened with reminiscence as she recalled building the hut together with her husband.

"I tried to detoxify the poison and recuperate here before returning to the sect, but the poison was extremely potent. Even after using the best detoxification pills from my storage ring and trying to expel the poison with my cultivation, it was useless. As time passed, my dantian began to suffer damage, and all of my organs showed signs of decay. I could do nothing but lie here and focus on suppressing the poison."

"At that time, I finally remembered that the Tang family had developed a kind of poison with a similar effect. It was a new type of poison that could even affect cultivators at the High Emperor Stage. How did I know? The patriarch of the Tang family once told me he had developed a poison with that kind of effect. He called it 'The Falling Emperor.'"

"I don't know why he told me something like that back then, but after I was poisoned and thought about it, maybe it was a warning—a warning for me that they had something that could harm me. I did not understand it at the time, but after that bitch threw the poison at me, everything finally made sense and the dots connected."

"The Tang family worked together with that bitch, and the patriarch also seems to know or even cooperate with the devils."

Hearing Sect Master Baek's conclusion, Aldrian frowned as he pondered. From his instincts, something bigger was brewing behind the shadows. For a famous and powerful family from the demon territory to work with the devils, and even involve the Seven Deadly Sins, it felt like too much effort just to deal with the Thorny Flower Garden.

Finally, a thought came to his mind.

*"They are targeting the Three Great Sects."*

Aldrian's face turned solemn.

If the purpose of the devils and these traitors was to destroy or control the Three Great Sects, then everything would make much more sense. However, it was still only his assumption, as he did not have solid proof. Even so, he felt a strong certainty that this was the case. To find out the truth, he would have to go directly to those who knew more details.

"By the way, how did you find this place? Like I said, no one knows about it except me and your father. Even if you somehow stumbled upon it, the illusion and barrier formations would have prevented you from seeing or entering it, so... how?" Sect Master Baek looked at her daughter, then at Aldrian.

Baek Jimin shrugged but gave a small gesture toward Aldrian.

Aldrian simply smiled at Sect Master Baek.

"Well, I have my own way," he said mysteriously. If he had told her he had simply asked the heavens directly for her location, she would probably think he was already nuts.

Sect Master Baek sighed and couldn't help but ask them,

"What happened to the sect? Why have you come back? Did that bitch not try to capture you or harm you? There's no way she'd miss the chance to capture you after you returned to the sect." She looked at Baek Jimin.

Before Baek Jimin could answer, Aldrian's voice resounded.

"Jimin, you can explain everything to your mother. After hearing Sect Master's story, it seems I have something I need to confirm. This is quite a troublesome matter if not taken care of as soon as possible."

Baek Jimin was stunned. She wanted to say something, but when she saw Aldrian look at her with a gentle gaze, she held back.

"You stay here with your mother. You must have many things to say to her, and I know you want to spend more time with her."

Baek Jimin's eyes softened, and she smiled at him. She knew that if Aldrian said something like that, he already had a plan in mind. She didn't want to nag him or become a burden, and besides, she wanted to be with her mother more at this time.

Baek Jimin nodded.

"Be careful."

Aldrian nodded, but just as he was about to leave, Sect Master Baek's voice called out to him.



"Wait, where are you going?"

Aldrian's face turned calm as he answered her.

"Well, to make a long story short, I'm taking the shortest route to unravel any plans the devils have for the demon territory. And what's shorter than going directly to those involved in it?"

Sect Master Baek's eyes slightly widened.

"Don't tell me... you just want to capture Kwon Mira or those from the Tang family?"

Aldrian didn't answer, but Sect Master Baek's expression grew angry.

"Are you crazy? You want to barge in without any proper planning? I know you're strong, but with Kwon Mira working with the Tang family and the devils, they must have plenty of tricks up their sleeves. You will—"

"Mother, mother, just let him be. He can handle it on his own."

Baek Jimin's voice cut off her mother's words, making her mother look at her with narrowed eyes.

"But—"

"Mother, I think you don't know anything about Aldrian because you've been in this place for so long, but trust him. If Kwon Mira, the Tang family, or the devils have something up their sleeves, Aldrian has just as many tricks of his own. He's someone I trust, and I want you to trust him, too."

Hearing her daughter, Sect Master Baek fell silent and looked at Aldrian again. He gave her a smile and a nod, which made her sigh. What had happened to make her daughter support Aldrian so fully and without question? It seemed there were many things she needed to discuss with her daughter after this.

"Then, see you later."

Aldrian turned and walked outside of the hut, leaving the mother and daughter alone.

Now alone with her daughter, Sect Master Baek turned to Baek Jimin.

"So, what happened while I was in here?"

Baek Jimin smiled and began recounting her experiences since returning to the demon territory today.

While Sect master Baek listened to her daughter's story, Aldrian had already walked 300 meters away from the hut. He looked up at the sky, admiring the numerous glimmering stars. The night scenery was beautiful and peaceful, but Aldrian didn't allow himself to enjoy it for too long—he had something to do.

What he needed to do now was find Kwon Mira, the one who had hurt Sect Master Baek and who seemed to know the devils' plan.

He asked the heavens for her location, and when the response came, he was stunned. He seemed to ponder for a few moments before he closed his eyes, activating his Eyes of the Heaven to directly see her whereabouts. Once he found her and finally saw her, his expression suddenly turned dumbfounded.

*"What the—?"*

### **Chapter 495: Unexpected Scene (R-18)**

The response from the heavens when Aldrian asked about Kwon Mira was not the place he expected. It was a city called Red Lotus, located quite far from the Thorny Flower Garden Territory and even closer to the Black Dragon Pavilion on the eastern side of the demon territory.

He wondered what she was doing in that place. What intrigued him most about the city of Red Lotus was that it was where he had heard the Beggar Sect had built one of their secret main hubs.

He knew this because the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect, Ryu Hyukjae, had explained the structure of the demon territory to him during his visit to the sect. Sect master Ryu had explained everything clearly and completely, allowing Aldrian to understand who, where, or what he needed to take note of while in the demon territory.

Aldrian thought for a moment. Was it only a coincidence that she visited this city? Had she visited one of the Beggar Sect's bases? Was the Beggar Sect also involved in this case?

He did not think further. Instead, he activated his Eyes of the Heaven to look directly at Kwon Mira's location and see what she was doing at that moment. When he found her, and the information from his Eyes of the Heaven confirmed her identity, he was astonished.

*"What the—"*

He did not expect the scene before him. It instantly left him speechless.

He saw her having sex with a man.

After confirming that it was truly her and knowing the man's name, he immediately deactivated his Eyes of the Heaven.

For the man's identity, he remembered his name as well, thanks to what sect master Ryu Hyukjae had explained.

His expression remained a mixture of dumbfounded and speechlessness.

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Inside a room with simple decor and minimal furniture, the sound of moaning, full of ecstasy, resounded without restraint. The repetitive sound of flesh meeting flesh echoed through the room. Anyone who heard it would instantly know what the occupant of the room was doing.

*Pak, pak, pak!*

"Ah, ah, yes, yes, harder."

The sultry voice of the beautiful woman with a voluptuous body and long purple hair urged the man behind her to quicken his movements. The slightly older man with unkempt hair pounded into her from behind, as he pulled one of her hands while fondling her breast with the other. He kissed her neck, moaning in pleasure.

"Agh... I... can't believe I can enjoy this body whenever I want."

*Pak, pak, pak!*

"Ugh... the body of the sect master of one of the great sects... Ugh," the man groaned in her ear, still thrusting with an increasingly faster tempo. He then moved her head to the side and kissed her from behind. The woman let him do as he pleased. Once their lips parted, she said to him,

"Ah, yes, ah, ah, you can enjoy me as much as you want," she gasped between moans.

Hearing her sultry voice and seeing her face twisted with pleasure, he grew even more excited and continued pounding her with vigorous movements.

The woman could do nothing but submit to the man's mercy as she continued to moan, but behind the pleasure etched on her face, her mind was elsewhere.

*"If not for the situation, I wouldn't have come here to hide, and this filthy man wouldn't dare to touch me. If not for that Aldrian guy!"*

She, Kwon Mira, the noblewoman and sect master of the Thorny Flower Garden, had been reduced to nothing more than an object of lust by the man still pounding into her,

all because she needed his help. She hadn't wanted to come to this place or ask for his assistance, but she had no choice.

Once the news from the Atria Empire spread and she learned that Aldrian was the man who had left with Baek Jimin, she decided to hide. She needed a place where no one could find her, even if they somehow managed to track her.

The safest place in the demon territory for her at the moment was here, due to the man's connections and the vast network of information he had across the region. If Aldrian were to return to the territory and visit the sect, this man would know about it, and he could track Aldrian's movements.

With Aldrian's movements always traceable, she could escape anywhere, as long as she had the information from this man.

She needed to hide for as long as possible.

The only problem was that she didn't know how long she would have to wait. When she saw what Aldrian was capable of during his battle with a huge army, she realized that she would be instantly dead if Baek Jimin returned with him and discovered what she had done to the sect or her mother. Once Aldrian stepped into the Thorny Flower Garden territory, she would have no time to escape.

Fear gripped her. She had finally reached the point of becoming the sect master after removing Baek Hayoon, she didn't want to die a dog's death. She wanted to keep her position and her life, even if it meant agreeing to this man's humiliating condition — to become his woman and satisfy his lust.

For her, the fear of death after having come this far made the protection in exchange for her body acceptable. She could return to the sect from time to time to maintain control of the situation and then come back to this man to continue hiding.

"Ah, dear, receive my seed." He could no longer hold back as his thrusts grew faster, preparing to release inside her womb.

"Ah, yes, yes, give it to me," she said, her face twisted in pleasure.

*Pak, pak, pak!*

"Here we go." The man pulled her body towards his, fondling her breasts more vigorously as he kissed her lips, his movements quickening as he neared release.

However, just before he could release, someone suddenly appeared beside them. The man, caught in the throes of pleasure and on the verge of ejaculation, didn't have time to react before a hand choked him from behind. He was pulled away from Kwon Mira by the figure.

Aldrian, who had teleported there to interrupt their erotic time, lifted the man's body with one hand. With a swift motion, he yanked the man's body in another direction, ensuring he wouldn't have to see his hardened dick, ready to release.

The man's dick, on the verge of ejaculation, separated from Kwon Mira's pleasure hole. Before he could release, he felt a surge of electricity, and his soul was shaken violently. The lightning laws, combined with Aldrian's golden energy, made his soul tremble. It took no more than five seconds for the man to fall unconscious.

With his other hand, Aldrian choked Kwon Mira from behind. Still unable to understand what was happening, she had no time to react or even see Aldrian's figure. All she felt was the man's dick pulling away from her vagina, followed by a tight grip on her neck that left her struggling to breathe in pain.

Along with the pain and suffocation, Kwon Mira also felt a wave of frustration. She had been on the brink of orgasm when the man pulled away from her slit. But then, she realized something was terribly wrong. She couldn't channel her energy, and it became clear—her cultivation had been sealed!

Aldrian quickly injected his golden energy into her body, blocking any access to or from her dantian. Afterward, he lifted her off the bed and threw her aside onto the floor, then tossed the man's unconscious body to the other side of the room as if discarding trash.

Thud!

The man's body rolled several times before crashing into the wall. Only after his body hit the wall did his dick shoot his seed into the air while he remained unconscious.

Kwon Mira, still processing what had just happened, felt her body covered by the white sheet from the bed, though it was stained with liquid. Aldrian threw the sheet over her to avoid seeing her naked body, which was marked with many hickeys and palm prints.

When Kwon Mira finally realized there was another man in the room, her eyes widened. Upon recognizing his face, her complexion drained of color. This was the man she had tried to avoid the most—how did he end up here? She wanted to scream, but to her horror, she realized she couldn't move her mouth or body. Aldrian had used his spatial lock to restrain her.

"Kwon Mira, the Grand Elder of the Thorny Flower Garden, I suppose you anticipated my arrival, considering the expression on your face as you try to avoid me. And to think you're here, enjoying your time. I wonder what's going through your mind, hmm? And that man—" Aldrian then glanced at the unconscious figure on the other side of the room before turning his attention back to Kwon Mira.

"To think you have an affair with the Sect Master of the Beggar Sect. This is getting interesting." Aldrian smiled, then used his gravity laws to pull a chair that was not far from him closer. He sat down, his eyes never leaving Kwon Mira.

"I wonder if all of this is connected—yourself, the Tang family, the Beggar Sect, and the Devils."

Upon hearing the names Aldrian mentioned, Kwon Mira's heart turned cold. How did he know about them and the devils?!

#### **Chapter 496: The Devils' Plan for the Demon Territory**

Aldrian silently observed Kwon Mira, noting how much expression showed in her trembling eyes. Her heartbeat also confirmed that what he had asked was right, just as he had guessed. It seemed all of these parties were indeed connected with the devils.

Aldrian then released the spatial lock on her lips and head. She instantly gasped as she could finally move her lips again and looked at Aldrian with terrified eyes. Aldrian calmly met her gaze and sensed a strong fear directed at him, which he found funny. The power of faith flowing from her to him was quite intense, as fear was also a form of the power of faith.

He thought this woman was truly afraid of death, yet she still played with fire by working together with the devils.

"I can tell just from your eyes that you know exactly what I meant. Now tell me, Kwon Mira, about the devils' connection with these parties and with you. What plan are you all brewing, that even members of the Seven Deadly Sins are inside the demon territory, hm?"

Kwon Mira had already forgotten her frustration over her failed orgasm. Her lips trembled.

"I don't know... what you are talking about," she said in a trembling voice. She tried to act brave, but her expression and eyes betrayed her.

"I do not understand why you still act this way when you are so afraid of me—or of death. Would you really prefer that I kill you, rather than be killed by the devils or anyone else?" Aldrian said, tilting his head slightly, as if curious about her.

Kwon Mira lowered her head but remained silent. After a few moments, Aldrian nodded.

"I see. It seems you are more afraid of the devils than of me. You would rather die by my hands than betray them, huh?" Aldrian stood up and approached her, stopping right in front of her.

"Then there is nothing more I can ask you. After all of this is over, you will receive your punishment in the Thorny Flower Garden. Sect Master Baek will personally handle it."

When Aldrian mentioned Baek Hayoon, Kwon Mira was stunned before she gritted her teeth.

"I am already tired of watching her be—humph—"

"Yeah, I know. Your negative energy toward Sect Master Baek is really strong. You must be jealous or something like that. You probably wanted the position of Sect Master and all the privileges that come with it. You thought you were better, and so on and so forth. So you took the devils' offer to work together, and voilà, you successfully got rid of Sect Master Baek. Now you want to keep the position you gained by any means necessary. Is that what you want to say?" Aldrian said as he cut off her words with another spatial lock.

"Classic reason," he added. He then touched her forehead and looked into her memories.

Kwon Mira, who had wanted to continue speaking after Aldrian mentioned Baek Hayoon, did not get the chance, as he immediately began observing her memories. Her expression twisted while he searched through her memories for the next few minutes before he finally released her. She had already fallen unconscious, and without much thought, he teleported her elsewhere before turning his gaze to the unconscious Sect Master of the Beggar Sect.

After looking through her memories, he finally understood the real connection between her and the Beggar Sect—or more precisely, the sect master. They were both partners in the devils' grand plan.

Once Kwon Mira heard about him after the news from the Atria Empire spread across the continent, she immediately came here, hoping to stay hidden in case he or Baek Jimin returned to the sect.

She knew she would be dead the moment he set foot in the Thorny Flower Garden territory, so she took no chances. She decisively sought refuge here, even agreeing to become the Beggar Sect Master's woman if it meant surviving.

He knew why she had chosen the Beggar Sect as her place of refuge, and it was a clever move on her part. Unfortunately for her, in the face of his abilities, all of her attempts to hide would be futile as long as she remained within his domain.

Aldrian then walked toward the unconscious man, the Beggar Sect Master, and stopped just before his body. He nudged the man with his foot, rolling him so that his body lay on his stomach, hiding his exposed dick from view.



Aldrian then touched the man's forehead and looked into his memories.

Joon Suk, the leader of the Beggar Sect, which was the most well-known information-gathering organization in the demon territory. The Beggar Sect's network spread across the demon territory and even reached some of the empires, though it was not as strong outside of the demon territory.

Despite its name, the Beggar Sect consists of many cultivators from diverse backgrounds, and it doesn't only accept beggars from across the demon territory. Most of the sect members come from common backgrounds, but once they enter the sect, they must assume the role of someone without wealth—like beggars, the homeless, or scavengers—anything that makes them blend in with simple or shabby appearances.

Each city must have members of the Beggar Sect, each with their own disguise. Every member is skilled in information gathering, and there is almost no secret that can remain hidden from them if they set out to find it. There are only a few places they cannot infiltrate, where they are unable to obtain any useful information.

If someone wanted to obtain information from them or use their services, the client would have to pay a price based on the type of information requested. The Beggar Sect's information could be considered highly accurate, which contributed to their fame. This accuracy allowed the Beggar Sect to expand its connections and influence across the demon territory, even reaching the three great sects.

It would not be surprising if the devils had also enticed the Beggar Sect to join their cause in their plan.

Aldrian finally stopped looking through Joon Suk's memories after a few minutes, but his frown deepened as he realized the devils' plan and influence were far greater than he had imagined.

After looking through Kwon Mira and Joon Suk's memories, he understood the extent of the devils' plan. The devils essentially wanted to control the demon territory, but first, they needed to take control of the three great sects. If that wasn't possible, they sought to destroy them.

This aligned with his earlier guess that the devils were targeting the three great sects, and he now understood more clearly why.

The reason was obvious: the three great sects, especially the Piercing Heaven Sect, were the representatives of the demon territory and demonic cultivators on the continent. They were the peak power in the demon territory, and to make the devils' operations in this region easier, they had to deal with these sects one way or another.

If they could control them, that would be ideal, but the devils wouldn't hesitate to destroy these sects if necessary.

To achieve this, the devils had been enticing large organizations like the Beggar Sect and the Tang Family to join them. They must have offered something enticing, using their typical methods to lure others in. By gathering these powers, the devils aimed to use them as support against the three great sects, while their pawns within those sects continued their work from the inside.

The Beggar Sect played a vital role in the devils' operation in the demon territory due to its extensive information network, and the devils had truly taken advantage of this. With the Beggar Sect's master, Joon Suk, working with them, the devils had access to detailed information on everything happening within the territory.

The devils used this leverage to recruit other powers in the territory, expanding their influence. With the help of the Beggar Sect, the scale of the devils' influence had grown wide, and now Aldrian could say that more than half of the power within the demon territory had already been infiltrated by the devils' pawns.

This situation was far more severe than he had realized, and it seemed he would have to inform the Black Dragon Pavilion and the Piercing Heaven Sect as soon as possible.

Aldrian thought for a moment before deciding to touch Joon Suk's forehead again. This time, he cast *Everlasting Demonic Follower* on him.

Joon Suk's expertise, knowledge, and influence were invaluable, and Aldrian couldn't miss the opportunity to turn the man—who knew so much about the demon territory—into his slave.

Once he finished casting *Everlasting Demonic Follower*, Aldrian slightly healed Joon Suk's soul before electrocuting his body again to wake him up.

Bzzt! Rttt!

"Ngghh!"

Joon Suk's body twitched violently as Aldrian shocked him with lightning laws. After Aldrian was certain he was awake, he stopped. Joon Suk instantly gasped for air, still disoriented, as everything that had just happened was too fast for him to process.

The only thing he knew was that he had been in the middle of fucking his woman, almost reaching climax, when suddenly his body was yanked and shocked by electricity before everything went dark. Now, as he looked at himself, he was still naked and his dick already limp.

When he turned his gaze to the side, he saw that another man was now in the room.

Upon seeing Aldrian's face, his eyes widened in shock.

"You! What are—" Before he could speak further, an extreme pain shot through his soul, causing him to clutch his head. After a few seconds, the pain finally subsided, allowing him to breathe a sigh of relief.

"First, put on your robe. I don't want to see your dick for another second. Even now, I'm resisting the urge to cut it off so I don't have to look at it," Aldrian said.

## **Chapter 497: Aldrian's Order**

Hearing Aldrian's threat, he felt a chill run through him and instinctively used his energy to form a layer of clothing over his body. Although it wasn't real attire, it was enough to keep himself covered. His head still throbbed from the sudden, piercing pain that had struck his soul. He didn't know why, but he felt certain Aldrian had caused it, leaving him slightly shaken.

What he had just experienced was a level of pain unlike anything before—agony that struck directly at his soul, the kind of pain that could be fatal to anyone.

"Well, that's fine too. Now that you've become my slave, you'll be helping me from now on."

Joon Suk couldn't help but frown slightly at Aldrian's words. A slave?

Unconsciously, anger flared within him—but before it could build, the pain in his soul returned without warning. His body convulsed, his energy faltering, and the conjured attire dissolved as he lost control of the energy flow. The agony overwhelmed everything.

The pain was so intense, he forgot his anger entirely. After several seconds that felt like an eternity, it finally ceased. He gasped for breath, lying exhausted on the floor, cold sweat streaming down his face.

Aldrian watched in silence, making no move to intervene. The Everlasting Demonic Follower had done its work.

The moment a slave harbored even the faintest negative intent toward their master, the seal embedded in their soul would put the slave in their place.

"If you don't want to feel that pain again, don't even think ill of your master. The seal inside your soul will teach you a lesson the moment you do," Aldrian said calmly.

Joon Suk gritted his teeth. Once again, fury and humiliation stirred within him—but as soon as the pain threatened to return, he forced himself to suppress those feelings. The pain faded just as quickly.

He exhaled in relief, breathing steadily for a few seconds before channeling his energy to clothe himself once more. Then he sat down, facing Aldrian, and look at the man who had become the hottest topic across the continent more seriously.

Of course, Joon Suk knew about him—and how he was a threat to Kwon Mira. That was the very reason she had agreed to his demand: to become his woman in exchange for being allowed to hide in the beggar sect's area.

As someone at the emperor stage and the leader of a powerful organization with access to countless secrets, very few things could excite him anymore. One of the few that still stirred his curiosity was the thought of having a woman of the same caliber as the sect master of the Thorny Flower Garden.

He hadn't expected Kwon Mira—a woman full of pride—to lower her head and accept such a demand. That alone meant one thing: she was truly afraid of this young man.

However, he still decided to help hide her, despite the risk of offending Aldrian. He was confident that no matter how powerful Aldrian was, he could keep her hidden. Aldrian's strength was indeed terrifying, but what could he do if he, the leader of the Beggar Sect, intended to hide with his woman?

With the extensive network of the Beggar Sect, there was no way Aldrian could escape the watchful eyes and ears spread across the demon territory.

Once a member of the Beggar Sect spotted Aldrian—or even sensed his presence within the territory—Joon Suk would be able to move accordingly, ensuring neither he nor Kwon Mira were caught.

But he never expected to be caught himself, even before he received any news or had a chance to react.

"Weren't you supposed to be in the Atria Empire? How... how did you find this place?" Joon Suk asked carefully.

"I don't have any obligation to answer you, slave. But as for why I'm here, don't you already know the answer?" Aldrian replied calmly.

Joon Suk that already sweating, felt another bead of sweat roll down his face.

"Anyway, I know you're not stupid, and I don't like to beat around the bush. So here's the thing: I discovered something interesting after returning to the demon territory. It seems you and many others are playing a very dangerous game with the devils." Aldrian said, his words sending a chill through Joon Suk's heart.

"What do you—" Joon Suk wanted to deny, but the pain threatened to return. Before it could fully set in, he fell silent, reluctantly accepting the fact that Aldrian knew about the

devils' plans and also his involvement. He couldn't deny it any longer. He remained silent, and that was enough for Aldrian.

"Good. Don't lie to me. Now, here's what I want you to do: spread the word that the devils are hiding across the demon territory. Leak their base locations to the masses. Let the people of this territory handle them. I know you're aware of many of the devils' bases in this territory—at least the ones you know of."

Joon Suk's eyes widened in shock at Aldrian's order. He looked at him with a slight pleading expression, unable to hide his unease.

"But if I do that, I—" Joon Suk began to protest, but the pain surged again, forcing him to stop. He could only grit his teeth and remain silent, his frustration boiling inside.

"The devils will come after you? As if I'd care. You're the leader of the Beggar Sect; you can take care of yourself. Or is it the Seven Deadly Sins you're afraid of?" Aldrian asked.

Hearing the mention of the Seven Deadly Sins, Joon Suk trembled, but that was enough of an answer for Aldrian. To be honest, Aldrian couldn't really blame Joon Suk for being afraid of the Seven Deadly Sins. They were insanely strong cultivators by the standards of the continent.

They were among the strongest of the devils, only ranked just below the Devil Lord.

Although Joon Suk was an emperor-stage cultivator, there was still a gap between him and the members of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Aldrian finally showed a smiling face, leaning toward Joon Suk.

"I'll give you a secret that not many know: I've killed three members of the Seven Deadly Sins—Greed, Lust, and Envy. I also killed all of their successors."

Joon Suk's eyes widened in shock. This was new information for him. He couldn't be certain whether Aldrian's words were true, but he couldn't shake the feeling that Aldrian wasn't the type to joke about something like this. He had seen Aldrian's battle in the Atria through the information crystal he obtained, and Aldrian was truly powerful—there was no doubt about that.

He had already received confirmation from his informant about the destruction caused by the battle in Losaris City, and it was enough to believe Aldrian had the power to take on someone from the Seven Deadly Sins.

If Aldrian truly had killed three of them but was still alive and well, then there could only be one conclusion.

The devils couldn't do anything about him—or they were wary of Aldrian, even after he had killed so many of their high-ranking members. Killing a member of the Seven Deadly Sins was one thing, but killing their successors was like cutting off their regeneration for an entire generation.

There was no way the Devil Lord or the other members of the Seven Deadly Sins would just let Aldrian be, unless they wary of him.

His eyes trembled as he looked at Aldrian again. This time, he finally understood the extent of his power—if Aldrian could kill those devils and still be alive, it made him reconsider his opinions about Aldrian and the Seven Deadly Sins.

He had initially been deterred by the power of the Seven Deadly Sins and the devils as a whole. If he betrayed them, they would instantly know he was the one who had done so if he spread the information about their operations in the demon territory. He had no doubt that the devils, or even the members of the Seven Deadly Sins, would come knocking at his door.

However, with Aldrian, who seemed much stronger, his heart, which had still hesitated to obey Aldrian because of the devils, began to change.

Aldrian could see the turmoil within Joon Suk's heart, but he couldn't blame him for being uncertain. After all, Joon Suk didn't know the fate of the three members of the Seven Deadly Sins. Aldrian had battled them all without any witnesses and had destroyed their bodies once he killed them, except for the Lust Devil, whose body had been destroyed by the Devil Lord's attack.

"Now that you understand what the Seven Deadly Sins mean to me, you better spread the information more earnestly. I want to hear that the information is being spread by tomorrow night at the latest. You don't want to feel that pain again, do you?" Aldrian asked, to which Joon Suk responded by shaking his head.

"Good. Now I will take my leave. With the slave seal in your soul, we can communicate through voice transmission no matter the distance. If you want to contact me, just think about me. Got it?"

Joon Suk nodded repeatedly.

"Good slave, good slave," Aldrian said, patting Joon Suk's head. Joon Suk lowered his head without showing any rejection, even trying to keep his thoughts positive about Aldrian.

Aldrian then disappeared from the room, leaving Joon Suk alone. Once he thought Aldrian wasn't coming back, he sighed in relief.

*"That was tense... truly a terrifying person,"* he thought. He sighed again. Now that it had come to this, like it or not, he had to follow Aldrian's orders.

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Aldrian then appeared in a dilapidated building still inside the city. He had teleported Kwon Mira here, and she was still unconscious. He looked at her for a moment, reflecting on what he had learned from her memories earlier.

There was one piece of information that intrigued him.

There was actually another member of the Seven Deadly Sins who had visited the demon territory, besides the Sloth Devil.

### **Chapter 498: The Rumours Spread**

In the story of Sect Master Baek, she encountered the Sloth Devil, but Aldrian discovered something interesting from the memories of Kwon Mira—another member of the Seven Deadly Sins had visited the demon territory not long ago.

That person was Gluttony.

From the memories he obtained from devils he had killed in the past, the Gluttony Devil is known as one of the most powerful members of the Seven Deadly Sins in terms of cultivation stage. This is largely due to his unique cultivation technique, which relies on a law called the Absorption Law—a law that allows those who comprehend it to absorb anything in the world and turn it into their own power.

The Absorption Laws are incredibly rare, and only a few individuals throughout the continent's history have ever comprehended them—most of whom were successors to the title of Gluttony Devil, passed down from one generation to the next.

With these laws, Gluttony can raise his cultivation at a rate far faster than any other cultivator. The Absorption Laws allow him to consume everything in front of him. Once absorbed into his body, everything is converted into comprehension or energy to fuel his cultivation.

This is how the Gluttony Devil reached the peak Emperor stage much faster than any of his peers.

It is a broken cultivation technique—one that many consider forbidden because of the destructive potential it carries. According to the continent's records, the first generation of Gluttony was the origin of the Absorption Laws.



No one truly knows how the devils first came to possess such power, but if a cultivator were to comprehend it, they would be hunted down immediately. The fear of the Absorption Laws' potential alone is enough to provoke such a response.

Gluttony also comprehended the Gravity Laws—just like Aldrian— and several other laws as well. This was the result of absorbing countless things in the past. But there is one more domain in which he excels.

Formations.

The Gluttony Devil is a master of formations, possessing high levels of attainment and deep comprehension.

After viewing Kwon Mira's memories, he finally learned who had modified the Thorny Flower Garden's defensive formation to such a powerful extent.

Once Kwon Mira realized who Aldrian truly was, she asked the devils to strengthen the sect's defenses—and the Gluttony Devil actually came.

If it was him, Aldrian wasn't surprised. He had to admit—by the standards of this continent, Gluttony was a genius among geniuses when it came to formations.

With the Gluttony Devil arriving at Thorny Flower Garden and modifying the sect's defensive formation, it seemed he also recognized Aldrian as a threat. He decided to assist Kwon Mira by turning the formation into a dual-purpose structure—one that could serve as a trap, with a reinforced defensive barrier.

While in hiding, Kwon Mira planned to leave her daughter, Kwon Hana, in the sect as bait in case Baek Jimin ever returned. If possible, she hoped to use the formation to trap and kill either Baek Jimin or Aldrian. It was another of her attempts to eliminate them, though she didn't place full trust in the plan. So she remained in hiding, waiting for Aldrian and Baek Jimin to appear.

Aldrian decided to ask the heaven about the presence of the Sloth and Gluttony Devils in the demon territory. The heavens responded as quickly as they could.

*"They've already left the demon territory,"* Aldrian thought.

Then he asked whether they were anywhere inside his domain. The heavens' reply came, leaving him to sigh.

*"They are already outside of my domain, which means they've either returned to the devil territory, or they might be in the Buddhist sect territory... or the Everlasting Silent Forest."*

However, he was more inclined to believe that they had already returned to the devil territory, based on a few factors. The Buddhist sect's territory wasn't a suitable hiding place for them, with so many Buddhist cultivators roaming the land.

As for the Everlasting Silent Forest, they would never risk their lives in such an unpredictable and dangerous forbidden zone, even though that place had been experiencing changes in recent years.

Aldrian couldn't help but sigh in disappointment. If they were still inside his domain, he would have sought them out to test his newfound power after his repeated breakthroughs. The members of the Seven Deadly Sins would be ideal targets for that.

*"Well, it's better to return for now, we still need to stabilize the Thorny Flower Garden sect after all the damage Kwon Mira has caused."* He thought.

Aldrian and Kwon Mira disappeared and reappeared not far from the hut where Baek Jimin and Sect Master Baek were sharing a mother-daughter moment. Sensing they were still engrossed with their conversation, Aldrian decided not to disturb them and hid Kwon Mira's body far away.

He then teleported to the top of a tree, gazing at the beautiful night sky, full of stars.

Only after midnight did Baek Jimin emerge from the hut. When he saw her, he allowed her to sense his presence. She was stunned when she suddenly sensed him atop the tree, smiling down at her. He then descended and approached her.

"Are you done?" Baek Jimin asked with smile.

"Done. And I think we need to return to the sect as soon as possible. We have something to discuss, and it concerns the three great sects and the demon territory as a whole," Aldrian replied.

Baek Jimin raised an eyebrow. It seemed Aldrian had found something troublesome, judging by the way he spoke.

As if hearing to Aldrian's words, Sect Master Baek suddenly emerged from the hut. Her body was still thin, but her complexion had improved, taking on a healthier hue. Though her face still looked aged, she was gradually regaining a more youthful appearance, with wrinkles slowly fading.

"Then let's go back," Sect Master Baek said. "I've already been away from the sect for too long. It's time to address the problems that bitch might cause while I'm gone."

She managed to walk, though her steps were still unsteady, prompting Baek Jimin to rush to her side to help her.

"Be careful," Baek Jimin said as Aldrian nodded at Sect Master Baek's words.

"Alright, you'd better cover yourself, Sect Master. I know you don't want to be seen in that condition. I'll teleport us all into the Thorny Flower Garden sect."

Baek Jimin then took out a large robe to cover her mother's features, and once they were ready, all three of them suddenly disappeared.

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When morning came and the sun was already high in the eastern horizon, the demon territory had already been shaken by an uproar. Rumors had begun spreading since midnight, claiming that the devils had many hiding places across the territory, with most of them located within the territories of various families or sects.

The rumors even specified the locations of these bases throughout the demon territory, and eyewitnesses from each area confirmed that they had seen devil activity there.

This caused some curious cultivators to investigate these locations. True to the rumors, they discovered shady activities and even found devils hiding within these places. As a result, battles broke out across the territory, even before the sun had fully risen.

Because the rumors were so strong and caused disturbances everywhere, all cultivator families and sects, regardless of their size, dispatched their cultivators to investigate and contain the situation. Even sects and families secretly working with the devils had to send their cultivators to maintain their image, often battling the devils they had been working with.

These families and sects had no choice but to act, otherwise, people would begin to doubt their integrity and involvement in the devils' activities. This was especially true since many of the devils' bases were located within their territories, raising suspicions if they didn't join other cultivators in fighting the devils.

Battles raged across many parts of the demon territory, and the great sects were not exempt from the uproar. Some of the devils' bases were located within their territories, prompting the great sects to treat the situation with utmost seriousness. They even sent their grand elders to battle the devils.

Joon Suk, who had been responsible for spreading the rumors, could only wait anxiously for the outcome of this event. He was uncertain about his future, but one thing was clear—after today, the devils would undoubtedly label him as a target to be eliminated, as they would soon discover that the rumors had originated from him.

Despite his anxiety, Joon Suk couldn't help but be amazed by the effect the rumors had on the families and sects with connections to the devils. They were forced to fight the devils within their own territories, which surely left the devils there confused.

Joon Suk realized that the parties connected to the devils had no choice but to act in order to avoid suspicion from the public. If they didn't fight, it would be safe to assume that they were in league with the devils, especially since the devils were hiding within their territories.

If that happened, those families and sects would be labeled as traitors and would have to be purged. It would also give their rivals a perfect opportunity to destroy them, forcing those working with the devils to burn their bridges with them.

Joon Suk sighed at this realization. Did Aldrian foresee all of these effects when he ordered him to spread the rumors? This was the type of person he feared the most.

Aldrian was already extremely powerful, but he also used his mind to devise plans that resulted in the most effective solutions, all without him having to make a move.

While the demon territory was in chaos, the man in question was in the Thorny Flower Garden, seated in one of the rooms, enjoying tea with Sect Master Baek and Baek Jimin.

No data found.

## **Chapter 499: The Next Step**

Aldrian sipped his tea in the calm atmosphere of the sect, while Sect Master Baek and Baek Jimin did the same. They seemed unaware of the chaos outside the Thorny Flower Garden Sect, but in truth, they had already received reports and updates on the situation.

Then why did they appear so relaxed, as if the chaos had nothing to do with them?

It was because, before sunrise this morning, Aldrian had already captured every traitor within the Thorny Flower Garden's territory using the memories of Kwon Mira and Joon Suk. He only targeted those who knew about Kwon Mira's ties to the devils—and those connected to the devils themselves.

After he had disappeared from the sect to heal Sect Master Baek, all the traitors from Kwon Mira's faction immediately tried to flee. They knew that with Aldrian's arrival, their lives were at risk, no matter what they had done within the sect.

Because of that—along with Sect Master Baek's previous purges and Kwon Mira's killing of several elders loyal to her—the sect lost more than half of its elders, including grand elders at the emperor stage. As a result, the sect was weaker than ever before.

Those who remained and didn't flee were still loyal to Sect Master Baek but had been forced to compromise after Kwon Mira successfully seized the position of sect master.

The traitors scattered across various territories outside the Thorny Flower Garden and did their best to stay hidden.

Unfortunately for them, with the help of the heavens, Aldrian located each of their positions and teleported them back to the sect, where they were immediately apprehended. Despite their collective strength being greater, they could do nothing but surrender under Aldrian's power.

Aldrian also eliminated all the devils within the Thorny Flower Garden territory as quickly as possible, a task that was easy for him. He moved like a killing machine—slaughtering devils in one place before teleporting to the next, leaving many corpses behind. He repeated this process over and over until not a single devil remained within the territory.

This was also Aldrian's way of helping Sect Master Baek, as the Thorny Flower Garden Sect currently lacked the manpower to dispatch its own cultivators across the territory.

That was why, despite the sect's power having dropped significantly, the Thorny Flower Garden enjoyed a calmer and more peaceful atmosphere compared to the rest of the demon territory.

Aldrian sighed after sipping his tea.

"So, what are you going to do after this? Even if the devils within the demon territory can be wiped out, we can't ignore the fact that many families and

sects were connected to them—and even supported them. If they betrayed us for the devils once, they can do it again in the future," Sect Master Baek said.

Her face had almost returned to its former mature beauty, with the wrinkles gone and only a few signs of age remaining. Her body had also begun to regain weight, with flesh and muscle returning after just two hours of cultivation—a quick and encouraging recovery that made Baek Jimin happy.

Aldrian had also told her and Baek Jimin what he discovered when he captured Kwon Mira and Joon Suk. He explained everything Kwon Mira had done, the devils' plans, and other matters connected to them—including how he had orchestrated the chaos now spreading through the demon territory.

They were truly shocked after hearing it and couldn't help but feel furious toward Kwon Mira, the traitors, and the devils.

To think that the demon territory had already been in the devils' grasp for so long—and that even the three great sects had been fooled by them.

"I will visit the other great sects and help them eliminate some of their high-ranking members who turned traitor. After that, the great sects will have to deal with the traitors' families and affiliated sects across the demon territory, with help from those who have not been corrupted by the devils. These will be bloody times, as a large-scale purge will sweep through the region."

"Since the number of traitorous families and sects is quite high, I'll also provide support if they refuse to surrender. I can already imagine the resistance we'll face—those families won't hesitate to sacrifice their own family. I'll prevent unnecessary bloodshed by targeting the rotten members directly. That way, the demon territory's overall strength won't drop too severely," Aldrian explained.

Sect Master Baek nodded. His plan was solid, and she believed it was the best course of action he could take. She knew that this chaos could easily

spiral out of control if not handled properly. However, if Aldrian, along with the other great sects and families or sects still clean of the devils, spread across the territories to manage the situation, the bloodshed could be minimized.

Aldrian and the mother and daughter continued their discussion, while elsewhere in the demon territory, a battle shook the land. Within the territory of the Piercing Heaven Sect, dozens of cultivators, ranging from marquess to emperor stage, clashed in various locations.

The cultivators at the emperor and king stages battled high in the sky, while those below fought on the ground. Despite their fight taking place high above, the effects of the emperor and king stage clashes were felt by everyone on the ground. Spatial cracks appeared here and there, and the clouds were torn apart by the force of their battle.

The surrounding land—and everything rising from it—had been flattened or reduced to craters. Elements like fire, water, earth, and air were hurled in all directions, turning the area into a chaotic battlefield.

On one side, the cultivators wore the robes of the Piercing Heaven Sect, while on the other stood cultivators with bulky bodies and red skin. From the onlookers, it was obvious that the red-skinned cultivators were devils, already in their devil forms. The fact that they had resorted to their devil forms suggested they were desperate to withstand the attacks from the Piercing Heaven Sect's cultivators.

Not far from the battle, the Sect Master of the Piercing Heaven Sect, Ryu Hyukjae, observed. His face was as calm as still water, and he had not made a move since the battle began. He was simply here to observe and ensure that the purging process was proceeding as planned.

After hearing the rumors, which only grew stronger as battles broke out in several locations, he decided to dispatch the elders to the areas where the



rumors had originated and where the battles were taking place, in order to control the situation.

As time passed, the situation spiraled further out of control, with more rumors surfacing about the locations of the devils' secret bases across the sect's territory.

In response, he declared a state of emergency and dispatched disciples to help contain the chaos. This battle was just one of many erupting across the sect's territory.

The devils were strong, but the demonic cultivators also had their own advantages and strengths. The cultivators of the sect pushed back the devils, killing them in droves, and their numbers dwindled rapidly. Before long, the devils in this area would be completely eradicated.

Once the battle was over, all of the elders and disciples began to clean up the battlefield. When Sect Master Ryu felt there was nothing more to address, he disappeared from the scene. A few minutes later, he appeared at the sect and walked toward the main building. Upon entering, he was immediately in the gathering hall, where he took his seat in the leader's chair.

He was alone inside the hall, his expression still calm, but his eyes flashed dangerously. Truthfully, he was seething with rage inside. With all the battles taking place within his sect's territory and the vast number of devils involved, how could he have been unaware of their existences?

His mind raced to make sense of the situation, but he found only one conclusion.

*"There are traitors among us,"* he thought.

There was no way so many devils could infiltrate the sect's territory without anyone noticing, especially with their surveillance in place—unless some of his own people had opened the door to these devils. He clenched his fist,

thoughts racing as he considered who the traitors might be, his mind landing on a few figures who seemed most suspicious.

Not long after, an elder entered, cupping his hands respectfully to Sect Master Ryu.

"Reporting to Sect Master, the battle across the sect's territory is almost concluded. Only a few locations still have devils persistently fighting. Most of the groups dispatched across the territory are now on their way back."

Sect Master Ryu nodded.

"Return to your post."

"Yes, Sect Master."

Once the elder left the hall, Sect Master Ryu sat in silence, deep in thought.

*"It looks like I'll have to do some 'cleaning' in the sect after this."*

## **Chapter 500: Pointing Out the Traitors**

A few hours later, all members of the group dispatched to control the situation across the Piercing Heaven Sect's territory had returned. Without delay, Sect Master Ryu summoned all the elders to the vast training ground in front of the main building. With more than a hundred elders present, the gathering hall was far too small to accommodate them.

Once the elders had assembled in orderly rows, Sect Master Ryu emerged from the building, accompanied by the announcement elder.

"Sect Master has arrived! Pay your respects!"

All of the elders dropped to one knee, cupping their hands and bowing their heads slightly toward Sect Master Ryu. Standing on the elevated ground of the main building, which overlooked the training field, the sect master surveyed the assembled elders before finally speaking.

"There were no casualties among you. Good. I expect at least that much. If any of you had died despite the element of surprise, there would be no one to blame but the weakness of the dead."

He paused for a moment before continuing, his gaze sweeping across the lines of elders.

"Still, the fact that devils managed to gain a foothold within our territory without my knowledge—and that I had to rely on rumors to learn of it—infuriates me. It means something happened behind my back."

He paused, this time looking directly at several elders.

"Those whose names I call, step forward."

"Shin Sangmin."

"Jung Gonwoo."

"Choi Yongshuk."

Upon hearing their names, the three elders stepped forward, forming a separate line ahead of the others. The rest of the elders exchanged glances, wondering why those three had been called—especially since one of them was a grand elder at the Emperor Stage.

"Given the devils' appearance within our territory, there's no way this happened without someone on our side betraying us—without someone opening the gate to them." Sect Master Ryu fixed his gaze on the three elders.

"You are the most suspected. And I want the truth, right here and now. If my suspicion is wrong, you may return to your place. But if it isn't... then you already know your fate."

Badump!

For a split second, Sect Master Ryu's eyes flicked toward two of the three elders. He had caught the subtle shift in their heartbeats—though their faces revealed nothing suspicious, only shock.

The shocked expressions were understandable. In the Piercing Heaven Sect, being called a traitor was unforgivable.

The rest of the elders were just as shocked by Sect Master Ryu's accusation. All three men were well-known within the sect, and one of them was a grand elder who had served for many years. If they truly were traitors, then they deserved some twisted form of applause—for managing to conceal their action even from the sect master for so long.

The word "traitor" alone was already damning. If it was proven true, then a fate worse than death awaited them. Sect Master Ryu despised betrayal more than anything else and was known to exact the harshest punishment on those who betrayed the sect.

There was a story, a member once leaked information to a family that harbored ill intent toward the sect. When Sect Master Ryu discovered the betrayal, he personally tortured the traitor. Rumor had it the man's screams echoed nonstop for an entire day, and by the end, what remained of his body was little more than a pulped mess of flesh—unrecognizable as a human being. Even demonic cultivators who had witnessed it called it a horrifying sight.

Sect Master Ryu didn't stop there. He personally annihilated the family that received the information. By the next morning, their entire bloodline had been erased—no survivors, no graves, no legacy.

Now, the betrayal was far greater—and far more severe—because it involved the devils. If these men were proven to be traitors, what kind of torture would await them? No one dared to imagine. Just the thought of it made several elders shudder.

Sect Master Ryu began walking toward the three accused, stopping in front of the one on the far left from his perspective.

"Shin Sangmin," he said. "You've been with this sect for a long time, and I granted you the title of grand elder. I know you've had your ambitions, and I allowed you to pursue them—as long as they aligned with the interests of the sect. But now I wonder... was it really the sect you served, or only yourself?"

He paused, eyes fixed directly on the grand elder.

"I also wonder if you know something about the devils. After all, you were the one I entrusted with managing certain regions, regions that, coincidentally, have many devils."

Grand Elder Shin's eyes trembled. He dropped into a deep bow without hesitation.

"This one truly did not know about the devils' existence in my area of responsibility," Shin Sangmin said, his voice steady. "But my loyalty lies with the sect alone. There is no way I would side with the devils. The devils' presence in my region is due to my lack of control and the possibility of a traitor I was unaware of. If you give me time, Sect Master, I will bring the traitor to you."

Sect Master Ryu only stared at him, though inwardly, he was furious. Despite Shin's best efforts to control his heartbeat and body language, to ensure he showed no signs of guilt, Sect Master Ryu could still sense a slight shift—a tiny slip in his heartbeat and a reaction from his body.

Without needing confirmation from his words, Sect Master Ryu already knew. Grand Elder Shin was hiding something... and lying.

Sect Master Ryu almost wanted to strangle Grand Elder Shin on the spot as his anger flared. His aura slipped dangerously from his body, but just as he was about to act, he sensed someone running toward him from outside the training ground.

All the elders also sensed the approaching presence, which appeared to be an inner disciple of the sect. They wondered what could have happened.

From the disciple's body language, it was clear he was in a hurry and had something important to convey.

The disciple immediately dropped to one knee, cupping his hands in respect as he arrived in front of Sect Master Ryu.

"Sect Master, I bring an urgent report," the disciple said, his voice tight with urgency. "An important guest has arrived at the sect, and he is already inside the sect."

Sect Master Ryu narrowed his eyes. "Who is it?"

"It's Young Master Aldrian. He has come to visit."

Hearing the name, Sect Master Ryu's eyes widened in shock. Most of the elders also reacted with surprise. Of course, they remembered the person who had visited their sect a few years ago—moreover, that person was someone famous across the continent. They were stunned to realize Aldrian was the mysterious swordsman who had been stirring the continent.

They couldn't help but wonder what this young man was doing here, especially in the midst of the chaotic situation in the demon territory. Did he come because of the situation they were currently facing?

Sect Master Ryu walked past the inner disciple.

"Quick, take him to the special guest room. I will meet with him shortly—"

"You don't have to do that, Sect Master."

Suddenly, Aldrian's voice cut through Sect Master Ryu's words, causing everyone present to turn toward the source of the voice. What they saw was a handsome young man whose face they still remembered, despite not having seen him in three years. Even without exuding any visible aura, his presence was vastly different.

He was much stronger now, and his mere presence commanded reverence from all who stood before him.

Aldrian walked up to Sect Master Ryu, making his way through the line of elders, who parted to let him pass. Sect Master Ryu quickly moved toward him and greeted him with respect.

"Young Master, why didn't you inform me of your arrival in advance? I would have made sure to greet you in a more proper setting. Unfortunately, I had important matters and had to gather all these people here," he said, cupping his hand toward Aldrian in respect.

"No worries, Sect Master," Aldrian replied with a smile, returning the gesture. "I'm the one who should apologize for not informing you beforehand. But there's no better time than now, when you have gathered all the elders, because my visit does indeed have something to do with this situation."

Aldrian glanced around at all the elders, his eyes briefly settling on the three who had been separated from the rest.

He smiled when he saw them and then turned back to Sect Master Ryu.

"And it seems my visit will be rather timely, as I see you're already in the midst of cleaning house,"

Sect Master Ryu stood stunned, wondering if Aldrian was here to discuss the traitor situation. Did Aldrian know something he didn't?

He watched as Aldrian calmly walked toward the three suspicious elders and stood before them.

Sect Master Ryu followed, standing beside Aldrian, his curiosity piqued. What was he planning to do?

Aldrian turned his gaze to Grand Elder Shin and Elder Choi Yongshuk, pausing for a moment before he turned to face Sect Master Ryu.

"These two are the traitors who allowed the devils to infiltrate the Piercing Heaven Sect territory," Aldrian declared.

The moment Aldrian spoke, a ripple of shock ran through the elders, while the two men singled out by Aldrian felt their hearts turn cold. Their faces paled, but they quickly turned their fury toward Aldrian, their eyes burning with anger.

"You, even if you—"

"Don't try to talk your way out of this," Aldrian interrupted. "I already have strong proof of your involvement in the devils' infiltration. Do you want me to

show you how you met with the devils in one of the caverns in Vermilion City three weeks ago?"

Grand Elder Shin's face turned even paler.

*"How did he know?"* The thought raced through his mind.