

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

#Chapter 91: 100

The Heavenly Demon's Scripture - Read The Shining Star Above The Heaven Chapter 91: The Heavenly Demon's Scripture

Chapter 91: The Heavenly Demon's Scripture

The term *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon* was new to Aldrian, but he quickly connected it to the cultivation technique used by Baek Ji-Min.

"If the cultivation technique she used is one of the Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon, then the others must be the Heavenly Demon's Scripture in the Piercing Heaven Sect. And the last one..." Aldrian looked at the pavilion leader of the Black Dragon Pavilion.

"The last one must be in the Black Dragon Pavilion."

He was genuinely curious about what those three scriptures signified within their respective sects. They must have known the dangers of cultivating such techniques, yet they still allowed their chosen disciples to practice them. It seemed he was missing some vital information.

"I'm sorry if I've confused you," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said to Aldrian. "But as you've just heard, it's one of the most guarded secrets in our demonic cult. Only a few of the highest-ranking demons know of its existence. The *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon*, as the name suggests, are three scriptures created by the Heavenly Demon himself."

"The *Heavenly Demon's Scripture*, the *Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture*, and the *Heavenly Demon's Black Dragon Scripture*—these are the ultimate cultivation techniques of demonic cultivation, the very foundation of our three great sects. Now, if you're wondering how we obtained these scriptures..." He paused for a moment before continuing.

"Aldrian, did you know there are other continents besides ours?"

Aldrian didn't seem surprised and simply nodded. Yes, he knew they weren't alone in the world. According to historical records, there were other continents that had somehow never made contact with the Barisan continent for millions of years.

Many didn't understand why, but suddenly, the energy and seas surrounding Barisan had become chaotic, making them impossible to cross even for cultivators at the Peak Emperor stage.

"The truth that's been forgotten by many is that many the ancestors of the cultivators on this continent came from another continent. For the three great sects, our power here is more like a branch of our main power in that other land."

"The *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon* were brought to this continent by our ancestors. As for their purpose in coming here, even our records are blurry. But there is a connection to something inside the *Everlasting Silent Forest*

."

Aldrian was astonished by this sudden revelation. The *Everlasting Silent Forest* had been brought up again? What had happened so long ago?

"Anyway, back to the topic. The *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon* hold immense value as the foundation of our three great sects. Our ancestors, who founded these sects, were the very first ones able to comprehend and cultivate this technique. They then passed the scriptures to the sects, allowing them to preserve the technique and train talented demonic cultivators to become their successors once they were gone."

"But why wait until they're gone? Here's another thing about the *Three Scriptures*, they can only be cultivated by one person at a time."

Aldrian was stunned. A cultivation technique that only one person could practice?

"Yes, you heard that right. The *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon* can only be cultivated by one person at a time. We don't know why, but once someone comprehends and cultivates one of the scriptures, no one else can cultivate it. It's as if the technique seals itself with something like karma. I don't know exactly what it is, but anyone who tries to comprehend it afterward will never succeed—and if they force it, it can even cause a inner demon."

Aldrian was truly enlightened by this new information, but Ryu Hyuk-Jae wasn't finished yet.

"After all this time, out of the *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon*, only the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture* remains unresolved, without a successor since the creation of the three great sects. While the other two already have successors even in this era, the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture* in the Piercing Heaven Sect has yet to find its destined practitioner. The only one who ever comprehended it was the founder of the Piercing Heaven Sect, said to be the sole disciple of the Heavenly Demon."

Aldrian was astounded. To create a cultivation technique so difficult that only one person could cultivate it—and that person being the Heavenly Demon's own disciple? What could the Heavenly Demon have been thinking? What kind of purpose required such a limitation?

"Wait... the weight of his name, the weight of destiny... Is that why it can only be comprehended by one person? Is this cultivation technique too overwhelming for others to grasp at the same time, leaving it only to those chosen by the Three Heavenly Demon Scriptures themselves?"

"Why must someone comprehend it at all?" Aldrian asked. "Isn't the weight of destiny for comprehending the *Three Heavenly Demon Scriptures* immense? Why not cultivate other demonic techniques that don't carry the burden of the Heavenly Demon's name? Why walk such a dangerous path, one that can bring destruction not only to the bearer of that destiny but also to their power?"

Ryu Hyuk-Jae smiled as he listened to Aldrian's question.

"Why do you ask? To continue the legacy of the Heavenly Demon. To ensure his scriptures are never forgotten. To remind future generations that the Heavenly Demon will always be with us, the demonic cultivators, and to give us hope—hope that the Heavenly Demon has never abandoned us, even though we've never seen him."

"In this uncertain era, the *Three Scriptures of the Heavenly Demon*

are both our ultimate trump card and the 'unknown' pill we gladly take without knowing the outcome. At the end of the road, if the bearer of this destiny can pass the tests of the world, they will emerge more powerful than ever, elevating the demonic cult to even greater heights!" Ryu Hyuk-Jae said with a crazed expression.

The others in the room remained silent, but Aldrian could sense the pride in each of their eyes, the pride of demonic cultivators.

"The demonic 'cult,' huh? No wonder they take pride when the orthodox sects call them a demonic cult. Their level of faith in the Heavenly Demon may vary, but in the end, they all revere and worship him," Aldrian thought.

"I understand," Aldrian said. "But why are you telling me this history lesson about the Heavenly Demon's scriptures? And what was that about 'finding the right person to comprehend the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture*' earlier?"

Ryu Hyuk-Jae wore a puzzled expression.

"Do you still not get it? I'm telling you this because you are the one destined to comprehend the Heavenly Demon's Scripture," he said, pointing at Aldrian.

Aldrian was left speechless, unable to comprehend this man's way of thinking. He sighed and pressed his forehead.

"Hold on. Why are you dragging me into your demonic cult business? And why should I be the one to comprehend the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture*? Doesn't that mean I'll have to bear the destiny of the Heavenly Demon's name for nothing? I don't gain anything from this."

"You don't want to? The power you'll gain from the scripture will be immense. And finally, the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture* will have a successor. You'll also have my unquestioning support," Ryu Hyuk-Jae responded.

"I'm not tempted by power. Just imagining a future full of endless struggles after comprehending the scripture already gives me a headache." And he also had his own cultivation and domain power.

"Is that so? Then what if I told you that the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture* will not affect you in regard to being the destiny bearer? In other words, even if you comprehend it, you will not be affected by the destiny tied to the Heavenly Demon's name."

The others in the room were shocked by his words. What was he talking about? It was common knowledge, passed down through generations, that anyone bearing the Heavenly Demon's name in any aspect of their life had to prove their worth first. That was the rule—the karma associated with the Heavenly Demon's name. And now, he was claiming there was a way to bypass it?

"What are you talking about?" Aldrian asked, his confusion evident.

"That's exactly what I'm saying. You won't be affected by the destiny that comes with the *Heavenly Demon's name*. You won't have to endure what the destiny bearer would normally face. As for how... I can't explain that right now, but please hear me out." Suddenly, Ryu Hyuk-Jae's expression turned serious, more so than at any point since the meeting had begun.

"I have no ill intentions toward you. Everything I've done is because of my unwavering faith in the Heavenly Demon. If the *Heavenly Demon's Scripture* has revealed that you are the chosen one, then I will gladly hand it over to you. You will gain great benefits from the scripture without the misfortune that befalls a destiny bearer."

"All of this is true. Not a single word I've spoken is false. The karma of the Heavenly Demon that binds me will serve as witness. If any of my words are lies, may a inner demon torment me for eternity."

"Ryu Hyuk-Jae!" Kang Doo-Hoon and Baek Ha-Yoon shouted. The others tried to stop him, but it was too late. After Ryu Hyuk-Jae finished his oath, only the moment of truth remained—whether what he had said about the destiny bearer was true or not.

Ryu Hyuk-Jae gazed intently at Aldrian, ignoring the reactions of his colleagues. Aldrian met his eyes, searching for even the slightest flicker of doubt or hesitation. But all he saw was unwavering conviction and blind faith—something that, in its own way, left him in awe. He closed his eyes and sighed.

"Fine."

Chapter 92: The Being's Essence

"Fine," Aldrian said.

Ryu Hyuk-Jae's serious expression instantly disappeared, replaced by a smile.

"Now we are—"

"But don't expect too much," Aldrian interrupted. "I have my own circumstances, so if nothing happens, you can't blame me."

"No, you will succeed," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said, waving his hand dismissively.

Aldrian's mouth twitched. He was truly enlightened by the man's optimistic nature. He glanced at his group and smiled bitterly.

"It looks like we'll have to stay in demon territory a bit longer," Aldrian sent a voice transmission to the trio.

"It's okay. If you succeed, we'll gain another supporter. That's good for the future journey."

"Whatever you decide, I'll follow you. It's also nice to explore while we're still in demon territory."

"I think I've started to get used to your ability to attract big powerhouses, so don't worry."

Aldrian smiled, looking at them. When he thought about it, with them by his side, his journey was far more colorful.

The meeting continued with a discussion on how they should develop a more meticulous plan to catch any remaining devils in the demon territory. Aldrian explained that the devils possess some kind of artifact capable of concealing their energy and aura. Even detection artifacts like the Orb of Origin, could be deceived. He didn't know the specific nature of the artifact since none of the devils he had read memories from mentioned its name.

While Aldrian didn't have concrete evidence yet, he suspected that the disappearance of one of the Forgeheart Kingdom's blacksmith master was connected to this artifact. The others pondered solemnly over how to counter it. Based on Aldrian's experience, the artifact only concealed devil energy to a certain extent—if the energy output became too intense, the artifact would lose its effectiveness.

Truthfully, Aldrian didn't have a solution to the issue either. Inside his domain, he could sense anomalies using his Eyes of Heaven, even if the devils wore the artifact, but only if he focused intently. Outside his domain, he had no immediate solution and could only force them out, as he had done in Balin and at Dual Horns Peak.

They now also have prisoners from the city lord's manor of Dual Peak Horns, so they will gather some information. Not all the members have had their memories read by Aldrian, as he left the rest of the task to the three great sects.

They decided to strengthen their surveillance in key cities where the devils were most likely to operate. If they couldn't catch them yet, they needed to narrow the devils' space to move freely within the demon territory.

By the end of the meeting, they agreed to some of Aldrian's proposed actions for dealing with potential problem in the demon territory.

First, The three great sects had their own networks scattered throughout the Demon territory, no matter how small. Aldrian to inform the eyes and ears of the three great sects in the vicinity if he encountered even the smallest trace of a devil conspiracy, then he can take an immediate action.

Second, if Aldrian ran into any demonic cultivators seeking trouble with him, he was to give them a "warning" or slap in the face if he chose to, while also reporting the incident to the three great sects. Aldrian only needed to sit back and let the three sects handle the matter. If the problem persisted, the three sects would allow Aldrian to decide how he wished to act.

With everything concluded, the meeting ended on a much more amicable note than earlier. Aldrian also received an invitation to visit the Heavenly Demon Temple in the Piercing Heaven Sect, with a notification about the exact time to follow.

When they exited the room, the moon was already high in the sky, prompting them to decide to stay in the sect for the night.

Now alone in his room, Aldrian began a comprehension session to fill his time.

"I didn't expect the meeting to take so long. Looks like I won't be able to look for Baek Ji-Min tonight," he thought.

As if the heavens had decided to answer his concern, within his domain, he sensed unusual movement atop a cliff. Using his Eyes of Heaven, Aldrian was surprised to see Baek Ji-Min sitting cross-legged at the cliff's peak.

"How convenient," Aldrian thought, feeling as though the heavens were watching him intently.

He smiled and, without hesitation, teleported just a short distance behind Baek Ji-Min. She remained unaware that someone was already watching her. Aldrian stood silently, observing the beautiful scene—the moon casting its light over the woman with white hair. The combination of the two made him think of a moon goddess sitting under the soft glow of moonlight.

Aldrian smiled at the thought and decided to move closer, allowing his presence to be known. Baek Ji-Min, sensing someone behind her, quickly stood up, her expression wary.

"Who—" Her question caught in her throat when she saw the person behind her.

"You?! How did—how did you get here?"

Her bewildered expression gave Aldrian a sense of satisfaction.

"Ah, I really enjoy teasing people," he thought.

"Well, I just entered through the gate. How else would I get in?" he said with a smirk.

"No, I'm serious! This is the Thorny Flower Garden! No men are allowed here without special permission. You need to leave before anyone spots you!" she exclaimed, hurrying to push Aldrian away. She tried to push him, but he was like a solid rock—she couldn't move him an inch.

"He's so strong!" she thought. With her cultivation at the Low Earl level, she couldn't even budge him.

Seeing his relaxed expression, she gave up and stopped trying to push him.

"Now, you don't have to worry," Aldrian said calmly. "I came here through official means. I'm not here specifically for you, but since I saw you, why would I avoid you? Don't you have something you want to ask me?"

Aldrian was genuinely curious about this destiny bearer of the Heavenly Demon, the one who cultivated the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

Baek Ji-Min stood stunned, but she finally connected the dots.

"Were you invited to the meeting in this sect?"

Aldrian responded only with silence and a smile. She didn't need any further confirmation—she understood that he had been invited by the three great sects. But the real question was: who was he, that the three sects would extend such an invitation? Then she recalled something—if the sects had invited someone important, could he be the one?

"Now that we're already face to face, I have some questions for you as well. We could exchange information. How about that?" Aldrian suggested.

Baek Ji-Min pondered for a moment before nodding. She needed information about him anyway.

"Alright, let me ask you first—why did you come to me?" Aldrian asked as he took a seat beside her.

Baek Ji-Min looked at his relaxed demeanor and sighed, then sat back down.

"I have a special ability that allows me to see the being's essence of each person."

"Being's essence of each person? You mean their soul?" Aldrian asked.

"It goes deeper than that. Souls are different for each person, yes, but the being's essence is the true nature hidden deep within the soul. It's more abstract than the soul itself."

"For example, a person who has committed atrocious acts can still have a white soul because they can cleanse their soul from the bad influence of their actions with good deeds. Each time their soul is tainted with darkness, they balance it with good actions. That's what we call hypocrisy," Baek Ji-Min explained.

"The essence of one's being isn't as simple. It's strongly tied to karma. Karma is intangible—unless someone comprehends the laws of karma of course, it's a concept that every being, whether they have a soul or not, is bound to."

She continued, "When you look at someone, you build karma with that person. When you talk to someone, even small talk, you create karma with them. Even when you observe the scenery—the trees, the rocks—you are connected to all of them through karma."

Aldrian nodded, understanding the mysterious nature of karma. Despite his high comprehension, even in his relatively short life, he couldn't claim to fully grasp karma. There was much more to learn. If he became powerful enough, with a strong enough understanding of karma, it might even be possible to trace the origin of his power.

"When I look at people, what I see varies. Sometimes it's horrifying—someone's essence can be so ugly and rotten. Other times, it's beautiful and fresh to my eyes," she said.

Aldrian finally understood why she had approached him.

"So, what did you see in me?" he asked.

"You?" Baek Ji-Min hesitated. "I can't explain it fully. What I saw was a vast void—so vast that I couldn't find its end. Then, there was a golden light above the void. I don't know how to describe it, but my heart started to race, and my eyes nearly went blind from looking at you for too long."

Chapter 93: What She Had Experienced

Aldrian remained silent, listening as she described his essence.

"Vast void and golden light, huh," he then recalling the lines he had repeated countless times.

I'm tied to the universe.

I'm tied to nature.

All of this is my own karma.

"Is my true nature really the universe and the 'nature' itself?" Aldrian wondered to himself.

"What kind of essence is that? I truly don't understand."

"Then, can you explain my essence?" he asked.

"No, you're inexplicable. I can describe others—like a psychopath addicted to murder and torture, for example. I see ugly scenes, like rotting corpses or wailing souls, I could describe it as hell. The opposite is true for good people who help others, they radiate a warm aura and are surrounded by a comforting light, attracting others."

"But you? How can I explain the meaning of a vast void and golden light without any clues? Your golden light is so strong that it's blinding. Even when I look at it for too long, it almost makes my eyes go blind and my soul trembles. It's the first time my vision has affected me physically, so I really don't know."

Aldrian nodded. It was yet another mystery surrounding him.

"Now it's my turn," Baek Ji-Min said, her gaze locking onto his. "Who exactly are you? Where do you come from, and what are you doing in the city?"

Her mesmerizing red eyes, along with her glowing white hair under the moonlight, gave her the appearance of an immortal fairy descended from the heavens.

Aldrian was captivated by her red eyes for a split second before he turned his gaze to the scenery and answered.

"I'm from the Ivory Empire. Just an adventurer seeking experience. There's nothing grand about my background. I was on my way to Forgeheart Kingdom, but, long story short, I got entangled in this demon problem. If that's what you want to know."

"Ivory Empire? Why are you from the Elven Empire? Oh, wait—one of your companions is an elf. Do you have a good relationship with them? She clearly has a noble background."

Aldrian wasn't surprised that Baek Ji-Min knew half of Sylphia's identity—it had to be her eyes.

"You could say that. I'm lucky enough to have earned their recognition and friendship," Aldrian replied.

"You are very lucky to have their recognition. The elves are much harder to approach than any other nobles because of their nature."

Aldrian nodded and looked back at Baek Ji-Min.

"I wonder, if looking at me for too long makes you almost blind, how is it that you're okay now?"

"Huh? Of course, at this moment I'm not using my technique. My eyes ability is something I control deliberately. It's not always active."

"Hmm, okay. But I'm still curious about your motive for approaching me. Maybe you see me differently, but I don't see why you would chase after me or ask to speak in private. What if I'm the bad guy?"

Baek Ji-Min was silent for a moment.

"To be honest, I don't know."

"What?" Aldrian asked, surprised.

Baek Ji-Min avoided his gaze.

"When I saw your essence, I felt... drawn to it. I don't know how to explain it, but I also couldn't look at it for too long. I know it sounds crazy, but that's just how it is," she said, her face turning red with embarrassment.

Aldrian almost facepalmed. He really didn't know how to make sense of it. This wasn't the first time someone had been attracted to his presence.

The spirits and spiritual beasts were drawn to his energy. The Heavenly Direction Church sought him out because of his holy energy. Xin Haotian had been captivated by his sword intent. And now this woman was attracted to the essence of his being? At this point, he barely needed to do anything, and people would still be drawn to him.

He glanced at her embarrassed face and sighed.

"So after being attracted to me, then what? You can't just follow me around because of that, right?"

"I don't know. It's the first time I've felt this way, so I ran after you without thinking much. I really don't know how to answer you," she replied, growing more embarrassed with every word.

Aldrian smiled and looked ahead.

"Don't you have any questions for me?" he asked.

"Umm... do you really not know anything about yourself? I mean, anything related to your essence? Do you have something... strange inside your body? Something no one else has?"

Aldrian remained silent for a moment before speaking.

"What I can say is... yes, there's something unique inside my body. As for what it is, I don't really know where to begin. But I, too, want to understand what's inside me."

His golden energy, his domain, his visions, and his many other capabilities—he longed to uncover their deeper meanings. Baek Ji-Min sensed that Aldrian became even more mysterious as he spoke about it.

"What's your relationship with the sect master of the Thorny Flower Garden?" Aldrian suddenly asked, catching her off guard.

"Why are you asking that?" she replied, her voice trembling slightly.

"It's nothing. If you don't want to answer, you don't have to. I'm not forcing you," Aldrian said calmly. "I'm just curious why someone with the same surname as the sect master

of the Thorny Flower Garden would be so bold as to cultivate one of the three Heavenly Demon Scriptures."

Baek Ji-Min froze, shocked by his words.

"What? Did my mother tell you that?!" Baek Ji-Min exclaimed, panic flashing in her eyes as she stood up, suddenly wary of him.

"So, she is your mother. No, no one told me who cultivates it," Aldrian replied calmly.

"Let's just say it's my specialty to sense people's techniques. You don't need to be so worked up about me knowing. I have no interest in your cultivation technique, so please, relax. I'm just curious—what motivated you to cultivate it? Was it the same reason as your mother?"

Baek Ji-Min's eyes trembled, and her expression turned sad. Aldrian watched her for a moment before sighing.

"I'm sorry if I made you sad. I don't know your circumstances, but do you realize that cultivating one of the three Heavenly Demon Scriptures makes you a destiny bearer of the Heavenly Demon's name?"

"I know," she whispered.

She sat down beside him again, her posture heavy, as if burdened by something unseen. Her back seemed lonely.

"Do you want to hear my story?"

Aldrian hesitated for a moment before nodding. She looked into the distance as the wind blew against her face, ignoring the cold, much like she was ignoring the chill in her heart.

"I'm the only child in my family. You can imagine what it's like, being the only child of the sect master," she began, a faint smile playing on her lips.

"Since childhood, I was always pampered by others. Many would come to play with me, many would try to talk to me... those were the happiest moments of my life."

"The moment I reached the age of cultivation was when everything changed," Baek Ji-Min continued. "My mother brought me to the temple of the Heavenly Demon, and that's where I first learned about the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture. When I managed to comprehend it, a few of the higher-ups gasped in shock. At the time, I didn't understand the significance of the scripture. I thought it would just give me more power and bring glory to the sect, but..."

She paused, her expression growing more somber.

"Yes, I became more powerful. Yes, I brought glory to the sect—at least behind the scenes. But, Suddenly I became isolated. My friends distanced themselves from me because I left them in the dust with my abnormal cultivation speed and talent."

"They became jealous, felt inferior, and changed. The eye technique I gained after cultivating didn't help, either... it only showed me the ill nature in the hearts of those who approached me, I don't know since when they changed, or if they have been like that from the beginning?"

"I can't see the world the way I used to. The eye technique I got from the scriptures has become a kind of curse. Although I try to minimize using it, the thoughts of everyone around me having their own agendas, even my mother are impossible to forget. In the end, I keep using the technique to see their true nature, their real selves. I just can't stop."

Her voice trembled as she went on.

"I felt lonely. My chest grew tight with every day. I wanted to run somewhere far away. I kept asking myself... is this really the fate of a destiny bearer of the Heavenly Demon's name? I felt like I was being consumed by my inner demon, but I didn't want to lose. I didn't want to become a mindless monster."

"So I fought. I fought my inner demons, and I've been fighting them for decades."

"If only I had never comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture... if only I hadn't been compatible with it... if only my mother hadn't taken me to the temple that day... if only... if only..."

Her voice trembled, and her eyes grew moist, though she fought with all her strength to hold back the tears. Her aura wavered, her energy flow spiraling into chaos as her body became consumed by instability. Clutching her head, she closed her eyes as if battling an unbearable pain.

Inside her mind, memories from the past resurfaced, clouding her thoughts, threatening to drown her in darkness. Just as she teetered on the edge of being consumed, a warm golden light appeared. The light wrapped around her, soothing her, its warmth making her feel safe and secure.

When she opened her eyes, she saw her entire body bathed in golden light. The source? The young man beside her. His hand rested gently on her shoulder, transferring his energy to calm her chaotic spirit.

He smiled at her, a warm, reassuring smile, one that mirrored the golden energy enveloping her. She didn't know why, but his smile, like the light, warmed her heart and eased her mind, lifting the weight of her sadness.

Chapter 94: An Ambush

Baek Ji-Min, still feeling the warmth of the golden energy, closed her eyes. It felt as if she were in the middle of a grassland, under the shade of a tree. The gentle breeze touched her skin, refreshing her body. The temperature was perfect—not too hot, not too cold—creating a balance that made her feel completely relaxed.

She wasn't sure how long she remained in that state, but she enjoyed it immensely. When she finally opened her eyes, the sky had started to show shades of orange, a sign that the sun was beginning to rise over the horizon.

It felt as though she had just woken up from a beautiful, fleeting dream—one she couldn't even remember the last time she experienced. She turned to her side to look for the young man, but all she found was the empty cliff. When she couldn't find him, she smiled bitterly.

"I didn't even ask his name. "

She had done something crazy the night before—talking to a stranger, revealing a few of her secrets, telling him her story to the point where she had nearly been overwhelmed by her own inner demons. She had also allowed herself to be vulnerable in front of him. The embarrassment was enough to make her want to dig a hole and bury her head in it.

"I must have been out of my mind last night. It seems like my pent-up emotions exploded when I met that man. "

She sighed and began to check her body. To her shock, her mind felt clearer, free of the negative influences that had clouded her thoughts. Her body felt lighter, more energetic, and...

"I've broken through to the Middle Earl stage!" she exclaimed.

She didn't fully understand how, but she believed the 'dream' she experienced while being enveloped by the golden energy had truly helped calm her mind and repel the inner demon and all of that caused by that young man. That energy also helped stabilize her chaotic energy, which had been disrupted by her unstable emotions and loss of control over her energy circulation. As a result, she was able to make a breakthrough.

She thought it was a blessing in disguise. Initially, she had only wanted to satisfy her curiosity, but in the end, she gained far more than she expected.

"It seems I'll have to ask Mother about him."

If he had been invited to the meeting, then her mother surely knew who he was! She stood up, brushing the dust from her clothes, ready to return and meet her mother. But suddenly, she remembered something.

"Ah, yes! Didn't he say I could find him at the Plum Blossom Tower?" She facepalmed, but this time, her smile was neither forced nor bitter. With a light step, she walked away from the top of the cliff.

On the main road in the middle of the Flower Garden's forest, a carriage raced forward at full speed. Aldrian and his group had already left Thorny Flower Garden before dawn, ensuring their departure remained secret by traveling the same path they had entered. The sun had yet to make its appearance, and the darkness still lingered.

They had already covered half the distance to Blooming Flower City, where they planned to stay until the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect sent an invitation. The atmosphere inside the carriage was light—Eleine and Sylphia chatted and giggled among themselves, while Xin Haotian sat in silence, eyes closed as if asleep. Aldrian, on the other hand, quietly enjoyed the scenery of trees rushing by.

"I hope that helped her overcome her anguish," Aldrian thought, reflecting on Baek Ji-Min.

"That was a close call. If I had been a little later, she would have been consumed by her inner demon."

Sensing her chaotic energy earlier, Aldrian had known he had to intervene. He hadn't expected her trauma to resurface so intensely while telling her story, triggering the awakening of her inner demon. He had used his energy to dispel it and added an illusion to calm her further.

Gazing serenely out of the carriage, Aldrian pondered the heavy burden borne by those marked by the Heavenly Demon's name. Even their surrounding people could become affected by the karma of such a destiny bearer.

As he pondered, suddenly he sensed multiple presences surrounding their carriage. Despite the full speed of the silver-horned horse, these figures were able to match their pace. Aldrian wondered who they were—their movements were silent and melded seamlessly with the wind, reminiscent of assassins.

The sun still hadn't fully risen, and the forest's tall trees cloaked the area in shadow, creating the perfect setting for an ambush.

"Twenty of them, several at the Earl and Marquess stages, and two are Dukes," Xin Haotian said, eyes still closed.

Eleine and Sylphia, who had lower cultivation levels, couldn't sense the presences outside. When Xin Haotian suddenly spoke, their wariness increased. Meanwhile, the coachman remained unaware of the figures following the carriage, still guiding the Silver Horned horse at full speed.

Suddenly, the coachman was startled by a massive log blocking the road. He pulled the reins with all his strength, trying to halt the horse. Just before it collided with the log, the horse stopped abruptly. Before he could breathe a sigh of relief, he was shocked by the sudden appearance of multiple silhouettes rushing toward the carriage. Armed with daggers and throwing knives, they attacked mercilessly.

The coachman froze, watching in terror as the assault came straight for him. Then, without a sound or warning, something moved faster than he could perceive. The next thing he saw was the incapacitated figures in black cloaks collapsing to the ground, their arms and legs broken. The carriage door was already open, revealing Xin Haotian, still sitting calmly with his eyes closed.

Meanwhile, two figures who had been observing from the tall trees remained at a distance, not participating in the attack. Seeing the swift defeat of their comrades, they trembled.

"Mission failed. We had a wrong intel."

"Let's retreat. We need to reorganize our forces to handle this threat."

Just as they were about to activate their escape talismans, they froze—hands had suddenly appeared on their shoulders.

"You'll need to gather a lot more people, I think. You won't catch us off guard with this level of power," a voice said from behind them.

In a panic, they attacked the person behind them to gain some distance and crushed their escape talismans. The scenery instantly shifted to a dark space illuminated only by torches. Believing they had successfully teleported to safety, they relaxed momentarily—until they realized the hands were still touching one of them.

"Can you tell me where we are and what this place is?" Aldrian asked curiously, glancing around. The surroundings resembled a small artificial cave, with little to see.

The two men attempted to launch a combined attack on Aldrian, but their energy flow suddenly went awry. They felt the power within their bodies spiral out of control. Collapsing to the ground, they realized their strength was draining away. Horror filled their expressions as they stared at Aldrian. They tried to end their lives, but they

couldn't move. The energy Aldrian had siphoned into their bodies when he touched their shoulders had transformed into a paralyzing poison.

"Now, let's see who you are." The only thing reflected in the two men's eyes was his hand slowly approaching their foreheads.

In the middle of the forest, the sounds of wild beasts echoed all around. The dense bushes provided perfect cover for a predator to ambush in this untamed environment. From one thicket, Aldrian emerged from an underground passage, parting the foliage that concealed its entrance.

"Sigh, I found nothing. They're definitely a group of professional assassins. Even from their memories, it's clear they received their orders indirectly, and there are no identifiable marks on their bodies."

Aldrian focused on his surroundings, reaching out to sense his nearest domain. He detected his domain of Thorny Flower Garden.

"So, this is still Flower Garden's forest. Does that mean there's an assassin hideout within Thorny Flower Garden's domain? Did they know this?"

He set the question aside and teleported to the nearby of Thorny Flower Garden.

In the Thorny Flower Garden, the sect master Baek Ha-Yoon, faced her daughter in her workspace. Baek Ji-Min felt it necessary to speak with her mother first to avoid any misunderstandings.

"You want to know who that man is? How do you know about him?" Baek Ha-Yoon asked, narrowing her eyes with suspicion.

"I met him during my visit to the city yesterday," Baek Ji-Min replied with a serene expression. She then explained how she had approached Aldrian, leaving out some details about what she had seen in him.

Baek Ha-Yoon tapped her finger on the armrest after hearing her daughter's story, deep in thought, before letting out a sigh.

"Actually, I don't know much about him either. Last night, I wanted to confirm several things with him, but his display of power and the fact that the Heavenly Demon's Scripture has already chosen its destined one left me with no opportunity."

Baek Ji-Min was stunned. The Heavenly Demon's Scripture had already chosen its destined one? She wanted to ask more when a knock echoed from the door.

"Sect Master, I bring urgent news for you."

Chapter 95: The One Behind It?

Aldrian looked at the corpses scattered around the carriage. He saw Eleine and Sylphia tried to probe the bodies, searching for any useful information. Xin Haotian still acted as if nothing mattered to him, but Aldrian knew he never lowered his guard. When they all sensed Aldrian's return, Eleine approached him.

"They really decided to choose suicide, they must be from a professional assassin group, we found nothing on their bodies."

"There are a few assassin groups on the continent. Some even dare to operate within the Ivory Empire, so I'm not surprised they would attack us in the Thorny Flower Garden's territory," Sylphia added.

"I didn't find anything that could identify their group either, we still don't know if they acted alone or if someone hired them." Aldrian replied.

He then turned to Xin Haotian.

What do you think?"

"Not all assassins leave signs of their group during a mission. When I checked them, their armaments were fairly standard for assassins, so it's difficult to identify them just from that. However, we can narrow it down to a certain group because I found that all their weapons are made from thunder iron, which is mostly found in the northwest of the continent, in the Atria Empire. I assume they've mastered the lightning laws, and I have one particular assassin group in mind," Xin Haotian replied, his eyes still closed.

"The Thunderous Shadow Pavilion. Their whereabouts are unknown, but they're famous for using thunder iron, and most of their members practice lightning laws, which coincidentally are favored by some families in the Atria Empire. No other group outside the Atria Empire has specialized in lightning laws, which is why many believe this assassin group originated there. But we have no solid evidence to confirm it."

Aldrian grew more confused. *The Atria Empire? Why would assassins from a place I have no connection to come all the way here just to his group?* If someone wanted them dead, wouldn't the mastermind have hired one of the demon groups for the assassination? It all seemed far-fetched. He had no ties to anyone from that empire—

"Wait—I do have a connection with them," he realized, nearly forgetting that group.

"The Golden Swan Commerce."

The Golden Swan Commerce, which had its headquarters in the Atria Empire. He had uncovered their betrayal, exposing their collusion with the devils to the Ivory Empire.

The Golden Swan Commerce was a giant in the merchant world. Their business connections spanned the entire continent, with only a few merchant groups rivaling them, such as the Diamond Spirit Commerce and the Golden Phoenix Pavilion. These three were the top merchant groups, constantly battling for business domination across the continent.

The Golden Swan Commerce consistently ranked in the top three, just slightly inferior to the Golden Phoenix Pavilion, which had its headquarters in the Vindas Empire. Meanwhile, the Diamond Spirit Commerce, based in the Doria Empire, trailed closely behind.

The rivalry between the three had been well-known for generations, dating back to when their respective empires sought to rebuild after the destruction caused by the Great War three million years ago.

Yet Aldrian still couldn't understand why a powerhouse like the Golden Swan Commerce would betray the entire continent by working with the devils. With their prestigious name, it would be far more profitable for them to keep their hands clean of devilish dealings.

He shook his head. Their reasons were beyond his understanding for now. There were greater concerns weighing on his mind.

"If these assassins were really sent by the Golden Swan Commerce, do they know that I'm the one who uncovered their betrayal and hindered their operations with the devils?" Aldrian wondered. He wasn't sure if that was the truth. The evidence and reasoning strongly pointed to the Golden Swan Commerce, but if that was indeed the case, how did they know about him?

"Oh well, we'll figure it out later. Let's get out of here first."

"If your guess is correct, then I think I know why they're targeting us," he continued. "Either way, we need to be more cautious from now on. It seems they know our location and movements. From now on, Elder Sis and Sylphia, you must avoid going anywhere alone. At the very least, you should bring me or this 'elder' here to accompany you." Aldrian pointed at Xin Haotian, emphasizing the word 'elder.'

Xin Haotian's mouth twitched slightly, but he opened his eyes and looked at Aldrian.

"What are you thinking?" he asked.

Aldrian then shared his information about the Golden Swan Commerce.

"Yes, it's strange," Sylphia said, narrowing her eyes. "If they really sent these assassins, how do they know about you? Something doesn't add up."

"Let's leave this place. The Thorny Flower Garden will handle the rest—I've already notified them about our situation," Aldrian said. Before arriving here, he had sent the location of the assassins' hideout and details about the ambush to the people of the Thorny Flower Garden. Without waiting for their response, he had disappeared to join the others.

Aldrian then told the coachman, who was still staring at them in amazement, to continue the journey. The road had already been cleared, and without much delay, they resumed their trip to Blooming Flower City.

Losaris City, the next day.

The capital of the Atria Empire, Losaris, was one of the busiest cities on the continent, a place where countless opportunities awaited those destined to seize them. It was also home to the headquarters of one of the largest merchant groups on the continent.

In the noble district, within a certain manor, in a particular room, the aura of wealth was overwhelming. The room was filled with luxurious items, rare treasures and expensive artifacts from across the land. Glowing objects adorned every corner, flaunting the might and status of the room's owner.

A giant painting of a golden swan hung on the wall, commanding the attention of anyone who entered the room.

At the other side of the room, a man sat in a lavish chair, staring at a paper in his hand. He was a middle-aged man with black hair, his noble attire enhancing his masculinity and charisma. However, his furrowed brow and dark expression made it clear that the news he was reading was not favorable.

"The Ivory Empire has certainly realized something... I'm sure of it. But why do they seem so unconcerned? What are they planning?" he muttered to himself.

His thoughts drifting back to an event from a year ago. A mysterious swordmaster had shaken the continent, and from that point onward, nothing seemed to go according to his plans. After the devils' infiltration into the Ivory Empire was discovered, he had ordered all branches involved with the devils to halt their operations temporarily within the empire.

They held their breath, waiting for developments regarding the devils, fearing that their involvement would be discovered by the elves. After some time passed without any significant updates in the investigation, it seemed the Evergreen imperial family were still unaware of the Golden Swan Commerce's involvement, at least, that was what he thought.

Not long after, the Evergreen imperial family unexpectedly approached the Golden Swan Commerce branch in the Ivory Empire for deeper cooperation. Initially, he didn't find this suspicious; in fact, he was extremely pleased. The Evergreen imperial family was notoriously difficult to negotiate with compared to other powers.

For the Evergreen imperial family to seek out the Golden Swan Commerce was a significant morale boost and presented a promising opportunity to dominate the Ivory Empire's market, much to the delight of the higher-ups. They discussed the cooperation regarding black rock distribution and the exchange of certain goods that the imperial family would allow without the need for taxes.

It would truly be game-changing if he agreed, but something inside him warned that something was wrong. After a while, he began to sense that the Evergreen imperial family's behavior toward them felt like a trap, a bait for them to take.

He didn't want to ignore his intuition. One of the abilities he prided himself on as a merchant was his sharp instinct for seizing opportunities and detecting dangers. This intuition had helped the Golden Swan Commerce compete with the Golden Phoenix Pavilion.

The feeling only intensified when today he received news that the Evergreen imperial family would allow the Golden Swan Commerce to open a new distribution line in Evergreen City. To him, it felt like a red flag, and he couldn't shake the ominous feeling in his heart.

Knock knock.

The sound of knocking pulled him from his thoughts. He set down the paper and sighed.

"Come in."

After the door opened, a butler entered and bowed to him.

"The 'first finger' is here, my lord."

The man stood up and walked around the table to sit on the sofa.

"Bring him in."

After he gave the order, the butler left, and not long after, a middle-aged man entered. Once he sat down opposite the man, the man asked a question.

"How is the operation? Was it successful?"

Chapter 96: The Golden Swan Commerce's Leader

"It failed."

The man in noble attire was stunned.

"You failed? How? This isn't your first time doing this, right? Your group always completes missions like this successfully. So how did you fail?"

"Typically, we have accurate information and thorough intelligence gathering to ensure a successful mission. But this time, it seems we were given bad intel."

"Bad intel?"

"You said they were only at the Earl and Marquess stages, right? Well, that's true, we confirmed it ourselves. So we sent assassins at the Earl, Marquess, and even Duke stages, which should have been more than enough to handle them. But no one came back. Do you know what that means?"

"Could someone have helped them? Or are they stronger than they seemed?"

The First Finger nodded.

"We don't know which is true yet, but we've decided to send stronger assassins. If we fail again, we may have to pause for a while. There's a good chance they have someone at least at the King stage or of equivalent power. If that's the case, you'll have to pay more, because 'The Fingers' will have to take care of it personally."

"As for the other task, we haven't started yet. The targets are under heavy surveillance from the three great sects, even the grand elders are involved. So, Mr. Carlson Harris, do you still want to continue using our services?"

Carlson Harris gritted his teeth. The problem seemed more complicated than it initially appeared. When he first heard about the trouble at the Dual Peak Horns in Demon territory, he had dismissed it as just another typical occurrence in the cultivation world.

But when Carlson Harris heard that the incident was connected to the Yu family and the devils, he gave the matter deeper attention. The Golden Swan Commerce could extend its influence further into the Dual Peak Horns because the Yu family was no more and it all had to do with their collaboration with the devils.

The Yu family had been a threat to their business and their cooperation with the devils in the Dual Peak Horns. The region was located in a strategic position, and they needed it to serve as one of their gateways into demon territory. However, the presence of the Yu family, a local noble clan dominating the business sectors like trade and escort agencies, had prevented them from moving freely.

The city lord of Dual Peak City also had his own plans, though he didn't seem interested in eliminating the Yu family outright. Then, he as the leader of the Golden Swan Commerce and the devils concocted a scheme that would entangle the city lord in their game. But how?

By taking advantage of the Yu family's escort service, the Golden Swan Commerce orchestrated a scheme to reveal the cooperation between the devils and the city lord's manor to the Yu family.

They planned to use the city lord's name for a special mission, informing the Yu family that the city lord required their services to escort goods purchased from the Golden Swan Commerce to Vermilion City.

During the mission, the Golden Swan Commerce would ensure that the Yu family discovered the 'betrayal' of the city lord's manor by letting them see the true nature of the goods they were escorting. The goal was to have the Yu family report this back to their patriarch. They didn't care about the aftermath because the mission's ultimate objective was the annihilation of the Yu family, with the city lord's manor forced to support this outcome.

That night, the devils massacred the Yu family in an uncoordinated act, forcing the city lord's manor into their game. In the end, the city lord had no choice but to announce that the Yu family had ties to the devils.

The city lord's manor forced the Yu family to take the blame because they knew about the manor's cooperation with the devils. Even though there are somehow still survivors from the Yu family, their name is already tarnished, and their voices will be drowned out by the scorn of the people, at least that's what they believe.

The city lord's manor could only swallow their anger when their plan to keep the Yu family alive failed. Unexpectedly, they found the patriarch's wife and their son, and they instantly took them under their control.

News of these survivors made the Golden Swan Commerce restless, fearing they might know too much about the devils in Demon territory and their secret cooperation.

The Golden Swan Commerce wanted to eliminate them, but the city lord's manor had already raised its defenses against both the Commerce and the devils. Realizing they were at each other's throats, they decided not to push harder at that time.

Strangely, the devils didn't seem to care about the Yu family survivors, and it finally dawned on him that, in the end, they were all just using one another. The devils had their own agenda, the city lord's manor had theirs, and the Golden Swan Commerce had its own as well.

When news of the chaos in the Dual Peak Horns and the destruction of the city lord's manor reached them, they held their breath once again. The involvement of the three great sects complicated things even further. They finally decided to erase the last traces of their involvement with the devils: the Yu family survivors and a mysterious group that had appeared out of nowhere.

According to some of the intel the Golden Swan Commerce had gathered, this group might be the reason behind the Yu family's resurgence—and they likely knew about the devils. Therefore, they too needed to be eliminated. It was a risky operation, especially since it was within demon territory and under the influence of the three great sects. If something went wrong, he would have to say goodbye to doing business in demon territory altogether.

But all of that had failed. For a while, Carlson Harris lived in anxiety, fearing that the powerful forces on the continent would uncover their cooperation with the devils. The three great sects had yet to show their stance on the Golden Swan Commerce, but he believed it was only a matter of time before they caught wind of it.

"How is it, Mr. Carlson Harris?"

The question from the First Finger snapped him out of his thoughts. He felt exasperated. Even after employing this group of assassins with close ties to nobles and even the imperial family of the Atria Empire, he still hadn't succeeded.

"Yes, proceed. I want them all dead."

"Then wait for further news. I will come to you again, Mr. Carlson," the First Finger said as he stood up and left the room.

Left alone, Carlson Harris leaned back on the sofa and released a tired sigh. He was the patriarch of the Harris family and the leader of the Golden Swan Commerce—a man of great ambition and a sharp mind for business.

At this point, however, Carlson Harris began to question whether his decision back then had truly been the best—both for himself and for the Golden Swan Commerce. Even the devils had claimed that the outcome was already sealed, but now, doubt was creeping in.

"He was already too wet to come out of the pond, he could only move forward, even though he had betrayed the entire continent."

Carlson walked toward the window, gazing out at the garden of his manor.

"I'm only doing this for my survival... for my family's survival."

In Blooming Flower City, Aldrian had just finished his comprehension session in his room within the Plum Blossom Tower. He had been working on strengthening his karma laws and refining his techniques. His recent encounter with the three great sects had given him deeper insight into the true strength of demonic cultivators.

Even though they were within his domain, he could still sense their extraordinary power—far beyond what was typical for orthodox cultivators. He thought that perhaps only the leaders of each empire could rival them. In fact, they seemed to be a bit stronger than Emperor Ladwin, even if not for the support of the World Tree.

As Aldrian stepped out of Plum Blossom Tower, intending to take a stroll to clear his mind, he paused. His gaze fell on a woman already seated at one of the chairs provided by a nearby street vendor. She noticed him and smiled before approaching.

"How have you been?" Aldrian asked with a smile. From her flushed appearance, it seemed she had somehow benefited from his energy the previous night. She bowed her head slightly, her voice soft.

"Thank you."

"Hmm, for what?"

"For your help."

"But I didn't help with anything."

"You don't have to hide it, you were very helpful last night." she said with a smile.

Aldrian smiled in return.

"So, did you come all this way just to say thank you?"

"No, I'm here to—" she began, but her words trailed off as she noticed a man suddenly appear beside Aldrian, smiling at him. Aldrian glanced at the newcomer before releasing a sigh.

"Why are you here, Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae?"

Chapter 97: It's to Fill My Curiosity

He wore a conical straw hat, partially covering his face. A middle-aged man dressed in a white robe, with black hair and a short beard. His handsome face, sharp eyes, and sturdy frame radiated the charisma of a leader. Yet, at this moment, his expression resembled that of a kind father speaking to his son, leaving Aldrian speechless.

Everyone had said this man was the true embodiment of a demonic cultivator, but what Aldrian had seen so far felt more like a positive, enthusiastic uncle. Ryu Hyuk-Jae then glanced at Baek Ji-Min.

"Oh, I didn't realize the young miss of the Thorny Flower Garden was here. Are you close with her, Aldrian? I didn't think her mother would let her daughter get too close to you. She even bares her fangs at that brat from the Black Dragon Pavilion for trying to approach her."

He looked at Aldrian and Baek Ji-Min with astonishment. As for Baek Ji-Min, she flushed red with embarrassment before cupping her hands and bowing slightly.

"Baek Ji-Min pays her respects to the sect master of—" Before she could finish her sentence, her voice suddenly disappeared.

"Shhh, don't tell anyone. I'm here without anyone knowing," he whispered, placing a finger over his lips.

Baek Ji-Min nodded, and her voice returned. Aldrian turned to the man and asked once more,

"Why are you here, Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae?"

"I wanted to let you know that the preparations are complete, and you can come to the Piercing Heaven Sect anytime," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said.

"That's it?"

"That's it."

"...."

"Well, I'll be waiting for you at the Piercing Heaven Sect. See you soon." With that, he disappeared as if he had never been there in the first place.

Not long after, the owner of the food vendor approached Aldrian and asked for his order. Aldrian replied, asking for the vendor's recommended drink.

Aldrian then glanced back at Baek Ji-Min. He wanted to talk to her, but noticed she was staring at him with a puzzled expression.

"What did you do to make the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect come to you personally and invite you to his sect? He's acting so out of character—it's bewildering! Every time I've seen him, he's always had that rigid expression."

"I didn't do anything, but—" Aldrian paused, creating a sound barrier around them.

"But he believes I'm the destined one to comprehend the Heavenly Demon's Scripture—"

Suddenly, Baek Ji-Min grabbed Aldrian's collar.

"What?! Is that true?!"

Her voice rose sharply, and if Aldrian hadn't created the sound barrier earlier, it would have startled everyone around them. The surrounding people could only see their gestures, unable to hear their conversation.

"You... why you?" Baek Ji-Min's expression grew sad. She loosened her grip on his collar and slumped back into her seat.

She had found someone interesting, someone she thought could become a friend because he seemed different from the others. She couldn't look at his essence for too long, but at the same time, it made her feel secure and drawn to him. It was a contradiction that left her confused, but still, she followed her heart.

And now, he was telling her that the Heavenly Demon's Scripture had chosen him as the destined one? She wasn't sure if it had something to do with her being the destiny bearer of the Heavenly Demon's name, but the idea that he could be the chosen one saddened her deeply. Had he become the destiny bearer because he had met her?

"No, it's not that. Stop overthinking, and don't let yourself be consumed by negative thoughts. You need to relax your mind and stop blaming yourself for bad luck," Aldrian said, waving his hand dismissively.

Baek Ji-Min was stunned. Could he read her mind?

"To tell you the truth, I'm interested in the Heavenly Demon's Scripture. The fact that it chose me is just a coincidence, not you—so don't worry!" Aldrian added with a reassuring smile.

"Well, I'm only interested in the Heavenly Demon," he thought to himself.

"But why? You're choosing such a difficult path, one that most people would avoid. Even your companions could be affected if you pursue this," Baek Ji-Min said.

"Hmm, I'm not sure how to explain it, but what's considered a difficult path is relative to each person. Maybe it seems difficult for others, but for me, it's about satisfying my curiosity. There are many things I still need to learn, and the Heavenly Demon's Scripture is one of them. I have a feeling that I'll gain something valuable if I comprehend it," Aldrian replied.

Baek Ji-Min, whose heart had been weighed down by sadness, found herself unexpectedly enlightened by Aldrian's bold and arrogant perspective. His claim to pursue the comprehension of the Heavenly Demon's Scripture merely out of curiosity? It was such an extreme way of thinking that she momentarily forgot her own sorrow. She couldn't fully grasp his mindset, but it intrigued her all the same.

What kind of person would consider comprehending a life-changing cultivation technique as merely a way to satisfy curiosity? Baek Ji-Min stared at Aldrian like he was the craziest person she'd ever met. He just smiled, amused by her reaction. Her earlier sadness had now been replaced by an expression full of doubt.

"Don't worry, I'm not a crazy person. And by the way, you should smile more and not waste such a beautiful face on sadness," Aldrian said.

Baek Ji-Min blushed. Every word that came from his mouth was so smooth and reassuring that she couldn't find a way to argue with him. She could only sigh.

"Young Master Aldrian, you've really opened my eyes. I'm truly thankful for this conversation, it's helped cheer me up, and helped me understand you better," she said with a smile.

"Here's your drink." The vendor brought their order and placed it on the table.

"Anyway, I also came to tell you about the assassins who tried to ambush you," Baek Ji-Min continued once the vendor had left.

"Oh? What about them?" Aldrian asked.

"The two duke-stage assassins you left at their hideout, they're incredibly persistent and refuse to give up. They've tried to commit suicide several times, but we've managed to prevent it. They haven't given us any useful information yet, but based on their armaments, we've gathered that they belong to a group of assassins from the north."

"The corpses also had traces of a faint energy, which allowed us to identify that they comprehended lightning laws. With all this evidence, we can assume they belong to an assassin group called the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion."

This conclusion matched the information Aldrian had received from Xin Haotian, so there was nothing new.

"Mother flew into a rage over the boldness of this assassin group. To set up a hideout right under our noses. She's even issued a Rose Garden Division kill order for anyone who helped them or has the slightest connection to them."

The Rose Garden Division was the elite force of the Thorny Flower Garden, specializing in combat, assassination, and all the dirty work needed to eliminate those deemed a threat by the sect. They were the sect's grim reapers. The fact that the assassins had managed to establish a hideout so close to the Thorny Flower Garden without being detected was a serious insult to one of the three great sects.

"Good. Your mother is truly decisive, as expected of the sect master of one of the three great sects," Aldrian said, glancing at Baek Ji-Min to gauge her reaction. However, all he saw was a serene expression—no sadness, no anger, nothing. But Aldrian could sense her inner turmoil. He had felt it before. Whenever she mentioned her mother, even just calling her "mother" stirred chaotic emotions within her.

An awkward silence lingered for a moment before Baek Ji-Min finally spoke.

"Mother is truly decisive, and the weight on her shoulders is heavy as the sect master of the Thorny Flower Garden. Her personality has always been like that. She's a demonic cultivator and one of the leaders of the three great sects. She must be strong and decisive."

She paused, her gaze falling to her drink, a mix of various spiritual herbs. "When I was a child, I remember her playing with me, pampering me. But everything changed after she introduced me to the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture. She became distant, colder, as if she no longer cared about me."

She sighed deeply, her voice softening. "At first, I hated her for it. She was the one who brought me to the scripture—a scripture that changed my life. But as time passed, I started to understand. She couldn't neglect her responsibility as the leader of the Thorny Flower Garden. And I... I am the one destined to bear that destiny, the destiny of the Heavenly Demon's name."

Baek Ji-Min lifted her hand, intending to drink, but Aldrian gently grabbed her wrist, stopping her. She looked at him, puzzled, her expression asking, *What's wrong?* Aldrian, however, was staring at his own drink.

Then, he glanced over at the vendor with a knowing smile.

"Poison."

Chapter 98: Close Combat Against A King Stage

He looked at the vendor owner for a moment, stunned.

"Low King stage!"

He couldn't detect the owner's cultivation. For someone at his level, the owner must be using an artifact or some extraordinary technique to hide his cultivation, as he seemed able to avoid detection even from the elders and grand elders of the Thorny Flower Garden, and even from Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae. Xin Haotian was still in his room—it was impossible for someone at the King stage to evade his detection and get this close.

The vendor owner couldn't have hidden his presence, aura, and cultivation through ordinary means alone, not with so many powerful beings nearby.

After considering for a moment, he decided to handle this situation himself, leaving Baek Ji-Min to report to the Thorny Flower Garden. He created his domain, ensuring it would be safe for him and those around him.

"Miss Ji-Min, please listen. The drink has been poisoned, and I need you to notify a nearby elder, at least one with a Middle King stage cultivation, to come here." Aldrian sent a voice transmission to Baek Ji-Min.

She widened her eyes slightly before glancing at the owner.

"Why don't we just wait for the elders to arrive? It'll be safer for them to handle him," Baek Ji-Min suggested.

"If he sees the elders approaching, I'm sure he'll escape, even if it means sacrificing a few people. His real target is me, and he'll grow suspicious if i don't drink. With his King stage cultivation, things could get ugly fast if he's determined to kill me. There will be many casualties," Aldrian explained.

Baek Ji-Min hesitated.

"Please trust me. I can handle him on my own."

She bit her lip but eventually nodded.

"Okay, I'll inform the elders. Please be careful." She stood up and, without any suspicious movements, walked away.

The owner glanced at her briefly before turning his attention back to Aldrian. He watched as Aldrian stared at the drink for a moment before downing it in one go. The owner smiled faintly but quickly returned to a neutral expression as Aldrian approached him, smiling.

"Your drink is delicious. What's it called?" Aldrian asked.

"Thank you, young master. It's a traditional drink from the northern continent, usually served during celebrations among commoners. Although it's made from a mix of low-level spiritual herbs, it has a refreshing and pleasant taste," the owner replied.

"Celebration for your death," he thought to himself.

"Good, good. Here are the energy stones." Aldrian took out a low-grade energy stone and handed it to the vendor. As he gave it to him, he clasped the owner's hand in a gesture of thanks, one that didn't raise any suspicion. The owner watched as Aldrian returned to the inn, then hurriedly closed his stall.

"Mission complete. He'll be dead in 5... 4... 3... 2... 1."

Suddenly, the scenery around him shifted. Now, he found himself inside a room. Stunned, what shocked him even more was the young man standing before him. Without a word or any warning, Aldrian struck, landing a punch aimed directly at the center of the vendor's chest, targeting his middle dantian.

The owner, still reeling from the sudden change in surroundings and Aldrian's swift action, almost lost his footing. But he was still a King stage cultivator. With a nimble move, he barely dodged the punch by a hair's breadth and retaliated with a fist aimed at Aldrian's face. Aldrian blocked the blow with his other hand.

The owner was shocked to find his fist caught in Aldrian's grip, unable to pull free. It felt as though his hand was trapped in the jaws of a beast. Desperate, he unleashed his powerful aura and energy, trying to suppress Aldrian, but suddenly, his energy flow became chaotic. He couldn't circulate it smoothly.

He finally detected a foreign energy already blocking some of his meridians. He saw Aldrian's fist strike coming for his middle dantian again. With one hand still trapped, there was no way to dodge. Left with no other option, he tried to meet the strike with his fist.

The moment their hands connected, the sound of cracking bones echoed through the room.

He grimaced in pain, overwhelmed by the sheer strength of Aldrian's body. The golden energy coursing through Aldrian not only made him powerful but also enhanced his physical form, surpassing even that of a typical body cultivator.

"Don't underestimate me!" the owner roared, pushing himself to break free from the blocked meridians with his powerful King stage cultivation. Strands of lightning began crackling across his body, trying to destroy everything around him. Yet, strangely, the

small room remained undamaged, with the space merely wobbling as the lightning touched the walls.

"A barrier! And a strong one at that," he realized.

Aldrian swiftly distanced himself from the owner as the lightning raged in all directions.

"Dealing with a King stage inside such a confined space is troublesome," he muttered.

He had attempted to turn the energy inside the owner's body into a paralyzing poison, but the man's King stage cultivation was too strong to be fully subdued by just that. Even Aldrian's energy suppression wasn't enough, their cultivation gap was too wide to make a significant difference. Aldrian quickly gathered his golden energy into his fist and teleported right behind the owner. With all his strength, he delivered a powerful punch to the man's back.

Caught off guard by Aldrian's sudden teleportation, the owner tried to block the incoming strike, but it was too late. The punch landed squarely in the middle of his back, right at his middle dantian. Blood spurted from his mouth as his body was flung against the wall with a loud thud.

He collapsed to the floor, and to his horror, he felt his energy leaking uncontrollably from his body.

"My dantian is shattered!" he thought, terror-stricken. But before he could process his defeat, Aldrian was already beside him, lifting him up effortlessly.

The man could no longer resist. With his cultivation shattered, he was as powerless as a weak mortal.

"How—" the owner tried to speak, but Aldrian ignored him and pressed a hand to his forehead. He wanted to see what kind of information he could extract. After all, sending someone at the King stage meant this man must hold some standing within the group, right? He couldn't afford to let him commit suicide, so he restrained his body with his energy.

As Aldrian delved into the owner's memories, he encountered a seal, a standard procedure used by organizations to protect their secrets when a member is captured. The seal was complex, but Aldrian managed to break it within a minute. Wasting no time, he sifted through the man's memories, searching for the most important information. Finally, he found a piece of information.

After a moment, he released the owner's forehead. The man had already fainted, the combined of extreme pain of his shattered dantian and the mental invasion are too much to bear. Aldrian stood, pondering what he had just learned.

"The man who ordered this assassination doesn't just want to kill me—he's also targeting Eleine, Sylphia, and Xin Haotian," He sighed in relief. This confirmed that the group of assassins, and the mastermind behind them, didn't know his true identity. It seemed the mastermind had sent these assassins purely because of the recent events at the Dual Peak Horns. He started putting the pieces together.

"The events at the Dual Peak Horns... If this is connected to the Golden Swan Commerce, then why did they only start targeting us after that incident?" Aldrian slapped his forehead.

"Of course. They don't want their connection to the devils exposed. The only ones who know about the devils' involvement in the Dual Peak Horns are the city lord's manor, the devils themselves, the Yu family, and us. They must have figured out an unknown group helped the Yu family." Aldrian felt concern for the Yu family.

"They'll likely try to eliminate the Yu family now that the city lord's manor is gone. They're trying to erase any trace that points back to their connection with the devils."

He could only hope that the support of the three great sects would be enough to slow their movement until he could find a solution.

"The Fingers, huh, what is that? I'd better ask Xin Haotian about that later."

He glanced at the door before Aldrian dispelled the formation and canceled the barrier.

Creak.

Aldrian looked toward the door as it opened. Xin Haotian scanned the room briefly before his gaze settled on the unconscious man lying on the floor.

"It's really surprising. You managed to subdue him in such a small space. As expected from the young master I admire," Xin Haotian remarked.

Aldrian ignored the compliment. He hadn't had much choice. There wasn't a suitable place within this two-kilometer domain to fight a King stage cultivator without causing significant damage or drawing attention. To trap an assassin of this caliber, he chose the confined room to limit any chance of escape. Before teleporting the owner into the room, he had informed Xin Haotian of the assassin's King stage cultivation and asked him to be on standby in case something happened outside.

"But to evade my senses like that... He must have used some extraordinary method," Xin Haotian said.

"Do you know about 'the Fingers'?" Aldrian asked.

Chapter 99: Time to Visit the Piercing Heaven sect

"The Fingers? That's the name of the nine emperor-stage assassins in the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion," Xin Haotian said.

"They'll send the Fingers if this assassination fails," Aldrian said, looking at the fainted man.

"It seems they're determined to kill you, even if they have to use the Fingers. Congratulations on attracting emperor-stage assassins." Xin Haotian said, making a mock clapping gesture.

"They're also targeting you and others, including the Yu family."

"..."

Xin Haotian was silent for a moment.

"Well, they're asking for death if they come after us. Anyway, it looks like many are approaching this place, most of them at the king stage, and a few even at the emperor stage."

"Hmmm, they must be from the Thorny Flower Garden. I already told Miss Ji-Min to bring support," Aldrian said as multiple presences arrived, surrounding the Plum Blossom Tower.

Aldrian then greeted an emperor-stage cultivator outside his room—a black-cloaked woman at the middle emperor stage. She was the leader of the Rose Garden and one of the sect master's right hands. Aldrian handed over the now-crippled assassin to her and glanced at Baek Ji-Min, who looked at him with concern.

"Are you alright?" she asked.

"Hmm, don't worry. That man couldn't even scratch me," he said, waving his hand with a smile. Meanwhile, Sylphia watched their interaction, narrowing her eyes. The way Baek Ji-Min spoke to Aldrian made her suspicious and uneasy, so she approached her.

"Don't worry, Miss Baek. Aldrian is much stronger than you think," Sylphia said, her tone subtly hinting that she had known Aldrian much longer. Baek Ji-Min raised an eyebrow at Sylphia's sudden approach.

"Although he's strong, it's still worrisome as a friend to see him face such enemies. Don't you feel concerned when your companion fights with a cultivation lower than his?"

"Oh, you've already become his friend after just a few days?" Sylphia replied. "And of course I worry, but I believe in Aldrian and his ability to handle things."

"Is that so?"

Aldrian noticed the conversation and the rising tension between them. He took a step back, then turned and walked towards Xin Haotian.

"Trying to escape?" Xin Haotian asked with a smirk.

"No, I just want to take a walk to clear my mind," Aldrian replied.

"You're trying to avoid problems, I see."

Sometimes, Aldrian felt the urge to punch Xin Haotian in the face just to shut him up—though, to be fair, what he said wasn't complete nonsense. Still, the way Xin Haotian smirked while making his comments was incredibly irritating. Aldrian sighed.

"Let's head to the Piercing Heaven Sect today. With the failed assassination attempt, they'll send the Fingers. We'll be safer in the Piercing Heaven Sect's domain... well, I hope so."

"The Piercing Heaven Sect is located in the southern part of Demon territory. Its domain is more secluded, between high mountains. If the Fingers somehow learn you're going there, I predict they'll wait for you to leave. Everyone knows what happens to troublemakers inside the Piercing Heaven Sect's domain," Xin Haotian said.

Aldrian spread his senses once more throughout his domain, scanning for any anomalies. He wanted to make sure there were no more assassins lurking in the area. Seeing the two women still in heated conversation, he decided to ignore it for now until things calmed down.

"Young master, you truly have fortune with women. It seems you'll have no difficulties in the future," a sudden voice transmission from Eleine teased. He glanced at her, noting the playful expression on her face.

"You too, Eleine?" Aldrian asked.

"What, young master? I don't understand," Eleine said, her grin widening.

"Lady Irene and Lord Aldrey will be proud of your achievements when they find out what you've done, young master."

Hearing about his parents suddenly made him miss them. It had been over three years since he last saw them.

"Father and mother... can I meet them?" Aldrian asked. Eleine's playful expression faded, replaced by a solemn look.

"No, you can't, young master. Not right now. Lady Irene and Lord Aldrey's situation is... complicated. I know you're strong, and in fact, I believe with your power, you could help with the issues between them. But this isn't something that can be solved by strength alone, young master."

Aldrian sighed.

"At least tell me about my father and mother's families. I want to know who they are." He already knew about his father's family from the sword his father had given him—the description from his Eyes of the Heaven revealed his father's family name. But when it came to his mother, he knew nothing. The only clue he had was Eleine herself, his mother's aide.

Obviously, he couldn't just search her memories—that would hurt her, be disrespectful, and taint their relationship.

"I'm sorry, young master, I can't tell you just yet. Knowing your personality, I know you'd plan a visit. I know you miss them and want to help, but please bear with me. The time will come when you can meet them," she said, attempting to bow as she forgot their 'roleplay' but Aldrian gently held her shoulders.

"Forget it, Eleine. I believe in you. You don't have to feel guilty. The important thing is that father and mother are safe and sound. I can meet them in the future," he said softly through a voice transmission, his tone reassuring.

Eleine looked at Aldrian's face, her guilt evident. Truthfully, she felt sad for him. She knew how much he wanted to see them after this journey, and if she had told him, he would have gone without hesitation. Knowing her young master's nature, she could imagine what he might do if Lord Aldrey's and Lady Irene's families opposed their relationship.

Forget about the war between the two families or even the two empires. With her young master's capabilities, Eleine feared it would turn into a bloodbath on all sides. The politics within the empires, combined with the families' positions as guardians of the border with the Devil Territory, meant many would take advantage of any instability within the Rivas and Flamecrest families.

The devils, too, would seize the opportunity to strike if there was any weakness. Aldrian wasn't someone who would take this lightly, and that's why she feared it could escalate into widespread bloodshed.

Aldrian then looked at his group.

"I think we should head to the Piercing Heaven Sect today. It's better to leave as soon as possible. This assassin group will likely send even stronger assassins."

The group stopped to listen to Aldrian, nodding in agreement with his decision, though one of them seemed saddened. Sensing her mood, Aldrian sent a voice transmission.

"Don't be sad. I'll visit this place again after I'm done at the Piercing Heaven Sect."

Baek Ji-Min's mood lifted at his words, and she simply nodded. After talking to the group for a while, Aldrian returned to his room.

In a room at an unknown location, two people sat facing each other. The space resembled a library, filled with scrolls and books. One was an old man with white hair, his face marked by the experience of countless battles, scars scattered across his skin. The other was who had spoken with the leader of the Golden Swan Commerce, the First Finger.

"Still no news?" the old man asked.

"No, nothing yet," the First Finger replied.

"Then we can consider it a failure."

"It seems we've encountered a particularly strong target this time."

"Well, that's the risk of this line of work. The Golden Swan Commerce really wants them dead, so we'll have to carry out what we agreed upon."

"Our target is truly mysterious. Their cultivation level is likely fake, and now I'll have to mobilize the Fingers to deal with them. To make things more complicated, Thorny Flower Garden is furious and has increased their surveillance. It's going to be much harder to kill them within their domain. The Yu family is also under heavy watch by the three great sects, with many experts around. It seems they're still worried about the devils," the First Finger said.

"Who would've thought the City Lord's Manor of Dual Peak Horns City would be in league with the devils," he added.

"It seems the devils have already spread to parts of the continent. If they've infiltrated both the Ivory Empire and the Demon Territory, we can safely assume they've spread across the entire continent. This mission also feels strange to me. Want to hear my thoughts?" the old man suddenly asked.

The First Finger looked curious. "What are you thinking?"

"I believe the Golden Swan Commerce may have ties to the devils," the old man added.

The First Finger was shocked. "What makes you say that?"

"The mission to kill the Yu family and this unknown group is directly linked to the devils and the City Lord's Manor. Why would the Golden Swan Commerce want them dead? In every sense, they're victims of the devils. Doesn't that seem strange to you? It feels like the Golden Swan Commerce is trying to hide something."

The First Finger solemnly pondered for a moment, nodding. It made sense. If this was true, could it mean they were indirectly helping the devils?

"I'll take action myself this time," the old man suddenly announced.

The First Finger was shocked again. "Why? You don't need to get involved."

"I just need a bit of exercise. We have a nice target, so why not take advantage of it?" the old man said as he began walking away.

Chapter 100: The Piercing Heaven Sect

Vermilion City is located within the Piercing Heaven Sect's domain, it's also the closest city to the sect and the one with a teleportation station. The city is surrounded by a mountainous range, with some peaks so high they seem to pierce the clouds, as if trying to pierce the heaven.

The city's name comes from the vermilion-colored diamonds scattered around its vicinity. At sunrise and sunset, the sun's light causes these diamonds to radiate a beautiful glow, making the surrounding mountains appear like a sky full of stars.

Due to its proximity to the Piercing Heaven Sect, only a three hour journey by carriage, the city attracts many demonic cultivators who aspire to join the most powerful force in Demon Territory and seek opportunities. As a result, Vermilion City is a gathering place for powerful cultivators from various backgrounds, all seeking the opportunities provided by the city and the sect.

In conclusion, this is a city of both stunning beauty and a place to seek power. At this moment, four figures wander along the bustling streets, two men and two women. They are none other than Aldrian and his companions. Having arrived not long ago, they are now searching for an inn. The sun is already low in the western sky, and sunset is fast approaching.

"This place is really beautiful and peaceful. I'd love to experience living in this city if I could," Sylphia said.

"Yes, even though there are so many powerful people here, the city seems orderly," Eleine added.

"This city is under the Piercing Heaven Sect's influence, and its proximity to the sect spells death for anyone who causes trouble here," Xin Haotian explained.

Aldrian looked at his surroundings—at the people, the energy in the air—and was amazed by the abundance of Heaven and Earth energy, as well as the high average cultivation level of the city's residents.

"It's really incredible. The energy of Heaven and Earth here is abundant, like I'm standing near the World Tree. Was this city built on top of an energy stone mine or something? No wonder the average cultivation here is so high, and so many people flock to this place."

He had visited many places within the Ivory Empire, and he had to admit that few could rival this city in terms of energy abundance and cultivation levels. Only places blessed by the presence of a mature World Tree, thousands of years old, could match the amount of energy here.

Their admiration and sightseeing were suddenly interrupted by a man blocking their path. He wore a black robe and had a young face, but his cultivation, at the Low King Stage, was evident.

"Young Master Aldrian and his companions, correct?" he asked.

"Yes. Who are you?" Aldrian replied.

"I am Ryu Dong-Geun, a disciple of the Piercing Heaven Sect's master. I was sent by my master to greet you and bring you to the sect," he said, cupping his hands in respect.

"Oh, from Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae. Sure, please show us the way," Aldrian said, returning the gesture.

They were then escorted to one side of the city, where a vast field full of flying beasts awaited. They were led to a carriage, but this one was connected by sturdy materials to the bodies of four giant white cranes.

"Since the Piercing Heaven Sect is located high in the mountains, it's more comfortable to use an air carriage rather than a regular one. Please enjoy the ride," Ryu Dong-Geun said, gesturing for them to enter.

Once inside, the four giant white cranes flapped their wings, creating a surge of wind that swept through the surroundings before they lifted off, pulling the carriage with them. Aldrian was amazed by how smooth the ride was, there was little shaking or vibration during takeoff. The mechanism of the carriage allowed it to remain steady, no matter how the beasts pulling it moved.

Aldrian had flown on a wyvern before, but this was a new experience for him, an air carriage where he didn't have to worry about strong winds. The breathtaking scenery of towering mountains accompanied them on their journey, and after a few minutes, he spotted a flat expanse of land nestled between the mountains.

The flatland was home to many buildings, and numerous people could be seen training and cultivating. A thin mist surrounded the area, making it seem like a secluded dwelling of immortals, hidden from the mortal world.

"Everyone, welcome to the Piercing Heaven Sect," Ryu Dong-Geun announced.

They then landed in a part of the sect designated as a special area for avian beasts like the white cranes to land with their carriages. As Aldrian and the others stepped out, they were greeted by the smiling face of Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae, literally right in front of Aldrian. Ryu Dong-Geun could only smile bitterly at his master's behavior, fully aware of his master's high enthusiasm.

"Sorry, Sect Master, could you move back a bit? You're too close." Aldrian said, looking at this weird man. He also noticed a few elders behind the sect master, whom Aldrian assumed were grand elders due to their Emperor Stage cultivation.

"Welcome to the Piercing Heaven Sect, Aldrian! I hope you enjoy your stay. Even though I only saw you a few hours ago, it feels like it's been a long time," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said with a smile. His response gave everyone who knew him goosebumps. Some even began to wonder if this was a stranger disguised as their sect master.

Yet, those who understood the situation knew why the sect master was acting this way. Though there were many opinions on the fact that the Heavenly Demon's scripture might be comprehended by someone from outside the Demon Territory, they kept their thoughts to themselves.

"Let's go, don't just stand here. I've already prepared rooms for you and your companions. You can relax and enjoy yourselves for now," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said, turning to lead the way.

Aldrian and his group followed the sect master through the sect grounds. There wasn't much difference compared to other sects, but the density of Heaven and Earth energy here was far greater than in the city. Aldrian could also sense hidden presences scattered throughout the sect.

"So, when are you planning to visit the Temple of the Heavenly Demon?" Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae asked as they walked.

"Didn't you just tell me to enjoy myself first? Now you're already asking about the temple," Aldrian thought before replied with a light chuckle.

"To be honest, I don't have a specific time in mind. I'm not sure what to expect, so I could visit the temple even now if needed."

"How about tomorrow morning? You can rest for now," Ryu Hyuk-Jae suggested.

Aldrian simply nodded and followed the arrangement. Some of the disciples they encountered immediately bowed to their entourage, or more accurately, bowed to the sect master. Although they had questions about the newcomer, they dared not approach with the sect master leading them.

Eventually, they arrived at a solitary guest pavilion on a higher elevation, offering a full view of the Piercing Heaven Sect. It was clear that the pavilion was strategically placed to showcase the sect's grandeur and the breathtaking scenery surrounding it, a way of displaying its might.

"Please enjoy your stay here. I'll notify you if anything comes up. For now, see you," Ryu Hyuk-Jae said with a smile, his gaze lingering on Aldrian. Without waiting for a response, he turned and walked away like a contented uncle. His disciple, Ryu Dong-Geun, could only twitch his mouth in slight embarrassment at his master's behavior before turning to Aldrian, cupping his hands respectfully.

"I apologize for my master's behavior. Ever since he returned from the Temple of the Heavenly Demon that day, he hasn't quite been the same."

"Is Sect Master Ryu Hyuk-Jae really as fearsome as the rumors say? All I've seen is an enthusiastic uncle this entire time," Aldrian asked via voice transmission to Ryu Dong-Geun.

"What if I told you it's true? He didn't earn the nickname 'Mad Demon' for nothing. Don't be fooled by how he acts in front of you. His real personality is the one everyone knew before—before he changed overnight. Even I still can't believe it. How could someone change so drastically? Maybe it was sheer happiness that altered his personality," Ryu Dong-Geun explained.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. The Heavenly Demon's scripture clearly meant a great deal to Ryu Hyuk-Jae. For it to finally show a reaction would indeed be enough to thrill him beyond measure.

"Anyway, enjoy your stay, and we hope you succeed tomorrow," Ryu Dong-Geun added with a smile.

"Thank you for your company," Aldrian said, cupping his hands respectfully.

With that, they finally settled into the guest pavilion, awaiting the events of the following day. Aldrian couldn't help but wonder what will happen tomorrow? Anticipation stirred within him as he thought of tomorrow event.

