

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 551: Tianlian Buddha - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 551: Tianlian Buddha

Chapter 551: Tianlian Buddha

Aldrian began to create his domain beside the lotus. As he merged with the surrounding nature and his domain took form, Venerable Karma Seeker's eyes trembled at the changes in Aldrian.

Aldrian's aura grew significantly stronger, but the most striking thing was his karma. In that moment, it became vividly perceptible—his karma could be sensed clearly, and it was connected to all things in the world.

Venerable Karma Seeker fell to the ground, unable to believe what he had sensed and seen. This kind of karma...

He knew that Aldrian might have been someone important in a past life. But this kind of karmic connection was not something that should exist in someone like Aldrian in this lifetime.

It was as if everything—even the smallest parts of the world—had karma with him. Heaven and earth, energy, particles, soulless matter, and living beings were all connected to Aldrian. Each of them formed a link with him, as if they were reconnecting to something they had once been bound to in the past.

If even something that minute holds karma with him, was he a god in his past life?

Even Aldrian's bearing now was like that of a god, making Venerable Karma Seeker feel the urge to prostrate before him. Aldrian might be able to control all beings connected to him through karma—as though he were a god—if he wished to.

That was what Venerable Karma Seeker believed.

Not long after, he sensed Aldrian's cultivation breaking through to the low Grand Duke stage, and it did not stop there. It continued to rise, approaching the middle Grand Duke stage.

His cultivation kept rising until it finally broke through to the middle Grand Duke stage, where it stabilized.

Venerable Karma Seeker, who witnessed all of this directly, could only remain in a state of repeated shock. It was not enough that Aldrian's karma was extraordinary—his cultivation was just as absurd.

His cultivation rose with ease, as if breaking through the Duke and Grand Duke stages was no big deal. Yet Venerable Karma Seeker knew well: the higher the cultivation, the harder it became to advance.

At that level, cultivators required not only immense energy and deep comprehension as the bare minimum, but also the right state of mind and place to break through. Watching Aldrian rise so effortlessly shattered his understanding of cultivation. It opened his eyes to a world where something this absurd was actually possible.

While Venerable Karma Seeker was still taking in the unbelievable sight, Aldrian had already completed the creation of his domain, making the entire Buddhist sect territory as his domain. He felt satisfied and quietly happy, but set those feelings aside for a moment as his consciousness was drawn into another space.

He stood in the middle of a white expanse—it looked like the same place where he had once met the Heavenly Demon and the personification of Heaven. Not far from him, a lone figure stood with one hand forming a mudra. The figure was bald and wore a brown kasaya.

When Aldrian saw his face, he smiled and walked toward him. The figure looked back as Aldrian approached, then clasped his hands and bowed.

"Welcome back, Your Majesty," he said. His voice was soothing and brought peace to everyone who heard it. He could captivate anyone with just his voice, which was truly useful since he liked to spread his teachings.

"It's been a long time. Well, I don't know how long exactly, but still, I can finally see you, even if it's just your will, Tianlian," Aldrian said.

The man before him was Tianlian—one of the closest people to him in his past life, alongside the Heavenly Demon and a few others. Tianlian could be called the first Buddhist cultivator in this universe.

Tianlian straightened and smiled, but Aldrian could see the emotion in his eyes. That alone made Aldrian's smile turn warm.

"What is it? Isn't an enlightened Buddha supposed to have already transcended worldly feelings? Why do you still look at me with those eyes, as if you're still trapped in worldly affairs?" he asked, intending to lighten the mood.

"True, worldly feelings belong to those still inside samsara, but in the end, those feelings are still part of us. How we manage them and how we perceive them is something each

of us will have to deal with. To reach the state of emptiness, you come from something, but from emptiness, something also comes to be."

"For me personally, the way I perceive my feelings for you will never change. You are someone I truly respect and already consider a role model. So, Your Majesty, even I can show this much emotion to you," Tianlian said with a slight smile.

Aldrian just nodded, understanding that Tianlian's insight on this matter was different from his own. Then Aldrian looked at him with narrowed eyes.

"Tianlian, are you still okay out there or...?"

"Oh, for me, I'm still alright, Your Majesty—at least for now, since I can still sense my karmic connection with my real body somewhere," Tianlian answered, which made Aldrian sigh in relief.

"So, Tianlian, I have already met many people and understand the situation outside. Mind telling me how bad it is? Is the destruction and loss really that severe?" Aldrian asked.

"Do you still remember the structure of this universe, Your Majesty?"

"Yes, at least this part I already remember. Our universe consists of nine heavens. Each heaven is so vast that it's like a universe inside the universe." Tianlian nodded as he heard Aldrian.

"Well, the situation was bad at the time I put my will into the Heavenly Lotus. We had lost the first four heavens, and we kept getting pushed back. Many have already perished defending each heaven. Although we are stronger, their numbers are truly immense, which puts us at a serious disadvantage."

"At this time—which I thought a long time had passed since then—and now with Your Majesty arriving here, I assume only the ninth heaven remains, the last heaven they have yet to conquer. I don't know if they have already reached the underworld or not, but it will be bad if they take it. Basically, they might control samsara."

"If that happens, this is also our last chance to turn the situation around. Because if something happens to Your Majesty in this life, then this universe is doomed. Those invaders will intercept your soul and erase Your Majesty from existence."

Aldrian frowned, the situation was truly bad. If those invaders could control samsara, then they could control the life and death of every soul as they pleased. Even the heavenly laws seemed unable to stop them from taking over each realm. Those invaders must have done something to the heavens, weakening the heavenly laws more and more.

"However, although the situation is not promising, many of us still fight and have created pockets of resistance in many places. Even the Heavenly Demon still fights in some of the higher heavens, using his own tactics to prevent the invaders from having a calm life. Thanks to that, not all of the invaders focus on the lower heavens, which has bought us enough time until your return."

"Is it true that all the universes are attacking us? Why are they doing this?" Aldrian asked, still feeling it strange that they suddenly attacked this universe.

"To be honest, I don't really know why they suddenly attacked us, but at one time, I glimpsed a vision that might explain the reason behind their attack."

"From my understanding, they seem to be looking for something that can take them to a higher realm—something that could even allow the strongest among them to reach beyond the realms they know."

Aldrian's frown deepened.

"And they're searching for that thing in this universe? Just this universe alone? What makes them think it's here? I sense some kind of conspiracy. Where did that kind of news come from?" he asked.

Tianlian shook his head.

"I don't know, but I suspect the same, because none of this could happen without someone directing many universes to attack us simultaneously—and it's only us. I've tried to investigate this matter, but so far, I haven't found anything. Maybe Your Majesty can meet my real body and talk to him about this."

Aldrian sighed and nodded, then suddenly remembered something and looked at Tianlian.

"Don't those invaders know that your will is communicating with me like this? The last time I spoke with the Heavenly Demon, one of the invaders seemed to sense us and attacked our meeting place. But at other times, they don't seem to realize that I communicate with the wills of many people," he asked.

"Well, those invaders can track the strange karmic threads and activities of those who are still alive and maintain a strong connection with the wills we placed here. My real body and the Heavenly Demon are included in this, since we have strong connections with our wills. With you activating my will, I believe they may have already sensed something and are trying to track this place."

"That's why we can't talk too much right now. So I think this is enough for our first meeting, Your Majesty. I'm just glad that you're back and have begun regaining your power."

Tianlian suddenly fell silent.

"Speak of the devil—they seem to have sensed something wrong and are trying to reach this place. We must separate now, your majesty."

Suddenly, darkness began to consume their surroundings. Before it fully engulfed them, Tianlian's voice resounded one last time.

"May the great emperor of All Heavens return with glory."

Then his figure vanished, swallowed by the darkness that overtook Aldrian's sight.

Chapter 552: New Laws

Aldrian opened his eyes and looked at the heavenly lotus, which contained deep comprehension of some laws from Tianlian. He thought it really benefited him to comprehend them as well, to further enrich his comprehension of his laws. So he closed his eyes again and continued cultivating.

In the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest, the Xin family was still inspecting various parts of the palace grounds. The presence of a higher realm's civilization intrigued them in many ways. Some areas displayed symbols and depictions of unknown meaning, and they even discovered materials they had never encountered on the continent.

There was much they could investigate and even learn from this place.

At this time, in a room that appeared to have been used as a dining hall, Xin Haotian, Patriarch Xin, and a few other elders had gathered. Before Aldrian went to the Buddhist sect, he had already teleported Xin Haotian to the core area so he could explain the outcome of the meeting between the Flamecrest and Rivas families.

His family needed to know and prepare for what lay ahead.

After Xin Haotian explained the result, the group discussed it thoroughly and finally decided on their next move.

"Well, then we wait until young Aldrian returns, and we'll coordinate our move with the other powers on the continent," Patriarch Xin said.

"Sigh... looks like it's time for our family to finally be known to the world, huh?" one of the elders said.

"It can't be helped. The situation is truly dire, and we have to do something. We don't want the events from three million years ago to repeat, right? And this time might be even worse, with the Devil God possibly descending."

"I agree. Better to bring the battle into their land than let the entire continent fall into chaos. Let their territory become the battlefield. We can't always be the ones left on the losing end—we need to be bold and take the initiative this time."

The elders voiced their support and opinions. Not long after, the meeting was dismissed, leaving Xin Haotian and Patriarch Xin alone in the room.

"Son, do you think we have a chance to win this battle? If that Devil God really descends—do you think young Aldrian can face it?" Patriarch Xin asked, a note of wonder in his voice.

Although Xin Haotian couldn't recreate the same illusionary effect as Aldrian, he had already shown his family the being that might come to this land. A giant eye that covered the world in darkness, with the heavens turning red and black, creating a truly horrific atmosphere.

Xin Haotian looked at his father and couldn't help but lift the corners of his lips slightly, revealing a faint smile.

"There's nothing we can do if that happens. What else can we do besides hope for the best from the prophesied one? If even he can't stop it, then maybe we really are doomed."

"You seem quite relaxed despite saying something so ominous," Patriarch Xin said with a smile.

"Well, what can I say? I still believe we can overcome this tribulation, even if that thing really descends on our land. I don't know how Aldrian will do it, but I can feel that he'll succeed," Xin Haotian said as he looked around at their surroundings.

"Don't you think the Divine Dragon and Phoenix built all of this for Aldrian—just for a situation like this? Maybe they've already prepared something for him. There's no way divine beings would overlook something like this, not when it seems they've been planning for a very long time," he added.

"Let Aldrian fulfill his role as the prophesied one, as the heavens intended. All we can do is watch how he faces that thing." He said nonchalantly.

Patriarch Xin sighed and nodded, but a smile rose on his face.

"You seem to like that young man, huh? Even though it always looked like you had problems with him, you never hated him," he said.

"Well, he's an irritating bastard when it comes to his words—but his actions and integrity aren't in question. He's not the type to backstab anyone, and he always follows through on what he says. That kind of character is enough for me to consider him a trustworthy ally. And that's rare in this world," Xin Haotian replied.

"Ally, huh? Is that all you consider him? I thought you two were close friends," Patriarch Xin asked.

Xin Haotian didn't lose his smile as he looked up at the ceiling.

"Close friends, huh? Maybe..." he replied, which made Patriarch Xin shake his head with a smile. His son had never truly had close friends inside the secret realm, mostly because his personality was difficult to approach. He had always seemed far more mature than others his age, and even after growing up, that part of him hadn't changed.

But someone like Aldrian—also mature, with a direct personality—seemed to be a much better fit as a friend for Xin Haotian.

After that, the two continued exploring the palace, searching for anything worth studying.

Later that day, the announcement from the continent major power's leaders was finally made. Envoys from each noble family visited cities and other areas under their control to deliver the message that had been decided upon by the rulers of the major powers in coordination with their nobles.

The announcement declared that the entire continent must prepare, as they were about to face one of the most critical moments in history—a moment that would decide their future, their survival.

All major territories would go to war against the devils, and a united alliance had been formed with Aldrian as its leader. Mobilization of armies had already begun, involving imperial and noble forces alike.

The announcement caused an uproar across the continent. For the first time in history, all major territories had formed a true alliance—and they were not just defending, but preparing to invade the devil territory.

This stirred many people, sweeping them up in the rising spirit of unity. For a long time, many had hoped for a chance to strike back at the devils within their own territory. The devils had brought destruction for generations, and in recent years, their actions had grown even bolder. Countless innocent lives had already been lost—it was time for payback.

Fortunately, the imperial families had anticipated this surge and had already prepared systems to accommodate those eager to join the fight. Without delay, many began registering themselves. Even though there was no promise of payment, it didn't seem to matter. These people simply wanted to kick some devil ass.

The fact that Aldrian would lead the alliance only fueled their determination. Many believed it was the right decision—he was the most fitting choice for alliance leader, especially since he held no clear alignment despite being the son of noble families from two different empires.

With the announcement, many began to wonder if the prophesied time was near—or perhaps it had already arrived without them realizing it.

Yet behind the rising battle spirit of those eager to repay the devils, there were also many who feared what lay ahead. If the prophesied time had truly come, then chaos could erupt across the land.

All they could do was hope that this war would lead to triumph—and finally bring an end to the devils who had long been a threat to their continent.

Three days later, at the Western Paradise Temple of the Buddhist sect, Aldrian was still cultivating. He continued deepening his comprehension through the insights gained from the heavenly lotus. Tianlian's comprehension of certain laws was exceptionally profound, especially karma, life, death, and even the laws known as samsara.

The samsara laws are born from the combined comprehension of the karma, death, and life laws. This laws allows someone who comprehends it to even control their own life and death, as well as their own reincarnation cycle.

Basically, those who comprehended it can enter samsara even though they are already outside of it.

This laws had many potential applications, one of them is that it can function as a "second chance" card.

Once cultivators reach a certain stage, they become entirely free from samsara. They no longer carry any karma tied to the underworld. They have reached a state outside of samsara through their powerful strength and cultivation.

However, the setback is that if they die, they cannot reincarnate because they are already outside of samsara. Their soul will vanish for good, as if returning to nothingness—from something to nothing.

However, with the samsara laws, they can bind their souls to samsara again and reincarnate. The ridiculous part is they might even be able to dictate how they want to reincarnate, although it still depends on their comprehension of the samsara laws.

This is cheating laws and challenging the heavenly law itself. That's why only divine beings can comprehend it—and even then, not all divine beings can, because of how difficult this laws are to grasp.

That is just one application of what the samsara laws can do. They can do much more, depending on how divine beings use them.

The heavenly lotus contains some comprehension of it, and Aldrian has actually managed to grasp some of it, which is already ridiculous.

For a mortal like him to perceive it is beyond comprehension, and if divine beings of the higher realms heard of it, it would cause an uproar. It has already crossed the line, and usually, such a thing would bring a massive heavenly tribulation. However—

Nothing happened to Aldrian.

There was no heavenly tribulation.

Not long after, Aldrian opened his eyes and exhaled a deep breath. He felt refreshed, strengthened by his newfound power. He felt more powerful than ever.

He looked around and saw Venerable Karma Seeker sitting cross-legged outside the pond, facing the lotus. The venerable Karma Seeker seemed to be in the middle of cultivation, but upon sensing Aldrian opening his eyes, he also opened his own.

Venerable Karma Seeker smiled at him.

"Done?" he asked.

Chapter 553: We Will Go To War!

Aldrian nodded at Venerable Karma Seeker.

"I'm done, teacher," he said as he turned his body toward him.

"I'm really thankful that you brought me here. I've benefited greatly from this visit," he added, clasping his hands and bowing slightly.

"No problem. I'm glad your visit here benefited you greatly. I can see it myself—congratulations on your breakthrough," Venerable Karma Seeker said with a smile.

Aldrian nodded.

"How long have I been cultivating, teacher?" Aldrian asked.

"Three days. You've been standing there for three days," Venerable Karma Seeker replied, which made Aldrian raise his eyebrows.

"Looks like I was really immersed in my cultivation and didn't pay attention to the time. In those three days, I imagine all the major territories have already prepared for the invasion of the devil territory," he said.

"Yes, we're already prepared and have even begun gathering in the Doria and Vindas Empires. The united armies have started assembling near the border with the devil territory. I've already sent three Arhats to lead our contingent there, and others will follow later with more monks," Venerable Karma Seeker said.

Aldrian nodded.

"Any movement from the devils? With such a large mobilization, we should expect some kind of response from them, no?" he asked.

"That's the worrying part. Since the last time they created chaos and killed so many, they haven't made any move at all. As for activity near the border, we haven't detected anything unusual. The devils' fortress across the border also shows no signs of movement, which leads us to believe they're planning something."

Aldrian frowned. This was truly a troubling situation. If the devils made no move despite the large-scale mobilization across the continent, then it could only mean one thing—they were planning something. There was no way they were unaware of such a massive buildup.

"As we decided in the plan, within a week at most, we'll be done with preparations and begin the invasion. But the expected response from the devils—their army gathering near the border hasn't happened. Because of this, we are rushing the preparations and might complete them much faster," Venerable Karma Seeker said.

Aldrian nodded. "Alright. I need to move quickly. We don't have much time," he said as he walked away from the pond.

"I'll head to the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest first. I'll send the Xin family and let them join the others at the border. I will stay at the core of the forest until I'm done checking it. I'll try not to take too long and will return before the week is over," he added, now standing on dry ground.

He dried his attire using his water laws, controlling the moisture from the fabric, gathering it on his palm, and then burning it with his fire laws to evaporate it.

Aldrian looked at Venerable Karma Seeker and bowed slightly, clasping his hands.

"Once again, thank you for bringing me here, teacher. I will surely always remember your advice," he said.

Venerable Karma Seeker nodded. "Do what you need to do, alliance leader. The stronger you are, the better for us," he said, which left Aldrian slightly stunned by the way he addressed him. But Aldrian smiled and nodded in response.

He then disappeared from the temple as Venerable Karma Seeker watched silently.

Not long after, he turned to look at the lotus and bowed slightly before stepping outside the temple. Once outside, he looked up at the sky, his eyes seemingly focused on something others could not see.

"The bad karma seems much thicker," he thought solemnly.

"I hope benefactor Aldrian succeeds in whatever he does in the Everlasting Silent Forest."

Inside the palace beneath the floating land, where a stone tablet stood, Aldrian appeared. Only one person was there—a woman who seemed to be studying the huge formation in front of her. She was one of the elders of the Xin family and a master of formations.

She was stunned when she suddenly sensed his presence and widened her eyes as she looked at Aldrian.

"Young Master Aldrian?" she blurted.

Aldrian looked around and did not see anyone else besides her.

"Well, it looks like they're busy," he thought, then smiled at her.

"Well, it seems they are still checking some places this time," he said before using his senses on his domain and instantly locating the rest of the group.

Without hesitation, Aldrian teleported all of them back to the hall, which left everyone stunned in shock before they saw his figure.

"Young Aldrian?" Patriarch Xin said, surprised that Aldrian had just teleported them there.

Aldrian nodded. "I'm sorry to disturb your observation and study, but I think time is getting tight. The invasion is drawing nearer. I know you still want to continue exploring this place, but I'm afraid we don't have much time now—"

Aldrian then explained that all the forces on the continent were already gathering at the border with the devil territory. The devils' strange movements made the other powers uneasy and pushed them to rush their preparations.

The invasion preparations were nearly complete. Aldrian said the Xin family might have to move to the border soon to start coordinating with the other powers.

The overall strategy had already been decided during the meeting between the Flamecrest and Rivas families. Details would only be shared once all forces gathered at the border. Since the Xin family was still an unknown power to others, they would need time to blend in and for the others to get to know them. Synergy between families was essential—knowing your allies was a must.

After hearing that, some of the people could only sigh. They still wanted to stay in this place since there were many things to study. But they understood the situation had forced them to move, so they had no choice.

Patriarch Xin also sighed.

"Then we will go back. Although it's a pity, at least we have seen the inner part of the core area of this place," he said.

Hearing the patriarch's voice full of regret, Aldrian smiled at him.

"Don't be too sad. Patriarch Xin can visit this place again after all the problems outside are solved. Don't think this will be the last time you set foot here," he said, which made Patriarch Xin smile back and nod.

"Well, if I survive this prophesized time, that is," the patriarch thought. He knew the others felt the same. This might be the last time they would see something like this because their futures were uncertain.

"Then we will teleport back to the Xin family manor," Aldrian said. Not long after, he teleported all of them inside the domain he created within the Xin family manor. They appeared right on the training field—the place where they had gathered before departing to the core area.

Seeing that they had already returned, everyone was stunned except Xin Haotian. This was the first time they experienced a teleportation technique that could bring them this far. Usually, they needed something like a teleportation formation or artifact, but with Aldrian's technique, they simply teleported here, which amazed everyone.

They couldn't even resist or sense anything when Aldrian teleported them.

After arriving, Patriarch Xin knew what he needed to do and flew into the sky above the manor. Some people near the training field saw the sudden appearance of the figures

and were shocked. However, since they recognized them as their family elders, they did not panic. Instead, they wondered if the exploration was already done.

"To all members of the Xin family, gather at the main training field right now!" Patriarch Xin shouted, his voice resounding across the manor and even beyond.

Everyone who heard him was stunned and looked toward the field, where they could see their patriarch floating in the sky. Without much delay, all members who were in the middle of their activities began gathering toward the training field.

The discipline of the Xin family was clear, as it did not take long for them to assemble. There were more than ten thousand of them, all already in their positions on the field.

Seeing that no one else was coming, Patriarch Xin opened his mouth.

"To the members of this guardian family! I have an announcement for you."

All the members listened intently, their eyes fixed on Patriarch Xin.

"After this announcement, I want all cultivators above the Earl stage to prepare themselves, because we will leave this secret realm, we will go to war!" Patriarch Xin shouted, shocking everyone present.

They are leaving the secret realm? Going to war?

Murmurs spread through the crowd, many could not understand such a sudden decision. Had something happened in the core area for the patriarch to decide they must leave the secret realm?

"I know many of you are confused by this, but there is one reason why we must go outside and go to war."

"The Devils!"

The thousands of people fell silent, their eyes turning solemn. Then, suddenly, a burning spirit flared within them. Were they really going to war with the devils, just like what happened three million years ago?

The story of the great war three million years ago has been told by their parents as if it were something they must know. How did they not know about a war that devastated the continent and destroyed their fellow guardian families in the past?

Although all of that was a story from the distant past, they still felt the need to pay back the devils for what had been done to them.

Chapter 554: On the Floating Land

"We have been in this place for so many years, through countless generations, guarding the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest. I know that many of you have the desire to go out into the outside world, to venture, to gain experience. But because we have a responsibility, we must abide by it. I'm truly thankful that all of you have followed this path without much complaint," Patriarch Xin shouted.

"Today, the devils' activities outside have shown that they intend to repeat what they did three million years ago—a great war that devastated the continent and took the lives of countless people."

"We are lucky to be among the survivors of that war. But do you think we can forget what the devils did back then?!"

"NO! We will not forget!" everyone shouted in unison.

"We will not forget what they did. We have built our strength since that time. All this while, we have remained hidden from the world, unknown to outsiders, because we guard the forest—to uphold the ancient agreement made by the divine dragon and phoenix," Patriarch Xin continued.

"But our task of guarding the forest is now complete! At last, the destined one has appeared—the one who has unraveled the mystery of the land where the divine dragon and phoenix reside. He is the one who will lead this continent toward salvation!"

"Now is the time for our family to reveal ourselves to the world. A war with the devils is coming—the same devils who once brought misery to this continent, who destroyed our fellow guardian families in the past, and who brought humiliation upon us!"

"Uwoo!" The roar of thousands echoed into the distance. Their auras flared, and the combined pressure of so many made even the air tremble. The spirit of each person could be felt from afar, all of them like wild beasts ready to be unleashed.

However, there were many who did not meet the criteria for war, and disappointment showed clearly on their faces. They longed for action too, but their cultivation had not reached the required level. Regret filled them for not having enough cultivation.

"For those who have not yet reached the Earl stage, do not be discouraged. You are still important. We need you to remain on standby—there may come a time when we will need every one of you. So do not be disheartened."

"Alright, move quickly! Once your preparations are complete, all of you who meet the criteria for the war, gather here again!" Patriarch Xin shouted one final time before the crowd dispersed to prepare everything they needed to bring. Their artifacts, talismans, elixirs—anything required for the war.

Hearing Patriarch Xin's speech, Aldrian was astonished. The patriarch had actually changed the Xin family's long-standing policy of guarding the core area in accordance with the agreement made with Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian?

He had assumed they would maintain that policy. All he had needed from the Xin family was a helping hand. Adding manpower should not have required such a drastic shift. And yet, they had gone so far as to change it. For what? For him?

He looked at Xin Haotian, who, sensing Aldrian's gaze, returned it—and smiled.

Aldrian figured that Xin Haotian must have known all along. It seemed they had already decided on this course of action beforehand.

"We've already thought about it. When you arrived in the core area, we realized our task was complete. It seems the divine dragon and phoenix created that place for someone like you," Xin Haotian's voice transmission came to him.

"Now, the one they have been waiting for has arrived. Traveling together made us realize that we were meant to guard the core area until the right person came—and that person is you."

"So, we believe it's time for change. The Xin family should begin blending into outside society, like other families. Even after the prophesied time passes, we will no longer remain hidden. Our time as a secret guardian family is over."

Aldrian was stunned, but he sighed and gave a quiet nod of understanding. He knew the Xin family had suspected his connection to Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian. He also knew there was truth in Xin Haotian's words. The guardian families seemed to have existed to aid Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian in protecting the core area—until he arrived. Everything they had done must have had meaning, and this was one of them.

The preparations did not take long. In less than fifteen minutes, over three thousand people had gathered. All of them were already dressed in white and yellow robes, bearing the Xin family's symbol on their backs.

Patriarch Xin had given instructions to a few elders who would remain behind to hold the fort, while the rest would head to the front lines.

Once everything was ready, Patriarch Xin, the other elders, and Xin Haotian joined the assembled members. The patriarch looked at Aldrian and gave a nod, which Aldrian returned. He then turned to the thousands before him.

"I will teleport all of you near the border of the devil territory, from the Doria Empire's side. You will join the other forces there. Let Xin Haotian, who knows the outside world, guide you," he said.

Aldrian turned to look at Xin Haotian.

"It's better for you meet with the Rivas family and stay close to them during this war. I hope you can offer them help if they need it—the situation might descend into chaos, and the devils could target them, since they are my mother's family, after all." Aldrian sent the voice transmission to Xin Haotian.

Xin Haotian responded with a simple nod, but for Aldrian, that was enough.

Aldrian then closed his eyes for a moment, searching for a suitable place to teleport the thousands of people. After a few moments, he found a large gathering, and within seconds, he spotted the Rivas family camp.

He decided on a location nearby that, fortunately, had enough open space to receive the arrival of thousands.

Without further delay, thousands of people suddenly vanished before the eyes of many, leaving them shocked. They did not know how Aldrian had done it—no one saw him use any technique or create a formation for the teleportation. They looked at Aldrian in awe, but then he too disappeared from his place, already teleported.

At the hall where the stone tablet was located, Aldrian appeared again. He looked at it for a moment before raising his gaze to the ceiling, as if he could see something beyond the roof of the palace. He took a deep breath and then exhaled before walking toward the teleportation formation.

He stood in the middle of the formation and injected his own energy into it. Moments later, the formation lit up with a bright light, and in the next instant, Aldrian's figure vanished.

Aldrian appeared again in a new environment. He observed his surroundings for a moment before focusing on what lay before him. The area was a beautiful garden adorned with decorations and fountains. The divine energy here was the strongest he had ever felt, far more potent than the divine water he sensed when they encountered the golden river during his journey here.

He was standing on top of a special teleportation platform on the floating land. Connected to the platform was a wide paved road, wide enough for ten carriages to pass side by side. The road led directly to a grand palace not far from where he stood.

The grand palace was one he had never seen in his current life but had often appeared in visions from his past life. In that past life, he visited this palace frequently because it served as one of his "rest areas."

The palace was truly grand—vast and enormous. There is also a towering building inside the palace area stretched toward the heavens, so high that even he could not see its tip.

Nostalgia washed over him as he gazed at the palace for a few moments, but he did not allow himself to linger too long. The calling he felt was growing stronger now that he stood right in front of the palace. Yet, he was slightly confused because there were two separate callings from where he stood. One came from inside the palace, and the other from somewhere beneath it.

Perhaps because he had arrived near the source of the callings, he could now feel two different sources here.

After observing the palace for a moment, he finally took a step forward. After some thought, he decided to follow the calling from beneath the palace, even though the one inside the palace felt much stronger.

He continued walking until he arrived at a massive pair of closed double doors. He studied them for a moment before touching the doors and injecting his golden energy. The doors glowed briefly, then emitted a mechanical sound as they slowly creaked open, revealing to Aldrian what lay inside the palace.

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Chapter 555: Finally, They Meet

Once the doors opened, Aldrian was greeted by a grand, luxurious hall. He looked around and thought that nothing had changed compared to his visions. Even the smallest details were positioned exactly the same. He remembered that he sometimes interacted with his followers here—Feng Xuanyan, Long Shentian, and a few others.

Even when they were still young and not yet powerful, they had already been visiting this place to meet with him and discuss many things.

His eyes turned nostalgic as he walked in, moving deeper into the palace. He knew the palace's structure, and it seemed he already understood where the second calling was coming from. He passed through many hallways and beautiful gardens inside the palace as he walked slowly. He couldn't help but reminisce about the past with his followers in every part of the palace he passed.

He kept walking, following the second calling until he reached a chamber with another set of double doors. Aldrian raised his eyebrows—this one was much different from

what he remembered. In his memory, there was no such chamber. And the doors, the very place he sensed the second call from, had never existed in his past life.

Did Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian make a few changes? It seemed so.

It looked like his prediction was wrong. He had thought the second call came from a place he already knew, but now it appeared to be from somewhere new—hidden beneath the palace.

He opened the doors and found a wide staircase leading downward to an underground area. There was no darkness here. The illumination crystals lining both sides of the walls bathed the entire path in light.

Aldrian continued to walk, and each time he descended the stairs, his heart beat a little faster. Ever since entering the core area of the forest, he had been anticipating his meeting with Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian. There were many things he wanted to talk about—and quietly, he missed them.

However, he had already prepared for the worst. The first vision he received from the calling had shown a giant golden bone. He had prepared himself for the possibility that they were already—

Aldrian bit his lip slightly as he imagined the worst, but he kept walking. After more than ten minutes, he finally reached another pair of doors. He stopped in front of them for a moment, inhaled deeply, then opened the doors to see what lay inside.

The interior was a vast hall, so immense he felt like an ant within it. This was the same hall he had seen in his vision when the golden bone first appeared. It had also appeared in the vision he saw when he looked into the memory of the Heavenly Scarf of the Divine Phoenix.

He did not dwell on how he had finally reached this place—his eyes were instantly drawn to something not far ahead. Something that made his eyes tremble and his chest tighten.

The source of the calling came from a small stone tablet placed in the center of the hall. But on both sides of the stone hall stood two gigantic skeletons, each from a different kind of creature.

His body felt frozen as he bit his lip hard. He had told himself he was prepared for the worst, but now it seemed the worst had truly happened.

He finally took a step toward the skeletons with a heavy heart. As he walked, memories of Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian surfaced—how they interacted with him, the way they spoke, their smiles, how they had followed him loyally since they were young.

His steps grew heavy as he neared one of the skeletons. His eyes remained fixed on it until he finally reached the golden skeleton.

His trembling hand touched the skull of the skeleton, which belonged to a phoenix. Although the skeleton was many times smaller than Feng Xuanyan's true form, he could feel the connection. Still, even at this reduced size, the phoenix's skeleton was so immense it made him feel like a small insect standing before it.

His hand continued to tremble as he leaned forward and pressed his forehead against the skull.

"In the end, you've already left me," he thought.

He stayed like that for a few moments before lifting his head to look at the other skeleton. Gently, he tapped the phoenix's skull a few times, then turned and began walking toward the dragon's skeleton.

The dragon's skeleton was also humongous, and its long body had to coil around itself just to fit inside the already massive hall. Aldrian walked toward it, his eyes tracing the majestic skeleton until he finally saw a section of bone that stirred a sense of déjà vu. It was the same piece he had seen in his first vision of this place.

He continued until he stood before the dragon's skull. Like with the phoenix, he reached out and touched it, then pressed his forehead to the bone, as if trying to feel the presence of the being that had once stood before him. The one who, in the past, had been one of his closest followers.

He remained there for a few moments before lifting his head again. Even though both skeletons had been lifeless for a long time, their golden bones still radiated divine energy—powerful enough to benefit any divine being who cultivated near them.

There was something else he noticed. It was the same sensation he had felt when he sensed his golden energy in Feng Xuanyan's blood. These skeletons seemed to contain traces of his golden energy. In other words, their bodies had been tempered with it while they were still alive.

He sighed with a heavy heart as he looked at the two skeletons again. These two were among the followers who had shared many memories with him. Perhaps because they had been with him since they were young, as far as he could remember, he had held a soft spot for them.

Aldrian turned his attention toward the stone tablet and walked to stand in front of it. Like the other stone tablets he had found, this one also bore an inscription.

To the brightest star that shone upon all the universe

Our god whom we worship

Our master whom we follow

Our teacher whom we respect

Our parent to whom we offer our deepest filial piety

We hope you succeed in your journey

May your light shine ever brighter

May the Great Emperor of All Heavens continue to reign sovereign

Aldrian did not move for a while after reading the inscription. Only after a minute spent collecting his thoughts did he reach out and touch the stone tablet. His heart beat fast as he closed his eyes and channeled his energy into the tablet. It then shone with a bright golden light, and before Aldrian could react to anything, his consciousness was transported somewhere else.

He felt a refreshing sensation as a gentle wind swept over his body. The breeze was just right—not too cold, not too strong—and it soothed his heart and mind.

When he opened his eyes, he saw a beautiful landscape of lush greenery and floating islands in the distance. This was a scenery unlike anything found on the Barisan continent. Mountain ranges stretched along the horizon, and a flowing lake disappeared beyond sight in both directions. Numerous kinds of flora and fauna thrived here—this place was its own world. It felt like a true heaven.

But this scenery was not unfamiliar to him, as he had already seen the same view in his past life. He now stood on a hill, which allowed him to see everything more clearly. Right beside him was a plum blossom tree in full bloom. Its flowers released a fragrance he knew well, and as he inhaled it, his soul felt refreshed.

He was enjoying this moment, but two figures were already waiting behind him. Not wanting to keep them waiting, he turned around and looked at the figures in front of him.

They were exactly as he remembered from his memories and visions. The man was truly handsome—so much so that he could make every woman in the universe fall for him at first sight. The woman was truly beautiful, like a goddess of heaven who could drive every man in the universe go wild for her.

There was no weakness in their outward appearances, even though some features showed they were not entirely human.

At this moment, those handsome and beautiful faces—faces that could make the universe tremble—showed the expression of those holding back tears. Their eyes were already red, especially the woman's, as tears began to fall. Seeing them like this, Aldrian's heart, which had been beating fast, began to calm.

Even if it was only their will, at least he was finally meeting them.

His expression softened as if he wanted to soothe them.

"Why are you crying? Aren't you happy that I have come?" he said, trying to lift the mood.

The man and woman did not answer. Instead, they suddenly prostrated themselves before him.

"Your Majesty, welcome back," they said in unison.

Aldrian could only smile warmly at their display and nodded.

"I'm back, Feng Xuanyan, Long Shentian."

Chapter 556: Something on the Horizon

At the border between the Doria Empire and devil territory, the situation was already festive, with many forces from across the continent gathering. Anyone passing through the area would see many flags bearing different symbols scattered across the border, forming an unbreakable net that seemed to isolate the devil territory.

These forces, assembled in preparation for the invasion of devil territory, were still waiting for more troops to arrive, as many were still on their way. A large number of volunteers continued to head to the border, and more were expected, with many still in the process of registering as volunteer troops.

At this moment, in one section of the border, there was a main area functioning as a central command post to coordinate the movements of the various groups. Large camps had been set up for the troops, and two imperial family flags fluttered side by side above them.

The symbols of the Doria Imperial Family and the Evergreen Imperial Family on the flags showed that these camps were joint camps between the two imperial families. A sight like this was rare, as only certain events could bring both families together in one place.

Now, another special *event* was approaching, and once again, they had to unite.

They were responsible for managing the troops across this part of the border, which stretched all the way to the territory of the Rivas grand duchy. It was a wide area to cover, and the army they commanded was massive—they estimated that more than four million troops would be stationed in this section of the border.

Elves, humans, dwarves, and even spiritual beasts and spirits—who had formed their own independent groups—could be seen in the camp areas.

However, this large alliance, made up of factions from different races, also came with its own problems.

Although from a distance it seemed that the different groups and races had no issues with each other, most still kept their distance—except for a few. This was not surprising, as many harbored prejudice toward other races or factions, making it difficult for them to work together easily. Such deep-rooted feelings could not be erased in a short time.

This was something many were aware of, including Hector, the First Prince of the Doria Empire. He was taking a stroll through the camps and their surroundings, though in truth, he was also making sure that everything remained in order.

He made a point of ensuring that no one stirred up trouble. Since the gathering began, he had already dealt with several incidents and had to punish those who threatened the alliance—especially those from his own empire. He knew he had to be decisive. He would not allow any cracks to form within the alliance.

"Look at that elf. Don't you think she's really beautiful?"

Suddenly, Hector heard someone speak not far from him. He turned toward the direction of the voice and saw a group of about a dozen people. They were sitting together, seeming to enjoy themselves.

He looked over the group and noticed a young man he recognized. Hector watched him for a moment. The young man sat quietly, not interacting much with the others. Compared to the lively group around him, he looked like an introvert among extroverts.

"Yeah, damn. If I get her after this war, I'll be the happiest man in the world. Imagine having an elf that beautiful as your wife—no regrets at all," another man in the group replied.

"You? With your face? You'd be better off marrying a log of wood."

"You fuck—!" The man stopped mid-sentence as his eyes landed on Hector. He immediately stood up and bowed.

"Your Highness," he said, causing the others to freeze. They turned to look at Hector, startled, then quickly stood and bowed as well.

Hector gave a small nod. "Easy. I know you were joking, but be careful not to let any elves hear you. This is a critical time. Don't stir up trouble, and don't do anything that might make other races uncomfortable. You'll need each other when the war begins."

"Yes, Your Highness," the group replied in unison.

Hector glanced once more at the quiet young man before turning and walking away. That young man was Danius Lucard—the young master of the Lucard family.

Since his father was also involved in the coup plot, the Lucard family lost their status as a ducal house and was reduced to a baron family. What Emperor Durand did was essentially the same as what Emperor Raymond had done after the coup. These traitorous families were still tied to the nobility, but they had already lost most of their influence and status.

From the looks of it, Danius seemed to have changed. He appeared more timid since his family's fall from grace. For him, it was a good change—he used to be the typical arrogant young master of a noble family, flaunting and abusing his status. After the setback, he seemed to have learned humility, which was good for him.

Hector continued walking and, not long after, entered a large tent. Inside were his father, Emperor Ladwin, and one of his sons—the First Prince of the Ivory Empire, Arvan Evergreen. Arvan, who had been away from the capital to guard the southern border between the Ivory Empire and the demon territory, had decided to join this war.

There was no way he would sit it out and abandon his family when the fate of the continent was at stake.

Arvan glanced at him, and Hector returned the glance with a nod before they both turned to look at the center of the tent. In the middle stood a large table with a detailed map of the border spread across it. The emperors were discussing their next move, pointing to different sectors on the map.

"We can attack from here," Emperor Durand said, pointing at the map. "We can breach their fortress with a pincer attack. Those bastards haven't made any significant moves. From the information we just received, there is still no movement from the devils' side. So, we can assume that in this area, there is nothing wrong with sending our troops for a pincer attack."

"This move is quite risky," Emperor Ladwin responded. "We can't be certain if the devils have something prepared deeper within their territory. If they do, the pincer troops will have to fight on their own."

"That is true. That is why I think we need an overwhelming number of troops for the pincer attack. So when the devils strike, the pincer troops will have the strength to

handle it. With all kinds of professions in the pincer troops, their chances of survival will increase," Emperor Durand replied.

They continued discussing the strategy when suddenly a soldier in armor entered the tent.

"My apologies for the interruption, Your Majesties, but you need to see this. Something strange has appeared on the horizon," he said.

Emperor Durand and Emperor Ladwin frowned. They stepped out of the tent and followed the soldier. Arvan and Hector also followed, and when they came outside, they walked toward the front line near the border—where the other side felt like another world.

That was the devil territory.

At this time, the sun was still high in the sky, and on their side, the land was full of green vitality. However, once they crossed to the other side, all greenery disappeared. There was only a land of death, covered by thick, negative energy that they could feel even from where they stood. The atmosphere and sky on that side were reddish, as if the sunlight could not pierce through the dense, dark energy.

This entire scene made everyone present feel an ominous chill just by looking at it.

Many of the guards standing watch looked toward the horizon, where something strange had appeared. They felt a strong sense of danger and an ominous presence. When Emperor Durand and Emperor Ladwin arrived, they finally saw what the soldier meant, and their frowns deepened.

In the reddish horizon, a dark light appeared. Although they could not tell how far it was, but a bad premonition settled heavily over them all.

Many murmurs resounded as everyone looked toward the horizon, wondering what the black light could be. Even their souls felt slightly shaken just from seeing that dark glow.

The two emperors, sensing that this was a bad sign, exchanged worried glances. Had the devils already begun the summoning process? Or were they preparing something else?

They felt anxious that the devils might have started the summoning while their own forces were still gathering to increase troop numbers.

This phenomenon was not only visible from their position but from other parts of the border as well. In fact, everyone standing right at the border at that moment could see it.

At the border between the Rivas Grand Duchy and the devil territory, Grand Duke Rivas, Irene, Xin Haotian, and Patriarch Xin were observing the scene. They were in the middle of a conversation inside their tent, having just met and trying to familiarize each other, when they were interrupted by a report of something strange appearing on the horizon in the direction of the devil territory.

The moment they saw the phenomenon, an ominous feeling filled them. They worried that the devils might have already begun the summoning process.

Was it already too late for them?

Chapter 557: The Truth About the Past 1

All the people on the front line, now standing at the border, looked in the same direction as they saw the black light on the horizon. A wave of discussion sparked among them as an ominous feeling spread, especially among the leaders of the major territories. They were the ones who knew the devils' true purpose, and it felt as if they might already be too late.

They did not know what exactly the devils were doing, but this was clearly not a good sign.

Grand Duke Rivas, along with his daughter, Patriarch Xin, and Xin Haotian, also looked toward the horizon. At that moment, Grand Duke Rivas could not help but ask,

"Where is Aldrian? I don't think this is a good sign. We might have to hasten our invasion. I'm afraid the devils have already begun the summoning process."

"He is in the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest, but he said he will come once his business there is done," Xin Haotian replied, his gaze still fixed on the horizon.

"I don't think we can wait for him to come out at this rate. I can imagine we'll have to hasten our invasion and attack with whatever we have in the next few days, even though we still lack the numbers we hoped for," Grand Duke Rivas said.

Irene looked at the horizon with worry as she clasped her hands.

"Aldrian."

Aldrian, finally meeting Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian, felt as though he had returned to his past life. The scenery and their presence made him feel like his old self again. This was a place he used to visit from time to time, and whenever he came, he would sit beneath the plum blossom tree, enjoying the view while playing his guqin.

Seeing that Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian had recreated this place moved him deeply. It was another reminder of how far these two were willing to go just to please him. It was as if they wanted him to remember who he once was, and who they were to him.

"Get up. You've truly given me many surprises ever since I started remembering parts of my past life," Aldrian said to the two figures he owed so much to.

From the moment he stepped out of the secret realm until this very day, their involvement—directly or indirectly—had shaped every part of his journey.

Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian slowly stood up from their prostrated positions. Their faces still showed the tears of joy—there was no emotion other than happiness, which instead struck Aldrian with a pang of sorrow.

They—

They were already dead.

And yet, there was no trace of regret or sadness on their faces. They were simply happy to see him again. He took a deep breath and gave them a warm smile.

However, how could Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian not notice the turbulence in Aldrian's emotions? They smiled as well, and Feng Xuanyan opened her lips.

"We can do anything for Your Majesty, as long as you return. Many of Your Majesty's followers are still waiting, still hoping for the future. Although it's a pity that we truly can't accompany Your Majesty on your journey ahead... this alone is worth it."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Long Shentian added, "now that you've appeared, there may still be a chance to salvage the situation in this universe. We may not be able to walk the road ahead with you, but at the very least, we can give you a starting point."

"Even if we have to sacrifice ourselves," he added, which made Aldrian's heart feel even heavier.

He took another breath to calm himself and looked at the two of them again.

"There are so many things I want to say to you... I don't even know where to begin," he said before letting out a sigh.

"Well then, how about starting with the story of how you reached this continent? I'd like to know how you got here—and how you created all those clues for me to find, guiding me throughout my journey," he finally asked, taking a seat and leaning against the plum blossom tree.

Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian followed him and also sat down. Then Long Shentian opened his mouth to speak.

"Your Majesty must already know what happened in the higher heavens—the invasion from other universes, right?" he asked, prompting a nod from Aldrian.

"After we lost the Fourth Heaven, we knew that our strength alone wasn't enough to fight against the many universes attacking us all at once. Although we were stronger, we couldn't deny that numbers had their own power. Those invaders from other universes didn't hesitate to sacrifice their people for the war, and that's why we kept getting pushed back," he continued.

"When the Fourth Heaven fell, Lord Tianlian had a vision. From his perspective, it was a future that could potentially save our universe. He had already seen countless possibilities and believed that this one held the highest probability of turning the situation around."

"That future was to wait for Your Majesty's reincarnation on this continent—and to help Your Majesty return to who you once were. This continent, he said, was the essential starting point."

"The thing is, we couldn't involve ourselves in the reincarnation process directly. The underworld must not intervene, like using their authority to pick Your Majesty's soul and place it on this continent. In other words, we had to wait patiently for Your Majesty to reincarnate naturally and appear here."

"The Heavenly Demon also saw this vision when he looked into the future using his technique. All of us agreed to devise a detailed plan for the moment Your Majesty finally reincarnated here—to help you recover your memories and regain your power."

"After the plan was created with the agreement and support of many parties—even with the heavens themselves involved—Feng Xuanyan and I decided to escape the Fourth Heaven. We had to break through countless enemies, even facing masters of universes. We fought for weeks, losing many of our brethren, before we finally escaped the Fourth Heaven."

"We kept moving, descending through the lower heavens until we reached this continent. And it was then that the plan finally began—the plan to return Your Majesty to how you once were, to help you remember who you truly are."

"To do that, we scattered many clues—clues about us, and about the followers who still believe in the future."

"And finally, when Your Majesty's mother called your name, your karma in this life was shaped and merged with the karma from your past lives. You were ready to be born on this continent. At that moment, our wills reached you. We gave Your Majesty a part of

our power, which originally came from you. With that, we hoped to hasten Your Majesty's development and help you regain your former strength," Long Shentian finally finished.

Aldrian sighed again. They had truly endured so much.

"I see," he said. "But I'm still confused about something."

"Please ask, Your Majesty," Long Shentian replied.

"I know my golden energy is special—something unique to me—but you seem to carry a part of it. A part of my power. I still don't remember how you obtained it, but how could the two of you contain my power? As far as I remember, my golden energy isn't something others can possess."

Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian smiled as they looked at him—a smile that only left Aldrian more confused.

"We are special, Your Majesty," Feng Xuanyan said, drawing Aldrian's gaze toward her. Seeing the puzzled expression on his face, she inwardly giggled. This was a new sensation for her—she had never seen their emperor look so clueless before. In the past, he was an all-knowing being whom they always asked countless questions.

Now Aldrian seemed like an ordinary man, a normal being who had things even he did not understand.

"That's also why we were chosen by others—and why we volunteered ourselves to be the ones physically waiting for Your Majesty here," she continued.

"It's because we are the only beings who can contain your energy. Even though it is just a tiny portion of your energy, that amount is enough to act as a catalyst for your energy to 'resurrect' from its slumber."

"Why are we the only beings who can store your energy, if Your Majesty would ask?"

"That is because we are special beings created by your own hand—or more specifically, well, let's say we are experimental beings you created, and quite a successful one at that," Long Shentian chimed in, making Aldrian's eyes widen in shock.

They were beings created by him through an experiment?

Seeing Aldrian's shock, Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian giggled. Aldrian's expressive reaction pleased them—it showed that although he was beginning to regain memories of his past lives and power, he still retained his worldly feelings and expressions.

"He might finally find the answers he seeks when he fully realizes this in the future," they thought.

Chapter 558: The Truth About the Past 2

Aldrian couldn't believe what he heard—that Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian were actually the result of his experiment. What kind of experiment? What was the experiment for?

"If only I could remember this part," he sighed inwardly.

"Well, you never told us directly," said Feng Xuanyan, "but you subtly hinted that we are your unique creation, the result of your success after several failed attempts."

"Your Majesty, do you know why even many gods regard you as their god—an existence above them? One of the reasons is that you have the ability to create living beings as if it's nothing. You can create entirely new forms of life—types of beings that never existed before—and yet you never face any repercussions from the heavenly laws. Many believe that your existence itself is already beyond the reach of those laws."

"Something like this could only be done by you, Your Majesty—the only being capable of doing anything without facing any setback from the heavenly order."

"So, after tracing our history, knowing we are the first of our kind and not born from the natural laws of the universe, we understood that we are special beings created directly by your hands."

"Added to the fact that we are the only beings capable of storing even a fragment of your energy—not even our descendants have that ability—and considering the nature of our karma with you, we can deduce that we were indeed created through your experiment," she finally said.

Aldrian felt that everything was finally beginning to make sense. Yet he sighed once again, this time in amazement at the strength and abilities of his past life. To create living beings without facing repercussions from heavenly laws or any other form of cosmic regulation was beyond comprehension.

He had already seen glimpses of it in his visions. For example, he could give life to dead objects and turn them into living beings as effortlessly as breathing. Thinking back on it, there was no reason to be surprised—he had even created an artifact like the Heavenly Scarf of the Divine Phoenix with nothing but his bare hands.

"I see... That's why I could sense my energy in your blood when I found it on my way here, and also in your—" He wanted to say *"in your remains,"* but couldn't bring himself to finish the sentence.

"Anyway, I can only imagine your struggle—and the others'—at that time. It must have been hard for you," he said, deciding to steer the conversation elsewhere. "But it seems those invaders eventually managed to track you down. They had already begun attacking you during the great war with the devils three million years ago," he added.

Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian understood that Aldrian was avoiding any mention of their real bodies, so they chose not to bring it up either.

"Yes," Long Shentian replied. "Although the invaders didn't know our exact location at first, they eventually found this place. We knew it was only a matter of time. Despite all our efforts to hide ourselves—to buy time until Your Majesty's reincarnation reached this place—we could only delay the inevitable. Even though we blocked this continent with formations and used other methods to keep them from detecting us."

Hearing that, Aldrian found it intriguing.

"Wait, I'm actually really interested in this formation," he said. "From what you said, you created a formation to hide this continent from the outside? All these years, there's been a strange limitation here—cultivators can't break through beyond the Emperor stage."

He paused, then added, "Also, we're trapped inside this continent. We can't leave because of the dangerous conditions at sea and in the sky surrounding it. So all of that is part of one massive, complex formation?"

Long Shentian nodded his head.

"Yes, Your Majesty. These are special formations that we created specifically to make this continent more hidden and to prevent the cultivators here from becoming too powerful. This is also our way of protecting Your Majesty, so you won't have to face anyone too strong for you."

"These formations also prevent outsiders from entering the continent, and vice versa. With this, we ensure that Your Majesty will have a supportive environment for development, free from disturbances from the outside."

"Especially the forest that the people of this continent now call the Everlasting Silent Forest. This is a special area we created only for those we authorized, like the four guardian families. Anyone who dares to enter will be swallowed by a spatial trap, trapping them inside a secret realm."

"For the core area, only Your Majesty can enter it with your energy. Any being that tries to force their way in will meet their end through the many traps set within the formation."

"If Your Majesty's domain covered the entire continent, you would understand the complexity of the formation," he added with a smile.

Aldrian nodded.

"So those Xin family members who took advantage of a hole in the barrier and entered the core area—they are all—?"

"Yes, they're all dead. Well, who told them to just slip in? That is the consequence of trespassing the core area without your permission," he answered.

Aldrian sighed inwardly but asked again.

"After hearing you just now, I finally understand something about all the legacy artifacts connected to the higher realms. Everything is part of the grand plan, right? Even the places where they store their artifacts—you influenced them to place those storage locations according to a predetermined plan." "Those are the foundation points of the formation, right?"

This was Aldrian's conclusion after hearing about the formation. The imperial families or ruling families of the major territories each had their own experiences of how they obtained their artifacts or divine items from higher realms. He remembered that the Avandi imperial family's place to store artifacts must not be changed to another location, according to the will of their first emperor.

The first emperor had some kind of enlightenment, but it must have been because Long Shentian or Feng Xuanyan pulled some strings that caused him to get that enlightenment.

Not only Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian, but also the combined effort of some other beings—including the heavens—helped these people arrange the formation points. They came through their subconsciousness.

Hearing Aldrian's question, Long Shentian nodded.

"Yes, we had to make all those people store their items according to our will so we could activate the formation optimally." He answered.

"Although the foundation consists of artifacts that can be taken from their positions, it does not diminish the formation's power once it takes shape. The only thing that threatened the formation was the great war three million years ago, which devastated the continent and destabilized the formation quite a bit."

"Those invaders almost got us at that time. Among them were beings who could disturb the heavenly laws of this universe and weaken them, which also caused the law of causality to weaken." he said with a slight chuckle.

"The heavenly laws have some rules, one of them is that they function as a preventive measure to stop higher beings—with cultivation beyond the rules of each heaven—from descending to the lower heavens."

"That is something tied to every being in the universe, even the gods are no exception. We had to seal our cultivation according to the rules of the lower heavens. If we want to stay in the lower heavens, we have to obey those rules. Well, except Your Majesty, of course, because Your Majesty is a singularity."

"To weaken the heavenly laws of a heaven, someone must be extremely strong, with high cultivation and deep comprehension of both the heavenly laws and the universe. The invaders had many of these masters of universes among their ranks."

"At that time, the ninth heaven's heavenly laws weakened, which meant its defense against higher beings from higher realms grew weaker. This was taken advantage of by some masters of the universes—especially a man called Tarius, who set his eyes on the ninth heaven. He was the one many devils called the Devil God." Long Shentian paused, and Aldrian was stunned by this revelation.

He narrowed his eyes. Tarius? Could that be the same entity he saw when he met the heavenly demon—the one who wanted to descend to this land? It might be.

"With the weakened heavenly laws, he could siphon part of his power into the ninth heaven and spread it among his followers, whom he had prepared long ago," Feng Xuanyan explained. "Tarius' followers had already infiltrated the lower heavens years earlier, spreading the cultivation technique of his kind, which later became known here as the devil cultivation technique."

"That's why they were so extremely powerful back then when the great war happened—they received a direct boost from Tarius."

"Three million years ago, when they nearly succeeded in conquering the continent, we decided to intervene. But to do so, we had to use a portion of our true cultivation, which worsened our hidden injuries. Although the heavenly laws were slightly weakened, their penalties were still painful. We had to endure heavenly punishment right here. Luckily, we were inside the core area, so no one knows what happened within."

"Well, although we can use your energy, the quantity is minimal. Yet our hidden injuries are quite severe, and it takes a long time to replenish—unlike Your Majesty, the true owner of this energy, who can replenish it quickly."

"Our hidden injuries from years ago during our escape, combined with the wounds from the heavenly punishment, really took a heavy toll on us. Our condition worsened as time passed, but luckily we managed to hold on until we sensed your presence in this continent." She smiled beautifully as she said this.

Chapter 559: The Truth About the Past 3

"The moment we sensed your soul and your karma towards us, that was the moment we knew our duty here had come to an end. Apart from giving a part of our power to Your Majesty as a catalyst to awaken your strength, we also decided to sacrifice our bodies to draw out every bit of your energy within us," Feng Xuanyan said.

"It was as if we had to drain ourselves completely. Your energy was one of the factors that kept us alive until that time. Once we took it out, we knew that would be our end."

"After we drew out the energy and combined it, we placed that concentration of energy inside the throne hall of the palace. That was the full extent of your energy we carried within us. Although it may be nothing compared to what Your Majesty had in the past, I believe for this life, it is enough to give you an extra boost."

Aldrian's heart trembled as it turned heavy again. They had remained alive until his birth, and once he was born, they chose to sacrifice themselves, giving up what remained inside them—for him. He finally understood what that second calling from within the palace might have been. It could be his energy, already separated from their bodies, now calling him—waiting to return to him.

Once again, he felt the urge to blame himself for leaving them to face his problem at that time. What kind of problem had he been facing that made him leave his loyal followers and allow all of this to happen? What was it?

Aldrian looked at Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan. He wanted to ask, but before he could speak, Feng Xuanyan had already responded.

"Your Majesty, ever since the universe was plunged into war, we have never once blamed you. We only lament that we were not strong enough to protect this universe—the one Your Majesty shaped into a prosperous realm," she said softly, trying to soothe him.

"Don't ever blame yourself, even if you feel that way, Your Majesty. We have no regrets. None of us—your followers—regret what we've done. What matters is that Your Majesty has finally returned and can now find the answer you were searching for." Long Shentian added.

But Aldrian's expression did not change. The pain in his eyes remained.

"How can I not blame myself for not being there when all of you had to face all of that? This is something I was also responsible for. I truly wonder why I had to reincarnate and leave you all behind. What was my problem? Do you know what it was? Did the Heavenly Demon tell you anything about it?" Aldrian asked.

"Well, the Heavenly Demon did tell us," Feng Xuanyan said. "But if we told Your Majesty about the problem now, it would become meaningless in the end. You wouldn't gain what you have gained. So please be patient. You will come to know it yourself, and when that time comes, perhaps you will finally realize the answer you've been searching for."

"Although we can't tell you what your past problem was, what we can say is this—at that time, for the first time, we realized there was something that made Your Majesty uncertain. You found no answer for it, and that became your problem. You chose to search for that answer yourself, and to do that, you entered the cycle of reincarnation."

"If it was Your Majesty's will to solve that problem, even if it meant leaving us—your followers—then who were we to stop you? You already gave everything to us. So at the very least, we could give Your Majesty all of our support, hoping that in the end, you would succeed."

Aldrian sighed. He still didn't know what the problem had been. He looked at the two figures before him—beings who were his direct creations. He couldn't help but feel regret and guilt, knowing they could no longer accompany him. They were already divine beings, beyond the cycle of samsara, and as far as he knew, they had never comprehended the samsara laws.

They were truly gone—completely. Their souls had vanished from this reality.

The phoenix possessed a revival technique, but from the look of it, Feng Xuanyan had not used it. In the end, they had already left him—and he would never meet them again in their physical forms. For his path to be smooth, they had given up everything.

He bit down on his lip so hard that it began to bleed.

Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan were stunned by the sight. Without hesitation, they prostrated themselves before him.

"Your Majesty, please don't hurt yourself," Feng Xuanyan said. "Seeing you like this truly breaks my heart."

"I know it might sound presumptuous for me to say this, but I want you to stop dwelling on the past. Instead, Your Majesty, please focus on the future," Long Shentian said. "If you continue to feel guilt over us—if you continue to blame yourself—then it's no different from belittling our resolve. It's no different from underestimating all of us."

"This is our resolve. We chose this path ourselves—so that Your Majesty could live the life you desire, find the answer you seek, and return to the place where you once stood. All our efforts, all our sacrifices, were made in the hope that you would make full use of them—so you could regain your past power, so you could live freely once more."

"Our sacrifices were never meant to make Your Majesty feel guilty, or to blame yourself for them. We don't want you to carry those feelings. You may remember us, but you must not drown in the past. We want you to keep moving forward, free from guilt or self-blame."

"Move forward, and let us—your followers—clear the path ahead. Your Majesty only needs to focus on reclaiming the power that once belonged to you."

He finally fell silent as he and Feng Xuanyan straightened their bodies, their gazes locked on Aldrian with solemn expressions.

Aldrian looked at the two of them, and also thought of the others he had met along his journey. He never doubted their resolve—and Long Shentian was right. If he kept blaming himself even after their repeated pleas, then it meant he failed to appreciate their sacrifice. What they wanted from him was not guilt or sorrow, but for him to return to his rightful place—his high place.

He took a deep breath and gave a small nod, which brought smiles back to their faces.

"Alright. I'm sorry for feeling that way... and thank you, all of you, for what you've done," Aldrian said.

Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan were slightly stunned at first, but then their expressions softened into brilliant smiles.

"That's it, Your Majesty. Instead of blaming yourself, appreciate the efforts and sacrifices of your followers. That will make us feel truly grateful and truly seen," Long Shentian said.

Aldrian finally smiled, but then let out a sigh.

"But it seems that Tarius went to the extreme. He wanted to descend to this continent and destroy it... but now I realize his real target was the two of you, wasn't it?" Aldrian asked.

Long Shentian nodded.

"Yes, we are actually his main target," Long Shentian said. "Those invaders are obsessed with hunting each of us—the gods of this universe—and even our followers. Your Majesty, do you know why those invaders attacked us in the first place?"

"From what I heard from Tianlian, they seem to be searching for something that can bring them to a much higher stage of cultivation—far beyond anything they currently possess," Aldrian answered, narrowing his eyes. "Is this also connected to why they kill the gods of this universe?"

Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan nodded.

"We don't know the full details of what those bastards are thinking, but during our escape at that time, we overheard something interesting," Long Shentian said. "They're trying to find an 'object' that they believe can elevate them to a higher cultivation realm. To do that, they want to kill every single god in this universe and bring this entire universe under their control."

"Although we don't know exactly what this object is, we suspect it has something to do with you, Your Majesty," Feng Xuanyan added.

Aldrian was stunned to hear this. It has something to do with him?

"You are a singular existence—there is no peer of yours in any other universe. Your strength and power surpass even us, beings considered among the strongest across many universes. We could be called masters of the universe ourselves, yet we still cannot fully grasp the extent of Your Majesty's power."

"That's why, after careful thought, we concluded that what they seek is in fact related to you. For example—"

"My energy?" Aldrian cut off Feng Xuanyan's words, and she nodded in response.

"Again, it's just our guess, so we don't truly know the truth. But I believe this might be one of the possibilities," she said, causing Aldrian to frown.

Long Shentian looked at Aldrian, but his mind was occupied with another conclusion about this matter. He thought about Aldrian and his past—or more precisely, his true origin.

No one truly knew Aldrian's origin, and as far as they remembered, they already knew Aldrian as he was: the almighty Great Emperor of all heavens who developed this universe and had power beyond their comprehension.

They did not know who Aldrian truly was in the distant past or how he came to possess his power. Even when they asked their emperor about it, he seemed to brush it off and refused to talk about it.

At one point, Long Shentian came up with a guess—one he thought was quite absurd but still possible.

He guessed that their emperor might have a direct connection to the point of the beginning.

Chapter 560: The Possible Connection of Their Emperor?

The Point of the Beginning, the place said to be the origin of the cosmos. A realm shrouded in mystery, where no being in existence has been able to fully grasp what lies within. Many have longed to venture into it, yet none have returned, vanishing without a trace due to the strange conditions within.

A place of nothingness, and yet, it continues to draw those who believe the secrets of the cosmos lie hidden there. Legends claim that cultivators may find opportunities to ascend to realms beyond their current comprehension. These tales stem from the strange aura and energy that emanates from the Point of the Beginning.

There is a mysterious form of primordial energy present that no being has ever been able to absorb. Any attempt to do so results in violent consequences, as their body will explode because they cannot contain it.

Long Shentian once visited the surroundings of the Point of the Beginning to see it for himself. The energy he sensed was strange, filled with chaos, yet overwhelming in its power. Eventually, the beings of the cosmos gave it a name, Primordial Chaos Energy.

Why does he think Aldrian's strength might have a direct connection to the Point of Beginning?

The primordial chaos energy he sensed in that place is different from Aldrian's famous golden energy.

The primordial chaos energy contains tremendous power but is filled with chaos. It is uncontrollable and dangerous, yet it seems compatible with any energy in cosmos.

Aldrian's golden energy is the opposite of the primordial chaos energy. Every time his emperor uses that energy, he feels order and warmth from it. Although his emperor can control its properties, the essence remains the same—it is order.

However, despite all of that, he still feels that the two energies are somehow related. The golden energy that Aldrian has and the primordial chaos energy share two things in common—

These energies can only be found in one place. The golden energy exists only in his emperor's body, and the primordial chaos energy exists in the Point of Beginning.

And also, these two energies are compatible with all elements or energies, but they cannot be absorbed like normal energy. Well, he and Feng Xuanyan are exceptions, since they can store Aldrian's golden energy, but that is only because of Aldrian's doing, and they have no idea how he did it.

These two energies are like two sides of the same coin.

These reasons alone are already enough for him to feel suspicious about Aldrian's connection to the Point of Beginning. With Aldrian's inexplicable strength, his suspicion only grew stronger.

But then he stopped thinking about the matter, he did not really care where Aldrian came from. He shrugged inwardly and decided to move on. He was already dead anyway, and this was the least of his concerns.

Now the problem was, if those invaders were truly looking for something like their emperor's energy—or anything connected to him—then Aldrian's journey would become even more dangerous.

"Well, I'll take note of that. It could be true, since we don't really know what they're looking for," Aldrian said after thinking for a moment.

"But this guy, Tarius, seems really intent on descending to this land. Even if he's someone at the level of a Master of the Universe, it's still quite challenging for him to descend to the Ninth Heaven," he added.

Feng Xuanyan nodded.

"Your Majesty must be careful. If Tarius truly wants to descend to this continent, it will be far more devastating than the Great War three million years ago. From the looks of it, the devils must be using some kind of catalyst to help Tarius weaken the heavenly laws once more—and this time, the effect will be even more severe than before," she said.

"Even at the level of a Master of the Universe, weakening the heavenly laws is no easy feat. From my understanding, there's no way for him to descend with his full power. No matter how weak the heavenly laws of the Ninth Heaven are, if he tries to descend with his real body and full strength, he will trigger a heavenly punishment powerful enough to endanger his life."

"Still, even if he uses an avatar or some kind of clone with only a fraction of his strength, it's still a difficult feat. He would still need to rely on his cultivation base. From our guess, he must be using some kind of catalyst to do it."

Aldrian fell silent for a moment, something coming to mind. A catalyst? Something that could weaken the heavenly laws and support a portion of Tarius' true power in descending?

His thoughts shifted to the devils' recent activities—no—even further back, a few years ago.

The devils' activities had spiked in the past few years, and all of them brought destruction and the loss of many lives. Many of these incidents seemed like typical devil behavior, but some of them raised questions.

For example, the war with the Doria Empire more than two years ago. Some parties within the empire, including members of the imperial family—were suspicious of the devils' motives. That was because the devils didn't appear to have a clear objective. They simply withdrew after he killed the Lust Devil and destroyed one of their fortresses.

The only result of the war was the destruction of the border region—nothing more.

However, what if that event was actually part of a larger plan? What if it was one of the catalysts used to summon Tarius?

Aldrian frowned again. What worried him most was likely true. The devils might have orchestrated all of that as part of the process to summon Tarius. And the fact that the devils' activities had suddenly stopped a few days ago gave him a bad feeling, that the summoning had already begun.

But then, one question confused him.

"Why would Tarius go through all this trouble if he could just descend to the Ninth Heaven himself? I mean, as long as he seals his cultivation like you did, couldn't he come down on his own?" he asked.

Feng Xuanyan smiled when she heard that.

"No, he can't do that. He's much different from weaklings who haven't reached a certain cultivation stage—those who can still infiltrate the lower heavens. A being of his caliber is already beyond what the heavenly laws of the Ninth Heaven can tolerate. And he's from another universe, his existence isn't something that should be here in the first place," she said.

"Unless he or anyone on the invaders' side—can take full control of the heavenly laws of the Ninth Heaven, there's no way he can descend whenever he wants. And from the looks of it, neither he nor the invaders have succeeded in fully controlling the heavenly laws of this heaven yet. As for the other fallen heavens, their laws have already been completely overtaken."

"But even then, it takes a very, very long time to gain full control over a heaven and its laws. They need to 'assimilate' themselves with the heaven first."

"They must be really impatient to reach this place," Long Shentian said with a sneer. "To force their way here through all this trouble without controlling the heavenly laws first... they must be in a real hurry to eliminate us."

"Anyway, they're much different from us, who were born in this universe," Feng Xuanyan continued. "The heavenly laws recognize us, so they're more lenient toward us. That's why we can descend to the lower heavens as long as we seal our cultivation."

Aldrian nodded in understanding. So that was it. Everything made sense now, and the catalyst might indeed be necessary for Tarius to descend.

"Your Majesty, with the invaders already in control of eight heavens, your future journey will be difficult. In those places, even the heavens themselves may stand against you, because they are now under the invaders' control," Feng Xuanyan said.

"However, I—no, we believe you can reclaim them all and overcome everything ahead. You are someone destined for greatness. All of us, your followers, have already paved the way for you and have been waiting for your return for a long time."

"Even I brought the Origin Sword, though it is already broken, because it also participated in the Great War—so that Your Majesty can find it as a clue to the blueprint of the sword. The sword that you personally created with your own hands and left behind in the First Heaven. A sword that only you can use, although you never used it seriously," Long Shentian added with a smile.

"The sword's blueprint—the one you gave to the blacksmith god Vaneris to study and learn from—we brought it as well, along with all the materials needed to create it. We left everything on this continent, hoping that the people here might be able to forge it. If they could, then Your Majesty might be able to use it when the time comes."

Aldrian inhaled deeply and nodded. Once again, he was truly thankful for everything they had done.

But then, he slightly stunned—when he saw their feet beginning to flicker and turn translucent. His heart tightened. He knew what that meant. He looked at them with trembling eyes, but they still smiled at him.

"I think this is it, Your Majesty," Feng Xuanyan said. "Now it's our turn to say goodbye."