

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 531: They Found Out His Secret? - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 531: They Found Out His Secret?

Chapter 531: They Found Out His Secret?

After walking for more than fifteen minutes, Aldrian finally entered another hall. But this time, the hall was not empty. Inside, Aldrian saw a giant formation with four pillars supporting the space. He knew the formation, this was the teleportation formation that led to the floating land above.

But his attention was on something that was not supposed to be there.

A stone tablet stood in front of the teleportation portal. In his memory, nothing like this had ever been in the hall. This stone tablet was the very thing that had drawn him here. He felt a strong connection to it, which made him approach without hesitation.

Aldrian stood before the stone tablet. There was writing on it.

To the brightest star that illuminates all

May your light never dim again

To the Absolute Ruler who will return

May your rule always bring glory

To the Great Emperor of All Heavens

May you continue to reign sovereign

To the one in whom we place our faith

To the one we always await

May you finally find what you are looking for

Aldrian touched the writing on the stone tablet. From the words alone, it was clear—they were directed at him. He could feel the determination and spirit of those who wrote them, just from the writing itself.

The others who had followed Aldrian finally arrived and saw him already standing in front of the stone tablet. They looked around the hall with curiosity, wondering what this

place was. A giant formation stood in the middle, surrounded by the four pillars that held up the hall.

"What is this place?"

"Why did young master Aldrian come here?"

Murmurs echoed as they examined the hall. They began approaching Aldrian, who remained still. Only then did they see the writing on the stone tablet and begin to read it.

Xin Haotian narrowed his eyes as he read. Was this written by the dragon and the phoenix? Or was it someone else? Whoever it was, he could feel the weight behind every word—the solemnness, the seriousness.

Each line was written with deep conviction and faith. It made him wonder: who was the one they had written this for? Even he could feel how remarkable the person must be, to inspire such unwavering loyalty from those who left these words behind.

"Hey, why do you—" Xin Haotian started to ask Aldrian, but paused when he saw Aldrian close his eyes, seemingly unaware of his voice.

The others noticed it too, but none of them disturbed Aldrian.

Xin Haotian looked at him for a moment, then turned his gaze back to the stone tablet. Why had Aldrian come here? Did he really know about this place beforehand?

No, that should be impossible.

But a seed of doubt had already formed in Xin Haotian's mind—not about Aldrian being the son of Flamecrest and Rivas, but about the truth behind Aldrian's abnormality.

He read the inscription on the stone tablet again and understood that it was written for someone whose status far exceeded that of the writer. His thoughts turned to the dragon and the phoenix—perhaps they were the ones who left this message.

After all, the records never mentioned anyone else residing in the core area. If so, that was the most likely possibility.

Xin Haotian read the writing again. He wanted to understand—why had Aldrian come here? What was he trying to do? Why did he seem to know about this place and head straight to the stone tablet?

After rereading the inscription, he paused for a moment.

"To the brightest star that illuminates all... is it truly a coincidence? Doesn't Aldrian's name also carry the meaning of a star? Aldrian Aster—Aster, which means star."

Xin Haotian's heart suddenly trembled. His eyes shifted back to Aldrian's still figure.

Was it really a coincidence?

"To the Absolute Ruler who will come back... then the one who wrote this is waiting for someone's return. It can even be linked with the earlier line—May your light never dim again—which means that, for some reason, that person left the one who wrote this. Their absence is symbolized by a dimmed light."

Xin Haotian's thoughts grew more serious.

"The hope that the person returns, so their light will never dim again..."

"The person who will return?" His looked at Aldrian once more.

"Aldrian?"

His mind felt like it was about to explode—as if he had just placed a missing puzzle piece that revealed the bigger picture. A puzzle that had long confused him, one that never seemed to make sense.

But now, with this piece in place, he might finally be able to solve the mystery surrounding the person he had been in the same group with for over three years.

Aldrian's strength might have come from something extraordinary, something connected to the dragon and the phoenix.

But what if the origin of his power was far greater? So great that even the dragon and the phoenix would refer to him as *the brightest star*?

"Absolute Ruler... The Great Emperor of All Heavens..."

Each title was powerful enough to make anyone tremble. They sounded far too grand—almost unreal.

Was there truly someone with such titles in the higher realm?

Xin Haotian then looked at his father, who also wore a serious expression. His father signaled him to step away from Aldrian for a moment to speak in private.

The other elders had already spread out, examining every part of the hall. One elder, especially knowledgeable in formations, appeared deeply focused as he studied the massive formation etched into the floor before them.

Once Xin Haotian and his father were far enough from Aldrian, Xin Haotian asked,

"Father, what do you think of Aldrian?"

"Did you reach the same conclusion as I did?" his father replied, lowering his voice.
"About young Aldrian's mystery?"

Xin Haotian nodded.

"There are still questions, but I think our suspicion is confirmed. If he truly has a direct connection to the dragon and the phoenix, that would explain why he's so different from anyone else on this continent." He said.

"Then where do you think he got that kind of strength—and that kind of wisdom—at such a young age?" Patriarch Xin asked. "If there was something within the secret realm where he was born that could grant such abilities, the guardian family would have taken it long ago. There's no way something capable of allowing a human to defy the common laws of cultivation would be left behind."

"If a guardian family had found it, we wouldn't have been in such a miserable state during the great battle with the devils three million years ago." He continued.

Then, Patriarch Xin looked toward Aldrian's back.

"And the strange point is this—the one who wrote that inscription seemed to know the figure they were waiting for would eventually come here. They were not guessing. They knew that figure personally. So the idea that *anyone* could become that figure, just by gaining that power, seems unlikely."

"That only leaves the most probable option," he added quietly.

Xin Haotian and Patriarch Xin looked into each other's eyes, both wearing the same serious expression.

"His strength is his own, and it has been there since his birth." They said in unison, before turning their eyes back to Aldrian's figure.

"So we can confirm that the dragon and the phoenix built this place for Aldrian? No wonder everything here only reacts to him." Xin Haotian's voice was filled with astonishment. "Then does that mean their arrival in this land had something to do with Aldrian from the very beginning? So they knew the exact future and have been waiting for Aldrian to appear here?"

Patriarch Xin fell silent, but his eyes returned to his son.

"Well, that is the point. They have been waiting to this day, and I think today we are witnessing another wonder of the universe. We don't usually concern ourselves with

ideas like reincarnation," he said slowly, "but... do you think this might be a real example of it?"

His words made Xin Haotian pause, falling into silence himself.

While Xin Haotian and his father unknowingly touched the core of Aldrian's mystery, Aldrian's consciousness was no longer in the hall. He now stood in a different place—one that was not his mindscape. He stood in the middle of a grassland, identical to the one filled with statues that he had seen before.

He stood in the center, surrounded by the "statues." But in this vast grassland, there was nothing blocking his view—he could see every single one of them. He guessed there must be thousands, all positioned exactly as the statues were in the real world.

However, the difference here was that instead of stone figures, what he met were real persons. They all showed various expressions to him—happiness, worship, and admiration. There was no negative expression on any of their faces.

Aldrian did not make any sound since his consciousness arrived here. He was still quite stunned because suddenly he was in the middle of so many people—or more precisely, their wills. To think that the wills of these people were not in the statues themselves but actually activated when he connected himself to the stone tablet!

No, to be more exact, the entire palace itself was actually a giant space to store the wills of these people, and the stone tablet was only the trigger for him to meet them.

Seeing Aldrian's confused expression, many of them smiled, but not long after, all of them prostrated before him.

"Welcome back, Your Majesty."

Chapter 532: The Past Events

"Welcome back, Your Majesty," all of them shouted in unison.

Aldrian looked at the people he had already seen in his visions. Some of them he knew by name, like the ones standing at the very front. They were the ones who often appeared in his visions, so he recognized who they were.

"Stand up, all of you. I must say, I feel quite overwhelmed by such a welcome," Aldrian said.

The others rose from their positions, smiling at him.

"We are glad to see you in good condition, Your Majesty. Your arrival here means you are close to making the entire heavens know of your return. All beings have already been waiting for your comeback," said a beautiful elf.

Aldrian looked at her.

"Ah, you. You are Valerina, the first leader of the elven race," he said.

"I'm glad you remember me, Your Majesty."

"Your Majesty, now that you are here, you are close to roaming the wider world," said another figure, this one a dwarf.

"Once you leave this small place, there will be many obstacles trying to block your path, but I believe you will overcome all of them with your ability," he added.

Aldrian looked at the dwarf.

"The first dwarf race leader, Durgan," he said, which made the dwarf's smile brighten.

"I'm glad you remember me."

Aldrian smiled and then looked at the others' faces.

"And all of you—even though I don't fully remember my interactions with each of you, or even your names—I remember your faces. Because once your face is embedded in my memory, I will not forget any of you," he said, which made them all happy and filled with a sense of honor.

"So, there are some questions I've wanted to ask for a long time. But I didn't know who to ask, since there was no one around who could answer them. I hope you can give me those answers now," he said as he looked at Durgan, Valerina, and the others.

"But first—are all of you already dead?"

"Answering Your Majesty," Valerina replied, "Well, some of us are already dead, and others are still alive. Perhaps all of us are already dead. We don't know the fate of our real bodies. We only stored our will inside this place."

Aldrian nodded, his mind a little more at ease. That meant there was still a chance that some of those who had appeared in his visions might still be alive.

"Along my journey, I've already met several figures. All of them gave me hints about my past, and all of them—as well as you—have been waiting for my return," he said.

"So, mind telling me what all of this is about? I mean everything that happened on the continent because of your plan—and the future that seems full of trouble. What are the obstacles you mentioned? I want an explanation, so I won't be completely blind to what's coming."

"I heard from Long Leiyun of the Silver Dragon Clan that there seem to be hostile parties preparing to come and cause destruction. So, who are they?" He looked at Valerina and Durgan.

Hearing Aldrian's question, their expressions turned serious.

"To answer that, we need to look at the time after Your Majesty chose to enter the Reincarnation Circle. Five hundred thousand years after your departure, our universe was suddenly attacked by beings from other universes." Valerina said.

Aldrian narrowed his eyes.

"Attacked?"

"Yes—and it was a war unlike any that had ever happened before. A battle that shook the entire cosmos, even its system. It affected every dimension and time, making it the most destructive great war between universes in history," she added.

"The attack came like a tidal wave, as if every universe in the system struck at us all at once. There was no way to count how many forces invaded our universe that day. We killed countless enemies, but their numbers were truly immense."

"Although we were much superior in quality to the invaders, their numbers were overwhelming. Many of the masters who ruled their own universes also joined the assault. We were overrun and forced to fall back."

Aldrian frowned more deeply. Of course, he already knew there were many universes—and even different dimensions. He had heard it in his visions, during his conversations with Feng Xuanyan, about how the cosmos they lived in was only one universe among many. They had even flown across the vast cosmos and visited other universes.

"Why did they attack us?" he asked.

"We're not entirely sure why they attacked us, but they seemed determined to conquer our universe," Durgan the dwarf answered. "We believed it might be because, at the time, our universe was the strongest in the entire vast cosmos. We had abundant resources—and perhaps most importantly, we were the closest universe to the Point of the Beginning."

"The Point of the Beginning?"

Seeing Aldrian's confused expression, they understood that he didn't remember that part.

"Yes—the Point of the Beginning, it's located at the center of the vast cosmos. It's said to be the place where everything began—the origin of creation. The point where the entire cosmos came into existence. Your Majesty could say it is the beginning of all things—where nothing turned into something, where nihility became existence. At least, that's what many of us believe, since several pieces of evidence and theories seem to point to that place as the source of the creation." He said.

Aldrian pondered for a moment. He didn't know why, but as Durgan explained the Point of the Beginning, he felt a strange sense of familiarity. He couldn't quite place it, so he set the thought aside for now.

"I see. So you don't know for sure," he said. "Then I guess, because of that war, Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian escaped to this place, right? Did they—or someone—already predict that I would appear here?"

"Yes," Valerina answered. "Because of the future that Lord Tianlian and the Heavenly Demon foresaw, we made a plan to prepare for your return. Lady Xuanyan and Lord Shentian were chosen to carry out those preparations. They were among Your Majesty's earliest followers, and also among the strongest—so they were entrusted with much."

"The plan is for us to buy time until your return, so Your Majesty will have enough power to face the invaders. We believe they don't know about this plan, which makes everything easier. This place is our last hope, our final chance to push back the invaders, because Your Majesty will appear here and then restore order to this universe."

Aldrian nodded in understanding.

"So those devils were also one of the parties that attacked us in the past?" he asked.

"The devils?"

"Yes, the devils—the ones with—" Aldrian began, then explained about the devils, which made everyone understand what he was talking about.

"Ah, so the beings of this world call them the devils? I see. Yes, they were one of the factions that attacked this universe. Their god is quite strong, and his followers are numerous. He easily gained many followers here with his cunning nature and cultivation techniques that exploit the negative emotions of living beings," Valerina said.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. Was this why he always felt irritated by the devils? Did he unconsciously reject their existence because they had invaded his home universe?

Or was it because their cultivation technique came from the invaders—from outside the universe—that made him feel repulsed?

After thinking for a moment, he suddenly remembered something.

"Ah, so that's why there was another foreign energy, very different from devil energy, inside the holy energy of the Heavenly Direction Church, which tainted it. That energy irritated me, which can only mean it came from one of the parties that invaded this universe," he thought.

For such energy to even affect heaven itself, there was only one explanation:

It was total domination and control.

"Those invaders were messing with the entire universe's rules and order. Even the heaven of this universe was affected by them. They tried to take full control, even over heaven itself, which is why the energy blessed by heaven became tainted," Aldrian thought.

Now, everything began to make sense—his reactions toward the devils and anything connected to them, or in this case, related to the invaders. He did not know why he felt such irritation toward the devils ever since he encountered that 'thing,' but it seemed to be an instinctive reaction tied to the origin of their power.

"However, for more details about the later events in this world, perhaps Lady Xuanyan and Lord Shentian can explain more. They know more about what happened here since they experienced it firsthand," Valerina said.

Aldrian nodded, then looked at the others, sweeping his gaze across them one by one.

"I'm really curious. Why do you believe I can do something that even many of you cannot, despite your numbers and power? How powerful was I in the past? Is my power so special that you place your hope in me, so strong that your conviction never wavers?" he asked.

If countless beings from other universes had attacked them and overwhelmed their forces, then why were these people so faithful to him? Why did they believe that the power of a single person could turn the tide?

What was his true strength in their eyes?

Chapter 533: Protecting Their Homeland, Protecting His Legacy

If he thought about it, the power of those who could cross between universes was already enough to be considered godlike. They could do anything with just a thought.

He was truly amazed by what he had done in his past life, but that was from the perspective of a mortal.

What about from the perspective of gods like these people?

The other gods must also have similar, or perhaps even greater, powers or abilities compared to him. That was what Aldrian thought. But upon hearing his question, all of them smiled.

"For how powerful, Your Majesty? Well, it's hard to say, because we never saw you use your power in battle—not even sparring, not even once. So forget about your full power. But even that was enough to convince us that you are a truly powerful being, one whose full strength we couldn't even begin to grasp," Valerin said.

"The only one we think could come closer to Your Majesty is the Heavenly Demon. He's the one closest to uncovering your *truth*, but even he believes that he still can't match you in strength or ability," she added.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows. He truly did not expect they held such a high opinion of him—especially when he had never fought. He looked at the others, but they also nodded in agreement with Valerin. This surprised him.

He still didn't know the reason, as his memories on this topic had yet to return. But for him to have never fought, not even once? Then how had he taken control of everything? Sometimes, a fight was necessary—even killing, to set an example for those who disobeyed.

But to think that none of these people had ever seen him fight?

"Wait, how can you assess me to be powerful without ever seeing me fight? Doesn't that seem like blind faith that could end in disappointment?" Aldrian asked, his expression confused.

"Also, if I never fought, then how did I end up earning so much respect from people like all of you? You're already considered gods yourselves, and you must have your own pride. For you to bow down to me, I must have shown at least some of my fighting power, right? To assert dominance or something like that."

"Well, my apologies, Your Majesty, if you misunderstood me," Valerin replied with a smile. "What I meant is, you never fought because there was never anything that made you fight—or in other words, there was no one worthy enough for you to even consider fighting."

"All those times, whenever someone came looking to challenge Your Majesty, you simply ignored them. They couldn't even get close to you. Even if they attacked with everything they had, you remained still and silent. It was as if the entire heavens and

the universe itself had special laws for you. Everything they used against you would never reach you. The elements of the universe didn't want to touch you."

"The only one who seemed able to get close to you—and even touch you with the intent to battle—was the Heavenly Demon. But even then, it was only touching you, and nothing more," she said, prompting everyone to nod in agreement and awe. They, too, held their own respect for the Heavenly Demon—for being the only one who could even lay a hand on His Majesty with the intent to fight.

He was one of the key reasons their universe had not fallen for so long, and that was why he had earned such deep respect.

"Also, what Your Majesty said is true—that to control many, power is needed. Power that shows dominance. But that only applies to others. For Your Majesty... well, what I can say is, you are special to us. Special to this universe. It can be said that, for as long as we can remember, it was Your Majesty who made it possible for all of us to have this kind of power."

"You are the one who created the environment where all living beings could cultivate. You are the one who taught us how to cultivate, how to live. You are the one who ensured that the entire universe remained in order and never descended into chaos."

"We are more grateful than anything for Your Majesty's appearance in this universe—for guiding us, helping us become our best selves, and making this universe thrive and prosper," Valerin said.

"Even if we put aside Your Majesty's strength, we are the ones who will never forget who made us what we are. For us to have the strength we possess now is all thanks to Your Majesty. All the living beings that prosper in this universe—our home—do so because of Your Majesty's help," Durgan said.

"Your Majesty gave us dignity and a better way of life than we ever had before," said another, this time a male spirit with a pair of wings on his back.

"Your Majesty is the one who saved my life from my weakness," said another, a spirit in human form with slit irises.

Many voices resounded, each one voicing why they were truly faithful to Aldrian and how grateful they were for his appearance in this universe—grateful for how he built it into prosperity, for the knowledge he shared, and for making them as powerful as they had become.

"This universe is our home, and Your Majesty is the one who left his legacy in the form of a strong and thriving world. We will not let those beings from other universes take it, destroy it, or trample on what Your Majesty has built. We will continue to struggle until the day those invaders are gone," Valerin said.

"Our lives are something we're willing to exchange for it. Even if we can't reincarnate, we'll make sure that those bastards will not succeed," Durgan said.

"But we feel ashamed that we lack the power to repel all those beings. We feel weak—our lives feel like a humiliation after being pushed back by the invaders. If possible, we wouldn't want to rely on Your Majesty, but we no longer have a choice."

"We will make sure to pave a way for Your Majesty, so you can regain your power, enact justice, and restore order to the universe. Because that is the only way to drive all of those invaders away. Please forgive us for our weakness—and for having to depend on Your Majesty to save this universe, our home, your legacy," Durgan said as he kowtowed once more, followed by the others.

Aldrian looked at all of this, his heart deeply moved. In the cultivation world, betrayal was not rare—even those who had been fed and raised with care could turn against their benefactors. There were countless stories of disciples killing their masters, descendants turning on the parents who loved them, slaves murdering their saviors—all for the pursuit of greater power.

That was the harsh truth of the cultivation world, something many had come to accept as normal.

But here, what he saw were beings who showed their loyalty without a sliver of doubt. They showed their gratitude, and they were even prepared to die for it. They could have betrayed him. They could have sided with the invaders and abandoned this universe. But instead, they had created this entire plan just so he could return to the place where he belonged.

To the place where he was meant to be.

To the place where he could restore order to the universe.

Aldrian couldn't help but sigh.

"What happened to me back then? Do you know how I died—or what caused me to enter the reincarnation cycle?" he couldn't help but ask.

"If I had still been alive at that time, things might have turned out differently. I'm truly confused... and I can't help but feel guilty for not being there when the war happened."

All of them straightened their posture and looked at Aldrian with expressions filled with respect.

"Please don't feel guilty, Your Majesty. Please don't blame yourself for what happened. That event occurred because of our weakness—we failed to protect our home universe," Valerin said.

"As for why Your Majesty entered the reincarnation cycle, it was your own decision. We heard from the Heavenly Demon that Your Majesty was searching for an answer to a problem, and to do that, you needed to undergo reincarnation. As for what that problem was... we don't know. The Heavenly Demon never explained the details," she added.

Hearing her words gave Aldrian a faint sense of déjà vu.

He remembered when he met the Heavenly Demon and his wife—they, too, had told him not to blame himself. Was this what they meant? To not blame himself for not being there when the war broke out? But how could he not, when he might have been able to help them? Instead, he left. What had driven him to enter the reincarnation cycle? What kind of problem had he faced? What answer had he been searching for?

Some of the people he encountered in the past had also touched on this topic. They had hoped he would find his answer. But what kind of answer? First, he needed to understand the problem he had faced at that time—only then could he grasp the answer he had once sought.

These people didn't know. So only the Heavenly Demon, his wife and perhaps Feng Xuanyan, or Long Shentian could tell him what kind of problem his powerful former self had carried.

"I see. Then it can't be helped," he said. But then his gaze shifted to one of the figures standing further in the back.

The man stood out clearly, with distinct dragon features on his forehead and a symbol embroidered on his white robe—the symbol of the Silver Dragon Clan.

Chapter 534: His Oath

"Long Tingxuan, the first patriarch of the Silver Lightning Dragon clan... he might know about the Silver Lightning Dragon clan, right?" Aldrian thought.

"Mr. Tingxuan," Aldrian said, prompting the others to look at an old man who still appeared quite energetic and had few wrinkles. The man was stunned when Aldrian suddenly looked in his direction and called his name.

"Yes, Your Majesty?" he answered.

"Mr. Tingxuan, I want to ask what happened to the Silver Lightning Dragon clan. When I met Long Leiyun of the Silver Lightning Dragon clan, he asked for my help to avenge the Silver Dragon clan. Can you tell me the fate of your clan, if you know about it?"

Hearing Aldrian's question, Long Tingxuan was silent for a moment before he parted his lips.

"The Silver Lightning Dragon clan is already extinct."

Aldrian was stunned. He couldn't help but sigh. He had already guessed that something terrible had happened to the clan, and after knowing there had been a war, what he feared most had become reality. In war, the annihilation of a clan was not rare. Many bloodlines had been erased from the world, ending the history of long-standing families—something depressing, but not surprising.

The others also seemed to know what had happened to the clan, as they showed sad expressions.

"My apologies and condolences for bringing up a painful topic," Aldrian said. "I've already made a promise to avenge your clan. I'm not someone who takes my own promises and words lightly. I will keep that promise. If I can truly return to the peak, like in my past life, your clan will be avenged."

He spoke with a serious expression.

Long Tingxuan was stunned, but his eyes grew slightly teary before he kowtowed to Aldrian.

"Thank you, Your Majesty, for your generosity—for your intent to avenge us. Even with the extinction of my clan, we never turned our backs on you, not even in death!" he shouted with a trembling voice.

Aldrian solemnly nodded and looked toward the others.

"And all of you here! You who have kept your loyalty and integrity, showing me that you never bent your will, even in unfavorable situations—even in death! Even after all this time, you still have faith in me. I am truly honored—once again, truly honored! You are the brave ones who still stand with your beliefs. Yours is the strength that endures—the strongest of all!"

"Maybe I am strong, but I might not be as strong as you in this regard. You have shown me that such belief can exist—a belief so strong it becomes unbreakable faith that follows even after death!"

"Hear me, O my followers who still remain faithful to me, the ones who have faced many enemies without fear!"

"I swear upon my name that I will avenge all of you! No matter who you are, your sacrifices have reached me, and I will not let them be in vain. For those who still live, I will come to you. For those who faced death bravely, rest in peace—I will see with my own eyes the end of those invaders!"

"This is my oath!" Aldrian shouted, and after that, he bowed his body slightly toward them.

"This is for the bravest warriors to whom I offer my respect."

All of their bodies flinched and trembled upon hearing Aldrian's solemn oath—and seeing him bow. They had never seen their emperor like this before.

Though they no longer possessed beating hearts, something within them stirred, as if their non-existent hearts wanted to leap forward and stop him. But seeing the seriousness in Aldrian's expression, and hearing him swear upon his own name, they understood—this was his true resolve.

To them, his name stood above all. Not even a vow sworn in the name of the heavens could compare. For him to use his own name—he was not playing. He was serious.

They did not want to sully that determination. What they saw before them was likely the result of Aldrian's time living as a mortal, having experienced many different lives. He was more human than they remembered—able to express emotions in ways they had never seen during the time he stood all-powerful and aloof.

But they did not take long to respond. With teary eyes, all of them immediately prostrated themselves before Aldrian.

"May the Great Emperor of All Heavens succeed!"

After their shout, their bodies began to slowly dissipate into particles of light, starting from their lower halves. All of them immediately straightened their posture, and Valerin looked at Aldrian with a beautiful smile.

"Your Majesty, we offer a part of our power to you. We don't know if it will be helpful, but we hope that with this, Your Majesty can gain some benefit. We hope Your Majesty can return to the peak soon," she said, as the particles of light had already consumed half of her body—and the same was happening to everyone else.

"Once again, please don't blame yourself, Your Majesty. Even if you discover that we have already died in the real world, please do not blame yourself. We gladly supported every decision you made. If, at that time, your decision required leaving us behind, then we are not the ones who have the right to be angry with you—because you are the one who gave everything to us," Durgan said.

The light reached their necks, yet their expressions still showed Aldrian their smiles. Then, suddenly, they prostrated themselves one last time—despite no longer having full bodies—as the light reached even their lower faces.

"May the Great Emperor of All Heavens keep reign sovereign!" they shouted in unison one last time—a cry that reverberated across the entire grassland—before all of their forms dissolved into particles of light that drifted toward Aldrian.

Bathed in the glow, Aldrian closed his eyes. He felt a warm energy flow through his body—the same warmth he had felt when he met others in the obelisks. But this light felt more intense. Much stronger.

He could sense their deep comprehension, which was understandable given their long lives and high cultivation. Unfortunately, like the others in the obelisk, it did not affect his cultivation.

He could also feel their strong emotions toward him, which made his heart tremble. Once again, he felt the strength of their faith in him. He was their master, their parent, their savior, their leader, their hope—their everything.

And he was their god.

The god upon whom they placed their entire faith.

In the hall where Aldrian's real body was, the stone tablet suddenly began to emit a blinding light. Those still inside the hall had to cover their eyes, as the light was truly painful to look at directly.

The others outside the hall, who were checking other places in the palace, sensed the disturbance inside and instantly returned, this included Patriarch Xin and Xin Haotian. They were stunned as the hall was already illuminated by a blinding light. It was like the time they stood before the obelisk when Aldrian triggered its reaction.

However, they felt a much stronger aura from this light, which gave them goosebumps. This was very different from the obelisk—this was a divine aura! Yet they could feel many different auras, as if the energy came from many people, all gathered into one.

Each aura alone made their souls want to prostrate—but if there were many of them? The rest of the group tried to hold themselves up, resisting the urge to fall to the ground and prostrate, but some could not; the aura was too strong.

The King-stage cultivators dropped to the ground first, not daring to lift their heads as the aura compelled them to remain bowed. Those at the Emperor stage fought the urge to prostrate but eventually could not resist and followed the King-stage cultivators. Cold sweat dripped from their faces, as they had never experienced such an intense divine aura before.

They felt as if they were in the presence of a god itself, forced to prostrate before the divine existence.

The blinding light continued for a few minutes before fading away. After it vanished, Xin Haotian and the others finally dared to lift their heads. They looked toward Aldrian and then at the stone tablet. They were stunned to see that the stone tablet was actually cracked. This was different from the obelisk, where after its triggered effect, nothing had changed in the object.

But this time, the stone tablet was cracked. When they looked at Aldrian, he still had his eyes closed. They did not know what had happened to him and waited silently. Even after a few minutes, he did not open his eyes. An hour passed—still no movement. A day, two days, three days—and finally, on the fourth day, Aldrian opened his eyes. The first thing he saw was the cracked stone tablet.

He stared at it for a moment, reading the writing once again. He remembered each of their faces that had looked at him with faces showing no blame. They did not blame him for leaving them. They were only happy to see him, happy that he had finally returned.

After a few moments, he bowed his head toward the stone tablet.

"Your sacrifices, I will not waste."

"I will not disappoint your faith in me."

"You will have your justice and vengeance."

Chapter 535: Xin Haotian's Doubt

Aldrian straightened his body and looked at his surroundings, he couldn't help but raise his eyebrows as he looked at the Xin family members, as if they had just prostrated to him.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

They looked at one another, unsure how to answer, as Aldrian seemed unaware of what had just happened. Xin Haotian sighed as he stood up.

"Nothing. We just saw something incredible from you," he said.

Aldrian looked at him in confusion, then at the others who were also starting to stand up. They were already used to his strangeness throughout this journey, but this time, they had at least confirmed something—even without clearly discussing it among themselves.

Aldrian had some kind of connection to this place, or to a divine being.

They weren't fools. Considering everything that had happened, along with the repeated signs and undeniable proof, ignoring the truth would be irrational. As absurd as it

sounded, Aldrian seemed more like a being from a higher realm stranded here in the body of a child.

There was no other explanation for how Aldrian acted in this place. There was no way he was unfamiliar with it or unconnected to it. If this place was a replica of the higher realms, then everything finally made sense.

Aldrian knew that their opinion of him had shifted once again. Even Xin Haotian, who had been with him for more than three years, was now looking at him with a gaze that had never been there before. It was the gaze of someone seeing a being far superior—mysterious, unreachable. Patriarch Xin looked at him the same way.

Aldrian let out a quiet sigh.

"There are many things I want to talk about. This place is one of them. But I don't think it's time yet," he said. "I can explain it to you, about me and also about this place. At the very least, you, as one of the guardian families protecting the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest, have the right to know."

"For now, we'll continue to the end of the mystery that has enshrouded the Everlasting Silent Forest since ancient times." He turned his gaze to the teleportation formation nearby.

"We need to visit one more place to make everything clear, and maybe you will find your answers there, without me needing to explain everything myself." He began walking toward the formation.

"Aldrian."

He stopped as Xin Haotian's voice called out to him.

Aldrian turned his head toward Xin Haotian and looked him in the eyes. Xin Haotian met his gaze, but there was uncertainty in it—he no longer seemed to know how he should act in front of Aldrian. His expression was awkward, perhaps because he had finally realized that Aldrian truly was the person they had all suspected him to be.

Aldrian waited in silence, and Xin Haotian eventually spoke.

"Everything you showed me... the way you acted with Sylphia, with the others—was that all just a mask? Or is that the real you?" he asked.

The others did not interrupt. They understood that this was something personal. Xin Haotian had been on the journey with Aldrian for more than three years. They had shared countless experiences with their group.

So now, with Aldrian revealing signs of being someone connected to a divine being or a higher realm, Xin Haotian's concern was understandable.

He was afraid that Aldrian had been wearing a mask all along—that he was someone they could never truly understand. Even after all this time together, Xin Haotian had no idea what burdens Aldrian carried. He could never grasp what was really going on inside his mind.

All he knew for certain was that Aldrian had his own secrets, and that was all.

Although he had no right to question it—since he did not even know what kind of place he held in Aldrian's mind—he still felt deceived. Was the Aldrian who interacted with him just a mask? Had he only been speaking to a false self all this time? He did not like the thought. It made him feel like a fool.

If that was only a mask, then what about the others? What about Sylphia, who had fallen completely head over heels for him? Had he only pretended to love her?

Xin Haotian wanted to know so he could act accordingly. He did not want to remain ignorant if Aldrian's entire character was only a facade. Aldrian might be a being who saw them from a different perspective—one shaped by his connection to the higher realm. Maybe he viewed them as lesser beings, using their ignorance to achieve his own goals.

Or was all the hustle and bustle Aldrian caused across the continent part of his plan as well?

Aldrian could sense the turmoil in Xin Haotian's heart and couldn't help but smile.

"What do you think?" he asked, his tone carrying a hint of playfulness.

Xin Haotian narrowed his eyes.

"I don't know," Xin Haotian said, his voice tight. "So please be serious, Aldrian. Everything you've shown me and the others—was it all just a mask to take advantage of us and achieve whatever your objective is?" He released his battle intent as he spoke.

"Explain it to me, so I won't feel bad when I hit you."

The others, including Patriarch Xin, felt the situation escalate too quickly. He wanted to stop his son, but then he heard Aldrian sigh.

"You're truly irritating, you know that?" Aldrian said, turning his body toward Xin Haotian and scratching the back of his head.

Xin Haotian's frown deepened. "What do you mean?"

"You're irritating because you overthink things until your imagination runs wild. Why don't you reflect on my actions during our journey? Do you really think all of that was just an act—to fool you, Sylphia, or anyone else? Was it really necessary for me to go that far just to deceive you?"

Xin Haotian kept narrowing his eyes as he recalled everything Aldrian had done in the past. In some events, it was true that Aldrian had prioritized others over his original plan. For example, at first, he wanted to remain anonymous as the mysterious swordsman for as long as possible. But when he came to save his parents, his identity became known to some imperial families.

He didn't hesitate to abandon his plan and make himself famous so his parents could benefit. They wouldn't have to face too much reproach once their relationship was revealed to the world. Aldrian's reputation was already enough to silence anyone who might want to harm his parents' dignity.

What did he gain from it? If his parents hadn't gotten into trouble, he wouldn't have had to do all of that and could have stayed anonymous longer.

He also took care of his group, especially the weaker members like the ladies, as best as he could. What for? To gain their trust? He gained nothing from them except their families' power. Did he want their families' influence—to face devils, for example? Did he want to use them?

But when he thought about it, did Aldrian really need to go through all that burdensome effort just to gain influence? With his ability and power, he could easily have gained the favor of these families and used that to fight devils or accomplish whatever he wished.

He didn't have to carry the burden of caring for the "weaklings" like the ladies by giving them cultivation resources whenever he had something useful. In fact, he never even took any cultivation resources for himself, no matter how valuable they were. Well, even without those resources, Aldrian's cultivation still advanced at an absurd rate—it kept jumping like crazy, but—

The point was, he didn't need to earn trust through those efforts. He could have simply leveraged the favor of their families to get what he wanted, without involving Sylphia and the others so much. That way, he would have more freedom. But no—Aldrian wanted them to grow stronger, side by side with him.

Did it look like he wanted to take advantage of their ignorance to gain their trust? No. Xin Haotian shook his head inwardly. That kind of burdensome care showed someone who truly cared for his friends and group. He was not an egoist, only thinking of himself, but also mindful of the well-being of those around him.

He thought about Aldrian's actions again and again, but they all seemed like Aldrian's natural way of doing things. It felt like an embedded part of his character, not some act.

It wasn't a grand plan to mask something or to take advantage of others for personal gain.

Xin Haotian sighed and looked at Aldrian again with a complicated gaze. He truly did not know how to judge him now. Aldrian lived in a world far different from his and the others', yet he acted more like a mortal.

"Hey," his thoughts were interrupted by Aldrian's voice.

"You look truly ugly with that complicated expression. Your usual expressionless face, like a statue, suits you better. Is the sun about to rise from the west for our dearest Sword Saint to show emotion like that? Well, at least it shows your mind is still working," Aldrian said with sarcasm.

A bulge appeared on Xin Haotian's forehead, clearly showing his irritation.

"You—" he wanted to say something but then closed his lips. He saw Aldrian just smiling at him, that usual smile that showed he'd won their "jabbing" match.

Aldrian's gaze, his mannerisms, everything about him had never changed since Xin Haotian first met him.

Aldrian was always like this and remained the same even now, despite the doubt Xin Haotian felt. Aldrian's eyes never wavered, they stayed clear and calm, showing no trace of nervousness, panic, or guilt as if caught red-handed.

He was Aldrian, just as always.

Xin Haotian sighed.

"Yeah, I'm probably overthinking him. So what if he really does have a connection to a higher realm? Through all this time, he's never abandoned his friends or loved ones. He always comes to their aid, helping them, pulling them out of trouble. He's a problem solver through and through. You could say he's an idiot who can't help but stick his nose into other people's problems."

"If he truly is some higher being, then he's an idiot higher being," he thought, unable to stop himself from finally smiling.

"From that smile, I know you're cursing me." Aldrian said with smile.

Xin Haotian smiled and shrugged.

"Well, what can I say? You're a truly confusing bastard, and you always act suspicious, like a thief."

Aldrian kept smiling after hearing that. Watching their interaction, the others felt relieved. The tension between them had eased quickly, showing how deeply Aldrian and Xin Haotian knew each other despite their unusual way of conversing.

"All right, I think it's time for—" Before he could finish his words, Aldrian suddenly stopped as a voice transmission from Sylphia came through.

"Dear, sorry to disturb you, but something big has happened."

Chapter 536: The Cat Out of the Bag?

There are a few things in recent years that can stir an uproar across the entire Barisan continent. Most of them have to do with the figure known as the mysterious swordsman—now known as Aldrian.

Various titles have been attached to his name. Many call him *young master Aldrian* because of how young he looks and the belief that he might be a descendant of a noble family. Many others call him *lord Aldrian*, already considering him far above the status of a mere young master.

There are also many who call him *saint Aldrian*, most of them from the Weilmar March of the Atria Empire. His actions as a savior—rescuing the empire from tyranny and healing many people—have left a lasting mark on their minds. When the situation was dire and many were dying, he was the only one who could come to their rescue.

There is one title even more excessive—he is called a god. A god who came in answer to the prayers of countless people. It is not surprising, as many see him as the only person capable of responding to certain crises.

In these uncertain times, as chaos spreads through the works of devils and rumors of a prophesied time circulate, people pray for the arrival of a messiah who can guide them through their tribulations.

The appearance of Aldrian's figure is like that of a god arriving in an age of turmoil. His power and character match their image of divinity—strong, benevolent, and just.

But the most popular title, the one that people across the continent believe truly befits him, is—

Aldrian the Great.

His greatness is unmatched. His strength is so extraordinary that even a peak Emperor Stage cultivator supported by two divine-grade artifacts cannot defeat him. Many people doubt that anyone on this continent is as strong as he is.

He might be the one who can unite the entire continent through his power and influence alone. Normally, something like this would unsettle the imperial families across the continent—someone holding enough power to stand against an entire empire on his own.

But the ruling families across the continent seem unbothered by Aldrian's existence. Why? Many believe they simply do not dare to cause trouble for him. There is far more to gain from befriending Aldrian than from becoming his enemy.

Perhaps they have already formed bonds with him and built relationships behind the scenes. That might be why they do not appear concerned about Aldrian's presence. He could be the one to help them face the prophesied time. People can only imagine how remarkable it must be for someone to earn the respect of every ruling family across the continent.

With all his achievements and titles, Aldrian's name has become the most talked-about in recent years. There is no place where his name or stories are not mentioned. Many storytellers have already spread his tales far and wide, and his legend has become a source of inspiration for young cultivators who dream of becoming like him.

However, despite his fame—and the admiration and even worship he receives—there is one thought that commonly lingers in people's minds. At the very least, it crosses their minds once, and it adds fuel to the rumors and stories about Aldrian.

That thought is the origin of Aldrian.

Many truly wonder how someone like him could have appeared on this continent. His strength is astonishing, and many believe he is the only person who has comprehended a divine-grade technique. He can fight opponents with a far higher cultivation base—and in his case, the gap is not ordinary. The cross-level battles he wins are nothing short of absurd.

The proclaimed geniuses across the continent—most of them can fight across cultivation levels, which is not particularly surprising. They are usually noble descendants, trained from childhood and supported by their families' vast resources.

Stories of a low Duke Stage cultivator defeating a high Duke Stage opponent are sometimes heard, as are tales of a peak Duke Stage defeating a low Grand Duke Stage.

Most of them can fight one to three realms above their current level. That alone is an incredible feat. Their potential is undeniable, and their future appears bright.

But Aldrian?

He can battle opponents at the Emperor Stage even while in the Duke Stage. Some rumors even claim he could do it as early as the Marquess Stage—or lower. Whether those rumors are true or not, the fact that he is clearly not an Emperor Stage cultivator while achieving such things has left people shocked.

Everything they thought they understood about cultivation levels and power scaling feels like it has been thrown into the trash when faced with Aldrian.

How can someone like that exist? What kind of technique does he use to make him so strong? Is it the effect of a divine-grade technique? If so, where did he get that technique? A divine technique is not something just anyone can acquire. As far as people know, only the ruling families of each major territory possess their own divine techniques.

But due to the strange circumstances across the continent, even they have failed to comprehend theirs.

That raises another question: even if Aldrian did obtain such a technique, how could he possibly comprehend it?

All of these questions make people truly wonder about Aldrian's real background. What kind of parents could give birth to someone like him? Did the divine-grade technique come from his family? This topic has become one of the most popular subjects of gossip.

Many have started to guess his origins based on the path of his journey. Some believe he may be related to the elven race, since his first known appearance was in Balin City. Others think he might be from the demon territory, as traces of him were found there not long after the incident in Balin City.

Each territory has its own version of Aldrian's origin—but none of them has any proof.

However, this topic has always been more of an interlude—most people do not dwell too much on Aldrian's origin. They are curious, yes, but the most important thing is that someone like Aldrian exists, and he is on their side. Where he came from? They do not really care, as long as he does not stand against them.

Many believed they would never learn the truth behind his mysterious origin.

But the rumor that spread yesterday completely shook the continent. It spread faster than any news about Aldrian ever had.

What they heard was about his family—or more specifically, his parents.

Plenty had guessed that Aldrian was the descendant of a noble family, but this rumor was still something no one expected. Yes, it claimed that he truly came from a noble

lineage—but not from the families anyone would have imagined, even in a million years. The name of his parent alone was enough to make many dismiss it as nothing more than a ridiculous joke.

But the reactions of the two family patriarchs made it clear to everyone—the rumor was likely true.

The Flamecrest family and the Rivas family.

Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas.

The successors of two houses with a long-standing fire and water relationship—actually had a child together.

At first, when the rumor spread, many thought it was just another baseless gossip about Aldrian. How could those two families—so different like fire and water—have Aldrian as their descendant? Forget about their two heirs who became successors, even ordinary family members sometimes ended up fighting whenever these two families met.

No one knew who had started the rumor, but most assumed it was someone with a terrible sense of humor.

But the shocking thing is, the action of Grand Duke Flamecrest and Grand Duke Rivas. Witnesses from both grand duchies saw the two grand dukes, clearly fuming, racing toward each other's territories. They moved at full speed, as if they could not wait to unleash their wrath.

Even more astonishing was how the two imperial families from each empire reacted upon hearing that the grand dukes seemed ready to kill each other. The two emperors themselves personally intervened to hold them back, doing everything they could to prevent any reckless actions.

The situation quickly descended into chaos as the two families appeared to follow their leaders' example, forcing the imperial armies to step in and calm everyone down. Meanwhile, the two central figures of the rumor, Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas, rushed after their fathers, clearly desperate to contain their raging fury.

After the persuasion of the two emperors, Aldrey and Irene, the two families finally agreed to hold a meeting to discuss everything—the events that had happened, the truth about Aldrian, and his birth. The two patriarchs needed to know.

The place chosen was the border between Flamecrest and Rivas, with the two emperors also attending. The meeting was scheduled for the next day—now, today.

News of the meeting spread quickly, and many parties wanted to witness it for themselves. Many people began traveling to the border between the two lands.

Today, as the meeting day and the exact time drew near, another shocking scene unfolded. Suddenly, the leaders from other ruler families and organizations across the major territories also appeared in person at the meeting.

The meeting place quickly transformed into a gathering of peak cultivators from almost all major territories, turning what was meant to be a discussion about Aldrian and his parents into a far grander event.

Chapter 537: Return to Dongtian City

At Dongtian City, inside one of the inns, Sylphia was in her room with the Fifth Finger. She was growing anxious over the news about what had happened on the border between Flamecrest and Rivas.

Updates kept reaching her, as the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion had also begun using their own methods to establish communication lines and had arrived at the meeting area to serve as eyes and ears.

Everyone around her was already talking about the breaking news, which had brought most people's activities to a stop. The parents of that sensational figure turned out to be two individuals from opposing families? It was truly spicy news.

No one had ever heard of any closeness or reconciliation between Flamecrest and Rivas—let alone a marriage—so this might be one of the possibilities many had already guessed.

Aldrey and Irene had Aldrian without the knowledge of their respective families, which caused stories about them to run wild. Since when had they met like that? Since when had they fallen in love with each other? How could they have had Aldrian without anyone knowing? So many questions had come up, each becoming a topic worth talking about.

"The Evergreen Imperial Family just arrived at the meeting place," the Fifth Finger reported after hearing from the communication artifact in her hand.

"The one who came is Emperor Ladwin himself."

Sylphia was stunned for a moment, but then she sighed. Of course her father would come. This was about Aldrian and his parents, after all. She could already imagine how frustrated he would feel later, realizing that he had known nothing about Aldrian's parents while some of the imperial families from other empires already knew.

"Dear, I hope you can come back as soon as possible."

This wasn't something she could keep from Aldrian, even if she wanted to. Although she might be interrupting his business with the Xin family, it concerned his parents—he had

to know. This was also the moment Aldrian had long anticipated, and he might have to handle it personally.

Suddenly, two figures appeared right inside her room. She was slightly startled, but she smiled as she looked at one of them.

"Dear, you're back!" she said as she jumped up and hugged Aldrian, who had suddenly appeared inside her room with Xin Haotian. Aldrian smiled warmly and returned her hug with tenderness.

The Fifth Finger was the only one that still shocked by Aldrian and Xin Haotian's sudden appearance. She had not even had time to react; they had simply appeared without warning. There had been no signs of energy disturbance or spatial fluctuation, making it seem as though they had materialized out of thin air.

Moreover, had Lady Sylphia not just contacted him a short while ago? Did he use some kind of teleportation technique or formation to get here? But she had neither sensed nor seen any such formation in place.

Ignoring the still-stunned Fifth Finger, Aldrian separated from Sylphia after a few moments and looked at her seriously.

"Tell me in detail what happened from yesterday until now. What exactly happened?" he asked.

The message he had received from Sylphia had also surprised him. News regarding his parents had already spread widely and with unusual speed. He wondered the origin of these rumors, especially since he doubted the imperial families that knew about his origin would be the ones to release such information. Doing so would only creating fractures in their relationship.

But he did not think much further, as the most important thing right now was to meet his parents and be with them during this moment. He had already prepared for this and would take care of it.

After receiving the news from Sylphia, he explained the situation to the Xin family's group. They understood and decided to remain at the palace until his return. While waiting, they could take their time exploring the entire palace, as they had yet to properly inspect the vast area during the past few days.

Aldrian then created his domain inside the palace and teleported from there to the inn, where he had already created another domain before leaving. Xin Haotian followed because he also wanted to see how Aldrian would solve his problem. But Aldrian knew that Xin Haotian was more interested in seeing the party and how he would handle it.

In other words, he wanted to witness the chaos.

Aldrian did not mind and brought him along.

Sylphia then told everything that happened after the first rumor about his parents appeared yesterday. Many did not know where the rumor came from, but the most probable source was within the Flamecrest or Rivas families themselves. This was because the rumor surfaced right after the two grand dukes showed their anger and stormed out of their mansions toward their neighboring territory.

It seemed that someone from those families knew something and could not hide the cause of their patriarchs' fury. The cause, of course, was the affair involving their own descendants—and the fact that they already had a child.

Fortunately, the two emperors from each empire were able to intervene before the fight broke out, as the grand dukes had nearly reached their target.

The cultivators of the two families also followed their patriarchs, wanting to attack each other, but the imperial family intervened, which kept the situation under control for now. They decided that the two families would have a meeting, scheduled for today, and the exact time was nearing.

The other emperors and rulers of major territories were said to be coming as well, which truly astonished Aldrian. The matter had actually spiraled so far that those rulers would come to the meeting personally. He had not expected them to spend their time on this, which allowed him to adjust some of his plans.

He could hasten his plan, and with most of the rulers of the major territories potentially coming, he could use this chance.

Sylphia also explained the incident with the devils while he was inside the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest. Hearing the explanation, Aldrian's face turned solemn. His bad feeling grew stronger—this was not good! There must be a plan the devil lord was brewing behind this reckless action.

With this situation, he truly wondered if those emperors or rulers could spare the time to come to the meeting, given that the Seven Deadly Sins were in their territories.

But he also thought that, with this news, the devils' focus might shift toward the meeting.

Something that could make all the continent's rulers unite and even sit in the same place was not something favorable to the devils after all.

However, it still left a bad taste in his mouth that the devils had killed so many while he was inside the core area—especially since most of the Seven Deadly Sins were within his domain, and Pride was in this territory.

He sighed, understanding that Sylphia had not wanted to tell him because she thought it would disturb his work inside the Everlasting Silent Forest. Moreover, the rulers of these territories might be able to handle this problem on their own.

They were a huge force, and if they couldn't take care of something like this, then they would not have survived for long. They had stood until today by overcoming many tribulations, and the devils were only one of them.

"I'm sorry for not telling you this. I thought it would disturb you, and if everything had to be handled by you, it would only become a burden," Sylphia said apologetically.

"Did I do wrong by that?"

Aldrian smiled warmly and touched her cheek.

"No, it's okay. Even though it's unfortunate that many have died, like you said, the rulers of each territory will take care of the problem one way or another. Also, I gained many things inside the Everlasting Silent Forest—I'll tell you about it later, so you don't have to feel sorry," he said as he stroked her cheek. She smiled and nodded to him, while Xin Haotian and the fifth finger could only watch this lovey-dovey couple.

"Anyway, let's go. We need to get to the meeting—Father and Mother must be anxious right now," Aldrian said before turning to the fifth finger.

"You stay in this city until we return."

"Yes, Master," she replied, and Aldrian nodded. He then checked on Eleine and Baek Jimin, but couldn't find Baek Jimin anywhere in the inn or even within this domain.

"Where is Baek Jimin?" he asked Sylphia.

"Ah, she's at Vera's place. I think she's playing with Evin right now," Sylphia answered.

"Alright, let's pick up Eleine first before we head to Vera's house."

After that, they went to get Eleine from her room. As expected, the moment Aldrian saw her face, she looked truly anxious. How could she not be, when the news about him being the son of Aldrey and Irene had already spread?

Seeing that Aldrian had returned finally put her heart at ease.

"It's good that you're back, young master. Lord Aldrey and Lady Irene might need you right now," she said.

"Yes. Don't worry—we'll be there soon."

After a short conversation, Aldrian prepared to teleport all of them to the front of Vera's house. But before he did, as he sensed the domain he had created over Vera's house, he noticed another presence in front of the house.

There was a figure there.

The figure appeared to be entertaining Evin outside, while Baek Jimin and Vera watched from their seats near the front door.

When Aldrian activated his Eyes of Heaven to get a clearer view of the figure, his eyes widened slightly. He recognized that person.

"Isn't that...?"

No data found.

Chapter 538: Arrived at the Meeting Place

In front of Vera's house, a man wearing a kasaya was interacting with Evin, entertaining her with some of his tricks using energy. He was clearly a monk. Baek Jimin and Vera, watching them not far from the house, sat with smiles on their faces. Seeing Evin's happy expression made them smile warmly in return.

However, they were stunned when several figures suddenly appeared. Baek Jimin immediately lit up with joy, especially when she saw one particular man among them.

Aldrian had teleported them all here, but once they arrived, he couldn't help but fix his eyes on the monk. The others who had come with Aldrian also turned to look at the monk, but it was Xin Haotian who reacted visibly, surprised at the sight because he knew this monk.

The monk, who didn't seem surprised at all by the sudden appearance of Aldrian and the others, met his gaze with a smile.

"Benefactor Aldrian, it's been a while," the monk said.

Aldrian stepped forward, slightly bowed, and clasped his hands.

"I didn't expect to meet you here again, teacher 'Karma Seeker'," he said.

The monk standing before him was the same one he and Xin Haotian had met in the Forgeheart Kingdom, after returning from Dragon Back Mountain. At the time, Aldrian had known nothing about the mysterious monk, but over the course of his journey, he eventually learned his true identity.

When he looked into the monk known by the title "Karma Seeker," there was little information available—only that the abbot of the Buddhist sect bore the title *Venerable Karma Seeker*.

He had already suspected that the monk might be the abbot of the Buddhist sect, especially given his cultivation at the peak emperor stage. Still, discovering it to be true left him with questions. Why had the leader of the Buddhist sect been walking alone back then? He also spoken a line that Aldrian had recalled many times during his travels.

"Not every being's heart can hold righteousness, and even if they have a righteous heart, not all of them can bear the weight of that righteousness,"

At one time he want to meet with this monk to asked him for an answer, because that statement is truly related in some of the cases he face along in his journey. Now he actually meet with this monk here like the fate has arrange it for them.

"Well, this is how fate and karma work. To think that Benefactor Aldrian is the one who saved Miss Vera's condition. Her case is quite special—I didn't dare to treat her recklessly, and not many would, as it could easily put her life at risk," said Venerable Karma Seeker.

Aldrian nodded in understanding, because that was true. When Vera arrived from the Atria Empire, she was already injured. The devil energy in her dantian was the lingering effect of Pride's technique, which was also infused with his sword intent.

To heal such a wound, one would need to overpower that energy while simultaneously repairing the dantian. Sword intent and devil energy from a peak emperor stage devil were not forces to take lightly. A single mistake could leave Vera crippled for life.

Venerable Karma Seeker was not a specialist in healing techniques. While he might have been able to suppress the devil energy or the remnant sword intent, healing the damage completely was another matter. There might be only one physician capable of treating Vera's condition, but that man's whereabouts were unknown.

All Venerable Karma Seeker could do was tend to her external wounds and keep her alive for as long as possible.

From this encounter with Venerable Karma Seeker, Aldrian finally realized who the generous monk that had been helping Vera stay in this place. He let out a quiet sigh. To think that his interest in Evin and in healing Vera would lead him to meet this monk again.

"Yes, it truly is fate. I never thought I would see Teacher Karma Seeker here," Aldrian said.

Venerable Karma Seeker nodded with a smile, his gaze filled with kindness as he looked at Aldrian.

"So, I assume Benefactor Aldrian is heading to the meeting between the Flamecrest and Rivas families?" he asked.

Aldrian was slightly surprised by the question but still gave a nod.

"Yes. I suppose Teacher Karma Seeker has heard the news. I won't lie to you—Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas are my parents. As their son, it wouldn't be right if I didn't go and take care for this situation. Besides, I've already prepared for this moment."

Upon hearing Aldrian's answer, Venerable Karma Seeker nodded again.

"Then, may this monk accompany you to the meeting place?"

Aldrian and the others in his group were stunned. The ladies already knew the monk's identity, having been told about it in the past. When Aldrian addressed him as Karma Seeker, they immediately understood—this monk was the abbot of the Buddhist Sect. But now he wanted to accompany them to the meeting place?

Did that mean the gathering of the leaders of the major territories would be complete? All of them would be present in one place.

Still, Aldrian responded to Venerable Karma Seeker with a smile.

"Of course you can, Teacher. With you coming with me, it gives me a boost in confidence," he said, prompting a warm smile from the monk.

"Benefactor Aldrian must be jesting. How could my presence affect your confidence? You are already one of the most influential figures on the continent—more than myself. Even without me, Benefactor Aldrian is more than capable of handling it," Venerable Karma Seeker replied.

"No, I'm serious, Teacher. With you accompanying me, it will definitely give me more credibility and support," Aldrian said. He wasn't lying. If Venerable Karma Seeker stood beside him, it would raise his standing in front of many. It would also increase the pressure on the Flamecrest and Rivas families if they still intended to act recklessly.

With the venerable Karma Seeker's appearance, all the leaders of the major territories on the continent will gather. With all of them assembled in support

of him, he doubts the Flamecrest and Rivas families will do anything stupid—though even now, he doubts they would, with all those people gathered there.

"Um... mister, are you leaving again?" a small voice suddenly called out. Aldrian turned and saw Evin looking up at him.

He smiled warmly and gently stroked her head.

"Yes, unfortunately I have to go. There's something your brother needs to take care of. So be good, and take care of your mother until I come back, alright?"

Evin nodded innocently, though inwardly she felt sad that Aldrian had to leave again. Aldrian could sense it. He gave her another gentle pat in consolation, then looked up at Baek Jimin and Vera, who were already standing close to him.

The way Vera looked at him now was very different from the last time they met. He thought she already knew his identity, so he wasn't surprised by the respect and admiration in her eyes.

"Is everything alright? How's your condition?" he asked Vera.

"Ah, nothing's wrong. I'm truly grateful for Lord Aldrian's help. I apologize for not recognizing you the first time we met," Vera replied with a slight bow.

"It's okay, don't worry. I'm just glad there are no more problems with your body," he said, waving his hand. Then he turned to Baek Jimin with a smile.

"Let's go," he said.

Baek Jimin nodded and glanced at Vera beside her.

"We'll go ahead," she said, receiving a nod from Vera in response.

Baek Jimin stepped closer and stood beside Aldrian.

"See you later," he said one last time to Vera and Evin before he, his group, and Venerable Karma Seeker disappeared.

Vera looked at the spot where Aldrian had just stood and sighed. She couldn't believe that the one who saved her was the mysterious swordsman everyone talked about. She hadn't known his face before because she was already ill here when Aldrian's face became known across the continent. But she was familiar with the story of the mysterious swordsman—one that had caused uproar throughout the lands several times.

When she finally learned that Aldrian was that person, she was truly shocked and felt somewhat embarrassed. To think that the famous swordsman was the one that healed her.

While Vera was still lost in thought about Aldrian, he and his group had already arrived at the meeting place.

The location was a vast stretch of land pinched by two forests, one from the Flamecrest family's territory and the other from the Rivas family. It was a good choice for the meeting—close enough to the nearest towns of both territories to make travel easier for everyone.

Aldrian teleported high into the sky with his concealment active, covering his entire group so no one could detect their arrival. He also enveloped the ladies in his energy, making them float. Sylphia, Baek Jimin, Eleine, and Xin Haotian were not really surprised that they had already arrived—they had long given up trying to fully understand Aldrian's abilities and simply accepted them as they were.

Xin Haotian, in particular, was no longer shocked because of Aldrian's connection to the higher realm.

Venerable Karma Seeker, however, was the most astonished. He couldn't resist Aldrian's teleportation, and suddenly found himself here—far from the Buddhist territory. There was no sign or warning of the sudden movement, which left him truly amazed by Aldrian's power. This was the first time he had experienced Aldrian's ability firsthand, and he inwardly nodded.

"Truly amazing ability. I couldn't even react," he thought, eyes fixed on Aldrian's figure.

"As expected from one who carries the continent's weight on his shoulders." He then looked down below. Not far from them, a massive gathering of people stretched out—if counted, it could reach thousands.

A large tent stood not far from them, surrounded by many guards who prevented anyone from approaching. Aldrian knew that tent was the place where the meeting was held.

Chapter 539: The Gathering of the Leaders

Inside the giant white tent where the meeting was held, the situation could be described as rather strange, with almost all of the leaders of the major territories sitting at the same table. The emperors of the Doria Empire, Vindas Empire, Atria Empire, and Ivory Empire were present, along with the king of the Forgeheart Kingdom and the pope of the Heavenly Direction Church.

Almost all of them were silently observing each other, which made the atmosphere not only awkward but also tense. Well, except for Pope Claudius, who didn't seem to care about the tension at all as he calmly sipped his tea.

Beside them, the two grand dukes were also present, but with so many behemoths gathered in one place, their presence was overshadowed. The main characters of this entire event, Aldrey and Irene, were there as well, seated beside their fathers.

Their guards remained outside the tent, as they might have fainted from the overwhelming atmosphere if they were forced to endure such tension from within.

Aldrey and Irene looked at each other with anxious expressions, then glanced at the others around them.

How did it escalate to this point? Was this all because of their son's influence?

For the first time, they were experiencing how Aldrian's very existence could influence even these powerful figures to gather in one place—though none of them truly understood why they were here.

As for the two grand dukes, their expressions were almost comical, as if they couldn't comprehend what was going on. Why had it come to this? Grand Duke Flamecrest and Grand Duke Rivas exchanged blank stares, equally lost about the sudden grand gathering of the continent's major leaders.

At first, upon discovering that their descendants had already done the deed and even had a son, the two had been ready to fight. It made sense that the emperors from their own empires would try to intervene—but for almost all of the continent's leaders to gather here? Was this also due to Aldrian's influence? Just how far did his influence reach, for nearly every ruler to come to this place?

But what was their reason for coming here in the first place? To watch the chaos unfold? To see Aldrian's parents for themselves? Why had they come here when the Seven Deadly Sins still roaming outside?

They remained silent. It has been more than an hour, yet no one spoke—until King Douwin of the Forgeheart Kingdom finally broke the silence.

"Are we really going to stay quiet until the end of the day? Why don't you just start whatever it is you plan to do?"

"I agree with King Douwin," Emperor Raymond said. "Let the meeting begin and hear what the two grand dukes want to do about this matter. Staying silent won't lead to anything."

"I also agree, let's hear what the two grand dukes have to say first." Emperor Ladwin added. "We hope this issue can be resolved without a fight."

Emperor Durand and Emperor Herman nodded at each other, then turned to the two grand dukes, who were trembling slightly under the collective gaze of all the leaders. The weight of those stares—stares that implied these people believed they had a say in this matter—was enough to drive the grand dukes nearly mad.

"This is a family matter! Why do all of you have to get involved?!"

But there was no helping it. They understood why these leaders had come. It was because of Aldrian himself. Everything he had achieved, and his connections with the major powers across the continent, was enough to draw all of them here simply at the news of something involving his family.

However, Aldrian's influence over the Demon Territory and the Buddhist Sect still seemed lacking, as neither of their leaders was present—or so the two grand dukes thought.

Suddenly, they heard a commotion and murmuring from outside. Moments later, a guard burst through the entrance of the tent and dropped to one knee.

"My apologies for disturbing Your Majesties, but the three sect masters of the great sects from the Demon Territories have arrived," the guard announced, causing all of the leaders to raise their eyebrows.

The two grand dukes were truly astonished—the Demon Territories too?

Not long after, three figures entered the tent, with Sect Master Ryu Hyukjae leading the entourage from the Demon Territory.

"Ah, has it already started? Don't mind us. Just go on with what you're doing—we'll watch from the side," Ryu Hyukjae said casually, as he and the other two sect masters took empty seats.

No one responded to Sect Master Ryu, but many shared the same thought: now that the demonic cultivators had arrived, the only one left was the abbot of the Buddhist sect.

"To think that the three sect masters of the great demon sects have also come," Emperor Durand said with an expressionless face. "What did you come here for?"

"Well, we came here for the same reason as some of the others," Sect Master Ryu replied without much concern. "A few of you who have no direct business with this meeting still came because it involves Young Master Aldrian, right? Same for us—but we have even more reason to be involved. Aldrian is already one of us."

His words made Emperor Durand and several others narrow their eyes slightly.

Sect Master Ryu was known for being stubborn and unwilling to compromise. Emperor Durand knew how arrogant and rigid the man could be—and the same could be said of the other sect masters as well. These demonic cultivators always had stranger temperaments than the orthodox sects, but that was simply part of their nature. None of the rulers here considered them close allies.

And yet, despite all that, he had called Aldrian "*Young Master*"—a title that showed this stubborn man genuinely acknowledged Aldrian as someone worthy of his respect, perhaps even someone of higher standing. But then, something else caught their attention.

"What do you mean? Young Aldrian already become one of you?" Emperor Herman asked.

Sect Master Ryu and the other two sect masters smiled before Sect Master Ryu responded.

"As you heard, he has already become one of us. He has comprehended our most important scripture and is now a demonic cultivator. I dare say his status stands above even the sect masters of the three great sects."

The others widened their eyes in shock.

"Young Aldrian, a demonic cultivator? Impossible! You're just claiming him for yourselves!" Emperor Durand said, releasing his aura at the peak of the Emperor Stage. He had recently made a breakthrough, and the sudden surge of power sent another wave of shock through the tent.

"You demonic cultivators are arrogant to claim him as your own. A demonic cultivator? I've never seen him use demonic energy even once. If you're going to lie, at least make it believable," he added, focusing the full weight of his pressure on the three sect masters.

But Sect Master Ryu simply continued to smile before releasing his own aura—also at the peak of the Emperor Stage.

"I don't care whether you believe me or not. That is the truth. Young Master Aldrian is one of us—and he is a demonic cultivator," Sect Master Ryu said as his aura clashed directly with Emperor Durand's.

The others were astonished. Sect Master Ryu had also broken through to the peak of the Emperor Stage! The overwhelming pressure that had been directed at the three sect masters vanished the moment Ryu's aura countered

it, but now the tent was filled with the oppressive force of two peak-level cultivators locked in confrontation.

Sensing that the situation was on the verge of spiraling out of control, Pope Claudius finally intervened. His holy aura—also at the peak of the Emperor Stage—washed over the tent and effortlessly neutralized the other two.

"What exactly are we here for?" he said calmly. "Are we going to let this meeting dissolve into a clash of egos? Enough. We came here to resolve a matter concerning Young Aldrian's family. This matter concerns us all—and the entire continent. The meeting hasn't even begun, yet the two of you are already turning it into a battleground."

The two leaders slowly retracted their auras. Emperor Durand refused to look at Sect Master Ryu, while Ryu leaned back in his seat, still wearing that relaxed smile.

The two grand dukes, already drenched in cold sweat, sat stiffly. For a moment, they had truly thought they were going to die—these leaders looked more ready to fight than they were. They were grateful the pope had deescalated the situation, but his words also made them want to shout back at him.

"What do you mean this concerns all of you and the entire continent? This is a family matter! It should be handled by us!"

Even if Aldrian had connections to many of the people in this tent, this was still something internal. Their descendants had a child—one they hadn't even known about. That child was now their grandson. They had come to demand answers from the other family—and, admittedly, to settle things with fists if necessary.

And yet, somehow, this had turned into a continental issue, dragging in rulers from every major power into this tent.

"Anyway, where is young Aldrian? I assumed this matter would definitely bring him here, but I don't see him," Emperor Ladwin asked.

Truthfully, he felt sulky. These other emperors knew about Aldrian's parents, while he—who was the first emperor to ever meet Aldrian—had been left out. A small sense of *"betrayal"* stirred in his chest.

He wanted to see him again, to speak his grievances directly. That young man had left him out of something so important—even after he had entrusted his precious daughter to him, even after he had silently accepted Aldrian taking her as his woman.

The others didn't answer. They had no idea where Aldrian was either. He tended to move on his own, never bothering to inform them of his whereabouts.

But then, a new commotion erupted outside—this one louder than before. Hearing the rising voices and shuffling outside the tent, they quickly understood why.

Chapter 540: Reunion

The people surrounding the tent outside the cleared area all raised their heads as they noticed a few figures in the sky. The guards raised their heads as well, having sensed the figures before anyone else. Everyone who saw them felt their hearts tremble—especially when they recognized one of the figures.

The man, who could also be called the central figure of this event, stood out not just for his presence but because his origin—his parents—were not as many had previously predicted.

Many had already taken out their information crystals to record everything, determined not to miss a moment of this significant occasion. There was no way they would let it pass without capturing it.

Aldrian, who had earlier finally canceled his concealment technique, descended slowly with his group, and all eyes followed them. Did this finally confirm that Aldrian was indeed the son of Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas? As their son, it was no surprise that he came to the place where his parents had fallen into trouble.

Some still doubted whether Aldrey and Irene were truly his parents, but with Aldrian's presence here now, they would soon know the truth.

"Wait, isn't that the Sword Saint?"

"Yes, that *is* the Sword Saint! Why is he with Lord Aldrian?"

"Don't tell me he's actually been with Lord Aldrian all this time?"

"Some said Lord Aldrian travels with his own group. So the Sword Saint is one of the members?"

"Who are the other figures with them? Who's that monk?"

Murmurs spread and conversations broke out as Aldrian's group finally descended near the tent. The guards didn't dare to block them. Aside from Aldrian, who was directly involved in this matter, the group also included the Sword Saint and several others the guards didn't recognize. The monk who

accompanied them was especially strange—they couldn't sense his cultivation at all.

From the tent, a few figures appeared. The leaders of the major territories, along with the two Grand Dukes, stepped out, followed by Aldrey and Irene. The moment they saw Aldrian that still in disguise—their eyes trembled.

Aldrian, who was also seeing his parents again after almost two years, smiled warmly at them. In that moment, time seemed to stop, and the world felt as if it existed only for the three of them.

"Mother, Father, I've come," Aldrian said softly, without hesitation. Although his voice was quiet and could only be heard by those closest to him, everyone else heard it too. They had been focusing their eyes and ears entirely on Aldrian. Once the words reached them, no further confirmation was needed—Aldrey and Irene were indeed his parents.

The leaders who looked at Aldrian could only smile. This was the side of him they had first seen. Until now, his image had been that of a powerful cultivator who seemed capable of doing everything alone. With his strength, he had never appeared to need anyone.

Yet, in the end, he was still a teen—a son with parents, his own family. The way he looked at his parents, the tone of his voice when he called them, full of warmth and longing, showed that he, like all others, had a family of his own—and love for them.

But then, their attention shifted to another figure—someone they hadn't expected to appear in this place—and they couldn't help but feel astonished. With the appearance of the Venerable Karma Seeker, all of the leaders of the major territories were now gathered here.

The two Grand Dukes, upon hearing Aldrian call Aldrey and Irene *mother* and *father*, felt their hearts tremble and their chests tighten. This was the same man they had once spoken with and regarded with deep respect. He was the one who had helped their families escape crisis and even raised their reputation.

And yet, the man they had treated with such reverence, the one they had considered their families' savior, was in fact their own grandson. Their emotions were in turmoil as they tried to process this moment.

For Irene, as if no one else existed around her, she dashed toward Aldrian and embraced him tightly. Aldrian could only smile as he accepted the full force of her hug, returning it with the same warmth. He felt the wetness on his shoulder as his mother wept in his arms.

Aldrey also followed Irene and stood behind her with teary eyes. He looked at his son, who seemed much taller now—in fact, they were almost the same height. He did not understand how their son could have grown so much in such a short time, but he did not really care about that. His focus was entirely on the scene before him.

He was finally reunited with his little family. This was the moment he had always dreamed of—being together with them again.

Aldrian then looked at his father, keeping his smile, which made Aldrey approach both him and Irene. Without hesitation, he hugged Aldrian and Irene tightly. Aldrian wrapped his other arm around his father, pulling all three into a close embrace.

They did not care about their surroundings; all that mattered was that they could finally hold each other again after years of separation, as one family.

The two Grand Dukes said nothing—they could do nothing but watch. From where they stood, they could see the deep love Aldrey, Irene, and Aldrian had for one another.

While the three family members reunited, two figures approached Aldrian's group and stopped in front of Sylphia and Baek Jimin. Emperor Ladwin approached his daughter, while Sect Master Baek approached his own. Both young women knew their parents recognized them despite their disguises, so each greeted their parent warmly.

"Father," Sylphia said to Emperor Ladwin with a smile.

Seeing his daughter—so much stronger than when she left the empire a few years ago—he was deeply shocked inwardly. Her cultivation had risen dramatically, making him wonder what she had experienced during her adventures with Aldrian.

At the same time, he felt proud as a father. This was the first time she had been away from the empire for so long. He had worried she might feel uncomfortable, unable to endure, and eventually return home.

But forget about coming home—she hadn't even communicated with her hometown, which made him miss his daughter dearly. However, he knew that with Aldrian she would be okay, but he still missed her for not sending any news.

He tried to hold back his tears, finally able to see his daughter again, filled with pride.

"I see you are well, even getting stronger. Good, good," he said.

"Did Aldrian take good care of you?"

Sylphia's face showed happiness as her father touched on the topic.

"Of course, Father. He really takes good care of me. Also, I want to discuss something with you later after this," she said, slightly blushing. The emperor looked at his daughter acting strangely and couldn't help but wonder what she wanted to talk about.

Baek Jimin and Sect Master Baek also shared a mother-daughter moment. Even though they had met not long ago, the short separation was still enough to spark conversation.

"Are you okay, child? With the Seven Deadly Sins roaming around, I'm really worried your group might meet them," Sect Master Baek asked worriedly.

"We're fine, Mother. Although the Seven Deadly Sins are roaming, we never met them," Baek Jimin replied with a smile, which made Sect Master Baek sigh in relief.

"I'm glad you're safe."

Their interaction also shocked the people. The group accompanying Aldrian consisted of the princess of the Ivory Empire and the daughter of one of the sect masters of the three great sects in the demon territory. With so many important figures in Aldrian's group, they wondered about the identity of the monk and the other woman near him.

According to known information, no one had ever heard of a monk appearing among Aldrian's group before. It was not surprising that many did not know about the abbot of the Buddhist sect because he was a reclusive monk. Few had met him personally, like the leaders of the major territories. The only thing most people knew was that the abbot of the Buddhist sect was called the Venerable Karma Seeker.

After a few moments of heartfelt reunion and embraces, Aldrian, Irene, and Aldrey separated and looked at each other. Irene's eyes were still red as she gazed at Aldrian with happiness. Then she turned her head to the side, noticing Eleine also looking at her with teary eyes.

"Milady," Eleine said as she bowed to Irene, prompting Irene to walk closer to her.

She gently straightened Eleine's posture and hugged her.

"Thank you for your hard work, Eleine," she said, to which Eleine nodded and hugged Irene back.

Aldrian and Aldrey smiled at the scene before Aldrey looked at his son.

"How are you doing, son? You are much stronger than the last time I saw you, which surprised me."

"I'm good, father. Well, what can I say? I'm just that genius," Aldrian answered with a joking tone.

"Cheeky brat," Aldrey said proudly, but then suddenly remembered something and looked behind him as his and Irene's father looked in their direction with complicated gazes.

Aldrian also noticed them and didn't hesitate to walk toward them. Now every eye was on him. What would Aldrian do? After the two grand dukes learned that Aldrian was their grandson, they wondered how they would interact with him. They wanted to know how it would end.