

# **The Shining Star Above The Heaven**

## **#Chapter 511: The Cause of Her Sickness - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 511: The Cause of Her Sickness**

### **Chapter 511: The Cause of Her Sickness**

"I finally remember you," Sylphia said, narrowing her eyes at the elf.

The elf was stunned and looked at Sylphia in wonder.

"You're the daughter of Duke Valerin—Vera Valerin. The one who was said to have disappeared thirty years ago," Sylphia continued, making the elf's eyes widen as her body trembled.

Seeing her reaction, Sylphia knew she was right. Aldrian and the others watched the development with curiosity. From the elf's response alone, they could tell Sylphia was correct, and for this elf to be a duke's daughter and end up here, there had to be a story behind it.

Evin, who looked at her mother and Sylphia with innocent eyes, felt confused. She did not understand their conversation at all. But when she saw her mother's unusual reaction, she reached out and touched her hand, watching her with a questioning gaze.

"Mother?" she asked softly.

She then saw her mother draw her closer, as if trying to shield her with her arm.

"Who are you? How do you know my real name? Did my father send you here?" Vera's voice sharpened. Though her face and body were weakened by illness, she tried to appear intimidating, releasing an aura that, while faint, made it clear to Aldrian and the others that her cultivation was at the middle Earl stage.

Worried that Vera might misunderstand further and knowing it could become dangerous, Sylphia pulled back the hood of her robe, revealing her full face and hair. Vera still did not lower her guard since she had never seen Sylphia before.

However, she then watched as Sylphia released her disguise technique, and her true face appeared, strikingly beautiful, with golden hair that could mesmerize anyone.

"I wasn't sent by your father or anyone else. Don't you recognize me?" Sylphia asked, offering a warm smile.

Her face had become even more beautiful and mature since the night she met the mysterious woman in her dream, the night she had sex for the first time with Aldrian.

Vera was stunned by Sylphia's true appearance. However, due to the changes in Sylphia's face, she didn't immediately recognize her.

Still, Vera didn't let her guard down. She narrowed her eyes and studied Sylphia's face more intently, trying to recall every elf she had ever met. From Sylphia's features, she could tell that she came from a noble family—or perhaps even the imperial family.

"The last time we met was 35 years ago, at the banquet Duke Valerin held for his breakthrough to the Emperor stage," Sylphia said.

After a few moments, Vera's eyes widened, and she looked at Sylphia with a trembling gaze.

"Your Highness, Princess Sylphia?" she asked.

Seeing that Vera had finally remembered, Sylphia smiled and nodded.

"Yes, it's me."

Vera was truly shocked, unable to believe that a member of the imperial family had arrived at this place. She hadn't recognized Sylphia when she first saw her face, and the fact that she hadn't immediately done so made her feel guilty. But then, she glanced at Aldrian and couldn't help but question what she had just heard from him.

Princess Sylphia is his lover?

Had she heard that correctly? Sylphia was a member of the imperial family, and Vera doubted that His Majesty, the Emperor, would ever pair her with a human. So what did Aldrian mean by that? And also, why was Sylphia here with this group of people? What had she missed while being away from the Ivory Empire for so long?

"So beautiful," Evin blurted out after staring at Sylphia's real appearance for a few moments. Vera couldn't help but sigh and She looked at Sylphia again.

"So, Your Highness, what is this all about? Why are you here? Why are you—" She stopped, her gaze shifting to Aldrian and the others.

Sylphia smiled and walked toward her, standing beside Evin and gently stroking the child's head before turning to Vera.

"I know you have many questions, and so do I. So why don't we talk about it?" she said. "But before that, let my man heal you. You seem really sick, and in your condition, we won't have a good conversation."

Vera looked at Aldrian again, truly astonished. She hadn't heard it wrong—Princess Sylphia really did have a human as her lover! Many questions flooded her mind, but she pushed them aside as Aldrian approached, pulling a chair beside her and sitting next to her bed.

"Like Sylphia said, let me heal you so you can tell your story, and you can ask about us as well. Also, don't you want to be healthy again so Evin can be happy?" Aldrian said with a smile.

Vera looked at Evin beside her, who gazed back with innocent eyes. Sighing as she looked at her daughter, she turned her gaze to Aldrian.

"Of course I want to be healthy again, my lord," she replied.

"Good. Now give me your hand," Aldrian said, and Vera obeyed, giving her hand to him. He held her wrist and checked her entire body with his sense.

What he sensed was that her internal organ function seemed weakened, and on some parts of her skin, there were slashing wounds—wounds that like those left by a sword.

He also sensed something from her dantian, something that should not be there. He could not help but frown after sensing it, something not unfamiliar to him, something he always encountered throughout his journey.

What he sensed was a residue of devil energy, trapped inside her dantian.

Although the quantity was small, it was enough to throw her energy inside her dantian into chaos, which prevented her from cultivating.

The worst part was that this residue had become the very cause of her illness. The devil energy was acting like poison, contaminating her own energy and weakening her body from the inside.

It was no wonder her body had become so sickly—her condition was in terrible shape, as the devil energy had been wrecking her from the inside. For a residue so small to cause this much damage, the source must have been a powerful cultivator, likely at the King or even Emperor stage among devil cultivators.

He could not be certain, since the residue had already blended with her own energy and dantian, but the strength of its effect gave him confidence that its owner was at least King stage.

He set aside the question of who the owner might be and began erasing the residue of devil energy. This was the source of her illness, and he needed to purify her energy first. His golden energy worked wonders as he injected it and spread it throughout her body.

Vera suddenly felt a comforting warmth spread through her body. All this time, she had always felt uncomfortable and sick. Ever since she escaped from "that" incident, she had never felt healthy again. The wounds had left behind effects she found hard to erase.

But now, her body felt at ease, and she even felt the urge to close her eyes and enjoy this moment, to sleep peacefully for once.

After a few moments, the sensation faded as Aldrian pulled his hand away from her wrist. She tried to sense the changes in her body and couldn't help but be surprised—her body felt light and refreshed. It was as if the illness she had endured had only been a dream, and she had just awakened from it.

She tried to circulate her energy and found that the uncomfortable pain that always followed each time she did so was gone. She was truly astonished and couldn't help but look at Aldrian with gratitude, from her position on the bed, she bowed her body towards him.

"Thank you for healing me, my lord. I'm ashamed that I can't do more than offer my thanks, but it's the only thing I can do right now," she said.

Evin's eyes lit up with excitement as she heard her mother speak those words, it seemed the healing had been a success. Seeing her mother bow to Aldrian, Evin wanted to do the same, but Sylphia gently held her back, offering a warm smile that made Evin smile in return.

Vera, still bowing, was truly thankful that Aldrian had healed her. She hadn't been able to call any physicians, as she didn't have the wealth to afford their services.

There was a kind-hearted monk who had generously allowed her to stay in this place, but she couldn't bring herself to ask him for more. She had hoped her condition might improve, but instead, it had only worsened with each passing day.

"Vera, after checking your body and healing you, I have a question for you," Aldrian said, his expression solemn, making it clear to everyone present that this was a serious matter.

She straightened her body and nodded.

"Please ask, my lord. I will answer to the best of my ability."

"Here's the thing, Vera. What I sensed in your body was the presence of residual devil energy, which I've already purified," Aldrian said.

Hearing this, everyone was astonished, including Vera, who couldn't believe it. She had never imagined that the source of her illness was residual devil energy.

"So, what I want to ask is, when did you start feeling sick? There must have been a trigger that allowed the devil energy to seep into your dantian and wreak havoc on your body," Aldrian asked.

Vera, understanding the gravity of the situation, tried to steady her heart as memories of a painful past resurfaced. She remained silent for a moment before finally speaking.

"It happened not long after the second prince of the Atria Empire, Prince Wilmar, started the civil war," she

## **Chapter 512: Vera's stories**

"It happened not long after the second prince of the Atria Empire, Prince Wilmar, started the civil war," Vera said.

"Wait, before you tell your story—Evin, come here," Aldrian said, stopping Vera as he looked at Evin with a warm smile.

The little girl that her eyes full of admiration, obeyed and walked toward him.

When she stood in front of Aldrian, he gently picked her up and set her on his lap. He stroked her head a few times, which made her feel comfortable and close her eyes. Before long, her breathing settled, her body relaxed against his side, and her head leaned on his chest. She seemed to have fallen asleep.

"My lord, what are you—"

"You don't want your daughter to hear something unpleasant, right? You can tell your story more freely this way," Aldrian said, cutting her off.

She fell silent, then sighed as she looked at her sleeping daughter's face and nodded.

After a few moments to gather her thoughts, Vera continued.

"My husband, Evin, and I live in a town within the territory of the noble Zurk family—one of the families that support Emperor Raymond. We knew our town would be one of the targets."

"Moreover, my husband, Rachter Vicanton, is important figure. He's the heir to the Vicanton family, a merchant house with significant influence in the Atria Empire, second only to the Golden Swan Commerce."

Hearing the name of the husband, Sylphia narrowed her eyes.

"Rachter Vicanton? I see, if my guess is right, you escaped from the Valerin family and eloped with Rachter. You lived in that small town so your father couldn't find you, didn't you?" she said.

Vera paused for a moment before nodding.

"Yes, that's right. With how the Valerin family works, there's no way they would ever agree to me marrying a human."

She then looked up at the ceiling, as if recalling a beautiful memory.

"I first met him when he visited Balin City on behalf of his family to expand their business. Coincidentally, I was there at the time as a representative of the Valerin family for some business as well."

"It was truly a coincidence that we met, even talked about business. After that day, we often met to discuss work, but as time passed, our conversations shifted to other things. Even after I had to return to the Valerin family, he would sometimes sneak into our territory just to see me," Vera said, smiling at the memory.

"I was raised under the strict conservatism of the Valerin family, so I had always been curious about other races—especially humans. Maybe that's why I became so interested in him. He was the first human who ever got that close to me." Her smile grew warmer as she remembered those days.

"As time passed, I fell in love with him—and he felt the same. I truly wanted us to be together, but I knew exactly how my family would react if they found out I loved a human. Even when I tried to bring it up subtly with my father, he became furious at the mere suggestion that I might be paired with a human. So I could already imagine what would happen if he knew I had actually fallen in love with one."

"My mother couldn't do much either, since the one who held all the power was my father."

"After thinking it over for a long time, I finally gathered the courage to run away from my family and follow him to the Atria Empire. The last I heard, my family was searching for me everywhere. At one point, they even tracked me into the Atria Empire."

"Luckily, Rachter and I had already moved to a small town called Gerin, and we managed to erase our traces with the help of the Vicanton family, who fortunately didn't have any issue with me. At first, my father-in-law disagreed, fearing that our relationship might ruin ties with the elves."

"But Rachter threatened to renounce his position as the family's heir, which made my father-in-law relent and help us hide. That's how we were able to stay in Gerin without the Valerin family finding us."

"And there, we were finally able to live a peaceful life—and even have Evin, after decades together." Vera smiled as she gazed at her daughter's sleeping face.

However, realizing she had gone off-topic for so long, Vera lowered her head to Aldrian.

"My apologies, my lord. I ended up telling my own story, which didn't have any connection to your question. I just couldn't help myself when Her Highness touched on our past," she said apologetically.

Aldrian smiled at her.

"No, it's okay. I was actually curious about it too, and it's good for you to remember these beautiful memories. This is your past, something you cherish, and by sharing it with us, you're allowing your heart to find peace and calm. I know you've experienced pain before coming to this place, but you still have those memories with him," he said.

Vera was stunned for a moment, but then she smiled and nodded.

"Thank you for understanding, my lord," she said with a sigh. "Alright, to answer your question, not long after the second prince launched the civil war, the Vicanton family was also forced to get involved. We received information that the second prince's army was heading toward our territory, and our town was near the border closest to their forces, so we had to prepare to evacuate the civilians."

"I also had to evacuate with Evin to another territory. Rachter accompanied us at that time."

But then, her expression shifted to one of fear as she recalled the memories that had traumatized her.

"However, in the middle of the evacuation, a black-robed cultivator suddenly appeared in the sky above the town. From just that sign, we knew this figure was at least at the King stage. I couldn't see their true appearance, but that figure marked the beginning of my nightmare," Vera's eyes trembled as she tried to recall the sight that had haunted her.

"He began massacring the people of the town with his sword. Every time his sword swung, it killed many people. The city guards—or anyone, for that matter—who tried to stop him were killed as if they were nothing more than weeds, sliced away with each slash of his sword."

"The situation turned into chaos. We were already near the teleportation portal, but because of the turmoil, many people scrambled to get in. That figure kept getting closer to us at the teleportation station, which only made the situation worse."

"Suddenly, that figure unleashed a sword technique that was truly horrifying. I couldn't fully comprehend what was happening due to the chaos, but I instantly pulled Evin to the ground to protect her. I was hurt by the sword technique, but at that moment, I didn't care."

"The moment I looked around, what I saw was blood everywhere and scattered body parts around me. The land was destroyed, and the teleportation portal seemed slightly damaged, though it was still operational." Her eyes suddenly reddened, and tears began to fall as she remembered another scene.

"That was also when I saw Rachter, already... already—" She stopped, unable to continue, as the memory of her husband's dismembered body overwhelmed her.

"I almost wanted to scream and cry as loudly as possible, but I remembered that the figure was still there and Evin was still in my arms, and I didn't let her see the horrors around us. I hardened my heart and decided to jump into the teleportation portal, which was still active. But just before I entered, I felt a chill as I sensed that the figure was looking in my direction. I didn't pay any attention, though, and that was the last time I saw that figure." She stopped, trying to wipe her tears.

Sylphia handed her a napkin to help wipe her tears away.

"Since that time, my body has felt sick, and as you can see, it still affects me to this day," Vera said, wiping away her tears.

After hearing her story, Aldrian narrowed his eyes, deep in thought. A figure wielding a sword, a cultivator at least at the King stage—just as he had predicted, and slaughtering without mercy. A few figures came to his mind, but he wasn't sure. He had a hunch that he needed to identify this figure to prevent any further trouble.

"I'm sorry, Miss Vera, but may I look into your memories? I only wish to see the part where this figure appeared, nothing else. I just need to confirm something after hearing your story about it," he said.

Vera was stunned for a moment, hesitating, but then she nodded firmly.

"You may, my lord. Please, if it will help with your investigation," she replied.

"Alright, then excuse me." Aldrian moved closer to her with careful movements, not wanting to wake Evin, who was still sleeping in his lap.

Once he was in position, he gently touched Vera's forehead and began to look into her memories. He sifted through them softly and gently, making sure she felt no discomfort as he delved into the memories she considered a nightmare.

After a minute or so, he released his touch from her forehead and nodded in understanding. He finally knew who the figure was.

*"That movement, that sword technique, there's no mistake."*

*"One of the Seven Deadly Sins."*

*"Pride."*

## **Chapter 513: Pride**

The Devil of Pride.

The member of the Seven Deadly Sins said to be the most powerful in terms of combat power. A swordmaster who was not included among the ten great swordmasters of the continent, yet the devils already considered him the most powerful swordmaster on this continent.

That was the information Aldrian got from the memories of the Envy Devil at that time. As a fellow member of the Seven Deadly Sins, the Envy Devil knew just how powerful the Pride Devil was.

To be honest, Aldrian had to admit that it was true after seeing how powerful Pride was within the memories of the Envy Devil.

There was one time when Pride tried to spar with Wrath and Gluttony, but the result was that one of Wrath's arms was cut off, and Gluttony received heavy injuries—not only external, but also to his soul—because Pride's technique had damaged both his body and soul.

The Pride Devil's sword technique is focused on obliteration and destruction, with each of his swings capable of cutting through an entire mountain range or even splitting a sea. His attainment in swordsmanship is so high that he has even comprehended techniques that allow him to attack an opponent's soul directly.

He can also strike without anyone noticing the presence of his devil energy—another example of how advanced his mastery is. His sword intent and technique are refined to the point that they completely mask the subtle devil energy hidden within his attacks.

However, despite all the qualities of a powerful swordsman, his morals and character can be described as twisted and cruel—though all members of the Seven Deadly Sins are like that. But Pride's cruelty is of a different kind. He is someone who takes pride in himself and his sword technique. He searches for anyone who can defeat him in swordsmanship, and he does so by any means necessary.

He did not hesitate to kill anyone as long as it allowed him to prove that his swordsmanship was the best. Even if it meant slaughtering an entire family just to show that his sword was "sharper" and "greater," he would do it without a second thought.

He had actually wanted to challenge the ten great swordmasters of the continent for a long time, but the Devil Lord never allowed him to go wild beyond his orders. Because of that, he never had the chance to seek them out and challenge them across the continent.

A solitary man and a sword maniac who did not see others as "living beings" but as objects to sharpen his swordsmanship.

In other words, he was truly a monster with a sword.

Because of his personality, he is the only member of the Seven Deadly Sins who has not had a successor until now.

He is also the only one among them who spends most of his time inside the devil territory. The Devil Lord knew exactly what kind of being Pride was, and if he were released recklessly without a specific order to kill, he would go on a rampage with his sword. That was something the Devil Lord actively prevented, knowing that Pride would end up surrounded by countless cultivators from across the continent.

No matter how strong the Pride Devil is, he would not be able to withstand a barrage from many high-level cultivators wielding their legacy artifacts.

But from Vera's memories, the Pride Devil had come to the Atria Empire not long after the civil war began.

That meant the Devil Lord had finally allowed him a bit of freedom—and he had already massacred an entire town.

Aldrian did not know what the Devil Lord's plan was or why the Pride Devil was in the Atria Empire, but one thing was certain: there would be more massacres—or perhaps some had already happened without his knowledge.

It had already been more than a year since the massacre shown in Vera's memories. He had no idea what that sword maniac had done since then, or what he would do next.

It seemed like more trouble was coming with the Pride Devil's appearance.

Aldrian stroked Evin's head a few times and smiled as he looked at her sleeping face.

"Is there something wrong, my lord?" Vera asked. She seemed to notice that Aldrian had been deep in thought after seeing her memories.

Aldrian smiled at her.

"Well, I know the figure who massacred Gerin Town, and his appearance is indeed a sign of trouble, but you don't have to worry. You are safe here," he said. "Anyway, forget about that figure for now. Just take care of Evin. She's truly a pious child—she's even been selling her handicrafts behind your back to help you recover."

Vera looked at Evin and couldn't help but feel touched.

All this time, she had spent most of her days inside the house, feeling too ill to move or walk far. She only knew that her daughter spent her time making handicrafts and playing outside, because there was no way she could keep her daughter inside all the time.

But to think that Evin had been selling her handicrafts...

Aldrian carefully picked Evin up from his lap and placed her gently on the bed, right beside Vera. Vera stared at her daughter lovingly and stroked her head, then lay down beside her in a protective position.

Once he confirmed that there was no problem with Evin and Vera, Aldrian stepped outside the house and stood there, deep in thought. Sylphia and the others followed him. Finally, she asked him,

"So you know who massacred that town?" she asked.

Aldrian nodded.

"One of the Seven Deadly Sins—Pride," he replied. "He's quite troublesome. With that man roaming free, bloodshed follows wherever he goes."

At the mention of the perpetrator, Sylphia and the others raised their eyebrows.

"Seven Deadly Sins... Pride? That sounds dangerous," Sylphia said.

"I've heard he's a great swordmaster, but there's barely any solid information about him. I wonder how strong he really is," Xin Haotian added. Then he looked at Aldrian with a hint of amusement. "Even though you call him troublesome, your expression is calm as ever. Well, I suppose that's just like you."

Aldrian smiled and gave a small shrug.

"Well, it's true that he will be a problem and a sign of trouble," he said, "but I'm still confident in myself. If I had to face him right now, I wouldn't back down."

Sylphia and the others smiled. This was the confidence they had come to expect from Aldrian.

Then they saw him close his eyes. For a brief moment, his presence grew heavier. It became more intimidating and overwhelming before returning to normal. This sensation was something they had felt from him many times before, and by now, they were used to it.

Aldrian opened his eyes as he turned this entire area into his domain. Once he finished, he asked the heaven whether Pride was within it.

Once the answer came, he sighed, as the heavens could not detect Pride's location. This made it clear that Pride could be in the Devil Territory, the Everlasting Silent Forest, or even within the Buddhist sect's territory.

In Pride's case, it was possible that he was operating alone Buddhist sect's territory, as the devil lord trusted Pride's strength, believing that he could escape if the situation turned unfavorable.

Aldrian couldn't help but smile at the prospect of Pride being inside the Buddhist sect's territory. If that were the case, the chances of their meeting would be higher, and he could finally test his strength against him.

Someone as powerful as Pride was a much better opponent than any other member of the Seven Deadly Sins. However, it would be even better if he could gather all of the Seven Deadly Sins in one place and fight them. Then, he would be able to unleash his full power and fight to his heart's content.

By fighting them, he might be able to estimate and compare just how powerful the devil lord truly was. He didn't believe that the devil lord was merely slightly stronger than the Seven Deadly Sins. In fact, he had already guessed that the devil lord was far, far more powerful than the Seven Deadly Sins combined.

*"I wonder where that bastard is,"* he thought, as he wondered about Pride's location.

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At an unknown location, a robed figure walked through the bustling streets of the town. The figure was completely covered in a robe, obscuring any view of their true appearance. The figure continued walking until they arrived at a quieter, more serene area of the town.

Not far from the figure stood a monastery, where a few monks were cleaning the floors around the monastery with brooms.

The figure continued walking toward the monastery, and before long, the monks finally realized someone was approaching them.

They saw a figure cloaked in robe, with no visible features or detectable cultivation.

The figure finally stopped and slightly lifted his head, allowing the monks to catch a brief glimpse of his face. He appeared to be a young looking man, with smooth skin, as if he were the heir of a noble family, someone who had been well cared for. His red irises gleamed like the eyes of a predator, shining faintly beneath the shadows of his hood.

The monks, who had been observing him, sensed that something was off about the man, as if he were silently studying them.

"Good sir, do you need any help?" one of the monks finally asked as he approached the figure. "Is there anyone you seek?"

The man turned his head toward the monk for a split second.

"Sir, you might—"

Before the monk could finish his words, his body was suddenly sliced in half from the top of his head. His internal organs spilled as his severed body crumpled to the ground.

The other monks, witnessing the horrifying sight, were stunned. They had not seen a sword in the man's hand before, yet now there was one, and they couldn't tell how he had drawn it.

It quickly became clear to them that this man had come with ill intent.

The man's red eyes shifted to the remaining monks before his body vanished in an instant.

Later that day, news that caused quite an uproar in that town reached the main temple of the Buddhist sect. One of the Buddhist sect's monasteries had been attacked, and all the monks inside had been slaughtered.

## **Chapter 514: Return to the Forbidden Zone**

Not long after healing Vera, Aldrian and the others discussed what to do next. Sylphia still seemed to have something to talk about with Vera and wanted to stay in the city for a while. As for Aldrian, he had no business in this place—unless there was news of the Pride Devil appearing in the Buddhist sect's territory.

They were already close to their destination at the Everlasting Silent Forest, and according to Xin Haotian, it would take about three more days to reach the Xin family's secret realm.

After the discussion, it was decided that Sylphia, Baek Jimin, and Eleine would stay, while Aldrian and Xin Haotian would head to the Xin family's secret realm. Besides the fact that Sylphia had something to do, the others—who could not fly—did not want to slow Aldrian and Xin Haotian down, so they chose to accompany her.

They then chose an inn to stay at, and since Aldrian did not know how long his business with the Xin family would take, he sent an order for some of the Fingers to come to the city and guard the ladies.

Only after the First, Second, and Fifth Fingers arrived did Aldrian and Xin Haotian leave the city.

They used a teleportation portal to reach a town near the border of the Everlasting Silent Forest, then flew eastward to enter the forest.

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It did not take long for Aldrian to reach the Everlasting Silent Forest. From the nearest town at the border, it took him only an hour to enter this forbidden zone. Once inside, seeing the forest again after several years, he finally sensed something he could not before.

What he sensed were strong space laws spread across many areas—even extending into the sky. From what he could tell, these space laws were scattered throughout the forest, numbering in the thousands, as far as his perception could reach. To him, this entire region felt like a place where countless natural spatial phenomena occurred.

However, he knew these scattered space laws were, in fact, secret realms. He could sense the signs of hidden spatial cracks—cracks that would pull in anyone who unknowingly passed through or even touched them.

"Follow my flight and stay close to me. If you stray too far, you'll be trapped in one of the secret realms scattered throughout this area. You must have this to pass through the spatial traps in the forest," Xin Haotian said, then took out a small, diamond-shaped object marked with patterns from his pouch.

Aldrian looked at the diamond and could sense how it resonated with the surrounding hidden spatial cracks. It emitted a kind of identification zone, forming a spatial field that enveloped both Xin Haotian and him. As long as he remained close to the diamond, he would be able to pass safely through the many spatial traps that would otherwise pull intruders into the secret realms.

He soon witnessed its effect firsthand. They passed several spatial traps without being drawn in, simply flying through them without disturbance. They continued heading east without encountering any problems.

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For the next three days, they kept flying and stopped to rest only a few times. Along the way, they encountered wild beasts that were normally impossible to find within the forest. This phenomenon showed that the forbidden zone was undergoing changes, causing some of the living beings it had once "swallowed" to escape.

With signs that many people trapped inside the Everlasting Silent Forest had been able to escape in recent years, he believed the forest was getting "weaker." Over time, the spatial traps leading to the secret realms began to open occasionally—and sometimes even fully—allowing the creatures trapped within to break free.

This phenomenon made Aldrian consider that his guess that the entire Everlasting Silent Forest was actually a massive formation might be true. Although he couldn't fully comprehend such a formation yet, due to its size and his current limitations, he felt that the Everlasting Silent Forest's formation was growing weaker for some reason.

The spatial traps were a part of this formation, and given its vast scale, it must require enormous energy sources to sustain it. These sources would have been essential to stabilize the formation since ancient times.

Did the energy source for the formation get depleted, causing the formation to weaken? If so, it would only be a matter of time before this forbidden zone returned to a normal forest, but rich in dense energy. The place would essentially transform into a cultivation sanctuary, given the vast energy that had gathered here over such a long time without anyone cultivating within it.

"We are near. The spatial crack to the Xin family's secret realm is beneath that high cliff," Xin Haotian said.

Aldrian looked in the direction of the high cliff, its tip hidden as it pierced the clouds. Beneath the cliff, lush, towering trees covered the base, and they landed there. Amidst the massive roots of the trees, Aldrian sensed the space laws and even detected a slight spatial distortion, clearly indicating the location of the secret realm.

"Truly, the forest has changed so much. Normally, there would be no sign of any spatial phenomena in this place, but now there is a visible spatial distortion. If spatial phenomena like this have been present since ancient times, then no one would be trapped inside the secret realms," Xin Haotian said.

Aldrian nodded. That was true. If the spatial phenomena were visible, people or beasts could easily evade them, so there would be no way they could be trapped inside the secret realms. However, with the changes in the forest, there were now places where spatial distortions could be seen, and he had already encountered some of them on their journey.

"Let's go in," Xin Haotian said as he stepped into the spatial distortion, followed by Aldrian.

The sensation of passing through the spatial distortion did not disturb Aldrian, and once he stepped into the secret realm, he was greeted by a new environment that made his eyes slightly widen.

What he saw was a vast, lush green expanse, with some settlements scattered in various areas. Aldrian and Xin Haotian were atop the cliff, so they were able to see the entire landscape stretching to the horizon, which was truly beautiful. Inside this secret realm, the sun shone just as it did outside.

That was one of the things Aldrian wanted to study—how to make the secret realm follow the day and night cycle of the outside world, or perhaps it had its own unique cycle. The secret realm he was born in also had a day and night cycle, which amazed him due to the complexity of the formation and the power of the one who had created all of this—the one who created the Everlasting Silent Forest.

Did Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian create all of this? It was possible, and Aldrian knew they were more than capable of it. From his memories and visions, he knew that both Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian had comprehended space laws and were masters of certain formations, especially Long Shentian. Though he was a dragon, Long Shentian could create many complex formations.

With how powerful they were, Aldrian had no doubt that they might be the ones who created all of this.

"Welcome to the Xin family's secret realm. This is the place where we live and also guard the center of the forest," Xin Haotian said with a smile. "Let's go; I will take you to the Xin family's main manor."

They flew in one direction, and during their journey, Aldrian looked below and observed some of the activities of the people here. There was a vast agricultural area with wheat and rice, where some people tended to the crops. They also passed by several villages, where many villagers went about their daily activities. Most of them were mortals, without any cultivation.

In addition, there was a forested area where Aldrian sensed some wild and even spiritual beasts.

From Aldrian's estimation, this secret realm was much larger than the one he was born in.

Not long after, they finally saw a vast complex of buildings surrounded by a protective wall. When Aldrian saw the building complex, it reminded him of the architecture in the demon territory, which had its own charm and a peaceful atmosphere.

"That is my family's manor," Xin Haotian said.

They landed not far from the front gate, where several guards stood. The guards, upon seeing Xin Haotian, widened their eyes slightly, straightened their posture, and soon after, bowed to him as he approached.

"Welcome back, young master," they called in unison.

Xin Haotian simply nodded.

"At ease. I've brought an important guest to meet the patriarch. You can stay at your posts," he said while walking past them.

The guards looked at Aldrian with curiosity, as they had never seen Xin Haotian bring anyone from the outside world. They knew their young master liked to venture outside, so it wasn't surprising. However, bringing someone here was a new for them.

Once they entered the manor, Aldrian nodded in appreciation at the beauty of the place. It truly resembled a manor in the demon territory, with its beautiful scenery, peaceful atmosphere, and many ponds.

He could also sense the presence of many strong cultivators in some of the buildings, including a few at the emperor stage, which was truly impressive. However, he didn't find it surprising. This place, with its rich heaven and earth energy, was the home of the guardian family of the forest since ancient times, so it was only natural that this family would be powerful.

Not long after, Aldrian arrived in front of the room where he sensed the strongest presence here—at peak emperor stage.

## **Chapter 515: Conversation with Patriarch Xin 1**

Xin Haotian opened the sliding door, allowing Aldrian to finally see inside. His attention was immediately drawn to the middle-aged man seated behind the table. The man had long black hair tied in a ponytail and retained the handsomeness of his younger years. He wore a regal white robe that reflected his position in the Xin family, and his charisma was hard to ignore.

*"Xin Guangming—is he Xin Haotian's father?"* Aldrian wondered after reading his information through the Eyes of Heaven.

Xin Guangming appeared to be working, focused on reading a scroll on the table. His calm expression as he read had a soothing effect on anyone who looked at him.

As the door opened, he glanced toward Aldrian and Xin Haotian.

"Father, I've returned, and I brought Aldrian with me," Xin Haotian said.

However, his father did not seem to hear Xin Haotian's words, as his focus remained on Aldrian. Xin Haotian did not mind and looked at Aldrian.

"Aldrian, this is my father, the patriarch of the Xin family," he said.

But Aldrian stayed silent as he looked at Patriarch Xin.

Patriarch Xin seemed to be observing and checking Aldrian with his senses, which Aldrian allowed without interference. At first, the patriarch's expression was calm, but then he narrowed his eyes and let out a sigh.

"Truly amazing. This is the first time I've seen something like this. You are truly someone I cannot comprehend," Patriarch Xin said. "How can someone possess that kind of energy? This is already beyond our understanding. No wonder Xin Haotian thinks so highly of you, young Aldrian."

What he sensed was a condensed energy that, to him, felt somewhat similar to a type of energy he had known before—but it was also distinctly different. What astonished him was the feeling that followed—not just from the energy itself, but from Aldrian's entire being.

It was the urge to worship.

Yes, that was the first emotion that rose within him: a deep, involuntary urge to worship. It came so suddenly, that his soul felt slightly shaken and his mind trembled. This sensation did not arise from thought but from instinct—something buried deep within the soul of every living being.

Anyone who sensed Aldrian's complete presence, together with that golden energy, would feel the same. It was a sign. A sign that Aldrian's very existence triggered a primal response: an unshakable need to revere.

Patriarch Xin slowly stood from his seat and walked toward Aldrian. Then, without hesitation, he cupped his hands in respect.

"My apologies. It seems I've already been rude by making you uncomfortable with my observation, but I couldn't help it. You carry so many stories and achievements—it feels like something straight out of a fantasy tale," he said apologetically.

Aldrian smiled at the patriarch.

"It's fine. I'm already used to it. Many are curious about me, so things like this don't really surprise me. Instead, I allow those who wish to understand me to see for

themselves—to learn what kind of person and existence I am, as long as they bear no ill intent," he said, returning the patriarch's respectful gesture.

Patriarch Xin smiled and motioned toward the chairs and table prepared for receiving guests.

"Let's have a seat. I know you have many questions and stories, and so do I. This is the first time I've met someone like you. I'd like to know more."

They sat down, and not long after, a maidservant entered to serve the tea. She stole a glance at Aldrian, clearly intrigued, as this was the first time she had seen someone from the outside world. In fact, ever since Aldrian stepped into the manor, many had looked in his direction with curiosity, and there were others observing him from behind the scenes.

How could they not? The Xin family had no history of bringing outsiders into the secret realm.

The Xin family was strict about who could leave or enter the secret realm. Only those trusted and granted authority by the patriarch were allowed to leave. But never had someone from the outside been allowed to step foot in this land.

They all knew the reason for this strictness, as they had been taught from childhood that the place they lived in was special and should not be recklessly exposed to outsiders. Their family was a unique one, guarding the central part of the Everlasting Silent Forest, and not many, or perhaps no one, knew that a family like theirs existed within the forbidden zone.

So, when Aldrian arrived, their curiosity was piqued. They had finally seen someone who was not from this secret realm.

After the tea was served, and the maid left the room, Patriarch Xin smiled at Aldrian.

"So, young Aldrian, I believe you've already heard about us, the Xin family, and the four guardian families of the forest from my son here?" he asked, to which Aldrian responded with a nod.

"To be honest, I was the first to be astonished when I heard the story about you from my son. Someone whose sword will can even harm my son is no ordinary person. Our family's legacy, the techniques and laws we've comprehended, come from the dragon and phoenix that descended from the heavens onto this land," Patriarch Xin said.

"The dragon and the phoenix brought many treasures with them and spread them fairly to the four guardian families of the forest. As for our part, aside from a few artifacts, we received a cultivation technique said to have been created by the God of Light, who, of course, came from a higher realm. His light laws and cultivation techniques are so

powerful that, to this day, there have only been a few times when our light laws were on par with or even overpowered by other cultivators. And all of them were devils who could do it."

"Our technique allows us to sense another higher-level energy, called divine energy, which is scattered in certain areas within the Forest. Although we can't absorb it, cultivating near this divine energy makes us much stronger than normal cultivators."

"We're not saying that the people of this continent have no way of facing our strength, but to do so, they would need to be much stronger in cultivation and foundation than us. At the same level, I can confidently say that there is no one on this continent who can contend with our technique."

Aldrian thought about what the patriarch had said. What Patriarch Xin implied was also something else—that the devil's technique also came from a higher realm. He wasn't too surprised by this, as he had already encountered "that thing"—something he believed to be the devil god, or some beings connected to the devils.

Given that, it was no surprise that their technique came from higher realms and could even rival the light laws of the God of Light's cultivation technique.

"You know what that means, right? We know that the devils possess cultivation techniques that, like ours, come from the higher realms. Their overbearing techniques are truly powerful. That is why they nearly conquered the continent, if not for the intervention of the dragon and phoenix, and leaving us as the last surviving guardian family," Patriarch Xin continued.

"As for you, a human born inside the secret realm who was unaware of our presence until Xin Haotian told you, to be able to overwhelm our light laws with a cultivation far lower than Xin Haotian's, relying only on your sword will, is truly amazing. It's beyond my comprehension."

"When I sensed you earlier, it confirmed that there is something even more special about you. Believe it or not, the energy inside your body seems similar to divine energy, but I've never felt divine energy that made me feel the way I did when I sensed yours." Patriarch Xin paused, looking into Aldrian's eyes with a smile.

"Even as I tell you this story, your eyes remain clear and calm, as if nothing I've said surprises you."

"You're not from the four guardian families, and you're not one of the devils, yet you possess great power and also the ability to store divine-like energy within your body—something we had already deemed impossible."

"Xin Haotian also told me you're still a youngster, not even twenty yet, but now, standing before you, it doesn't feel like I'm facing a teenager. Your bearing and presence are like someone who has lived for a long time."

Patriarch Xin paused for a moment, his gaze fixed on Aldrian.

"Young Aldrian, what exactly are you? No, more precisely, who are you?"

A silence followed.

Then, Aldrian smiled at the question—a question he had heard several times before, a question he himself also wanted to know the answer to.

Although he had been powerful in his past life, that still didn't answer the question. What was he? Who had he been before he became so powerful? How had he gained the strength to control the cosmos? Had becoming the emperor of all heavens been just one life among many? If that wasn't his first life, then what had been his first life? What was his true first life?

What was his origin, something even the heavens did not know? What was... who was... why was... so many questions swirled within his mind, each one a mystery he longed to unravel.

As for the patriarch's question, he could say he had been powerful in his past life, but that wasn't an answer he could give—not one he truly understood himself.

"That is something I want to know the answer to," Aldrian finally replied, causing Patriarch Xin to look at him in confusion.

What kind of answer was that?

"Anyway, Patriarch Xin, I need to correct something in your information." Aldrian said, catching Patriarch Xin's attention.

"Actually, the Xin family isn't the only guardian family to survive the war three million years ago," Aldrian added.

At those words, both Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian's eyes widened in shock.

## **Chapter 516: Conversation with Patriarch Xin 2**

Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian were truly shocked when they heard there was another surviving guardian family. Until now, they had believed that none of the other main family had survived the great war with the devils three million years ago.

They knew a small number of survivors existed outside the main family, hidden in some of the secret realms, but they had never met anyone from the main bloodline, which they believed had long perished.

And yet, Aldrian claimed that another guardian family had survived alongside them?

Even Xin Haotian was hearing it for the first time, since he and Aldrian had never spoken about it.

"Are you certain, young Aldrian? How do you know they are from the guardian family?" Patriarch Xin asked with a doubtful expression.

Aldrian did not answer and instead took out a scarf from his storage ring. Once it came out, it immediately wrapped around his hands by itself. Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian raised their eyebrows because this scarf was actually a divine-grade artifact.

But then, Patriarch Xin narrowed his eyes.

He could sense a divine aura from the scarf, which meant this scarf was created by beings of the higher realms.

"Wait, *this scarf*," he thought, as he seemed to have seen this scarf somewhere before. After a few moments, he finally remembered where he had seen it.

*"Isn't this the Heavenly Scarf of Divine Phoenix? The artifact given to the Ragius family?"*

He saw this scarf in their records, which included descriptions and pictures of the artifacts used by the four guardian families. These records were something that each of the guardian families possessed, since their duties could require them to work together.

They needed to be familiar with each other's artifacts so they could cooperate more harmoniously and cover the gaps in what each family lacked. The artifacts given by the dragon and phoenix were known to all four families anyway. Hiding them would only be detrimental to the unity of the guardian families.

"Is this the Heavenly Scarf of Divine Phoenix? The artifact given to the Ragius family?" Patriarch Xin asked Aldrian, and Aldrian responded with a nod.

Seeing the confirmation, Patriarch Xin's heart trembled.

"The Ragius family actually survived. They escaped from their secret realm before they were fully annihilated by the devils during the great war three million years ago and took refuge in the Atria Empire," Aldrian explained.

"In that place, they changed their family name to Rosalind. Long story short, as time passed, they forgot their roots and their past, so they never returned to the Everlasting Silent Forest."

Aldrian then explained how the scarf ended up in his possession, and he also spoke about the other artifacts from the Ragius family.

Hearing Aldrian recount his story about the Rosalind Barony, Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian felt as if it was all surreal. To think that all this time, the Rosalind family—now a noble family within the Atria Empire—was actually the Ragius family!

Xin Haotian truly did not expect this. Did that mean Elena Rosalind—one of the ten great swordmasters of the continent—was actually part of the guardian family?

"I see. To think that the Ragius family ended up like that," Patriarch Xin sighed. "No wonder we couldn't find their artifacts. They actually escaped—we thought their artifacts had already been taken by the devils."

"But, they really did hide themselves well. We had no idea about it. And also—" he looked at Aldrian.

"I can imagine they are much weaker compared to their former strength, since they have been living outside our 'habitat.' They were given cultivation techniques that are far more effective when practiced within the Everlasting Silent Forest. The heaven and earth energy is much richer here, which deepens their comprehension and helps them build a far stronger cultivation foundation."

Aldrian nodded.

"Well, yes. Even their current patriarch is only at the low emperor stage, and they were pushed into a corner by an enemy faction during the civil war," he said. "If they had the kind of strength the Xin family has here, I doubt they would be struggling like that. They might have even been able to turn the tide of the civil war."

Since entering the Xin family manor, Aldrian had already sensed more than seven emperor-stage cultivators—something no noble family outside could compare to, not even the imperial family. Patriarch Xin was the strongest here, at the peak of the emperor stage, powerful enough to lead an empire outside. With the Xin family's combined strength, they could easily establish their own kingdom if they wished.

"What a pity. I hope they can return to the Everlasting Silent Forest and regain their strength, especially with the time of the prophecy drawing closer. If that prophecy refers to another great war, then we are essentially doomed. The power of the continent now is much weaker than it was during the great war three million years ago," Patriarch Xin said.

"Well, that depends on their decision in the future. I still haven't spoken to them about whether they want to return to the secret realm inside the forest," Aldrian replied before he sipped his tea. He had to admit it was delicious and refreshing, though not quite as good as the tea he had when he met the Heavenly Demon.

Patriarch Xin also sipped his tea before placing the teacup down and looking at Aldrian.

"Now, about why we want you to help us uncover the mystery of the Everlasting Silent Forest. As you know, there is a secret in the central part of the forest, where the dragon and phoenix have stayed all these years. The central part of the forest is covered by a barrier that can't be broken, even when the devils tried to breach it three million years ago."

"However, all of that changed when the phenomenon of the Dragon and Phoenix appeared in the sky over the continent more than 16 years ago. Since that day, our people, who sometimes check the barrier, have sensed that it is weakening. In fact, since then, some holes had occasionally appeared before closing again, but not at fixed intervals."

"We are worried that this is a sign something has happened to the dragon and the phoenix inside the core area. With the prophecy drawing nearer, this is absolutely not a good sign. We don't know what happened inside the core area, as we have never established a connection with the dragon and the phoenix."

"If something has happened to the dragon and the phoenix, and if the devils' target is the same as it was during the great war three million years ago—the core area where the dragon and the phoenix reside—or if their target is the dragon and the phoenix themselves, then we will not have enough strength to withstand the devils' forces," Patriarch Xin said.

Hearing the patriarch's explanation, Aldrian opened his lips.

"Wait, the devils at that time were targeting the core area?" he asked in wonder.

"Yes. Although the devils spread across the continent, causing destruction and conquering many territories, their real target was the core area, where the barrier covered it. We don't know what they were after, but the devils were indeed targeting something inside the core area, and they tried to force their way in."

Aldrian frowned. This was a clue, a clue that the devils had been on a mission for a long time, and it had something to do with Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian. Were the devils really targeting them? What could have made the devils target them?

Then, he remembered what Long Leiyun of the Silver Lightning Dragon Clan had told him. Aldrian realized there were problems beyond just the devils and the prophecy on

this continent. Could this still be connected to the parties Long Leiyun mentioned, the ones who had challenged his authority?

Aldrian set those matters aside for the moment and asked Patriarch Xin.

"Let's say that the great war happened and the devils' target is still the core area. Until today, I've already killed three of the Seven Deadly Sins and weakened the devils' influence across the continent."

"With all those losses, do the devils still have enough strength to attack the core area? Realistically, with their strength greatly reduced due to the death of some of the Seven Deadly Sins and many devils across the continent, they wouldn't have enough power to face the entire continent's strength like they did during the great war three million years ago." He added.

Patriarch Xin shook his head.

"I'm not sure, as only the devils know the extent of their own power. So, I can't be certain if they have some hidden cards beyond the known powers like the Seven Deadly Sins or those devils who infiltrated the empires."

Aldrian sighed inwardly. From what he had seen in the memories of the devils he had killed, there was no sign of any hidden power—at least none known to the devils whose memories he had accessed.

Even when he looked at the memories of the Envy devil, there was nothing that indicated the devils had any hidden powers that would allow them to face the entire continent, if they lost many devils and the Seven Deadly Sins.

But if the devils were still targeting the core area after he had already greatly reduced their strength, what made them so confident in continuing the attack? What was their hidden card? Was it the descent of their god?

There was something beyond his calculations, and it made him uncomfortable.

*"Devil lord, what are you planning?"* Aldrian thought.

### **Chapter 517: Conversation with Patriarch Xin 3**

What is the Devil Lord planning? If he truly depends on his god to launch an attack or create chaos, then how does he summon them? This is a question that might lead to an answer about how the prophecy came to be. Aldrian believes that for a god to descend, the devils must require something that allows the path to this world to be opened.

From the moment he saw a vision of that "thing" trying to descend upon this land, he has been thinking about how such a being could manage it. The law of causality should prevent a powerful existence like that from descending into the lower heavens.

When he took in the clones of the Golden Phoenix and the Great Peng to his group, he began to suspect that the law of causality might have weakened, which could explain how beasts from the higher heavens were able to be summoned into this world.

But that remains only his guess, without any solid proof. That is because weakening a law of causality that is already part of the fundamental rules of the universe is no simple task.

With Patriarch Xin's explanation, Aldrian's certainty that the Devil Lord might know how to weaken the law of causality grew much stronger. That seemed to be the only piece that fit into the puzzle of how that "thing" could descend—and likely the reason the devils still had the confidence to initiate another great war, despite the heavy losses they had already suffered.

The next important question was: how? What method did the Devil Lord use to weaken the law of causality? This had to be something only he knew, and Aldrian had found no trace of it in the memories of the devils he had killed.

If he could uncover how the Devil Lord weakened the law of causality, then perhaps he could prevent that "thing" from descending. They would not have to experience the prophecy—meaning the prophecy would never come to pass.

*"Do I have to barge into the Devil Lord's stronghold?"* Aldrian wondered, but inwardly, he shook his head.

That would be far too reckless. Aldrian had no idea how strong the Devil Lord truly was, or what kind of tricks he might be hiding. If he just barged in without a plan, he would be no different from the arrogant fools he had always despised.

But how could he understand how the Devil Lord operated without entering devil territory?

*"It looks like I'll need to infiltrate the devil territory after this."*

Seeing that Aldrian seemed lost in thought, Patriarch Xin looked at him with curiosity.

"Is everything alright, young Aldrian?" he asked.

Aldrian gave a simple nod.

"Yes. I was just thinking about what Patriarch Xin said—it gave me some clues that help with a certain deduction I've been working on."

Though he remained curious about what Aldrian meant, Patriarch Xin chose not to pry and continued speaking.

"So, return to why we need your help—because of the possibility that something has happened inside the core area, we have to try to enter it. We need to confirm whether the dragon and the phoenix are still with us, or if something went wrong inside. That's why we may have to be 'slightly rude' and barge into their place of rest. The phenomena occurring in the forest are troubling, and we want to make sure we understand what's happening."

"However, the barrier is mixed with divine energy. That's why it's so strong, and we haven't been able to do anything about it—not even with the light laws from the God of Light. But—" Patriarch Xin pointed toward Aldrian.

"With your special power—and the ability to store energy that resembles divine energy—we might be able to enter the core area. Your unique power, which even surpasses the light laws of the God of Light, could allow us to get through the barrier without waiting for a hole to appear."

"Once we're inside the core area, your power may still be necessary. There are likely many things within that share properties with the barrier—mixed with divine energy. You could say this is a gamble, one where we must be prepared to risk our lives."

"If we're wrong and the dragon and the phoenix are offended by our intrusion—then we can also say goodbye to our lives. Still, I'm convinced something is wrong, judging by the changes happening within the forest."

"But if the dragon and the phoenix are truly in a state where they can no longer stop the devils' attack, then what we need to do is find something inside that can help us survive the time of the prophecy—something that can turn the tide of the great war in our favor."

"This is also a chance for us to uncover the mysteries hidden within the core area—and to understand why the devils are targeting it."

"So, what do you say? Will you come with us into the core area? To take on an adventure that might be dangerous, but could be incredibly rewarding?" Patriarch Xin asked with a smile.

Aldrian didn't answer immediately. Even without this invitation, he had already planned to go to the core area where Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian resided. Ever since he entered the Everlasting Silent Forest, the call from that direction had only grown stronger. He wanted to see it for himself—to discover what kind of secret was waiting for him there.

"Did the Xin family not try to enter the core area when the hole in the barrier appeared?" Aldrian asked.

"Of course, we've already tried," Patriarch Xin said. "Whenever the hole appeared near our people, we sent a few groups inside the core area. But the moment the hole closed, we lost contact with them. The hole never reappeared in the same spot, making this method ineffective. That's why we need you, someone who might be able to open the path for us."

Aldrian nodded.

"I'm in," he said. "I'm curious about what's inside there, and who wouldn't want to uncover the mystery of the famous forbidden zone that has been created since ancient times?" Aldrian added with a light, joking tone.

Hearing this, Patriarch Xin smiled while Xin Haotian nodded, just as he had expected. Aldrian would help them, even with the uncertainty of what lay inside that place. From Xin Haotian's perspective, Aldrian was someone who enjoyed venturing into any place that promised new experiences.

As he ventured with Aldrian, Xin Haotian could sense that Aldrian never hesitated to go into places that were even dangerous. He always involved himself in problems that he sometimes didn't have to put his nose into. Yet, Aldrian never shied away, and that was why he had become so popular.

Now, with Aldrian helping his family, Xin Haotian felt confident that this adventure into the core area would bring yet another surprise. He sighed inwardly.

*"Since when did I become so confident in him?"* he thought with a smile.

Unknowingly, he had come to see Aldrian as someone who would bring luck, as if everything they did together would lead to surprising results. He was eager to see what kind of surprise Aldrian would uncover in the core area this time.

"Anyway, I know you've taken a long journey to get here, and it's not ideal to head straight to the core area right after arriving. So stay here and rest for now. We can depart for the core area tomorrow, or the day after," Patriarch Xin said.

"Alright," Aldrian replied.

Not long after, Aldrian was brought to the special guest room where he could rest. Once inside the luxurious room—lavish by the standards of this place and surrounded by beautiful scenery—Aldrian took a moment to appreciate it before turning to what he needed to do first.

To create his domain here.

Once his fifty-five-kilometer domain was established, he began checking everything within its reach. He wasn't surprised to find many divine-grade artifacts hidden inside what appeared to be the Xin family's secret vault.

Besides the Xin family's own legacy artifacts, there were likely artifacts from the other guardian families—gathered by the Xin family after those families were destroyed, to keep them from falling into the devils' hands.

The artifacts he sensed also carried a divine aura, a sign that they had been bestowed by Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian. He wondered if connecting to them through the thread of origin would show him anything.

He set those thoughts aside and decided to stop checking for now, having already scanned the entire domain.

Nothing seemed out of place, which allowed him to relax a little. He sat on the bed and closed his eyes.

He decided to spend his time deepening his comprehension of his domain. He usually did this by using the domain's abilities and occasionally training the aspects of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.

His consciousness seemed to become one with the domain, as if the domain were his body, his eyes, his ears—his entire being. His senses spread across the domain, stretching over the continent, and he continued to train them to push his limits.

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While Aldrian was inside the secret realm, training with his domain, at the Buddhist sect's territory, this land of enlightenment was in a tense situation due to the many incidents that had occurred a few days earlier.

Many monks and common people had been slaughtered by an unknown figure.

### **Chapter 518: The Trouble in the Buddhist Sect Territory**

The news circulating across the Buddhist sect territory is unsettling, as many people have died at the hands of an unknown assailant. Some monasteries, villages, and even small towns have already been drenched in blood. The Buddhist sect has even dispatched two of the Seven Arhats to catch the perpetrator.

However, even after several days, the perpetrator has not been caught, showing that the assailant is not an ordinary man.

At this time, a group of monks from the Buddhist sect arrived at the scene where they had received a report of a slaughtered village with hundreds of victims. When they

reached the location, what they saw was truly a terrible sight—many body parts were scattered everywhere. There was no distinction between women or men, old or young, even children. All of them had died gruesome deaths.

Some of the monks could not endure the scene in front of them and immediately vomited upon seeing it.

The leader of this group of monks is a middle-aged monk with a burly body. Although he has a huge build and looks quite intimidating, his presence is like calm water. There is no aura, nothing that makes others feel uneasy—aside from his imposing physique.

Beside him is another monk with a slightly older face and a normal-sized build. He carries a long staff tied to his back. Like the burly monk beside him, he exudes no aura and remains as calm as still water.

However, those who are familiar with the members of the Buddhist sect hold these two in high regard. They are two of the Seven Arhats—the grand elders of the Buddhist sect. Buddhist cultivators who have attained profound comprehension and enlightenment. All of them are emperor-stage cultivators, and exceptionally powerful ones at that.

"Amitabha, may you reincarnate to a better life," the monk with the staff said as he looked at the gruesome scene in front of him.

"It's the same as the others. The sword wounds and clean cuts show that the perpetrator is a swordmaster," the burly monk said as he examined the scene.

"The clues we have point to the perpetrator acting alone, and he is likely an emperor-stage cultivator. What is this figure trying to achieve with such indiscriminate slaughter? This person is truly cruel—there are no better words. He is a devil," he added.

"Well, perhaps the perpetrator really is a devil. We only need to find this devil's pattern. So far, we haven't understood why he kills. Who is his real target? Does he simply enjoy slaughter, or is there a hidden clue behind these massacres?" the other monk replied.

"If he is only creating chaos and killing without a clear purpose, then we can narrow the search and guard the nearest settlements to the scene. At some point, we are likely to catch this figure," he added.

"But if this figure has a mission and attacks specific targets, then we have the need to dispatch many manpower, because we don't know who the real target of this figure is, and we need to guard a wide area."

The burly monk sighed.

"I hope that we can catch this figure without having to attract more commotion. This time, many already start to panic as we still can't catch this figure. If only this figure can be seen by Venerable Eyes of Destiny."

Venerable Eyes of Destiny is one of the Seven Arhats who comprehended one of the Buddhist sect's techniques, which can be said to be a karmic-based technique that can track anything.

The technique also makes it possible for him to have the ability of clairvoyance, which can look into the future of any being, although the future he sees can be scattered or vague depending on who or what he wants to see.

The Heavenly Buddha's Eyes.

Normally, with Venerable Eyes of Destiny's ability, they would easily know who the person is that they want to find, along with their location. But when Venerable Eyes of Destiny said he couldn't see the perpetrator—as if this figure was blanketed by dark fog—there could only be one explanation.

That figure is prepared, and seems to know how to prevent himself from being tracked by the Heavenly Buddha's Eyes. Maybe this figure has a technique that can hide him from karmic-based abilities, or perhaps he is using some kind of artifact.

With no way to track this figure, being blind to his targets, and considering the wide range of his possible movements, the search has become extremely difficult. He could be anywhere, and his target could be anyone.

They lacked the manpower capable of catching this figure, whom they already guessed to be at the emperor stage. Even if, by chance, someone found him, they would be dead before anyone strong enough to face him could arrive. By that time, the figure would have already escaped, forcing everything to start from zero again.

The two Arhats and their group investigated the place for some time before deciding to "clean" the scene. These poor souls may not have found peace when their lives ended, but at the very least, they deserved to be laid to rest in a more respectable manner.

All of the victims were buried near the village, with many tombstone left behind to mark them as victims of the massacre. This place became one of many that this group of monks had cleansed after such tragedies.

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While the group of monks continued searching for the assailant, Sylphia and the others remained inside Dongtian City. At this time, Sylphia was with Evin as they appeared to be taking a stroll and enjoying their time together. Unbeknownst to them, the Fifth Finger followed silently, guarding them with her stealth technique.

Sylphia and Evin looked happy as they walked side by side. Sylphia enjoyed having Evin with her on strolls through the city—she made the walks feel more lively.

She truly liked how sweet and obedient Evin was, which made her grow even more fond of the child. But deep inside, she pitied the girl's fate—forced to face the harsh reality that her father was gone and that she had no one but her mother.

Sylphia sighed inwardly as she looked at the child beside her. She had already spoken to Vera about what she wanted to do in the future. She had no one left in the Atria empire. The Vicanton family no longer existed, having been one of the noble houses wiped out by Prince Wilmar during the civil war.

If they returned to the Atria Empire, they would have to start from scratch, which Sylphia knew would be a struggle—not only for Vera but also for Evin. With her elven features, Vera would undoubtedly attract attention and would have to conceal them.

If news of an elf being sighted in the Atria Empire spread, it could attract the attention of the elves from the Ivory Empire. It was even possible that the Valerin family would make the connection to Vera, as they still searched for her after all these years. This only showed how much the Valerin family had focused their attention on Vera.

If Vera were found by the Valerin family, she would truly be in trouble. No one knew what the Valerin family might do to her, especially since she had already given birth to Evin, a child of mixed blood.

Sylphia wasn't confident that the Valerin family, particularly Duke Valerin with his conservative views, would accept Evin.

However, Sylphia was confident she could protect Evin if Duke Valerin lost his mind and tried to harm her. Her status as a princess would serve as a deterrent, and she could take Evin under her wing. She could simply declare that Evin was under her protection, and the Valerin family would not dare to touch her.

But the situation with Vera was more complex. As the daughter of Duke Valerin, who had escaped her family to marry a human, the burden would fall largely on her shoulders. The Valerin family would undoubtedly be affected by her actions. Sylphia knew she couldn't interfere too much with the internal matters of the Valerin family.

It wouldn't be wise for the imperial family to meddle in the affairs of another noble family, after all.

They could punish Vera harshly, something Sylphia didn't want, as it would undoubtedly affect Evin as well. The poor child, who only had her mother, would surely be heartbroken if something happened to Vera.

Sylphia was determined to help Vera achieve the best possible outcome: a life where she and Evin could live in peace. That was what she and Vera had been discussing over the past few days—finding a way for them to live a peaceful life.

Sylphia couldn't help but smile as she watched the happy Evin and continued walking beside her. They chose the road that led to an area filled with food stalls, a left turn just ahead of them.

However, unbeknownst to them, a robed figure passed by them on the opposite side of the road, walking behind them. The figure suddenly stopped and turned to look in the direction where Sylphia had just passed. She had already disappeared into the bustling street, having turned onto a road lined with food stalls.

The robed figure then looked at the rooftop, where it seemed empty. However, the Fifth Finger was actually there! Unaware that she was being watched as she continued guarding Sylphia.

But the robed figure seemed unconcerned and continued walking in the opposite direction, eventually disappearing into the busy crowd.

## **Chapter 519: The Core Area**

On the next day, at the Xin family's secret realm, Aldrian floated in the "sky" of the secret realm. The edge of the secret realm on each side was quite far and high, much wider than the secret realms he was born with, just like he had guessed.

At the edge of the secret realm was a kind of spatial barrier that distorted space and could not be passed by anyone.

Beyond the edge of the secret realm was a void of space that might engulf the entire realm if it ever became unstable—something that could happen if someone managed to destroy the secret realm with their strength, though that was not easy to do.

Aldrian had just flown across the secret realm, observing anything, and it truly amazed him. It was much different from the secret realm he was born with, which was only inhabited by villagers and had only one village. This secret realm had many settlements like villages, and there was even a town as well.

This secret realm, along with every living being and settlement inside it, could be considered a separate country and could sustain itself if needed.

However, in the end, they still needed to stay connected to the outside world so they would not be left behind in anything that happened beyond their "little" world. That was because everything happening outside could also affect their world.

As Aldrian enjoyed the scenery below, someone approached him from behind and cupped his hands once he drew near.

"Sir Aldrian, the patriarch and young master are already waiting and ready to go to the core area," the man said.

Aldrian turned his head and looked at the Xin family elder, who was at the King Stage. He nodded in understanding.

"Alright. Thank you for informing me. I will be there shortly," he said.

The elder nodded and returned to the manor, and Aldrian followed shortly after.

Not long after, Aldrian met with Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian inside the patriarch's private room—the same place where they had discussed matters the day before.

When he saw Aldrian enter, Patriarch Xin smiled at him.

"Ready?" he asked.

Aldrian responded with a nod.

They then walked outside to the training field, where several elders at the King and Emperor Stage were already waiting. As soon as they saw Patriarch Xin, they immediately cupped their hands in respect and greeted him, as well as Xin Haotian and Aldrian.

These elders also played a role in allowing Aldrian to enter the secret realm. Since the matter involved the family's well-being and secrets, it was not something the patriarch could decide on his own. At that time, Patriarch Xin had gathered all the elders to discuss Aldrian's entry into the realm.

Only after a heated discussion did the elders finally agree and grant Aldrian permission to enter. Fortunately, they had already heard of Aldrian's achievements in the outside world all this time, which gave them more confidence in their decision.

They believed this expedition might result in something worthwhile.

"This is our expedition group. I believe we need powerful cultivators at the King and Emperor Stage to support us. We still don't know what awaits us beyond the barrier, so with a strong team like this, I hope we can increase our chances of survival," Patriarch Xin said.

Aldrian nodded and looked at Xin Haotian.

"So you're joining too, huh? If something happens to us, the Xin family might end up with no successor," he said in a joking tone.

Patriarch Xin also glanced at his son. He had already spoken to him about the same concern. This expedition could become dangerous, and if both father and son entered and something happened to them, the Xin family would be left without a leader. However—

"Well, even if something happens, I can only lament the fate of the family and the continent," Xin Haotian replied to Aldrian. "But I have a feeling this journey will bring something unexpected, and I want to witness it myself. I don't know why—I just feel it. And if it truly happens, how could I miss it?"

That was the same answer he had given to his father, and Patriarch Xin couldn't sway his son's intent to follow them into the core area. To be honest, Patriarch Xin also had a strong feeling that they would encounter something surprising—something worth witnessing once they were inside—so his son's reason was understandable.

"The distance to the core area is more than two months if we fly toward it. However, we don't have to do that—we can use a teleportation artifact we prepared beforehand to travel to a location near the core area. Some of our people are already there, observing the barrier," Patriarch Xin explained to Aldrian.

"Alright, let's get going. Stand closer to me," he added, prompting the group to gather more tightly around him.

Patriarch Xin then took out a diamond-shaped crystal and infused it with his energy. A moment later, a rune appeared beneath them, glowing faintly at first. It then lit up with brilliant light, and in the next instant, all of them vanished.

What Aldrian felt was like a normal teleportation, and a split second later, he was already in a different environment. Beneath him was a kind of platform, seemingly prepared for teleportation, and all around them stood towering trees so dense that they obscured the view.

But then, Aldrian saw it—the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest. The central part of the famous forbidden zone, shrouded in mystery since ancient times. What he saw was a massive spatial distortion reaching all the way into the sky.

The distortion stretched across the horizon in the opposite direction as well, revealing just how enormous the barrier truly was. From it, Aldrian could also sense an overwhelming amount of divine energy. It was, without a doubt, the densest divine energy he had ever encountered on this continent—even more concentrated than what he had sensed in the secret places of the Doria and Vindas Empires.

It was no wonder that no one could destroy this barrier. Aldrian knew just how strong it was. He didn't doubt that even if he used all of his power and his entire domain to attack it, the barrier would still not budge.

However, he still believed that it wasn't an obstacle for him. Moreover, the calling from the core area was growing stronger. He believed that Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian hadn't created anything that would make it impossible for him to pass. They were still waiting for him, and he would reach them.

Some of the Xin family's people were already at the site. As soon as they saw their patriarch's group arrive, they quickly approached them.

"Welcome, my lord!"

Patriarch Xin nodded.

"Is there anything strange or any change in the barrier?" Aldrian asked, prompting one of the Xin family members to respond.

"No, my lord. Everything is as usual, and we haven't seen any openings."

"Alright." Patriarch Xin walked off the platform, guiding Aldrian closer to the barrier.

"This is the barrier of the core area. As you can see, it completely surrounds the core area without any gaps. The barrier is so strong that even a full strike from a peak Emperor Stage cultivator couldn't create a ripple in it," he explained as they walked closer.

"This barrier also prevents any form of communication or anything from outside from reaching the inside. Even when we tried to trick the barrier by sending a forward group to create a teleportation point behind it, our teleportation artifact didn't work."

That wasn't surprising to Aldrian. He could sense the complexity of the space laws here, which were so intricate that they prevented anything from the outside world from reaching inside—even teleportation. It reminded him of when he created a spatial barrier around his domain to prevent enemies from escaping using escape talismans.

After they arrived right in front of the barrier, they stopped. Patriarch Xin touched the barrier and looked upwards, where the barrier stretched toward the sky.

"This barrier separates us from the creatures that have given us our task and power since ancient times. Behind this barrier lies the place where they reside, and it holds many mysteries that remain unknown to us even today," he said.

Aldrian walked closer and touched the barrier as well. Despite the space distortion that made everyone think they would be sucked into it if they touched it, he found the barrier to be a hard, solid surface.

*"Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian wouldn't have created something to obstruct me. They must have created something that allows me to enter this place, something that shows it's me and that I've come for them,"* Aldrian thought.

A smile crept onto his face as he quickly found the answer. He then injected his golden energy into the barrier. His palm glowed with a golden hue, causing Patriarch Xin and the others to be mesmerized by the sight.

*"So this is the energy that is said to be special to young Aldrian,"* the patriarch thought.

The golden energy filled them with a sense of reverence, and an urge to bow down.

Zum.

In the midst of their amazement, they were stunned when they heard a strange sound and saw that part of the barrier in front of Aldrian was changing. Before long, the space distortion disappeared, creating a path into the core area. Though they still couldn't see the other side, the path was now open.

The path was wide enough for two people to stand side by side, and they were truly shocked by what they saw. It was working! Bringing Aldrian had really worked!

Patriarch Xin clenched his fist, his prediction that Aldrian would bring a change to this expedition proving correct. With this, he knew Aldrian's power would be invaluable once they were inside.

Xin Haotian smiled, having expected they would pass this first obstacle with ease.

After the path was opened, Aldrian turned to the others.

"Let's go."

No data found.

## **Chapter 520: The Monument of Eternal Faith**

Aldrian and the group then entered the opened path. They did not instantly step to the other side of the barrier, but walked through the thickness of the barrier itself, which amazed them, as they had to walk for a kilometre before encountering another space distortion. Aldrian tried to touch it, but his hand actually passed through, which made him confident enough to step in.

The rest of the group also followed. Once they stepped in and appeared on the other side of the space distortion, they were instantly greeted by dense heaven and earth energy that made their bodies tingle and caused their pores to react, instinctively absorbing the richness of the energy.

They had never felt such rich heaven and earth energy before—not even the cultivation sanctuary inside their family’s manor in the secret realm could compare to this place.

They could also sense the divine energy here, far richer than anything they had ever encountered across the Everlasting Silent Forest.

However, aside from the richness of the heaven and earth energy and divine energy, what truly amazed them was the scenery in front of them.

What they saw was a vast grassland stretching to the horizon. In the distance, they could see a mountain range with many towering peaks shaped like giant staffs piercing the sky. The tips of the mountains were faintly visible, as they rose beyond the clouds, which did not entirely cover them.

But the most amazing sight—the one they would never forget—was a giant floating landmass in the sky. It hovered above everything else, and from where they stood, they could see a massive structure on top of it. Although the structure was partially obscured by clouds, they could still make out its grandeur. It looked like a palace.

With this scenery and the shape of the structure above, they felt as if they had entered a different world. They began to wonder if the higher realms looked like this, and a sudden desire to reach the higher realm stirred in their hearts.

Aldrian, staring at the scenery before him, felt a wave of *déjà vu*. He let out a soft sigh, a tightness forming in his chest. The floating land, the palace—he had already seen it all before in the visions of his past. Everything was strikingly similar, even the palace’s shape.

A longing rose within him. It felt as if he had not returned to those places for a long time, even though he had never visited them in this life.

Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian were speechless as they looked at the scene before them, filled with awe they could not put into words. Everything about this place felt truly perfect, and they found themselves not wanting to leave.

Aldrian closed his eyes. The first thing he needed to do here was to create his domain. Once he finished, he became the first to break the silence. He turned to the others.

"Let's go. We can start exploring this place slowly. We'll begin by checking the area near the barrier before moving closer to the central part," he said, pulling them out of their dazed state.

"I agree. Let's check the outer area first before heading deeper into the core region," Patriarch Xin responded.

Before long, they began their exploration. They flew together as a group, unwilling to separate due to the unknown nature of this land. As beautiful as the place was, they did not know what dangers might be hidden within it. If they split up without knowing anything, they risked throwing their lives away by facing threats on their own.

They flew parallel to the barrier at first, and then changed to a direction that would gradually take them closer to the central area where the floating land was located.

Each of them extended their senses to the limit, maintaining constant vigilance. They continued flying, but even after five hours, they had not found anything worthy of their attention. They were still surrounded by endless grassland, and it felt as though the central area was no closer than before. Even so, they did not rush or grow impatient. They understood the central region might be incredibly large, and they were prepared to spend months exploring this place.

From time to time, Aldrian glanced at the palace on the floating land, where the sense of calling grew stronger. With each passing hour, the pull intensified, and more fragments of memory or visions began to resurface in his mind.

After flying for several more hours, their senses suddenly picked up something ahead. A few kilometres in front of them, they sensed a solitary structure standing in the middle of the grassland. As they drew closer, they saw that it resembled an obelisk.

Not long after, they arrived right in front of it and began observing the obelisk. Now up close, they could study its details more clearly. The obelisk was entirely white, with no markings on its surface. Judging by its appearance, it seemed to be made from a type of white marble.

"What is this structure for? Why is it standing here alone?" one of the elders asked, glancing between the obelisk and its surroundings.

"I think it's a monument. Structures like this are usually used as landmarks or something similar," another elder replied.

A discussion began to stir among the elders, while Patriarch Xin turned to Aldrian after quietly observing the obelisk for a while.

"Young Aldrian, what do you think it is?" he asked.

But Aldrian did not answer immediately. He continued to study the obelisk, and a moment later, he activated his Eyes of Heaven.

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### The Monument of Eternal Faith

**Description:** The monument where the wills of many living beings from the past along with a part of their power are stored, waiting for the absolute ruler to awaken them.

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Reading the description, Aldrian understood what it meant. Without hesitation, he approached the obelisk and touched its surface. The others, who saw Aldrian approaching the structure and even touching it, raised their alert levels, wary of any traps or dangers that might be triggered once Aldrian made contact.

But nothing happened after Aldrian touched it, which slightly relieved them. However, they were stunned when the obelisk suddenly began to shine with a golden light. The light was blinding, forcing them to cover their eyes, and the obelisk continued to shine.

Aldrian already closed his eyes and injected his golden energy into the obelisk. In that instant, he felt as though his entire being had been transported to another space. Of course, he had already experienced this several times. When he opened his eyes, he found himself in a different space—he knew this was a manifestation of his mindscape.

But this time, he was stunned after opening his eyes. In front of him, there wasn't just one figure, not two or three, but what he saw were hundreds of figures with different features. There were beings in normal human appearance, as well as spiritual beasts that had taken human form. There were also elves, spirits, and many other beings whose nature he couldn't identify.

He hadn't expected to encounter so many people here. For them to store their will in the obelisk and wait for him, he guessed these individuals must have believed in him and waited for his return.

At that moment, they all immediately knelt before him.

"Welcome back, Great Emperor of All Heavens!"

"Welcome back, Absolute Ruler!"

"We congratulate you on your return, and you will return to your rightful place!"

They all shouted in unison, their voices echoing across the vast space of Aldrian's mindscape.

Aldrian looked at these people and couldn't help but feel bad because he didn't recognize any of them!

"Stand up. I feel truly bad because I don't have any memories of any of you, and yet you have faithfully waited for me until now," he said, prompting the people to straighten their posture in response.

One of them, positioned at the front, appeared to be a human-shaped spiritual beast with a pair of wings on his back. He looked at Aldrian with deep reverence.

"You don't have to remember us, your majesty," he said. "We are but small figures unworthy of your attention, and we have only met you a few times from afar."

"That is true, your majesty," another voice said, this time from a dwarf. "We are merely insignificant and unworthy of your grand self remembering us."

"We placed our will here to show our unwavering faith in you, and we hope that you will return," said another, this time a beautiful elf woman.

Aldrian was deeply touched and wanted to speak further, but the winged man spoke again.

"Your majesty, we don't have much time now that you have awakened us. Our presence here won't last long. We only wish to see you one last time and give you a little help. Though we're unsure if it will aid you, we hope it will. With this small assistance, we hope to accelerate your return to the highest realm."

"Though our lives may have already ended, our faith in you remains strong," another figure said.

"We are pleased to see you one last time, your majesty."

"We believe in you, your majesty."

"Your majesty—"

Many voices, full of conviction and faith, echoed before all of them began to dissipate into particles of light. The light moved toward Aldrian in a mass, and

as it touched his body, it entered him, filling him with a warm sensation throughout his being.

But Aldrian seemed to ignore it, showing only a bitter smile.

"Even I don't have time to say much more to you all," he said.