

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

- Chapter 621: Resting After the Calamity

"Greetings, senior," the golden-haired man said with a reverent tone. He did not shout, but his voice could be heard clearly by Aldrian despite the distance.

Aldrian simply stared at the handsome, golden-haired man with a calm expression, waiting to hear what he wanted to say.

"Allow me to introduce my humble self. I am Rozwald Avilandis, the emperor of the Martal Empire of the Orian continent. We came with no intent of hostility, so please rest assured that we have no desire to act against senior's interests," the golden-haired man known as Rozwald said.

"First, we are not on the same side as the devils. We came here after seeing the black pillar shoot into the sky and thought to stop whatever plan the devils were attempting," he added.

"However, we truly did not expect that the devils' plan would be so great that they could open a portal to the higher heavens and summon an immortal. If senior had not stopped that immortal, we would not know the fate of this world. So, please accept my grateful bow for saving the entire world." He then bowed his head.

The others who saw this also bowed. Not only would it have been inappropriate to let Rozwald bow alone, but they, too, felt sincere gratitude that someone had been able to face that immortal and foil the devils' plan. Even if Aldrian had failed to prevent the destruction of their world, his strength alone was enough to earn their respect, and their bow.

After a few moments, Rozwald straightened his body and looked at the avatar again.

"Senior, if your great self does not mind, I would like to pay a visit to the continent we have long called untouchable, or in ancient times, the Barisan continent. I also wish to visit senior directly to express my gratitude."

The others gazed at Rozwald with narrowed eyes. All of them instantly realized this man's intent. He wanted to visit the continent, yet it only directed to himself and his faction. He was trying to seize the opportunity to bring himself closer to that senior and build a connection, without involving the rest of them.

Knowing they would be left behind if they remained passive, one of them finally gathered the courage to greet Aldrian.

"Greetings, senior. This humble one is Frederick Van Ricondel. I am the king of the Valhemin Kingdom of the Orian continent. Like Emperor Rozwald, I would also like to visit your great self," said the brown-haired man.

"Greetings, senior..."

One by one, those who appeared to be the leaders of their respective nations, sects, or whatever organizations they belonged to, began expressing their intent to visit the continent.

Aldrian understood their intentions. He also wished to learn more about this world. These people likely possessed deeper knowledge of the world, or even of this heaven. That was something he would need for his future plans.

But still, this moment was not the right time. The Barisan continent had just experienced something terrible, and he wanted its people to have time to rest. He also needed rest, and to sort through everything he had gained over the past few weeks. These people could wait until he allowed them in.

"I understand all of your intent, but unfortunately, you will have to postpone your visit. I don't want anyone from outside this continent to come here until I say otherwise. Until that time comes, return to wherever you came from. That is all." Aldrian's voice resounded clearly to all those gathered above the sea.

The people who heard it were stunned, but inwardly, they sighed. They understood that this senior had just fought a great battle and seemed to want rest. They also knew they could not keep pushing, no matter how high their status was.

In their own lands, they were leaders and wielded great authority, but in front of this senior, all of that was meaningless.

Strength was everything—and in front of power as great as that senior's, their status was nothing more than an illusion, not even worth mentioning. All they could do was obey and wait for the moment that senior allowed them to enter. At the very least, he had given them a chance to visit the continent in the future.

Not long after, Aldrian saw most of the flying fortresses and smaller transports, called cruisers, retreating toward the horizon, leaving only a few behind. He understood that those who remained had been tasked with waiting until the time came when they could enter. If that moment arrived, they would notify their respective factions.

Aldrian thought that the major problems had been taken care of, with only remnants left. From his position, he could easily sense the surviving devils scattered across parts of the devil territory. He raised his index finger, and heavenly lightning began crackling from its tip.

A moment later, he opened a small spatial crack in front of his finger, and then shot the heavenly lightning through it.

At that moment, in some parts of what used to be devil territory, spatial cracks suddenly appeared in the sky, followed by bolts of lightning. The alliance forces also noticed several lightning strikes flashing on the horizon, leaving them wondering why lightning had suddenly appeared.

Unbeknownst to them, Aldrian was eliminating every last surviving devil cultivator, except for the group of beasts under the World Tree and one man.

Zhang Haoran.

Aldrian had his own plans for dealing with him later. After ensuring that no devils remained across the continent, he finally deactivated his avatar technique.

The giant avatar's form vanished, leaving Aldrian floating high in the sky. He glanced down at the continent below before teleporting to the grand hall of his palace. There, he sighed, and sent a voice transmission to Sylphia.

"I'll come to you after I recuperate for a moment."

Sylphia, still looking in the direction where the avatar had disappeared, was momentarily stunned before a joyful expression spread across her face, though Aldrian couldn't see it.

"Mm. Please rest as much as you need. You've already done your best. I know you must be tired."

Aldrian smiled. He thought the conversation was over, but then Sylphia's voice came again.

"Thank you, dear. Thank you for saving all of us."

Still smiling, as if Sylphia could see him, he replied,

"Well, I need this continent for us to live a long life, after all. We'll have a family to build someday, remember? How could I let this continent be destroyed?"

Hearing his answer, Sylphia blushed deeply.

"You're truly shameless."

"Only for you."

His quick reply made her blush even more.

"Ah—go rest now. Don't tease me anymore."

With that, she cut off the connection.

Aldrian kept smiling. He cherished moments like this—simple, free from complex problems. Just the pure, worldly feeling of love and the bond between two people.

He sat down in meditation, beginning to heal the internal injuries caused by the final strike of heavenly lightning during the tribulation.

He needed to recover quickly, then reunite with Sylphia and the others.

The alliance forces, seeing that the avatar had already disappeared, decided to rest where they were. The war was finally over, and now, for the first time, they could truly relax. Many let out tired sighs as they sat down on the ground.

They weren't sure if it was just their imagination, but the environment around them felt improved. The oppressive negative energy had dropped drastically. They no longer felt suffocated, nor was their mental state being affected.

Even those who used holy energy no longer needed to actively purify their surroundings or rely on their techniques to resist the negative energy. For once, everyone could truly rest, without exception.

"This must be the aftermath of that battle with the thing in the sky. The negative energy in the devil territory feels thinner by the minute," one emperor-stage cultivator said to his companion.

"Yes, we can sense it much more clearly now. I can't believe the time has truly come in my life when the devil territory is purged of devils, and the negative energy here is thinning out. We can even breathe without suffocating," his friend answered with a sigh.

"It's all thanks to Lord Aldrian that we're alive to see this moment. I can't imagine what would've happened if he hadn't been on our side," the man said as he looked at the floating land visible in the distance.

"Yes, thanks to Lord Aldrian... but still, that battle was truly terrifying. How can Lord Aldrian be that strong? How could Lord Aldrian fight against that thing in the sky? Just looking at it was enough to fill my mind with fear and negativity, I couldn't even move."

"I don't know, and honestly, I don't care how Lord Aldrian became that strong. What matters is that we survived the war, and the calamity."

Conversations like that could be heard among many of the troops—and it was only natural. The leaders didn't interfere and simply let them be. They had just come through a war that would determine the continent's future. For now, they needed rest—and a chance to release the weight they had been carrying.

On the other side, Sylphia was surrounded by several people. Her face was visibly red with embarrassment.

"So? What did Aldrian say to make you blush like that? There's no way he just said he'll come after recuperating, right?" Baek Jimin asked with a teasing smile.

"N-no... it's not—"

"Look at her," Emperor Ladwin said with a laugh, shaking his head. "Aish, I've truly lost my daughter at this point."

"No... Father!" Sylphia shouted, stomping her foot.

Angelica, Aldrey, and Irene, who were standing nearby, couldn't help but giggle as they watched her. The reaction of the elf who had managed to win Aldrian's heart was truly adorable whenever she was teased about him.

The atmosphere was light and joyful as they continued teasing Sylphia for a while, until, suddenly, a figure appeared nearby, and all of them immediately fell silent.

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Aldrian's figure that suddenly appeared instantly garnered attention as many people turned their heads in his direction. His face looked much more mature, and his figure was noticeably taller than the last time they saw him. It was as if he had matured rapidly over the past few weeks.

All of them were stunned, but then their expressions turned to reverence, for in front of them stood the messiah who had already saved their lives and the continent from the calamity.

They also couldn't help but notice that Aldrian's presence felt much more in harmony with nature. For the emperor stage cultivators, they could no longer sense the depth of Aldrian's cultivation. They knew that, at this moment, Aldrian's cultivation had already surpassed theirs.

After watching Aldrian's battle with that god, they had no doubt that he had now stepped into a realm above the emperor stage. Although the power he had shown throughout his

journey was already far greater than any ordinary emperor stage, he had not yet been one himself.

Now they could see that Aldrian had already reached a realm beyond the emperor stage, and it gave them a different feeling. If he had reached beyond the emperor stage, then could they too? Many still dreamed of that higher realm, but due to strange circumstances on the continent, no one had been able to break through beyond the emperor stage.

Aldrian could sense the reverence and faith surging toward him from the people, but he ignored it. Instead, he showed a smile toward a few figures who began approaching him, especially one who dashed toward him and leapt straight into his embrace.

Aldrian's body stood like a sturdy wall as he received the full impact of Sylphia's body. She hugged him tightly, burying her head in his chest. He could feel how worried she had been, the wetness soaking into his chest made it clear. Sylphia was silently crying, and it made him feel guilty. He immediately wrapped his arms around her to comfort her.

"Shh... shh... I'm already here." He whispered comforting words to her, but she didn't answer and kept her head buried in his chest.

He sighed, then turned his gaze toward his parents, who were already standing nearby. They looked at him with teary eyes. Irene's tears had been falling since earlier, while Aldrey was clearly trying to hold his back, though it seemed futile. His eyes were already red and watery, and occasional sniffles escaped from his nose.

Aldrian showed them his warmest smile.

"Father, Mother, I'm back," he said, and they both nodded.

"Welcome back, son," Aldrey replied with a proud tone.

Aldrian then turned to the others, looking at each of their faces and expressions. He smiled at Baek Jimin and Angelica, and they both nodded in return. Then he looked toward the rest of the people gathered there.

These were the people who had been ready to sacrifice themselves for the future of the continent. He saw that some no longer had all their limbs, yet they still stood strong. It was clear they still wanted to fight, that was why they remained here.

He noticed even Emperor Raymond had lost his right hand, something Aldrian quietly took note of.

He swept his gaze across the crowd, meeting each face one by one. Then he raised his hand and clenched it into a fist.

"We have won!" he shouted, and his voice echoed across the entire alliance force.

"UWOOO!" The crowd roared in response, raising their hands in victory. Many sobbed, not in defeat, but from grief. They had lost comrades, friends, lovers, and all forms of cherished bonds.

Yet with this victory, they believed that those deaths were not in vain. Their sacrifices would be remembered.

"I know that many of you have lost someone dear to you, but their sacrifice was not in vain! With this victory and the purge of the devils, their names will be immortalized in the history of the continent. These are the names that took part in the war that decided the future of our land. Future generations will know how much they, and all of you gave to make the continent a better place to live," Aldrian said as he swept his gaze over the others.

Those who heard his words felt honored. They knew that Aldrian was humbling himself. The most important role had still been his—he was the one who had worked the hardest among them. Without him, they doubted that victory could have been achieved, even with their combined strength.

That eye was not something any of them could have stood against.

"This war also marks the beginning of a new era for our continent, an era where we will develop to a higher stage," Aldrian continued. "As you've seen, this continent was protected by a massive formation that shielded us from the outside world. But that same formation also trapped us within and prevented us from breaking through to higher realms."

"Now that the barrier has been deactivated, all the limitations this continent once faced are gone. For those who have reached the peak of the emperor stage, you can now break through to the next realm. And this is the proof..."

He then released his aura at the pseudo immortal establishment stage, which shook the hearts of everyone present.

Many of them trembled as they felt that the moment had finally come. They too could now reach the realm beyond the emperor stage. For those who had already reached the peak emperor stage, especially Pope Claudius, it felt like a dream was finally about to come true.

He had stood at the peak emperor stage for so long, unable to break through.

It was something that had weighed on his heart for a long time, even becoming an inner demon, as he remained unable to break through to higher realms.

But now, it seemed he finally could, and he could already feel that the moment was drawing near.

"So that's why something felt released inside me when the barrier disappeared. That must have been what blocked our access to the higher realm... and now it's gone," Pope Claudius thought.

The others also murmuring among themselves, discussing the implications. Most of them knew that not everyone would be able to reach the emperor stage, let alone ascend beyond it, due to various circumstances. But even so, they felt happy and excited, the continent was about to undergo a transformation, a true evolution and qualitative change.

With Aldrian's presence and the shift brought by these changes, their continent would become stronger than ever.

"Besides that, this continent will be reconnected to the outside world," Aldrian continued. "Since ancient times, we have been cut off by the barrier that protected us. There is much we don't know about the world beyond, so I hope you will be ready for the changes to come."

"Earlier, many beings had already approached this continent. As you heard from our conversation, they intend to visit. These visits from outsiders will only become more frequent in the future, so prepare yourselves for that."

"Many of them are truly powerful cultivators, beyond the emperor stage. But just because they are strong, I don't want any of you to throw away your dignity before them. When they arrive in the future, show your pride and your courtesy. As long as they are respectful, you should respond in kind. But if they come with arrogance and try to trample your dignity as people of this continent, then do not be afraid, I will stand with you."

"Let us show them that the people of this continent are their equals, not cowards. And once again, I will be behind you if any outsider dares to disrespect your dignity."

Hearing Aldrian's words, the people felt their spirits ignite. Yes, with Aldrian behind them, what was there to fear? Those outsiders might be powerful, but they had Aldrian, someone who had even fought a god.

In fact, those outsiders seemed to respect Aldrian, judging by the way they addressed him. It was clear that Aldrian's existence was something they seriously considered, and they hadn't dared to intrude on the continent once he told them to leave.

That alone was a display of power, and acknowledgment. The outsiders clearly saw Aldrian as someone they could not afford to offend. If Aldrian had already shown them the pride of this continent, then they too would uphold it with the same resolve.

"But don't misuse my name or wrong those outsiders. Believe me, I will know who is in the right and who is in the wrong the moment any of you dare to misuse my name and cause trouble. Forget the outsiders, if that time comes, I will punish you myself. And trust me, you will not like it," Aldrian said in a serious tone, which made everyone take his warning to heart.

Punished by Aldrian himself? None of them even wanted to imagine it.

"I also want all of you to spread what I've said here to the rest of the continent. Can I count on you to do that?"

"Of course, Your Excellency! I will do it!"

"Of course, my lord."

"Don't worry, my lord."

Voices responded one after another, each in their own way, but the meaning was the same. They would obey.

Aldrian nodded in satisfaction.

"All right, that's all from me," he said before turning to the people near him, the ones who knew him personally and smiled at them. Then he looked down at Sylphia, who was still clinging to him without moving an inch.

He gently stroked her hair and touched her cheek.

"What is it, my lovely elf? Don't you have many things you want to say to me?" he asked with a warm smile.

But she still kept her face buried in his chest, which left him a little confused. Then Emperor Ladwin spoke up.

"I think she's embarrassed after we teased her about what you—"

"No, that's not it!" Sylphia finally couldn't hold it in. She lifted her head and shouted at her father. Though her eyes were filled with tears, the deep blush on her cheeks made her look genuinely adorable.

"Hahaha..." Several people burst into laughter, while Aldrian stunned, finally understanding what it was all about.

Well... what could he say? He did enjoy teasing her too.

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Three days later, the continent was still recuperating from the destruction caused by Tarius. Many were repairing broken structures or rebuilding what had been destroyed. At this moment, the people across the continent stood united, working together to regain their vitality after the calamity.

Although many mourned the loss of lives during the calamity and war, life had to go on.

The continent also experienced peace and order during this time. There had been no open acts of evil in the last few days. Bandits and those with malicious intent did not dare to act as recklessly as before. They were afraid that, somehow, their evil deeds would become known to Aldrian.

At this moment, many already knew that Aldrian's cultivation was above everyone else on the continent. His battle with a god had been visible to all, after all. Because no one knew the true extent or limits of Aldrian's ability, many rumors began to spread among the populace.

Some said that Aldrian's senses could cover the entire continent, making it pointless for anyone to try escaping if he decided to pursue them. There were also rumors that he could send a long-distance technique and kill anyone across the continent without even having to move an inch.

These rumors strongly deterred anyone who might have been tempted to test their luck by committing evil acts as they had in the past. Thanks to this, the continent had entered a period of order unlike anything before, where people no longer feared bandits or anyone who might disturb or kill them.

There were also other things that had happened in the past few days.

What Aldrian had said to the alliance forces had already spread across the continent, sparking widespread discussion, especially among those who still knew little about the world beyond their continent.

The news that the limitations placed on the continent for so many years had been lifted brought great joy. With those restrictions gone, cultivators could now break through to realms far beyond the peak emperor stage. Those who possessed divine techniques could finally begin to comprehend them, which would greatly benefit the continent's overall strength in the long run.

As for the Devil Territory, or what it used to be called—Aldrian decided to give that land to the beastkind of the continent. The others simply followed his decision, as he held the greatest authority when it came to matters concerning the continent.

In the Barisan Continent, the beastkind had never had their own dedicated territory or unified organization. This was a rare chance to provide them with a land of their own.

Since the beastkind failed to secure their own territory during the migration from the outside continent in ancient times, they had been forced to live scattered across the land, without a vast territory like the major powers.

Only a few beasts had managed to settle in places like the Forest of Despair, and even then, it was due to their longstanding collective strength and their historical ties to Emperor Thonias.

For years, conflict between beastkind and the other races could be heard almost everywhere, almost every day, due to many reasons. With this new partition, Aldrian hoped that the clashes between beasts and humans, or other races would be drastically reduced.

Moreover, there was also a large group of devil beasts with high cultivation. Their collective strength alone was already enough for them to form a nation of their own.

That was why Aldrian decided to give the Devil Territory to the beastkind and rename it the Beast Territory, simple, yet clearly showing whom the land now belonged to. Once the news spread, many beasts who had gained intelligence or achieved cultivation began migrating toward the newly declared Beast Territory.

It was a joyous moment for beastkind, as they could finally have a territory of their own, just like the other races. However, some groups, such as the beasts from the Forest of Despair, chose to remain in their own land.

They, too, had participated in the war, as all of them were Aldrian's followers. They had come voluntarily, as there was no way they would simply stay behind while their leader went to war. What kind of followers would they be if they just remained in their land at such a moment?

Although they had lost some members in battle, they still demonstrated their strength as beings of the Forest of Despair.

The spirits and beasts of the Forest of Despair played a major role in one of the regions during the war. Their strength proved to be a great support to the alliance forces.

In the past three days, scenes of countless beasts making their journey to the Beast Territory had become common. Although people initially panicked, they had gradually gotten used to it.

As for the first World Tree of the continent, Vireline—she chose to remain in the canyon and allowed her main body to take root there. Although Aldrian had told her she was

free to do anything beyond guarding the foundation of the formation, she still decided to return and stay in the canyon.

She still wished to protect that place, but the difference now was that she no longer needed to keep her main body buried underground. Emperor Ladwin also requested to Aldrian that a small elven settlement be built near the World Tree, and Aldrian agreed, though he gave a warning. The elves who lived there would have to coexist with beasts possessing devil-type cultivation.

Emperor Ladwin did not mind, as long as there would be an elven settlement near the World Tree.

Aldrian, of course, understood why the emperor wanted that. No matter the reason, the World Trees were still beings deeply revered by the elves, and they wished to stay close to them wherever they were.

Moreover, Vireline was special, she was the first World Tree on this continent.

The environment within the Beast Territory had also greatly improved over the past three days. As of today, it no longer resembled the old Devil Territory.

The sky was no longer stained with an ominous red hue, but instead displayed a natural blue, with sunlight fully illuminating the land. The negative energy had diminished, now balanced with the other energies, making the territory no longer much different from the rest of the continent.

The only thing that still weighed on some people's minds regarding the Beast Territory was the presence of beasts who used devil cultivation. They were large in number and incredibly powerful.

Many still couldn't forget the acts of the devils throughout history, so a deep-rooted prejudice remained. Even though these beasts had stood on the opposite side of the Devil Lord during the war, the fact that they still used devil cultivation made others uneasy.

Aldrian knew it would take time for people to let go of their bias against them. Of course, he had the power to hypnotize or erase memories of the devils from the minds of most people on the continent, but that was something he clearly had no intention of doing.

He also gave thought to the cultivation path of those devil beasts. Since the environment no longer supported devil energy, it would become increasingly difficult for them to cultivate or grow stronger. He already had a few ideas in mind to address this issue.

Another change was the rising density of heaven and earth energy across the continent. It had been growing richer by the day, and the source of this transformation was the

Everlasting Silent Forest, where the dense energy originated and spread throughout the land.

The forest itself had also changed from what it once was. Its former image as a forbidden region had now transformed into what many began calling a cultivation sanctuary, a vast area filled with rich spiritual energy, capable of accelerating cultivation even for those cultivating in its outer zones.

The forest, once known for its dead silence, had now become a place frequently visited by cultivators. The strange phenomenon of people disappearing was no longer a concern, as word had spread that Aldrian had already taken care of it.

Having already made the entire Barisan Continent his domain, and with full control over the formation, Aldrian had deactivated the trapping functions scattered throughout the forest. He no longer saw any need for them and allowed people to enter the forest freely to advance their cultivation.

With no more risk of being trapped inside the secret realm, cultivators could now train there with peace of mind.

They could now enter some of the secret realms through spatial cracks visible from the outside, and even cultivate within them. With so many different types of secret realms, the forest had truly become a cultivation paradise.

This approach was also intended to quickly raise the average cultivation level of the continent's people. It would help them build the confidence to face outsiders and ensure that this continent would not fall behind others. In the future, they would have to grow accustomed to living alongside people from other continents.

All in all, the drastic changes across the continent had brought great benefits and stability to all beings.

And there was one more great change visible to all across the continent, the appearance of a vast floating landmass in the central region of the Everlasting Silent Forest.

The enormous land and the grand palace atop it were truly magnificent, visible from every corner of the continent.

Everyone who laid eyes on it would gaze with reverence and worship, for they knew that this was the dwelling place of their savior, their hero, their leader, and even, to some, their god.

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The central region, or rather, the core region of the Everlasting Silent Forest, where the floating land is located, remains as peaceful as ever. The only difference now is that there is no longer a barrier blocking the view of this region from the outside world.

Many are eager to visit this place, wanting to witness for themselves the region long shrouded in mystery since ancient times. Rumors persist that gods once descended from the heavens and shaped the central region into what it is today.

This is also a special region that seems to hold particular significance to the figure they have already come to regard as a god.

Why do they think that way?

Because he has already claimed the central region as his territory, turning it into a special territory. Many wish to visit this region at least once in their lives.

That is, of course, if Aldrian, through Xin family permits it, as the core region is guarded by them. Everyone already knows about the Xin family, who live within one of the secret realms, and seem to be the ones protecting the core area. It is said they are an ancient noble family, far older than any of the current major powers.

Their role in the war was significant, and they are also the family from which Xin Haotian, the Sword Saint, hails. Because of this, the Xin family has been revered by many since their emergence into the world before the war.

To enter the core region and remain near the figure many already regard as a god is seen as both a great fortune and an honor. Their continent has someone like Aldrian, and they do not want to miss the chance to see him directly with their own eyes, even once in their lifetime.

At this moment, the figure revered by many is inside his grand palace. Since the war ended, Aldrian has chosen to make this place his permanent home. A place filled with memories. A place built by his family members, Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan, through their hard work and sacrifice.

He wants to remain here, to remember them, to remind himself of who he is, and who he once was.

But there are times when he forgets all of that. And the current moment is one of those times.

The hero is now inside one of the palace's luxurious bedrooms, which was the most lavish room he has seen in this lifetime. He is on the large bed with Sylphia.

What are they doing?

If there were no formation blocking the sound from the bedroom, their activities could be heard from outside—and everyone would instantly know what was happening.

Pak. Pak. Pak.

"Angh... dear... I... can't... do this... anymore..."

The sound of flesh meeting flesh echoed, followed by Sylphia's weak, breathless voice, but Aldrian, who pounded her from behind, did not stop. His expression was one of pleasure as he pinned Sylphia beneath him and pounded her hard, giving her no room to escape the pleasure.

He groped both of her breasts as he bit her neck, all while continuing to pound into her. He left another hickey on her skin, just one among the many that already marked her body. Judging by the sweat and the number of hickeys, it was clear they had been doing this for quite a long time.

"Then this is the last. Receive my seed, my love," Aldrian said, his hips moving with even greater speed. Sylphia seemed completely exhausted, so much so that she could not even answer him and could only surrender to his mercy.

Not long after, he released one of her breasts, brought his hand to her chin, and turned her face toward him. Then he kissed her lips. She returned the kiss, their tongues dancing together.

"Here it comes," he murmured before kissing her deeply.

And then—

Sprut! Sprut! Sprut!

He released his semen into her vagina for the umpteenth time. Her groin, already stained by his semen and her orgasm, stood as proof of how intense their battle had been.

Aldrian continued to release for the next ten seconds, his face contorted in pleasure each time he came. For cultivators, semen or Yang essence could be replenished quickly, especially for Aldrian, who had already reached the Pseudo-Immortal Establishment Stage.

Even though he had released his Yang essence more than fifteen times since he started having sex with Sylphia last night, that amount was still far from reaching his limit. He could go on, his spirit and body were still capable, but Aldrian could see that Sylphia had reached her limit.

After releasing his Yang essence, he kept his dick buried inside her vagina, his warm gaze resting on Sylphia's tired face for a moment. She had her eyes closed, gasping for breath, sweat covering her entire beautiful face.

He smiled and kissed her shoulder before finally pulling his dick out of her pleasure hole and flopping down beside her.

He felt guilty for making her like this, as she truly seemed dead tired. It could not be helped—once they got into action, he never had enough of her body. Moreover, with his cultivation so high that his stamina felt unlimited, he still liked to keep going. But he knew that Sylphia's mind and body could not handle his vigor with her current cultivation.

He then hugged her naked body and sent golden energy into her to make her more comfortable. His energy also rejuvenated her, the exhaustion slowly fading from her face, replaced by a more relaxed expression. He had already done this several times whenever she seemed on the verge of collapse.

After a few moments, she finally opened her eyes and looked into Aldrian's. Then, suddenly, she pouted.

"You're truly a monster. Do you never get tired?" she asked with a slight sulk.

Aldrian gave a bitter smile as he stroked her long hair.

"I'm sorry, dear. I truly can't help myself. Every time I see your sexy body, I just want to gobble you up. Your body is truly my weakness," he said.

Sylphia blushed slightly, then buried her head in his chest and hugged him tighter.

"Also, I want you to grow much stronger, much faster. For now, there's no better method for you than dual cultivation," he said.

"You'll be one of the people that everyone from outside the continent judges because of your relationship with me. There's no way to avoid it. Even if those outsiders won't dare to speak badly about you in front of me, or in front of you, they'll still form their own opinions."

"I don't want them to underestimate you. I also want to give you confidence when you face them," he said as he gently stroked her smooth hair.

Sylphia couldn't refute him. It was true that dual cultivating with Aldrian had caused her cultivation to soar. Now that Aldrian's level was so high, the benefits she received were even more incredible. At this moment, her cultivation had already reached high Marquess stage!

That was a breakthrough through three minor realms from the peak of the Earls stage, and all in a single night! It was truly incredible. What was even crazier was the fact that her cultivation could rise even further if she could keep up with Aldrian.

As for those outsiders, she honestly didn't care much about them. She couldn't control their opinions anyway. But she knew that kind of thinking only worked when she was still single. Now that she was Aldrian's woman, she had become a part of his image, someone who carried the responsibility to uphold and protect it.

As his woman, she did not want to bring shame to Aldrian, and she did not want strangers to underestimate him because of her. She would show them that she was a woman worthy of standing beside him.

She smiled, feeling lucky to have Aldrian as her man—but that feeling also gave her new determination. Her current cultivation still wasn't enough. Her efforts still weren't enough! If she truly did not want to embarrass him, then she would need to work even harder.

She slowly raised her upper body, revealing her bare breasts to him, immediately drawing Aldrian's gaze.

"Then, my love, I'll have to trouble you to help me raise my cultivation," she said in a sweet voice, gently moving her breasts as if inviting him.

His once-limp member suddenly hardened again at the sight. There was no way he could hold himself back when Sylphia was clearly inviting him like that.

Without hesitation, he pulled her close and slid his dick back inside her vagina.

"Aahh!" she moaned as she felt him penetrate her, followed by the thrusts that sent her into the nine heavens. Erotic sounds echoed once more through the luxurious room as they indulged in each other, with Aldrian dominating her completely.

Only after three more hours did Aldrian finally stop. He stepped out of the room already dressed in his casual robe and moved toward the balcony. He had left Sylphia to rest after they had been having sex for more than fifteen hours.

His gaze swept over the beautiful scenery of the floating land. Because his bedroom was located in one of the palace's high towers, he had a much wider view of everything below.

After admiring the landscape, he shifted his gaze downward, where he saw his father and mother, seemingly in the middle of their training.

At this moment, the two of them stood facing each other, separated by a distance of about five hundred meters. He watched with interest, this would be his first time seeing them spar.

Not long after, they finally began.

Whoosh!

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Whoosh!

Aldrey and Irene's figures disappeared from their spot and clashed using their arms. They blocked each other's strikes, followed by a rapid series of attacks and defenses. Although someone with lower or even the same level of cultivation wouldn't be able to follow their movements, Aldrian could see everything clearly.

Their movements were slow in his point of view, which was understandable given his strong cultivation.

It seemed Aldrey and Irene were training their martial arts without relying on elemental techniques. Aldrian could tell they were more or less on par, as they could block each other's attacks. His mother had much more agile movements, which made her troublesome to deal with, but his father had a stronger body capable of withstanding all of her strikes.

The sparring had already been going for five minutes when his father suddenly found a slight opening in his mother's movements. When his mother combined her footwork with a punch, his father showed his experience as a fighter, someone who could take advantage of even the smallest opportunity.

He actually let her attack come close enough to almost land, making her believe victory was within reach. But then, with a burst of agility he hadn't shown before, he tilted his head nearly eighty degrees. At the same time, he slightly lowered his body and swept his left leg toward Irene's nearby foot.

Her attack passed just above Aldrey's head with only the smallest margin, but his leg had already connected with her left foot. Shocked that her strike had missed, Irene felt her balance break from the unexpected sweep. She was about to fall, but before she

could hit the ground, Aldrey had already caught the attacking arm and wrapped his other hand around her waist.

He pulled her toward him, letting her back rest against his chest. Then, with a quick motion, he kissed the back of her exposed nape.

"Ah." She couldn't help but let out a sound at the sudden sensation.

He smiled as he hugged her from behind.

"Got you. I told you, when it comes to martial arts, you have no chance against me," he said with a grin.

Irene answered in a slightly irritated tone.

"You just got lucky. Next time, I'll really defeat you. Ugh, how did I let my guard down like that?"

Even as she said that, she remained where she was, allowing him to hold her from behind.

Aldrey, still gazing at Irene's back, admired the curve of her nape and her figure for a moment before resting his head on her left shoulder.

"Wife, you're truly beautiful," he said in a soft voice that made her blush.

"What are you saying? Why are you suddenly talking like that?" she replied, trying to pull away from him. But Aldrey didn't let her go, keeping her wrapped in his arms.

Though she struggled, she didn't use much strength, making it seem more like a half-hearted effort.

"Wife, let's make a little sibling for Aldrian," he said suddenly.

Her face turned even redder as she shouted, "What are you talking about here?!"

"You don't want to?" he asked with a slightly pitiful tone.

She turned her face away, answering in a quieter voice.

"No, it's not like that. I mean... I want it too, but maybe it can wait until after our marriage." Her voice grew softer with each word.

Hearing her answer, Aldrey tightened his hug and whispered near her ear.

"But I can't wait that long. I've already decided to start working hard tonight, so by the time our marriage comes, we'll already have one on the way."

Irene's head felt like it was about to explode.

"W-What... tonight? You can't wait?" she stammered. "What if... what if you 'do that yourself' to release some of the steam? I heard some men do that instead of... sleeping with someone."

"No. It's already been a long time, and now that the right moment is finally here, when we can truly be together—I don't want to do it by myself. I've never done it myself. After two nights of sleeping in the same room with you, I really can't hold back any longer. That's why I'm saying this now, to ask for your permission. And while I'm at it, I think giving Aldrian a sibling would be a wonderful thing too."

Irene did not answer, but from the way he saw it, she seemed to agree with him, which made him smile more brightly. He leaned in and spoke softly into her ear again.

"Then I'll take that as a yes. Starting tonight, I'll work hard. Be prepared, my love... because once we begin, you won't stop moaning until we succeed."

His voice, along with the heat of his breath against her ear, sent a shiver through her nape. Her body felt weak under the rising sensation.

"Wait... can I..." she tried to say something, but Aldrey had already turned her body and kissed her. She couldn't resist him, and instead, returned his kiss, which turned the atmosphere a warm shade of pink around them.

Meanwhile, Aldrian was already far away, his face slightly flushed and one eye twitching. He regretted having to hear his parents' overly affectionate and sensual exchange.

He didn't want to hear any more and decided to move elsewhere without waiting for them to finish their conversation.

Still, he couldn't help but smile, glad to see that his parents' relationship was as strong as ever.

It truly made him wonder, how did they end up together? What had happened in the past to make them fall in love?

They came from different families, ones that didn't have the best relationship. And yet, they still became lovers.

That was a story he'd like to hear. Maybe he would ask them about it in the future, when the time was right.

"A sibling, huh?" he thought, still smiling.

He didn't know what it felt like to have a sibling in this life, but he wanted to experience it. In some of his past lives, he had siblings. Now that his parents were planning to create one for him, he felt something stir inside his heart.

Was it... anticipation?

He was still smiling as he walked, enjoying the palace's garden.

Then he spotted the golden phoenix, who was also doing her usual thing, which in her case, meant standing motionlessly in the middle of the garden, quietly observing the nature around her.

Her gaze followed a butterfly that fluttered past, tracking it as it landed on a flower. She continued watching it, calm and serene, until a sudden presence beside her made her freeze.

She widened her eyes slightly and gave a bow to him.

"Master," she said, finally showing a faint expression of happiness. She hadn't sensed him at all until he was standing right next to her.

Aldrian nodded with a smile.

"Aurelia, how is it here? Are you enjoying it? Or is there anything you feel is lacking?" he asked.

He had already given her and the Great Peng their names the day before. There was no way he would keep calling them *the golden phoenix*, *the great peng*, or just *you* for the rest of their lives. That would only create distance in their relationship, even if it was just that of master and beast mount.

The moment he gave them names, they were so happy that, for the first time, he saw them smile. He could feel that they were truly joyous.

It's as if they gain a true identity only after living without any identity except as summoning beasts or beast mounts. They will live and die as summoning beasts, and no one will bat an eye at them.

However, simply by naming them, he gave them more than just roles as beast mounts. He gave them a chance to live as beings with their own worth.

Not just to exist in monotony, waiting for his commands, but to live like any other living being, with their own thoughts and interests.

Hearing his question, she answered immediately.

"No, no, Master. I like it here, it's just..." She paused, seeming hesitant.

Aldrian, who seemed to have understood the problem, gave a small nod.

"I see... you can't cultivate because of your cultivation method?" he said.

The golden phoenix slowly nodded. She felt truly frustrated, to be of real help to her master, she needed to reach far greater heights. Even now, she could feel that she was only a small step away from breaking through to the Pseudo Immortal Foundation stage.

But without a place suitable for cultivation, she couldn't take that step forward.

Ever since the entire continent had become Aldrian's domain, he had been thinking about this as well.

There was no longer any place on the continent that offered a suitable environment for devil cultivators. Thousands of beasts who practiced devil cultivation had found their growth halted because there was nowhere that could support their advancement.

However, he had an idea, one that, if successful, might "cure" those who had already cultivated using devil methods.

Though the idea sounded extremely difficult, even impossible, he believed he could make it happen.

His idea was to create a new cultivation method, one that could completely replace the devil cultivation practiced by these beasts.

More importantly, it wouldn't require them to entirely destroy their existing foundation. Their current cultivation could be preserved while transitioning to a new path.

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Creating a cultivation technique that could replace the devil cultivation method while allowing cultivators to retain their cultivation without having to destroy their entire foundation sounds like a story too good to be true.

There are some major problems awaiting Aldrian, and he must know how to address them if he wants to succeed.

It is already known that changing one's cultivation technique is possible, but the downside is that cultivators have to destroy their cultivation foundation and rebuild it from scratch.

Why must they do that?

Because the cultivator's entire body and foundation have already been shaped by their previous cultivation technique, changing the method is akin to replacing the foundation of a building all at once. There is no way the old foundation can support the new structure of the cultivator's new path.

This is the biggest problem for anyone who desires to change their cultivation technique, because from this issue, many other problems arise.

The most obvious issue, of course, is the cultivation itself. Once cultivators destroy their foundation, they lose the cultivation they have built over a long time. After that, they must regain their strength using the new cultivation method, but not before healing themselves first. This is because destroying one's own cultivation foundation seriously harms both the body and even the soul.

The healing process may take a long time or not, depending on the severity of the injury caused by destroying one's own cultivation. It also depends on how many resources the cultivator has to recover. This process might require rare and expensive resources, which not everyone can obtain.

However, with sufficient resources, they might be able to heal quickly before starting cultivation again.

Time is another major issue. It is especially dangerous because a cultivator's lifespan is directly supported by their cultivation stage. The moment they destroy their foundation, there is nothing left to sustain their extended lifespan, as their cultivation collapses.

If they do not begin cultivating with the new method quickly, their natural lifespan will catch up to them. They must advance rapidly, or their remaining years will run out. If they cannot grow fast enough, they are as good as dead.

To speed up their cultivation, they need a large amount of resources to support the process. Without those resources, they will not be able to cultivate fast enough to escape the limit of their original lifespan.

With all these problems awaiting those who wish to change their cultivation method, it is no wonder that successful cases are rare. The only ones who succeed are usually those with lower cultivation, a long remaining lifespan, and abundant resources.

Aldrian's idea is to create a cultivation method for these beasts that could solve all of those problems, something that sounds impossible to achieve.

But Aldrian sees it as a personal challenge. If his idea works, it could bring great change to the cultivation world. The potential and benefits he could gain from its success are immense, possibly opening many new possibilities in the future.

First, he would be able to help those who had already cultivated the invaders' method, regardless of their cultivation stage. If he were to encounter a situation similar to the devil beasts from the World Tree group in the former devil territory, he could offer them a new path.

There is no way he would allow anyone to continue cultivating a technique created by the invaders who once brought destruction to this universe.

Second, he could create a unique cultivation method of his own, one that could be shared with the masses. A superior technique that would help people cultivate faster and build a stronger foundation.

What would he gain from it?

Of course, the power of faith. If many people cultivate using his method, their karmic threads to him will strengthen, and so will their faith. Stronger faith means greater strength for him. The more, the better.

Now that the Barisan Continent has reconnected with the outside world, they need to catch up quickly in terms of cultivation quality. The stronger the cultivators of this continent become, the fewer problems they will face in the future, even without his presence.

The third is that he could create a special cultivation technique for his loved ones and those he trusts. This technique would allow them to grow stronger, faster, and more efficiently than others. Naturally, those who have a personal or emotional bond with him will receive special treatment.

His cultivation speed was so fast that it left the rest of his family in the dust. To narrow that gap, they could not rely on their current cultivation methods.

They needed a technique far stronger and more efficient.

At the very least, he had to create a divine-grade cultivation technique, something on the level of the Xin family's technique, which was created by a god of light.

Now that the restriction on the continent was gone, he could already imagine their cultivation speeds increasing dramatically, especially for those at high stages, like duke level and above.

There was nothing blocking their comprehension of their entire cultivation techniques anymore, which would ultimately strengthen and accelerate their cultivation.

Aldrian dared to say that the Xin family, with their divine-grade cultivation technique, would become the strongest family and group of cultivators on the continent. The Rosalind family could also follow, as their technique also originated from the higher heavens.

However, because they cultivated outside the Everlasting Silent Forest, an area ideal for their method, they had never been able to fully maximize the potential of their divine-grade technique.

"Wait, stay still. Let me check you for a moment," Aldrian said to Aurelia, then gently touched her forehead.

Aurelia allowed him to touch her and examine whatever he needed to inspect inside her body. Aldrian focused his senses within Aurelia, carefully mapping her entire body down to the smallest detail. This was a necessary step for him to understand the flow of energy and the anatomy of beasts.

Each species of beast had a different anatomy and meridian structure in their beast form, but in their human form, the difference was minimal. It was easier for him to study their anatomy while they were in human form, so he could build a cultivation technique based on that structure, and later compare it with their beast form.

If he could fully grasp the intricacies of beast cultivation, then he could create a technique usable by beasts in both their human and beast forms.

Aldrian examined Aurelia for over a minute before he finally said,

"Now change to your beast form."

Aurelia said nothing further and transformed into her giant phoenix form. Her immense size towered over Aldrian, blocking the sunlight from reaching him. The black feathers of her phoenix body and the devilish aura she radiated were truly intimidating, but Aldrian ignored it.

He reached out, touched her body, and began another inspection, focusing his senses within her once again.

He stayed like that for a minute before nodding.

"Alright, done. You can return to your human form," he said.

She shifted back to her human form, and Aldrian smiled at her.

"You don't have to worry about the cultivation issue. I already have a way to solve it. Just wait a little longer, I hope it won't take too much time," he said.

Aurelia lowered her head, feeling guilty. She hadn't been able to find a solution to her problem, yet her master already had one. That alone made her feel she had fallen short.

At the same time, she wanted to grow stronger, so she could be more helpful to him.

Sensing her emotions, Aldrian smiled and gently touched her head.

"You don't have to feel guilty. I benefit from your growth too. The stronger you become, the more confident I'll be leaving important tasks in your hands. So don't feel guilty for my sake. Instead, be happy, you're going to become stronger and even more helpful to me."

Hearing him, Aurelia let out a soft sigh before raising her head. She gave a small smile and nodded as she looked at him.

"Thank you, Master. I won't disappoint you," she said.

Aldrian nodded, satisfied, and withdrew his hand.

"Then wait for my news. I'll visit Reiss after this," he said, before disappearing.

Aurelia simply watched the spot where Aldrian had stood, then bowed toward it before turning back to the garden. She felt relieved and grateful that her cultivation problem finally had a solution.

She couldn't help but smile, a warm feeling blooming in her chest. She truly felt lucky to have Aldrian as her master.

Aldrian's figure appeared in one of the vast grasslands in the core region, where he spotted a large avian beast flying across the sky. The great peng soared with majesty, paying no attention to anything, until a voice suddenly called out.

"Reiss."

The moment the great peng heard the voice, it immediately turned its massive body toward the source and dove toward Aldrian's position. Just before reaching the ground, it transformed into a human. He landed on one knee before Aldrian.

"Master," he said.

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"Master," Reiss said.

Aldrian nodded.

"Do you like it here?" he asked with a smile.

"Yes, Master, I like it here. There is nothing more I could hope for in this place," Reiss answered as he stood up.

Aldrian nodded again.

"Then what about your cultivation? Haven't you felt restless and burdened by the fact that you can't cultivate properly due to the lack of a supportive environment?" he asked, which made Reiss freeze in place before falling silent. Of course, nothing could be hidden from his master, so he sighed and nodded.

"But Master, I—"

"I already have an idea to solve your problem, and any devil beast's, so don't worry. Just wait for my news," Aldrian cut him off, causing Reiss's eyes to widen.

"No, Master, how could you—"

"No buts. And I'll tell you this in advance, you don't have to feel guilty. I benefit from your growth too. The stronger you become, the more confident I'll be leaving important tasks in your hands. So don't feel guilty for my sake. Instead, be happy, you're going to become stronger and even more helpful to me." Aldrian cut Reiss off again, causing him to fall silent.

He was truly speechless. Aldrian seemed to know exactly what he was about to say, and he couldn't help but sigh. He knew that if he wanted to become stronger and be of greater help to his master, then what he needed to do was avoid being a burden and stop being stubborn.

"Thank you, Master. I won't disappoint you," he said while bowing.

Aldrian, looking at Reiss like this, could only offer a wry smile. This guy really was just like Aurelia. He ended up saying the same thing to him as he had to her. It couldn't be helped, both of them came from the same place and shared the same mindset. It would take time for their way of thinking to shift toward something freer.

"Alright, let me check something," Aldrian said as he touched Reiss's forehead. Reiss allowed him without question, and after finishing, Aldrian asked Reiss to transform into his beast form and checked him again.

"That's it for now. Wait for my news," Aldrian said once he was done. He then disappeared, leaving Reiss bowing behind.

"Thank you once again, Master."

Aldrian reappeared in the sky above the palace. He looked down at his floating land, where he could see several activities taking place. His parents were still in their training session, occasionally mixing it with some lovely dovey moments.

Baek Jimin was enjoying the garden scenery with a cup of tea, joined by Angelica and Eleine. Aurelia remained in the garden, enjoying her solitude, while Reiss continued flying in his beast form.

Aldrian was glad they could finally enjoy a peaceful environment after the events that had forced them into a bloodbath. He had brought his close family and friends here so they could settle into this new home of his.

Of course, for people like his parents, Sylphia, Baek Jimin, and Eleine, he had no reason not to bring them here.

As for Angelica, although she didn't say it out loud, he knew she wanted to follow him when she saw him leaving with his family. He had also intended to take her out of the church anyway, to let her see more of the world. Pope Claudius had agreed to let her go as well.

She had truly worked hard to make it to this point, despite the disability that had limited her in the past.

As for Aurelia and Reiss, they had chosen to stay close to him for obvious reasons. He was their master, and they didn't want to be far from him, so they refused to stay with the beasts from the World Tree's group.

The only one absent was Xin Haotian, who had decided to return with his family to their secret realm to take care of their own affairs after the war.

Aldrian had already asked all of them to stay in this place, whether just for a while or for as long as they wanted, as it was the best location not only on this continent, but also in the entire world, or even across the whole first heaven.

It was no surprise, considering this place and the entire core region had been built by two gods. There was nothing lacking here.

Even the gods themselves would want to stay in this place because of the richness of divine energy.

At first, they had been truly shocked that the grand palace had become his. The palace and its entire territory, which was said to have been built by the gods in ancient times, was now in Aldrian's possession?

Aldrian had to explain that this was how it was meant to be, he had successfully inherited the legacy of the gods who built this place when he first entered it. Most of the people who came with him eventually nodded in understanding.

It was indeed a fortunate encounter, and thankfully, Aldrian had been able to inherit the gods' legacy. That alone explained his sudden leap in cultivation—even to the point where he now had the power to fight a god.

Only Sylphia knew there was more to it, as she was aware of Aldrian's past life and mysterious origin. She believed this place had likely been waiting for someone like him to claim it, and she was right. Aldrian had told her the truth in the midst of their sex session when she asked him about it.

After Aldrian was satisfied observing the activities on the floating land, he turned his attention to the core region and beyond. He decided to ascend higher and higher until he could see the entire continent, the sky growing darker as he rose.

From his vantage point, his vision was no longer limited to just the Barisan continent, he could even see other continents in the distance.

The Barisan Continent was slightly smaller than the others and located in isolation, surrounded on all sides by vast oceans. It was an ideal place to create a secluded community, untouched by the influence of other continents.

He continued to fly upward until he finally reached outer space, a place that had once been unreachable when the protective formation of the continent was still active.

This was something he had already tried on the night after the war ended, and he truly enjoyed it. Rising into the outer space of the world and gazing upon the majesty and vastness of the first heaven.

That night, he had wondered whether he could fly as high as possible now that the barrier trapping the continent had been deactivated. It didn't take him long to try, and he was glad to find that he could actually break through the atmospheric barrier and reach outer space.

The moment he reached space, he felt as if he were back in his past life.

He had also already tried moving as far as possible from his home planet, and he was able to do it without any problem. Even after he left the range of his domain, the difference was minimal. He could still control his flight without much difficulty.

At this moment, he looked at his own world, a truly massive, round planet. Then he turned his gaze upward, where he could clearly see a blinding light from a kind of sun above the firmament. That lone sun seemed to be the one illuminating this part of the universe.

His eyes also took in the countless stars that were visible to him. Even the sunlight, which hid the glow of the other stars, couldn't stop him from admiring the glittering expanse of space filled with starlight.

He truly liked this feeling, this sense of power, as if he had returned to his past life. This kind of scenery had once been normal for him. In his past life, his gaze had known no bounds, as if his eyes could perceive the deepest secrets of the universe. Everything before him had felt within his control, like pieces on a chessboard.

A chessboard where he could create pawns from nothing.

His gaze then shifted to a few glittering stars, much brighter and closer than the others. He assumed they were the nearest stars to his home planet and began to wonder what kind of civilizations might exist there.

There were many civilizations spread across the universe, each on their own stars or planets. Each civilization was not always the same as the others. For example, the planet called Earth, where Zhang Haoran came from, only had mortals as far as he could remember.

It was vastly different here, where countless beings possessed cultivation and could perform feats far beyond the comprehension of Earth's inhabitants.

During his last journey through space, he had seen movement in the distance and assumed it must have been other cultivators from another civilization, or something similar. They were using some kind of transportation, like flying fortresses, to travel through space. Some of them even appeared to be heading toward his home world.

They had landed on one of the continents, but he wasn't interested in learning more. He would find out when the time came. For now, he just wanted to enjoy his time after the war. He had no desire to meddle in the affairs of the other continents or the outer world, at least, not so soon.

Aldrian remained still, quietly observing the stars, until a thought came to his mind, something crucial for his future growth and long-term plan. His gaze shifted back to his planet.

"If I want to make this entire planet my domain in one swoop... then where am I supposed to build it?"

Then he looked at the stars again.

"What about this entire heaven? Where am I supposed to create the domain to make all of this my domain?"

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To bring all of First Heaven under his domain, Aldrian would need to create his domain in the place where the faith of all beings was gathered. But the question remained, where was that place? What kind of place could it be?

There was no way he could build his domain piece by piece, planet by planet, until it eventually covered the entire First Heaven. That would take forever. What he needed was an efficient way to achieve it.

However, before that, he needed to turn his home planet into his domain first. Even then, he still did not know where the place was, the one where the faith of all the beings on the planet gathered.

"Could I sense it from here?" Aldrian wondered.

He tried it as he concentrated and spread his sense to the maximum. His sharp sense at the Pseudo Immortal Establishment Stage had reached the size of the Barisan Continent, and was even slightly larger.

He tried to sense the flow of the people's faith of the world, hoping that some of it would pass through his sense. After a few moments, he finally sensed something, faith passing through his sense. It was an invisible force with no fixed shape, yet it clearly carried the faith of the people.

It was connected to the place where that faith was gathered. This was the same sensation Aldrian always felt whenever he looked toward where faith gathered.

His sense followed the invisible force. It was moving toward a single direction, but he couldn't tell where, as it lay beyond the range of his sense. He would need to make the journey himself, which he had already expected.

He retracted his sense before taking a deep breath and letting out a sigh. There was no oxygen here, but the energy of heaven and earth existed everywhere in the universe. Cultivators at his level no longer depended solely on oxygen to survive. His body could absorb energy directly, allowing him to stay alive without needing to breathe.

"One step at a time. First, I'll make this planet my domain. After that, I'll focus on finding the place where the faith gathers in this heaven," he thought before descending toward his palace.

He stopped in the sky above it and instantly teleported to the place where Baek Jimin and the others were still enjoying their time together. His figure appeared beside Baek Jimin, and his sudden arrival left them slightly stunned.

Aldrian smiled at them and was about to greet them, but raised his eyebrows when Baek Jimin suddenly hugged him. She embraced him while still seated, her head pressing against his stomach. Her expression showed clear relief, as if she had just found the cure to an addiction.

Aldrian could only smile and gently wrapped his arms around her head, stroking her long white hair. Since the end of the war, Baek Jimin had become more attached to him, more pampered and openly affectionate.

She had also grown bolder in expressing her feelings, showing it through her actions. She proactively displayed her affection toward him, even going as far as kissing him in front of the others without hesitation.

When they were alone, she didn't hold back from trying to seduce him, deliberately wearing tight robes that accentuated her curves and exposed more of her skin.

If not for his self-control, Aldrian had no doubt he would have devoured her right then and there.

But then he understood why Baek Jimin had become like this. The war had left a deep impact on her heart and mindset. She had become more decisive and bolder because she believed she needed to make the most of peaceful moments like this, when no problems stood in their way.

She didn't want to take their calm, carefree time for granted. Instead, she chose to go into "attack" mode, doing whatever she could to make his heart flutter.

Of course, he wasn't oblivious to her efforts to make him fall for her even more.

It was her way of trying to make him happy, and also to win his heart. He also allowed it, because he was attracted to her as well.

He had opened his heart as wide as possible to her ever since Sylphia gave her support for him to have a harem. And he had to admit, her efforts over the past few days had truly shaken his heart. His affection for her kept growing.

There was no way his heart could remain unmoved in the face of such open acts of affection and seduction from a woman he had already welcomed into it.

It had reached the point where he couldn't even imagine her with another man. Just the thought of it irritated him. He couldn't give her to anyone else, and he knew this was a

clear sign—part of his heart had already been claimed by her, and that part was steadily growing with each passing day.

Even now, as she hugged him, he felt butterflies in his stomach.

The others smiled as they watched how Baek Jimin behaved toward Aldrian. After spending time together and sharing many conversations, they understood her feelings for him, and they also knew Aldrian had opened his heart to her.

They weren't surprised that many women were drawn to Aldrian, but only a few, like Sylphia and Baek Jimin, had been fortunate enough to truly capture his heart.

Even Angelica had felt a sense of interest, or even attraction toward Aldrian when he first visited the church, though not in a romantic way. She didn't know why, but she often found herself thinking about the man called Aldrian, even though she couldn't see him at the time.

Was it because he was the prophesied one? Or was it something else?

She didn't know.

After he healed her disabilities and she saw him for the first time, Aldrian's figure became even more deeply embedded in her mind. Her interest in him kept growing, and she found herself wanting to follow him.

When she was finally able to join Aldrian's group and observe his actions firsthand over the past few days, it awakened something new in her. She saw how he behaved when he wasn't in front of outsiders, how different he was with those close to him. He showed a much more affectionate side, toward those he cared about.

But what stirred her heart the most was watching how he interacted with Sylphia and Baek Jimin. She didn't know why, but something inside her felt bitter when she saw them being so openly romantic with him.

This kind of feeling was truly new to her, and it left her confused. She knew she shouldn't feel this way, Aldrian's actions were perfectly normal between people who loved each other. And yet, she instantly recognized that this feeling must have stemmed from her growing attraction toward him, an attraction that still remained a mystery to her.

Still, she buried it deep within her heart, hiding it behind her smile.

"How is it? Do you both like it here?" Aldrian asked her and Eleine with a smile, his hand gently stroking Baek Jimin's hair.

"This place is the best, young master," Eleine replied with a smile. "There's nothing lacking here. Honestly, this is the perfect place to stay and grow stronger. I even want to

live here for good, though I'll have to persuade Lady Irene first. Everything about this place feels perfect."

"I also agree with Eleine. This is truly the best place, and I even feel more powerful here. The holy energy is so abundant, it's really beneficial to me. The scenery is also beautiful," Angelica said.

Aldrian nodded.

"I'm glad you all like it."

He then looked at Baek Jimin, who was still hugging him.

"How about you? Do you like it here?" he asked, continuing to stroke her hair.

"I like any place, as long as you're there," she replied, making him raise his eyebrows. Baek Jimin truly used every opportunity to stir his heart with her romantic words. He could only smile warmly, but then her voice came again.

"Could you stay here for a while? There are so many things we girls want to hear from you. I know you have a lot of stories that could entertain us, and we'd love to hear them."

"Of course. If you want to hear my stories, then I'll tell you. How could I deny your request?" he said with a slightly playful tone, which made her smile.

Not long after, he sat in the vacant chair beside Baek Jimin. He began recounting the events of the past few weeks to the ladies, accompanied by cups of tea that Angelica had served herself.

While Aldrian enjoyed his time with his loved ones, the situation on the Orion Continent had already returned to normal. The effects of the war on the Barisan Continent had also reached Orion, though not as strongly.

There were no casualties on this continent, as Tarius's power, such as his corroding divine energy, had not yet spread this far. Even the massive tsunami caused by his battle with Aldrian, which was supposed to reach Orion's coastline, never struck.

The cultivators near the Barisan Continent had stopped the waves by breaking apart the tsunami before it could spread any further.

With many high-level cultivators, such a feat was not difficult.

Even now, the battle remained a hot topic. The tale of a mighty figure who fought against an immortal had spread like wildfire across the continent.

A powerful individual from the so-called untouchable continent, a mysterious land long regarded as a legend since ancient times. And now, that very continent seemed accessible to the world once again.

That figure had ordered the forces of the world to return to where they came from, and they all complied. It was a clear sign that no one wished to provoke him, and the populace understood why.

There was no point in forcing their way into a continent protected by someone capable of fighting an immortal.

Because of this event, all eyes had turned toward the untouchable continent, now once again called the Barisan Continent, as in the ancient times. Curiosity burned in the hearts of many. They wanted to visit the place themselves.

After all, how could a land produce someone powerful enough to fight an immortal?

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At one of the restaurants inside the capital city of the Martal Empire, people gathered to enjoy food and drink in the midst of their daily activities. It was also a good place for them to talk about many topics, especially the hot ones. The most recent, of course, was about the Barisan Continent.

"Aish, I'm really curious about that place. If it could really produce someone who could face an immortal, then it must be rich with resources or even treasures. I can imagine the powers across the world wanting to take a slice of the cake from that place," said one of the men there.

He was a blond-haired man in casual attire, sitting at a table with his three friends.

"Yes, I heard from my friend, who works in the imperial palace, that he saw His Majesty return using a teleportation crystal. He said His Majesty asked that figure for permission to visit the continent, but neither he nor the other powers were granted it. Instead, they were ordered to go back," said his brown-haired friend after finishing his drink.

"Damn, what an arrogant man, to order the entire world to back off. Well, I guess that's to be expected. With that kind of strength, there's no way any power in the world would dare to offend him. They can only obey and wait for that figure to let them in," said another man beside them.

The other man nodded.

"Yes, even I still get goosebumps when I remember the impact of that battle, it reached the entire world. The world truly shook, and its energy turned to chaos. I've already heard from my friends across the continent, and even in other continents, that they felt the same. Earthquakes, chaotic energy, the pressure of an immortal... I can only imagine the kind of battle that could bring the world to the brink of destruction."

The others agreed with the man. They had not only felt the aftereffects of the clash, but also sensed the chaos that came with it. When Aldrian battled Tarius, they could see the light and the shockwaves far on the horizon in the direction of the Barisan Continent. They also saw the darkened sky, though they couldn't see the eye of Tarius because of the distance.

The energy around them became difficult to control, as all of it was being drawn toward that dark sky, an utterly terrifying sight. To pull in energy from such a distance was beyond their comprehension.

That clash and its effects were already proof enough that the scale of the battle was unlike anything in the world's history. Even the strongest figures on the continent, those at the Pseudo Immortal stage, had never caused something that affected the entire world in their battles.

The most intense battles between Pseudo Immortals had, at most, only affected an entire continent.

"But then, I guess cultivators from other stars and realms will also come to our world because of it? With a battle on that scale, I doubt they didn't sense it, or wouldn't know about it," the man asked again.

"You're right. Some cultivators from other stars have already arrived in the city and are visiting the imperial palace. I saw some of their huge ships land near the city. I figured they must've sent envoys to investigate the battle," his friend replied.

They continued discussing the topic until the entire restaurant suddenly fell silent as a group of cultivators entered. They wore formal, neat clothing, as if they were part of a noble family. All of them seemed to be following a handsome, black-haired young man dressed in noble attire at the front.

The moment the people saw the symbol on some of their attire, they instantly recognized who they were.

"Valroy family from the Akares Star... and the young master of the Valroy family, Randolph Valroy," one of the men murmured.

The group of cultivators from the Valroy family walked toward the inner part of the restaurant, ignoring the stares of the other patrons until they were out of sight.

"Well, that's not exactly unexpected. There's no way the strongest family in the Akares Star wouldn't be interested in this, especially if they sent their young master as an envoy. I expect the other major families or sects from other worlds will also visit us in the next few days," the blond-haired man said.

"No wonder His Majesty returned using a teleportation crystal. He must've known this might happen and came back quickly to handle it," his friend added.

The others nodded and continued their conversation.

While the others continued their conversations, the group from the Valroy family made their way to the upper floors of the restaurant, which had ten levels. They arrived at the topmost floor, where they could see the vast capital city of the Martal Empire stretching out before them.

They were immediately greeted by the restaurant's owner, a middle-aged man with blond hair.

"Welcome to the highest floor of Heaven's Taste, young master. I suppose you'd like private rooms, yes?" the owner asked the handsome young man.

"Yes, please. Five rooms for me, my men, and our guests. Also, bring the best food and drink you have to my room. We're expecting other guests shortly. You'll recognize them when you see them, please bring them to my room," he said, making the owner's eyes light up.

If this young man spoke of other guests, then they had to be important figures! He could already smell money. His restaurant, already known as the best in the city, was about to soar even higher!

"Right away, young master!" the owner said before leading the young man to one of the private rooms, then quickly went to take care of the order.

Each room was protected by a formation strong enough to block even the senses of a Pseudo Immortal Establishment stage cultivator, ensuring complete privacy for the guests. Moreover, this was a VVIP area, only a select few were ever allowed to sit here, so the restaurant took every detail seriously.

Not long after the young man sat down and began waiting for his order, he noticed another group of cultivators entering the restaurant. Moments later, the door to his room opened, and another handsome young man stepped inside.

"As expected of Young Master Randolph. You've arrived before any of the major families in this city. But did you expect me to come to this restaurant at this exact time?" asked the blond-haired young man as he took a seat in one of the vacant chairs.

"Just a hunch," Randolph replied with a smile. "Though I didn't expect it to actually come true, Young Master Ivan."

"Aish, don't give me that modest answer. You must've known I'd visit this place. With your information network and sharp mind, you were already prepared," said the young man named Ivan.

"Then, I suppose the reason you invited me into this room is to discuss the battle between that mysterious figure and the Immortal, isn't it?" he added.

Randolf nodded in response.

"Do you really think it was an Immortal? I mean, can an Immortal from the higher heavens actually descend to the lower heaven?" Ivan asked.

"In theory, it's possible. But I don't know if it's actually doable. Anyway, we can talk about that once the others arrive," Randolph said, leaving Ivan puzzled.

"The others?" he asked, but Randolph remained silent.

Not long after, another group entered the restaurant. Soon after, a beautiful woman wearing a transparent veil stepped into the room. She wore an elegant, tight-fitting robe that accentuated her figure. At her waist was a beautifully crafted sword.

The moment she appeared, the two men instinctively looked at her. Her beauty stirred their hearts, though they kept their reactions hidden.

After all, this woman held the same status as them.

"Welcome, Sword Maiden. Have a seat. I've already ordered plenty of things, they should arrive shortly," Randolph said with a smile.

The woman, referred to as the Sword Maiden, didn't answer or even glance at him as she took her seat. However, Randolph didn't seem to mind, he clearly already knew the nature of this icy beauty.

A brief silence followed, prompting Ivan to clear his throat.

"Well, let's talk about something else first, if Young Master Randolph is still waiting for the others to arrive. It has been ten years since our last meeting at that inter-star conference, after all. I'm sure we all have plenty of interesting stories to share—"

But he stopped as the door opened again, revealing a young man and a young woman entering the room.

The man had long red hair tied in a ponytail, and the woman also had red hair, but she left hers loose, letting it flow smoothly down her front and back. Her beauty was no less striking than that of the Sword Maiden.

Both of them wore robes styled in the distinctive fashion of the Demon Territory.

"Welcome, Brother Ryong and Sister Rin," Randolph said with a smile.

The man called Ryong looked at Randolph with a slight frown.

"Spare that polite expression for someone else. I know you invited us here for a reason," Ryong said. Despite his words, he still took a seat in one of the vacant chairs, followed by the woman beside him.

"And I can guess it has something to do with that mysterious figure, right?" he added.

Randolph wasn't offended by Ryong's bluntness. Instead, he simply nodded.

"Yes. After all, that's why we came to the Ancient Blue Gate World, isn't it? I want to discuss it, since this matter may affect us all in the future."

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[1,759 words]

Chapter 630: Instigating?

Not long after the last two guests arrived at young master Randolph's room, the waiters brought out all of his orders. Many kinds of dishes were served on their table, and once the arrangement was done, the waiters left them alone again.

Randolph looked at them with a smile, then gestured with his hand.

"Come on, let's dig in. It'll be good while it's still hot. It's already been so long since I last tasted the food in this place. We can talk while we eat," he said, then picked up his utensils and began eating without waiting for the others.

The others looked at Randolph for a moment, then decided to follow him and started eating as well. The only one not touching any dish was the sword maiden, who simply closed her eyes as if meditating.

For a few moments, only the sounds of utensils could be heard, until Ryong finally spoke after swallowing a piece of meat.

"Let's not waste any more time. What's on your mind? What did you mean by what you said earlier?" he asked as he looked at Randolph.

"All of you must have some questions about the battle involving that figure, a clash powerful enough to be sensed from our home stars. For now, let's just agree that the figure did fight an immortal, regardless of what kind of being that figure faced," Randolph said, then picked up another piece of meat.

He chewed it for a moment before swallowing and continued.

"Well, like I said earlier, the appearance of that mysterious figure, who could battle and defeat an immortal, could affect all of us in the future. With that kind of strength, that figure is basically the strongest person not only in our star clusters, but also across the galaxy clusters... or perhaps even under this entire heaven."

"That kind of strength appeared in the Ancient Blue Gate World, which was already quite powerful due to its history. It will tip the balance between the stars even further. Someone like that would be unstoppable if he decided to act," Randolph said.

"We are already dealing with the devil problem from the fallen star cluster in the north, and now someone with even more terrifying strength has appeared in this star. We do not know what kind of person is capable of defeating an immortal, but someone with no one strong enough to keep him in check is a dangerous factor for the future."

"I heard that even the combined power of this entire star did not dare to oppose him. They could only obey when that figure told them to back off. That is not a good sign for me, and perhaps not for any of you either. The fact that he did not even consider the strongest forces of this star worth his attention—though understandable given his strength, has created an uncertain future for all of us," Randolph continued as he sliced a piece of meat.

"What if he decides to expand his influence in the future? What if his mindset leans toward expansionism? We already have enough problems, and I do not feel comfortable turning my back while someone like that figure remains unchecked," he said, then put a piece of meat in his mouth and chewed it.

"It would be much worse if the powers of this star chose to support him. At that point, there would be no one capable of stopping them," he added.

"I understand what you mean, and where this discussion is going. But didn't others say that figure was fighting an immortal who exuded a terrifying kind of devil energy?" Ryong said. "According to my sources, that immortal might have been part of something the devils of this world had planned."

"My view is simple. If that figure is opposing the devils, then he might be on our side too. This dangerous factor you are talking about is being too dramatized. You are focusing too much on the negative when there is potential for something good. We could build a relationship with that figure, instead of living in fear of the unknown," he added, then placed a piece of meat in his mouth as well.

"Well, brother Ryong is right to think that way, but still, what guarantee do you have that this figure is truly on our side? What if he has had a hidden agenda all along? The fact that someone like him exists, hidden on the Untouchable Continent, and then appears at the same time the devils from the northern star cluster begin to move, can we really call that a coincidence?"

"Even the change on the Untouchable Continent itself is deeply suspicious to me. A continent that could not be entered due to natural phenomena, as if something was deliberately blocking us, suddenly opens again to the world. That is why I call that figure a dangerous factor," Randolph said, which caused Ryong to fall silent while the others also began to think.

They all knew what Randolph meant about the movement of the devils in the northern star cluster. For the past month, their families had received information that the devils in that region were making large-scale movements and seemed to be preparing for war.

There was no way a preparation of that scale could have escaped their information network. The movements in those stars were simply too large to be hidden. Their families concluded that the devils seemed to be preparing a major attack somewhere, and their best guess was that the target would be their own star cluster, which was the closest.

This news arrived not long after they had heard about an anomaly in the Ancient Blue Gate World, where it was said that the devils in this world were also planning something significant. In the end, they finally learned that this grand scheme had something to do with the immortal, who was, fortunately, defeated by that mysterious figure.

After what Randolph said, the others also began to think more deeply. Was it really a coincidence that the devils began moving across so many stars almost at the same time? No—all of them knew it was not a coincidence.

Their movements seemed more like something that had been coordinated in advance.

"What guarantee do we have that the figure wasn't also waiting for this exact opportunity to reveal himself and show his strength, as if announcing his existence to the world? What if he chose not to act until that day so his appearance would leave a greater impact on other beings?" Randolph said.

"With strength like that, he could have wiped out every devil without waiting for them to carry out their plans, if he were truly on our side, don't you think? To me, that

mysterious figure feels more like an opportunist, waiting for the right moment to take advantage of the situation."

"His purpose might be to plant hesitation and fear in others, so he can manipulate us into doing his bidding. In the future, even without realizing it, we could already be under his influence and become his subjects, and there would be nothing we could do about it," Randolph said in a serious tone.

The others looked in his direction in silence, each of them lost in their own thoughts.

Ivan parted his lips not long after.

"I understand that, in the end, what brother Randolph said is a warning about a possible future, one that could be right or wrong. But even if everything you said is true, what could we possibly do? No one dares to offend or oppose that figure. Someone like him has never appeared before," Ivan said.

Hearing that question, Randolph smiled.

"We could use our collective efforts to divert his attention elsewhere, so he does not focus on our star cluster. We might even be able to encourage him to explore beyond our galaxy," he answered.

"How would you do that?" Ivan asked, narrowing his eyes.

"By using the devils. We can draw that figure's attention toward the devils from the northern star cluster. Let him purge them. And once he's done there, perhaps he'll cleanse the rest of the galaxy as well. Let him stay busy while we sit back and watch him clean up that trash for us," Randolph answered.

"How do you plan to make him focus on the devils?" Ivan asked.

"I have an idea," Randolph replied, "but I'll need your family's cooperation to make this plan work."

The others remained silent, but then the sword maiden stood from her seat. Without saying a word, she left the room. No one tried to stop her. A short while later, Ryong turned his eyes toward Randolph.

"I know what you just said sounds reasonable, but it's still based on an if. We haven't met this person or learned who he really is, so we don't know what kind of man he is," Ryong said before standing up, followed by the woman beside him.

"My family also has its own interests in this matter, so we have our own views. As for what you've said, let's continue that discussion in the future, if that person truly turns out

to be like you said. For now, let's end this conversation here. Oh, and thank you for the invitation," he added, then walked out of the room with the woman following him.

With the others withdrawing from the discussion, Ivan turned to Randolph and let out a quiet sigh.

"Brother Randolph, I understand your concerns, but I have to agree with what Brother Ryong said. We have yet to meet this person, so we cannot judge him based solely on assumptions without proper information. If he can actually be befriended, wouldn't that be much better?" Ivan said as he stood up.

"My family also has an interest in this person, so for now, so I can't give an answer regarding your plan."

He walked toward the door, but before stepping out, he glanced back at Randolph.

"Ah, thank you for the invitation and the meal," he said, then left the room, leaving Randolph alone.

Randolph's expression, which had remained calm as the others departed, slowly shifted into a smile. He picked up a glass of wine in front of him and stared at it for a moment.

"All of you will follow whatever plan I set in the future, whether you like it or not," he thought, then raised the glass.

"For our god."

He drank the wine in silence.

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A month later, the situation in the Barisan continent had mostly returned to what it used to be, with activities thriving once again. The only difference was the many statues of Aldrian that had been built all across the continent. These statues, named Aldrian the Great, had become symbols of hope, reverence, and worship for people everywhere.

The poses of his statues might differ, but each one still conveyed his glory, making all who saw them revere him even more.

Even the group that worshipped Aldrian as their god had become more openly active, establishing places of worship where his statues were prominently displayed. Yet few criticized or looked down on this. Everyone understood how deeply Aldrian's presence had impacted all of their lives.

Without Aldrian, none of them would still be standing on this continent. If some chose to worship him, then so be it. Many believed this was simply their way of showing gratitude to their savior.

These past few days, another matter has been drawing attention. Many places across the continent have turned festive, as something significant is about to happen. The celebrations are understandable, given the event's connection to the continent's savior.

It is the upcoming marriage of Aldrian's parents, Aldrey and Irene.

Just over a week ago, the Flamecrest and Rivas families finally agreed on a date for the wedding, two days from now. This will be a marriage unlike any other in the continent's history, as it will be celebrated across the entire land.

As Aldrian's parents, Aldrey and Irene hold a position of their own in the hearts of the people. While they did not directly defeat a god, many still see them as part of the salvation that saved the continent. Without them, there would be no Aldrian. So when news of their marriage spread, people everywhere joined in the celebration.

This is also what both families hoped for—they wanted the people of the continent, who had just experienced a great calamity, to feel joy again and be swept up in the festivity of the marriage. They wished, at the very least, to help those still burdened by trauma or sorrow forget their pain for a moment and share in the happiness.

Moreover, Aldrian the Great himself announced that he would personally take part in the celebration by giving a lecture on cultivation on the day of his parents' wedding. This news stirred great excitement and anticipation, as a lecture from Aldrian—the strongest person among them, would undoubtedly be of immense value.

Many were eager to hear his lecture, knowing that comprehension in cultivation is just as crucial as the energy required to advance. In some cases, cultivators are unable to progress not because of a lack of power, but because they lack comprehension, even when they have enough energy to break through.

A lecture from Aldrian would be a rare opportunity for many to deepen their insight and quickly raise their level of comprehension.

While many people eagerly awaited the day of the marriage, Aldrian and his group remained in his grand palace. On this day, however, several figures whom Aldrian already knew had come to visit.

Aldrian had already constructed a teleportation portal that connected the core region with the Xin family. At the moment, the only way to move instantaneously from outside the core region into it was through the Xin family's secret realm.

Outside the secret realm, a teleportation portal had already been set up, currently connected privately to each sovereign's palace across the major territories. In the future, there were plans to expand this network to allow easier access for others across the continent to reach the Everlasting Secret Forest.

From the Xin family's secret realm, they were teleported into the palace complex beneath the massive floating land. From there, they used a special teleportation portal located inside the main palace building, which connected directly to Aldrian's floating land.

The figures now standing before Aldrian were the leaders of all major territories, along with members of the Rosalind family. They had just arrived through the teleportation portal on the floating land.

For the leaders of the major territories, this was their second time visiting, but for the Rosalind family, it was their first. Although most of them had already been here before, they still looked around in amazement at the palace's luxury and grandeur. The palace aside, none of them had ever seen a floating landmass like the one they now stood on.

They had no idea how land this vast could float in the sky, and all of them had reacted like country bumpkins the first time they stepped on it. Aldrian explained to them that the floating land was sustained by the dense and rich energy of heaven and earth.

When the energy of heaven and earth reached a certain density, it could affect land of a certain size and cause it to float. The higher the land floated, the denser the energy in that area. Moreover, the core region, especially the place where the grand palace stood, was also rich in divine energy, which further helped propel the floating land.

Aldrian greeted them as they appeared through the teleportation portal.

"Welcome, esteemed guests. It's truly my pleasure to meet all of you again," Aldrian said with a smile.

The others finally pulled themselves out of their bumpkin-like amazement and turned their attention to Aldrian again. Emperor Ladwin was the first to speak.

"Ah, son-in-law, you didn't need to wait here for us. We could have come to you inside. We'd feel bad making a man of your status come out just to greet us," he said as he approached Aldrian.

The others glanced at Emperor Ladwin but remained silent. In truth, most of them envied the elven emperor for having a daughter who had captured Aldrian's heart. Who wouldn't be proud to call Aldrian their son-in-law? That was exactly why they found it irritating every time Emperor Ladwin called Aldrian son-in-law, as if he were boasting about his status as the father-in-law.

The only one who shared in his joy was Sect Master Baek, who already knew about the special relationship between Baek Jimin and Aldrian. It was only a matter of time before Baek Jimin became Aldrian's wife.

"Ah, that would be inappropriate. Even if I've done something that gained me some fame, your status as leaders of nations is still a fact I must respect. It would be impolite of me not to at least greet you all," Aldrian said as he looked at Emperor Ladwin and the others.

Those who heard him smiled at his humility. This was one of the many reasons they always held a positive opinion of Aldrian. Even though he was now the strongest among them, he hadn't become arrogant and remained grounded.

"Also, welcome to my home, Your Excellency. This is your first time visiting this place. And Elena, I believe your condition has fully recovered. I'm glad you could make it," Aldrian added as he turned toward Baron Rosalind, the patriarch of the Rosalind family, and his daughter, Elena.

Not long after the war, Baron Rosalind had come to Aldrian and implored him to save Elena—something Aldrian had done without hesitation. In fact, not only had he healed Elena, but he had also restored Emperor Raymond's arm and treated thousands of troops using his healing ability. With his cultivation and strength now, such feats were easy for him.

"Ah yes, thank you for asking, Young Master. Thanks to you, I fully recovered in a short time. I even resumed my cultivation three weeks ago," Elena said with a slight bow.

Aldrian nodded with a smile, then looked toward Pope Claudius. At this moment, the pope appeared much younger. The wrinkles on his face had faded, and he now looked more like a middle-aged man.

"I know I'm a little late, but congratulations on your breakthrough, Your Holiness. With your strength, our continent will be more secure," he said.

"Ahahaha, thank you, Young Aldrian. But it's all right, I know you have your own busyness. Besides, it's thanks to you that I've lived long enough to reach this breakthrough," Pope Claudius said.

Pope Claudius had actually broken through to the low pseudo-immortal foundation stage more than two weeks ago. It was an event that sparked celebration both within the church and across the continent.

Another person had advanced beyond the emperor stage, aside from Aldrian and Patriarch Xin who had already advanced not long after the war. For many, this was another clear sign that their continent was truly evolving to a new height.

This achievement also inspired many cultivators, filling them with renewed determination as they too aspired to reach such levels.

"Let's go. It wouldn't be good for us to keep standing here. Let's move to a more suitable place to talk," Aldrian said, then led them into the palace.

As they followed him, the guests continued to glance around at their surroundings. Aldrian guided them to one of the palace's large and luxurious rooms, prepared specifically for receiving guests. The space was unlike any guest room found in the imperial palaces they were used to.

This room truly radiated extreme luxury. Every piece of furniture was, in fact, an artifact. That was not an exaggeration, it was simply the truth. The room was filled with artifacts, and even the chairs were heaven-grade.

Once again, everyone present felt humbled.

After they all took their seats around a large table, Aldrian finally spoke.

"So, what is the matter that brings the honor of having all of Your Majesties visit this place?" he asked.

"Young Aldrian, we came here because we want to discuss your status on this continent, or rather, your position within the continent's hierarchy," Emperor Durand said this time.

"We have already discussed it among ourselves. And why do we bring this up? Because we believe it's important, especially now that our continent has reconnected with the outside world."

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"My hierarchy?" Aldrian asked in wonder.

"May I know what Your Majesty means by that?"

Emperor Durand looked at the others for a moment before turning to Aldrian again.

"Young Aldrian, we believe it would be better if you established your own nation, and we followed you as its leader," he said with a serious expression.

Hearing Emperor Durand, Aldrian's eyes widened in shock. Even Baron Rosalind and Elene seemed shocked, clearly unaware of this matter.

"What are you—"

"We have our reasons, and I want you to hear them, young Aldrian. Consider them seriously, because this may affect all of us in the future," Emperor Durand cut him off, causing Aldrian to fall silent.

Emperor Durand nodded.

"Why are we discussing this matter? It has to do with the origin of our empires, our organizations, or more specifically, the powers that come from outside the continent," he said.

"As young Aldrian knows, most of our organizations originated from beyond this continent. Our ancestors migrated here in the past. It could be said that our roots lie outside the Barisan continent."

"Now, why do we believe it is necessary for you to become our leader and establish a new nation? It is because, although most of us have roots beyond this continent, we already consider this land our home, our land, the place we have devoted our lives to."

"Even now, when the Barisan continent has reconnected with the outside world, we still feel that we belong to this land. Our ancestors built our nations here. Moreover, they did not seem too rigid with their descendants about maintaining loyalty to their original powers beyond this continent. They didn't appear to hold their origin from the outside world in the highest regard."

"Because of that, we don't feel a strong connection to our roots beyond this continent. We consider ourselves entirely as people of this land." Emperor Durand paused for a moment as Aldrian continued listening.

Emperor Durand let out a quiet sigh.

"With the Barisan continent now reconnected to the outside world, the major powers from beyond will inevitably reach out to us. I can already imagine them asking about many things regarding this continent, and I also expect they'll bring their old hierarchies and connections—pressuring us to act as their eyes and ears here."

"In other words, they'll likely see the powers on this continent as vassal states, attempting to control our policies and decisions."

Hearing this, Aldrian finally understood where it was heading. In the end, those outside forces would view some of the continent's powers as mere extensions of their own. They could use the weight of shared history to compel obedience.

Their demands might conflict with the interests of this continent, or with his own, which would sour the relationships that had been built over time.

"If that happens, then we fear those powers from outside the continent may have intentions that go against our interests here, or even against you, young Aldrian. After all, we don't know what those powers are truly like," Emperor Durand continued.

"The blood and tears of our ancestors built our nations on this continent, but if all of that ends up being exploited by them, then it's far from what we want. That is why we have been thinking of you, young Aldrian," Emperor Durand said as he looked into Aldrian's eyes.

"We asked ourselves, how can we make those powers abandon their intention to use us as vassals? The answer we arrived at was this, to place our nations under a new, greater ruler. And that ruler must be someone like us, someone from this continent."

"With us united under the umbrella of a new, larger nation, especially if that nation is under you, I doubt those forces from outside the continent would dare to force us to do their bidding. If they ever try anything, they would still see you as our leader, the ruler of this continent."

"This also strengthens our identity as people of this land. It shows that we have built something of our own, that we are no longer their vassals. We are people of your nation, not theirs," Emperor Durand said.

"And young Aldrian," Pope Claudius added, "this would also raise the confidence of the people of this continent. Did you know your name is already far more well-known than any of ours? Even many within the church regard you more highly than myself, or even Angelica."

"With you leading the entire nation of this continent, our people will face outsiders with greater confidence. They'll proudly say they are from this continent, from the great nation founded by their saviour," Emperor Herman continued.

"We know you have your own business and responsibilities, so you don't need to worry that this will become a burden. You can continue as usual without focusing entirely on this continent. For the most part, the major territories will continue operating as usual," he assured.

"But whenever a decision involves your interests or the interests of this continent, we will consult you and wait for your judgment. And if you have a policy you wish to enact across the continent, we will carry it out. You have already become our leader, after all."

"That is what we believe, young Aldrian. So, what do you think? We truly hope you will reconsider this seriously. We believe this is the best course of action for now," Emperor Durand said, his expression solemn.

The others waited in silence, their eyes fixed on Aldrian's calm expression as he continued listening. They could see he was still deep in thought, showing no sign of haste. The only ones still visibly shocked were Baron Rosalind and Elena.

Hearing these powerful figures express their wish to make Aldrian their leader under one new great nation felt like a dream to them. These powers, which had stood since ancient times with their own interests and their own histories, now suddenly wanted to unite under a single banner.

However, Baron Rosalind inwardly sighed, as he also thought the leaders of the major territories were right. What they said made sense. If they wanted to repel the influence of outside powers, then they had to stand firm as the people of this continent.

The simplest path was to unite all powers across the continent under the banner of one great nation, one that reflected the identity of this land. A great nation led by Aldrian, and one that must be led by him, at least for now, as the beginning.

He was the only one who could unite the people's hearts, and that was the most important factor for this plan to succeed. With a figure like Aldrian as their leader, there would be no resistance from the populace; they might even support it.

The powers from outside the continent would also hesitate to pressure these empires, knowing they could no longer rely on history and strength alone.

"Now, what is your decision, young master?" Baron Rosalind thought as he looked at Aldrian.

Aldrian's expression remained calm, but his mind was steadily processing the implications of the proposal. He agreed with what the leaders had said and found no fault in their reasoning. In fact, he had once thought about this issue himself, the intentions of those powers beyond the continent.

He didn't know whether those powers would try to take advantage of the forces here, but he didn't want a clash of interests to arise after everything they had built together. The idea that outsiders might claim authority over this continent's factions just because of historical ties was something he had quietly considered before.

He had thought about possible solutions, but now, these leaders had unexpectedly brought one forward themselves. And to be honest, from what he had heard so far, it didn't seem troublesome or difficult.

If the empires, the kingdom, and the sects could continue to operate as they always had without needing him to manage everything, that was ideal. They would only come to him when a major decision had to be made.

It would not hinder his plans in the future, if anything, it might give him greater support and strength. By becoming the ruler, the power of faith from people across the continent would also grow stronger. Their hearts would become firmer, as they sincerely accepted him as their leader, without hesitation, and not just in sentiment.

There would be no burden weighing on their hearts or minds, because there was nothing left to doubt. The leaders of the major territories had agreed and willingly placed their nations under him as the absolute ruler of this continent.

The others continued waiting for Aldrian's response as he remained deep in thought for several minutes. They watched him in tense but hopeful silence, wishing he would agree with their judgment, and their plan.

After another moment, they finally saw Aldrian part his lips.

"After thinking about it, I've come to a decision..."

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"After thinking about it, I've come to a decision that..." Aldrian said as he looked at the others.

"I will take the role Your Majesties hope for. If my acceptance of this role can bring stability and peace throughout the land, then I will gladly take it. Well, I don't like those outsiders trying anything stupid on this continent anyway, so I don't see any problem with it."

His answer made the others instantly light up with joy, and they let out sighs of relief.

"I'm glad you support our opinion and are willing to take the role. If you had refused to become our leader, we would have had no choice but to use your name if those people tried to pressure us. That could have caused hidden resentment, since they would see us as defying their orders, and they might have done something harmful to us. But it's still much better than becoming their extended hands," Emperor Durand said.

"Yes, it's much different if we are directly under young Aldrian's authority. They would have to think about you and wouldn't just recklessly act. If they did something to us, it would be the same as challenging your authority here. That alone is enough to justify anything that might happen to them," Emperor Raymond said.

"But then again, I don't think they'd be crazy enough to try, which means we'll gain peace through young Aldrian's deterrent effect," he added.

Aldrian nodded. Although the main point of this plan was to use his position as a deterrent against the outsiders, he did not mind. He would gain something from it as well. If, even after the creation of his nation, those outsiders still acted in ways that conflicted with his interests, then they would have no one to blame but themselves.

He would not allow anyone seeking to disrupt the continent's stability to do as they pleased.

They then continued to discuss the details of this nation's creation and its structure. To unite the full strength of the continent, they agreed to form one large container. Since what they needed was a clear hierarchy between ruler and subject, they decided that this container would take the form of an empire.

Aldrian would become its emperor, standing at the peak of the continent's pyramid.

They continued discussing the matter for the next three hours before deciding it was enough.

"All of you are welcome to stay here for a while. This place is quite good for cultivation, after all," Aldrian said as he noticed the leaders of the major territories standing as if they were preparing to leave.

"Ahaha, maybe next time. There are other matters I need to attend to at the royal palace... Your Majesty," Emperor Durand said with a smile, deliberately emphasizing the title.

"Yes, there are still many things we need to take care of. Besides..." Emperor Raymond said as he glanced at Baron Rosalind with a smile. "Your Majesty still has something to discuss with Baron Rosalind. We won't take any more of your time. We can make our way out on our own, there's no need for Your Majesty to escort us. That would be inappropriate."

The others said the same, and Aldrian couldn't help but inwardly sigh. These guys so eager to make him their leader, even calling him Your Majesty when the empire had not even been created yet.

He could only accept their eagerness and let them do as they pleased until they left the room, leaving him alone with Baron Rosalind and Elena. Once the others were gone, a brief awkward silence settled over the room.

For Baron Rosalind and Elena, who had only intended to come here to discuss a certain matter with Aldrian, they ended up hearing the entire conversation about the creation of a new empire instead. And just like that, once the discussion was over and the others had left, Aldrian had already decided to become the first emperor of that empire.

He felt he wasn't supposed to be part of such a high-level meeting in the first place, but those leaders had still allowed him and Elena to listen, as if it wasn't a big deal.

Aldrian decided to break the awkward silence and smiled at them.

"So, what is it, Your Excellency? From what I can tell, your visit must be for something different than those other leaders, right?" he asked.

"Uh... uhm... Your Majesty—"

"No, don't call me that. Not yet. The empire isn't even officially established, so how could you call me that? Don't follow those old folks in their eagerness, Your Excellency," Aldrian cut off Baron Rosalind, causing the baron to fall silent, nod, and sigh.

"All right, young master," he said as he took a deep breath. But then he seemed hesitant to start the discussion, which made Aldrian slightly confused. What could he possibly want to say that made him hesitate this much?

"Uh... young master, to be honest, I feel quite ashamed to bring this up, but..." Baron Rosalind finally spoke, though he still hesitated before letting out a long sigh and gathering his courage.

"I would like to ask your permission for my family to return to our former secret realm, back when we were still one of the four guardian families of the core region of the Everlasting Silent Forest," he said at last, giving a slight bow. Elena followed her father and bowed as well.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows as he finally understood what this was about. Baron Rosalind straightened his posture and continued.

"I know I must sound shameless, perhaps even outrageous but after the war, I came to realize just how much of our family's potential has been wasted, despite having an inheritance granted by the gods."

"Even though we had a strong background in the past, we were never able to truly unleash its full power because we lacked the proper environment to support it."

"When we compare ourselves to the Xin family, who were also one of the four guardian families, we feel like nothing. The difference between us is so great that I can't help but feel deeply ashamed... and even envious of them."

"But I believe the Rosalind family holds the same potential as the Xin family. We share the same roots as the true indigenous people of this continent, and we made the same pact with the divine dragon and phoenix." Baron Rosalind said, though his eyes couldn't meet Aldrian's. He slightly lowered his gaze.

He truly felt ashamed, and even rude for saying such things, but he had to. It had been weighing on his heart for the past week.

"We lost some of our members in the war, a result of our own weakness. Patriarch Xin visited our family and said that the current state of the Rosalind family is far from the glory we once had when we were still the Ragius family. He recommended that we return to the secret realm where our ancestors once lived," Baron Rosalind said, his fist tightening slightly.

"He said that the only environment on this continent that supports our cultivation is within the secret realm of the forest. He also told me I should speak to you about it first, young master... but I feel truly ashamed. It seems like I only want to enjoy the results of your hard work, after everything you've done to protect this continent."

"Even so, The Rosalind family has wasted too much of its potential. I want to raise it to greater heights. Patriarch Xin's words keep echoing in my mind. We want to return to those glorious days when we were still the Ragius family—standing on equal footing with the Xin family."

"My apologies, young master, for this outrageous request... but would you grant the Rosalind family permission to return to our ancestral secret realm?" Baron Rosalind asked, bowing his head once more, with Elena following his gesture.

"Of course, Your Excellency. You may return with your family to the Ragius family's old secret realm. That was once your family's home, after all, and I also want your family to maximize its potential, Your Excellency."

"It's truly a pity that the Rosalind family couldn't develop that potential due to the lack of a supportive environment. But I hope that with your return to the secret realm, the Rosalind family can regain its former glory, just as it once had when it was still known as the Ragius family," Aldrian said without hesitation.

Baron Rosalind and Elena were stunned. Just like that?

They sighed inwardly. Aldrian was someone easy to speak to, as long as you had a sincere relationship with him. A matter like this was nothing to him. He simply allowed the Rosalind family to return.

Not everyone was like Aldrian. If he had been the type who always wanted something in return, or worse, some arrogant asshole, he could've forced Baron Rosalind into a humiliating request just to be allowed back into the secret realm.

Thankfully, Aldrian wasn't like that, which made everything much easier.

"Thank you. Truly, thank you, young master," Baron Rosalind said, bowing again.

Aldrian nodded with a smile.

"No problem," he replied, then turned his gaze to Elena.

"I see that you're getting stronger, Miss Elena. Congratulations on your breakthrough to the Emperor stage."

"Ah, thank you for your congratulatory words, young master," Elena replied, a slight blush on her face.

They continued talking about other matters for another hour before finally wrapping up. Baron Rosalind and Elena then left to begin preparations for their family's migration.

Later that day, news spread across the continent, causing an uproar among the entire populace.

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A piece of news that caused an uproar across the entire populace spread rapidly throughout the continent, as the sovereigns of each major territory were the ones personally announcing it—a piece of news the people had never expected.

It was said that the continent was stepping into a new era, one where they would unite under a single banner. The outside world had now opened, and its influence might soon reach the continent, making unity all the more critical.

The entire continent would be unified under one great empire, with Aldrian as the first emperor. His official coronation would take place a week after the marriage of Aldrey and Irene. From that moment on, the entire hierarchy of the continent would change.

The empires would become kingdoms, while the others remained the same. With the creation of a great empire uniting the full strength of the Barisan continent, it was hoped that peace and stability would be maintained amid the presence of powerful forces from beyond the continent seeking to enter.

Although this news caused an uproar across the continent, just as the leaders had anticipated, the entire populace welcomed the development positively. No one opposed the plan, instead, many supported it deeply and embraced it wholeheartedly.

With someone like Aldrian leading the continent, the people believed it would truly be safe from any threat. Order would be strengthened, and their lives would improve because of it. Even without Aldrian becoming emperor, crime across the continent had already declined. His name alone was enough to create that effect.

So what would happen if he were enthroned as the highest authority?

Those who harbored evil intentions would be even more afraid to act.

The people believed in Aldrian's moral compass and his sense of righteousness, trusting his credibility and integrity because of his track record.

They also believed that Aldrian would lead the continent to new heights, as the strongest individual in the land. They had even heard that those from outside the continent were reluctant to offend him.

All in all, the creation of this empire and Aldrian's enthronement were events awaited by all, and the people were eager for it.

Not long after meeting with Baron Rosalind, Aldrian was now walking through a dim hallway, where the corridor was lit only by small illumination crystals placed along the sides. His footsteps echoed quietly as he continued onward, eventually arriving at a place lined with cells on both sides of the wall.

This was another face of the grand palace on the floating land. Beneath all its grandeur, beauty, and luxury, there existed an ominous place like this, hidden beneath the splendor above.

This hidden place, concealed from the sight of others, was where Aldrian could imprison someone without much concern.

Even if he chose not to seal the cultivation of a pseudo-immortal stage cultivator here, a deadly formation guarded the area, one powerful enough to kill a cultivator at that level. With a formation that dangerous, escape was out of the question.

Aldrian kept walking toward one of the cells and stopped in front of it. His blue eyes, faintly glowing in the dim surroundings, stared at the man inside, his body tied to a lone chair.

The man's condition was far from what it used to be. His face was worn and haggard, his long black hair messy, with several strands already turned white. His pale skin and thin body stood in stark contrast to the burly, powerful figure he once was. His eyes were half open, but his gaze was lifeless, as if the will to live had already left him.

He seemed to know that Aldrian was standing before the cell, but he simply did not care.

Aldrian looked at the man who had once been the mastermind behind the devils in the Barisan continent, the leader and strongest among the devils and cultivators, aside from Aldrian himself.

After the war, Aldrian chose to imprison Zhang Haoran here. He felt it would be a waste to kill him immediately, as there might still be information hidden in his memories that Aldrian had yet to uncover. When Aldrian looked into Zhang Haoran's memories, they were still incomplete.

He might have missed something important, as he had viewed them in haste due to the circumstances at the time.

He also wanted to see if the man could still be of use in the future, given that he had once been an apostle of Tarius. Aldrian had already checked whether the system inside Zhang Haoran was still present. However, during the inspection through his own system, he discovered that Zhang Haoran's system had completely disappeared.

Aldrian thought that Tarius had truly discarded Zhang Haoran because he was no longer useful. Maybe that bastard was already looking for a new apostle to replace him.

Since the war ended, Aldrian had only come to see Zhang Haoran once, without saying a word. He simply looked through his memories, checked what needed to be checked, and left.

Zhang Haoran, who was initially shocked by the situation and the failure of his god's plan, now seemed to have given up entirely.

He already knew he had been abandoned by his god, which was confirmed by the disappearance of his system. At the time, he could only smile bitterly to himself. He had realized long ago that his god might only be using him, but he simply didn't care.

As long as he gained power and could return to Earth to enact his revenge, he had allowed himself to become a tool.

But now? He had nothing left.

Revenge? He no longer had the strength. He was weak.

Although the flame of revenge still burned in his heart, his body could no longer follow it. He felt tired and powerless.

Click. Kriek.

Aldrian entered the cell and stood in front of Zhang Haoran, his gaze fixed downward at the man.

"After thinking it through, I've decided I no longer need anything from you. There's nothing left in you that makes your life worth preserving."

"To be honest, I originally planned to execute you in front of the entire continent a few days from now, to ease the pain of those who lost their lives, or whose lives were turned into hell by the devils. But I've changed my mind. Killing you in loneliness is enough." Aldrian spoke as he reached out and touched Zhang Haoran's head.

"There's no need for the people of this continent to be reminded again of the terror of war and the devils by seeing your face. I don't want to stain these joyous times with your presence, either."

Zhang Haoran continued listening without a single movement.

"Any last words?"

Hearing the question, Zhang Haoran's eyes trembled slightly before shifting toward Aldrian's lower body as he tried to look up at his face. His head struggled to rise, but he kept forcing it until he could finally see Aldrian's face. There was no expression on it, but his lifeless eyes stared directly into Aldrian's.

"If you are a god, please hear my request," his hoarse and faint voice echoed.

"Please, avenge the death of my sister. I beg you with all my heart."

"I don't care what I become in my next life, as long as those responsible for my sister's death face their consequences."

Hearing that, Aldrian's expression didn't change. He wasn't surprised that Zhang Haoran saw him as a god. But then, inwardly, he was stunned, he could suddenly sense the power of faith flowing from Zhang Haoran into him. The man was truly sincere in his request, and his faith was unexpectedly strong.

"This man truly has made vengeance the sole purpose of his life. He doesn't care about anything else, as long as his sister's death is avenged. If he can't do it himself, he's willing to beg anyone or anything to carry out that revenge," Aldrian thought.

After speaking, Zhang Haoran fell silent. It seemed he had said everything he needed to say. His eyes remained locked on Aldrian's face, never looking away as he made his request.

From Aldrian's hand, which was resting on Zhang Haoran's head, a golden flame suddenly emerged. This was one of his techniques born from his comprehension of fire laws, developed further through the insights he gained from the comprehension of his many followers.

He called it the *Fire of Judgment*, a flame that burns anything burdened by bad karma. The greater the karma, the larger and hotter the flame. It was a technique that combined fire laws with karma laws.

For someone like Zhang Haoran, who had committed countless atrocities in his life, the flame would undoubtedly reduce him to ashes in an instant. And with such immense karma, he would surely carry its weight into his next life.

The moment the golden flame appeared and touched Zhang Haoran's head, it instantly spread across his body in a split second. There was no scream. No movement. His body turned to ash, and even the ashes were consumed, leaving nothing behind. No trace of him remained.

Yet in that final instant, his eyes never left Aldrian, as if he truly believed, truly hoped, that his plea would be answered.

After executing Zhang Haoran, Aldrian turned and walked out of the cell.

With Zhang Haoran's death, the final Chapter of the devils who had brought ruin to the Barisan continent came to a close.

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The next day, Aldrian was in one part of his palace training field with Aurelia and Reiss. The two beasts in their human forms, sat in meditation as Aldrian stood in front of them. He had just told them to gather because he had something to give them.

"I've finished creating something that will let you cultivate again. If this works, you won't need a special environment anymore, you'll be able to cultivate anywhere," Aldrian said with a smile.

The two beasts wondered what it was. Then they saw Aldrian place his hands on their foreheads, and suddenly, new information entered their minds.

They remained in that position and closed their eyes throughout the imparting process, allowing the information to flow into their minds and began to process it.

After Aldrian finished transferring all the necessary information, he withdrew his hands and waited for them to finish processing what he had given them. What he shared was his own cultivation technique, something he had spent the past month developing.

Since this was the first time he had created a cultivation technique on his own, he was actually quite nervous about the outcome. Even so, he remained confident and hoped

there would be no problems. He wanted it to succeed just as it had in the simulations he had run in his mind.

To create this cultivation technique for the beasts, he had truly racked his brain to find a way to make the impossible possible. He had even traveled to the beast territory and visited Vireline to study the bodies of many different devil beasts, all to refine and perfect the cultivation technique in his mind.

He wanted to ensure that the technique could be used by these beasts without issue, and for that, he needed to research every detail carefully.

The cultivation methods of human forms and beast forms are different, each with its own advantages.

Beasts cultivate by naturally absorbing the surrounding heaven and earth energy, even without using a specific cultivation technique. They can continue to cultivate even while asleep. Their growth becomes much faster if they consume treasures from nature, such as high-level spiritual herbs.

However, this advantage can also backfire. Their environment directly affects their cultivation. If a beast absorbs too much negative energy from its surroundings, it can transform into a devil beast, just like what happened to those in the former devil territory.

If they manage to live long enough and survive the madness brought on by the early stages of devil cultivation, they can become powerful beasts feared by many.

Another disadvantage for beasts is that their cultivation speed slows significantly in the later stages due to increasingly demanding requirements. This is especially true for larger beasts, their size and anatomy cause their energy needs to far exceed those of humans.

They can try to transform into human form, and cultivate that way, but doing so requires them to follow human cultivation methods.

Humans, on the other hand, cannot cultivate without a specific cultivation technique, and their growth is generally slower than that of beasts.

However, they progress steadily, and while they also experience slower cultivation at higher stages, their requirements are not as overwhelming as those faced by beasts.

As for Aldrian's cultivation technique, it could be used by beasts that had not yet transformed into human form, as well as those in human form.

It was truly a universal cultivation technique.

If it succeeded, he could impart this technique to all the devil beasts in the beast territory.

Fortunately, the lowest cultivation level among the devil beasts there was at the Grand Duke stage. At that level, they were already intelligent enough to understand far more complex human language, which made things much easier.

If there were any beasts below that stage, the process would take much longer. Although they could still understand human speech, their comprehension was not as advanced. Unlike those at the Grand Duke stage or higher, they would have required manual guidance.

That would be far more time-consuming and troublesome.

Another important aspect of this cultivation technique was that it did not completely replace the beasts' original cultivation foundation. Instead, it altered the nature of that foundation. The foundation remained, but through his technique, the devil properties would gradually be purified using the energy of heaven and earth.

Their breathing and energy flow had to follow this cultivation method precisely in order to cleanse their bodies of excessive negative energy. The process would begin with purifying the meridians, and then the dantian.

Normally, this kind of transformation would be impossible. The normal energy of heaven and earth would instinctively be rejected by the meridians and dantian of a devil cultivator. But with Aldrian's technique, the energy of heaven and earth was effectively forced to expel the devil energy from the body.

Aldrian had already imagined that this cultivation technique would cause some discomfort in the initial phase of purification. After all, their bodies had long adapted to devil energy. But over time, they would begin to feel more at ease, and their cultivation progress would surpass what they achieved through devil cultivation.

The only drawback of this technique was that it required a large amount of heaven and earth energy to cultivate, especially during the phase where the devil energy was being expelled from the body. However, with the increasing density of heaven and earth energy across the continent, Aldrian believed this issue would resolve itself.

As for Aurelia and Reiss, of course would not encounter this problem. This place held the densest concentration of heaven and earth energy, even divine energy.

After finishing the process of absorbing the information their master had given them, Aurelia and Reiss opened their eyes and looked at Aldrian in shock.

"Master, this is...?!" Aurelia asked in shock. Her question was the same one Reiss wanted to ask, so he was also waiting to hear Aldrian's answer.

Aldrian nodded with a smile.

"That is the cultivation technique I personally created. It's a special method that allows you to shift from devil cultivation without destroying your cultivation foundation," he said.

Hearing that, Aurelia and Reiss were still in shock. As expected, this was a cultivation technique, and not just any technique. It was advanced and complex, even more so than the devil cultivation technique already engraved in their minds.

They truly couldn't believe that their master had created such a complex cultivation technique, one far more advanced and refined than the devil cultivation technique. That technique was said to have been created by the Devil God himself!

In other words, their master was on par with a god in this regard!

A sudden warmth filled their hearts as they felt the effort their master had poured into creating it. Though it sounded too good to be true, they were genuinely grateful.

Without hesitation, they kowtowed before him.

"Thank you, Master, for this gift! We will follow you until our death!" they said in unison.

Aldrian simply smiled at them as he spoke.

"You two are the first beings to try cultivating my technique. We don't even know the effects yet, so there's no need to thank me just yet. This technique might kill you if my judgment is wrong, you know?"

Aurelia and Reiss straightened their posture.

"Then we gladly offer our lives for your experiment, and pave the way to your success. With our sacrifice, we hope Master can reach even greater heights," Aurelia said without hesitation.

"Still, we believe in Master's cultivation technique. It will succeed in one try, marking the beginning of a new era of cultivation," she added.

Reiss nodded in agreement, his expression showing complete faith in Aldrian.

Aldrian was truly moved by their unwavering faith in him. It was not the kind of faith born from mere hierarchy or loyalty as beast mounts, it came from genuine belief in his success. They didn't see this test as something designed to harm them, nor did they see themselves as mere guinea pigs.

They believed this was Aldrian's way of caring for those close to him. This was not just a test, it was an honor, a gift that could open a new path and mark the beginning of a new era.

Aldrian continued to smile at them.

"Alright, then begin cultivating using the technique. Focus carefully, and make sure your energy flows along the correct path. It will feel uncomfortable at first, but with time, you'll grow used to it. You don't need to worry about anything. If something goes wrong, I'm here to stop the worst from happening and keep you safe," he said.

The two beasts nodded and closed their eyes. Aldrian's expression turned solemn as he walked behind them and sat in meditation posture. This was the moment of truth.

He placed his palms on their backs, focusing his senses entirely on them, ready to detect any anomalies in the cultivation process. If anything went wrong, he would immediately tell them to stop.

The surrounding energy began to move toward Aurelia and Reiss, a clear sign they had started cultivating, guiding the energy according to the technique.

He sensed the energy starting to enter their meridians. His focus sharpened. This was a critical phase, the meridians, long attuned to devil energy, were now receiving the pure energy of heaven and earth.

As expected, the meridians initially rejected the energy. But the cultivation process didn't stop. Guided by his technique, the heaven and earth energy continued to pour into the meridians, slowly purifying them to open the path to the dantian.

After a few seconds, he finally detected a change. The meridians began to loosen and gradually accept the normal heaven and earth energy. His heart leapt with joy.

"The first phase succeeded!"

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The energy inside both Aurelia and Reiss began to purify their meridians slowly. While doing so, it also started to flow forward through their bodies. Aldrian could sense that Aurelia and Reiss felt uncomfortable, as they slightly frowned, but he had already predicted this and continued observing.

Because their meridians had been adjusted to the flow of devil energy for their entire lives, this was the first time they were being cleansed of that very energy. They felt slight pain throughout their bodies, but they would have to endure it.

After more than a minute, Aldrian saw black liquid with a pungent smell seeping from Aurelia and Reiss's skin, staining their robes. He smiled, this was a sign that their bodies were truly cleansing themselves through his cultivation technique. The black liquid was the excessive filth that had accumulated inside their bodies from cultivating dense negative energy all this time.

Normally, cultivation helps cleanse each cultivator's body of internal impurities. However, in the case of devil cultivation techniques, residue is always left behind due to the nature of negative energy.

With their bodies cleansed of this residue, Aurelia and Reiss would feel much more comfortable moving forward. They continued cultivating for the next two hours until the energy finally began to enter the dantian.

In their case, the dantian referred to their beast cores.

This marked the next crucial step.

Now that their meridians had adjusted to the normal heaven and earth energy, the next phase began, the dantian.

Earlier, Aurelia and Reiss had already touched their dantians with energy to purify the outer layer. According to the cultivation technique they had received, this process was meant to weaken the dantian's resistance to heaven and earth energy.

When they finally managed to guide the flow of energy into their dantian—

They trembled slightly, their expressions tightening into deeper frowns. This had to be the most uncomfortable sensation they had felt in a long time. The piercing pain in their dantians was not something they could hide.

Aldrian kept his focus on their dantians, hoping they would pass through this critical phase as he had envisioned.

An hour passed. They continued cultivating without pause, and the black liquid kept seeping from their bodies. Their dantians were being steadily purified by the heaven and earth energy.

Two hours, three hours...

Their expressions gradually eased as time went on. Seeing this development, Aldrian truly wanted to shout that he succeeded! But he remained silent, continuing to observe them as they cultivated.

After another hour, he finally pulled back his palms and smiled in victory. Once he confirmed there were no issues with their cultivation, he could confidently say the test was a success. If it worked in their human forms, then he was certain it would also succeed in their beast forms.

"Alright, stop," Aldrian said.

Even though they were deep in cultivation and fully focused, Aurelia and Reiss still heard him. They stopped circulating their energy, and when they opened their eyes, they were stunned to see their bodies stained with black liquid. They immediately recognized it as the excess filth that had built up inside them.

They could feel the changes inside their bodies, and it left them truly shocked. They felt fresher, more comfortable, as if a gentle breeze were flowing through them, something they had never felt before. It was as if they had awakened in entirely different bodies.

They looked at Aldrian with trembling eyes.

"Master... you've succeeded," Aurelia said, her voice shaking.

As she had expected, her master had done it.

They wanted to kowtow to him, but Aldrian stopped them.

"Wait. It's not over yet. We still have one more test, your beast form. Now, transform and do the same."

Aurelia and Reiss nodded and immediately transformed into their beast forms. Their enormous bodies blocked out the sunlight, casting a shadow over Aldrian, but they wasted no time and began cultivating again.

They circulated their energy while Aldrian placed his hands on them to observe the flow.

Once again, his prediction was correct, the energy moved smoothly through their massive bodies. When it reached their beast cores, there were no issues. Thanks to their earlier cultivation, both their meridians and beast cores had already adjusted to the heaven and earth energy, making this round of cultivation much easier and smoother.

After another hour, Aurelia and Reiss finally stopped. They opened their eyes and looked down at the small figure of Aldrian, their expressions filled with emotion and joy.

They could feel it clearly, there was nothing wrong with the cultivation technique. Their master had truly succeeded in creating his own method. And this technique would revolutionize the cultivation world by overturning the very knowledge of how cultivation techniques worked. Specifically, the knowledge that one could not change the cultivation techniques without destroying their foundation.

The two beasts transformed back into their human forms, robes formed from their energy instantly covering them as they prostrated before Aldrian.

"Congratulations, Master. You've succeeded! Your name will be engraved in the history of the cultivation world!"

"Congratulations, Master! You've created something that will leave your name in the annals of cultivation history!" Aurelia and Reiss said in unison.

Aldrian nodded with a smile.

"Well, thankfully it worked just as I predicted. The two of you also contributed to opening the path for this cultivation method, so your names will be recorded in history as well," he said.

"This is our greatest honor, to be part of this historic moment," Aurelia said with pride.

Aurelia and Reiss then straightened their bodies.

"Now that I know the cultivation method has no problems, you can use it from now on. Abandon your devil side once and for all, starting today," Aldrian said.

The two beasts nodded. Eagerly, they resumed their cultivation. The refreshing feeling was truly addicting, and they wanted to keep experiencing it, more and more. Even after only a few hours of using this method, they could already feel its effects. They had no intention of wasting any more time.

Aldrian continued to observe them as they cultivated for another hour. Once he was fully confident there were no issues, he quietly left them. He concluded that the test had succeeded, and now, he could begin spreading the technique to the other beasts in the Beast Territory.

Without waiting any longer, he teleported near Vireline's main body, the World Tree, and was immediately greeted by her. She was already aware of the empire creation plan, as Emperor Ladwin had come to inform her directly before the leaders visited Aldrian.

Naturally, she would follow any decision Aldrian made. If he agreed to the plan, she would support it as well.

Not long after, he began spreading his cultivation technique to the beasts, starting with those at the emperor stage, since they were capable of transforming into human form.

He had to pass the technique to them directly through touch, transmitting the information into their memories.

However, he could only transfer it to two individuals at a time, which consumed a great deal of time, especially with hundreds of emperor-stage beasts to reach.

This made him realize he needed to create a method that would allow him to transmit information into the memories of many individuals at once.

Those who had already received the cultivation technique immediately began to practice it. Just like Aurelia and Reiss, these beasts could feel the changes within their bodies. They were truly shocked, none of them had imagined something like this was even possible, yet Aldrian had achieved the impossible.

By the time Aldrian finished transmitting the technique to all the emperor-stage beasts, it was already past noon. He remained there, observing them until the sun was just an inch above the horizon. From what he saw, there were no issues with their cultivation, and he could safely leave them for now.

As for the rest who had not yet received the technique, they couldn't help but feel envious after seeing its effects firsthand.

However, they understood that Aldrian had his own business and couldn't stay there all night just to distribute his cultivation technique, especially since tomorrow was a special day for his family.

Those who had already received the technique didn't dare to pass it on to others without Aldrian's supervision either. They were afraid something might go wrong if they shared it on their own.

For those who had yet to receive it, they could only wait until Aldrian returned. But Aldrian reassured them not to worry, he would make sure every one of them received the cultivation technique as soon as possible.

After confirming there were no issues with the technique, he disappeared and returned to his palace. Tomorrow was a special day for his family, and tonight, he simply wanted to stay home and enjoy his time with Sylphia.

He was truly looking forward to tomorrow's event.

The next day, the entire continent was filled with a festive atmosphere. Today was one of the most anticipated days, celebrated and awaited by many.

A day when two people in love would take their oath as husband and wife, pledging to support and love each other for the rest of their lives.

This was the wedding day of Aldrey and Irene.

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Today is filled with festivity as the long-awaited day for Aldrian's parents has finally arrived. The marriage, which will take place in the main church of the Heavenly Direction Church, will be witnessed by countless eyes across the continent.

The dwarves and Aldrian have already created a type of projection artifact that will display the wedding procession in real time throughout the continent. The view on the projection comes from one or more information crystals located within the church.

The projection will not only display the visual scene of the wedding, but it also includes sound functionality. With this, people can both see and hear everything happening during the ceremony.

The artifact was actually a modified version of the information crystals already known to the populace. This version was larger in size and capable of connecting to other information crystals that acted as recording devices.

The concept behind this artifact is the same as what Aldrian previously used when he gave his speech before the war. At that time, his figure appeared on screens in the sky across the continent.

However, that effect was a trick Aldrian achieved through his manipulation of elemental laws. It was not something that could be easily replicated by just anyone, so he thought about creating an artifact that could function with a similar effect.

Aldrian got this idea when he recalled one of his past lives, when he lived on the planet Earth. He remembered a device that could transmit live events from one place to another over long distances.

If this artifact succeeded, it would bring many benefits in the future. It could also be developed into something more. For example, it might evolve into a new method of communication. If this artifact were commercialized, it could generate significant wealth, as it had the potential to revolutionize long-distance communication.

Over the past month, the dwarves and Aldrian succeeded in creating prototypes and testing them across the continent, and they actually worked. Now, the artifacts are finally being put to use.

People were truly amazed by this new technology and couldn't help but praise both the dwarves and Aldrian for the brilliant idea. Now, everyone across the continent could witness the wedding procession without worry, they could watch it from their own lands.

Each city and town had several of these artifacts placed in public areas, allowing everyone to see the event.

At this moment, the projection showed a large crowd gathered on the spacious church grounds. Many of them were nobles from across the continent who had arrived early to await the start of the ceremony.

Even among the gathering, the leaders of major territories could be seen.

Emperor Ladwin and Emperor Durand were engaged in discussion in their specially designated area. Elsewhere, Emperor Raymond, Emperor Herman, and Patriarch Xin were speaking with the venerable Karma Seeker.

The leaders of the three great sects from the demon territory had also arrived and were gathered in their designated section, where Saintess Angelica was speaking with them. Angelica, who was close to Baek Jimin, spoke with her, which naturally led her to converse with the demon territory leaders as well.

This was truly a sight that many in the past could never have imagined. These leaders, who had never all gathered in one place due to various reasons, were now assembled for "just" a wedding.

However, everyone understood that this was no ordinary marriage. This was the union of the parents of their savior, their hero, their god. Their presence was a symbol of the deep reverence they held for Aldrian, especially with him soon to be named emperor of the newly established empire.

As they continued waiting for the ceremony to begin, everyone suddenly turned their heads toward the road in front of the church grounds. A luxurious carriage had arrived, guarded by cultivators of the Xin family. The riders, mounted on horned horses, moved in formation, creating a path forward as if to announce the arrival of someone important.

The moment everyone saw the carriage and the symbol displayed on it, their expressions turned to reverence. Some of them even prostrated themselves before it.

On the carriage was the symbol of the absolute ruler, the name Aldrian the Great had said when the leaders of the major territories asked about its meaning after seeing it in his grand palace.

The leaders and Aldrian had agreed that this symbol of the absolute ruler would become the emblem of the future empire.

It was said that the symbol originated from the gods of the heavens who once dwelled in the central region of the Everlasting Silent Forest. Furthermore, it could only be engraved by Aldrian the Great himself.

Many were truly intrigued by the rumors, and some even attempted to replicate the symbol themselves. However, true to what had been said, none of them could complete it. Their hearts and instincts screamed danger, as if they might die if they forced themselves to continue.

They did not dare to push further and gradually came to believe the rumors, accepting that the symbol was truly something special, meant only for Aldrian the Great himself.

As the carriage came to a stop in front of the red carpet, a guard from the church stepped forward and opened the door from the outside, finally revealing the occupant within. A foot stepped down from the carriage, and a man slowly came into view.

The moment everyone saw him, many were moved to tears—they were finally seeing their hero again. With his unmatched aura and bearing, he stood as the most exceptional human in the land. There was no one else like him.

His long red hair was tied into a ponytail, revealing his flawless and strikingly handsome face. He wore a noble outfit of golden white that elevated his charm to the heavens. In that moment, no one could remain unaffected by his appearance. The men could only sigh in amazement and envy, while many of the women blushed, many even falling for him on the spot.

At that moment, he became the dream of countless women.

But Aldrian did not immediately step forward from the carriage. Instead, he remained where he stood, waiting for someone else. He reached back and gently took the hand of a woman emerging from the carriage.

That was when the people saw Sylphia, the princess of the Ivory Empire, which would soon become the Ivory Kingdom.

The moment people saw her, their reactions were the opposite of those they had toward Aldrian. This time, it was the men who blushed with many of them falling for her at first sight, while the women could only sigh in amazement and envy.

After all, how could they not, when Sylphia had captured the heart of someone like Aldrian?

Many had already heard the news that Aldrian had a lover, and that woman was none other than the princess of the Ivory Empire.

To them, having a man like Aldrian meant a life guaranteed to be filled with success.

Sylphia wore an elegant green-and-white dress that enhanced her charm and beauty. Her long golden hair was tied in a ponytail, though she let her bangs flow softly down the sides of her beautiful face.

Her appearance had grown more mature since the change brought on by the dreams of that mysterious woman, and that transformation had already captivated many.

But at this moment, she looked like a goddess descended from the heavens, so pure and so radiant. There was no heart that did not tremble at the sight of her beauty and grace.

Those who saw Aldrian and Sylphia standing together felt, without a doubt, that they were a pair destined by the heavens. They truly complemented each other.

Once Sylphia stepped down from the carriage with Aldrian's help, she gently held onto his arm, and the two of them walked toward the church entrance. Both wore warm smiles as they entered, but inwardly, Aldrian sighed.

To him, all of this felt excessive. He had wanted to keep a low profile when he arrived. In fact, he had even considered using a disguise to hide his face. All of this was his attempt not to steal the spotlight from the true stars of the day, his parents. They were the king and queen today, as they rightfully should be.

He knew his worth, and he knew that his presence would inevitably draw attention away from them. He simply wanted to let his parents shine, at least for today, during their historic moment, one that was being watched by the entire continent.

However, his parents did not allow that. Instead, they insisted on presenting him in the most conspicuous way possible. The other leaders supported them, and even Emperor Douwin personally crafted a special carriage for him, with Aldrian himself adding the finishing touch by engraving the symbol of the absolute ruler.

His parents said they wanted to show him off as their greatest pride, to present him in the best possible light. It was also fitting, for Aldrian as the future emperor of the great empire.

Aldrian could only follow their wishes, though he still felt for stealing the spotlight that should have belonged to them.

Under the reverent gazes of the crowd, Aldrian finally arrived at his designated seat near the platform, where he sat alongside his group. Baek Jimin and Angelica were already there, waiting for him and Sylphia.

"I think you've stolen many women's hearts just now," Baek Jimin said to Aldrian with a smile as he arrived.

Aldrian sighed. "Well, what can I do? Father and Mother didn't let me stay low-profile, this was bound to happen," he replied in a resigned tone.

Afterward, Aldrian greeted the other leaders one by one and exchanged a few words with each of them.

Xin Haotian also took his seat shortly afterward, as he was part of Aldrian's group. In fact, he had arrived with Aldrian's carriage group and was one of the assigned protectors. Because of this, Aldrian enjoyed teasing him about his role as a bodyguard, something that irritate Xin Haotian.

After Aldrian's arrival, the atmosphere grew even more festive, filled with excitement and anticipation. Not long after, Pope Claudius appeared before the crowd from the back of the platform, and two carriages began approaching the church.

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The two carriages stopped in front of the red carpet, or at least near it. A moment later, the doors of both carriages opened, and the passengers stepped out.

The front carriage carried Grand Duke Flamecrest, his wife Anna Flamecrest, and Aldrey's younger brother, Luis Flamecrest. The back carriage carried Grand Duke Rivas and his wife, Elene Rivas.

The arrival of the groom's and bride's direct families signaled that the procession was about to begin.

The two families walked into the church, where they saw Aldrian and the others. They greeted everyone, but when Grand Duke Flamecrest and Grand Duke Rivas turned to greet Aldrian, there was still a trace of awkwardness.

Aldrian was their own grandson, yet both Grand Duke Flamecrest and Grand Duke Rivas still felt strange and awkward calling him that. They felt unworthy of being his grandfathers. Even so, they wanted to greet him, but before they could, their wives had already stepped forward.

"Young Aldrian, I've actually wanted to meet you directly for a long time. This is the first time I've had the chance," said Anna, the wife of Grand Duke Flamecrest, with a smile. She took Aldrian's right arm and gave it a gentle squeeze, as if trying to feel the firmness of his arm, like a proud grandmother.

"Me too, young Aldrian. I've heard about you from your mother ever since the rumors about Irene and Aldrey began spreading. She hasn't stopped talking about you as the most treasured person in her life," Elene said with a smile. She did the same as Anna, gently holding his left arm.

Aldrian, of course, returned their smiles as he answered them.

"I'm glad we finally met on this joyous occasion, Grandmother Anna, Grandmother Elene. I'm sorry I wasn't able to visit in the past because of various circumstances."

Hearing Aldrian call them grandmother, Anna and Elene's smiles grew even brighter.

"That's alright. After this, I really want to talk with you about many things, young Aldrian. Would you grant us old women the honor of a private conversation?" said Elene, her words supported by Anna's nod.

"Of course, Grandmother. I would be glad to visit you afterward and talk as much as you like. Also, you two don't look old at all. What I see are youthful, beautiful, and elegant women," Aldrian replied with a soft smile.

"Jeez, listen to how sweet your words are. I really wonder who you learned that from," Anna said with a slightly embarrassed tone.

Grand Duke Flamecrest and Grand Duke Rivas were not surprised, as their wives already seemed close to each other. Since news of Aldrey and Irene's relationship had spread across the continent, the two women had met from time to time, and from the looks of it, they had grown close because of it.

Although they were the wives of grand dukes from families that had not shared a good relationship in the past, they did not seem to take that hostility very seriously. In fact, their friendship had developed faster than any other connection between the two families.

Perhaps it was because they shared similar values and ways of thinking. That was what crossed the minds of both grand dukes.

"Grandfather Giovan, Grandfather Carlos," Aldrian said as he greeted the two grand dukes. "Thank you for your help all this time. Without your cooperation, we wouldn't have been able to make this marriage happen."

"Haha, you're too humble, young Aldrian. You've also done a lot to make this possible," Grand Duke Flamecrest said with a natural smile, trying to brush aside the lingering awkwardness. "As their parents, of course we did our best to support this marriage."

"Yes, it was you who made this celebration what it is, young Aldrian," Grand Duke Rivas added. "There's no way this marriage could have turned out like this without you."

"Anyway, we should take our seats. Aldrey and Irene are almost at the church, so we need to be quick," he added before the two grand dukes and their wives walked toward the altar platform, where special seats had been prepared for them on both sides of the podium where Pope Claudius now stood.

Luis separated from his parents and took a seat near Aldrian, where he was warmly greeted.

Grand Duke Flamecrest and his wife sat on the pope's right side, while Grand Duke Rivas and his wife sat on his left. From their seats, they looked toward the church entrance, where another commotion could already be heard.

Not long after, a luxurious carriage bearing the symbol of the dragon-phoenix came into view. It stopped at the edge of the red carpet, and those who saw it waited eagerly for its occupant to step out. They all knew this carriage carried the main star of today's event. It was the carriage used by the groom to fetch the bride from her home and bring her to the wedding venue.

When the door finally opened, people across the continent held their breath. The man who stepped down was the very one who had long captured the hearts of many women, even before Aldrian ever appeared.

At this moment, his handsomeness made many women fall in love at first sight all over again. Now, they truly found themselves confused, unable to decide between the father or the son.

It was clear that Aldrian's good looks came from his father, though each had his own unique charm. Aldrian's youth gave him a fresh, captivating presence, while Aldrey's mature features were like a perfectly ripened fruit, he was the refined, grown version of Aldrian.

Aldrey was dressed in a noble white wedding suit from the Flamecrest family, his red hair neatly combed back, giving him an elegant and masculine appearance.

His smile at that moment showed he was the happiest man in the world. He then turned and extended his hand, and a woman's hand reached out from the carriage to take his. The moment the bride stepped out, the eyes of men and women across the continent shimmered with amazement as they finally saw her.

At this moment, Irene looked truly like a goddess, her charm standing side by side with Sylphia's without falling short. She wore a beautiful white wedding dress that enhanced her elegance and grace. Her long black hair flowed freely beneath a sheer white veil, and her flawless face was visible for all to admire.

The smile she gave Aldrey made her feelings clear. She was already known across the continent as the "Ice Beauty," and had rarely shown any emotion, but this smile, warm and full of love, appeared only in front of him.

As Irene stepped down from the carriage, she gently held Aldrey's arm. They smiled at each other, then began walking toward the entrance of the church. Once again, people across the continent could not help but think that this couple truly looked like a match made in heaven.

Aldrian and the others watched with smiles and moved expressions. For Grand Duke Rivas and his wife, the emotions were harder to contain. The grand duke held back tears, while his wife's eyes were already red. Their daughter, whom they had raised with love and care for so many years was finally getting married, and they could see that she was truly happy.

Aldrian also looked at his parents with a gentle smile. They had finally reached the moment where they could stand together, united as husband and wife in front of many people. He knew how much hardship they had endured to arrive at this point.

While his gaze remained on them, something unusual drew his attention. He sensed a subtle movement of energy around his mother. Aldrian's eyes shifted toward her abdomen, where he could feel the flow of heaven and earth energy being quietly drawn in.

With his sharp sense, he immediately recognized that it was not the location of a dantian, but rather, the place of a womb.

He slightly widened his eyes, then smiled warmly as he finally understood what was happening.

"Mother has already conceived my little sibling. It looks like Father and Mother truly succeeded," he thought.

Aldrey and Irene had returned to their own grand duchy more than two weeks earlier to prepare for the wedding, after staying in Aldrian's palace. Before they left, Aldrian had sensed nothing unusual. That was why he was so astonished to sense it now, his mother was already carrying his little sibling.

Since the pregnancy was still in its early stages, he could not tell the gender. But the warmth and quiet excitement in his heart continued to grow. He didn't care whether it

was a brother or sister. Whatever the gender, he would cherish them, and take care of them.

As Aldrey and Irene approached the altar, they finally spotted Aldrian seated with his group. Their smiles grew even brighter, and they couldn't help but feel moved. They had finally reached the moment where they could stand together, united, without worrying about others' opinions or judgment. After everything they had been through, they had arrived at the dream they had always hoped for.

They had never imagined their wedding would be held on such a grand scale, with people across the continent watching. And they both knew that all of this had only been possible because of their son, their pride, Aldrian. His presence was truly a blessing, and to them, he was their greatest gift.

Irene's eyes grew red, but she held back her tears as she and Aldrey continued walking toward the altar, where Pope Claudius and their parents were already waiting. When they reached the altar, they stopped just before the podium.

They exchanged one more glance, smiling at each other, before Aldrey turned to look at Pope Claudius, who welcomed them with a gentle smile of his own.

Pope Claudius gave a small nod, then looked out at the gathered audience.

"For all beings under the heavens who are watching this sacred ceremony at this very moment..."

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"For all beings under the heavens who are watching this sacred ceremony at this very moment. In a moment, we will be witnessing a historic moment—a historic moment for two human beings who will bind themselves in a sacred bond before the heavens, a bond that ties them together forever," Pope Claudius began his speech.

"A bond strengthened by their love for each other. With that love, this bond is something that can carry them through every challenge, even the toughest ones in the future, just as it already has in their past."

"They have successfully maintained their love all this time despite the tough challenges and circumstances. Even when we thought that what they did was impossible, they still carried on until this point. From them, we can learn an important lesson, that the feeling of love is not just a mere emotion. It is a force that can help any of us overcome the tests and obstacles of life." Pope Claudius then slightly paused as he swept his gaze across the mass.

"Now, at this moment, we will witness the union of these two human beings, a union that will make them officially one family, not only under mundane laws, but also before the heavens. They will become a pair of husband and wife."

"Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas," Pope Claudius said as he looked at Aldrey and Irene with a smile.

"Are you ready to build your new relationship status, Aldrey Flamecrest?" he asked as he looked at Aldrey.

"I've been more than ready for a long time, Your Holiness," Aldrey answered with a joking tone, which made those who heard it chuckle softly.

The Pope smiled at this and turned to look at Irene.

"Are you ready to build your new relationship status, Irene Rivas?" he asked the same question, which Irene answered with a nod.

"I'm ready, Your Holiness," she said.

Pope Claudius nodded, but then his expression turned slightly solemn.

"With the heavens as the witness, the heavens that brought the fate of you two together, I will now begin the vow-taking procession," he said. Suddenly, a long red scarf appeared in Pope Claudius's hand. He controlled the scarf with his energy, guiding it to drape over Aldrey and Irene's shoulders, connecting them through the red scarf.

This was a traditional custom symbolizing that the two beings were fated by the red thread of love. There is a saying that if two people are married while connected by the red scarf and truly love each other, their feelings will never fade. They will continue to love one another as if they are forever in the first bloom of their love.

"Face the heavens. Bow once to the heavens that have already given you their blessing, allowing you to come this far," Pope Claudius said. Aldrey and Irene obeyed, lifting their gaze upward for a moment before bowing deeply. After two seconds, they straightened their posture.

"Bow once to your parents, the ones who gave you life and have cared for you since you were children," Pope Claudius said. Aldrey and Irene turned to face their parents and bowed to them.

Watching this scene, the two grand dukes and their wives were truly moved and held back their tears.

After two seconds, Aldrey and Irene straightened once more.

"Now, face and bow toward each other, to the one who has stood beside you to reach this point. To the one who has overcome many tribulations with you, so that each of you can now stand here as a couple, supporting and loving each other," Pope Claudius said again.

Aldrey and Irene then turned to face one another. Their smiles could not be hidden, and Irene's eyes had already reddened, she was truly happy in this moment. Aldrey, too, was deeply moved and wanted to cry, but he held it in. At that moment, both of them were drawn back to their past, to the time when they first realized their feelings for each other.

They had each been fighting for their own family, yet they fell in love because of one moment in the past, a moment that shaped the future they now stood in. When they decided to confirm their relationship, they had to hide it from their families.

When they missed each other, they would secretly use their private methods to communicate. Sometimes they relied on a third party to deliver messages, and at other times, they used the traditional method, a handwritten note tied to a trained bird.

Those were the moments filled with struggle, the trials that shaped their bond. Then came the day they were trapped inside the secret realm, where they finally had Aldrian. The son they were proud of, the one who made all of this possible.

"To Aldrey Flamecrest, you may now say your vow to Irene Rivas," Pope Claudius said.

Aldrey's expression softened as he looked at Irene. In his eyes, at that moment, there was no one else, only her.

"I Aldrey Flamecrest take you, Irene Rivas, to be my lawfully wedded wife,

to have and to hold, from this day forward,

for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,

in sickness and in health,

to love and to cherish,

until death do us part.

This is my solemn vow.

If I break this vow, may the heavens punish me with their worst tribulation," he said seriously, causing those present to gasp.

That last line, invoking the heavens, was actually unnecessary, it would truly bring about his end if Aldrey were ever to break his vow. Pope Claudius looked at him, astonished. With such a vow, it was clear just how deeply serious and committed Aldrey was to Irene.

Before the Pope could say anything, he heard Irene's voice.

"I Irene Rivas take you, Aldrey Flamcrest, to be my lawfully wedded husband,
to have and to hold, from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
until death do us part.

This is my solemn vow.

If I break this vow, may the heavens punish me with their worst tribulation," she said as her tears finally began to flow.

This was the moment she had waited for so long, these were the words she had dreamed of saying in front of so many people, to show how deeply she loved Aldrey and how serious she was about their bond. At last, she could say them confidently and aloud.

Many in the crowd could not hold back their own tears, including both Aldrey and Irene's parents, and Eleine. For Eleine, who knew the hardships Irene had endured for the relationship she had committed to, this moment felt like all of that struggle had finally been repaid.

She then stood up, already holding a pair of beautiful rings on a golden plate, and approached Aldrey and Irene. Aldrey, knowing what to do, looked at the rings with a smile, took one, and stepped toward Irene.

Irene offered her hand, and Aldrey gently took it, slowly slipping the ring onto her ring finger. Once he finished, Irene picked up the remaining ring and did the same for Aldrey. When they were done, they looked into each other's eyes.

"From this moment on, Aldrey Flamecrest and Irene Rivas are officially husband and wife. May you uphold your vows until the end of your days," Pope Claudius said with a smile, followed by the sound of applause.

Everyone in the church stood and clapped their hands. But not only the attendees in the church and those nearby, in that very moment, across the continent, the sound of clapping could be heard.

Under countless clapping hands and watching eyes, Irene and Aldrey finally kissed. It was a soft kiss that lasted for five seconds.

Aldrian watched it all with a smile, and he couldn't help glancing beside him, where Sylphia also looked touched, her eyes slightly red.

He leaned toward her right ear and whispered,

"We'll be like that in the future."

As he said it, he gently took her soft hand. Hearing his words and feeling his touch, Sylphia's touched expression froze, shifting into shyness as her cheeks turned red. She glanced at Aldrian, but he was already looking back at his parents.

She looked at his side profile for a moment, then suddenly smiled. Without saying a word, she gently tightened her grip around his hand, and the two of them held hands together.

After that, Aldrey and Irene received many words of congratulations from the attendees.

Aldrian and Sylphia were the first to congratulate them. Aldrey and Irene didn't hesitate to hug Aldrian, showing the complete harmony of their little family. Sylphia stood by and smiled warmly, giving them space.

Once they separated, the leaders of the major territories were the next to have the opportunity to offer their congratulations. All of them were truly eager, which left Aldrey and Irene feeling a little overwhelmed.

After receiving well wishes from close family and acquaintances, Pope Claudius turned to address the crowd.

"Alright, ladies and gentlemen. We know the main event, the vow-taking procession, has just concluded, but there are still other festivities to enjoy. The celebration will continue, and don't forget, we have an event when our most honored guest will deliver his lecture to us all!" he said with a smile.

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The events that followed mostly consisted of entertainment, such as the grand feast held on the church grounds. The bride and groom also began walking around to greet the other attendees.

Occasions like this were also a perfect opportunity for everyone to build connections with many people.

With so many nobles and other important figures present, there was no better time or place than this moment. Especially for Aldrian, whom many wanted to greet or at least get close to. With Sylphia by his side, he also greeted and spoke with several people who had already become their acquaintances.

He could later be seen speaking with Prince Hector, Prince Claude, and Prince Ferdinand. They appeared to be enjoying their discussion, smiling from time to time. For many women, this was truly a blessed sight, four handsome men of high status gathered together. Many wished to approach them, but they did not dare.

As time passed and the sun rose high in the sky, the atmosphere remained lively, with even more people continuing to arrive from outside the Heavenly City. They did not want to miss the chance to attend the wedding ceremony, especially with Aldrian personally present.

Seeing that it was already midday, Pope Claudius's voice resounded once again.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we've arrived at the event that I know many of you have been waiting for, well, I've been looking forward to it myself," he said in a joking tone, drawing light laughter from the crowd.

"Well then, the time has come for our most esteemed guest and future leader to give a lecture on cultivation. I hope we can all make the most of this opportunity, so that we do not waste the valuable chance that has been generously given to us."

"Ladies and gentlemen, let us welcome His Majesty Aldrian Aster." As Pope Claudius finished the announcement, Aldrian walked onto the platform where the vow-taking procession had taken place.

There was almost complete silence as Aldrian stepped onto the platform. No one wanted to miss a single word, everyone was eager to hear everything he had to say with perfect clarity. At the same time, screens across the continent displayed his figure.

Aldrian stopped at the center of the platform and swept his gaze calmly across the crowd. After a few moments of quiet, he parted his lips.

"Before I begin the lecture, I suggest all of you take your meditation positions. This session may lead you into a state of comprehension."

Upon hearing those words, people everywhere began sitting in meditative positions. No one thought Aldrian's statement was arrogant, instead, they took his words seriously. If he said that his lecture might lead to a state of comprehension, then they needed to be prepared.

Many did not care where they sat, as long as they were comfortable. Aldrey and Irene had their own meditation mats, placed slightly apart from the others.

"Alright, you may begin cultivating. You can use your own cultivation techniques."

After that, everyone closed their eyes and focused, guiding their energy according to their respective cultivation technique.

Seeing that everyone was ready, Aldrian gave a small nod.

"Cultivation is essentially walking against the flow of the nature law and even against the heavens. Yet, it is also the path to reaching harmony within ourselves..." As Aldrian began his lecture, his voice spread through his domain. It was not the sound transmitted by the screens across the continent, instead, his domain carried his voice directly.

Through this method, Aldrian's words could be heard with perfect clarity by every being, no matter where they were. It felt as though he was speaking right beside their ears.

As time passed, his voice began to resonate with nature, giving rise to subtle phenomena. The wind ceased to blow, and the flow of natural energy became smoother, allowing those in meditation to absorb the energy of heaven and earth with greater ease.

Because so many people were cultivating at the same time, gathered in large numbers across various places throughout the continent, the flow of energy could even be seen forming colorful vortexes.

However, few witnessed this phenomenon, as most were fully immersed in their own cultivation. Many had already entered a state of enlightenment, resonating with Aldrian's words. What Aldrian shared was essentially his own comprehension of Dao and cultivation, but that alone was enough for others to benefit deeply.

As the strongest cultivator on the continent, Aldrian possessed a far deeper comprehension of cultivation, and his lecture could resonate with all beings, regardless of race or cultivation path.

As time passed, someone among the listeners finally broke through. After that, more cultivators began to break through one after another. Scenes of breakthroughs occurring in succession could be seen across the continent.

Many of them were below the King Stage, as they were the ones who could advance more easily.

However, there were also a few peak King Stage cultivators who broke through unconsciously, triggering their heavenly tribulations. All across the continent, clouds of tribulation suddenly formed in the skies, marking their breakthrough to the emperor stage.

This caused quite a disturbance to their surroundings, as the pressure from the tribulations inevitably disrupted the nearby cultivators. Realizing this, the tribulation takers opened their eyes and, looked up at the forming tribulation clouds. With clear awareness, they quickly moved to secluded areas to undergo their tribulations.

The tribulation clouds would follow them wherever they went, ensuring others would not be affected.

Although Aldrian was still delivering his lecture, his senses extended across the continent. He was aware of everything happening, including the tribulation clouds that had begun to form in various places, including near his own location. There were several of them.

The sight of the sky darkening with many tribulation clouds was undeniably terrifying, but not as terrifying as the memory of Aldrian's battle with Tarius.

Those near Aldrian, disturbed by the pressure of the tribulations, wanted to open their eyes and look at the sky. However, before they could do so, the overwhelming pressure suddenly vanished.

Many were stunned by the abrupt disappearance, though they recognized it as a sign that the tribulation takers had moved elsewhere. Even so, they were surprised by how quickly it happened, it felt as if the cultivators and their tribulation clouds had simply vanished.

Unbeknownst to them, those who were about to undergo tribulation had been teleported to safe locations by Aldrian. Even while delivering his lecture, he was able to teleport the cultivators, along with their tribulation clouds, to secluded places where they could face the tribulation without affecting others.

The lecture continued for two hours before Aldrian finally stopped. During that time, many experienced breakthroughs. It was the first time in history that such an event had occurred across the continent.

Because of this, the flow of heaven and earth energy became slightly chaotic, as so many cultivators broke through almost simultaneously. The presence of multiple heavenly tribulations in various locations, some even occurring close to one another, added to the turbulence in the energy.

When everyone finally opened their eyes, nearly all of them across the continent immediately prostrated themselves toward Aldrian.

"Thank you for the lecture, Your Majesty!"

The voices echoing from across the continent made Aldrian nod in satisfaction. He was glad he could help raise the cultivation of so many so quickly. With this one lecture, he had pushed the continent's average cultivation a step higher.

"I hope you will continue cultivating earnestly," Aldrian said, sweeping his gaze over the crowd. "We are entering a new era, one where our continent will open to the outside world. I want all of you to stand tall, equal to those beyond our continent."

He then looked at Pope Claudius and nodded with a slight smile.

"I'm done here. Your Holiness may proceed with the rest of the event," he said, before stepping down from the platform.

Pope Claudius then took over, and the wedding event continued. The celebration lasted until the sun was nearly set, when it finally came to an end. At last, it was time for the groom and bride to enter the bridal chamber, which had been prepared in Aldrian's grand palace.

Initially, they had planned to renovate their old home in the secret realm, where Aldrey, Irene, and Aldrian had once lived together and stay there.

However, before Aldrey and Irene returned to their grand duchy, Aldrian suggested they stay in the palace instead. It was not only the best place for both living and cultivation, but also the safest place on the continent. More than that, he wanted them to remain close and create new memories there, just as they had once done in the secret realm.

Hearing their son's request, Aldrey and Irene agreed after some thought, knowing that what Aldrian said was true. Moreover, they were aware that a new life was growing in Irene's womb. Living in the palace, with its rich energy and safe environment would also benefit the unborn child, helping it grow stronger and healthier.

After the event ended, people gradually began leaving the church grounds, just as Aldrian and his group did. He brought them back to the palace using teleportation, after saying goodbye to those who were not coming with them.

And with that, the marriage ceremony of his parents came to a close.

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Two days later,

Aldrian and Sylphia were in the Buddhist sect territory, specifically in Dongtian City. They wore inconspicuous black robes that concealed their features as they teleported to the city, appearing directly in front of a house.

When they arrived, an elf wrapped in a brown robe was drying clothes, hanging them on a string line in front of the house. The moment they appeared, the elf seemed to sense their presence and instantly turned her head toward them.

When she saw their faces, her eyes widened and she attempted to prostrate before them.

"Your Majes—"

"At ease, Miss Vera. You don't have to do that," Aldrian's voice stopped Vera from continuing, and he used his energy control to prevent her from lowering her body any further. Realizing she couldn't move, Vera simply obeyed Aldrian's command.

Vera sighed because she knew why Aldrian and Sylphia were here. More than three weeks ago, they had visited her, and at that time, they discussed what she would do in the future, whether she wanted to continue hiding from her family or not.

They all understood that as time passed and Evin grew more mature, she would inevitably begin to question her mother's origins and past.

At that time, no one could predict what Evin would do. She might reject any connection to her elven roots, or she might try to contact her maternal family. If she did try to establish contact, trouble could follow. The Valrein family might easily piece things together and realize that Evin was their mixed-blood descendant.

That uncertainty about the future had weighed heavily on Vera's mind ever since Aldrian asked her that question.

For Vera, ideally, she would prefer to keep Evin's existence hidden from her family. But she knew that, given the uncertainty of the future, a reunion might be inevitable. She also couldn't be sure whether the Valerin family would eventually find them. Although it had been a long time, there were still occasional rumors that the Valerin family continued searching for her.

Now that the time of the prophecy had already passed, she feared the Valerin family would shift their focus more toward finding her.

Because of that, she had made her decision after the discussion with Aldrian and Sylphia, a decision to return to her family. It was the best choice for her now. No longer would she have to live in hiding, carrying the weight in her heart and mind.

There would be no hidden danger or unexpected trouble if she came back and made everything clear on her own, compared to the risk if the Valerin family found her or Evin first.

Moreover, with Aldrian and Sylphia supporting her, Evin would be safe.

"Mister—no, Your Majesty."

Suddenly, Evin's voice rang out.

She had heard her mother speaking with someone from inside the house. Curious, she came to see, and when she realized it was Aldrian and Sylphia, her spirits lifted. Her mother had already told her about Aldrian's true identity, so she corrected the way she addressed him. Even so, in her heart, she still saw Aldrian as her usual 'generous mister.'

Her voice instantly drew Aldrian and Sylphia's attention as they turned their heads toward Evin. They smiled, and Aldrian walked over to her.

"Evin, you don't have to call me that. Just call me big brother, I already consider you my little sister," he said softly, gently stroking her head once he stood in front of her.

Hearing that, Evin's eyes brightened.

"Really?" she asked.

Aldrian nodded in response.

"Of course. You don't need to feel bad about calling me that, just like you call her big sister," he added, gesturing toward Sylphia.

Evin looked at Sylphia with a smile still on her face. She had already called Sylphia 'big sister' in the past, back when Aldrian had gone to the Everlasting Silent Forest.

"Then... big brother," she said, still slightly hesitant but smiling. She had always wanted to know what it felt like to have an older sibling, and now that she could call someone that, she was truly happy.

"Evin, I want to take you and your mother to a nice place. Would you like to come with big brother?" Aldrian asked, making Evin tilt her head curiously. But then she simply nodded with a smile.

"I'll follow big brother. If you say it's a nice place, then I'm sure it will be," she replied, which made Aldrian nod before turning to Vera.

"Miss Vera, are you ready? Do you need to change or bring anything with you?"

"No, no, my lord. I only have this attire, and there's nothing of value for me to take from this place. I'm already ready to go," Vera answered.

"Alright then. I'll teleport all of us to my palace. 'They' will come there later, so you can finally meet them," Aldrian said.

The moment he finished speaking, their surroundings shifted instantly, transporting them to a completely different place. Vera and Evin stood stunned as they looked around, overwhelmed by the sudden change.

Evin's eyes sparkled. What she saw left her breathless with awe.

A magnificent palace stood before them, surrounded by a vast, lush garden filled with countless varieties of flowers. For someone so young, it was the most beautiful sight she had ever seen. The view completely captivated her heart.

Vera felt the same. She could immediately sense the richness of the heaven and earth energy in this place. Now she understood, the meeting would take place in Aldrian's palace.

The very palace that could only be seen from a distance. The place known as the true center of the continent.

She had never been told that the meeting would take place here, and this visit made her feel truly honored. From what she had heard, only a few people had ever been allowed to step into this place.

To her, it truly felt like the depiction of a real heaven.

"Welcome to my home. While we wait for our other guests to arrive, Miss Vera and Evin, please feel free to enjoy this place," Aldrian said with a smile.

"Wah, big brother, this is your home?! It's so big and beautiful," Evin said in an amazed tone, which made Aldrian smile.

"Do you like it?" he asked.

Evin nodded eagerly.

"Mhm, I really like it."

Aldrian gently stroked her head, then looked at Sylphia and nodded. Sylphia, understanding what Aldrian meant, turned to Vera and Evin.

"Let's go. I'll show you around until it's time for our guests to arrive," she said.

With that, Sylphia guided them to another part of the palace, explaining the place as they walked. To Vera and Evin, it truly felt like a joyful outing.

Seeing that Sylphia had taken them around, Aldrian turned and walked toward the guest room. He would wait there, as he could already sense that their guests had arrived at the Xin family's secret realm.

An hour later, the teleportation formation near the palace glowed briefly before several figures appeared on it—five elves and one member of the Xin family.

The moment they arrived, the eyes of the five elves trembled with emotion. They had finally set foot in the palace that was revered throughout the continent because of the person who lived within.

Even from a distance, the palace radiated a majestic aura that revealed the greatness of its structure. Now that they stood so close, the palace's majesty was even more palpable, it made their very souls tremble. They couldn't help but feel deeply moved and honored to be here, especially since this visit came by personal invitation from Aldrian himself.

Before they could admire the palace further, a voice rang out from the Xin family member.

"Let's go. I will take Your Excellencies to His Majesty," said the elder of the Xin family, a peak Emperor-stage cultivator.

He began walking ahead, and the elves followed behind him in silence.

As they walked, they continued to take in their surroundings, admiring both the majestic scenery and the richness of the energy in the air. They had never experienced such dense spiritual energy, not even near the World Tree in the Ivory Empire. The atmosphere felt so pure and refreshing that they didn't want to leave.

After about thirty minutes of walking, they finally arrived before grand double doors. The elder of the Xin family stepped forward and knocked twice.

Knock, knock!

"Your Majesty, I have brought Duke Valerin and his entourage," the elder announced.

After a brief pause, the elder gave a small nod to himself and opened the doors.

The moment the double doors open, the group was greeted by a luxurious guest room, the same one where Aldrian had once received the leaders of the major territories.

Aldrian sat on the master seat, appearing relaxed as he enjoyed his tea. He looked up at the incoming guests and offered a faint smile. Among the five elves were four males and one female. From Aldrian's observation, two of the male elves were guards. The remaining three appeared to be Duke Valerin, his wife, and most likely their son.

"Come in, Your Excellency. I've been waiting for you," Aldrian said.

"Ah—yes, Your Majesty. But please, you don't have to address me that way. I feel unworthy of such respect. Just use my title and name, Your Majesty. Also... thank you for the invitation. It is truly an honor to be here," Duke Valerin replied, his voice carrying a slight nervousness.

He and the other elves also bowed respectfully to Aldrian.

"Alright then. First, let's take a seat. I know you must be wondering why I invited you here, so let's have a chat."

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Hearing that Aldrian wanted to discuss something with them, the three elves looked at him in wonder. They had never had any direct connection or communication with Aldrian. Even when he stayed in the Ivory Empire in the past, Duke Valerin, who belonged to the conservative faction, never spoke to him and only observed him in silence.

That was why, when Aldrian came to Duke Valerin with Sylphia during the wedding ceremony, they were truly curious. The only thing that made them slightly nervous was the lingering fear that this might somehow involve a fault of theirs for some unknown reason. It was only natural for them to think that way, as they had never interacted with Aldrian, yet he suddenly approached Duke Valerin.

At the ceremony, Aldrian simply told them to meet him at his palace today, and said it would be better if Duke Valerin brought his entire direct family. The duke, of course, complied, as it was a direct request from Aldrian himself.

And so, here they were, all seated inside Aldrian's palace.

"My apologies, Your Majesty, but I suppose what you want to talk about isn't something I made a mistake on, right? I'm afraid I might have somehow done something wrong without realizing it and offended Your Majesty," Duke Valerin said with a worried expression.

"Oh no, Duke Valerin. You haven't done anything wrong. I simply invited you here for another matter, and it's not something that has wronged me, so you don't need to worry," Aldrian replied, which made the three elves sigh in relief.

"Then?"

"Duke Valerin, as far as I know, you have one more child, named Vera Valerin. Correct?" Aldrian asked, which left the three elves stunned.

At this moment, Aldrian's expression remained calm, but he was reading the thoughts and emotions of the elves. He wanted to understand what went through their minds the moment the name of a child, who had run away from home years ago was brought up.

Then he felt it. These elves were angry, but that anger was scattered in many directions. They were angry at Vera, angry at each other, and even angry at themselves. And after the anger came sadness, the kind that felt like they had truly lost someone dear to them. Aldrian could sense that, despite everything, they still held deep affection for Vera as part of their family.

"Yes, Your Majesty, that is correct. I have another child named Vera, our youngest. However, she is no longer with us," Duke Valerin said after a moment of silence. But then his eyes narrowed slightly in suspicion. Why would Aldrian suddenly ask about Vera out of nowhere?

He wanted to ask, but Aldrian spoke first.

"No longer with you? Ah, my apologies. I heard she suddenly disappeared, so you must mean she is no longer with you because of that?"

Duke Valerin sighed.

"No. She is already dead," he said, which made Aldrian raise his eyebrows. He was inwardly amused by the duke's answer. Dead? How could he come to that conclusion?

"Why do you think she is dead?" Aldrian asked.

Duke Valerin released a sigh before opening his lips.

"Not long after the war ended, I continued searching for her. After a long time, we finally received a clue from an ex member of the Vicanton family. We went to that person, and they told us that Vera had been living in a town within the Atria Empire all this time."

"Vicanton family? Why would it be connected to the Vicanton family?" Aldrian asked, feigning ignorance.

Duke Valerin hesitated slightly before answering through gritted teeth.

"She ran away from home because she eloped with their young master."

Hearing this, Aldrian raised his eyebrows as if surprised. He also observed the expressions and emotions of the duke's wife and son, anger mixed with grief. They were clearly mourning, but alongside that grief was deep regret, both for what had happened to Vera and for their own part in it.

"Is that so? I never imagined someone from Duke Valerin's family would elope with someone, and with a human, no less. I thought your family was rather conservative," Aldrian said.

"It's true that in the past we strongly embraced that kind of conservatism," Duke Valerin replied. "After Vera disappeared, I began to suspect that her escape was made possible with the help of the young master of the Vicanton family. I had heard they spent some time together when he visited the Ivory Empire."

"However, I could do nothing to them, because I had no proof connecting Vera's disappearance to that young master. Still, I had already guessed that Vera might have had a special relationship with the Vicanton family's young master, which truly infuriated me," Duke Valerin said, clenching his fists as he took a deep breath.

"However, as time passed, I came to understand why Vera ran away from home. I realized she felt trapped within her own family. She felt constrained by our conservatism and chose to pursue her own happiness."

"In the end, she ran away because she couldn't chase her happiness under the weight of our family's beliefs."

"After reflecting for a long time, I came to regret that I never understood how my daughter truly felt. I regret that she felt caged within her own family because of our beliefs. I regret everything. I truly regret it."

As Duke Valerin continued speaking, his wife and son showed the same sorrow in their expressions.

They seemed to feel the same way, which genuinely impressed Aldrian. This family was a rare case, one where every member shared the same sense of remorse. Usually, in a situation like this, such feelings might appear in only one or two people, but all three of them felt it deeply.

"It looks like their love for Vera is stronger than their belief in conservatism," Aldrian thought.

"You are truly unique, Duke Valerin, to feel remorse over your daughter eloping with a human, especially considering your conservative background. In most cases, people in

your position would blame the Vicanton family or someone else, but not feel regret," he said.

"Well, it's true that we come from a conservative family, but we still have hearts and minds to think. We're not so extreme as to blindly blame others because of it. Though, to be honest, at first I did blame the Vicanton family. But as time passed, I realized I also shared the responsibility. In the end, my daughter ran away because she felt trapped by the beliefs I had instilled in her since childhood," Duke Valerin said.

"However, even though I feel regret and remorse, all of that is meaningless now. I later found out that the town where she lived with the young master of the Vicanton family was massacred by a Pride devil. I know it's already too late. The young master was killed along with thousands of townspeople, and we assume that Vera was among the victims," he added, his eyes brimming with sadness.

Aldrian looked at Duke Valerin for a moment, then turned his gaze toward the duke's wife.

"Madam Valerin, do you also share the same thoughts as your husband?" he asked.

Hearing the question, Madam Valerin, whose eyes were already red answered softly.

"Of course, Your Majesty. Even to this day, there hasn't been a single day when I don't feel regret and remorse for not understanding my own daughter until it was too late. That was the moment I began to reflect and contemplate deeply, about myself and about this family."

Aldrian nodded, then turned his gaze to Vera's older brother.

"And how about you, young master?" he asked.

The response came immediately.

"I always pampered and supported my little sister, Your Majesty. Although I also shared the same conservative views as many elves, I still loved my sister the most. If she truly wanted to pursue her own happiness, I would have gladly helped her, even if it meant going against our family's beliefs," the young master, named Vilan, answered with unwavering conviction.

Hearing his response, even Duke Valerin and his wife were slightly taken aback. They had always known their son truly cared for his sister and held deep affection for her, but they had never heard him speak so firmly about Vera like this. These were the strongest words he had ever spoken about her since her disappearance.

But then, something clicked in Duke Valerin's mind. The emotional talk about Vera had made him forget Aldrian's original intent. Why had Aldrian brought up Vera in the first place? Why now?

"My apologies, Your Majesty, but why did you ask about her?" he asked.

Aldrian suddenly smiled, a gesture that only deepened Duke Valerin's confusion.

"What if I told you that Vera is still alive and well?" Aldrian said, causing the three elves to freeze in shock.

Duke Valerin couldn't help but stand up at once.

"What are you talking about, Your Majesty? Is she really still alive? But her town—" His voice trembled with disbelief, but the rest of his words caught in his throat as something suddenly began to unfold before his eyes. His wife and son also froze, shocked by what they were seeing.

Not far behind Aldrian's seat, two figures slowly began to appear, emerging as if a veil covering them had been lifted, revealing them at last. One was a beautiful elf, tears already streaming down her face, and beside her was a child. She held the child's hand as the two of them stood side by side.

The beautiful elf looked at Duke Valerin with trembling eyes.

"Father."

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Chapter 643 - 643: Reunite

[1,633 words]

"Father." Vera's trembling voice echoed, but Duke Valerin's body remained frozen, his eyes still quivering as he looked in Vera's direction. Then his gaze shifted to the child beside her, a human girl, watching him with curious eyes.

Evin looked at him with an expression that seemed to ask, so this is my grandpa?

Duke Valerin immediately noticed the resemblance between the child and Vera. He connected the dots in his mind on his own. He wasn't a fool, and he knew this was likely her child. After all, he had received news not long ago that Vera already had a daughter.

The others came to the same conclusion, and it was Madam Valerin's voice that broke the silence first.

"Vera," she said, her voice trembling as she walked toward her.

Vera, seeing her mother approaching with tears already falling from her eyes, softly spoke.

"Mother."

Once her mother reached her, she pulled her into a tight embrace. The two of them held each other under the silent gaze of Duke Valerin, who kept watching Vera and the child beside her.

Unconsciously, he took a step forward toward Vera and her daughter.

While her mother and grandmother remained in their embrace, Evin watched everything with wide, innocent eyes. She wanted to comfort the ones who were crying but didn't know how. Her gaze instead was drawn to the man walking toward her, her grandfather.

Moments later, Duke Valerin stopped right in front of Evin. His tall figure made her tilt her head up to meet his eyes, and in that instant, he understood what he had to do. He dropped to one knee so that his height would match hers.

By now, Vera and Madam Valerin had released each other from their embrace. Vera turned to watch her father, who was looking intently at Evin. After a few moments of silence, she spoke to him.

"Father, this is Evin, my child, your granddaughter."

Duke Valerin trembled. He had already guessed it, but hearing the confirmation directly from Vera struck him differently.

"Evin... Evin..." he murmured, repeating her name softly.

"Are you my grandpa?" Evin suddenly asked, catching him off guard.

It was the first time anyone had called him grandpa, and the word struck something deep within him. His heart trembled. His appearance, thanks to the elves' slow aging and long lifespan, was still that of a man in his prime. By appearance alone, the title didn't suit him, yet hearing it from the child's lips made it impossible to deny.

That single word from Evin stirred something different within him, something warm and full of affection. The beliefs he had held for so long about humans and the old ways of elven conservatism faded in that moment.

Truthfully, a part of him still recoiled when he first saw the child. The deep rooted ideals he had grown up with didn't simply vanish even if he had come to accept that those very beliefs were what drove Vera to leave. Letting go of something so ingrained was not as simple as turning over a hand.

And yet, hearing the word grandpa from Evin was enough. It quieted those lingering thoughts and swept away the bitterness he held about Vera choosing a human.

At last, Duke Valerin smiled and gave a small nod.

"Yes, I'm Grandpa..." he said warmly, his voice soft, making Evin's eyes light up with a smile.

"Grandpa," she repeated.

Duke Valerin couldn't help but reach out and gently stroke her head.

Vera had already been crying, and as she watched her father gently stroke Evin's head, her tears fell even more heavily. She raised one hand to cover her lips, trying to muffle the sobs rising in her throat. Her mother, standing beside her, smiled through her own tears as she looked at Evin.

"Evin, call me Grandma," she said. Though she still looked young and graceful, in that moment, all she wanted was to be called Grandma by her granddaughter.

Hearing the request, Evin turned to her with a bright smile.

"Grandma," she said, her voice light.

Madam Valerin gave a small nod.

Vera felt truly happy to see her parents accept Evin so easily. But then she turned to the side, where her older brother was already standing, watching the scene unfold. Sensing her gaze, he looked at her and let out a soft sigh before smiling.

"Vera," he said, then pulled his little sister into a tight hug. Vera returned it, feeling just how much he had missed her.

Aldrian watched the reunion with a quiet smile. From the beginning, Vera had already been in the room with Evin and listen everything discussed between him and the Valerin family. He wanted her to hear their thoughts first, before she continued to hold firmly to her decision about returning home.

He had simply used his light laws to bend the light and hide both Vera and Evin from view.

If the Valerin family had remained firm in their beliefs and reacted harshly toward Vera and Evin, then it would have been better for Vera not to return. She could have stayed in the palace and worked under Sylphia if she wished to remain hidden from her family.

Fortunately, they were still open-minded and not completely bound by old ideals. This was the best outcome for everyone.

After a few moments of reunion, the Valerin family returned to their seats, with Madam Valerin gently holding Evin's hand and guiding her to sit beside her.

"My apologies, Your Majesty, but I am still overwhelmed," Duke Valerin said. "How is it that she met you and survived? When I heard that an entire town was slaughtered by the Pride devil, and no survivors were found during our investigation, we believed Vera had perished along with the rest."

"Well, you could say it was fate that brought us together," Aldrian replied with a faint smile. He then began to explain how he had met Evin and Vera in the Buddhist sect's territory. Vera also shared her story—how she managed to escape from the devastated town and eventually reach the Buddhist sect.

As the three elves listened to Aldrian and Vera recount what had happened, they couldn't help but feel that it was indeed fate. If Evin hadn't caught Aldrian's attention at that moment, everything might have turned out differently. They might never have known that Vera was still alive and injured. Without proper care, her condition could have worsened, and she might have died, leaving Evin behind alone.

Just imagining that possibility brought a deep ache to their hearts. They began to grasp the hardships Vera and Evin had endured after fleeing the town.

"Now, Duke Valerin, as you already know, Miss Vera wishes to return home with Evin. I want to ensure that neither of them will be harmed once they go back. Given that your family was raised in a conservative environment, I assume the elves around you likely share the same mindset. You understand what I mean, don't you?" Aldrian said.

Duke Valerin gave a firm nod. "Yes, Your Majesty."

"Especially for Evin," Aldrian continued. "She's still a child, and she may face backlash. I want you to make sure that nothing harmful ever reaches her. She's already like a little sister to me, and I won't allow anything to happen to her."

Hearing that, Duke Valerin bowed his head.

"I will not let anything happen to my granddaughter, Your Majesty. Forgive me if this sounds presumptuous, but even if you hadn't said a word, I would still do everything in my power to protect both her and my daughter from any backlash."

He understood the gravity of the situation—how could he not? He, his wife, and his son might be willing to accept that Vera had eloped with a human and even had a child with him. But the same could not be said for the rest of the elves in his dukedom.

There was no guarantee how others would react. Some might look at Vera and Evin with cold, judgmental eyes. And if there were any extremists, they might even try to harm them.

Now that Aldrian had spoken so firmly, declaring that nothing must happen to Vera or Evin, it gave Duke Valerin even more reason to make sure everything was properly handled when the two returned home.

After that, the discussion continued for another two hours, still centered around Vera and Evin. When Duke Valerin finally realized how much time had passed, he rose and expressed his intent to take his leave.

By the time the elves stepped outside the palace and reached the teleportation formation, Sylphia had joined Aldrian to escort the guests. Evin turned to them with sad eyes.

"Big Brother, Big Sister, will you visit us in the future?" she asked.

Aldrian smiled warmly at her.

"Of course we'll visit you. Big Brother will even take you to see many beautiful places," he said.

Evin's expression lit up with a smile, and she gave a firm nod.

"Then I'll wait for Big Brother," she replied.

Aldrian nodded, then turned his gaze to Vera, who immediately bowed deeply to him.

"Thank you for everything you've done for me, Your Majesty. I'll never forget it, truly, thank you," she said, her voice full of gratitude.

Aldrian nodded in return.

"Take care, Miss Vera. I hope your life will be much better from now on," he said one last time.

And with that, their figures vanished as they were teleported to the palace beneath the floating land.

After the guests disappeared, leaving only Aldrian and Sylphia near the teleportation formation, Sylphia turned to him with a smile.

"What a happy ending for them. You really are a lucky star, you know?"

Aldrian smiled as he looked at her.

"Is that so? Then—" he suddenly wrapped an arm around her waist. "Would you like to experience another lucky part of me?" he asked in a teasing tone.

Sylphia blushed and let out a small shout.

"What are you saying? It's still broad daylight, go do something useful!" she said as she slipped out of his grasp and ran off.

Aldrian laughed.

Another problem, solved.

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Chapter 644 - 644: Uninvited Guests

[1,612 words]

Night had already fallen across the Barisan continent, and tonight was a moonless night where not even a sliver of the moon could be seen. Although the sky lacked one of its usual jewels, the absence of moonlight made the countless glimmering stars appear even more clearly.

The nightly activities of people across the continent continued as usual, with no significant disturbances.

Aldrian had also just finished his "nightly activity" in his bedroom within the palace. He had just had a quick session with Sylphia, and while it had been brief, it was enough to satisfy her. She now slept peacefully beneath the blanket and a smile resting on her face.

As for Aldrian, he was now meditating beside the bed with his eyes closed. Dressed in a casual robe, he sat cross-legged on his cultivation mat. Although he was already the strongest being on the continent with extraordinary comprehension, that did not stop him from continuing to cultivate his comprehension.

He also kept training with his domain, utilizing aspects of his divinity—omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. His senses spread across the entire continent, observing its lands and inhabitants as if he were a god. With his cultivation at the low Pseudo Immortal Establishment stage, he could do heavier tasks, and his mind and soul no longer felt burdened.

At this stage, he could perceive every living being across the continent at the same time without suffering a headache, thanks to his powerful soul. He could even process the details of billions of pieces of information simultaneously within his mind, something he could never have done in the past.

The stronger he became, the more his former weaknesses were patched up. By now, he was increasingly like a god, there was nothing that could be hidden from him.

He was truly grateful to Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan for giving him their golden energy, which had greatly boosted his cultivation and strength. It was thanks to them that he had reached the Pseudo Immortal Establishment stage, a realm above the Pseudo Immortal Foundation.

The next step was to break through to the Pseudo Immortal stage, the final threshold before he could ascend to the Immortal stage.

However, ever since reaching this level of power, a problem had lingered in his mind.

"I was able to reach this stage because I absorbed the golden energy left behind by Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan," Aldrian thought.

"After the mortal cultivation realm, from Beginner to Emperor, comes the Immortal Transition, which consists of three major stages:

Pseudo Immortal Foundation,

Pseudo Immortal Establishment,

Pseudo Immortal.

Each stage has three minor realms—low, middle, and peak."

"Now that I've reached the Low Pseudo Immortal Establishment stage, it truly makes me wonder... how large must the domain I create be to reach the next minor realm, or even the next major stage?"

He could already feel it, his cultivation progress would no longer be as fast as it once was, now that he had reached this height. There had been a clear qualitative shift within him ever since he stepped into the Immortal Transition realm. He could sense that even a domain the size of the major territories within the Barisan Continent would no longer contribute to his cultivation.

He had even begun to suspect that a domain the size of the entire continent itself might not be enough to advance him quickly like in the past, and that thought genuinely troubled him.

While Aldrian's thoughts lingered on this topic, he opened his eyes and stopped his training. A golden hue flickered in his gaze for a split second before fading. Afterward, he opened his personal information from the system.

Aldrian Aster

Domain : Barisan Continent

Age : 17 years

Cultivation : Low Pseudo Immortal Establishment

Current energy : 15,067,393 (+12 /10m)

Energy needed for the next stage : 18,000,001

Although the information appeared satisfactory, it meant little to someone with ambition as high as his. He had no time to bask in momentary progress.

"At this rate, I'll reach the next minor realm in over four years," Aldrian thought, shaking his head. That pace was far too slow. He needed to grow stronger as quickly as possible, he had to reclaim this universe from those invaders.

If any cultivators had heard what Aldrian was thinking, they would have wanted to strangle him to death.

How could he even consider that slow? For cultivators at the Pseudo Immortal Establishment stage, advancing in cultivation typically took hundreds even thousands of years. Even those blessed by fate or hailed as true geniuses might only make progress after several decades.

Raising one's realm in under ten years? That was nothing short of absurd.

And yet, here was Aldrian, already thinking that taking more than four years was too slow.

As he pondered about his future cultivation, he suddenly felt something entering his sense, which he had spread across his domain that covered a slightly larger area than the continent. His domain encompassed the entire formation surrounding the continent, so the seas around the continent were also covered by it.

He closed his information screen and instantly looked toward whatever had entered his sense from outside the continent.

When he finally saw what it was, he raised his eyebrows, but then amusement stirred in his heart. What he saw through his Eyes of Heaven was a mobile transport shaped like a flying ship, known as a cruiser, entering the continent's periphery and approaching the beast territory.

Inside the cruiser, which was large enough to hold several dozen adult men, were ten figures—six men and four women. They wore black robes embedded with concealment functions, as if they were assassins or on an infiltration mission.

Aldrian was amused that outsiders would dare enter the continent despite his standing order. What made it more interesting was these people's cultivation levels were at the Pseudo Immortal Foundation and Pseudo Immortal Establishment stages. An exaggerated level of strength for an infiltration mission on this continent.

With such cultivation, these individuals would be unstoppable on this continent and could pose a real threat.

Curious to know more about them, he didn't waste any time. Without hesitation, he vanished from the bedroom, leaving the sleeping Sylphia behind.

At the western edge near the coastline of the beast territory, a cruiser flew at high speed, approaching the shoreline that was already visible from its position. The dark, moonless night helped conceal their approach, making the cruiser nearly invisible from a distance.

Above the cruiser, a few figures stood, their eyes fixed on the coastline now in view. A middle-aged man with black hair and a scar across one eye stood at the front. He appeared to be the leader, as he was not only the strongest among them but also the one positioned ahead of the others.

He gazed toward the shore with his piercing blue eyes.

There was only silence between them, but then the leader turned to the figures behind him and spoke.

"Remember our mission. We are here to study everything and gather detailed information about this continent. Once we land, we'll spread out. Avoid trouble as much as possible. Blend in with the indigenous people if you can. We don't want anyone to discover that we came here without the permission of that mysterious figure."

"Let me repeat, gather all information. Social structure, economy, military—everything. We'll report to each other every week, and once all reports are compiled, I'll send them to the higher-ups. Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir," the others answered in unison.

The leader gave a firm nod and turned his gaze back toward the front.

"All right. We'll fly from here. Store the cruiser in a storage ring. The coastline is clear, no one is in sight," he said.

The others obeyed without hesitation. One by one, they took to the air, and the cruiser vanished into a storage ring carried by one of them.

They flew at a normal speed toward the coastline, and after more than ten minutes, they finally arrived at the Barisan Continent. The moment they reached the shore, they landed and began scanning their surroundings to observe the situation.

There was no one in sight, and their senses did not detect anything unusual, so they assumed it was safe. When they examined the heaven and earth energy in the area, they felt it was slightly lacking compared to other continents.

However, they assumed they might have landed in a special zone within the continent where the heaven and earth energy was naturally thinner. They believed this possibility was reasonable, especially since they could see a floating landmass in the distance, something that suggested the continent might actually contain the densest heaven and earth energy they had ever encountered.

All of them looked into the distance, where they could see Aldrian's floating palace. The sight truly amazed them, they had never seen a floating landmass rise that high. To keep land suspended at such a height, the area must be rich in heaven and earth energy, so rich that even cultivators at the Pseudo Immortal stage could benefit from it.

The grand palace atop the floating land also made them think of the mysterious figure who had become the subject of countless stories across the world. Was that man residing in that palace? They wanted to know.

However, the fact that such a massive floating island could exist at such height was also a warning. It was a clear sign that this continent might house many powerful cultivators, which made all of them wary. Perhaps it also held the secret behind how this land was able to produce someone strong enough to fight an immortal.

After observing for a moment, the leader turned to his subordinates.

"All right then—" he began to speak, but abruptly stopped as he suddenly sensed someone standing nearby.

The others felt it too, and all of them instantly turned their heads toward the figure who was already standing not far from them.

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Chapter 645 - 645: Their Identities

[1,599 words]

The leader and the other outsiders instantly saw a young man standing not far from them, which left all of them genuinely shocked. They hadn't sensed him at all, as if he had just appeared like a ghost!

All of them rose to their highest alert, ready to fight if necessary. The young man had conspicuous long red hair and an undeniably handsome face. He was dressed in casual white robes, as if he were simply relaxing at home. His cultivation was also high, at the low stage of pseudo immortal establishment.

Although three of the cultivators in their group had much higher cultivation than the young man, the fact that none of them detected his presence before he appeared was truly alarming. They were in foreign territory and had no idea how strong this person actually was.

Now that their infiltration had actually been compromised by this young man, they were unsure of what course of action to take. Normally, they would have killed any witness without hesitation, but this time, they hesitated. There was something strange about the young man.

The leader was also thinking hard about what to do, but he leaned toward simply killing this person and moving on. He silently began preparing to attack. After all, he had a much higher cultivation at the peak of pseudo immortal establishment, and two others

were at the middle stage. If things went south, the three of them could take care of the young man together.

As for the young man, he calmly looked at each of them. There was no emotion on his face, and those blue eyes gave them a deeply unsettling feeling. It was as if his gaze stripped them bare, nothing could be hidden from those eyes.

Despite his calm expression, Aldrian was genuinely curious about these people. Why would outsiders dare to infiltrate the continent despite his order? Who exactly were they?

"I recall giving an order that no outsiders are to enter this continent until I say otherwise," Aldrian said. "But it seems you truly didn't take my words to heart."

Hearing Aldrian's words, the outsiders were stunned. From the way this young man spoke, could he be the mysterious figure who had fought an immortal? But he was "only" at the low stage of pseudo immortal establishment!

Many had assumed that the one who fought the immortal was at the peak Pseudo Immortal stage, which sounded far more believable.

The leader's mind was in disarray. Was this young man truly telling the truth? If so, they were as good as dead, any resistance would be meaningless against someone capable of standing on equal ground with an immortal.

But what if he was bluffing?

As the leader struggled to decide the best course of action, Aldrian's voice rang out again.

"You'd better not cause a ruckus or show even the slightest killing intent toward me again. The moment you strike, everything that follows, you'll have only yourself to blame."

The leader took a deep breath before cupping his hands. After thinking quickly, he decided to improvise. The infiltration mission might not succeed, or at least not go as planned, but for now, he needed to get out of this situation.

The uncertainty surrounding the young man's identity also made him hesitate to simply kill him.

"My apologies for our behavior. We were just startled," the leader said. "We are from the Barevisk family of the Akares star. We weren't aware of your order, as we had only just arrived in the Ancient Blue Gate World. We thought we could visit this continent, which has been said to be untouchable since ancient times."

He lowered his hands slightly.

"We only wanted to see for ourselves the mysterious continent that has become the subject of so much talk. We didn't know there was an order in place, and for that, we sincerely apologize."

He said all of that in a truly convincing manner, even going so far as to control his heart rate and suppress any signs from his body, as if he were speaking from the heart. This was something he could do with ease, a common trick among high-level cultivators.

The only concern now was how his opponent would react.

Many were familiar with this technique, and he assumed the young man was no exception. However, the young man wouldn't be able to immediately discern the truth behind his words. Logically, someone faced with uncertain information would not act recklessly.

He could only hope that the situation wouldn't escalate, and that this could be resolved without violence.

"Is that so?" Aldrian said. "If you're going to lie like that, you should at least wear something more casual instead of a black robe with concealment functions. And if you only came to study this continent, why did you go to such lengths to stay hidden from everyone?"

Upon hearing Aldrian's words, the outsiders didn't hesitate. All of them instantly took flight, dashing toward the sea in an attempt to escape. From what Aldrian had said, it was clear he had been listening to everything the leader had said earlier on the cruiser without any of them noticing!

That alone was enough to confirm that Aldrian was far more mysterious and powerful than they had assumed.

However, before their bodies could even reach above the sea, they suddenly froze in place, as if an invisible force had locked them down. None of them could move, suspended motionless in midair.

But they instantly understood what was happening.

"The space laws!" the leader thought. He tried to use his own space laws to break through Aldrian's, but his heart trembled when he realized he couldn't control anything around him. It was as if the surrounding elemental energy had been sealed off.

"He's blocking my control over the surrounding element energy! His space laws are strong enough to suppress mine!" the leader shouted in his mind.

Before he could think further, his surroundings shifted once again. He found himself back on the beach where they had stood earlier. The others shared the same fate, gathered in one place, completely immobilized. Their bodies refused to move.

Aldrian was still standing there, looking at them with an amused expression, the first emotion they had seen on his face.

"Also," Aldrian's voice echoed again, "if what you said was the truth, you wouldn't have sent a voice transmission to your friends to coordinate your escape. That alone is suspicious, don't you think?"

But none of them cared about what he said anymore.

At this moment, they fully understood, the gap between them was vast. The young man had returned them all to this spot effortlessly, without even moving. Their hearts trembled as they realized how utterly outmatched they were.

This time, they were truly screwed!

The leader tried to speak, but even his lips refused to open. Aldrian's spatial lock had sealed off their movements completely, even the smallest one.

Aldrian then walked toward the leader and stopped right in front of him, locking eyes with him.

"I'm truly curious about your higher-ups, what made them decide to order you to infiltrate this place despite my order?" Aldrian said, reaching out and touching the leader's forehead.

At that moment, the leader understood exactly what Aldrian intended to do. He wanted to scream that it was futile, that Aldrian wouldn't gain anything from him.

But then, a sharp jolt ran through his head, followed by a dull pain. His eyes rolled back as Aldrian began to peer into his memories.

The others, still unable to move, could see what Aldrian was doing from the corners of their eyes. And they knew, it was only a matter of time before it would be their turn.

After three minutes, Aldrian finally withdrew his hand from the leader's forehead. He stared at him for a brief moment before turning his gaze to the others. Without another word, he proceeded to look into each of their memories.

Once he had seen enough, he stepped back and quietly observed the group.

As the leader had claimed, these intruders were indeed from the Barevisk family of the Akares star. They were not just outsiders from another continent, they were from another star entirely. Among them, three held the rank of elder within the family.

Through their memories, Aldrian learned that his actions against Tarius had stirred a commotion across the stars. Many forces had turned their attention to the Ancient Blue Gate World, with many seeking to meet him or visit this continent.

However, all of them hesitated to enter the Barisan Continent because of what he had said at that time. His words had been taken seriously, and everyone seemed to respect the warning. But the Barevisk family appeared to have their own agenda, choosing to defy his order and attempt an infiltration.

Aldrian found no specific reason behind the command from the Barevisk patriarch, who had personally ordered the mission. The instruction was simply to study everything about the continent without causing trouble.

Even so, Aldrian couldn't help but question, why had the patriarch recklessly sent people here, fully aware that it meant going against his word?

He must have known that provoking someone capable of fighting an immortal was a terrible move, so why had he still gone through with it?

Wouldn't it have made far more sense to wait for his permission than to pull something like this?

Aldrian's instincts stirred. Something about the Barevisk family's actions reeked of a deeper conspiracy.

His eyes shifted to the leader, who was already looking at him with a tense gaze. Aldrian could sense his fear behind his eyes, as if he were silently awaiting judgment.

"So... what should I do with you?" Aldrian thought to himself.

After a moment of silent consideration, he finally came to a decision, one that might prove useful to him in the future.

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Chapter 646 - 646: Enjoy Your Stay

[1,534 words]

Aldrian then touched the leader's forehead and cast the Everlasting Demonic Follower on him, making him his slave. The moment the Everlasting Demonic Follower bound the leader's soul, he could sense something gripping it, and he knew exactly what Aldrian had just done to him.

He truly did not expect Aldrian to easily break through any seals inside his memories and soul, even those created by the patriarch himself. The seals had functioned as a safeguard to prevent any information leaks before the mission began.

Now, even his soul was bound by some kind of slave seal, based on his experience. He could feel a restriction embedded in his soul, something that also linked him to Aldrian.

Aldrian also did the same to the others, casting the Everlasting Demonic Follower on them as well. Once he was done, he released his spatial lock, allowing all of them to move again. But the moment the lock was lifted, the leader and the others seemed to want to try their luck by attacking Aldrian together.

They appeared to understand the gravity of the situation and tried to hide their killing intent and thoughts in an attempt to carry out the attack. This was also to avoid triggering the slave seal, which might harm them before the surprise strike.

However, before they could even touch Aldrian, a sudden and overwhelming pain surged through their souls at that exact moment. It was so intense and unexpected that they instantly collapsed to the ground, convulsing. Their eyes rolled back, and saliva dripped from their mouths as the leader struggled to speak.

"Please... mercy..." he said through his pained expression. Even speaking required him to endure tremendous agony.

Aldrian simply watched them writhe in pain, impressed by how they had tried to fool the Everlasting Demonic Follower. They had truly hidden their negative thoughts and killing intent completely, which was incredibly difficult to do. It showed that these people had likely been trained for this kind of deception.

Unfortunately, they still underestimated the Everlasting Demonic Follower. This technique, created by the Heavenly Demon, was a truly perfect slave seal. It would instantly inflict pain the moment a slave intended to harm their master, regardless of how fast their body moved. The pain was designed to be overwhelmingly severe, ensuring the slave would completely submit to the master.

After a few seconds of watching them writhe in agony, Aldrian finally ended the pain. The moment he did, they stopped convulsing. All of them gasped for air, their bloodshot eyes and sweat-soaked faces clear signs that those few seconds had felt like an eternity. It was as if they had just been through hellish torture.

"Now that you've experienced the effect of this technique, I hope you understand the situation you're in," Aldrian said to them with a smile. He knew they could still hear him, despite their condition making it seem otherwise, as they were still feeling the lingering effects of their tormented souls.

"I've heard that all of you will create weekly reports about this continent to each other before sending them to your higher-ups. What I want is simple. I'll let you stay on this continent and continue your mission. However, before you send anything to your superiors, you will report it to me first."

"Just think of me and send your voice transmission, I'll hear you, no matter the distance. I'll be the one to decide which information is allowed to leave. Oh, and please don't lie. I'll know instantly, and so will the slave seal embedded in your souls. If you're still stubborn... well, you've already felt what happens."

"Don't cause any trouble on this continent. Don't abuse your power here, either. That would also trigger the slave seal."

"Anyway, that's all from me. So, welcome to the Barisan Continent, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you enjoy your stay."

After Aldrian said that, he instantly disappeared, leaving the ten outsiders still reeling from the aftereffects of the slave seal. They were still gasping for air, and after a few moments, some of them finally managed to sit up as the pain in their souls began to subside.

"I think coming here was truly a mistake. From this moment on, we're no different from double agents and the mark of a traitor is already upon us," one of the women said.

"As I thought, it was a terrible idea to infiltrate this place. What was the patriarch thinking, sending us here in defiance of that man's order? This is the result, and we're lucky to still be alive," one of the men added.

The leader was already sitting, and he let out a sigh of relief as the pain finally subsided. However, his thoughts were no different from those of his subordinates. He also believed that coming to this place had been a mistake. To be honest, he felt the patriarch had been reckless to provoke someone capable of fighting an immortal by sending them to infiltrate this land in the first place.

Why would he do that? Why didn't he wait?

He then recalled that a few weeks ago, the Barevisk family had received a visit from an important figure. As an elder, he knew exactly who that person was.

Was that the reason?

He sighed again. Whatever happened in the past was meaningless now. There was no point in thinking about the cause or the reasons. They had already become traitors to their family. If the truth ever reached the patriarch, they would face the harsh punishment, possibly even execution.

They were trapped.

He sighed again and looked at the others.

"Let's look at the bright side. We're still alive, and that man is letting us stay here. We can still carry out the mission, so in a way, we're still working with our family, though we also have to give that man our reports. At least, for now, we haven't done anything that would earn us the label of traitor."

He then stood up.

"Let's go. We still have work to do. Just do our part and don't mess it up."

The others followed their leader, and not long after, they flew deeper into the beast territory.

Inside his bedroom in the palace, Aldrian had already taken a meditative position after returning from dealing with the intruders. Letting them live and continue their mission was far more advantageous to him than killing them. With those people under his control, he would have more information in his hands about the other side's plans.

He could smell the stench of conspiracy coming from the Barevisk family. To uncover their intentions and understand what had truly happened, he needed someone who could serve as a bridge of communication. Those intruders were the perfect candidates for that role.

Every order and message from the Barevisk family would be sent to them, and that flow of information would prove useful for his analysis. It would also serve as a preventive measure against any unexpected moves from that family in the future.

However, from this moment on, Aldrian began to consider the possibility that other families might share the same mindset as the Barevisk family. While he suspected the Barevisk might have deeper motives behind their infiltration, he also realized this could be a sign that other families would act similarly if they grew impatient waiting for his permission.

He could already imagine a future where, if the continent's quarantine lasted too long, similar infiltrations would continue to occur. He could eliminate them or make an

example out of anyone who tried to test his patience, but that approach would not be sustainable in the long run.

The Barisan Continent had already begun attracting attention, even from beyond this world, and its growing mystery would only make others more eager to infiltrate or even covet it.

If that happened, the Barisan continent would be overwhelmed if there was ever a time he was not in the continent. There is no way this continent could hold on against so many powers. It would be like this universe being ganged up on by all other universes.

He will not let it happen.

"It looks like the time is near for this continent to finally open itself to the world," Aldrian thought.

The only way to prevent such a future was through open connection. He needs to build friendly connections with others so the Barisan continent is not alone. He needs to build mutual trust so they will not do anything reckless in this continent. By building connections, they will know what to do and what not to do in this continent, because they will know him.

Letting others know more about him would create a far stronger deterrent than stories about his battle with an immortal, stories that, he was sure, not everyone from other stars would easily accept.

For now, he needed to take the throne and lead the entire continent before opening it to the outside world.

He sighed at the thought, already imagining that his peaceful days would likely come to an end once the continent was fully opened. Many would flock to it, and he would have to ensure everything remained in order while dealing with countless outsiders.

He turned his head to Sylphia's beautiful sleeping face and smiled. Her presence always brought peace and warmth to his heart. Then, he returned to focus, closed his eyes, and continued his training.

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Chapter 647 - 647: What He Learned

[1,449 words]

Two days later, Aldrian floated above the Forest of Eternal Sanctuary, the new name given by many to the former Everlasting Silent Forest. That name was no longer used, as it had become outdated due to the forest's transformation.

The current forest was no longer the deadly place it once had been. Now, it had become one of the most sought-after locations for cultivation and even residence. The rich heaven and earth energy that permeated the area greatly enhance one's cultivation, making it highly desirable for many cultivators.

Moreover, the forest encircled the region where Aldrian resided. Although he had not officially claimed it as his territory, many had already reached a tacit understanding that the forest belonged to him as well. This was due to the forest and its core region being part of a vast, ancient land shrouded in mystery.

The Xin family, said to have guarded the core region since ancient times, had also lived in the forest for generations. Because of this, it made sense to regard the entire forest as part of Aldrian's territory. That was why, when many people wished to establish their own dwellings within the forest, they had to seek permission either from the Xin family or from Aldrian himself.

Many of these people regarded Aldrian as their god and wished to live near him, but not too close, for fear of sullyng his dwelling place.

With the time of Aldrian's enthronement drawing nearer, even more people wanted to settle near the core region so they could be close to the ceremony. Even if they could not witness the enthronement directly, they were already satisfied just to be near the core.

Aldrian gave his permission, and the other major territories also decided to support the people who wished to settle in the forest. They planned to build cities near the core region, close to what would eventually become the center of the great empire and its future capital.

That was why, at this moment, in several areas near the core, large-scale city construction was underway, something Aldrian now observed from above. He looked down at the thousands of people from various races working together to build the city.

In his mind, he could already picture this place becoming a thriving, expansive city in the future.

After observing the construction for a while, Aldrian vanished from his place and reappeared in the garden of his palace, where he saw the three ladies, Sylphia, Baek Jimin, and Angelica gathered and talking with one another.

He didn't disturb them and walked to the other side of the garden, where he saw his parents enjoying their time together. Because of his mother's pregnancy, she had begun to reduce her intense activities, such as training.

Although she claimed she could still train, citing the strength of her womb and the fact that it was still early in the pregnancy, his father was deeply worried and had forbidden her from doing any strenuous training.

She simply complied, understanding his concern, and had no intention of arguing with him over it.

Aldrian nodded to himself, but then he sensed the teleportation formation on the floating land activate as a man appeared. Recognizing who it was, Aldrian immediately went to meet him.

Not long after Pope Claudius emerged from the teleportation formation, he was greeted by Aldrian, and he returned the gesture warmly.

"Young Aldrian, I'm here to discuss the details of your enthronement. The time is near, and I need to discuss the details of the ceremony with you to ensure everything is in order for the day itself. All of the leaders will follow any changes that come out of this discussion," Pope Claudius said after their greeting and brief exchange.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. His enthronement was scheduled for the day after tomorrow, and most parts of the ceremony had already been agreed upon. This final meeting was only to discuss and confirm the remaining details one last time.

Pope Claudius and Aldrian moved to the guest room to discuss the ceremony. According to the plan, the enthronement would be held at Aldrian's palace, signifying that it would serve as the central palace where the emperor who ruled over the entire continent would officially reside.

This palace would not only be Aldrian's home but also a symbol of the continent's shared faith.

Unfortunately, due to the limitations of transportation and teleportation formations, not everyone would be able to witness the enthronement directly on the floating land. Only a limited number of people would see Aldrian in person.

However, like Aldrey and Irene's wedding, his enthronement would be broadcast across the continent using projectors, allowing everyone to watch the ceremony.

As Pope Claudius and Aldrian continued discussing the details of the enthronement day, some people elsewhere were busy studying the continent. The outsiders from outside the Barisan Continent and who had already become Aldrian's slaves were carrying out their tasks in various parts of the Doria Empire.

After being enslaved by Aldrian using the Everlasting Demonic Follower, they had flown deeper into the beast territories. But when they spotted a towering world tree on the horizon, they assumed they were approaching the elves' territory, something they wished to avoid. They knew they would not easily blend in if they entered elven lands.

They decided to take a different route and flew farther away from the world tree. With their speed, granted by their pseudo-Immortal Foundation and pseudo-Immortal Establishment stage, they could travel much faster.

As a result, they reached the border of the Doria Empire within a single day.

There, they found a border town, which became their starting point before they began to spread out. They also had to hide their cultivation to avoid drawing unwanted attention.

By now, these outsiders had already dispersed throughout the region, each with their own disguise.

The leader of these outsiders, for example, was gathering information in a tavern within the capital city of the Doria Empire. Although he concealed his cultivation level, the scar over his left eye and his commanding presence led those who saw him to immediately regard him as an expert. Because of that, the people nearby remained cautious and wary of him.

The leader, however, paid no attention to them. He appeared to be calmly enjoying his drink, but in truth, his senses were spread wide, capturing every word that slipped from people's lips. He listened to everything, from idle chatter to conversations that piqued his interest, and quietly analyzed it all.

During his short time in the empire, he analyzed everything he saw, sensed, and heard. To be honest, he was somewhat surprised, and a little disappointed after arriving in this city, which was said to be the capital of one of the empires on this continent.

From what he sensed, the concentration of heaven and earth energy was quite high, but not to the point of impressing him. There were places on his own star with far richer energy than this. As for the average cultivation level, it was severely lacking, even when compared to other continents in this world.

This place was far weaker than he had expected. He had not sensed a single person who had entered the Immortal Transition realm. For a continent capable of producing someone like that monster, he had truly expected more. Yet reality was far from what he imagined, leaving him genuinely confused.

"Was the floating land the only special place on this continent?"

What he did see, however, was that the monster who had become his master and was said to live on that floating land was deeply respected, even worshipped. Statues and portraits of him could be found everywhere, and the leader finally learned his name.

"These people call him Aldrian the Great. He seems to be the leading figure of this continent," the leader thought.

He was not surprised by the reverence Aldrian received, after all, that man appeared to be the strongest person on the continent. The continent itself also seemed to be in the midst of great change, with all its power uniting under a single imperial banner, and that man's enthronement as the first emperor was just two days away.

When he learned more about Aldrian, he was truly shocked by the stories surrounding him. It was no wonder the people of the continent regarded him not only as their leader but even as a god, placing their faith in him without question. But the most absurd part came when he discovered Aldrian's age.

Still under twenty years old? With that kind of cultivation and power?

He nearly felt like he was losing his mind. There were still many questions about this continent that lingered in his thoughts, but he kept them to himself for now. After all, he had only just arrived.

What mattered most at the moment was continuing to learn everything he could about this place.

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Chapter 648 - 648: The Enthronement Day

[1,671 words]

Two days later, the day everyone had been waiting for finally arrived. The sun was already well above two sticks on the eastern horizon. The atmosphere was truly festive, not lacking compared to the Aldrey and Irene's wedding day. In fact, in certain aspects, it could be said that this day was even more celebratory.

Cities across the continent had been decorated with all kinds of ornaments that reflected the people's enthusiasm. Even in the most remote villages, they held their own festivities to show that they too had awaited this day.

Finally, after today, all of them would unite under the banner of a great empire. This was a historic moment, for the first time in history, their continent would be united under a single ruler.

What made this moment truly special was that the unification had not come through violence, but through collective understanding and agreement, that one person was the only rightful leader who could guide them through the challenges ahead. With this belief as its foundation, the new empire would begin with a strong base and wide support.

This empire would not be easily shaken, as long as the name Aldrian still echoed.

Those who could move closer to the core region did so, hoping to get nearer to the place of enthronement. Projectors to broadcast the ceremony had already been set up, and crowds had begun to gather to witness it.

At this moment, the projector displayed the front of Aldrian's palace, an image never before shown to the public. The sight of the grand palace amazed many and drew their reverent gazes. This was the palace that, after today, would become the center of the entire continent. It stood as the new symbol of leadership and faith.

In the capital city of the Doria Empire, the leader of the outsiders watched the people's enthusiasm with an expression of understanding. Over the past two days, he had gathered more information about Aldrian, and he had to admit, there was no one else like him. He could only be described as a singularity, a miracle.

His life and fate seemed as though the heavens had prepared him to stand at the peak of all things. Aldrian was truly the embodiment of a miracle, the prophesied figure spoken of in the legendary stories passed down to younger generations.

There was no way anyone could replicate what he had done or what he had achieved.

Still, even after hearing all that Aldrian had done and achieved, he couldn't help but question the authenticity of the stories. It wasn't surprising that he continued to think that way, what he had heard was truly absurd. Yet all the people spoke the same way. There were no contradictions in their stories or in what they knew about Aldrian.

There were also many witnesses, and their testimonies could be accounted for.

Like it or not, believe it or not, Aldrian's tale was the truth, and all of it was fact.

The leader looked at the projector, which now displayed the palace's front garden, wearing his usual expression. Yet, like everyone else, he was truly amazed by the grandeur of the palace. Even through the projection, he could feel its majesty, its solemn presence, and the power of the one who owned it.

He could already see the palace from where he stood, and that alone was impressive. But seeing it up close through the projector only intensified that feeling.

As the leader watched the projector along with the others, preparations on the floating land had already been completed. Those invited by Aldrian to attend in person had arrived earlier.

Most of them were individuals Aldrian personally knew or had communicated with directly. Among them were the leaders of the major territories and their families, as well as people Aldrian had met during his past journeys.

Matriarch Yu and her son, Yu Fenglian, could be seen enjoying the beauty of the palace gardens. Vera and Evin were also present with their elven family, taking in the serene atmosphere. Baron Rosalind and his family were engaged in conversation with Patriarch Xin near the palace entrance.

There were also others in attendance, such as Duke Valiard and Mardred from the Forgeheart Kingdom. Behind the scenes, the hidden group, the Thunderous Shadow Pavilion worked to ensure everything was in order, though they knew their presence was only a formality. After all, there was no chance of chaos or danger in a place where Aldrian resided.

The palace had taken on a festive atmosphere, filled with many of Aldrian's acquaintances.

As the guests continued to admire the palace or converse among themselves, Pope Claudius's voice suddenly echoed throughout the halls.

"The procession of the enthronement will commence in a moment. Prepare for the enthronement."

As his voice faded, the grand double doors of the palace began to open, slowly revealing the interior. For those who had never seen it before, the sight deeply moved them. One by one, they began walking in. Across the continent, those watching through the projectors were equally amazed by the palace's interior.

The people who had the chance to walk into the palace looked around in admiration. It was the most luxurious and majestic place they had ever seen. They continued walking and soon arrived at the circling hallway, where five statues of Aldrian's past followers stood, causing many to wonder who these figures were.

Are they gods?

Even the statues themselves radiated majesty and heroism, yet the onlookers could also sense reverence and unwavering faith in their expressions and posture. All five statues faced the same direction, toward the grand hall in front of them.

That was where the invited guests continued, passing through another set of towering double doors before finally entering the grand hall, the throne hall.

This was the place where the emperor would sit upon his throne. This was the place of the enthronement.

The moment they entered the hall, they were greeted not only by its grandeur but also by a lone throne. The throne stood on elevated ground, accessible only by ascending nine steps.

As all eyes turned toward it, what they saw was a symbol of overwhelming greatness. The throne radiated a strange aura, one that stirred a deep urge to prostrate before it. They understood this was not a throne for just anyone. Only the chosen one could sit upon such a revered throne.

These guests had seen the thrones of emperors across the continent, yet none had ever felt like this. No other throne had ever made them feel such an irresistible urge to submit.

The invited guests walked along both sides of the hall, carefully avoiding the red carpet that stretched from the entrance all the way to the steps leading to the throne.

After all the invited guests had taken their positions on the right and left sides of the hall, below the throne, they stood in silence, waiting for the procession to begin. Their eyes drifted to the throne from time to time, still admiring its presence.

A few moments later, Pope Claudius stepped through the entrance of the throne hall. He wore his papal robe and walked with sacred solemnity toward the throne, under the watch of countless eyes. Upon reaching the steps, he ascended slowly and came to a stop at the top, then turned to face the audience.

He swept his gaze across the gathered guests, and then to the information crystal that broadcasted his image through the projectors across the continent.

After a brief moment of silence, the Pope finally opened his lips to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have arrived at a historic moment in our lives as the people of this continent, a moment that marks the beginning of a new era."

His voice was firm and clear, carrying across the hall, and across the continent.

"As you know, this continent has never been united under a single banner. We have long been divided by differences, differences in ideology, in values, in interests, in morality, and so on."

"While those differences have created a rich and diverse continent, they have also made us fragile, easily divided, and unable to pursue a shared purpose. The devil crisis is the clearest example, when unity was needed most, we failed to act together. Because we could not trust one another, because of our differences, we allowed the devils to rampage across this land for far too long."

"This kind of failure is truly shameful. And what's worse, none of us realized that even the devils were capable of plotting so much behind our backs."

"Because of our lack of unity and decisiveness, we paid a heavy price. We came dangerously close to losing everything, even our lives."

Hearing this, many lowered their heads, ashamed and angry with themselves as they thought back on the past.

"However, the heavens did not abandon us! Despite our selfishness, despite the sin of negligence, the heavens still helped us. Fortunately, we had someone who prevented the worst from happening!" the pope continued.

"Because of his existence, we, the people of this continent, were finally able to unite in mind and in heart."

"Because of his existence, we came to understand the power of unity in diversity. He showed us what we can achieve when we move together as one."

"Because of his existence, we are still here, alive and well, having endured the calamity, even when despair clutched at our hearts and shook our faith."

"His appearance was like a light shining through the darkness. He is the light that reveals the right path, the guiding presence that keeps us from losing our way."

The pope's voice rang with vigor and hope, and many found themselves moved by his spirit and filled with the same hope.

"Now, at this moment, I believe the time has come for us to give that man the place he truly deserves, the most honorable seat, from where he will continue to guide us, continue to lead us forward, and stand as our symbol of unity and hope."

"To all the people of this continent, let us welcome the one who will become our beacon of light—"

"Aldrian Aster!"

The moment the pope's voice fell silent, a figure appeared at the entrance and began walking into the hall.

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Chapter 649 - 649: Aldrian the Great

[1,736 words]

The moment all eyes turned toward the entrance of the hall, they couldn't help but glimmer with awe. Across the continent, countless people were already on their knees. They didn't do it out of fear, but because the sight before them moved their hearts, a gesture of reverence to the figure who stepped inside.

Aldrian, with his unblemished and handsome face, let his long red hair fall freely. At this moment, he wore imperial robes that perfectly embodied his dignity and power as emperor. The attire wasn't overly adorned with ornaments, yet it was distinct enough to show how special it truly was. A red cape draped over one shoulder added a noble touch and enhanced his striking presence.

His tall, firm build only completed the image, at this moment, he was perfect in the eyes of all.

The imperial robe he now wore had actually been found by Aldrian in one of the palace rooms, displayed within a glass case. According to the information he read, it was the result of a collaboration between Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan. The robe had been sewn using the hair and leather fiber from their divine beast forms.

Because of the special materials used in its creation, the imperial robe possessed defensive properties. For instance, it was immune to basic elemental attacks, granting Aldrian additional protection.

Once again, Aldrian was touched by their efforts. It felt as if, by creating this robe, they had already foreseen he would wear it on such an occasion, and so they had styled it in imperial fashion.

Behind him, on both sides, Sylphia and Baek Jimin followed as his partners. Their beauty in this moment was unmatched. Sylphia revealed her true elegance, dressed in noble elven attire, while Baek Jimin wore a white formal robe typically seen only in the demon territory.

The robe highlighted her elegance and beauty to the fullest. Combined with her rare white hair, she looked like a mysterious beauty emerging from a snowy land.

For the first time, many were finally seeing Baek Jimin's beauty in detail, and they couldn't help but feel they had overlooked her. With Sylphia always at Aldrian's side, Baek Jimin had long been overshadowed. But now, standing in the spotlight, her beauty was no less than Sylphia's.

He walked with firm steps as countless eyes followed him, filled with respect and reverence. Aldrey and Irene watched him with proud expressions, while the leaders of the major territories looked on with smiles and an unspoken message in their gaze—finally, the time has come!

Aldrian and the two ladies walked until they reached the base of the stairs. There, Sylphia and Baek Jimin stopped, each stepping to one side of the red carpet. They turned to face Aldrian as he continued alone, ascending the steps one by one until he reached the top, standing not far from the throne, one he had not sat upon for a very long time.

Pope Claudius had already stepped back to give him space.

Aldrian looked at the throne as memories began to flood his mind. At last, after many lives, he would sit on it again. From the moment he first entered the hall more than a month ago until now, he had never taken that seat.

But now, the moment had come for him to sit on the throne once more.

He turned his body to face the audiences and swept his gaze across them. He also glanced at the information crystal operator, who was projecting his image across the continent.

"To the people of this continent, to all who have placed your faith in me, honestly, I still feel overwhelmed by the trust you've given me in allowing me this honor. I truly did not expect to be granted such a respected position, the role of leading you all as a symbol of unity and faith," Aldrian said.

"As we know, our continent is undergoing great change, and it will lead us to a wider world filled with challenges. At this moment, we are like a hidden treasure, one that many outsiders may wish to approach."

"Those outsiders may bring changes we cannot predict, whether for better or for worse."

"We are weak, much weaker than them because of the restrictions that have covered our continent for so long. We've fallen behind in cultivation and many other aspects, a reality that could truly put us in danger." Aldrian paused, sweeping his gaze once more across the hall, then toward the information crystal.

The people who heard his words could feel the weight behind them. They could already imagine how vulnerable their continent was now that the world beyond had become accessible. Instead of bringing benefits, opening their borders might invite trouble.

Their continent, once hidden from the outside world, would undoubtedly attract countless powerful cultivators from beyond. And those intrusions might bring even more chaos than the devils had.

"That is why we must be more united than ever, to shield ourselves from the harmful influence of those beyond our land," Aldrian continued.

"To keep those outsiders in check and prevent them from acting with arrogance in our continent, we know we need a deterrent force. I am glad to become that force, a force that will stand against anyone who dares to disrupt the peace we have earned through the sacrifices of so many."

"All this time, I have simply acted according to my own moral compass. I never expected anything in return. I only did what I believed I was meant to do. That is why your trust in me, because of what I have done gives me a sense of profound honor. An honor I will carry proudly as proof that I will never betray your faith."

"So on this occasion, I want to thank all of you who have placed your trust in me and believed in me. I will carry that faith in my heart always."

Aldrian lowered his head slightly before standing tall once more.

"And lastly, as I once said, hold on to your dignity in front of others. Keep your pride as the people of this continent. Do not let anyone trample you, because I will be behind you to support you. Do not be afraid if you stand in the right. Do not be afraid to uphold your dignity and integrity. Once again, I will stand behind you all."

Across the continent, the people's expressions turned solemn as they quietly nodded. Aldrian's words had once again renewed their confidence in facing the world beyond.

After his speech, Aldrian looked to the pope at his left and gave a small nod.

The pope understood and turned to address the audience.

"The heavens have sent us their chosen one, as our savior, our protector, our leader, and the beacon of light who will guide us toward a brighter future." As Pope Claudius spoke, Aldrian began walking toward the throne.

"Now, it is time for the chosen one to formally take his reign, to step into the position that has long awaited him, and to fulfill the role that is rightfully his."

Aldrian then stopped right in front of the throne and turned to face the audience. Just as he did, another figure entered the hall. The moment countless eyes shifted toward the entrance, they immediately saw Angelica, dressed in her saintess robes.

In her hands, she carried a golden plate, and resting upon it was a majestic golden crown. The crown had nine sharp, pointed crests, each representing the nine major territories that had now come under Aldrian's rule.

To Aldrian, however, the nine points also held another meaning. They represented the nine heavens.

A large golden diamond was embedded at the front of the crown, symbolizing his supreme authority.

This crown had been crafted by King Douwin himself. He had forged it with care, precision, and full dedication, knowing it would become one of the symbols of Aldrian's reign. He made sure that nothing was lacking. Even the materials and the jewels used were rare treasures taken from the royal secret vault.

Angelica continued walking until she reached the top of the stairs, then moved to stand beside Pope Claudius. Once he saw that Angelica was in position, the pope turned to face the audience.

"Let us hear the vow of the one chosen by the heavens, the vow that may lead us to glory," Pope Claudius said clearly.

Aldrian then opened his lips to speak.

"I, Aldrian Aster, the one in whom the people of this continent have placed their full faith, swear before all beings, before heaven and earth, that I will carry out my role with all sincerity. If all beings wish for me to guide and lead them, then I shall do so to the best of my ability."

"Heaven and the entire universe shall bear witness that this great empire, built upon your belief in me will not fall, and together, we will witness the greatest glory this continent will ever see."

Aldrian's voice was solemn and firm, stirring the hearts of all who heard it and setting their spirits alight.

Pope Claudius then took the crown from Angelica and stepped to Aldrian's right side.

"From this moment onward, Aldrian Aster, bearing the title of Aldrian the Great, the one chosen by the heavens shall become the first emperor of the Aster Empire. An empire that symbolizes the bright star which illuminates all things, a light that will never fade, a light that shall remain with us until the end of time," he declared.

Pope Claudius then placed the crown upon Aldrian's head. Afterward, he turned to face the audience.

"May the great emperor, Aldrian the Great, continue to reign sovereign!"

"May his glory be eternal! May his light never fade!" he shouted, and his voice was echoed by all beings across the continent.

"May the great emperor, Aldrian the Great, continue to reign sovereign!"

"May his glory be eternal! May his light never fade!"

Many instantly prostrated in Aldrian's direction as a sign of submission and recognition. Even nature itself, in its own way, seemed to bow before him. The winds stirred gently, the skies cleared, and the land felt still, as if the world itself shared in this moment.

The heavens, too, sent their intent to Aldrian, as if echoing his name and reign with silent praise.

Aldrian looked upon it all with a calm expression.

In this moment, he could not yet know that his title would one day be inseparable from his very existence, not only in this world, but among all beings across the heavens.

For in the future, whenever his name is spoken, one truth will always follow—

Aldrian the Great.

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Chapter 650 - 650: Giving His Parents New Cultivation Technique

[1,532 words]

On the next day, the populace of the continent returned to their usual activities. However, the festive atmosphere from the enthronement ceremony still lingered. Many were still talking about yesterday's ceremony and Aldrian's speech.

They truly felt fortunate to have someone like Aldrian on their continent at this time.

All of them had already forgotten that he was just a seventeen-year-old young man. The only thing embedded in their minds was that Aldrian was their emperor, their strong and wise leader who would guide them through many challenges in the future.

Following the enthronement, the administrative changes across the territories were also officially implemented. The empires became kingdoms, and their emperors became kings.

As Aldrian and the other leaders of the major territories had discussed and agreed, these territories continued to operate as usual, with no significant changes. The only difference was that if a king faced a major decision, it would require Aldrian's approval.

Aldrian could also implement his own policies in these territories if he wished.

Following the enthronement, the flow of people wishing to migrate to the Eternal Sanctuary Forest increased sharply. The number even reached into the hundreds of thousands, spreading around the core region of the forest.

The construction of new cities also accelerated, as many of the newcomers joined the effort and contributed to the building process.

On this day, the Rosalind family also began their migration, returning to their ancestral land within the secret realm in the north, with help from the Xin family. Emperor Raymond had already granted them permission, allowing them to choose their own path, as he already knew about their origins as immigrants from outside the Atria Kingdom.

From what he had recently discovered, they actually shared the same roots as the Xin family, which made him understand their desire to return to their ancestral land.

With so many migration movements toward the center of the continent, it was no surprise that scenes of thousands gathered and moving in one direction had become a common sight.

While the outer region beyond the core was hectic with the movement of the populace, the core region remained as peaceful as ever. Aldrian simply continued his usual activities, despite his new role as emperor of the great empire that now unified the continent.

At this moment, Aldrian brought his father and mother to the training ground, with Aurelia and Reiss following behind.

Why did he bring them here?

"Father, Mother, I have something to give you," Aldrian said, drawing their curious gazes.

"What is it?" Aldrey asked. Without another word, Aldrian placed his hands on their foreheads and transmitted the information he intended to share.

A few minutes passed before Aldrian finished, leaving Aldrey and Irene to process what he had given them.

When they finally opened their eyes, both were staring at Aldrian in shock.

"Son, this is...?!" Irene asked, bewildered.

"Yes, Mother. This is a cultivation technique, a special one I created myself," Aldrian replied. "With this technique, your cultivation speed will increase significantly. And when you switch to it, you won't have to destroy your existing foundation."

His words left Aldrey and Irene even more stunned.

"What?" Aldrey asked unconsciously.

"Father, Mother, I hope with this cultivation technique, you'll grow stronger much faster. And you won't need to worry—"

"Wait, wait, wait. Aldrian, you created this?" Aldrey interrupted, still staring at him in disbelief. How could Aldrian say something like that with such a relaxed expression? From what they had just seen, this was clearly a high-level cultivation technique, far beyond the one Aldrey was currently using.

The cultivation technique was complex, yet easy to use, clearly reflecting the creator's deep comprehension. Aldrey could sense the mysterious quality within it, and after hearing Aldrian mention that it didn't require destroying one's foundation, he immediately understood the origin of that feeling.

"I did, Father," Aldrian said calmly. "I made it with the hope that you and Mother could grow stronger more quickly. My apologies, it's not that I'm underestimating your current cultivation techniques, but I believe that to face the challenges ahead, you'll need something better."

"You don't have to worry about any problems with this cultivation technique. I've already made sure that everything works perfectly,"

Then, Aldrian gave a signal to Aurelia and Reiss.

"I have two examples of the cultivation technique I created. Aurelia and Reiss are already using it, and as you can see, they've completely left the path of devil cultivation. In fact, all the devil beasts in the beast territory are now using this technique."

As he finished speaking, Aurelia and Reiss released their energy, causing Aldrey and Irene to gasp in shock.

They knew these two were the devil beasts who cultivated devil energy, but now, they were clearly exuding pure, normal energy. This realization left Aldrey and Irene stunned, as they began to grasp the magnitude of Aldrian's achievement.

This wasn't just about his overwhelming strength. It was about what he had created, something that could revolutionize the cultivation world itself.

To change a cultivation technique without destroying the foundation? That defied what everyone believed to be fundamental knowledge.

It was truly mind-blowing.

"What I created for you two is completely different from what I made for the spiritual beasts," Aldrian continued. "This technique is specially designed for both of you. And once again, you don't need to worry, I've already made sure there are no issues with it."

Aldrey and Irene stared at Aldrian with blank expressions. After a few moments of silence, they let out a long sigh.

"I'm honestly so overwhelmed by what you just said that I could barely focus on anything beyond the fact that you created this cultivation technique," Aldrey said with deep admiration.

"This is truly shocking... and you must understand the value of what you've made. This is a breakthrough for the entire cultivation world."

"If you're the one who created it, and you're saying there's no problem with it, then I'll believe you," he added, before turning to look at Irene.

"Dear, you could just—"

"Nope. I want to start cultivating too," Irene cut him off firmly. "I want to try this cultivation technique. You don't need to worry about the fetus—I'm still in the early phase of pregnancy. I can cultivate normally at this stage."

Aldrey frowned. "But you—"

"Father," Aldrian interjected gently, trying to ease the tension. "I'm here, and I'll make sure there's no issue during the cultivation process. You don't need to worry about my little sibling, I took Mother's pregnancy into account when I created this technique. She'll be able to cultivate safely up until the later stages of pregnancy. So please, rest assured."

He glanced between them, hoping to calm his father and prevent their discussion from turning into an argument.

Hearing Aldrian's explanation, Aldrey sighed again and nodded.

"Alright, I'll trust you," he said, prompting a smile and a nod from Aldrian.

"Then please try this cultivation technique. I'll be here to watch over you," Aldrian said, as Aldrey and Irene took meditative positions, closed their eyes, and began cultivating using the new technique.

As the surrounding energy began to gather and flow into his parents, Aldrian watched them closely, making sure there were no issues during the process.

The cultivation technique he had created especially for his parents was far easier to develop than the one he made for the spiritual beasts.

He only needed three days to create it. That was thanks to the success of his earlier experiments, as well as his much deeper understanding of the human body compared to that of spiritual beasts. In addition, his parents' cultivation foundation was built on regular energy, not devil energy, which made the process far less complicated.

After a few minutes of cultivation, Aldrian still detected no issues. He nodded to himself, it was proceeding exactly as it had in the simulations within his mind. This cultivation technique was a complete success. He predicted it would double his parents' cultivation speed.

Not only that, the technique would also strengthen their foundation, which in turn would boost their overall strength. In the future, they would be able to fight opponents at a higher cultivation stage with much greater ease.

After half an hour, Aldrey and Irene finally stopped cultivating and opened their eyes. They looked at their bodies, then at Aldrian, both smiling.

"This is truly amazing. I can already feel the difference with this cultivation technique," Aldrey said.

"Yes, I feel refreshed and rejuvenated. I can even sense that our foundation has grown stronger," Irene added.

Aldrian smiled and gave a small nod.

"Good. From now on, both of you can use this cultivation technique. Just as I predicted, there were no issues from what I observed," he said.

Aldrey nodded, then stood up and, without a word, embraced his son. Irene smiled at the sight before standing as well and joining them in the hug.

"Thank you for this gift, son," Aldrey said, his voice filled with pride.

Aldrian simply smiled and returned their embrace, the three of them sharing a warm moment together.

Afterward, Aldrey and Irene resumed their cultivation under the watchful eyes of Aurelia and Reiss.

As for Aldrian, he walked to another part of the garden where he could sense Baek Jimin's presence.

While walking, he turned his sense to the outsiders, wondering what they were doing at that moment.

Activating his Eyes of Heaven, their activities came into view, and immediately, one of the outsiders caught his attention. His gaze locked onto her with interest.

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