

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 601: Battle of Speed[1,601 words]

Chapter 601: Battle of Speed

The black substance was like hardened rock but with a glistening surface. It formed shapes like walls, protecting Zhang Haoran and the altar. The moment it took a direct hit from the Pillar of Heaven's Judgement—

Dong! Rumble!

A loud sound, like metal being struck, resounded as the entire area trembled under the impact. The ground beneath the defensive wall was pushed back by the force of the strike, the black wall trembled heavily, but, amazingly, it was not destroyed.

Aldrian, watching this, raised his eyebrows. The defensive wall still held even after taking a direct hit from his full-powered Pillar of Heaven's Judgement was truly surprising, but not unexpected. He knew Zhang Haoran might possess methods unknown to him.

Zhang Haoran held knowledge of the higher heavens, after all, and must have many tricks to block attacks like this.

Unknown to Aldrian, what Zhang Haoran had just used was his most powerful defensive technique, one he received directly from Tarius. This technique was a reward given to him after completing a certain mission in the past.

It was Zhang Haoran's trump card in defense, something that normally wouldn't be brought out during the initial phase of battle. However, he truly had no choice. The attack Aldrian unleashed was terrifying for his current self.

The strange properties of the golden energy and the sheer power behind the strike made him unwilling to rely on the invisible shield protecting the altar. He had no idea what kind of effect that golden energy might have on the barrier surrounding it.

It was better to use his strongest defensive technique first, as it was the only one capable of withstanding an attack at the level of the Pseudo Immortal Foundation stage.

Sensing the power of the attack, he was glad he had used it from the start, as the force behind it was truly terrifying. But he did not wait or remain passive, he immediately used another one of his techniques.

He touched the ground, and suddenly, many giant symbols of a summoning formation appeared around him. There were a total of twenty summoning formations!

The moment the symbols appeared, red light shone, and then—

Roar!

Shriek!

The beasts started to pour out from the summoning formations. There were phoenixes, dragons, hydras, cerberus, and great penguins. All of them instantly leapt out from the formations and took flight, each one radiating the aura of the peak emperor stage.

They appeared from behind the wall, intent on attacking Aldrian, but before they could strike, they saw that Aldrian was no longer in his place.

At that moment, Zhang Haoran had also vanished from his position. Having comprehended the space laws, he used a teleportation technique to move a distance away from where he had been. He had narrowly evaded Aldrian's sword strike, but Aldrian had suddenly stopped his assault on the wall and teleported right beside him in a surprise attack.

Zhang Haoran had not expected that Aldrian could teleport without creating even the slightest trace of energy or spatial disturbance. He already knew from reports that Aldrian relied heavily on space laws, teleportation was one of his specialties.

But now, he finally understood just how masterful Aldrian's control over space truly was. He could even mask the spatial disturbance at the target's location caused by the teleportation technique.

Unfortunately for Zhang Haoran, what he did not know was that the teleportation inside Aldrian's domain was not a technique of Aldrian himself. It was one of the domain's cheat-like abilities, allowing him to teleport anywhere he wished.

Taaang!

The sound of the clash resounded, followed by billowing wind sweeping through their surroundings, as Zhang Haoran suddenly grasped a long spear that radiated the aura of a peak divine-grade artifact.

However, Aldrian didn't seem to care. He teleported to Zhang Haoran's other side and slashed at him again.

Zhang Haoran met the strike with his spear but was forced to teleport to another location to maintain distance. Aldrian's silent teleportation was truly dangerous, if he stayed in one place, he would remain in a constantly passive position.

While both of them teleported across the battlefield, they continued clashing in rapid succession.

The summoned beasts tried to assist by attacking Aldrian, but his movements were too fast. Even their eyes couldn't follow him, and their attacks couldn't reach him before he teleported again.

Tang!

Ting! Rumble!

Boom! Tang!

Their clashes tore through the surroundings, creating spatial cracks everywhere. Each time their bodies reappeared, the ground shattered, space split, and the wind was blown away.

Aldrian could follow where Zhang Haoran teleported, as he could sense the direction through the spatial disturbance. A split second before Zhang Haoran reached his destination, Aldrian would already teleport there and intercept him. This repeated again and again, leaving Zhang Haoran unable to find an opening to strike back.

That was also the reason Zhang Haoran remained in a passive position. He was trying to escape this situation and searching for Aldrian's weakness when he finally noticed something—something that might be his opportunity.

After exchanging hundreds of blows, he found one weakness he could exploit in order to fight back against Aldrian: the difference in the quality of their artifacts.

He had seen it, Aldrian did not always use his sword to clash with his spear. Instead, he sometimes used a spatial shield that coated his palm to block the spear with one hand while attacking his body with the sword in the other.

To others, it might seem meaningless. But to Zhang Haoran, it revealed a detail that could shift the battle in his favor.

He might know exactly why Aldrian did that. The reason was—

The durability of the artifact.

Clashing directly with a peak divine-grade artifact using a middle divine-grade artifact would eventually break the latter as time passed. The sword would not hold if it kept clashing directly with his spear.

Thinking this, he decided to use another tactic. He ordered his summoned beasts to focus their attacks on a single spot, one where he planned to teleport. All twenty beasts obeyed, directing their strikes at an empty space a few kilometers away.

A split second before their attacks landed, Zhang Haoran teleported there with Aldrian—

Whozz, Boom!

The combined assault of twenty peak emperor-stage beasts shook the land and created spatial cracks that spiraled into a spatial storm.

But elsewhere, Aldrian and Zhang Haoran had already reappeared, and this time, Zhang Haoran took the initiative to attack.

He focused on striking with the intent of forcing Aldrian to block with his sword, targeting the side where Aldrian held it and pressing his offense in that direction.

Tang! Ting! Boom!

Whozz!

Aldrian, now in the disadvantaged position, had to defend himself against Zhang Haoran's relentless attacks. He genuinely commended Zhang Haoran's strategy, using the summoned beasts to strike the location they would teleport to had disrupted his attack tempo.

Forced to defend against the combined assault of the beasts, he gave Zhang Haoran a window to press the offensive. Zhang Haoran had used a type of defensive talisman the moment the combined attack from the twenty beasts landed, protecting himself from the effects of friendly fire.

In this current clash, Aldrian had no choice but to use his sword to actively block the attacks, which was bad news for him. If this continued, it would only be a matter of time before *Eternal Spirit* broke. There was no way a middle divine-grade artifact could hold out for long in direct clashes against a peak divine-grade weapon.

However, in this battle of speed and power, he had the upper hand compared to Zhang Haoran, that was the silent teleportation ability granted by the domain. Zhang Haoran had to sharpen his senses and extend them across a wide area just to detect where Aldrian would teleport.

That method had its limitations. It still created a split-second delay for Zhang Haoran to react and teleport to the place where Aldrian was. In the end, Zhang Haoran was merely following where Aldrian had already teleported, and this weakness could be exploited.

It was different for Aldrian earlier. He was the one attacking and pursuing Zhang Haoran because he sensed where Zhang Haoran would teleport in advance. As a result, they would appear at the same place at the same time, allowing Aldrian to consistently gain the upper hand.

While their clash continued, Aldrian had already prepared to use another spatial technique, and then—

Dack!

Zhang Haoran was suddenly struck by something in the middle of attacking and pursuing Aldrian. His body was repelled in the opposite direction, giving Aldrian the opportunity to counterattack. He slashed several times toward Zhang Haoran with his sword technique, *Slash of Vanguard*—each strike carrying the power of a peak emperor-stage attack.

Zhang Haoran had no time to think about what had just happened. He immediately teleported again to evade. The slashing energy flew past as it missed him, his body had already reappeared elsewhere. But Aldrian had already anticipated it.

He also attacked in that direction using *Slash of Vanguard*. The moment Zhang Haoran's figure appeared at the teleportation point, the slash was already right in front of him.

Zhang Haoran looked at the incoming slash, but then, as if time had suddenly slowed, the attack's speed seemed to drop for just a second, allowing him to teleport away again in the nick of time.

However, he struck something mid-teleportation, his movement suddenly hindered, and that moment was not wasted by Aldrian. His body had already appeared behind Zhang Haoran, sword pointed at his heart, and—

Pierced!

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 602: Dangerous?[1,746 words]

Chapter 602: Dangerous?

Pierced!

Thud!

Aldrian's sword was supposed to pierce Zhang Haoran at this moment, but he realized he was too optimistic. The sword stopped before its tip could touch Zhang Haoran's body, blocked by armor that turned out to be a high divine-grade artifact.

Zhang Haoran, now having time to react, attacked Aldrian with a palm strike from his other hand. His palm was coated with a kind of curse that, even with the slightest touch, would hinder Aldrian in this battle.

Realizing that his attack had already failed, Aldrian teleported again to create distance. But the summoned beasts followed with their attacks. He couldn't catch a break as they kept pressing him. He teleported again, this time much farther, causing the beasts to lose track of him for a second before spotting him in the distance.

They wanted to pursue him, but then heavenly lightning appeared on Aldrian's body, rumbling with great force. Black energy also exuded from him, merging with the lightning and giving it a new, terrifying aura. The heavenly attribute fused with the attribute of the underworld.

It was as if this lightning had come from the underworld itself, meant to punish sinful souls, punishment through a lightning strike from the ruler of the underworld. He had used this combination in the past, and he would use it again now with full power.

The heavenly lightning and death laws twisted together, creating a force so overwhelming that even the summoned beasts trembled in its presence. Cerberus in particular froze when it sensed the death laws emanating from Aldrian. Its body trembled and rooted itself to the spot, as if unwilling to attack.

Aldrian, unleashing the full power of his domain, let loose the lightning infused with death laws. He spread it through spatial cracks that suddenly tore open across every part of his domain. The entire space was riddled with rifts, and from the void, both the beasts and Zhang Haoran could sense the terrifying power of the heavenly lightning.

A second later—

Rumble!

The sound of a thunderclap roared as heavenly lightning burst from every spatial crack. At this moment, the entire area within Aldrian's domain resembled a violent lightning storm, only without a single drop of rain.

The lightning itself was the rain, striking the ground and everything nearby with relentless fury.

The scene looked as if the apocalypse had descended upon the world. The summoned beasts, despite their formidable defenses, could not withstand the heavenly lightning. Once it touched their bodies, they were not only electrocuted, the death laws woven into the lightning were also attacking their souls.

This combination of heavenly lightning and death laws struck both body and soul at once, rendering their defenses nearly useless.

Zhang Haoran also had to teleport repeatedly to avoid the strikes, sensing the dreadful power contained within the death laws. This lightning could even corrode the durability of a divine-grade artifact.

There was a reason why death laws were special laws that only divine beings could comprehend. Death laws could affect anything in the universe, though their impact still depended on the comprehension of the one who wielded them.

Zhang Haoran had sensed them once before, from his god, Tarius, who also comprehended death laws, an experience that revealed their terrifying effects. Now, he sensed death laws again, but this time from someone with a mortal body. It was still something he couldn't understand, but he no longer cared.

What he needed to focus on was how to defeat Aldrian.

As he teleported to evade the lightning striking all around him, he could already tell that many of his summoned beasts had succumbed to death.

The barrage of heavenly lightning, each strike carrying the strength of the peak Emperor stage, was impossible to keep defending against. Their bodies were struck again and again until their defenses gave out, and the lightning tore through them without mercy.

They couldn't evade it either. With their massive bodies, dodging was nearly impossible, and even after transforming into human form, they were still hit. The lightning was simply too fast. One by one, the beasts dropped dead, but even then, their corpses continued to be struck. The lightning kept falling until their bodies turned to ash, leaving behind nothing but scorched, ruined land.

Zhang Haoran wanted to approach Aldrian, to attack the source of the lightning directly, but the sheer intensity of the barrage made it nearly impossible. Even if he managed to get through and reach him, Aldrian's body was within the lightning itself. There was no opening, lightning layered around him like armor, forming a protective shell made from heavenly lightning.

Yet the barrage still did not stop, as if Aldrian had a massive reservoir of energy hidden within his mortal body. This was another thing Zhang Haoran couldn't understand. Did Aldrian possess unlimited energy, or something?

He never seemed to show any sign of exhaustion, even after unleashing techniques that, by all logic, should require an immense amount of energy.

This lightning storm, for example, each strike carrying the strength of the peak Emperor stag, was not something that could be sustained with a small amount of power.

Aldrian had already maintained this technique for fifteen seconds, and in that time, the lightning had obliterated all the summoned beasts and was now focusing entirely on Zhang Haoran.

Realizing this, Zhang Haoran decided to use another trump card. He suddenly stopped moving and allowed the lightning to strike his body. He felt a slight jolt as the artifact he wore absorbed the brunt of the impact.

As expected, the lightning was powerful enough to affect even a high divine-grade artifact. The fact that he could feel even a trace of the shock was proof that this combination of heavenly lightning and death laws was truly deadly, even with high divine grade artifact.

However, Zhang Haoran managed to endure the lightning barrage for a few moments, just enough time to take out an artifact. In his grasp appeared a transparent sphere with a single eye sealed within it. He pointed the eye directly at Aldrian.

The eye glowed red for a few seconds before the artifact shattered. But despite its destruction, Zhang Haoran grinned. He had succeeded. Though he had to stop and take multiple lightning strikes in the process, he had managed to activate the artifact on Aldrian. Scorch marks had already begun forming on the surface of his armor, but it was still worth it.

Aldrian had no idea what Zhang Haoran had just used on him. Before he could think further, he suddenly felt something binding his dantian and soul. His energy flow faltered, restricted by a force he couldn't see. He could also feel his soul being suppressed by something invisible and unnatural.

"A curse?" he thought.

He instantly realized that what was binding him was indeed a curse, and a powerful one at that. It bound both his dantian and his soul, causing him to lose control of his technique.

The lightning storm slowly began to disperse as he focused on dealing with the curse first. It did more than block his control over energy, it also exerted a negative influence on his soul. At this moment, his soul was under direct attack, and his mind was clouded with negative thoughts.

He saw his followers suddenly appear around him, staring at him with eyes full of hatred. All the faces he knew were now looking at him with expressions he had never seen before, expressions filled with loathing, directed solely at him.

"Why are you leaving us? Why did you leave us to die?" the illusion of Feng Xuanyan said to him.

"You have abandoned us. You have abandoned us," Long Shentian said.

"Where were you when we needed you? You abandoned us!"

"You are—"

Many negative remarks were thrown at him. He tried to ignore them, but the curse made him clutch his head as pain throbbed through his head. The curse on his soul was truly strong, it created a powerful illusion that affected his mental state. He knew this was only an illusion, but their words still hurt him deeply.

Suddenly, he saw Zhang Haoran already standing right in front of him, sweeping his spear toward him, specifically at his neck. He intended to decapitate him in a single, clean strike.

"Die."

But before the spear could reach Aldrian's neck, he had already teleported to a much farther distance from Zhang Haoran.

Zhang Haoran, who had only swept his spear through empty space, was stunned and couldn't help but feel astonished. Aldrian could still use his technique, even though he couldn't access his dantian?

The artifact he had used was a curse-type artifact given to him by Tarius. A one-time-use item designed to curse a specific target within its line of sight. It was said to contain powerful Anathema laws, capable of inflicting torture and misfortune upon whoever was cursed.

The curse did more than bind the dantian and soul, it also affected karma. Over time, it would bring misfortune to the victim's surroundings.

Once someone was marked by this curse, they lost access to their dantian and would suffer nightmares every second of their life. And the curse didn't stop with the victim, it also influenced the surrounding environment and anyone connected to them. All of them would be affected by the curse's misfortune.

A truly strong and terrifying curse, Zhang Haoran doubted anyone in this heaven could escape from it once they were struck by it.

Aldrian should no longer be able to access his dantian, so how was he still able to teleport?

Zhang Haoran prepared to teleport toward Aldrian to attack again, but then he heard Aldrian's voice.

"To dirty my followers' figures with this ugly illusion—"

BOOM!

Suddenly, Aldrian's body erupted with a surge of powerful energy and aura. The force of it stirred the wind across the entire area, forcing Zhang Haoran to shield himself.

A golden light burst from Aldrian, shining brilliantly, as a massive, transparent golden avatar began to form around him. The avatar's towering figure stretched into the sky, forcing Zhang Haoran to lift his gaze just to see its face. His eyes widened in shock as he looked up at the colossal figure.

The avatar's face was Aldrian's, but it wore a crown and regal armor, as if he were an emperor.

"Your fate has been sealed," Aldrian said, his voice filled with authority.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 603: His Ultimate Trump Card[1,543 words]

Chapter 603: His Ultimate Trump Card

Zhang Haoran lifted his head to look at the massive golden avatar, which revealed the complete figure of Aldrian's avatar manifestation. The avatar's face resembled Aldrian's, adorned with a crown, and it wore regal armor and a cape, as if an emperor were preparing for war.

It was exuding a powerful aura, one much stronger than that of the peak emperor stage. Once this avatar appeared, nature itself seemed to prostrate before it. The immense concentration of golden energy was a clear sign of authority, one that could command all things, whether in heaven or beneath it, and it was now revealed to the world as never before.

This avatar was entirely different from when Aldrian used his sword techniques. Whenever he wielded a sword technique, he had to combine his energy with his powerful sword intent and will.

But his avatar technique required him to release his golden energy in its purest form, without mixing anything into it. In essence, this was the first time he revealed his golden energy on such a scale to the world.

The avatar's figure even reached the clouds, making Zhang Haoran's presence seem no bigger than an ant. It felt as if Aldrian could crush him to death with a single step.

Seeing the avatar now, Zhang Haoran was in turmoil. His eyes trembled, and sweat rolled down his forehead. Suddenly, a memory from the past resurfaced, a strong sense of déjà vu washing over him. He remembered the first time he laid eyes on a god-like figure. That moment had terrified him to the core.

At that moment, he could feel the overwhelming disparity between himself and a god. He was like an ant—no, worse than that. He might as well have been speck of dirt, something that could be swept away with a single breath. That was the moment he met Tarius, his god.

He had seen Tarius's figure, towering and immense, as if it covered the sky. Meanwhile, he had been nothing more than a mortal, no more significant than dust, someone unworthy to stand in the presence of such a divine being. It was a feeling of utter despair.

He did not know why, but in this moment, that long-buried memory surfaced from the deepest corner of his mind. In front of Aldrian's avatar, he once again felt like an ant. In many ways, it was as if he had returned to the day he first met Tarius.

At this moment, his thoughts began racing, everything around him seemed to slow down. He started thinking about all of Aldrian's strangeness. He thought about the entirety of Aldrian's existence.

This kind of avatar size could normally only be achieved when a cultivator reached a certain stage. The problem was, this enormous avatar had appeared on the continent from someone who was only at the middle Grand Duke stage.

What shocked Zhang Haoran even more was that the avatar was far larger than those created by cultivators at the pseudo-Immortal Foundation stage.

He had no doubt that Aldrian was someone who had reincarnated from elsewhere and brought with him knowledge from the higher heavens.

Zhang Haoran did not know Aldrian's full circumstances, but he believed that was certainly the case.

Why was he so sure? Because he himself was proof of it. In fact, he knew there were others like him scattered across the heavens.

However, just because Aldrian was a reincarnated person who possessed knowledge from the higher heavens and a system, it did not mean he was exempt from the heavenly laws or the natural order that had been established since the primordial era.

Many of what Aldrian possessed at this moment was something only a god was meant to have. There was no way a mortal body could contain all that power, and the heavenly laws would never tolerate it. It was impossible for a mortal vessel to comprehend or hold divine power.

And what kind of divine being would be insane enough to grant such power to Aldrian? There was no way a divine entity capable of bestowing that much strength would be unaware of the consequences.

But at that moment, Zhang Haoran began to consider another possibility, one that might explain the impossibility before him. He tried to break free from the constraints of his own thinking.

What if his perspective was too narrow? What if he had been too trapped within a mindset that insisted everything must follow the patterns of past precedent?

That kind of thinking had limited his imagination and prevented him from seeing other answers that might be right in front of him. Now, he allowed his thoughts to open, spreading into far broader possibilities.

What if Aldrian had not broken any heavenly laws at all? What if he could wield all that power because he was meant to?

The answer was not too complex or distant.

What if Aldrian was actually a true god in the form of a mortal?

That was the only explanation that made sense. It was the only reason Aldrian could possess all of that without consequence.

A god within a mortal body.

Was that even possible? He did not know. He lacked deep knowledge about the true extent of a god's power. But one thing was certain, Aldrian possessed the qualities of a divine being.

But then, one question continued to bother him. He could not understand how Aldrian managed to evade the heavenly laws of the lower heavens.

By all reason, Aldrian should have already faced punishment. A divine being using divine power in the lower realm should have triggered immediate backlash. But nothing had happened. Why?

Then, a new and even more absurd conclusion formed in his mind, one that made him laugh at himself in silence.

What if the heavenly laws were not punishing Aldrian... because they supported his existence?

If that were true, then he was not just facing a cultivator. He was facing a fragment of a god.

Could he win against that?

"Whatever," he thought.

He decided to use his ultimate trump card. The current situation was forcing his hand. He did not know the full extent of Aldrian's strength or abilities, but judging from what he had seen, he had no choice. If he wanted to survive, he had to act decisively.

At that moment, Aldrian's avatar raised one of its hands. And in that hand, a sword suddenly formed, a sword with the exact shape of Eternal Spirit. Without a single word, the avatar brought the blade down toward Zhang Haoran.

The sword was so powerful that space itself was split by its tip, leaving a rift in its wake.

But before the sword could crush Zhang Haoran—

BOOM!

Zhang Haoran's aura suddenly burst forth, surging violently as the surrounding wind was blown away. From his body, a giant avatar emerged, towering and imposing. It was red, with three heads and six arms, an asura-like figure with a terrifying expression that stared directly at the incoming sword.

In an instant, spears appeared in each of its hands. All six arms moved at once, forming a defensive stance to block the descending blade.

Aldrian, watching this unfold, raised an eyebrow, but he did not stop his strike.

The moment his sword met the spears of Zhang Haoran's avatar—

BOOM!

Swooosh! Rumble!

The tremendous sound of the clash echoed across the entire region, and the impact tore open a massive spatial rift around them. The force of the collision also devastated the land behind Zhang Haoran, with the destruction spreading for over a hundred kilometers.

Even the spatial barrier that Aldrian had created to trap Zhang Haoran inside his domain was shattered by the clash.

A chaotic spatial storm erupted, pulling everything nearby into its swirling void. Yet despite the destruction, the two avatars remained unmoved. Although Zhang Haoran's avatar was much smaller than Aldrian's, it did not fall short in terms of power. It was exuding the same strong aura as Aldrian's.

That was what made Aldrian raise his eyebrows in surprise. Zhang Haoran's cultivation had now touched the next realm—the pseudo-Immortal Foundation stage.

On this continent, which had long been sealed by a massive formation created through the combined efforts of Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan, no one was supposed to reach a realm beyond the peak emperor stage in the truest sense.

Yet now, it seemed that someone had bypassed that restriction.

At this moment, Zhang Haoran had truly stepped into that higher realm. Aldrian could sense it, not just from his aura or the expansion of his energy, but from the energy around him. His entire being had shifted. He had not merely approached the threshold. He had crossed it.

He had reached the next realm in the truest sense.

Zhang Haoran's avatar then pushed Aldrian's sword upward as he roared with all his might. The six spears moved in unison, successfully repelling the massive sword of Aldrian's avatar.

Without pause, Zhang Haoran revealed the full figure of his avatar and flew into the air, positioning its spears in a battle stance.

"Aldrian! We'll decide our fate here and now! One of us will fall!"

He would end this as soon as possible!

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 604: Battle of Two Avatars[1,716 words]

Chapter 604: Battle of Two Avatars

Zhang Haoran decided to use his ultimate trump card, a reward he had received from Tarius for completing certain missions in the past. This reward allowed him to bypass the restriction of the giant formation that covered the continent.

It was something already within him and could be unleashed through his intent, requiring only the system's help to activate it. The formation that covered the continent imposed strict limitations on the cultivators living within it. They could not break through beyond the peak Emperor stage and were unable to comprehend divine-grade techniques.

However, the reward known as the "Altering Rules" cheat, given by Tarius, was a game-changer. This one-time-use cheat had the function of altering a restriction placed upon him, as long as the rule was not divine in nature or did not violate heavenly laws. As long as those conditions were met, he could essentially break any restriction imposed on him.

For example, if he went to a place where there was a restriction requiring anyone who entered to have a maximum or minimum cultivation level, he could bypass that restriction using this reward.

Right now, in this continent, there was a restriction that blocked him from breaking through to the next realm beyond the peak Emperor stage, so he used the reward to overcome it. Still, he honestly did not want to use it, as he had wanted to save it for the

future. It was a one-time-use item and could only be applied to a single rule. He had to be careful and wise in choosing when to activate it.

However, the current situation had pushed him to the point where he was forced to use it in order to gain an instant boost in strength. Aldrian was someone he had already regarded as a god, and he needed the power increase to stand a chance in the fight. He did not know the true extent of Aldrian's abilities, nor whether Aldrian had more hidden trump cards.

He had already reached the peak Emperor stage long ago. All he needed was for the restriction to be lifted, and he could instantly break through. The quality of his entire being had been ready to touch the next realm for a long time, so advancing to the next level was not difficult at all.

At this moment, he became the first person on this continent to break through to the realm beyond the peak Emperor stage. The instant he used the reward, he also activated his avatar technique to block Aldrian's strike. His strength erupted explosively, and his comprehension and mastery of the divine-grade artifact rose to a new level.

After all, cultivators at the peak Emperor stage had never been able to bring out the full potential of a divine-grade artifact. That stage still carried its own limitations when it came to fully using a divine-grade artifact's power or potential.

Now that he had reached the pseudo-Immortal Foundation stage, he could feel it, he might be able to defeat Aldrian.

However, he needed to end the fight as quickly as possible. His cultivation was still unstable due to the breakthrough, and prolonged combat might damage his cultivation foundation. That was something he could not allow to happen, as it would affect his future potential.

"Aldrian! We'll decide our fate here and now! One of us will fall!" he shouted.

Then, all six spears in his avatar's grasp thrust toward Aldrian's direction. Aldrian's main body was located in the central chest area of the avatar, and that was exactly where Zhang Haoran aimed his attack.

Aldrian, of course, did not just stand by and watch Zhang Haoran's attack come without doing anything. His massive avatar could move swiftly, as if there were no difference between it and his smaller main body. His sword swung with such speed that it generated a raging wind, intercepting the six spears as they came toward him.

Thang!

The sound of the clash echoed as sword and spears collided.

But Zhang Haoran did not stop. He soared higher with incredible speed. There were no restrictions in his movement, and he had no trouble maneuvering his giant avatar.

He lifted all six spears again and pointed them at Aldrian. Each spear was suddenly coated in a surge of powerful red energy, intensifying its aura dramatically, then he hurled them one by one.

Six Punishment of the Destruction Spears.

Each spear sliced through space as it flew at Aldrian with immense speed. Every single one carried the full force of a strike from the pseudo-Immortal Foundation stage!

Aldrian, watching the incoming strikes, swept his giant sword in a wide arc, channeling the full power of his domain to block the spears.

Thang! Boom!

He blocked the first spear, then moved his sword again to intercept the others. His avatar's movements were so smooth, it felt as if it were Aldrian's own body. The avatar could shift the sword's trajectory with incredible speed, stirring powerful winds in every direction.

Thang! Boom!

Thang! Boom!

The sword kept blocking the spears with precise timing, but when it moved to stop the fourth—

Thang! Boom! Clang!

The sword in Aldrian's avatar's hand shattered. The fourth spear pierced through it and shot straight toward Aldrian, followed closely by the fifth and sixth spears. A split second later—

Dang! Dang! Dang!

The spears struck the chest of Aldrian's avatar directly, pushing the massive figure back several hundred meters before it finally stopped. The spears had pierced into the avatar's chest and nearly reached Aldrian's main body. They came to a halt, stuck in the avatar's armor just before touching him.

Aldrian that staring at the tip of a spear not far from his face, moved his avatar's hand to pull it out from his avatar's chest. He was not surprised that the sword in his avatar's hand, which was an energy manifestation of the Eternal Spirit, could only withstand three full-power attacks from a pseudo-Immortal Foundation cultivator's avatar.

Those three strikes had also managed to pierce the armor of his avatar. The first spear weakened the armor without breaking through, but the second and third spears pierced the already weakened defense.

That showed just how powerful the strikes were, as they still managed to pierce armor enhanced by the full power of Aldrian's domain. After all, a true pseudo-Immortal Foundation cultivator was still many times stronger than someone at the peak Emperor stage.

After pulling out the spears, Aldrian saw that Zhang Haoran's avatar had already recalled the others he had successfully blocked. The spears flew back into his avatar's hands. Zhang Haoran already tried to call back the remaining two spears embedded in Aldrian's avatar's chest, but they were already in Aldrian's grasp.

They could not return because Aldrian was holding them tightly, refusing to let go.

Zhang Haoran, seeing that the rest of the spears could not return to him, did not dwell on it. He lifted the four remaining spears and pointed them toward the sky. In that moment, the sky above suddenly turned overcast.

Thunderclaps echoed as strands of lightning crackled through the dark clouds above. Lightning suddenly struck the four spears in Zhang Haoran's avatar's hands, and he pointed them at Aldrian. A few moments later—

Rumble! Rumble!

The Lightning's Judgement.

Beams of lightning burst from the four spear tips, shooting toward Aldrian. The power within each beam was even slightly stronger than Zhang Haoran's previous strike.

Aldrian's avatar, still gripping the two spears, took a stance. His avatar mirrored his motion as he positioned himself like a warrior about to hurl a javelin at Zhang Haoran's avatar. Then, with full force, he threw the spear.

Whoosh!

He then threw the second spear in his other hand with smooth precision.

Whoosh!

Right after, Aldrian manifested his sword once more, and his avatar gripped it tightly. He watched the spears fly directly toward the incoming lightning beams, until they collided.

Boom!

A massive explosion erupted, and massive spatial cracks split open at the point of impact. Winds howled in all directions, and even the ground far below was destroyed, leaving behind a huge crater.

But then, from within the explosion, the two spears Aldrian had thrown were hurled to the sides. The lightning beams had overpowered them and continued to surge toward Aldrian's direction.

Aldrian's avatar, now wielding its sword once more, swung it upward as Aldrian attempted to execute the *Slash of Vanguard* through it.

The result?

SWOOSH!

The entire space trembled and collapsed as a massive wave of slash energy burst from the sword's blade, rushing toward the four incoming lightning beams. The slash met the beams just a second later.

BOOM!

A massive explosion shook the entire region. But behind the thick smoke, the slash energy could be seen forcing the lightning beams back, driving them toward Zhang Haoran.

Zhang Haoran sensed it as well and gritted his teeth. He had already used a significant portion of his energy since earlier. From the beginning of his battle with Aldrian until now, he had already expended fifty percent of his energy. However, because he was using the avatar technique, the energy within his dantian was depleting at an even faster rate.

The avatar technique could multiply the power of a cultivator's attacks, but it consumed energy at a much faster pace.

Seeing that his technique was still being overpowered, Zhang Haoran realized he would need to use an even stronger technique, and even combine it with his domain. He had not activated his domain yet, knowing it would drain a large amount of his energy. But from the way things were going, he might need everything he had to overpower Aldrian.

He began preparing to cancel his current technique, as the slash energy continued to approach and push back his lightning beams.

But then, his eyes widened in shock. In the blink of an eye, Aldrian's massive avatar vanished, then reappeared right beside his own.

Aldrian's avatar, still standing on the ground due to its enormous size, had already begun a chopping motion, and the blade of the giant sword was instantly upon Zhang Haoran's avatar.

"He can use teleportation with—?!"

BOOM!

Zhang Haoran's avatar took a direct hit from the giant sword while he was still in shock.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 605: The End of the Battle?[1,749 words]

Chapter 605: The End of the Battle?

Once the sword met the head of Zhang Haoran's avatar, he immediately felt shaken as the full force of the giant sword was also transmitted to him. His soul trembled violently, since the avatar technique had a strong connection to the cultivator's soul. Before long, he spat out a mouthful of blood.

Sprut!

Blood splashed as his avatar began to fall, the massive sword forcing it down. He tried to remain airborne and attempted to push the sword away, but the direct impact on his avatar had already caused serious damage to his soul. He couldn't fully concentrate on controlling it anymore, as the sword's power kept inflicting continuous damage.

And then, two seconds later—

Crack! Crack! Clang!

Zhang Haoran's avatar's head shattered, followed by the collapse of its entire body. Zhang Haoran kept vomiting blood as he fell from the sky, and finally—

Boom!

His body was thrown to the ground like a projectile, crashing down with a deafening impact after his avatar was destroyed. The sudden strike and the direct hit from the massive sword, empowered by Aldrian's entire domain, had left him severely injured.

He truly felt stupid, having still been caught off guard despite all his preparation.

Zhang Haoran's thoughts slipped for a moment, he had already accepted that Aldrian was a god, yet in the heat of battle, he miscalculated. He kept thinking inside the box, still applying the rules of battle between mortal cultivators. It was understandable. After all, he had never fought a god before, and there were too many possibilities he couldn't predict.

He did not expect Aldrian to have the capability to teleport while using an avatar technique of that scale. He had assumed that to control and move such a massive avatar, Aldrian would need to focus entirely on channeling his energy to maintain its form and motion.

After all, maintaining an avatar of that size should have placed a tremendous toll on the user, and teleporting the entire avatar should have been impossible, doing so would normally cause the avatar's form to collapse.

That was his mistake.

He had continued to apply mortal rules to Aldrian, and now he was paying the price.

When his body struck the ground, the impact shattered the earth beneath him and left a crater in its wake.

Although his body was protected by a high-grade divine armor artifact, his soul had taken severe damage. And that was the worst part. He was still in the midst of battle, and damage to the soul would leave him dangerously vulnerable.

However, having prepared for the worst, he had already accounted for a situation like this. He possessed another one time card, that could heal any injury in his body and soul as long as he was still alive. He was about to command the system to activate it, but before he could speak—

Grab!

Aldrian grabbed hold of his head. His avatar technique had already been cancelled, and in the next instant, Aldrian injected his golden energy that now already altered with poisonous properties, directly into Zhang Haoran.

Alongside it, he unleashed a strand of lightning, aiming to inflict even greater damage to the soul.

In Aldrian's mind, Zhang Haoran's soul had to be exceptionally strong, having touched the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Realm.

That soul's strength, he believed, should be enough to withstand this much pain.

Zhang Haoran, already wracked with unbearable pain, felt as if his head would burst from the surge of Aldrian's golden energy and lightning forced into him.

"Warning, warning, the host's life is in danger. Warning, warning, the host's life is in danger." The system's voice rang in Zhang Haoran's mind, but he could not comprehend it. The pain in his head was overwhelming, so intense that he could no longer grasp anything around him.

"No, I need to stay awake! I need to stay awake!"

"My revenge—"

His vision suddenly went black. The unbearable pain tearing through his soul was too much. With his soul already wounded, the combined assault of golden energy and lightning laws had pushed him past his limit. He could no longer maintain his consciousness.

The fact that he had managed to stay conscious even for a few seconds was already a remarkable feat, one that left Aldrian quietly impressed by the soul strength of someone who had reached the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Realm.

Still holding Zhang Haoran's head, Aldrian made sure he had truly lost consciousness.

He waited for a full minute before slowly releasing his grip. His gaze remained fixed on Zhang Haoran's head and body, his senses focused entirely on him and the surrounding environment—watching for any possible trick.

Once he was certain that Zhang Haoran had truly lost consciousness and wasn't faking it, he sat down beside him, letting his body slump slightly. He took a deep breath and exhaled, his eyes still on Zhang Haoran.

This battle had been truly challenging and tense. It was very different from his fight with Cardinal Carsius. Although he had been injured in that battle, this one was even more challenging. It was a true battle of strategy and power, and even without suffering any injuries, it had pushed him far harder.

When he fought Cardinal Carsius, he still had a trump card—his full domain’s strength at the time.

However, against Zhang Haoran, he had to unleash the full power of his domain from the very beginning. Throughout the battle, he had mostly maintained that level of power, and even then, he was unable to defeat Zhang Haoran overwhelmingly.

Zhang Haoran was truly a clever fighter. He could take advantage of every detail in the battlefield and adapt quickly to turn situations in his favor.

For example, when he targeted Aldrian’s sword with the intent to break it, the momentum, which had previously been in Aldrian’s favor, shifted. Aldrian was forced into a passive position and could only defend for a time.

Combined with Zhang Haoran’s comprehension of many laws, he became as slippery as an eel every time Aldrian’s attack nearly landed.

When Aldrian read his information, he couldn’t help but feel astonished by the number of techniques and laws Zhang Haoran had comprehended.

It was the longest information he had ever seen from any cultivator he had looked into.

Zhang Haoran had mastered the four basic elements, along with seven more special elements, such as space, time, and curse—and over twenty techniques, including summoning, domain, avatar, and many others.

At one point, Zhang Haoran used his time laws to slow the surrounding space for a second, just enough to evade Aldrian’s strike. Aldrian, who also comprehended time laws, recognized it immediately and knew he would need to be more creative if he wanted to land a direct hit.

What gave him the edge, however, was an ability Zhang Haoran had not fully realized—his domain.

Aldrian took full advantage of that ignorance.

He used the spatial barrier he had created across the surface of his domain to prevent Zhang Haoran from escaping. He lured him toward the edge, and Zhang Haoran, unaware that he was already inside the domain and unable to detect the hidden spatial barrier, crashed into it. That brief moment was enough for Aldrian to strike back.

Even so, the moment Zhang Haoran cast that curse was truly dangerous. Aldrian had been completely vulnerable for an instant. Unfortunately for Zhang Haoran, Aldrian’s golden energy was a natural bane to any kind of curse. Although the curse attempted to seal his

dantian, it had no chance of completely suppressing the source where his golden energy was concentrated.

Forget about his dantian, even all of his meridians were filled with golden energy.

Fueled by rage after seeing the illusion, he forcefully shattered the curse.

He burst forth with energy, unleashing the full power of his domain to crush the curse and activate his avatar technique, for the first time ever.

He had actually created this avatar technique during the journey to this place. While resting along the way, he had taken the time to prepare himself further for the battle against the Devil Lord, adding a new technique to his arsenal.

Although he already had a trump card like *Slash of the End*, he still wanted to include an avatar technique to strengthen his overall power.

However, there was a moment when he felt slightly anxious, when Zhang Haoran managed to break through to the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Realm. He knew that, as of now, the full power of his domain might only reach that level. The power of the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation was not something to be underestimated, as he had just experienced firsthand.

He was already using the full power of his domain, and it was enough to match Zhang Haoran during their exchange with avatars. But what would come next? Zhang Haoran might still have even more powerful techniques, and he hadn't activated his domain at all since the beginning, which Aldrian could already guess the reason for.

A domain was a technique that consumed a great deal of energy. Zhang Haoran clearly didn't want to use it recklessly while facing him. He was still observing, still evaluating Aldrian's strength and abilities, waiting for the right moment to activate it.

Aldrian knew that after their clash using avatars, Zhang Haoran would likely bring out his domain in an attempt to overpower him. If Zhang Haoran possessed even stronger attack techniques and chose that moment to activate his domain as well, then there would be no way for Aldrian to block all of it.

He might have to use *Slash of the End*, and even then, he wasn't confident it would be enough. He didn't know the true limits of Zhang Haoran's power after reaching the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Realm and using all his cards.

That was why he used another trick to strike before Zhang Haoran could go all out. That trick was the teleportation ability of his domain.

Zhang Haoran would never expect the massive avatar to teleport directly in front of him and launch an immediate attack. It was a surprise that left him no time to react, and fortunately, the plan worked.

He had also prevented Zhang Haoran from healing through his system. He had seen, when reading Zhang Haoran's information before the battle, that he possessed something capable of instantly healing all his wounds.

Aldrian took a deep breath before moving closer to Zhang Haoran's head.

It was time to look into his memories.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 606: Already Want to Descend?[1,486 words]

Chapter 606: Already Want to Descend?

Aldrian touched Zhang Haoran's head and began entering his mind. But before he could go much deeper, he suddenly encountered many large screens that turned red, followed by a loud voice. The voice was monotone, like a kind of programmed message.

"Warning, warning, intruder infiltrating host's mind. Warning, warning, intruder infiltrating host's mind."

The voice was so loud it slightly hurt his ears. He instantly knew this must be the system embedded inside Zhang Haoran. Despite the noise, he kept moving and tried to touch the system.

His hand passed through the screen, which made him realize the system had characteristics similar to his own. However, he had to find a way to shut it down, as the voice was truly disturbing him.

He thought for a moment about how to stop the thing called a system. He didn't know how it worked, so he had no idea how to make it disappear. Forget about the system inside another person, he still hadn't fully grasped how his own system worked.

According to Zhang Haoran, the system was something given by the gods, which made him even more cautious in dealing with it.

While searching for a solution, he thought about his own system. If it was a system problem, then his own system must know the way, right?

"Can you help me? Can you make the system in this person stop disturbing me?" he asked the system inside his mind.

The response came instantly, appearing as writing on the screen in front of his consciousness.

"I can. Please wait..."

Reading the answer, Aldrian nodded in satisfaction. He looked around at the red screens, all displaying the same warning message about an intruder infiltrating the space. He wanted to understand how the system worked, and how his own system would silence it.

But before he could see it in action, the red screens and the loud voice vanished all at once. He stood still, stunned, he had no idea how his system had managed to stop the opposing system. There was nothing for him to observe, his system had done it so easily and so quickly that he didn't even know what he was supposed to be looking for.

However, even though he was curious to know more about how the system worked, he had more important things to do right now. With the screens gone, he continued forward, delving into Zhang Haoran's memories.

At a location much farther from Aldrian, several days away, the thousands of alliance troops had already arrived near the battlefield where Aldrian was facing millions of devil troops.

They had reached the area where flames were still blazing in some places, and the heat made the troops that neared it sweat. The group of the world tree that already moving much farther helping to put out the flame so the troops did not hindered by the flame and can keep moving forward.

They needed to push forward toward the black pillar faster, which now appeared much closer, and the scene they had just witnessed made them even more eager to advance.

For the past few minutes, they had been watching an astonishing sight. A golden giant figure shone through the darkness on the horizon. The figure was massive, reaching up to the clouds, and many recognized it as an avatar technique.

They were truly shocked that an avatar could reach such a size, and many could see that the avatar had Aldrian's face. There was no doubt who it belonged to, and this was the

first time they had seen Aldrian use his avatar technique. They saw that Aldrian appeared to be fighting someone, but they couldn't tell who it was, as they were still too far away.

However, they could clearly see how the giant avatar moved smoothly and swiftly, as if its massive body didn't hinder it at all. The avatar attacked and defended with quick movements and precise control of power, allowing it to block the attacks of the devil.

Those who understood avatar techniques were especially amazed by Aldrian's control. They knew how difficult it was to manage an avatar, and how exhausting it could be, as it drained energy at a rapid rate.

The enemy also used an avatar, one with a red hue, which immediately told them that Aldrian was facing a devil cultivator. That devil was clearly powerful, strong enough that even from a distance, they could see his strength matched Aldrian's. At one point, it even looked like Aldrian's avatar might lose, as its defenses were broken.

Sylphia and the others who witnessed it were deeply worried. Aldrian's opponent this time seemed truly formidable, and one name came to mind.

The Devil Lord.

Was Aldrian already fighting the Devil Lord?

Those who continued watching the battle held their breath as the clash between the two avatars went on, until they were shocked to see Aldrian's avatar suddenly teleport to the side of the devil's avatar in the blink of an eye.

Then, they saw Aldrian's avatar's sword strike shattered the devil's avatar, and all the troops shouted in unison, their spirits lifted as they witnessed Aldrian's victory in the avatar battle.

They had truly learned something new from watching the fight. What they saw was incredible control and power, making them feel like amateurs in comparison to Aldrian. Many of them wondered how he could fight like that and wished they could learn even a fraction of his skill.

The alliance troops continued advancing, extinguishing the flames in the areas they passed. Before long, they arrived at a place where a vast, deep crater spread out before them. The scale of the destruction left them astonished, and many felt a chill in their hearts.

They knew the vast crater had been formed by a colossal rock that fell from the sky two days ago.

They truly couldn't fathom how a human could use such a technique or unleash destruction on this scale. As they continued advancing, the leaders of the major territories at the front exchanged their thoughts about what they saw.

"This level of destruction is truly terrifying," Emperor Durand said with a sigh. "There is no way any of us could pull off something like this. I can only imagine the energy and control required, it must be immense. We simply don't have the capacity."

"I agree. Young Aldrian is a monster," Emperor Herman replied. "I don't have a better word for it. Everything about him truly out of this world." He sighed, then added, "I'm just glad he's on our side."

"Well, that's to be expected from the prophesied one. He can't be comprehended, and I've already given up trying to understand his being. I'd go crazy if I forced myself to. The most important thing is that he's on our side," Emperor Raymond said from the side. His right hand was still severed, but the wound had already closed beneath the bandages.

With repeated treatment from the physicians, the injury had stabilized, and he could now move more freely.

"Anyway, don't you think this terrifying aura has been getting stronger?" Emperor Ladwin asked with a frown. "It feels like the source has gotten much closer in a short time."

Since entering the area beyond the fog wall, they had sensed a terrifying aura, one that felt similar to devil energy, but even more intimidating. All of it came from the direction of the black pillar.

The aura was so suffocating that the holy-element cultivators had to work even harder to protect the troops from its influence.

Unbeknownst to them, what they were sensing was Tarius's divine aura.

"Yes, the aura feels more suffocating and heavier. It's as if the source is getting much closer," Pope Carsius answered with a frown.

"However, I don't sense any clear origin nearby. Instead, the aura seems to be spreading more widely, as if the source is everywhere," he added.

All of them looked around, trying to make sense of the change in the aura surrounding them. But even after searching for several moments, they found nothing, which left them confused. The aura was undeniably growing stronger with each passing minute, yet they could not locate its source.

But then—

"Wait... do you think the void in the sky has changed slightly?" Emperor Ladwin said, staring at the portal in the sky.

The others followed his gaze, and saw what he saw.

The black portal that now covered the entire sky felt even more ominous and darker. And then, they saw something that chilled them to the bone.

A thin spatial crack suddenly appeared in the darkness, slowly stretching longer and longer. Their eyes froze on it, sweat forming on their brows as their hearts pounded. Their emotions were in turmoil, a mixture of fear and disbelief.

Was the Devil God already preparing to descend into this world?

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 607: The Past[1,723 words]

Chapter 607: The Past

Year 2035, on a blue planet called "Earth."

Zhang Haoran was a 35-year-old handsome man living in the city of Shanghai, China. He lived with his little sister in a normal household. They no longer had any parents, as their parents had left them when they were young.

There was nothing particularly conspicuous about him on the outside, he looked just like an ordinary handsome man. His sister also lived a normal life, working as a secretary at a corporation.

However, behind that handsome and seemingly ordinary appearance, Zhang Haoran lived a life far from normal, one that even his sister didn't know about. Behind the scenes, he was actually an important member of a mafia group.

Having once sought a way to earn money, he had become trapped in the world of organized crime.

He was one of the best henchmen under the boss of that mafia group and eventually became the brain behind their operations. His contributions to the organization were immense, allowing the group to grow at a tremendous rate. They began absorbing many

smaller gangs and even destroyed rival mafia groups, causing their influence to expand rapidly.

This rapid growth alarmed the other groups in the surrounding regions. Feeling threatened, multiple mafia groups across China joined forces and launched a coordinated attack, ultimately destroying Zhang Haoran's group and leaving only a few survivors.

He was captured by one of the enemy groups, who saw his value and decided not to kill him. Instead, they chose to use him as much as they could. Knowing how important he was, they threatened him with his sister's safety, forcing him to work for the very group that had destroyed his own.

Year 2040.

He had helped the mafia group grow even larger and more powerful. However, he had lived like a dog all this time. Even though the group relied on his value, they never treated him like a colleague. Instead, he was treated like an animal on a leash, forced to obey, with his sister's life as the chain around his neck.

His sister, unaware of any danger, lived her life normally. She didn't know that the mafia group was constantly watching her, using her as leverage to keep him under control.

He desperately wanted to escape and take his sister far away from the city, but the group never gave him the chance. He couldn't even tell her the truth, afraid that doing so would only make the situation even worse.

He never wanted to make his sister worry. All he wished for was for her to live an innocent, ordinary life, just like any other normal woman. He never wanted her to know anything about the dark world he was part of.

But one night, their home was attacked by an unknown group of masked figures. A fierce battle broke out as he tried to protect his sister, killing many of the intruders in the process. However, the attackers were well-prepared, and their coordination quickly overwhelmed him.

They captured his sister, and in the end, he had no choice but to surrender.

Not long after, the two of them were taken to a remote location, where he was interrogated about the mafia group he currently worked for. It was then that he finally understood, these attackers were actually from a rival faction, enemies of the group he had been forced to serve.

They wanted all the secret information about the group he had been working for. And since he already hated that group, he didn't hesitate, he told them everything he knew.

He thought it would end there. But this mafia group turned out to be even more twisted than he imagined.

One of their members took a sick interest in his sister. He was forced to watch as she struggled to protect her dignity and purity. Rage like he had never known surged through him, he wanted nothing more than to kill them all. But he was outnumbered, powerless, and completely restrained.

Helpless, he could only scream inside as those monsters tried to do as they pleased. And then, in one final act of defiance, his beloved sister snatched a gun from one of them and took her own life.

That moment burned itself into his memory—unforgettable.

It left behind a hatred deeper than anything he had ever felt. A hatred for his fate. For his weakness. For everything.

And in that moment, he made a vow deep within his heart.

He would take revenge. Even if it meant becoming a ghost.

After that, they decided to kill him by throwing him into the nearest river with a heavy rock tied to his feet. But just as his fate seemed sealed, something unbelievable happened.

Just before his body could be tossed into the water, a dark portal opened beneath him, swallowing him and a few of his captors.

He had no idea what had just occurred. All he knew was that he fell into a place he would later call hell.

Fortunately, he landed in a spot where no one else was around. That brief solitude gave him just enough time to free himself from the ropes binding his body.

As he began to explore the strange world he had fallen into, he couldn't believe what he was seeing. Creatures that belonged in myths and legends roamed the land, beasts he had only ever read about in stories. Even more terrifying were the monsters unlike anything he had ever imagined. They radiated power far beyond anything he could comprehend.

He was truly scared shitless, looking at all these absurd scenes. He didn't know whether this was a blessing from the heavens or just another punishment in a crueler form. But then he remembered.

His revenge.

He still had something to live for. He still had his revenge to carry out, and finally, he decided to survive this hell. His desire for revenge overpowered his fear, and his will to survive became even stronger.

At first, he had to hide and kill some monsters like goblins and slimes. But as time passed, he managed to survive and adapt to life inside this hell, and he began killing much stronger monsters.

Every time he killed one, he felt himself growing stronger, so he never stopped. He no longer knew how much time he had spent in this place, but he didn't care.

Kill, kill, kill.

He survived with only one purpose in his mind, to escape this hell and take revenge on those who drove his sister to suicide.

To take revenge on the fate that made him like this.

Inside this hell, he also learned that he could use a kind of technique, something like the magic he had only heard about in stories back when he was still on Earth. Something he found truly useful on his path to revenge.

Time kept moving, though he had no idea how many years he had already been trapped in this hell. Until one day, he encountered a being known as a god. At that moment, he truly felt like dust in front of something far beyond comprehension.

There was no comparison, no resistance, only despair and absolute obedience.

That was the first time he saw Tarius.

The god who would later become his god, and make Zhang Haoran his apostle.

At first, Tarius considered him no different from any other mortal being. Just another plaything. But something about Zhang Haoran caught his attention. That enormous intent for revenge. That relentless will to survive. The fact that he had endured for so long in a place like this hell.

Because of all that, Tarius chose him as his apostle.

That was also the first time Zhang Haoran received the system that would aid him on his journey.

From that moment on, he continued growing stronger at a tremendous pace. Eventually, his god brought him to the Higher Heavens, a realm that existed above both the Earth he once knew and the hell he had endured.

There, he met others who were also called apostles, and that was when he learned that Tarius was not the only god. There were others.

He also found out that he was the last apostle to arrive, while the rest had already lived their lives as apostles for a long time.

But then a question arose, why had the gods brought their apostles to the Higher Heavens?

It was to give them experience, to broaden their understanding and show them that realms existed far above their own worlds. In that place, they learned many things: about cultivation, about the universe, and many things beyond mortal comprehension. Their roles and duties as apostles were also explained in detail.

To spread their teachings and faith to all beings across the universes. The apostles, as the spearheads of this mission, would spread their gods' faith, and in doing so, make their gods even stronger. In return, the apostles themselves would also grow stronger through their systems.

Each apostle would receive various missions through the system. Every time they completed one, they would be rewarded directly by their god. Because of this divine support, apostles were far stronger and developed much faster than any ordinary beings or cultivators in the universe.

For Zhang Haoran, he was given a special mission. In addition to side quests, he had a main mission, and that mission was located in the First Heaven, the same heaven where Earth existed, though in a completely different region of the universe.

To carry out his task, he would need to be "placed" into a world known as Ancient Blue Gate World, on a continent called Barisan Continent.

His main mission there was not only to spread the faith of God Tarius and assist the existing believers already present in that world, but also to open a portal to that world, allowing God Tarius to descend into the lower heavens.

Zhang Haoran did not know why his god wanted to descend personally, nor did he want to know. What mattered most was the promise his god had made to him after this mission was complete.

A reward he had long desired.

His revenge.

He would be allowed to return to Earth and finally carry out the vengeance he had waited for all these years.

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 608: Zhang Haoran's Plan[1,889 words]

Chapter 608: Zhang Haoran's Plan

Aldrian, who viewed Zhang Haoran's memories from a first-person perspective, did not change his expression.

Although he knew that Zhang Haoran had a harsh and cruel past, that kind of experience was not something unique to him.

Just because Zhang Haoran had suffered a cruel fate did not mean Aldrian had to feel sympathy for him, especially after everything Zhang Haoran had done to the continent.

He wanted revenge? Fine. But at the cost of other people's lives? No. That would make him no different from the villains who once victimized him.

Aldrian understood that Zhang Haoran hadn't had much of a choice either, as Tarius's power had come at just the right time, and he needed it for his revenge. So Aldrian did not blame him.

Unfortunately, fate dictated that Zhang Haoran would meet Aldrian on this continent. Aldrian, who carried his own responsibilities on his shoulders, would of course do whatever it took to fulfill them.

Like Zhang Haoran, he also had his own revenge. He truly wanted to kill all those invaders who had killed so many of his followers.

However, revenge was not his only purpose. He had a broader goal in mind. He needed to return to what he once was, to reclaim his former strength and glory, to restore order to this universe and even beyond.

There was still much to do, and he would not allow anyone to stop him on his path of return.

Aldrian took his time as he looked through Zhang Haoran's memories, because he wanted to understand every detail of how Zhang Haoran became what he was now. About Tarius, about the system, anything he deemed important.

Looking at Zhang Haoran's past, he couldn't help but remember his own past life, or more specifically, one of them. Zhang Haoran was a human from a planet called Earth, and to Aldrian, it felt familiar. He recalled that in one of his visions, he had also lived in that place for some time.

A planet filled with mortals, without cultivation. Seeing how Tarius, or those gods had already spread their influence even to a place like that, the First Heaven seemed to have infiltrated so deeply that even a distant world like Earth had been affected.

But he set that aside for now and continued looking into Zhang Haoran's memories. He wanted to see if there was anything he could use to face Tarius, or any secret that might prove useful to him.

He kept observing the memories of Zhang Haoran's time in the Barisan Continent. Zhang Haoran had not actually been reincarnated into a new body, as Aldrian had once assumed. Instead, his soul had taken over the body of a low-level devil cultivator who had just died at the hands of a cultivator from the Doria Empire.

Tarius had slipped Zhang Haoran's soul into that body, and Zhang Haoran's journey on this continent began from that moment. He climbed from the lowest ranks of the devils to become a Devil Lord, thanks to both his own abilities and the system that played a major role in his rise.

He had overcome every kind of struggle and obstacle to reach that position. And once he became a Devil Lord, he began planning the opening of the portal that would allow Tarius to descend.

This was the part that Aldrian truly wanted to know.

He wanted to know what Zhang Haoran had planned at the time, and more importantly, how the portal to the higher heavens worked. The method for opening the portal was listed as the ultimate mission in Zhang Haoran's system, and the instructions appeared only after he became a Devil Lord. As Aldrian examined it, he frowned.

Opening the portal required many components, but there was one detail that stood out to him: in order to open the portal, Zhang Haoran had to help Tarius weaken the law of causality that prevented higher beings from descending into the lower heavens.

Weakening the laws of causality was no trivial matter. These laws were part of the natural order of the universe, forces that had maintained balance since primordial times.

Only a few beings had ever been capable of affecting them, and all of them possessed strength on the level of those who had mastered the universe.

To interfere with the law of causality required not only immense strength, but also a profound comprehension of it. Even then, it would take an extremely long time to cause any noticeable effect on such fundamental laws.

However, Tarius and the other invaders had actually done something quite clever to accelerate the weakening of the law of causality in each heaven. They sent their apostles into the lower heavens to act on their behalf, sabotaging them from within to speed up the process.

The invaders operated from the higher heavens, while the apostles worked from below.

The primary force behind weakening the law still lay with the gods themselves, but with their apostles carrying out missions in the lower heavens, the gods above would have a far easier time eroding those laws.

With this two-sided "attack," the law of causality which was the barrier separating the heavens, would weaken much more rapidly.

As a result, higher beings could more freely extend their power and influence into the lower realms. Even descending into the lower heavens for a short time might become possible for gods, though they would still be greatly weakened in the process.

So how did the apostles help weaken the law of causality for their gods?

From observing Zhang Haoran, Aldrian could only understand how *he* did it, at least, this was the method used by the god Tarius. And that was—

By spreading negative energy across the continent as densely as possible.

But how could negative energy be spread to that extent?

Aldrian kept observing, and as time passed, his expression grew darker, until it finally shifted into a look of realization.

Why had Zhang Haoran orchestrated the devil infiltration?

Why had he sparked wars without any clear purpose?

Why had he planned so much destruction?

Everything had been done to weaken the law of causality in this part of the heavens, specifically, in the Barisan Continent.

To spread negative energy as densely as possible, Zhang Haoran had chosen the most effective method: widespread destruction, fear, death, and every form of suffering capable of generating the energy needed. All of it served one goal, to accelerate the weakening of the laws.

The system had even given him a threshold: a minimum density of negative energy required before the portal-opening process could begin. Once that threshold was reached, he could start.

His plan for the devil infiltration in the past had been aimed at causing as much widespread damage and death across the territories as possible.

He had also enticed many cultivators throughout the continent to join him and become devil cultivators. On top of that, he waged purposeless wars, like the one against the Doria Empire, simply to accelerate the spread of negative energy.

If his plan had gone smoothly without Aldrian's interference, the continent might have already fallen into chaos, with destruction and death everywhere. And with that destruction, the negative energy would have surged in a short time, reaching the threshold set by the system almost immediately.

Had everything gone according to Zhang Haoran's plan, the portal wouldn't have taken nearly as long to open. Unlike the current situation, where it required nearly a month, the portal might have opened in just a day, fueled by the overwhelming amount of negative energy created through all the devastation.

He did not want to repeat the same mistake made during the Great War three million years ago, when the devils met with divine power near the central region of the Everlasting Silent Forest. All that death and destruction had been in vain, as the apostle at that time was killed due to his own recklessness, attacking the heart of the forest without understanding his limits.

Today's situation was different. The devils were far weaker than they had been back then. Zhang Haoran had to rely on cunning and precision, choosing a cleaner, more calculated approach to achieve his goal as effectively as possible.

However, in this era, the appearance of Aldrian had greatly disrupted Zhang Haoran's plan. Because of that interference, he was forced to alter his strategy. His purpose shifted, from pursuing the most efficient way to open the portal, to simply ensuring that the portal could be opened at all.

As long as he met the threshold, he could begin the process of opening the portal. With Aldrian's unexpected appearance, Zhang Haoran knew he could no longer rely on the most effective method to reach that threshold.

What he could do, however, was adapt to the situation. He simply allowed Aldrian to run rampant, killing many of his devil minions and anyone associated with them.

Although this approach would make the portal-opening process take much longer, it was still better than failing his mission altogether. Every time large-scale chaos and destruction erupted across the continent because of Aldrian, it contributed to the buildup of dense negative energy, bringing Zhang Haoran one step closer to the required threshold.

Once that threshold was finally reached, he could begin the portal-opening process, marked by the appearance of the black pillar. And once the portal had entered the creation phase, he would have to sacrifice everything to accelerate its completion.

And how could it be accelerated?

Through more death and destruction, of course.

War was the perfect medium for both. With each death and every act of devastation caused by all sides, the portal-opening process would quicken.

The portal's size also had its own threshold, and once that limit was reached, Tarius's descent would become imminent.

Aldrian gritted his teeth in frustration as the truth became clear. He felt like a fool. He had been taken advantage of by Zhang Haoran this entire time.

Unknowingly, he had contributed to the opening of the portal through the very chaos, death, and destruction he had caused over the years.

But then, all of it had been inevitable. There was no way he could have moved forward without killing many along the way. It was impossible to avoid bloodshed or destruction, not when facing devils or anyone tied to them.

He continued observing Zhang Haoran's memories until the moment he finally encountered him. Then, Aldrian stopped.

In the real world, he opened his eyes, and gritted his teeth. Unconsciously, all this time, he had also contributed to accelerating the portal-opening process.

But this revelation led him to a conclusion: in the end, whether the threshold of the portal was reached or not, this war was bound to happen. That black pillar would still appear. The war would still break out.

He looked at the black pillar and stood up, intending to destroy it before the portal reached the required threshold. He knew the threshold was already dangerously close, and he hoped he wasn't too late.

But then he froze.

As he turned his gaze toward the sky, he saw a thin spatial crack slowly spreading across it. His eyes widened, and a chill ran through his chest.

Then, from behind him, a weak voice spoke.

"You... are... too... late."

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 609: Closing the Gap of the Formation[1,644 words]

Chapter 609: Closing the Gap of the Formation

"You...are...too...late." The weak voice of Zhang Haoran resounded.

Aldrian, who felt his heart turn cold, gritted his teeth as he turned his gaze and saw Zhang Haoran showing a weak smile. But that smile did not last long, as Aldrian struck him hard in the face.

The hit was so strong that Zhang Haoran's head slammed into the ground, creating another crater.

Zhang Haoran fainted again. From that hit, his head and soul were shaken greatly, and there was no way he could stay conscious, as his soul was already wounded and couldn't withstand another blow from him. Aldrian then sealed Zhang Haoran's cultivation before turning his gaze to the black pillar.

Without wasting a second, he activated his avatar again and instantly attacked the altar with all his might.

The giant sword created raging winds and spatial cracks everywhere. The slash energy from Slash of Vanguard slammed directly into the black pillar—or so Aldrian thought.

The sound of the clash resounded, making the ground tremble, but Aldrian could see a kind of invisible spatial barrier protecting the altar. Seeing that his attack did not reach the target, he did not give up and kept attacking it using the Slash of Vanguard at full power in rapid succession.

Each strike created ripples on the spatial shield, and the ripples kept growing larger.

Truthfully, Aldrian was astonished that this spatial shield could withstand so many strikes from the Slash of Vanguard. From Zhang Haoran's memories, he knew the spatial barrier protecting the altar and the black pillar was empowered by the divine energy of Tarius.

The barrier could withstand any attack from a cultivator of the First Heaven, no matter how strong.

Still he wanted to destroy it, and he could see that the properties of his golden energy were capable of weakening it.

However, from the looks of it, the power still wasn't enough. Even if he used the Slash of the End, he might need to use it several times to truly shatter the barrier, which would be a serious waste of time.

He thought hard before slapping his forehead a few seconds later as the solution came to him. If he couldn't destroy the altar through normal means, then he needed to approach it from another angle.

He then controlled the vast land in front of him, using his earth laws to move the ground to both sides. The ground trembled violently as it split apart, and the grand palace that serving as both altar and the base of the black light, began to crack as well.

Normally, something like this would be impossible, as the barrier also prevented any disturbance from underground. But with Aldrian's domain covering part of the altar, he could manipulate the earth much more freely. The barrier was useless inside his domain.

Rumble!

The land split into two, moving widely to both sides, and the altar finally split apart, but Aldrian still felt unsatisfied. He then manipulated the ground to create a massive sinkhole beneath the altar. He intended to destroy the entire palace completely.

The black light began to flicker, unstable, and the black pillar started to shrink little by little. Aldrian continued destroying the altar, and three of the six towering pillars that

pointed toward the sky also began to collapse. The sinkhole grew even larger, devouring a significant portion of the altar.

Aldrian gritted his teeth as he looked up at the sky nervously. He wondered whether he could still stop the portal formation. He hoped he wasn't too late and that the portal hadn't reached its threshold yet.

The black light kept shrinking as it continued to flicker, until it finally vanished completely. The altar and the palace collapsed as Aldrian expanded the sinkhole even further, turning it into a massive crater.

It looked as if a colossal rock had fallen from the sky and smashed into the land, leaving behind a vast and deep impact.

Smoke and debris rose as everything in front of him was destroyed. At last, he had stopped the portal from opening. He could see that the spatial crack in the sky had also stopped spreading, which made him let out a slight sigh of relief. Even so, he kept his eyes on the sky, wanting to make absolutely sure the portal formation had truly stopped.

He spread his senses across his entire domain on the continent. He also used the Eyes of Heaven to survey the situation.

The portal had already engulfed half the sky above the continent. He guessed it was because he had killed so many devils at once two days ago, which had likely accelerated the process.

Once again, he felt frustrated, he hadn't known that death and destruction would also accelerate the opening process.

He had also miscalculated the necessary size of the portal for Tarius to descend. If only he had known that the portal didn't need to be as large as the one he saw in the memories of those traitors.

If only he had known that there was something called a threshold for the portal, he would have chosen a different strategy in this war to avoid accelerating its opening.

But all of that was just wishful thinking—there was no way he could have known any of this before defeating Zhang Haoran. It no longer mattered, and none of it would change anything now.

Sweat rolled down his forehead as he kept his eyes on the sky, waiting for any change.

He could already sense Tarius's divine aura seeping through the thin crack, spreading across the continent below. At this moment, many people across the land were already feeling the terrifying aura that pushed countless souls into despair.

To them, it felt like the descent of the devil god was only a matter of time.

They believed death was inevitable.

For Aldrian, it was truly bad news, the seeping of Tarius's divine aura was a sign that, somehow, the portal had already connected to the Higher Heaven.

He desperately hoped he wasn't too late, that the portal hadn't passed the threshold, and that destroying the altar had truly stopped the process.

After all, the threshold could only be seen through Zhang Haoran's system.

At this moment, everyone could see that the black pillar had vanished, causing many to hold their breath. Most didn't know how to interpret its disappearance.

Had they failed, or had they succeeded?

Many continued to stare at the sky, hearts pounding, waiting to see if anything would change in the portal's form after the black pillar disappeared.

A second... two seconds... ten seconds... nothing changed.

A minute... two minutes... still no change.

But then, after three minutes—

Crack!

A loud cracking sound echoed across the continent, sending chills through the entire populace.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The cracking sounds continued, growing louder and louder, and everyone watched as the fracture in the portal began spreading rapidly. The terrifying aura that seeped through the crack surged outward like a tidal wave, making the populace feel as if their very souls were being shaken.

A wave of pure negativity welled up in their hearts, but then, suddenly, a glistening light appeared in the sky, visible across the entire continent.

The overwhelming negativity diminished in an instant, and the terrifying aura seemed to weaken. The glistening light shone like a protective shield, covering the continent and holding back the excessive divine aura of Tarius.

Unbeknownst to the populace, the barrier created by the formation spanning the entire continent was already at work. At this moment, the formation created by Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan was actively repelling the excessive divine aura that was trying to seep into the continent.

Aldrian, witnessing all of this unfold, felt his heart tremble and a chill spread through his chest. It seemed he was still too late, the portal had already reached the necessary threshold, and Tarius might still be able to descend.

He gritted his teeth, forcing himself to suppress the anxiety surging in his chest. His mind raced, trying to find a way to turn the situation around. He knew there was no way he could defeat a god, even if Tarius descended in his weakest form. The gap between him and a god was still far too great.

What could he do now?

What could he do?

First, he spread his senses across the continent once again. He could sense that the formation created by Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan was active, shielding the continent from the excessive divine aura.

However, he could sense that there was a gap in the formation, an opening through which the divine aura was still seeping into the continent. That gap was located above the devil territory. Because of the dense negative energy concentrated here, the area had become the formation's weakest link.

He instantly understood what needed to be done.

He teleported to the altar, which had now become a vast and deep crater. He could sense that the faith from across the devil territory had gathered at this place.

By establishing his domain here, he could turn the entire devil territory into his domain, and that would restore the formation as a whole, since his domain would purify the excessive negative energy.

Without waiting even a second, he began to build his domain here. A few seconds later, he finally finished, and the effect could immediately be felt across the entire devil territory.

More importantly, his cultivation also rose to the peak of the Grand Duke stage!

The glistening light in the sky now appeared above the devil territory as well, working to close the gap and protect the continent as a whole.

Crack! Crack!

The sound of the spatial crack still echoed, and Tarius's divine aura kept pouring out, until suddenly—

Crack! Clang!

"Grhh."

The Shining Star Above The Heaven - Chapter 610: The Pressure Alone[1,659 words]

Chapter 610: The Pressure Alone

"Grrh." The growling voice could be heard across the continent and even throughout the entire world—a sound that sent a chill deep into the hearts of all who heard it. They could tell that the voice came from the spatial crack in the sky.

Following that voice, the cracking sound grew louder and increasingly frequent. The spatial crack could be seen widening, spreading across the portal and the portal itself, as if it was being forcibly opened. The black void expanded rapidly.

The portal continued to grow, and now a third of the sky above both the demon territory and the Buddhist sect territory was being engulfed by the darkness. The spatial crack widened further as fragments of space broke off and fell from the sky before vanishing into particles of energy.

The spatial crack that kept widening revealed only darkness, as if the world beyond the dark portal was a place without light. But then, suddenly—

Whooonngg!

A strange sound echoed, and immediately afterward, a powerful pressure descended like a tidal wave, aimed directly at the Barisan continent.

Rumble!

The entire continent—no, the entire world, trembled under the weight of that pressure. People across the world collapsed, stumbling as the land violently shook beneath them. All of them could feel the pressure, making it difficult to stay on their feet.

At the same time, the divine aura of Tarius had already begun to spread across the world, and everyone could sense it.

At this time, above the sea that the people of this world called the Forbidden Sea, the large groups aboard the flying fortresses also felt the effects of the pressure. These were the groups making their journey toward the untouchable continent. They had already reached the edge of the formation that protected the continent, where they saw a region they called the Impassable Storm.

A violent storm filled with strong winds, rain, lightning, and even spatial cracks that would suddenly appear and swallow anything in their path, these were what awaited anyone who tried to force their way into the continent. It was a never-ending storm that circled the untouchable continent, a deadly zone that had already claimed countless lives over the years.

The groups, who had come from across the world, had arrived at this region since yesterday. All of them hovered above the sea in their respective transporters. None dared to advance further. They had chosen to wait near the Impassable Storm and observe the situation.

The portal had also spread in their direction and now engulfed the sky above them, casting darkness over the entire scene.

But at this moment, they truly felt the scare of their lives, as the pressure pressing down on their bodies was stronger than anything they had ever experienced. It came from the spatial crack within the portal and carried a terrifying aura and pressure that made their souls tremble.

They felt completely powerless before this aura and pressure. All they could feel was despair. Instantly, they understood, whoever possessed such an aura and pressure was someone they could never hope to stand against.

Atop the flying fortress carrying human cultivators, many struggled just to remain standing. In fact, the flying fortress itself was on the brink of falling, but all of the cultivators aboard were doing their best to keep it in the air.

Even the highest realm cultivators were helping to keep the flying fortress from falling. Unfortunately, some of the smaller cruisers had already crashed into the sea.

But fortunately, many of the cultivators were at the emperor stage, and they managed to rescue those below their level, minimizing the casualties, an outcome that could still be considered fortunate under the circumstances.

Still, many of the highest realm cultivators had to struggle to keep their flying fortresses from falling. The pressure weighed on them as well, making both their souls and bodies tremble. They had to endure it on their own while also helping the others.

The leaders, from many different factions, helped those around them while occasionally glancing up at the sky with trembling gazes. Fear was visible in their eyes. Sweat dripped from their foreheads, and their faces had turned slightly pale.

"This pressure...? Is this an immortal?" asked one of the leaders, a man with brown hair and noble robes. "This aura and pressure... it's far beyond a pseudo-immortal. Could an immortal be trying to descend?"

"How can an immortal descend to the lower heaven? The law of causality should prevent them from descending," said a beautiful woman with blue hair.

"No... it might be possible," the golden-haired man replied. "We don't know what happened in the untouchable continent, but I'm certain the dark space in the sky is actually a portal connected to the higher heaven. There's no other explanation, especially with the terrifying aura seeping from the spatial crack, it's far beyond the pseudo-immortal stage. The voice we heard earlier also seemed like a sign... as if a being from above is drawing near."

He paused before adding, "But this is really bad. It might mean the devils in the untouchable continent have succeeded in whatever they were planning."

All who heard it couldn't help but feel frustrated, their teeth clenched in despair. If an immortal truly descended on the side of the devils, there would be no way to stand against such a being.

To an immortal, cultivators from the lower realm were like ants, beings who could be crushed on a whim. With the devils seemingly trying to summon such a being, the entire world now faced the greatest threat in its history.

On the other side of the sea, the dragons and phoenixes felt the same pressure and dread. Yet, the two leaders of those ancient races still held on to a sliver of hope. They believed the vision from the Spirit Ancestor would come true, and not prove false.

Their faces were tense and solemn as they looked up at the sky, which continued to break apart, revealing chaotic darkness. This was the moment of truth—whether the world still had a future or not.

While most were gripped by tension and despair, the group from the devil's side watched the sky with expressions of fanatic devotion and reverence. Though they too felt the overwhelming pressure, their expressions remained unchanged.

This was the moment they had all been waiting for.

"Our god will descend, and we will finally rule over all!" declared the devil leader, his eyes wide with madness as he stared into the sky.

While the entire world felt the terror of Tarius's pressure, the Barisan continent, the main target, strangely did not suffer as much.

The people across the continent could feel the ground trembling beneath them and a faint weight pressing down on their bodies and souls from above. But the effect was not nearly as overwhelming as what others around the world were experiencing.

They could still see the bright yellow glimmer in the sky, now sparkling even more vividly. A barrier protecting the entire continent was also shielding them from the pressure, preventing its full impact from reaching those within.

Even so, the sight and sounds from the sky left many frightened and filled with despair. Many believed that their end was near.

As for Aldrian?

At this moment, his face had turned pale as he knelt on the ground. He gasped for breath, sweat pouring from his forehead as though he were enduring intense pain. Blood stained the ground in front of him, and a thin trail had dripped from the corner of his mouth, evidence that he had somehow been wounded.

His soul felt as if it were being torn apart, and his organs trembled violently within him. All of it came from the pressure that had suddenly descended upon the continent.

For the first time in his life, Aldrian's domain was affected by an outside force. The pressure was bearing down on it heavily, and the impact on him was immense. The weight pressing against his domain sent a backlash through his body, making his soul and organs feel as if they were being torn apart.

His expression was filled with pain.

"This is only from his pressure?!" he thought.

This was completely different from the time he met the Heavenly Demon. Back then, when he saw Tarius, the Heavenly Demon had blocked most of the effects for him. Even so, he had still sensed the despair and fear in that moment.

There was no way he could stand against a being like that.

Now that he felt Tarius's power directly without the Heavenly Demon's presence, he couldn't help but remember that moment, the fear and despair. He knew Tarius would still be greatly weakened if he tried to descend, but even so, he couldn't withstand the effect of his pressure alone.

But then his expression shifted into a frown, laced with irritation. He gritted his teeth as fury surged within him, like flames burning through his heart.

He felt fear? Toward the one who had killed so many of his followers?

Despair? Because of the one responsible for the destruction across the universe? Because of Tarius, one of the invaders?

A humiliation swelled inside his chest!

He felt humiliated!

His mind raced, trying to flip the situation. Despair? Fear? Fuck all of that!

How could he feel this way when every one of his followers had placed their hopes in him?

Aldrian gritted his teeth hard as he forced himself to stand, despite the pain tearing through his soul. He looked up at the sky, where the spatial crack had already opened wide. The energy and aura pouring out from Tarius continued to spread, corrupting the world.

There was one place, his last chance, that might help him turn everything around. He could only hope that, whatever lay within, it would grant him the power to stand against Tarius's might.