

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 571: The Thing in the Canyon's Core[1,520 words]

Chapter 571: The Thing in the Canyon's Core

Aldrian was brought along at such high speed that he couldn't really see the details below him, but he could still sense many presences in the grand canyon. It seemed that none of them reacted once they sensed Dureus's presence, which was understandable. Even so, he could still sense a few that appeared to be following Dureus—perhaps curious about him.

Aldrian didn't mind them, especially since Dureus also didn't seem to care and simply continued flying at high speed.

After a few moments of silence, Aldrian finally opened his lips.

"Do you know about the war that's happening now?" he asked.

"Of course I know. There's no way something that big could slip past my attention. In fact, all beings inside this region already know about it," Dureus answered.

"Then did the Devil Lord not disturb you or the beings in this region because of the war? To be honest, all this time I thought everyone with devil energy was under the Devil Lord and worshipped the Devil God, but—" Aldrian looked below.

"I can sense many powerful beings down there who don't seem to care or participate in the war. With this kind of strength, I think even the alliance forces would face difficulties and be slowed down."

Truthfully, he was shocked by what he could sense from the land below. What he had sensed all this time were beings at least at the Grand Duke level at their weakest, and in truth, the region was more dominated by King-stage beings. The number of Emperor-stage beings was also quite high, which made him wonder how such a place could exist within devil territory.

With beings like these, if the Devil Lord brought them under his command, he would have a massive army of high-cultivation beasts.

Hearing Aldrian's question, Dureus let out a faint snort before opening his lips.

"Well, let's just say that the beings of this canyon are special. We don't really consider the Devil Lord our leader, nor do we see the Devil God as our god," he said.

"The Grand Canyon of Offering Souls has been a special place since long ago—even the Devil Lords of the past didn't want to provoke this place carelessly. Why? Aside from the average power level here and the brutal environment, there's something else that makes devils from outside hesitate to enter this region," he said with a mysterious smile.

"You'll see it for yourself, Young Master Aldrian. Even now, that thing might already be sensing your arrival."

"Anyway, whatever questions you have may be answered once you reach the core area."

Hearing Dureus's answer, Aldrian wasn't surprised he knew his name, news of him had already spread after all, but he was curious about the thing Dureus spoke of.

What kind of presence could make even the Devil Lords of the past avoid this region?

What had Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan left behind that kept the Devil Lord from interfering with this place?

As he was thinking, Dureus suddenly came to a stop—his flight path blocked by a beast. It was a type of eagle with gray-black feathers, its cultivation at the high Emperor stage.

"Xerax, why are you blocking my path? You don't have any business with me, do you?" Dureus asked.

The beast named Xerax didn't answer immediately. Instead, he looked at Aldrian.

"I don't, but who is this human? Why are you letting him ride on your back?" Xerax's male voice rang out as he narrowed his eyes at Aldrian.

"And why are you bringing him toward the core area? You know very well that *that thing* and its guardian don't like outsiders, especially humans entering without reason," he added.

"It'll be trouble if that thing gets angry after being disturbed. You'd better not do anything foolish."

As he spoke, other beasts began to approach. All of them were at the Emperor stage. Aldrian glanced at them, then calmly created his domain as a failsafe while observing the situation.

The situation felt strange but still seemed under control, with minimal ill intent. However, Aldrian didn't rely solely on that. He glanced at the beasts, ready to make a move if they did anything reckless.

"He's the one everyone's been talking about recently. He's the prophesied one," Dureus said, causing the surrounding beasts to widen their eyes slightly.

"Him?" Xerax said in astonishment, looking at Aldrian again. This young Grand Duke—was he truly the one spoken of in the prophecy?

Aldrian noticed their reaction and couldn't help wanting to test these devil beasts. He began exuding his golden energy and aura, causing all the beasts present to tremble. The shock in their eyes was clear, and their souls quivered in response.

"This energy... this aura—? How is this possible?"

"His aura feels the same as *that thing's*—"

"But his golden energy carries an unfamiliar pressure... it strikes directly at our souls, unlike *that thing*."

Many hushed voices echoed around as the beasts were truly shocked to feel this aura coming from Aldrian.

Then suddenly, a loud rumbling rose from below—like a massive landslide. But it wasn't a landslide. The Grand Canyon trembled slightly, as if an earthquake had struck.

Seeing this, the beasts were once again shocked. They turned toward a specific direction—the same direction Dureus had intended to take Aldrian.

Following the trembling ground, the cries of beasts echoed throughout the canyon. Many began flying out of their dwellings, panic clear in their movements. The quake had stirred them.

Xerax and the other beasts near Aldrian and Dureus turned their eyes back to Aldrian. They understood now, *that thing* must have sensed Aldrian's energy and had begun to stir. With this sign, there was no longer any doubt: Aldrian was truly special, and it seemed he was the one that *thing* had been waiting for.

Without another word, Xerax made way. Dureus understood instantly and dashed forward, continuing their journey. The other beasts simply watched as the two moved away, and Xerax narrowed his eyes.

"It looks like there will be a change in this region after this," he thought before glancing toward the direction of the black pillar.

Dureus and Aldrian had already put some distance between themselves and the others when Aldrian asked,

"How long will it take to reach that thing?"

"At the earliest, we'll arrive tomorrow after sunrise," Dureus answered.

Aldrian fell into thought for a moment before speaking again.

"Tomorrow, huh... I'm really curious about this 'thing' you keep mentioning. Was that earthquake earlier caused by it? If so, I can only imagine the size or the power it must have to shake the canyon that much."

"Well, you're right, Young Master. That thing is truly massive. Even we don't know exactly how huge it is."

Aldrian thought for a moment again.

"Is it located underground and a being that can't move? For example—"

"Is it a kind of plant?" he asked with near certainty.

The basis of his guess was simple. If something was large enough to make the canyon tremble and required them to travel for more than a night just to reach it, then it had to be enormous. That kind of size should allow it to be seen from the horizon, but even now, he didn't see anything like that.

So, the possibility was that it was located underground. And why did he suspect it might be a plant? Because if it were a beast, with such a size, it would require an extremely high cultivation, something only possible in higher heavens.

But a plant was different. It could grow that massive even if its cultivation only reached the peak of the Emperor stage, depending on the type of plant. A clear example was the World Tree, which was immense in size, visible from afar, yet "only" at the Emperor stage in terms of cultivation.

Hearing Aldrian's guess, Dureus smiled.

"Yes, you are right, Young Master. That thing is a plant, and it's located underground. But we don't really know what kind of plant it is, as we have only ever seen its roots. Even so,

its roots are already enormous, and we have never seen its main body," he answered, which made Aldrian curious.

"Why haven't you seen its main body?" Aldrian asked.

"Well, you will know for yourself later, Young Master."

They continued their journey as they spoke about other topics that interested Aldrian.

While Aldrian continued his journey to the core area of the canyon, the battle to seize the devil fortresses along the border was nearing its end. This outcome was already expected, as the alliance forces overwhelmed the devils in every aspect.

The fortresses along the border fell one after another, leaving only two still in the process of being taken.

The sound of battle raged on, and both the devils and the alliance fought with wild intensity. In this battlefield, several prominent figures stood out, finally revealing their true strength.

One of them was someone many had not expected to be so powerful. Her technique cut down devils like ants.

Rumble!

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 572: To Push Herself[1,600 words]

Chapter 572: To Push Herself

A woman in armor stood with a bow in hand. Her beautiful face remained untouched by dirt, even after fighting for hours. Although she was only at the peak Earl stage, her technique was powerful enough to kill even middle Marquess stage devils. With this kind of power, many devils had tried to target her, but she was under heavy protection.

However, even without protection, she could defend herself with her own strength, as she had already proven by this point.

She had already fired many arrows from afar toward the devils. Each arrow left destruction in its path. At times, even peak Marquess or low King stage devils were forced to stop her arrows or any of her techniques.

Sylphia, the princess of the Ivory empire, was truly showing her skill and strength, to the point that even her own family's troops were bewildered.

Was the princess always this strong?

If any devils slipped past the line of defense to reach her, she would put aside her bow and strike them with her elemental techniques. Her wind, which could turn into blades, was able to cut through middle Marquess stage devils. She also demonstrated a wide-area technique that threw the devils into disarray.

Her fame rose on the battlefield, but she was not the only woman drawing attention.

On another side of the battlefield, there was another woman who also shocked many people. Although she was not specialized in combat, her role was truly vital for the troops.

Angelica, the Saintess of the Heavenly Direction Church, played a widespread support role across the battlefield. Those near her had their strength boosted depending on their cultivation. As long as a person wasn't dead, if they were wounded, they would be healed.

Many wounded troops recovered quickly and simultaneously, which was truly astonishing. It was far more effective than healing one by one.

With her technique, which not only boosted strength but also healed the troops, she was like a goddess on the battlefield.

Moreover, at this time, she was much different from her usual self in the church, where she wore elegant dresses befitting her status as a Saintess. Now, she wore a special outfit for battle, covered by unique armor designed specifically for her, which made her beauty and charm stand out even more.

Because of her strategic role, the devils had already marked her as a special target. However, she was positioned behind the line of defense and guarded by Paladin Knights.

Arthur, who was fighting not far from Angelica, was also there to ensure that no devils could harm her.

Not long after, the last wave of devils was trapped in a part of the fortress and dealt with by Sylphia using her technique. Suddenly, massive tree roots emerged from the ground and crushed the devils, who had no means of resisting her power. The roots moved like whips and sharp blades, killing every devil they touched.

After eliminating the devils, the roots suddenly crumbled and vanished like ash. It was not surprising, as the roots were merely a manifestation of the energy from the wood element's energy.

Once the devils were dealt with, the fortress was finally secured and brought under the alliance's control.

"Uwooo!"

"We won this battle!"

"Glory to the alliance!"

The shouts of many cultivators resounded loudly as they raised their artifacts. Although there had been casualties among the alliance forces, it did not diminish their spirit in victory.

"Her Highness is truly strong. I never knew she could do all of that. Some of her techniques have never even been used by other members of the imperial family. Could that be the result of her adventure?" one of the elder elves asked his colleague.

"No doubt," his colleague replied. "Just look at her cultivation. Her speed is like no other. And with Lord Aldrian accompanying her, she might've gained something that boosted her power. Who knows, maybe Lord Aldrian gave her rare pills or helped her create a new technique?"

"All battalion commanders, proceed to the next plan! Don't get too caught up in the moment of victory!"

Suddenly, a shout from a middle Emperor stage cultivator of the Doria Empire echoed across the battlefield.

Hearing the order, many troops began organizing themselves and moved out of the fortress toward the rear, heading deeper into enemy territory.

Even though they had eliminated every devil inside the fortress, they could not fully rest yet. According to reports from other parts of the border, the devils were expected to send another wave of armies once the fortress was lost.

The alliance forces didn't take long to form battle lines at the rear of the fortress.

True to the information, not long after the alliance completed their formation, thousands of devils appeared in the distance, charging toward them. In the sky, they saw the wyvern corps of the devils—hundreds of them, flying in from above.

"Fire element cultivators, get ready to attack the wyverns. Don't let them break through the first line of defense," the commander ordered.

As the devils' wyvern corps approached the alliance troops, followed by thousands of devils on the ground, suddenly, the atmosphere shifted. The night that already dark enough to obscure the surroundings, grew even darker with the sudden appearance of overcast clouds.

However, the strange thing was that the overcast clouds only covered the devils in the distance, which left many people confused. But then, it dawned on them, the clouds were actually a technique cast by someone. And true to their guess, they sensed Sylphia releasing a massive amount of energy.

Their hearts trembled. How could Sylphia cast a technique from such a distance? The incoming devils were still around ten kilometers away, yet she had cast a wide-area technique that far? The overcast clouds covered a radius of about ten kilometers, and when they considered the range and scale, it was nothing short of astonishing.

The people looked up at the clouds as rain began to fall, and the first to be hit were the wyvern corps of the devils. The devils, already prepared for any technique, raised their defenses using their own energy. They knew this was no natural phenomenon.

However, the moment the rain touched their defenses, a sizzling sound echoed. As the rain grew heavier, their defenses began to melt away.

"Be careful! This is acid!"

"Get out of the cloud area! Don't touch the rain!"

Panic spread among the devils as they scrambled to escape the area, but the heavy acid rain slowed them down. Before most could get out, the acid had already broken through their defenses.

"Argh!"

"Uwargh!"

The bodies without defense under the acid rain were like paper slowly burning from a small flame. Their skin burned first, then quickly melted down to the bones.

One by one, the wyverns dropped from the sky, while the devil ground troops fell into chaos. The Duke stage devils and above began using their defensive abilities to protect themselves and the devil troops.

The casualties reached into the tens before suddenly, an Emperor stage devil slashed at the sky, splitting the clouds. The technique instantly broke, and the rain stopped. Sylphia felt her body tremble slightly from the setback caused by the broken technique.

She felt drained, having used a huge amount of energy to cast such a wide-area technique at that distance. She knew what she did was inefficient and wasted her energy, especially since her technique only took down a small number of devils despite its size and cost.

Strategically, she hadn't achieved much—except to attract the amazement of those watching.

However, what she sought was not amazement from others. What she wanted was to train herself, to push herself to the limit, to test her strength. She knew she wasn't this strong a few years ago, before she met Aldrian.

But after meeting him and officially becoming his lover, her power rose rapidly, especially after encountering that mysterious woman in her dream. That woman gave her something, which was comprehension and knowledge about the elements and new techniques.

There was no better place to test all the power she had gained since then than the battlefield. That's why many in her empire were shocked when she displayed techniques that had never appeared before, because they were gifts from that mysterious woman.

Sylphia felt truly exhausted as she gasped for breath, her older brother Arion was already beside her, steadying her before she could collapse.

But suddenly, a warm feeling enveloped her, and her fatigue began to fade slowly.

She was slightly stunned and looked behind her, where she saw Angelica smiling at her. Sylphia smiled back and nodded in appreciation. With Angelica supporting her recovery, she would return to her prime condition in no time.

"What is that?" suddenly a soldier shouted as they looked toward the line of devils and noticed something strange.

What they saw was a large group of people who seemed to be wearing the robes of the Orthodox faction. However, the way they walked was quite strange, and their eyes appeared blank, as if they were puppets moved by strings.

"Those are undead," said one of the low Emperor stage cultivators from the church calmly.

Hearing this, the people were shocked.

Undead?

The devils were finally using one of their hidden cards.

The expressions of the troops turned extremely solemn. If the devils were using undead, then there had to be a necromancer among them. And if a necromancer was present, then there was a possibility that "she" would appear!

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 573: Arthur's Light[1,605 words]

Chapter 573: Arthur's Light

There have been many necromancers throughout the history of the Barisan continent, but in the past hundred years, only a few are known. Some of them are from the devils' side, but only two figures must be treated as a serious threat by the alliance forces.

One of them is said to be the successor of the Sloth Devil, and the most terrifying is the Sloth Devil herself.

The fact that the devils are finally showing undead in their armies means there is a chance the Sloth Devil is among them. This is a concerning situation, as the Sloth Devil's reputation as a one-person army is well known. Her story first appeared a long time ago, during the sudden outbreak of undead and beasts in the Vindas Empire.

The undead and beasts brought severe trouble to the noble houses and the imperial family, as their numbers were overwhelming and their strength formidable. They appeared openly across all noble territories, and despite the deployment of emperor-stage cultivators, the defenders faced major challenges and even suffered casualties.

The outbreak was eventually contained after the imperial family managed to track the summoner using their artifact, revealing the Sloth Devil as the culprit. She had been lazily watching the destruction from the sidelines, and even when surrounded by several

emperor-stage cultivators, she still managed to escape using her summons, fatally injuring some of them in the process.

Since then, rumors about the Sloth Devil have spread, and many know her as a powerful necromancer or summoner.

Even so, none of the alliance troops fell into panic or despair. Even if the Sloth Devil was present, they would still face her. They also must prepare for the worst.

Although they have more troops and greater resources, they still cannot underestimate her. They believe they can win, but they also know it will come at a heavy cost if she is truly here.

When the distance between the two armies closed to five kilometers, the devils' troops finally charged at full speed. The undead, which had previously moved like puppets, suddenly began moving with agile motions, as if they were living beings.

"Decapitate the undead or obliterate them at once! That's how you kill them! Cut off their legs if you want to immobilize them! Don't treat the undead like living beings—they won't feel pain, even if you strike their bodies! You must take them down in a single, clean blow!" one of the battalion commanders shouted in warning.

As he shouted, his gaze also scanned the devils' army, trying to spot the necromancer. He hoped it wasn't the Sloth Devil. The other emperor-stage cultivators were doing the same. But before they could search any further, the devils had already reached them, and their troops began attacking with elemental techniques.

Emperor-stage fought against emperor-stage, king-stage against king-stage, and the rest had to take care of themselves.

Destruction spread quickly, and soon the alliance troops began to struggle against the undead. The situation worsened when the undead started using techniques they had mastered while still alive, making them much harder to kill.

Many alliance troops fell, as the undead attacked relentlessly, showing no concern even when their bodies were struck by multiple techniques.

Fortunately, the cultivators from the Church and the Buddhist sect, who used holy energy, were able to weaken the undead to a certain extent, depending on the undead's strength. With enough power, holy element cultivators could even seal the undead's movements, or seal the undead entirely.

As usual, Angelica used her technique to support the troops, but it seemed the devils already knew who she was. Many of them began attacking in her direction, and a large

number of undead also approached her, causing the defensive line protecting her to be pushed back. But Arthur did not allow it.

With his famous weapon, the Heaven's Judgement Sword, he slashed toward the undead charging wildly at Angelica.

Heavenly Slash

Rumble!

His powerful strike, infused with strong holy energy, instantly cut down many undead at once. The land behind them was also caught in the technique and left in ruins. Arthur was already powerful on his own, but with Angelica's support, he had reached another level.

"There! That's the necromancer!" one of the emperor-stage cultivators fighting in the sky suddenly shouted, pointing in a specific direction.

Arthur leapt into the air and spotted a lone robed figure standing behind the devils' defensive lines. When he looked at the figure, he felt a slight sense of relief, it did not appear to be the Sloth Devil herself. The figure seemed to be male and radiated an ominous energy that Arthur could not fully comprehend.

He could sense that the figure was at the peak of the king stage. If his guess was right, then this man could only be—

"He is one of the Seven Devils of Annihilation, and the successor of the Sloth Devil, Rudolf Zuker," Arthur thought.

Rudolf looked back in Arthur's direction, and when Arthur caught a glimpse of the face beneath the robe, his suspicion was confirmed. Rudolf was a young-looking man with black hair, though he was no longer truly young.

He was someone who possessed the same potential as the Sloth Devil, and also cultivating the negative energy of sloth. That was why, among the Seven Devils of Annihilation, he had been chosen as her successor.

Arthur counted the distance between himself and Rudolf while in the air and the moment his feet touched the ground, his demeanor shifted. His presence became more intimidating, and a surge of energy and aura erupted from his body like a tidal wave. The nearby troops instinctively backed away, their eyes widening as they stared at Arthur in astonishment.

They watched as Arthur raised his sword into the air with both hands, his gaze locked on Rudolf's direction behind the lines of thousands of devils. His body began to shine with

golden light, exuding a powerful holy aura. The darkness of night that had swallowed the battlefield was instantly driven back, as though a small sun had appeared in their midst.

Even the swords in the area began to tremble, becoming difficult to hold as a powerful sword will swept through the battlefield. The nearby troops paused, turning toward Arthur, drawn by the overwhelming pressure emanating from him.

"Sir Arthur... is he going to make that move?" one of them asked, but the others already understood what he meant.

The technique that made him famous for killing many enemies. Knowing that Arthur was about to unleash it, the nearby allies moved to protect him from anyone who might try to interrupt the technique.

The devils, sensing Arthur's intent, also moved to stop him. But then they froze as Arthur's sword suddenly shone with a brilliant light. A pillar of light burst from the blade, shooting into the sky and splitting the clouds apart.

Under the night sky, the pillar of light stood out clearly, even to those hundreds of kilometers away.

"Stop him! Don't let him unleash his technique!" an emperor-stage devil shouted, trying to charge forward. But his path was blocked by a cultivator from the Church. This one wasn't a Paladin but belonged to another of the Church's knight orders. He thrust his spear forward without hesitation.

"You're not going anywhere," he said, continuing his assault.

"Bastard!" the devil shouted, evading the strike and glancing toward Arthur, only to see that the pillar of light was ready to descend.

Rudolf, watching Arthur's sword technique, showed a crazed smile. This attack was truly dangerous even for him. He knew that if it struck him directly, he would be instantly obliterated.

"You're not hesitating at all, huh? Then I'll entertain you as well," he said. He touched the ground, and suddenly, a massive summoning formation appeared beneath many of the devil troops. The devils standing on the symbol quickly backed away, knowing Rudolf was about to summon something—and judging by the size of the formation, it would be enormous.

Their instincts were correct. The ground trembled, and a middle emperor-level aura surged from the formation. A giant lion's head emerged first, then the creature rose fully from the ground, revealing its entire body. Flames flickered from its jaws, and its tail, which was actually a venomous snake, writhed and hissed.

"The Chimera!" many voices shouted in shock.

A rare, powerful being that had not been seen for several thousand years now stood before them. It was a creature known for leaving destruction in its wake, and every time it appeared, carnage always followed.

However, Arthur did not seem to care about the Chimera's appearance. His preparations were complete, and without hesitation, he brought his sword down toward Rudolf's direction.

This was his ultimate technique, far stronger than when he had unleashed it in front of Aldrian. With his cultivation at the threshold of breaking through to the emperor stage, and enhanced by Angelica's supporting technique, he was more powerful than ever before.

It was this very technique that had once inspired Aldrian to create his own—the Pillar of Heaven's Judgement.

A radiant pillar of light that crushed all who stood against it.

Heavenly Sword of Destruction.

The Chimera, standing in the path of the descending light pillar, looked up at it for a moment. It had little time to react and tried to block the pillar with its flame breath.

However, the light pillar remained completely unaffected. A moment later, it struck the Chimera directly.

BOOM! Rumble!

What followed could only be described as chaos and destruction, like a massive natural disaster had descended upon the land.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 574: The Border Region Under Control[1,610 words]

Chapter 574: The Border Region Under Control

Arthur's strike is powerful enough to alter the landscape, carving a deep slash mark on the ground stretching as far as 30 kilometers. The devils' and undead army formations caught in the path of Arthur's technique cease to exist, engulfed by the blinding pillar of light.

As for the chimera, only parts of its limbs remain, marked with burning wounds. Its head and most of its body are already destroyed, and a few moments later, the remaining parts collapse to the ground. The powerful chimera, a middle emperor-stage creature that would normally require many to subdue, is slain by a single individual.

The troops look in Arthur's direction and see him slightly gasping, having exerted a tremendous amount of energy to unleash that technique. However, given the destruction it caused, the effort is clearly worth it. It opens a path deep into the back of the devils' line and throws their formation into chaos.

As for Rudolf, he had already moved to another location and watched the destruction with a smiling face, though sweat lined his forehead. The strike just now was truly dangerous. Fortunately, his summoned beast—the chimera—was able to hold off the attack for a few seconds, just enough to save him from instant death.

He hadn't expected the chimera to last only a few seconds before the sword slash struck his position. He had to admit, the technique Arthur displayed was truly powerful—worthy of someone counted among the ten great swordmasters of the continent.

While he looked at the destruction, another commotion suddenly rose from the rear of the devils' lines. He turned to the side and saw a group of emperor-stage cultivators emerging from behind the devils, throwing their ranks into even greater chaos.

"That is His Majesty Emperor Ladwin's group!"

"Yes! They did it!"

"Attack harder! Don't let the devils concentrate elsewhere!"

Many alliance troops shouted, their spirits ignited as they saw Emperor Ladwin's group joining them in a pincer attack. The group that had attacked the summoning sites not long ago and had been waiting for the right moment to strike from the rear was finally entering the fray.

Rudolf narrowed his eyes—the situation was turning grim. With this new group joining the battle, their defeat was only a matter of time. He had received information earlier that many summoning sites deeper in the territory had been attacked by multiple groups of emperor-stage cultivators across the region.

He wondered how those groups knew that there were summoning sites deeper within the territory. Because of that attack, the devils near the border did not receive additional reinforcements in the form of beast groups, and the second group of devils ended up trapped in a pincer attack instead.

Rudolf saw the group led by the emperor of the Ivory Empire, Emperor Ladwin, as the emperor unleashed his own technique. A giant dragon-shaped root erupted from the ground, killing many devils with the slam of its body or the sharp thorns on its jaw.

A powerful cultivator at Emperor Ladwin's class was in a league of his own and could sweep away many devil lives easily in one go.

Despite the unfavorable situation, Rudolf only looked at it without any desperation and instead looked at Arthur and the others with a smile on his face. Without any words, he crushed the escape talisman under his robe, and his body instantly disappeared, leaving the alliance force stunned.

Did he just escape?

Arthur looked at this with narrowed eyes. Rudolf really had not put much effort into holding this line. Looking at the losing situation, he did not hesitate to escape. It seemed the alliance would have to face this kind of tactic until they arrived at the gathering point, which was located near the black pillar.

However, he still did not sheath his sword even after he saw that Rudolf had disappeared. He then attacked the other devils near him. There were still many devils here that he needed to kill.

When the battle in one part of the border was still raging, in another part, the fighting had already ceased. The strategy of the pincer attack proved truly effective, and the devils' lines of defense were easily broken from the rear. It made the battle much shorter than predicted.

The border area now was almost entirely under the control of the alliance forces, and this was a good development. They could move to the deeper part of devil territory much faster.

The battle area where Xin Haotian was located had already entered the cleanup phase, where they were counting and gathering their casualties and burning the bodies of the devils. His performance as the Sword Saint was not disappointing, as his strength and ability left no room for the devils in this area to hold out.

Even one of the Seven Devils of Destruction had appeared when the battle started, but Xin Haotian managed to cut off one of his arms before that man escaped. Yet despite all his achievements in this battle, he seemed to wear a calm expression, and not even a stain of sweat marked his face.

The people also finally saw the power of the Xin family, which was truly what made the battle here much easier and faster. The family that specialize in light laws and added with their powerful techniques, was truly terrifying. The devils could do nothing against them as they were slaughtered like the Xin family held a deep grudge.

Xin Haotian was observing the cleanup process alongside his father. They watched as Grand Duke Rivas gave orders to his men while also overseeing the cleanup. His daughter, Irene, could also be seen helping the wounded troops with her retainer, Eleine.

"This is truly refreshing, I can unleash my power without any concern. It truly reminds me of my younger days, when I ventured out from the secret realm," Patriarch Xin said.

"But from the looks of it, the devils' intent with this battle was only to slow us down, not to win. Their strategy wasn't complex. All they did was sacrifice their own troops like cannon fodder," he added.

Xin Haotian nodded.

"It can be understood. The devils must truly depend on their god's descent. They will do absolutely anything to buy time for the portal to fully open," he said as he looked in the direction of the black pillar.

Patriarch Xin sighed as he also looked up at the sky, where the black pillar was opening the portal, which continued to widen slowly.

"I hope our plan succeeds, and young Aldrian truly can stop the devil lord in time," he said.

Over the next few hours, news from the border kept arriving and spreading across the continent. Before sunrise, the report that the alliance forces had taken control of the entire border region had already spread. Now, the alliance army was moving deeper into the devil territory.

The sun finally rose, signaling the arrival of a new day. Normally, this would mark the beginning of people's usual activities across the continent. However, at this moment, the morning light only served as a reminder that they were drawing closer to their own fateful day, as the portal continued to widen with each passing moment.

Across the continent, people began to see the portal forming in the sky where the black pillar touched. Although many still tried to believe that the alliance forces would succeed, the sight of the dark void beyond the portal gave them a deep sense of unease. They could not help but imagine the god Aldrian had spoken of descending from that darkness.

Could they really survive when that time came?

At the same time, Aldrian was finally nearing the core of the canyon. After flying through the night without rest, and with the morning light offering a clearer view of the land, he could now see a new scene unfolding not far ahead.

What he saw was a vast, flat stretch of land at the base of the canyon, surrounded by the canyon's cliffs. The landscape was truly unique, and just as Dureus had said the night before, Aldrian could sense a faint divine aura lingering in the air. This confirmed that something imbued with divine energy was indeed present here, and it was not his own golden energy.

"We'll have to land here and not fly any closer. I don't want to be rude to that thing." Dureus said, descending to the base of the canyon.

"There's an entrance not far from here," he added after landing. Aldrian hopped down from his back, and Dureus shifted into his human form before walking ahead to guide him.

After walking for more than twenty minutes, they finally arrived near the edge of the cliff, where they found a big opening resembling a cave entrance.

"To be honest, this is the first time that thing hasn't reacted, even when we're this close. Do you young master notice there isn't a single living being within at least 10,000 kilometers? That's because no one dares to live within that range," Dureus said as he continued walking toward the entrance.

"If we came near, that thing would give a warning by unleashing its aura—even I felt goosebumps from it. So for us to be this close and still get no reaction—" He paused and looked at Aldrian with smile.

"I think that thing might truly see you as someone special. Maybe the one it's been waiting for all this time," he said before continuing forward.

Aldrian's curiosity only deepened. He kept following Dureus until they finally stepped through the entrance.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 575: Seeing the ‘Thing’ [1,510 words]

Chapter 575: Seeing the ‘Thing’

Once they entered the cave, the path ahead was completely dark, with nothing to illuminate the way. However, as high-ranking cultivators at the Grand Duke and Emperor stages, Aldrian and Dureus could see in the darkness. They continued walking deeper underground, and as time passed, Aldrian was astonished to see the passage gradually widening.

"Young master, I know you heard last night that the ‘thing’ has a guardian. The guardian is actually a kind of spirit. I don’t know what kind of spirit she is, but she’s incredibly strong. From what I’ve heard, the guardian here has always been the same spirit since ancient times," Dureus sent through a voice transmission as they walked.

"You must already know, young master, that the devil energy here is being suppressed. Don’t you find it strange? The Grand Canyon holds an extremely dense concentration of devil energy, even compared to other regions in the devil territory—yet in the core area, it’s actually suppressed. We don’t know the mystery behind it, but—"

"This place is like heaven for us devil beasts. Even with all the devil energy around, we don’t completely lose our minds because of the aura present in the core. For your information, the lower a devil’s cultivation, the more corrupted their mind becomes, and they tend to act more erratically."

"As our cultivation continues to rise, we gradually regain our sanity and start to take control of our personalities again. However, due to the prolonged exposure to negative energy and a corrupted mind, many devil cultivators end up with a twisted personality in one way or another."

"But in this region, in this area, there is something that can suppress the devil energy—and not just suppress it, but also clear our minds. Even a weakling at the beginner stage can regain their sanity here, which is incredibly valuable in the long run."

"As you can see, we aren’t particularly fanatical or loyal to the Devil Lord and also to what some call the Devil God. Despite our devil origin, we still have the freedom to choose our alignment. We don’t feel bound to that so-called Devil Lord or Devil God."

"Instead, we feel bound to this place—to that thing that makes all of this possible. We don't really care about its origin. What matters is that it has truly helped us, and it permits us to live in this region. We deeply respect it and honor any agreement it desires, regardless of its strength."

"We can become powerful quickly because of the thick negative energy, and we don't lose our minds since we can just come to this area." Dureus paused slightly as he had to jump a little because the terrain wasn't completely even.

"However, here's the catch. Despite all that convenience, why is this place only filled with beasts and plant beings, and not humans? That's because of the strange preference of the 'thing' and its guardian." Dureus continued.

"Their preference?" Aldrian asked curiously.

Dureus nodded. *"Yes. For some unknown reason, the 'thing' and the guardian don't seem to welcome humans into this region. They will kill anyone who still tries to force their way in."*

"In the past, of course, there were several attempts by the Devil Lord's side to take over this region. And in every attempt, it ended in failure. There was even a time when a Devil Lord personally came, only to be nearly defeated by that thing," Dureus said with a slightly mocking tone.

Aldrian slightly raised his eyebrows and couldn't help but ask,

"Did that happen during the Great War three million years ago?"

Dureus glanced at Aldrian and nodded.

"From the stories we've heard, the Great War three million years ago was the time when the devils from the Devil Lord's faction came very close to subjugating this region. The Devil Lord himself came here. From what I heard, back then, this place wasn't a grand canyon like it is now, but a mountainous terrain."

Hearing this, Aldrian's eyes widened.

"Then—?"

Dureus nodded.

"Yes. Because that thing retaliated with its full power, the terrain changed into what we see now. From what I've heard, even this path is a remnant of that battle."

Hearing the answer, Aldrian was truly amazed. If that was true, then that tree might be as big as the World Tree or even bigger.

Aldrian looked at the ground and stopped walking, which made Dureus also stop and glance at him in confusion.

"What is it, young master?" he asked.

"Wait a moment," Aldrian said as he closed his eyes and created his domain. Once it was created, he could sense the entire space within it more clearly, and what he sensed deep beneath him shocked him.

What he detected was the enormous root system of a tree. The roots were so massive that they could rival those of the World Tree in the capital city of the Ivory Empire, the largest tree he had ever seen in his life. Well, aside from the Heavenly Tree of the World, of course.

However, what stood out was the strange positioning of the roots themselves.

The roots were actually growing upward, positioned beside a massive main body. The main body was so enormous that even his domain couldn't fully encompass it. Because of the tree's size, his domain couldn't reach its base.

The shape of the tree's main body resembled that of a World Tree. He also sensed its branches spreading widely in all directions, all of them bare, without a single leaf.

Curious, he looked toward the tree and activated his Eyes of the Heaven.

The World Tree

Age : 6,000,015 years

Cultivation : Peak Emperor

Techniques : The Blessing of the World Tree, the whip of her root already enough to destroy everything.

Looking at the simple information, he finally knew that this was indeed a World Tree. But then a question arose in his mind, why was there a World Tree in this place, and why was

it buried underground like this? Judging by the tree's age, it was actually a little older than the World Tree in the capital city of the Ivory Empire.

One of the things that was also striking was that this World Tree was exuding a strong divine aura. He thought that this World Tree was much more special than the one in the Ivory Empire, as there was no World Tree like this that he had sensed there. This made him wonder if there was a source of divine energy somewhere near the tree.

Then, he finally sensed a presence near it. This presence was actually much closer, its figure seemingly waiting for their arrival in the large space at the end of the path. It was a woman and upon seeing her, he couldn't help but be reminded of Olivia and Alice, the World Tree spirits in Balin and the capital city.

The World Tree's Spirit

Race : World Tree (Spirit)

Age : 6,000,015 years (The world tree), 6,000,015 years (Spirit)

Cultivation : Peak Emperor

Techniques : The Blessing of the World Tree, the whip of her root already enough to destroy everything.

After he saw her information, it confirmed his guess that this figure was indeed the spirit of the World Tree.

While he was still thinking about what he had found, Dureus suddenly seemed to receive a voice transmission from someone. A few moments later, he looked at Aldrian.

"Young master, it seems you need to enter deeper alone without me. The guardian has asked me to wait outside," he said.

Aldrian nodded. "Alright, thanks for bringing me here. I'll go alone then," he replied, which Dureus responded to with a nod.

Aldrian then walked deeper into the path, while Dureus watched him for a moment before turning back toward the way out.

Aldrian kept walking for the next thirty minutes until he saw a light in the distance. He knew that was the end of the path and the place where the spirit had been waiting for him. Without hesitation, he continued walking until he reached the end of the path and stepped into the large underground space.

He observed his surroundings. What he saw was a beautiful, spacious cave illuminated by illumination crystal. The area was also rich in energy stones as many peak-level stones were embedded in the walls of the cave.

He also noticed a large root protruding from one side of the wall which was a root of the World Tree. On the opposite side of the chamber, there was another entrance that seemed to lead even deeper into the underground.

However, to reach that entrance, he would first have to pass the figure who had been sitting in a kneeling position, facing him ever since he entered the space. A beautiful figure with reddish-green hair, wearing an elegant dress that accentuated her body. Her clear green eyes glanced in his direction for a moment before she gently lowered them.

As he approached, the spirit suddenly prostrated herself before him with reverence.

"Welcome, my lord."

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 576: Her Duty and Experience[1,697 words]

Chapter 576: Her Duty and Experience

Aldrian looked at the spirit for a moment before he answered.

"To be honest, I don't really know about you. But are you aware of who I am for you to do this?"

"Of course, my lord. Your energy and aura were described in my memory by my creator—a figure who possesses the power to subdue any energy, whose presence feels different from all others when I sense it directly. The energy that can make nature prostrate in reverence," the spirit answered.

"Your creator?" Aldrian asked, then paused in thought. If this spirit of the World Tree used the term *her creator*, then the only figure she could be referring to was—

"Is it Seralis?" he asked, which made the spirit nod.

"Goddess Seralis, my goddess, gave me an embedded task. She told me to guard the place where I placed. The Divine Phoenix placed me here, so I must stay. I am to remain until the Absolute Ruler reveals himself."

"When that time comes, he will appear as a figure of light, one whose energy and aura are unlike any other, a presence so overwhelming that nature itself will prostrate before him. He is special, and I must treat him with even more reverence than I give to the goddess herself."

"I heard everything from outside about the figure who shook the continent, and my attention turned to it. From long ago, I knew. The moment I witnessed the phenomenon of the Divine Dragon and Phoenix, and the chain of events that followed, I knew my lord was the one mentioned by Goddess Seralis. The Absolute One. The Absolute Ruler."

"After I sensed your presence, I felt more certain. And when I sensed your energy and aura, I no longer had a sliver of doubt. You are the one the goddess spoke of."

She then stopped.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. He knew why Seralis had embedded that task. In the end, it was to guard the foundation of the formation. Long Shentian had said that ever since the devils took over this territory, a weakness had formed in it.

He thought it might be due to the dense devil energy here, which disturbed the formation. Aldrian knew this place was the foundation point of the formation that covered the entire continent.

To make the foundation whole again—without weakness or gaps—he would have to take it back from the devils. By *taking over*, Long Shentian must have been referring to claiming it as his domain. Though, Aldrian wasn't sure if there were other foundation points scattered elsewhere within devil-controlled territory.

As for this spirit's image of him, it was only natural for someone like her to sense how unique his energy and aura were. His energy was especially potent for beings with a deep connection to nature, like spirits and plants. It had already been proven many times in the past. For example, the first time he met Olivia, she had been drawn to him, yet she also revered him.

"I see. But how did those beasts seem to know you were waiting for someone—for me? Did you tell them?" Aldrian asked.

"Only your description. Those devil beasts were eager to remain in this region, so I let them, but I placed certain conditions on their stay. I thought they might be useful in the future. I told them I was waiting for someone—someone who would be a great person with qualities no one else would have," the spirit answered.

"They would immediately know what I was waiting for, because my lord's energy is unlike anything else. Beasts with a close connection to nature would not dare to underestimate an energy that makes them feel subdued."

"I see. So you didn't have anything binding those beasts. You were simply making use of their desire to remain here," Aldrian said.

"Yes, even I really don't care if they want to leave this place. Some of them have already gone outside, even joined the devil lord's side. But I still don't really care, as my primary objective is to stay here, not to manage those beasts."

Aldrian nodded, but then his eyes showed curiosity.

"But why only beasts? Why not humans? Wouldn't they be much more useful in the long run, in many ways?"

The spirit nodded. "A long time ago, there were actually humans who decided to stay in this region. The beasts, the humans—they were all ones who refused to follow the devil lord. After finding this place, they chose to form their own alignment here."

"As time passed, the humans' greed grew far beyond what I had anticipated. Long story short, they tried to take more than what I had already given them. They even planned to kill me and seize this place."

"Well, I easily obliterated them. And since that time, I've never fully trusted humans—" she paused, looking at Aldrian before bowing slightly again.

"Of course, except you, my lord." She straightened again.

"After that experience, I came to understand that beasts are more predictable and easier to deal with than humans. Even if they betray this place and choose to join others, that is the extent of their actions."

"If, after that experience, I still allowed humans in, there was a chance they would bring me trouble. They are more cunning, and since they don't have a close connection to nature, they would be difficult to control once you arrived. So after much thought, I saw no benefit in allowing humans to stay," she said.

Her answer made sense, and he agreed with her. All beings have a dark side, but humans were more unpredictable than any other. Beasts would also be easier for him to control because of how his energy affected them compared to humans. At the very least, beasts would recognize the true benefit and significance of his energy.

But then something came to his mind.

"I see. But during this prophesied time of chaos, I doubt the current devil lord would ignore you or this region. I can't imagine he would stay idle when he has a plan spreading across the continent without including this place as a target," he said.

The spirit nodded.

"Yes, that is true. The devil lord's side has been trying to act again, although not as brazenly as the previous devil lords. He infiltrated some of the beasts on his side and gradually incited the ones in this region to join them, even convincing some to become the devil's summoning beasts."

"It seems that the time of prophecy, along with the prospect of the devil god's descent, has changed the hearts of some beasts, leading them to side with the devil lord."

Aldrian, hearing this, suddenly remembered something and couldn't help but ask,

"Was one of the beasts who joined the devil lord a Black Rock Snake at the middle emperor stage?"

The spirit raised her eyebrows and nodded.

"Yes, my lord. How did you know?"

"Well, I killed him during my journey," he answered.

The Black Rock Snake he mentioned was the same one he had killed in the Dual Horns Peak city, located within demon territory. At that time, a giant serpent had lain beneath the mountain, and he brought it down with his Earth Shattering Bow.

Just now, he had thought that a beast that powerful might have come from this place, but, it turned out his guess had been correct.

"Well, that was his fate for going against you, my lord. He deserved nothing but death," she said with certainty. But then her expression shifted, her eyes narrowed, and her tone grew serious.

"My lord, since you've brought up the devil lord, I must remind you of something." It was the first time he heard her speak with such weight in her voice.

"Tell me," Aldrian said.

"The current devil lord is unlike those who came before him—at least from what I've observed. In my opinion, he is the most dangerous one to date. Why do I say this? Because he possesses methods and things that are not of this world—things I cannot understand."

"He appears to have a way to summon beasts that aren't from this realm. I don't know what kind of creatures they are, or how he acquired such a method. How do I know this? At one point, the devil lord seemed to be testing me. He summoned a beast near the canyon, one that gave off an otherworldly presence, and had it move toward me."

"The beasts dwelling in this canyon couldn't pursue it. I had to deal with it personally before it reached my main body."

Aldrian narrowed his eyes. He had long known that the devil lord possessed a method to summon beings from the higher heavens, something that still unsettled him. How could the devil lord know a method like that?

"The devil lord also holds knowledge unknown to anyone on this continent," the spirit continued. "For example, there was a time I left the canyon. I occasionally do this to observe the situation beyond the region."

"On that occasion, I saw many devils attempting to draw a formation near the canyon region. It was a large-scale formation that spanned a wide area. Using my technique, I eventually discovered that it was part of the devil lord's plan to trap the canyon under that formation."

"Fortunately, I managed to stop it, and afterward, the devil lord seemed to lose interest and left this region alone."

She paused, her expression troubled.

"But the fact that he could attempt such a formation is deeply troubling. It was the first time I had seen one of that kind. As far as I know, there is no knowledge of such a formation anywhere on this continent."

Hearing that, Aldrian frowned deeper. His mind moved quickly, turning over everything he had just heard.

Then, his thoughts arrived at one possibility that might be true.

Knowing the method of summoning beasts from the higher heavens?

Possessing knowledge not from this continent?

"Was the devil lord a reincarnated being from the higher heavens, one who actually remembered his past life?" he thought solemnly.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 577: The Change of Situation[1,589 words]

Chapter 577: The Change of Situation

That kind of conclusion is not far-fetched, because Aldrian himself is a living example of a reincarnated being who slowly regains the memories of his past lives. If the devil lord is actually a reincarnated being who still retains the memories of his past lives, then he has to admit that such an opponent indeed dangerous.

In terms of strength, they may not be so far apart, as the formation covering the continent limits the devil lord to, at most, the peak of the emperor stage—though he can still exude power beyond that. Aldrian, with the combination of all his domains, can also release power beyond the emperor stage, as seen in his battle with Cardinal Carsius.

However, the more dangerous aspect lies in the devil lord's knowledge. With his extensive understanding, he holds far greater advantages over any of his opponents and can act precisely according to his plans. There is no opponent more dangerous than one who is not only powerful but also possesses a clever and knowledgeable mind.

That means the devil lord is not merely a brute-force type opponent. Moreover, that man might have already lived for thousands of years, giving him far more experience than Aldrian has in this lifetime.

Aldrian took a deep breath and tried to focus on the positive. At the very least, knowing this information meant he could be more prepared when he faced that man in the near future.

Aldrian nodded to the spirit.

"Alright, thank you for your warning. I will keep that in mind," he said.

"Anyway, where does that path lead? Does it go to a deeper part of the underground?" he added, his eyes fixed on the pathway behind the spirit.

The spirit, understanding exactly what Aldrian meant, answered without delay.

"This was also one of my intentions from the start, to bring you there, my lord. Yes, that path leads to a deeper part of the underground and stretches down to the base of my main body. There are many treasures in that place that may be useful to you. Many of them came from the higher heavens, brought by the divine phoenix, and many others are from my own discoveries."

She then stood up and turned toward the pathway.

"I will lead you there, my lord," she said as she began to walk, and of course, Aldrian did not hesitate to follow her. This path was quite different from the ones he had passed through on his way here. It was illuminated by a soft purple glow, coming from the rich energy stones embedded along the walls.

All of the stones were at their peak level, which made sense—none had ever been mined and they had remained untouched for a long time.

As they began walking along the wide path, Aldrian glanced at the spirit's back.

"By the way, since earlier, I don't know how I should call you, and it doesn't feel right to just say 'miss spirit.' Do you have a name that was given to you?" he asked.

Although he already knew the answer after seeing her information—which showed she had no name—he asked anyway, as a formality and to make some conversation.

"I don't have any name myself, my lord. You may call me whatever you wish," she answered.

Aldrian pondered slightly as he watched her back. Only after a few seconds did he finally come up with a good name.

"Well, if it's me, how about I call you Vireline? I think it suits you. Do you like it?" he asked.

Hearing Aldrian's suggestion, the spirit softly repeated the name and couldn't help but smile. She stopped, turned her body, and gave a slight bow.

"Then from today onward, my name shall be Vireline. I'm truly thankful to my lord for giving me a name I can carry until the end of my time," she said, which made him smile.

"I'm glad you like it. Anyway, Vireline, I still have questions regarding this place," he said.

Vireline had already straightened her posture.

"What is it, my lord?"

"I'm actually curious why your main body, the World Tree is buried underground instead of standing on the surface like the others. Have you been in this place since the beginning? Was it the divine phoenix who placed you here underground?"

"No, my lord," Vireline answered as she resumed walking, continuing their journey. "In the beginning, my main body was also on the surface, like any other tree. However, not long after I began to grow, the devils landed in this continent, along with others from outside the continent."

"Not long after their arrival, many powerful devils came to this territory. I was alone, not yet as strong or as large as I am now, and I had to do whatever I could to fulfill my task. At that time, I came up with an idea, it would be best to bury my main body, both to avoid attracting attention and to safeguard this space along with the treasures left behind by the divine phoenix."

"Actually, some elves also came to this territory and intended to build a settlement nearby. But they were too late, the devils had already established a strong foothold in the region. So the elves decided to move south, far from here."

"There were also many beasts that arrived and roamed near me. Many of them came from the devils' side, which is why there are so many different kinds of beasts in this region."

"As the devils conquered this territory and the negative energy grew thicker, I remained underground to protect myself from the harsh environment. Fortunately, the divine source at the base of this place was strong enough to cover my entire body, so the negative energy hasn't seeped in."

Aldrian nodded, finally understanding the reason. It was actually quite surprising that the elves had initially intended to build their territory here. Perhaps they had sensed the presence of the World Tree and chose a location nearby because of it. This was the first time he had heard of it, neither Emperor Ladwin nor anyone else had ever mentioned it to him.

He had also never read about this event while he was in the Ivory Empire. Maybe it had been placed among the forgotten histories of the elves, or perhaps the elves simply chose not to record it in their historical archives.

He had to admit, Vireline was truly clever to choose to bury herself underground. It allowed her to grow slowly without much interference and to take advantage of the formation's foundation. With so many treasures and divine source energy gathered here, the energy in this space had become incredibly rich, greatly assisting her cultivation.

Given all these conditions, it was no wonder she was so different from other World Trees. Besides being created directly by Seralis's hand, she was able to make use of everything around her while remaining underground. She had grown powerful enough to survive in devil territory all this time.

She then guided Aldrian to one of her branches that was protruding from the cave floor.

"My lord, excuse me, but I believe it would be much faster if I use my own method to bring us to the base of my main body. If we follow this path, it will take hours to reach it," she said as the branch in front of them suddenly began to move toward Aldrian.

"I've sensed a change in the atmosphere outside, my lord. The negative energy in the region is suddenly growing much thicker. I know you must not waste time here, and you have to continue your journey. This change is not a good sign," she added, which made Aldrian frown.

He was still within the domain he had created earlier, and since his domain extended to the sky, he spread his senses across it. True to Vireline's words, he could feel the sudden surge in negative energy. Although the divine aura from underground still managed to suppress it in the core area, the negative energy beyond its reach was steadily rising.

This was not normal, and it alarmed him. He then looked at Vireline.

"Wait, I will look outside to make sure," he said, which left Vireline confused. But she was stunned when Aldrian suddenly vanished.

Aldrian reappeared in the sky above the core area, scanning his surroundings before turning his gaze toward the black pillar. He looked up at the sky where the black pillar was still in the process of creating the portal. He then narrowed his eyes to focus on it.

At that moment, he finally noticed a change in the portal. Its expansion speed was noticeably faster compared to earlier when he last checked. Although the change might not be visible from a distance, his eyes could clearly detect the increased pace.

His frown deepened. He still did not understand the mechanism behind the black pillar. Could the portal's progress be accelerated? If that was possible, then why had it not been accelerated from the beginning?

This was truly bad news. The descent of the devil god might actually happen much sooner than he had predicted.

He set that thought aside for now, because dwelling on it would only waste time. At the moment, he needed to act quickly. He then teleported back to Vireline's side and looked at her.

"You are right. It seems the situation outside is getting worse, so I think we need to move quickly."

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 578: From This Moment You Are Free...[1,658 words]

Chapter 578: From This Moment You Are Free...

Understanding that they had to move quickly, Vireline did not waste another moment.

"Then excuse me, my lord," she said, as roots instantly circled Aldrian and enclosed him like a cocoon. Immediately afterward, the roots buried themselves underground, carrying Aldrian down toward the base of the world tree.

Aldrian remained still inside the cocoon for the next fifteen minutes before it suddenly opened.

As his eyes adjusted to his surroundings, they widened slightly in astonishment at the beauty of the place. What he saw was a vast underground cavern, filled with enormous roots, undoubtedly those of the world tree. The size of the space reminded him of the underground hall where the skeletons of Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan were placed.

On the walls, there were many energy stones, far more than on the upper ground. It was not surprising that so many peak-level energy stones were present in this area, as Vireline must have stopped cultivating a long time ago. Like other beings on the continent, she had been unable to break through to a higher stage of cultivation due to the formation of the continent.

With her cultivation halted, the energy had accumulated here for years. The world tree, capable of functioning as an energy filter, had purified the energy in this area. As a result, the underground space was filled with rich, pure heaven and earth energy, making it easy for the energy stones to reach peak quality.

The abundance of peak-level energy stones embedded in the cave's walls gave off a soft purple glow, illuminating the surrounding space. But the stones were not the only source of light.

He saw a golden light spreading from the center of the underground space, illuminating the entire cavern. In the middle of the underground space, there was a large pond filled with golden water, which was the source of the golden light. At the center of the pond stood a massive crystal, which was actually the Crystal of Divinity, and its size was truly the largest he had ever seen.

With a crystal that size, Aldrian thought even a divine being would find it hard to resist. No wonder the divine aura could spread across such a wide area, since the Crystal of Divinity itself was this enormous.

There were also numerous treasures around him, and some of them were actually divine-grade artifacts, which truly shocked him. Their auras extended directly toward him, and he could even sense high divine-grade artifacts among the pile of treasures.

Combined with the other valuable treasures and energy stones scattered throughout the area, this core region was essentially a giant hidden vault of treasure.

"My lord, you can take anything from here. Maybe you'll find something useful for your battle. I don't need any of this, and even the Divine Phoenix said that some of the artifacts here are for you, if you want them," Vireline said.

Aldrian looked at his surroundings, then approached the artifacts that had been placed without any order, as if they were piles of trash. He picked up an artifact that was exuding a low divine-grade aura—it was a sword. The sword trembled for a moment before he injected his golden energy into it, and it calmed down.

He looked at the information of the sword and confirmed that it was actually from the Higher Heavens, and it had once belonged to one of his followers.

He then put it back and picked up another artifact. This one was a shield with a middle divine-grade aura. The shield reacted the same way, and Aldrian did the same to calm it. This one was also from the Higher Heavens.

He then focused at all the piles of artifacts, and the lowest among them was actually at the Heaven grade. With this quantity, he estimated that he could arm an entire battalion of cultivators or even more.

Given the high quality of the artifacts, that group of cultivators might become the strongest if they could use them properly.

He then walked toward the place where he sensed the aura of a high divine-grade artifact. Unlike the others, this artifact was not piled carelessly but placed on top of a stone table. There, he saw a beautifully crafted bow, and after checking its information, he learned that it was one of the artifacts from the High Elves in the Higher Heavens.

He touched it, but it did not tremble. Instead, he could feel the intent within the bow. He was not surprised, as the artifact had already reached the high divine grade, and its consciousness was more advanced than the others. This bow had already sensed how unique he was when he touched the other artifacts, so it did not react.

The intent from the bow was one of curiosity, and Aldrian injected his golden energy as a greeting. Upon feeling it, the bow responded with joy and even absorbed the golden energy greedily.

He smiled and gently stroked the beautifully crafted bow, unable to stop himself from thinking of someone.

"This is good for Sylphia. With this bow, she can unleash the full potential of her techniques."

He then looked at the pond, filled with water that was the liquefied form of divine energy, created by how dense the divine energy was in this place. The crystal and the pond together served as the formation's foundation, positioned here to support the formation that protected the entire continent, the reason why Vireline had remained.

However, considering the current situation, he believed there was now a far more useful task for Vireline than simply staying here.

"Vireline, do you want to leave this place? Don't you think it's time to finally free yourself from this underground, given the situation? With the threat of the Devil God's descent, I believe your power will be much needed," he said.

For the first time, Vireline showed a slight smile to him and gave a small bow.

"With my lord having arrived at this place, my primary task here is complete. I have safeguarded this place until now, and with the dire situation outside, of course I will gladly assist my lord. If my lord wishes to use me, then please do so. I will serve my lord," she said, making Aldrian nod in satisfaction.

He certainly would not allow power as strong as Vireline to go to waste. Her strength would be a great help in the war. And if he could also rally the beasts of this region, it would be even better. With their support, the war could end much more quickly, as the alliance would gain a more significant advantage.

"Great. I'll take some of the treasures here, then we'll move out," he said as he looked around, and then his gaze rising toward the ceiling where Vireline's main body was visible, the base of the massive World Tree, large enough to cover an entire small town.

"It's time for you to move freely after millions of years." He murmured, then turned his gaze to her. "I also want you to manage the beasts in this region. They'll be helpful in the war, and it would be a waste not to make use of their strength."

"Your wish is my command, my lord," she answered.

After that, Aldrian selected some treasures he thought would be useful for his family, along with several powerful talismans that were also stored here. He didn't plan to take everything, this place could serve as a hidden underground vault for now, and he was the only one who knew about it.

Once he finished choosing what he needed, he established his domain here, sensing that the faith of the entire Grand Canyon region was gathered in this place. After that, he looked at Vireline with a smile.

"Vireline, from this moment, you are free from your duty to safeguard this place," he said. "You can move your body now, and I will make sure the shifting ground does not bury this place."

Hearing that, Vireline nodded, and suddenly the ground around them began to shake violently. The cavern seemed on the verge of collapse as the tremors grew stronger, but Aldrian used his earth laws to stabilize the area, preventing the hidden treasure vault from being buried.

He reinforced the cave floor while looking up at the ceiling, where the enormous roots of the World Tree had begun to move. As time passed, the shaking intensified, and the earthquake could be felt throughout the region and beyond.

All the beings in the Grand Canyon were thrown into panic for the second time, following the quake from the night before. But this one was far more intense, causing multiple landslides throughout the canyon.

The deep, thunderous rumble from underground and the trembling land forced every creature capable of flight to take to the skies. Those dwelling at the canyon floor scrambled toward higher ground in fear of what was coming.

The king- and emperor-stage beasts had already taken to the sky, their eyes fixed on the core area of the canyon. They knew this earthquake was caused by *that* thing—and from the sheer force of it, whatever was happening now was unlike anything they had ever felt. The ground shook with such intensity it seemed the entire canyon might collapse. They could only wonder what was happening beneath the surface.

As they watched, their eyes widened in shock. A massive silhouette began to rise on the horizon. Slowly, the form of a colossal tree emerged, its roots writhing like serpents as it pushed its enormous trunk toward the surface.

For the first time, the beings of this region laid eyes on the entity they had long revered. The one they had respected for granting peace and balance within the canyon.

The hidden World Tree, buried in silence for millions of years had returned, revealing its glorious form once more.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 579: The Appearance of Another World Tree[1,598 words]

Chapter 579: The Appearance of Another World Tree

The alliance force had already moved deeper into devil territory. After conquering the border region, they advanced to the next stage not long after and continued pressing forward. However, at this time, many cultivators who had comprehended the earth element and were advancing from the Doria Empire felt a slight disturbance in the ground.

Emperor Ladwin's group was among them, as he too sensed the subtle tremor. The disturbance was extremely faint and went unnoticed by most cultivators, but those who had reached the emperor stage or comprehended the earth element would recognize the slight disturbance in the ground.

"Did you feel that?" Emperor Ladwin asked Imperial Teacher Elthar, who stood beside him. They were positioned some distance away from the main force, which moved steadily behind them, following their lead. Most cultivators traveled on wild beasts, in carriages, or aboard flying fortresses to speed up their journey.

"Yes, a slight tremor," the imperial teacher answered.

"With the terrain in the devil territory that we don't entirely grasp, I really don't know what this is. We'd better be careful, it might be a sign of the devils' plan," he added, which made Emperor Ladwin nod.

They continued moving for a few moments, still feeling the slight tremor coming from deeper within the territory. And then—

"What is that?" Emperor Ladwin suddenly noticed something rising on the horizon.

Imperial Teacher Elthar also looked in the same direction but didn't respond. After a few moments, they finally saw the full shape of the thing on the horizon.

"That's a tree?!" Emperor Ladwin asked in bewilderment.

"From the silhouette, don't you think it looks like a world tree?" he added.

Imperial Teacher Elthar continued looking at the silhouette on the horizon in silence before he nodded.

"Yes, from the silhouette, that's indeed a world tree," he confirmed.

"What is going on? Why is there a world tree in devil territory?" Emperor Ladwin asked in confusion.

The imperial teacher was also confused by the situation. How could a world tree grow in this territory? A world tree must be planted in an environment that supports its life, and they knew that devil territory was not one of them. There was also a kind of ritual performed by the elves themselves to help the world tree grow properly. Without the ritual, the world tree would not grow, as it was something deeply connected to the karma of the elves.

Because of those requirements, the presence of a world tree in devil territory was something they couldn't comprehend.

But then, Imperial Teacher Elthar seemed to remember something and looked at Emperor Ladwin.

"Wait, I think I remember something, about that strange record of the first emperor who built our empire. Didn't you read it too in the special archive?" he asked.

Emperor Ladwin frowned. "The one about why the first emperor built the empire in its current location?" he said, to which the imperial teacher nodded.

"Yes. According to the record, didn't it say that the elves at that time *had* to build the empire here? We didn't pay much attention to it, although we were curious about our ancestor's decision to found the Ivory Empire in our current territory. Why did they *have* to build it there? Was there some special reason behind choosing that location?" Elthar said.

"And then I remembered, the revered spirit of the world tree in the capital once told me she sensed a kind of subtle connection with something far to the north, beyond the borders of the empire. But she didn't know what it was."

"If I think about it again, I believe this is connected to that world tree," Elthar said as he looked at the tree on the horizon, which was becoming more visible—and seemed to be moving.

"What if the phrase '*had to build here*' in the record wasn't because there was something special about the current location of the Ivory Empire, but because of another reason?" Elthar said, turning to Emperor Ladwin with a solemn expression.

The emperor frowned as well, looking at his imperial teacher as a thought came to him.

"Are you saying that our ancestors had to build the Ivory Empire in its current position because they couldn't build *there*?" he asked, pointing at the world tree. Even now, they could still feel a faint tremor beneath the ground.

"Are you saying that the world tree might have been planted by our ancestors, and that was supposed to be our original territory—but when the devils came, they had no choice but to move to our current empire's territory?"

The imperial teacher fell silent for a moment and then nodded.

"Yes, that's what I suspect," he said, then sighed. "However, it's still just a guess—we have no proof. Even if it's true, our empire has already been established in its current place. And even if that world tree truly has a connection to our ancestors, all of that belongs to the past."

"Right now, we don't know if that world tree is the same as the ones we know in the empire. It has already been in devil territory for a long time. What if the devils have done something to it, and that world tree is actually hostile?" he said with a worried expression.

"The world tree is not an easy opponent, because it is a truly powerful being," he added.

Emperor Ladwin gritted his teeth at the thought that the world tree might have been corrupted by the devils and the environment of the devil territory. To imagine that a tree

they had long regarded as guardian beings, the hands of the heavenly tree of the world, had become an object of the devils, he couldn't help but feel furious.

This was a blasphemous act!

At this moment, he wanted nothing more than to destroy every devil for this offense, and he would, if he had the power.

The rise of the world tree was also witnessed by many troops, who began to wonder if it was part of the devils' plan. However, it was the elves who were most shaken by the sight, as they recognized the silhouette as that of a world tree. They could not understand why such a sacred tree would appear deep within devil territory.

At the Ivory Empire, Alice—the spirit of the world tree in the capital, was in the middle of her meditation atop the world tree when she suddenly felt something stir deep within her heart. She opened her eyes and looked toward the north, her gaze sharpening ever so slightly.

"This feeling..."

At the Devil Lord's palace, the Devil Lord also sensed the disturbance and turned his gaze toward the southern horizon. From his position, he still could not see the world tree because it was too far away, but he could feel a faint tremor coming from that direction, which made him raise his eyebrows slightly.

Just then, he sensed an incoming transmission from the communication artifact in the pouch at his waist. He took it out and held it near to his ear. While still staring at the horizon, a male voice came through.

"The thing buried inside the Grand Canyon of Offering Souls has emerged to the surface."

Upon hearing the report, the Devil Lord showed no change in expression. He responded to the voice calmly.

"Then use Plan B2. Bring your entire troops, just in case."

"Understood, my lord," the voice replied before the communication cut off.

The Devil Lord had clearly anticipated this development and already prepared a contingency plan, which explained his lack of surprise. He turned back toward the altar,

watching the black pillar and the opening portal accelerated. A faint smile tugged at his lips.

"Yes... all of you fools are only speeding up the opening of the portal. Keep going—until your own doom arrives," he thought to himself.

The situation in the Grand Canyon of Offering Souls was already in chaos, as the landscape in the canyon's core area had completely changed. Now, a huge tree stood there, its height piercing the clouds. It was even taller than the highest world tree in the Ivory Empire, the world tree in the capital city.

The long, massive roots of the world tree had emerged from underground, destroying a large part of the central area of the canyon and reshaping much of the surrounding landscape.

Many landslides also occurred across the Grand Canyon, altering the terrain in several regions of the canyon.

Dureus, who had been standing closest to the core area, had already escaped more than hundreds of kilometres away, scared shitless when the heavy earthquake hit. The collapsing land and the appearance of the giant tree left him petrified, as he had seen that thing up close and could sense the overwhelming aura it released.

He couldn't believe that something so massive had been buried underground all this time.

The beasts in the distance also stared in the direction of the tree, many of them finally able to see its full form. In fact, every beast across the grand canyon mirrored the same reaction, their eyes locked on the giant world tree that had emerged from the ground.

At last, all of them could see for themselves the very thing buried in the core area—the object of their long standing questions.

While their gazes remained fixed on the giant tree, a woman's voice suddenly resounded across the grand canyon.

"Attention to all beings in the grand canyon of Offering Souls."

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 580: Joining the War[1,624 words]

Chapter 580: Joining the War

Vireline revealed herself in front of her main body, with Aldrian already appearing beside her.

All the beasts that heard her voice looked up and saw the two of them floating side by side. They wondered what was happening, as something like this had never occurred before.

The beasts only knew Vireline's figure as the guardian of this thing and wondered what had happened to that thing, to cause an appearance like this.

It was not surprising that the beasts believed Vireline was a separate entity from the tree. They thought she was the tree's guardian, not its spirit, since the idea of her being a spirit had never occurred to them.

All they knew was that this guardian figure had been there for a long time, even during the era of their own grandfathers.

"I have an announcement to make to all beings in this region," Vireline said as she looked into the distance, where many beasts were watching her.

"First, I—together with the sacred tree, the world tree will join my lord, Lord Aldrian, in the war against the Devil Lord's forces."

Hearing that, all the beasts widened their eyes in shock. Join the war?

The tree that had been buried underground for who knew how long, and its guardian, suddenly appeared and declared that they would join the war? And the way the guardian called Aldrian her lord also shocked them. This was a huge matter!

The news about Aldrian already spread across the canyon, and all beings in the region came to know about what had happened the night before.

The beasts across the canyon region finally knew that someone had visited the canyon earlier—and it was actually a human. That human was the rumored figure named Aldrian. His arrival was what triggered the thing that caused the earthquake last night.

It was also said that he was the one the tree and its guardian had been waiting for all this time.

Questions instantly rose in their minds, but they kept them to themselves as Vireline's voice continued.

"The threat of the Devil Lord cannot be ignored anymore, and we have to directly attack him to stop whatever plan he is carrying out. That black pillar is bad news for all of us. If we don't do something, then we can say goodbye to our lives here."

"You already know that the Devil Lord has been eyeing this region for a long time. He's targeting all of you who refused to follow him, who did not worship the Devil God. And this time, he will likely succeed—and I'm not joking—he will come for you all."

"We are truly under threat, and I can't protect this region with my strength alone anymore. That is why—"

She then stretched her arms out, motioning to present Aldrian.

"With my lord's strength, I believe we can prevent the Devil Lord from doing what he intends to do. And you, the beings of this region, there is no other option for you but to also fight for our survival. This time is the time for you to unleash your potential, and each of your strengths will bring a difference in this war."

Hearing Vireline, the beasts' hearts trembled. Even the tree and its guardian had declared that Aldrian was more powerful than them and that they needed his power to stop whatever the Devil Lord was planning.

They already knew that the appearance of the black pillar was bad news, so they had been wary of it, but now they realized it was far worse than they had thought. Even they needed to join the war.

"So you have two choices: either stay here and act lazy while waiting for your own death, or get out of this place, fight the Devil Lord's forces, and try to keep your life intact. Well, just consider this a do-or-die, because if the Devil Lord's plan succeeds, you will die anyway."

"So what do you want to do?" she asked one last time, then fell silent.

There was a moment of silence—until suddenly, a roar came from a beast far away. This beast was a giant wolf with red and black fur, and its roar echoed throughout the vast area.

"I will join this war! We will spill the blood of those bastards that threaten our lives," the wolf said in a harsh male voice.

A shrieking cry followed as a giant falcon voiced his decision.

"I also want to join."

After that, the sounds of beasts echoed across the Grand Canyon as they voiced their decision to follow Vireline and go to war.

Aldrian, who watched and listened to all of this, nodded in satisfaction. He was also impressed by Vireline's way of speaking to these beasts.

Fortunately, the devil beasts here did not show indifference toward Vireline or the fate of the future. He knew that, to push these beasts, Vireline had to be forceful and refuse to compromise. These beasts were devil cultivators, after all. They were stubborn and hard-headed by nature, and one had to be firm with them.

Even if she had to exaggerate her story, it didn't matter, as long as these beasts understood the significance of the situation and his status in this war.

At the very least, these beasts still had the spirit to fight for their own lives, and that would undoubtedly help in the coming battle. Whatever their reasons for joining the war, it was a good thing for him, as long as these powerful beasts chose to stand on their side.

"Now we will move to join the war under Lord Aldrian's instruction. I want you all to place him on the highest pedestal, far above me in this matter. Don't you dare go against him if you don't want to lose your life early. If you end up on his bad side, even I won't be able to save you," Vireline said.

After that, Aldrian moved slightly forward, passing Vireline.

"Alright, I'll get to the point. That black light pillar is the primary target of this war. The Devil Lord's main objective is to call the Devil God to descend through the portal that has opened in the sky. So we have to stop him, whatever it takes," he said, pointing toward the sky, where the portal was slowly opening.

"Don't ask how the Devil Lord can do it, because he *is* capable of doing it. I've confirmed it. The Devil God *will* descend if we don't stop the Devil Lord from fully opening the portal."

The beasts and even Vireline were astonished after hearing Aldrian say that the Devil God wanted to descend. Vireline didn't know about this, as she had never learned the details of the war or what the devils from the Devil Lord's faction had been doing all this time. Aldrian also hadn't explained this matter to her earlier.

To think the Devil Lord was truly trying to bring the Devil God into this world.

The beasts also felt tense. They were considered devil cultivators, and by that logic, they should have worshipped the Devil God. But in the past, their ancestors had chosen not to believe in the Devil God. They rebelled against the Devil Lord and chose their own path in this region.

Many believed the Devil God was nothing more than a creation of ancient devils, an illusion meant to scare devil cultivators and keep them bound to the devils' doctrine. The devil cultivation technique was also believed to have been created by someone in the past, and there was no reason to think that a being called the Devil God had anything to do with it.

Now that the Devil God had been called upon by the Devil Lord and was trying to descend, they felt a deep sense of unease. To think the Devil God was actually real and could truly appear.

"What we have to do is simple. We will move toward the direction of that black pillar, and all of you will annihilate every devil from the Devil Lord's forces. Kill every devil you meet along the way, show no mercy. Keep doing that until we reach the place where the black pillar stands."

"Is that clear?!" he shouted, making all the beasts across the Grand Canyon roar in unison.

"Yes, my lord!"

Aldrian smiled at the response and looked at Vireline beside him.

"Ready?" he asked.

She responded with a nod.

"I am, my lord."

Aldrian turned his gaze back toward the Grand Canyon.

"Alright, let's move. We can't waste any more time!"

After that, the ground began to shake as the roots of the World Tree started moving again. Thousands of beasts let out roars or cries, their voices echoing as they followed the tree's movement, spreading out beside and behind it.

Supported by its massive, shifting roots, the World Tree was actually walking toward the direction of the black pillar. Despite its immense size, its movement was surprisingly fast. The rumbling earth and loud sound accompanied every movement of the colossal tree.

Tens of thousands of beasts that moved with the world tree, creating a terrifying spectacle. It was as if a beast tide invasion had merged with the invasion of a World Tree.

Aldrian, seated atop the tree, watched the march of this vast force. Thousands of emperor-stage, king-stage, and grand duke-stage beasts, along with a World Tree whose power was enough to destroy an entire empire, were now under his command.

He chose to stay with the group, wanting to witness their strength with his own eyes. That moment came the next day, when they finally encountered a large group of devils not far ahead.