

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 568: The Invasion Begin[1,559 words]

Chapter 568: The Invasion Begin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From the way he saw it, the devil lord seemed to depend heavily on summoning beasts as part of his plan to hold the invasion. Luckily, the other places did not have the capacity to summon beasts as strong as those here, since this area was the main site for summoning.

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

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

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

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

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

"Incoming—"

Boom!

Rumble!

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

"Aggh!"

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

"Prepare yourselves!"

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

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

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

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

Boom!

Rumble!

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

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

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

"Uwo!"

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

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

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

"AHH!"

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

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

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

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

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

"That is Commander Shang."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Agh!"

"Ugh!"

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

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

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 569: Strategy of Search and Destroy [1,635 words]

Chapter 569: Strategy of Search and Destroy

A one-sided battle takes place a thousand kilometers behind the Arbrus Fortress. The attackers are only a small group of a dozen cultivators, but they are the ones delivering devastating blows.

The devils are truly caught off guard, unaware that the invasion force has breached this far into their territory—and that too by a group of emperor-stage cultivators with the weakest among them is already at the middle emperor stage.

The strongest is a high emperor stage cultivator, none other than the emperor of the Vindas Empire himself.

Emperor Herman, wielding his family's legacy weapon, the Heavenly Dragon Sword, gains a significant boost in strength and becomes unstoppable. Along with his group of emperor-stage cultivators, he wreaks havoc across the entire area surrounding the summoning formation located here.

The devils are still in the middle of the summoning process and do not have time to complete it, as they are suddenly attacked by this force. Worst of all, the strongest among them are only two middle emperor stage devils who remain behind to guard the site. With just the two of them, there is no way to stop the onslaught of a dozen emperor-stage cultivators led by a high emperor.

Slash! Whoosh!

Rumble!

Each strike from the Heavenly Dragon Sword, wielded by Emperor Herman, is devastating—cutting through the land and even slicing space itself, creating a chaotic battlefield. The devils are like fish on a chopping board, with no chance to escape. Every counterattack they attempt against Emperor Herman is effortlessly deflected by a single wave of his sword.

"Argh!"

"You bastards! Once our god descends, you won't be able to escape! You'll be consumed by darkness!"

The devils screamed as they were slaughtered, their body parts flying in every direction. But the invading force did not pause for even a moment. The devils' words meant nothing to them—they continued the killing without hesitation.

The battle lasted no more than twenty minutes, and not a single devil survived, despite their numbers reaching into the thousands. The invading group suffered no casualties, having thoroughly prepared the ambush. Every one of them was far stronger than the devils present, who included only a few emperor-stage cultivators.

"Crazy bastards. To think those devils actually sacrificed so many of their own. And they even had prisoners... Looks like they've been kidnapping people from the empires for years to use as sacrifices," said one of the middle emperor-stage cultivators as he looked over the ruined land.

Like the one at Aldrian's summoning site, there were many sacrifices found here too—though not as many as in Aldrian's location.

"Luckily, we were able to stop the summoning. If not, it would have been troublesome," said another cultivator.

Emperor Herman nodded.

"Well, thanks to young Aldrian's information, we learned that the devils had something like this behind their lines. Now that we've taken care of it, it's time to prepare another ambush—this time at the devils' camp southwest of here," he said.

When Aldrian revealed the information about the summoning sites, the leadership quickly adjusted their strategy and launched a bold plan. They formed small elite teams made up entirely of emperor-stage cultivators, with the weakest at the middle emperor stage. Each group had to include at least one high emperor stage cultivator as leader, and at least one holy-element cultivator for support.

Why this formation? Because they needed swift action in a limited time. With middle emperor stage as the minimum, the teams could move quickly and strike hard—more than enough to overwhelm standard devil forces, as long as they didn't encounter one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

They have to infiltrate behind enemy lines first, before the main force of the alliance attacks the fortresses. Their task is simple: search and destroy. They will search for the summoning sites, according to the information, located much deeper than the fortresses and destroy them before the summoning process can be completed.

At this moment, across the border, all these groups are carrying out this dangerous task, as they are unaware whether there are any traps or large enemy forces surrounding the sites. Some of the groups even have to take detours, as they must pass around the massive armies of devils stationed in the rear areas behind the fortresses.

There are already more than a million devils spread across the border, including those positioned at the fortresses, so the infiltrators must be extremely cautious not to be detected.

But the strategy does not end there. It also takes into account the concentration of these large enemy forces. The next step, after successfully eliminating the summoning sites, is for the small groups to move toward the nearest gathering point of the devil forces and wait for the main invasion force to arrive. Once the main army attacks the devils' massed formation, these small groups will launch an ambush or initiate a pincer attack from the rear.

With this strategy, the devils would lose focus and be forced to divide their attention, preventing them from concentrating their armies against the main force.

After successfully eliminating the devils in the area, Emperor Herman's group proceeded to the next phase, flying toward the southwest.

At another location, a similar scene unfolded as another summoning site was destroyed. This time, it was the site behind the fortress region near the Doria Empire. Here, a mixed group of elves and humans could be seen.

Having just finished destroying the summoning site, they were preparing to move on to the next step. The one leading the group was Emperor Ladwin.

"I don't think there's anything here that needs our attention. Let's move to the nearest group of devils—"

Before he could finish his words, his communication artifact signaled an incoming communication. He took it out and held it near his ear to hear what it was.

"Your Majesty, this is Elthar. My apologies, but it seems we're slightly too late. One of the summoning sites near our area has already completed its ritual. Six beasts have emerged and are now heading toward the main invasion force," came the voice of Imperial Teacher Elthar. In the background, the rumbling of battle could be faintly heard.

"Five are land beasts, and one is an avian type. Four of them are at the middle emperor stage, and the other two are at the low emperor stage. We're currently holding back the land beasts, but the avian one—a flying creature we've never seen before, at the middle emperor stage—is incredibly fast. I couldn't keep up with it. This spiritual beast clearly specializes in speed."

"I've had to stop pursuing it and focus on containing the other beasts and the devils advancing with them."

Emperor Ladwin frowned at the report. Elthar had recently broken through to the high emperor stage, and his flying speed should already be formidable. Yet he had still fallen behind a middle emperor stage beast. It seemed this particular creature was indeed specialized in speed.

"Alright, focus on holding your position. Let the main force handle the one heading their way. It's just a single avian beast—our main force should be able to deal with it," the emperor replied.

"Yes, Your Majesty."

With that, the communication ended, and Emperor Ladwin resumed their plan to form a pincer position against the devils from behind.

Near the border area, a flying beast moved so fast that it left only an afterimage as it raced toward the main invasion force. The devils who saw the beast fly past shouted their war cries, signaling that their summoned beasts had appeared. This was a sign that they would soon move toward the nearest fortress already under attack by the alliance forces.

But their spirit and happiness did not last long. Suddenly, the avian beast was intercepted by another flying spiritual beast—much larger and stronger—approaching from the side. This newcomer had peak emperor stage cultivation! However, the devils were shocked to sense strong devil energy emanating from it.

What was going on? Was this a case of blue on blue? Why was that beast attacking its own kind?

The newcomer spiritual beast pierced the avian beast's body, instantly engulfing it in black flames that caused the devils to shudder. The flames rapidly consumed the avian beast, turning it to ash within seconds.

The devils, numbering in the thousands, could only watch as the avian beast turned to ash. What could they do? The newcomer beast was actually peak emperor stage; there was no way they could stand against it.

The devils' hearts shuddered as the newcomer beast turned to face them. Without any warning, it flew toward them, attacking with black flames that exuded from its body.

"Arrgh!"

"Why?"

Instantly, tens of thousands of devils perished, as the power of a peak emperor stage easily obliterated them. Even the emperor stage devils couldn't escape.

After the devils here were wiped out, the flying beast, which was actually the golden phoenix, flew in another direction. She had been ordered by Aldrian to assist the alliance, and she intended to do so wholeheartedly. This was also her chance to stretch her muscles, as she had not had an opportunity to act since her summoning.

With this chance, she could prove her ability to her master and show that she could handle the job with a flying score.

While the border area inside devil territory was already engulfed in the flames of war, Aldrian had moved much deeper into the devil lands. The sun had already set, and the sky was dark, making the atmosphere around him even more intense.

Night in devil territory was very different from anywhere else on the continent, filled with thick negative energy, after all.

He kept moving until he finally sensed another presences ahead of him.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 570: Grand Canyon of Offering Souls[1,616 words]

Chapter 570: Grand Canyon of Offering Souls

Aldrian had already arrived in the region where he found himself facing a canyon. The canyon stretched as far as he could see toward the horizon. This place was truly terrifying—the concentration of devil energy here was far higher than anywhere else he had encountered until now.

As Aldrian stopped at the top of the deep gorge, he looked down at the base, where a river flowed, and he could sense many presences within the canyon. Although the terrain was dark due to the absence of light, it did not hinder his sight; he could view the landscape as clearly as if it were a normal day.

From what he sensed for a split second just now, he detected a few powerful auras belonging to beasts at the emperor stage.

He needed to pass through this region if he did not want to take a detour. Looking at this region, he recalled something from the memories of the devils he had killed in the past. He remembered that a few devils had spoken about a forbidden zone hidden within the devil territory.

Inside the devil territory, there is a grand canyon region even the devils themselves avoid, a place so dangerous that even the Seven Deadly Sins must remain wary of it.

This forbidden region is called the *Grand Canyon of Offering Souls*.

It is called that because anyone who enters this area is no different from offering their life to the canyon. A dangerous place filled with ominous things—beasts and strange plants that thrive in the harsh environment of the devil territory, especially in this region.

He created his domain here and recklessly extended his senses to the limit, as if announcing his arrival. The moment he spread his sense without restraint, the roar of a beast echoed across the canyon. In an instant, the auras and senses of the powerful beasts surged toward him, as if trying to see who was arrogant enough to behave so pompously in their home.

Aldrian let them examine him, and after a few moments, they seemed to lose interest and withdrew their senses. He smiled. Perhaps they thought he was just a mere Grand Duke-level cultivator, but that was fine. He didn't care about them. All he wanted was to uncover the information hidden in this place, a region said to contain mysteries still unresolved to this day.

Aldrian sensed the strongest beast within his domain, and decided to teleport directly beside it. The beast turned out to be a massive mountain goat, its horns sharp like thorns. It stood casually on a cliff wall, appearing to be at rest.

But the moment it sensed a sudden presence beside it, the beast opened its eyes and found Aldrian floating at eye level. Its eyes widened in shock, but before it could react, Aldrian reached out, touching its head and injecting golden energy into its body.

The high emperor-stage beast finally responded, swinging its head to strike Aldrian with its horns. But it was already too late. The golden energy had already seeped into its head and soul. The beast's body trembled, and a sudden surge of pain struck deep within.

"Roargh!" it roared in agony as it fell from the cliff wall, crashing into the depths of the gorge. When its massive body hit the ground, the impact sent a tremor through the area.

Aldrian then stepped onto the head of the fallen beast and looked into its eyes, which still reflected its pain. The energy he injected through the head was always the most effective—it reached the soul faster than if delivered through any other part of the body.

He altered the properties of his energy, turning it into poison that directly attacked the soul. The pain it caused was unimaginable for anyone unfortunate enough to become his target.

After more than fifteen seconds of agony, Aldrian finally stopped, allowing the beast to breathe. The giant goat wasted no time, drawing in deep breaths to calm itself, its eyes still fixed on Aldrian—whose figure was barely larger than the beast's eye.

It couldn't understand what had just happened. This human, who appeared to be nothing more than a weak Grand Duke-stage cultivator, possessed an energy like that?

Its soul and mind were still shaken, and inwardly, it was truly shocked by the energy it had felt invading its body. The beast's eye trembled as it stared at Aldrian, who stood calmly on its face.

"I know you can communicate with me," Aldrian said calmly. "I only want information about this place. So it would be better for you to answer—unless you want to experience that pain again."

He continued, "So let's get to the point. Tell me—what is truly hidden in this region? Because the ones who—"

"You... are you the one many have said was prophesied?" the beast interrupted.

Aldrian fell silent for a moment, then gave a slight nod.

"I am. So what?" he replied.

"I see," the beast said, its tone strained as it gasped lightly from the lingering pain. "Your energy... actually, it feels familiar to me. I sensed the same sensation deep within the core area of this place."

Aldrian's eyes widened slightly. The same sensation as his golden energy? His thoughts immediately turned to Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan. This forbidden region must have been built by them as well, because there had to be something here capable of storing or emitting an energy similar to his.

He did not know whether the energy the beast mentioned was divine energy or his golden energy, since the beast might not be able to tell the difference between the two. But the fact that something here could emit a presence similar to either divine energy or his golden energy was reason enough for him to investigate thoroughly.

"The same sensation as my energy, huh?" Aldrian said. "Explain it more clearly—what exactly do you mean by that 'sensation'? And what does me being the prophesied one have to do with it?"

The beast's body suddenly shone with a red light, and Aldrian knew that it wanted to change into its human form. He stepped aside from its face and allowed the transformation to take place. Soon, the shape of a human appeared, a silhouette of a man gradually becoming clear before Aldrian's eyes.

The beast transformed into a middle-aged man with a short white beard, his eyes fixed steadily on Aldrian.

"Before I answer your question, let me introduce myself," he said with a slight courtesy.

"My name is Dureus, and I am the one who controls this area."

"As for your question, as I said before, I can sense the same sensation coming from the core area of this region of the Grand Canyon. What lies inside is difficult to explain, so you should visit it yourself. As the prophesized one, you will understand more."

Aldrian narrowed his eyes at the answer. He could sense that Dureus was telling the truth and held no ill intent, which was strange considering he had just caused the beast considerable pain. Seeing that made Aldrian feel a bit guilty, yet he could not afford to lower his guard. After all, this was still devil territory, and everything here could be a dangerous and hostile entity.

It would be a lie to say he was not interested in what lay within this Grand Canyon—after all, even the devils avoided it.

His gaze shifted upward to the sky, focusing on the black pillar that was still forming as the portal opened. Judging by the speed of its growth and comparing it to the size of the Tarius eye he had seen in his vision, Aldrian estimated it would take a little more than a month for the portal to reach that scale.

He might as well visit the core area of the Grand Canyon to see it for himself.

Dureus then transformed back into his goat form and lowered his body. "I will take you there. Hop on my back," he said.

Aldrian narrowed his eyes but still climbed onto his back. Without hesitation, Dureus leapt into the air and flew high into the sky. As a high emperor-stage beast, his speed was truly fast, although not as fast as an emperor stage avian beast.

Aldrian sat calmly on his back, observing the beast. He was genuinely curious about the Dureus's demeanor when he sensed his energy.

Aldrian could tell this beast was a devil cultivator, the thick devil energy stored within his body made that clear, but why didn't he seem as fanatical as other devil cultivators? As an emperor-stage beast and a devil cultivator, shouldn't he be much more violent, fueled by pride and anger at having his strength trampled by him?

Aldrian did not believe that pain in the soul alone could change his character or remove any ill intent toward him. The beast should hold some grudge, yet he sensed none.

Dureus seemed much more level-headed—

Then Aldrian's thoughts stopped. He suddenly remembered two beings like Dureus: two powerful entities with strong devil energy who became obedient once they sensed his golden energy. Who else could they be if not the Golden Phoenix and the Great Peng?

They are beings he summoned through the summoning formation. But as far as he knew, they never showed any devilish traits beyond their devil energy. Their behavior was like that of normal cultivators, without any ill intentions.

These beings chose him wholeheartedly as their true master, as if they had abandoned their devil origins.

Now Aldrian was truly curious about the true effect of his golden energy on these devil beasts.