

# An Understated Dominance Chapter 2495

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“The real question is, even if we understand Cardinal Dragon Marshal’s intentions, how do we stop him?” Austin pressed.

Cardinal Dragon Marshal had vanished without a trace. Their forces hadn’t even come close to catching him, leaving them with no clear path to pursue him.

West Lucozia is a vast and resource-rich nation. Blocking every possible route into the country is simply impractical. While it might be manageable in the short term, prolonged efforts would severely harm West Lucozia’s economy. Devoting such resources to capturing a single fugitive isn’t a wise decision.

“Cardinal Dragon Marshal is now a wanted man across the city. He can’t use official routes to leave the country; his only option is to sneak across the border,” Dustin explained. “Based on the sea charts, if he’s heading from West Lucozia to Lecanon, he’ll have to pass through Bohai Country. That’s our starting point. We need to investigate how many smuggling routes exist between West Lucozia and Bohai Country.”

“Understood. I’ll handle it immediately,” Austin replied. He quickly summoned his personal guards and issued the necessary orders.

The palace staff worked with remarkable efficiency. Within half an hour, a detailed map of smuggling routes was delivered to Austin. When unfolded, the map revealed dozens of winding paths leading from West Lucozia’s border to Bohai Kingdom’s docks and ports. Five routes, marked in red, stood out prominently.

These red routes weren’t found on standard maps. They were secret paths used for smuggling and illegal immigration, operated by corrupt businessmen and officials for profit. The palace had already gathered this intelligence but had yet to act on it.

“Brother, look,” Austin said, pointing to the map. “These are the five main smuggling routes into Bohai Kingdom. If your theory is correct, Cardinal Dragon Marshal will likely choose one of them. If we station troops along these routes, we can intercept him.”

“Cardinal Dragon Marshal is a skilled martial artist with sharp instincts. Deploying large numbers of soldiers could alert him and scare him off,” Dustin cautioned. The fugitive was already on edge and would flee at the slightest hint of danger.

“You’re right,” Austin conceded, nodding thoughtfully. “Sending a massive force isn’t the best move. But if we only send a small elite team, I’m concerned they won’t be enough to stop him.”

Even weakened by the Ten Fragrance Softening Powder, Cardinal Dragon Marshal had managed to escape the palace. Ordinary soldiers would be no match for him. Only an elite force like the Dragon Guard could guarantee success. However, the Dragon Guard was limited in number—just a few hundred strong—and couldn’t cover all five routes simultaneously. Splitting their forces would only weaken them, and with the Pantheon’s masters potentially backing Cardinal Dragon Marshal, a direct confrontation could end in failure.

“There’s no need to overcomplicate this,” Dustin said calmly. “Block four of the routes with your troops. Leave the last one to me.”

“I see! So this is the ‘snake-luring’ strategy you mentioned. Brilliant!” Austin quickly grasped the plan. By blocking four routes and leaving one open, they would give Cardinal Dragon Marshal a false sense of hope, leading him straight into Dustin’s trap. This way, they could avoid alerting him while ensuring his capture.

As for whether Dustin could handle Cardinal Dragon Marshal alone, Austin had no doubts. His elder brother had defeated top warriors from the champion list. A cornered Cardinal Dragon Marshal wouldn’t stand a chance. He had simply picked the wrong enemy.

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As dawn broke, the search operation in West Lucozia’s Royal City continued. Although Dustin and Austin had their plan in place, they maintained the appearance of an active manhunt to avoid raising suspicions among the Pantheon’s agents.

Meanwhile, outside the royal city, in a secluded house with a courtyard, a hidden mechanism creaked. The secret door behind a bookcase slowly opened, and Alec, a rugged man with a crew cut, stepped out cautiously, followed by several subordinates. After scanning the area for threats, Alec turned and called out, “General, it’s clear. You can come out now.”

“Damn it! I was suffocating in there!” Cardinal Dragon Marshal emerged, cursing and covered in dust. After spending the night in a dark, damp tunnel, he was relieved to breathe fresh air again. He slumped into a chair and poured himself a cup of cold tea.

But as he raised the cup to his lips, he hesitated, his eyes darting to Alec. The memory of the poisoned tea in the palace still haunted him.

“Don’t worry, General. It’s not poisoned,” Alec reassured him with a smile. To prove it, he took the cup from Cardinal Dragon Marshal and drank it in one go.

“Can’t be too careful. Once bitten, twice shy,” Cardinal Dragon Marshal muttered, finally drinking the tea with some peace of mind.

Suddenly, footsteps echoed outside the door. Cardinal Dragon Marshal’s expression hardened, and he instinctively reached for his sword, ready to strike.