

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 561: The Tears of the Emperor - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 561: The Tears of the Emperor

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Seeing that their time was nearing its end, Aldrian couldn't help but show a pained and sorrowful expression. After this, he would lose the two figures who had accompanied him for so long in the past and continued to guide him in this life.

They were the two souls he had created with his own hands, who remained loyal to him even now, though only their wills remained.

"Don't be sad, Your Majesty. Although we can't accompany you on the road ahead, there are still many followers who are alive and waiting for your return. They've never given up, holding onto nothing but the belief that you would come back to them," said Feng Xuanyan.

"Yes, that's right. Don't be too sad," Long Shentian added. "Like I said, we are only the past. Your Majesty must not be too drawn into the past—you have to focus on the future. There are still many things that can be saved, many things that can still be done."

Aldrian took a deep breath and nodded.

"I truly want to converse with you about many things, but after this, I and the entire powers of the continent are going to attack the devil territories, so we might be able to evade all of our worries about Tarius descending to this land," he said with a sigh.

"Originally, I had hoped you two would still be alive so we could face this matter together, but you both left me first."

Feng Xuanyan nodded.

"Well, it couldn't be helped, Your Majesty. We had to do everything for your return. Your strength alone is what determines fate. Your very existence is what matters most. As long as you live, everything else is trivial. Every possible future remains open, and all of them are far brighter with you in it," she said.

"Yes, Your Majesty," Long Shentian agreed. "And you intend to invade the devil territory? That would be a good move. That territory is actually one of the formation's

foundation. Ever since the devils came and took it shortly after our arrival, it has become the formation's weakest link and its flaw."

"With you reclaiming that land, the formation will finally be whole. The 'gap' will be closed, and the continent's protective formation will be complete, without any weaknesses."

Feng Xuanyan nodded.

"Yes, Your Majesty, and also I want you to be careful, because when you finally absorb the energy we left behind for you in the throne hall, the formation will lose all of its main foundation to keep the formation active. We used our bodies as one of the main foundations at that time to strengthen the formation before extracting your energy from us."

"Your energy became the main foundation and source since that time, as our bodies slowly died and weakened the formation. But we had no other choice. To keep the formation active, we had to make sure it had its main foundation, no matter what it was."

"The formation will be deactivated for some time after you absorb the energy, but don't worry, Your Majesty, we already prepared many crystals of divinity to replace the foundation left behind by your energy. The formation will fully activate again after a while. Although it will not be as strong as when having us or your energy as the foundation, the formation will be fully under your control at that time," he added.

Aldrian nodded.

"I see. So that's why not long after my birth, the barrier covering the core area of the forest and the entire formation in the forest was disturbed. When you extracted my energy from your bodies, the foundation of the formation was disturbed and caused changes in the forest—and those effects can still be felt even today."

He finally knew everything he wanted to know from the forbidden zone that had been famous since ancient times.

The Everlasting Silent Forest, the forbidden zone that was actually created by Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan. Not only that, he could guess that a few other forbidden zones on this continent were also built by them to hide the formation's foundations, as well as treasures like the origin sword he found in Dragon Back Mountain.

He then saw the translucent parts of their feet begin to dissipate, as particles of light slowly consumed them.

Looking at this, Aldrian sighed again and looked at their faces, which were still smiling at him.

"Your Majesty, the moment you absorb the energy in the hall, the entire world—this entire universe—will give a sign of your return. You have to prepare for what will come to you. The invaders will finally know about your being—a being outside of their understanding," Feng Xuanyan said.

"With the barrier covering the continent deactivated, this continent will be accessible from the outside again. Many will come to you with various intentions, and we believe that Your Majesty can take care of the rest with the power we left behind," she added.

The particles of light had already reached their knees, and they kept rising.

"Your Majesty, you can use our bones to make artifacts or whatever you desire. Even though we are dead, we can still help you on your journey. As for our beast cores, they are inside the stone tablet. After you leave this place, you will find them, and you can use them as you see fit," Long Shentian said.

"Your Majesty, remember, although we are no longer by your side, our spirit and hope are always with you. Not only us two, but countless beings still place their faith in you. Keep walking forward and don't drown too much in the past. We want when your majesty look back, you see the power of the people pushing you forward—not the people you feel guilt toward," he added with full conviction.

The particles of light had already reached their waists.

Aldrian listened to their advice with focus, like a student absorbing their teacher's guidance. At this moment, he wanted to engrave their words, their expressions, their very beings into his memories. This was a rare moment when he felt his heart tear apart, knowing he would be parting ways with two of the closest people from his past.

As the particles of light already reached their stomachs, Aldrian suddenly hugged them both without hesitation. He pulled them into his embrace while they were still "seated", which made their eyes widen in shock.

Now, both of their faces were beside the sides of Aldrian's face, and his hands rested behind their backs.

They glanced to the side, looking at Aldrian's profile. They did not expect him to suddenly hug them. Then, they finally smiled again as they returned the embrace. They knew the reincarnation their emperor was living through was making him more "human," filled with worldly feelings.

This was good, as it meant their emperor's experience was causing a change that would make his "radiance" even brighter in the future—a change that would make him an even better figure than the already perfect character he was in the past.

"Thank you for all your effort for me, for all the sacrifices you have made. Although I still do not entirely remember all our interactions from my past life, I already consider you as my own family," Aldrian said, his voice full of gratitude and determination.

"Long Shentian, Feng Xuanyan, I'm truly grateful that my past self decided to create you. Without your existence, the entire story would be very different. I might not have come this far without you."

"I'm sorry if I ever acted in ways that made you uncomfortable in the past. I'm sorry that I wasn't there when you needed me."

"I will make sure that you will not be disappointed in me, and I will fulfill your hopes. I swear this upon my name, Aldrian."

Suddenly, they felt their emperor's body tremble, and not long after, they felt their shoulders grow wet.

They knew that, for the first time, they had seen their emperor cry.

Looking at this, their eyes—which had already dried earlier—could not help but water again. They tightened their hug, as if seeking comfort from each other.

The particles of light had already reached Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan's arms, which made Aldrian feel the pressure on his back loosen. Their arms had disappeared, leaving only parts of their shoulders, necks, and heads.

"Thank you for giving us life, thank you for always taking care of us, thank you for everything," Long Shentian said.

"Thank you for always entertaining us even though you had your own business in the past. Thank you for not forgetting us, thank you for never abandoning us, thank you—really, thank you," Feng Xuanyan said as the light reached their upper necks.

Aldrian heard each of their words, and his tears grew heavier.

"Goodbye, Your Majesty," they said softly. But before the light particles reached their mouths, they spoke one last time.

"May the great emperor of all heavens continue to reign sovereign."

After that, their entire beings dissipated into particles of light, showing only their smiling faces streaked with tears. The light particles then moved toward Aldrian and entered his body, as if wanting to become one with him.

He felt the warmth of the light and a slight change in his cultivation, but he did not care about it.

His tears continued to flow even after they disappeared. He then dropped his hands from the hugging position but did not move his body. He remained like that for a few moments, even as his surroundings began to disintegrate.

At this moment, there was nothing grand about him. The only thing visible was his deep sadness.

His tears bore witness to his sorrowful heart, a memory he would hold close.

Chapter 562: The Heaven's Cry

At the border of the devil territory, many people were still discussing the black light on the horizon. It had already been more than an hour, and the black light seemed to be growing larger, though slowly.

At the border between the Doria Empire and the devil territory, Emperor Ladwin remained at the frontlines, still observing the black light.

Beside him stood Sylphia, who had arrived a few days earlier. She and Baek Jimin had been informed in advance by Aldrian that if he did not return from the Buddhist sect within a day, they were to join their families at the border.

Right now, she was already showing her true, beautiful face, with golden hair that made every man nearby steal a glance at her. Moreover, after meeting the mysterious woman in her dream, her features had become more mature and refined.

That meeting had truly enhanced her beauty further. Even Emperor Ladwin had been stunned the first time he saw his daughter's face again after several years.

The change was drastic, and when he asked her about it, Sylphia only gave a vague answer. If not for the fact that everyone here already knew she was the princess of the Ivory Empire, many men, even nobles, would have tried to approach her.

She was already wearing her special armor suit, which covered most of her body while still making her look elegant. The armor even made her appear more majestic and somehow added to her charm.

"Do you still can't contact Aldrian?" Emperor Ladwin asked his daughter beside him.

She responded with a shake of her head.

"No, I tried to contact him just now, but he didn't respond. It seems he's in the middle of cultivation or something, since it's not like him to ignore my call," Sylphia answered.

She was also worried about the situation at the border, as the black light gave her a bad feeling. The fact that Aldrian still couldn't be contacted only made things more unsettling. She wondered what had happened to him, for him not to respond.

She had already received information from Baek Jimin that the Xin family had appeared in the Rivas Grand Duchy.

They said Aldrian was inside the core area of the Everlasting Silent Forest and would return within a week. But judging by the current situation, she doubted they had that long. At most, the invasion would begin in just a few days.

Tick, tick.

She paused her thoughts as droplets suddenly began to fall from the sky. She lifted her head and looked up, astonished to see the atmosphere had turned cloudy all of a sudden. The weather had been clear just moments ago, yet now it was overcast—so abruptly that it truly bewildered her.

This kind of sudden change was in no way natural. She thought the devils might be behind it, but then she felt something else. Was it sadness? A wave of sorrow seemed to spread through the air, and for some reason, it made her suddenly think of Aldrian.

"What the—? Why did the weather suddenly turn rainy? Is this also part of the devils' plan?" her father asked in astonishment.

The others also looked up at the sky in confusion. First the black light, and now this unexpected shift in the weather—it left them unsure how to interpret the situation. Was this the effect of that black light?

But then, they all began to feel something. A sudden sadness pressing on their hearts, carried by the heavy, cloudy air. None of them knew why, but the atmosphere around them had turned to sorrow.

At this moment, almost all living beings across the entire continent could sense the change in the atmosphere and looked up at the sky. They wondered what had caused the sudden shift in weather.

The drizzle continued to grow heavier until it finally turned into rain. Rain fell across all major territories at the same time, and the sorrow in the air deepened. Many didn't even know why they had started to cry or why memories from their past began to resurface.

The heavy rain carried a sorrowful atmosphere, as if the heavens themselves had begun to cry—and that sorrow could be felt throughout heaven and earth. At this moment, there were no celebrations, no activities that showed any sign of joy. Even nature itself seemed to grieve, expressing its sorrow in its own way.

Many trees began to shed their leaves. The wind stopped blowing, as if making way for the rain. The wild beasts also settled in place, remaining still.

The world fell into silence, except for the sound of the rain.

The rain kept falling for the next five minutes before it suddenly began to ease. Not long after the rain stopped, it left the earth wet and the sad atmosphere lingering. The cloudy sky also started to clear, and finally, the sun could be seen again, its light illuminating the continent once more.

All the people who had taken cover from the rain came out of their shelters, looking up at the sky with confused feelings. What had just happened? One moment the weather was clear, then suddenly it rained, and now it was sunny again. Their feelings also seemed affected by the rain.

Was this some kind of trick?

The confusion and commotion spreading across the continent were also felt by the Xin family in their secret realm. A part of their secret realm suddenly experienced rainfall, making them wonder if someone had unleashed some kind of technique, since this kind of phenomenon was not natural.

At the floating land, in the underground hall where the skeletons of a dragon and a phoenix rested, Aldrian still stood with his hand touching the large stone tablet. His eyes remained closed, but tears were flowing from them. Suddenly, the stone tablet cracked, and not long after, it split in half and crumbled.

After the stone tablet collapsed, two glowing objects emerged from its remains, floating before Aldrian. They were quite large, each one bigger than Aldrian's body.

The two objects were round in shape, glowing with the same golden color but emanating different powerful auras and laws. Anyone cultivating near them, even those beyond the emperor stage could easily raise their comprehension as naturally as breathing. If processed correctly into elixirs or pills, they could boost cultivation stages several times over.

These two objects were the beast cores of Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan. They were not ordinary spiritual beast cores; these were divine beast cores—the cores of the first existences of the dragon and the phoenix.

Nothing else held the same value as these two items. They were incredibly precious to cultivators and could even ignite wars as cultivators fought to obtain such powerful cultivation resources.

Not long after, Aldrian slowly opened his eyes and rubbed them to dry his tears. He still felt the sadness, and the reality settled in that Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan had already left him. From this moment on, he would move forward without their presence, carrying his memories of them with him.

He looked at the crumbled stone tablet and the two beast cores. He touched each of them and could feel the tremendous power and laws inside. He knew this kind of cultivation resource was truly valuable and could attract disaster if he did not have the ability to protect them. But who was he? How could he not have the ability to keep these things that his cherished people left for him?

He would keep them.

For now, he would leave their cores here, as he did not want to store them inside his storage ring mixed with other things. He would make sure to place their cores somewhere special.

His gaze then shifted toward the skeletons of Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan. They had already given their permission and willingly allowed him to use their skeletons as he saw fit.

But how could he do that?

Imagining their majestic remains becoming mere artifacts irritated him deeply. They were some of his closest family, and the thought of their bodies being used for anything after death did not sit well with him. He decided to store the skeletons here for now until he could find a better place on this land.

In the end, he did not have the heart to use any part of Feng Xuanyan's or Long Shentian's remains. He simply could not bring himself to treat them as tools. Even deep inside his heart, he thought he might be able to do something to bring them back to life, although it sounded absurd and impossible.

If Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian had not reached the status of divine beings, then they might have been able to reincarnate or even be resurrected. But they were divine beings who had already transcended samsara— beings whose souls' connection had separated from the underworld.

If they died, their existence itself had already returned to nothingness, gone entirely from existence, from something to nothing.

However, he still had a little hope inside his heart. He was someone said to be a being outside of any laws, someone considered a god among the gods.

Maybe he could do something about it? Maybe this was not impossible for him? Maybe he could do it?

He tried to convince himself, and his eyes grew determined.

If there is a will, there is a way.

If he is someone who can become a being outside of the laws, as he once was in his past life, then he would make the impossible become possible.

Chapter 563: Too Late?

Aldrian looked at the two beast cores and the skeletons for a moment before deciding to turn back and move on. Like Long Shentian said—don't drown in the past. Keep moving forward.

They were already dead, and he was still alive to walk his path toward the future.

He had many things left to do. It would not be wise to remain sentimental over what had already passed. He would keep moving forward and not disappoint them.

There was one more place he needed to visit, and it would be the moment when he announced to the universe that he was back.

Aldrian came out from the underground hall, closed the double doors, and made his way up. Once he returned to the surface, he followed the last call he could feel—not far from his position. He thought the source of the call was in a straight line from the underground hall where Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian rested.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. They were the main foundation of the formation, and their replacements needed to be placed at least along the same line as their original positions. Directly above the underground hall stood the throne hall—the place where they had stored his energy.

He made his way toward the throne hall through another hallway, but before he reached it, he encountered another different hallway. This hallway was massive and actually encircled the throne hall. The moment he stepped inside, he stopped in surprise at the sight of statues along one side of the wall.

These statues were not as large as the ones outside, since they were meant for the interior, but what astonished him was the identity of the figures they depicted. He walked through the circular corridor, fully encircling the throne hall, and returned to the spot where he had first stepped into the hallway.

There were five statues in total, positioned symmetrically, all of them facing the throne hall.

He sighed. These were the figures he had been closest to in that past life—the people who had appeared most often in his visions. They were: Long Shentian, Feng Xuanyan,

the Heavenly Demon, Tianlian, and one more figure—someone he had actually met once in this life, even if only for a brief moment.

The figure was a woman with elven features—even her statue radiated beauty. He had met her once, back when he was in Balin and picked up a strange leaf that had fallen from nowhere. At that moment, his consciousness had been drawn elsewhere, to a place where he saw a giant tree whose crown pierced the heavens.

There, he saw a breathtaking woman—her beauty no less than Feng Xuanyan's, though of a different kind. While Feng Xuanyan burned with a fiery allure, this woman was like calm water—soothing, serene, and as gentle as untouched nature.

Only after some time did he come to learn the identity of that mysterious woman.

She was the spirit of the Heavenly Tree of the World—Seralis.

She is the spirit of the tree that is believed to be the origin of many living beings. One of the most well-known among them was the elven race, which is why the elves considered the Heavenly Tree of the World as an existence akin to a god.

The world trees were seen as extensions of the Heavenly Tree's will, its far-reaching hands, and for that reason, the elves held them in the highest respect, turning to them as guardians and asking for their blessings.

She and the other four were the ones he had interacted with most in that past life. They did not hesitate to engage with him more casually compared to the others, which made the distance between them much smaller.

Aldrian sighed. The other three, besides Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan were still alive. At least he still had a chance to meet them in the future.

Aldrian then walked toward the big double doors that served as the entrance to the throne hall. He took a deep breath, and just as he was about to push the doors open, a sudden ominous feeling washed over him, and the atmosphere grew heavy.

His eyes and heart trembled, forcing him to instantly look around. What was this feeling? His heart tightened, and sweat began to drip from his forehead. This kind of sensation was a sign that something significant had happened, after all, he was sensitive to nature.

Suddenly, a voice transmission came through, and he immediately recognized who it was.

"Dear, can you hear me? Please respond!" Sylphia's voice was full of panic, which made his expression turn solemn. Still, he tried to calm her.

"I'm here, I'm here. Calm down, calm down, my love. Relax yourself. Stay calm." He answered, which made her sigh in relief.

"Thank heaven you're responding. Something bad has happened. I think we're too late!" she said, her voice tinged with panic, causing him to frown.

"There's something happening deep within the devil territory, and I think the devils have already begun the summoning!" she added, which made his eyes widen in shock.

Without hesitation, he decided to create his domain right where he stood. Once it was done, he teleported to the border of the devil territory.

He floated in the sky between the Doria Empire and the devil territory, and what he saw upon arrival dumbfounded him. A black pillar of light appeared on the horizon, seemingly piercing the heavens. The black pillar exuded a terrifying aura, which he could sense even from where he float, sending chills down his spine.

The negative aura radiating from the pillar was so thick that the pillar itself seemed to be a concentrated mass of negative energy accumulated over a long time. He focused on the sky, fixing his gaze on the black pillar that appeared to connect to the firmament.

Narrowing his eyes, his heart turned cold as he suddenly noticed a small crack beginning to form in the sky.

He gritted his teeth, his worst fears were coming true: the devils had begun the summoning process.

At this moment, no matter how far away, no matter where they were, all beings across the Barisan continent and beyond could see the black pillar.

At a place outside the Barisan continent, a large group had already gathered near the coastline, and from the looks of it, they were a huge army. Their numbers easily reached hundreds of thousands, even million, as they occupied a vast stretch of land as a camp.

Not only were there countless personnel, but there were also more than twenty flying fortresses, each much larger than the flying fortresses found within the Barisan continent, amidst the large group. Beside the flying fortresses, there were also thousands of smaller flying "ships."

All in all, a gathering of this scale would blow the mind of anyone from the Barisan continent, as even the imperial families there could never assemble such a force.

In this camp, many kinds of people seemed to be doing their own activities, but all of it could be summed up in two words:

Chaos and debauchery.

In many parts of the camp, many fights broke out with crowds of people watching. Many others were drinking and drunk, which made the situation noisy. There were also many people who just slept anywhere, no matter the location, some in the middle of busy paths, others on top of trees, and there was even one who slept upside down, his body tied to a tree by others.

The most outrageous thing was that some were actually having sex out in the open! In many parts of the camp, men and women having sex in various positions was a common sight. Some did it inside their tents, but there were also those crazy enough to have sex completely uncovered, giving a show to anyone who wanted to watch.

The sounds of moaning and slapping could be heard everywhere, but the people seemed to consider it just part of daily life and ignored it to continue with their own activities. Some even joined in after seeing the scenes, and there were also those who just grabbed the woman or man from their partner in the middle of their fun.

But suddenly, all the activities stopped as everyone looked in one direction—toward the Untouchable Continent. Although it was far away, the black pillar that appeared on the horizon, piercing the firmament, was tall enough for them to see clearly.

They did not know exactly what it was, but they had already been briefed that they were waiting for something from that mysterious continent. That was why they had such a huge mobilization, the biggest they had ever done, with even their higher-ups deploying almost all the devil resources on this continent.

Were they waiting for this sign?

At this time, one figure was inside a large tent that seemed reserved just for him. He was a burly man with long black hair, and his terrifying aura was far stronger than that of an emperor-stage cultivator, showing that his cultivation level was above the emperor stage.

He seemed to be cultivating with his eyes closed, but as if sensing something, he slowly opened them. Not long after, a man in armor rushed into the tent and immediately dropped to one knee.

"My lord, the sign has appeared. It's time," the armored man said respectfully.

Hearing this, the man smiled menacingly.

"Finally, the time has come," he said before standing up.

"Let's depart. It is finally time to go to that untouchable

Chapter 564: Become the Focus Again

At another location near the coastline, another large army had also gathered. The number of troops here was much greater, as this army consisted of different parties. Many symbols were shown on the flags fluttering in the wind, making it clear that this area was restricted to authorized parties only.

At this moment, a commotion erupted as everyone turned to look in the same direction—the direction of the untouchable continent. They had all heard that their higher-ups were rushing to gather every faction on the Orian continent, seemingly with the intention of setting out on a journey.

A news had spread that their true destination was the mysterious continent that had already become the stuff of legend. Because of its mysterious nature and the stories from the past, many were curious about what lay within the land surrounded by the forbidden sea.

Now that something had appeared on the horizon in the direction of the forbidden sea, it was easy to guess that it came from the untouchable continent. But what they saw unsettled them and left a bad feeling in the air.

A black pillar had risen from the horizon, piercing the sky as if trying to break through the firmament. Discussions sparked among the gathered forces as they talked about it, trying to determine what that thing could be.

From one of the temporary structures built to accommodate the higher-ups, several figures appeared and looked out toward the sea. Their expressions were tense as they frowned at the phenomenon. None of them had ever seen anything like it, and it filled them with a deep sense of unease.

"Amitabha, that thing truly brings misfortune upon this world," said one of the figures, a monk in kasaya, holding a khakkhara in his right hand.

"Is that the sign foretold in the prophecy? What *is* that thing? Even from here, I can sense the ominous feeling it carries," said a beautiful woman with blue hair, clad in armor.

"I think we should begin to move as well. The devils are likely waiting for that as a signal to act," said another figure, this one a brown-haired man dressed in noble attire.

There were several other figures as well, and one of them was a blond-haired man. He looked at the black pillar with a solemn expression—it seemed the time had truly come. Then, he noticed a man in knight armor running toward him, who dropped to one knee the moment he arrived.

"Your Majesty, urgent report," the knight said in a tense tone.

"Speak," the man replied.

"The devils have begun to move. We saw them boarding the flying fortresses and the cruisers," the knight reported, causing the expressions of the nearby figures to turn grim.

The blond-haired man looked at the others.

"It seems we must act as well. We cannot allow the devils to succeed in whatever they are planning. That thing gives me a terrible feeling," he said, to which the others responded with nods.

Not long after, the massive armies began packing up their temporary base and boarding dozens of flying fortresses and thousands of smaller flying ships.

Similar activity was also taking place on another continent, where hundreds of thousands of spiritual beasts had gathered near the coastline. Their groups, too, had their own flying fortresses and smaller flying vessels.

Once they saw the black pillar, all of them seemed to begin moving, led by two figures standing atop the flying fortress at the very front. One was a man with red hair, the other a woman with red and yellow striped hair.

The man bore the features of a dragon and wore royal robes while the woman had sharp, beautiful eyes and wore red and yellow robe. Their usually calm expressions had turned solemn as they stared at the black pillar of light. Their gazes eventually rose to the tip of the pillar, which seemed to reach the heavens.

"What do you think of that?" the woman asked in a soft voice.

"Bad news. The massive negative energy radiating from it can be sensed even from here. It's denser than anything I've ever encountered in the devil territory. That black pillar might well be a pure concentration of negative energy itself," the man replied.

"With energy that thick, has the entire untouchable continent become devil territory? If so... does that mean the prophecy from the Spirit Ancestor was false?" the woman asked.

The man shook his head.

"That's still not certain. We don't yet know the true condition of the untouchable continent. Until we do, we shouldn't assume anything. Besides, we haven't seen the 'light' mentioned by the Spirit Ancestor and you know that old lady has never been wrong when it comes to her visions," he said.

The woman sighed softly.

"I hope you're right," she said, continuing to look ahead.

The strange phenomenon from the direction of the untouchable continent quickly became a topic of discussion across the world. At this moment, the untouchable continent that long forgotten by the powers of the Ancient Blue Gate world had once again become the focus.

In the devil territory of the Barisan continent, behind the Devil Lord's palace, there is a huge altar, its size comparable to a small town. The altar stands in an open area, so anyone passing by would instantly see it. Even those flying from a distance would be able to spot it because of how vast it is.

The altar had six stone pillars pointing toward the sky, arranged symmetrically on opposite sides.

At this moment, the altar was illuminated with a dark light, creating a giant pillar that rose into the sky. Surrounding it were thousands of devils, all gazing at it with fanatical expressions, as if they were finally witnessing the arrival of their idol.

Not far from the altar stood a burly man, watching the scene unfold. The Devil Lord looked upon it all with a satisfied smile—as if he had succeeded in reaching this phase. Though the result had diverged from his original plan, the objective had still been achieved, even if with less "impact."

At last, the process of summoning his god was underway, despite the obstacles which named Aldrian.

"With this, my job here is almost done. Now we need to hold off the invasion until the portal connecting to the higher heavens fully opens. When that happens, no matter what happens after, I will win," the Devil Lord thought with a smile.

He then took out a communication artifact.

"Do it according to the plan. Hold them off until the portal fully opens."

"Yes, my lord," several voices answered in unison before the Devil Lord cut off the connection and continued to look at the black pillar with a triumphant smile.

If the black pillar caused commotion among those far from the continent, then what about the people living in the Barisan continent? It is easy to imagine the panic that

occurred. Many who saw the black pillar instantly felt a bad premonition and sudden fear they did not understand.

The atmosphere across the continent became tense, and everyone had already stopped their activities to look in one direction.

One question appeared in all these people's minds: what is that?

The commotion began to spread, and many connected it to the invasion that will happen soon. The war had already become a hot topic. Although many people still wondered why the rulers of the major territories took such a drastic step as an invasion, many still supported them.

But now it seemed this was the reason the leaders of the continent decided to invade the devil territory. Is this devil the cause of that phenomenon?

At the border, Aldrian had just arrived from the core of the Everlasting Silent Forest when he decided to teleport to another place. He teleported right to the tripoint where the Doria Empire, Vindas Empire, and the devil territory meet. At this specific place, camps from the Rivas and Flamecrest families were set up near each other, and both grand dukes were actually present.

Many people who were staring intensely at the black pillar were stunned when Aldrian suddenly appeared in the sky. Those who saw him looked on, wondering what Aldrian would do in this situation. They knew he was the alliance leader, and his decision was crucial to calming the troops who were starting to panic and tense up.

Suddenly, across the continent, many translucent screens appeared in the sky, showing his lone figure. Everyone who still felt tense and panicked because of the black pillar's sudden presence instantly looked up. They were stunned by the unexpected appearance of the screens and the lone figure of Aldrian, whom many immediately recognized.

Murmurs spread as the populace gazed at Aldrian's image, but then their eyes widened as his face suddenly changed—from his already handsome face to a more dazzling one with red hair.

Many were shocked, having never seen his real face before. Most had already guessed that Aldrian had been using a disguise all this time, and now, at this moment, they could finally see his true face. A handsome face that made countless women blush despite the dire situation the continent was in.

His long red hair fluttered as the wind swept through it, making his figure appear even more heroic, adding to his charm and charisma.

Those who already knew him could only smile inwardly, for at this moment, the entire continent would finally know the real Aldrian Aster.

Chapter 565: Raising Their Spirit Before War

The populace of the continent finally saw the real face of the man who had already become a legend. The man's achievements would be difficult—no, outright impossible—to replicate in the future. There was no one like him.

"That is Lord Aldrian?"

"That is Aldrian the Great's real face? As I thought, even his face is not disappointing. It truly fits a legend."

"Aldrian the Great is here—does this mean the attack will begin soon?"

Many discussions sparked after Aldrian revealed his real face. Their unrest over the black pillar was now distracted by his appearance, which made him nod inwardly. At this time, he needed to make these people focus on him and not on the black pillar.

Aldrian looked at the people below, all of whom were already focused on him. He also used his combined energy manipulation and sound laws to project himself across his domain so that everyone on the continent could see and hear what he was about to say. It was something that came to his mind after he absorbed so much comprehension from his followers in the core area.

Aldrian took a deep breath. The people of the continent needed reassurance right now. Looking at the phenomenon in the devil territory, he knew that these people—who had no idea of the dire situation about to strike—would fall into chaos and anarchy if Tarius truly descended. People would begin to lose control, and he needed to prevent that.

And to do that, he would have to prepare them for what was about to come.

"To the people of this continent," he said, and his voice echoed across the land.

"I know you have many questions about what is really happening to the continent, with the recent movements of the major territories and the war that is unfolding in the devil territory. Now, as the denizens of this continent, you have the right to know—and I do not intend to sugarcoat what is truly happening."

"This continent is in a crisis like never before, and our existence is under threat. The devils are attempting to summon their god into this land. Yes, you heard that right—the devils are trying to summon a divine being into this world, a being so powerful that it lies beyond our comprehension."

The people widened their eyes in shock. A god descending to this land? Most of them knew nothing about higher realms or divine beings. That kind of story had always seemed like folklore—tales told before bed, not something real.

After all, the people of this continent were trapped here, unable to cultivate beyond the Emperor stage. The idea of gods was far removed from their reality.

But now, Aldrian, the figure they revered had told them the devils were actually trying to summon such a being?

"The devils have been planning this for who knows how long, and we realized it far too late. The being they are trying to summon will destroy this continent. If it succeeds, there will be nothing you can do to stop it."

Hearing the grim tone in Aldrian's voice, the faces of the people across the continent turned pale. A deep fear took hold of them. Was this truly how their lives would end?

Parents began to hold their children close. Those who believed in something started to pray for their lives. Others tried to find any way to calm themselves. None of them doubted Aldrian's words—the movements of the major territories, the massive alliances forming—this was clearly no joke.

If they went so far, then those leaders must have received confirmation that the devils truly could do it. No wonder the major territories had formed an alliance for the first time in history. The situation had already grown so dire that it threatened all their lives.

Even the troops—those who had not known the truth about this war—felt their hearts turn cold. They had believed this would be like any other battle, only on a larger scale, a united strike against the devils. But now, realizing that this war might decide the fate of the entire continent, it felt surreal.

"All people of this continent! The people with a warrior's heart!" Aldrian shouted again, his voice carrying power and authority. The sound alone pulled everyone out of their panic and desperation, forcing them to focus on him once more.

"Although the situation is grim, we are not without hope! We still have a chance to turn this around. We can still foil the devils' plan and prevent this calamity from descending. That is why we have gathered the bravest warriors from across the continent—to join in the eradication of the evil rising from the devil territory."

The troops who had felt fear just moments ago began to feel a small spark of hope stir in their hearts after hearing his words.

"To all of you who participate in this war, I cannot express enough how much respect I have for you. You came here despite the very real chance that you may not return. To the soldiers following orders and to the volunteers who joined the army with the intent to

slay evil—every one of you is a brave warrior who came here knowing that death is near in this war."

"Be proud of yourselves, for your names will be written in golden letters in the history of this continent. You are part of the army that will decide the future of this land! You will bring glory to yourselves and your families!" Aldrian shouted, his golden energy flaring from his body as his aura surged.

"Even if the gods descend upon this land to destroy it, do not despair! Keep your spirit strong. Never give up, because the future is ours to decide—not the devils', nor anyone who seeks to destroy our home. Do not falter. Do not ever doubt our chance at survival."

"But even if you doubt yourself, at least trust me. Do not doubt me! No matter who dares to destroy our land, I have the power to stop them. You must believe in me—and I will answer that belief. I will answer it!" he shouted, his aura erupting so powerfully it could be sensed thousands of kilometers away.

As if nature itself supported their lord's speech, it showed signs and phenomena. The wind blew, sweeping through the trees, and the leaves rustled while the trunks swayed in the wind, creating the illusion that the trunks were moving as if waving their many hands.

But in the Ivory Empire, all the world trees were truly moving as if they were dancing. They created a rustling sound with their leaves that could be heard across the cities. The elves that stay in the Ivory Empire looked on with shocked expressions.

Many of them were in the middle of praying for protection from the Heavenly Tree of the World when suddenly they saw the world trees moving.

They had never seen the world trees move this vividly. Though it was known that the world trees could move, they had remained still for millions of years. According to ancient records, the last time the world trees were known to move was during the Great War three million years ago, and only in times of true desperation.

Unbeknownst to them, the spirits of the world trees were all watching Aldrian. Each one clasped their hands as if in prayer, wishing for Aldrian's success. Olivia and Alice, who knew Aldrian personally, also prayed. And unlike the rest, their prayers were deeper, more serious—they knew just how extraordinary Aldrian truly was.

All the troops who heard Aldrian's speech felt their spirits flare again. After being told the grim news, they now felt that there was still hope for the future. The prospect that their names would be counted among the legends of the continent for participating in this decisive war truly ignited their spirits. They were the ones who would battle on the frontlines to protect those behind them.

They felt lucky to live in this time, honored to be involved in a war that would decide the continent's fate. The volunteers also felt proud to take part in a conflict that would be written into history forever.

They were not like the cultivators from noble houses; they came from many different backgrounds, even humble ones. Some were vagabond cultivators who had learned cultivation through fortunate encounters. There was also a man who only sold food from his stall and had low cultivation because of his lack of talent.

Some had lost family members and, with limited resources, joined the war driven by the desire for revenge. Others had nothing but their cultivation, and even that was not very strong.

All of those people who didn't even have the means to protect themselves but still decided to join this war showed that their bravery and determination overcame their limitations. They conquered their fear, their lack of confidence, and their weaknesses. People like them will also be written into the history of the continent.

"Yes, we will bring glory to our lives!"

"We will not give up! We will not surrender!"

"For the glory of our land! For a brighter future, for our survival!"

"Aldrian the Great is right. It's not the time to despair—we still have a chance."

"We believe in you, my lord!"

"We believe in you!"

Many shouts resounded at the border of the devil territory. The troops' burning spirit was so strong that their voices alone could raise the morale of everyone who heard them. The entire continent was affected, and people shouted words of encouragement to keep their hope alive and resist despair.

Aldrian looked at all this and nodded with satisfaction.

He then took out his sword from his storage ring, the Eternal Spirit and lifted it high into the air.

"Raise your weapons! We will break the devil territory and prevent the calamity. We will end the devils' existence on this continent once and for all," he shouted, his voice booming across the entire continent.

"UWOOO!" people across the continent shouted in unison, showing their spirit and determination to break the calamity.

Chapter 566: Meeting Again After a Few Years

Aldrian, with his hand still lifting the sword high, swept his gaze toward the many troops below. His red hair was swept by the wind as he looked at his parents, who were looking at him with smiles. The Xin family and Baek Jimin with her sect near his mother's camp were also looking at him with smiles.

He smiled and nodded back, though inwardly he sighed. He was glad he could boost the morale of both the populace and the troops. He had even used his sound laws, which carried effects capable of hypnotizing and stimulating the listener the moment his speech reached their ears. It was necessary, to pull the people out of their despair as quickly as possible.

What they needed was hope. Even though the situation was dire, they needed something to hold on to, and he was ready to become that, just as his followers had placed all of their hope in him.

The screens across the continent then disappeared, but the atmosphere was no longer gloomy and desperate like earlier. Aldrian's speech still left an effect on them, and their spirit was still burning. Even those who still hesitated about whether to join the war decided to register as volunteers. Some even went by themselves to the border.

After the screens disappeared, Aldrian closed his eyes and searched for the positions of all the leaders of the major territories, along with some people he was close to. Once he located them all, he teleported them to the area below.

All of the leaders stood stunned, shocked as they did not expect to be teleported without warning. Before they could say anything, Aldrian had already landed near them.

"I'm sorry if I dragged you here forcefully, but we need to move quickly right now. I believe we need to bring the attack time forward," he said after landing.

The others nodded in agreement.

"Although we still lack the desired manpower, it can't be helped. Then when are we going to attack, Alliance Leader?" Emperor Durand asked.

"We will attack today, when the sun is about to set. There is no overall change in the plan—it only needs to be hastened. I hope your armies can take control of the area near the border by tomorrow. After that, all of you will push forward to there—" Aldrian pointed toward the black pillar.

"That is our main target. Direct all of your armies' movements toward it. From the looks of it, that black pillar is opening a portal, which might be the way for the devil god to descend. The devils still need time to fully open that portal, so we still have a chance to stop it."

The leaders nodded solemnly. At this time, albeit slowly, the black pillar piercing the sky continued to open the portal as the blackish void gradually widened in the sky.

"Be careful of any devil traps or tricks. If you encounter any member of the Seven Deadly Sins and need help, report to me—I will come to you," Aldrian said as he walked toward each of the leaders and embedded a small symbol on their bodies, a formation crafted using his own energy.

All of the leaders looked at the symbols, which seemed to sink into their bodies.

"Those are small teleportation formations. I can teleport to your location if you tell me you need help," Aldrian said, which left the others astonished. It was truly a convenient formation—one that would be incredibly useful in many situations.

Aldrian also felt fortunate to have gained so many comprehension from his followers. Through their comprehension, he discovered many new possibilities to develop his elements, space laws among them. This small formation was something he came up with while thinking about a way to keep his family safe in the chaos of the coming war.

He also placed the same formation on his family and loved ones, marking all of them with it. With this, he could reach them instantly if they were ever in danger. It gave him peace of mind, knowing he could protect those he cared about if the need arose.

"Leader, are you sure you don't want someone to go with you? At least someone who might be able to assist you," Emperor Raymond asked.

Aldrian smiled and shook his head.

"No, it's fine. I'm enough on my own. And no offense, but if I brought someone with me, they would only slow me down. I need to move quickly to reach the devil lord."

The initial plan was for Aldrian to move alone toward the devil lord's palace. It was a dangerous path, especially since he had no idea what the devil lord might have prepared for him. But given the situation at that time, swift and bold action was necessary.

Now that the devils had seemingly begun the summoning process, there was no more time to waste.

His target was the devil lord.

He then looked at the leaders.

"Alright, I'll send you back to your designated areas. I hope I'll still see all of Your Majesties' faces here alive once this war is over," Aldrian said, and the leaders responded with smiles.

"Yes, Alliance Leader," they said.

Aldrian was about to teleport them back to their areas of responsibility when he saw Sylphia with her true beautiful face already revealed walking toward him with quick steps. He wondered what she intended to do, but he froze in surprise as she suddenly tiptoed and kissed his cheek in one swift, unexpected motion.

Her unexpected act shocked many around them—none had expected the princess of the Ivory Empire to kiss Aldrian so suddenly.

The leaders were amused by Sylphia's boldness and could only lament that they did not have daughters they could pair with him. Well, except for Sect Master Baek, who already knew her daughter and Aldrian shared a special relationship—Baek Jimin becoming Aldrian's true harem member was only a matter of time.

As for Emperor Ladwin, well, he was in tears of happiness.

Aldrian looked speechlessly at Sylphia's beautiful face after she kissed his cheek, now blushing deeply. She lowered her head, which made him smile warmly at her.

"Be careful out there. You must return to me after this war," she said softly, which made his expression even warmer.

"Your order is my command, my queen," he replied, making Sylphia blush even harder.

After that, Aldrian finally teleported those he had summoned back to their areas of responsibility. Once they disappeared, he turned to his parents, who were approaching with smiles—but then his eyes shifted to the two figures following behind his mother. He had noticed them earlier, and now that he was free, he immediately walked toward them with an eager expression.

The two figures were an old man and an old woman. Aldrian had missed them dearly, as they were among the people who had taken care of him during his time inside the secret realm, especially after his parents left.

Irene allowed her son to greet them first, knowing how much these two had cared for him alongside Eleine while he was in the secret realm.

"Grandpa Wei, Grandma Wei, you're here," he said as he stopped right in front of them.

Standing before Aldrian were Weijun Rivas and Lina Rivas—the two who had helped raise him during his time in the realm. After the meeting between the Flamecrest and Rivas families, Irene told Aldrian she wished to bring Grandpa and Grandma Wei back to the outside world.

Besides missing them, their expertise would also prove crucial in the war. Both were physicians, and Grandpa Wei was quite well known in the Rivas Grand Duchy. Aldrian agreed, so he deactivated the formation surrounding the secret realm's entrance—the one he had originally created to prevent his mother from visiting him.

A day after the meeting, Grandpa and Grandma Wei were picked up by her and a group from the Rivas family, using wyverns to speed up the journey.

Now that they were here, all of the people closest to him from the secret realm had finally gathered.

"Young master, it's been a few years since I last saw you, and yet you've already created so many miracles. As expected of my intuition, you've become the sun. I'm so proud of you, young master," Grandpa Wei said with a smile.

Aldrian smiled back at him.

"Well, I can't embarrass my parents, so I have to do my best to make them proud," he replied, which made the others giggle at his answer.

"Truly, young master, you always surprised us, even when you were still so small in young miss Irene's arms. I'm truly glad and proud that you've grown this far in such a short time. It's still shocking, but it suits you, the wonder child, a child full of miracles," Grandma Wei said.

"This is also because of you, Grandma. You never got tired of me nagging whenever I came to your house in the secret realm, and you always took care of me. That's why I've been able to grow this much," Aldrian said, prompting Grandma Wei to respond.

"Aish, look at how sweet this child is. I feel like I've gone back in time—back when you used to praise me all the time as a little boy. Seems like you haven't changed at all."

The others giggled, and Aldrian chuckled along with them. But after a few moments of happy reunion, Irene looked at him with slightly worried eyes.

"So... you'll depart after this?"

At her question, the others quieted and turned to Aldrian.

He gave a firm, confident nod in reply.

"Yes, Mother. I'll depart after this. It's better to go as soon as possible. After all, it wouldn't be polite to keep *'him'* waiting," he said with a hint of a joke.

No data found.

Chapter 567: Start of the Battle

"Yes, Mother. I'll depart after this. It's better to go as soon as possible. After all, it wouldn't be polite to keep *'him'* waiting," he said with a hint of a joke. However, no one took it as a joke—Aldrian was heading into devil territory, and they knew *'him'* referred to the devil lord. According to Aldrian's information, the devil lord was the key to everything that had happened. He was the mastermind, the one who knew things even the members of the Seven Deadly Sins did not.

If the devil lord could be defeated early, their chances of collapsing the devils' forces quickly and stopping the summoning process would grow significantly. To achieve that, Aldrian's role was crucial. He would move swiftly toward the devil lord's palace while the others launched attacks from various sides of the territory.

With this strategy, they aimed to scatter the devils' attention, disrupt their coordination, and create confusion.

Irene sighed as she walked up to Aldrian and hugged him tightly.

"Don't push yourself too hard. If something truly life-threatening happens, you can always retreat. Your life is the most important," she said.

Aldrian smiled, returned his mother's hug, and nodded.

"Son, be careful out there. We don't know what the devils have prepared this time. You must not let your strength make you arrogant or complacent. Assume everything in the devil territory is as strong as you, and you'll stay alert to your surroundings," Aldrey said from beside them.

Aldrian nodded.

"Yes, Father. I'll keep that in mind."

They spoke for a while, and before long, the time had come for Aldrian to leave.

He now stood at the very edge of the Doria Empire's territory, facing the devil territory. Before him stretched the land of death—a place he had entered several times in the past, leaving destruction in his wake.

His family and the others nearby watched his back as he silently observed the land ahead. After a moment, he turned his head to look at them.

"Then, I'm going," he said, and his parents responded with a nod.

"Be careful out there," Irene said. Aldrian nodded in return, and in the next moment, his figure vanished—he had already teleported.

Everyone present had long held Aldrian in deep respect, but seeing what he was now willing to do, they considered it truly heroic. They couldn't help but feel an even greater admiration for him.

All they could do now was pray that whatever he planned or faced within the devil territory would succeed—and that the continent could be saved.

Aldrian had already teleported several times, going deeper into the devil territory. At this point, he sent a voice transmission to someone.

"How are things there? Any developments?" he asked.
He received an immediate reply.

"The devils seem to be preparing their armies to block the alliance's movement not far from the fortresses along the border," said a female voice.
"Same here. From my position, I can see they've started creating defensive positions not far from Arbrus Fortress. It looks like they've also fortified the rear of the fortress. They're planning to hold the alliance back and prevent them from advancing even if the fortress falls,"
said a male voice.

These two reports came from the Golden Phoenix and the Great Peng that Aldrian had sent to infiltrate the devil territory a few days earlier. Since they were essentially summoned creatures born with devil energy, the devils wouldn't be too suspicious of their presence. They were the most suitable for scouting, and for sabotage, if necessary.

"Alright. I want you to keep observing everything. If possible, assist the alliance by sabotaging the devils' forces from behind. Be careful if you encounter any of the Seven Deadly Sins. If you see them, do not attack, just avoid them," Aldrian said.

"Yes, Master," they replied.

Aldrian ended the communication and took out a communication artifact to report the devils' movements to the others. The information would be crucial for planning their assault on the devil fortresses.

He continued teleporting as he made the report, but after some time, a thought crossed his mind.

"Where are the devils? I haven't seen a single one in this area since earlier. If the devils are already moving their forces, as the reports indicated, and this area is completely empty, then something is off. There must be a reason for the lack of activity here. What are they doing?"

Even with that thought in mind, he didn't slow down and kept teleporting—until he finally sensed something to the northeast.

The landscape was nothing but a vast, flat expanse of dead land, with nothing to block his view. He could see far into the distance. Upon sensing a presence, he moved toward the source, and before long, he spotted multiple large groups of devils in the distance, seemingly engaged in some kind of activity.

Aldrian had already activated his stealth technique, making it difficult for anyone to detect him. With his comprehension and cultivation having reached the Grand Duke stage, his stealth had become far more refined and almost impossible to sense.

He finally arrived at the location where he had seen the group of devils, and now he could clearly observe what they were doing. But once he stopped a short distance away to watch them, his eyes widened. What he saw left him shocked.

There were thousands of devils here, and between their position were dozens of summoning formations—ones he had often seen across the continent.

These summoning formations called forth many kinds of beasts, not only rare but some that did not even exist in this world.

He knew that the devils or more precisely, the devil lord, knew the way to summon powerful beings from higher heavens, but this scale—? There were more than thirty summoning formations, and around them lay so many corpses that they formed small hills, showing just how many had been sacrificed for the summoning rituals.

At this time, he saw the madness of these devils. From what he could tell, they were sacrificing their own kind as offerings for the summoning formations. Judging by the numbers, the devils really did not care—they had sacrificed tens of thousands, and it might have even reached a hundred thousand.

"Those crazy bastards! To think they would go this far... have they decided to go all out this time?" Aldrian thought.

From the aura and energy radiating from the formations, it seemed that what would emerge from them were powerful beings at the Emperor stage. If all of those formations could summon creatures as strong as the Hydra or even Cerberus, the continent would be devastated. In that case, the alliance forces passing through this area would be destroyed, as there would be no way to hold back so many beasts.

He could imagine that at least the Doria and Vindas empires would be engulfed in flames from the beast invasion, which made sense since those creatures were already powerful in their own realms.

To contain them, the alliance forces would have to unite and fight together to repel the invasion. If that happened, the alliance's movement would be obstructed, causing delays and greatly weakening their forces.

His mind worked quickly as he analyzed the devils' strategy. It seemed the movements reported by the Golden Phoenix and Great Peng were not only meant to block the alliance from reaching the Black Pillar but also to act as the distractors. These summoned beasts would be the real challenge for the alliance forces.

The devils here were still in the middle of the summoning process, and although it was not yet complete, the energy radiating from it was already accumulating—and it was terrifying. As he surveyed the area, he saw several devils at the Emperor stage, with the strongest among them reaching the Middle Emperor stage.

He decided to create his domain here. Not wanting to take any chances, he chose the most effective way to eliminate these threats for the alliance forces.

Once ready, he finally took action as sparks of lightning began to flicker across his body. The moment he did, his presence was instantly detected by the thousands of devils. Those still in the middle of the summoning process were stunned when they suddenly sensed a presence that hadn't been there before.

The huge concentration of energy and intense pressure immediately warned them that this newcomer was not one of the devils—and came with ill intentions.

"Intruder!"

"Stop that bastard!"

"Kill him!"

Even without the shouts, many devils reacted instantly, sensing the terrifying power radiating from the lightning and the heavenly might accompanying it. But Aldrian would not allow any of them to get near. He looked at them calmly and parted his lips.

"Begone."

Rumble!

The sound of a thunderclap echoed far and wide as the lightning flared, signaling the start of the battle in the devil territory.

Chapter 568: The Invasion Begin

The rumbling thunderclap signaled the start of the battle in devil territory, and many devils perished instantly. The heavenly lightning unleashed by Aldrian, who had already reached the middle Grand Duke stage and also within his domain, was unstoppable, tearing through the ranks of those poor bastards.

Outside his domain, Aldrian could fight toe-to-toe with low Emperor-stage cultivators thanks to his boost in strength. Already a powerful cultivator with cross-level fighting ability, and with the power of faith flowing to him from across the continent, he was more powerful than ever.

The heavenly lightning pierced thousands of devils, slithering like the movement of thousands of snakes. It tore through their bodies and electrocuted them to a crisp. Whether the devils used defensive artifacts or not, they were useless in the face of the heavenly lightning.

Aldrian didn't stop there. He sent more lightning to obliterate the entire area. He wouldn't allow these summoning formations to be used again. The storm continued to devastate the land, the devils, and everything in its path. Only after more than thirty seconds did the lightning storm come to an end.

Aldrian looked at the result of his attack, the vast land lying in ruins, and nodded to himself in satisfaction. There was nothing left for him to destroy here—except for a few who were still alive, though already dying. Fortunately, he had not used his full power, and a few Emperor-stage devils had managed to endure the lightning storm.

He teleported to one of the Emperor-stage devils who was still breathing, though his body was charred and covered in burn wounds. Without a word, Aldrian began to look through the devil's memories, then ended his life by frying his head with lightning once he was done.

Aldrian frowned at what he had seen. The devils were truly going all out in this war, having spent all of their resources and manpower. This area turned out to be their biggest sites for summoning beasts, but it was not the only summoning site.

There were others, and although they weren't on the same scale as this one, those summoner groups could still pose a threat to the alliance forces.

From the way he saw it, the devil lord seemed to depend heavily on summoning beasts as part of his plan to hold the invasion. Luckily, the other

places did not have the capacity to summon beasts as strong as those here, since this area was the main site for summoning.

It was no wonder he hadn't encountered any devils on his journey here, most of them either concentrated here or had already been sacrificed.

Aldrian took out a communication artifact and reported the threat of the summoning beasts to the leaders of the invasion force before continuing his journey. At this time, he really couldn't afford to visit other areas to deal with those summoning formations, as it would take too much time. What he needed to do was trust the invasion force to handle those problems later.

At this moment, the devils in Arbrus Fortress—one of the devil fortresses near the border of the Vindas Empire and devil territory—were already on their highest alert. The news of the invasion had reached them a few days earlier, and they were just waiting for the invasion force to arrive.

The devils were already wearing their armor and gripping their weapons as they stood guard atop the fortress walls.

They looked intently toward the Vindas Empire for any movement. After days of waiting, they finally saw something. On the horizon, many flying objects seemed to be approaching. But before the devils on guard could warn the entire fortress, they were struck by a flame beam.

"Incoming—"

Boom!

Rumble!

The flame beam, with the strength of a high Emperor-stage cultivator, instantly destroyed part of the fortress wall and obliterated sections of the fortress.

"Aggh!"

"We are under attack! They're coming!"

"Prepare yourselves!"

The devils in the fortress that already on high alert, quickly took their positions and raised the fortress's defensive formations. They truly did not expect the invasion force's first move to be an instant attack from a cannon fired by a flying fortress. It was clear the invasion force spared no resources for this war.

At last, the devils could see the invasion force approaching, and the sight sent chills down their spines. Across the horizon, they saw a sea of people, many flying fortresses, and the wyvern corps following behind.

In their entire lives, they had never witnessed an army of this scale. The mere sight was enough to deter them. Yet, imagining their god's descent, their faces turned spirited and fanatic. No matter how massive the invasion was, their god was enough. Once he descended, it would all come to an end.

Then the attacks came again—other flying fortresses fired their beam cannons, lightning and flames striking the fortress's defensive formations.

Boom!

Rumble!

The continuous cannon attacks from different flying fortresses finally collapsed the defensive formation, leaving the fortress vulnerable to further assault. This was part of the invasion force's plan: to quickly take over the fortress by effectively destroying its defenses.

To achieve this, nothing was more suitable than the cannons of the flying fortresses. The fact that the three empires had sent all their flying fortresses to participate in the war made things much easier.

"The defensive formation has collapsed! Attack!" shouted one of the commanders from the knight orders of the Avandi imperial family.

"Uwo!"

Following the commander's shout, many cultivators raised their war cries. King-stage cultivators flew at high speed toward the fortress, launching elemental attacks. The assault was also supported by cultivators from the church and the Buddhist sect, who worked to repel the negative energy lingering in the air.

The wyvern corps followed closely behind, providing support for the king-stage cultivators, who now served as the spearhead of the attack.

"Hold them! Kill as many as you can!"

"AHH!"

The devils shouted as the two armies finally clashed and exchanged their techniques. Powerful elemental attacks flew back and forth with destructive force capable of leveling entire towns. It was no surprise—hundreds of King-stage cultivators fought in this area, but most from the alliance forces.

With their overwhelming numbers, the outcome was predictable. Even the devils who had to shift into their devil forms early on could not do much against such a flood of opponents.

The devil higher-ups at the Emperor stage, watching their underlings overwhelmed, decided to intervene. One of them created a giant ball of flame that replicated a miniature sun, its heat felt hundreds of kilometers away. The intense heat forced many cultivators to pause and stare at the blazing giant orb with shock.

The devil hurled the mini sun toward the alliance formation, but before it could reach them, a sword slash struck the orb, splitting it in half. The mini sun was instantly destroyed as the flames dissipated on both sides, preventing any harm to the alliance forces.

The devil leaders and other cultivators turned to see the source of the sword slash.

"That is Commander Shang."

"Keep pushing forward! The commander will take care of their higher-ups!"

The one who destroyed the mini sun was Commander Shang, leader of the Blue Dragon Battalion of the Avandi imperial family. With a single sword slash, he easily cut through the orb that could have destroyed vast stretches of land.

The devil higher-ups at the Emperor stage that numbering three, narrowed their eyes at Commander Shang. They knew well the reputation of the Blue Dragon Battalion's commander, a strong cultivator leading an elite battalion of the Avandi imperial family.

The Emperor-stage devils decided to go all out from the start. They could not afford to conserve energy here. With their numbers at a disadvantage, they needed to drag the battle out as long as possible to buy time for reinforcements to arrive at the fortress.

As the devil higher-ups tried to devise a strategy, Commander Shang attacked again, his sword slashes coming fast and furious.

The devils evaded the strikes, but then another attack came from a different direction. The devils found themselves under barrage from multiple sides as a few Emperor-stage cultivators from the alliance also joined the assault.

"Your life ends here, you fuckers!" Commander Shang spat as he attacked again. Their battle at the Emperor stage showed no concern for their surroundings, leaving parts of the fortress already in ruins.

The devils tried to keep defending as they had no room to strike back because of the barrage of attacks.

Looking at their defensive position and how they did not fully strike back, Commander Shang seemed to know what was on their minds.

"Don't tell me you're hoping for reinforcements from your rear? Better bury that hope, you will not get any reinforcement," he said mockingly.

The devils frowned at Commander Shang's words but did not think any further as the battle continued.

A thousand kilometers behind the fortress, another battle had already broken out. Powerful beings at the High Emperor stage were slaughtering the devils here.

"Agh!"

"Ugh!"

The cries of the dying echoed as swords sliced through many devils.

"Fuck! How can the Emperor of the Vindas Empire be here? What the hell is the intelligence group doing?!" shouted one of the devils.