

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

Chapter 651 - 651: The Loophole of the Slave Seal?

[1,669 words]

In another part of the capital city of the Doria Empire, one of the female outsiders was speaking with a man in a private, luxurious restaurant. The man was someone Aldrian recognized—Prince Hector.

Aldrian was intrigued by how this outsider had managed to get in contact with Hector in such a short time since her arrival on the continent. He also wondered what they were discussing that required a private room.

As he focused his senses and hearing, their voices finally became clear.

"Thank you for inviting me, Your Highness. Once again, I apologize if I disrupted your schedule because of me," the female outsider named Vanessa said softly.

She was a beautiful, young-looking woman with long black hair. At this moment, she wore a casual robe that emphasized the curves of her body, making her look sexy. Combined with the way she spoke and the softness of her voice, it could easily melt those who heard it. Aldrian could see from Hector's expression that he was affected.

Hector's face turned slightly red, and he coughed as he tried to compose himself.

"It's nothing, Miss Vanessa. There was no schedule to be disturbed while I'm here, so you don't have to worry," he said.

Aldrian, who had been watching the two, felt something was off, especially seeing how Hector appeared shy, almost as if he were charmed by Vanessa. This made Aldrian raise his eyebrows before a thought crossed his mind. He focused more intently on the two, and soon, he sensed something from Vanessa.

"Charm technique," he thought.

Now he understood what was going on. No wonder Hector seemed so captivated by her. If she could use a charm technique, someone like Hector would be an easy target. With her cultivation at the middle stage of the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation, she could charm anyone on this continent—anyone except Aldrian.

Aldrian stopped walking and decided to listen to their conversation. He took a nearby seat in a secluded part of the garden. As he continued to listen in, all he could hear was

casual conversation. To him, the two of them seemed more like they were on a blind date, exchanging questions and answers in a relaxed manner.

After thirty minutes, their meeting finally ended, with Vanessa leaving first and Hector remaining alone in the private room, looking infatuated. Seeing this as a chance, Aldrian decided to visit Hector and make things clear. From his perspective, Hector seemed manipulated by that woman, and he did not like it. It was better to hear the clarification directly from him.

Hector, still sitting alone, was stunned when Aldrian suddenly appeared in the vacant seat Vanessa had occupied earlier. The moment he saw Aldrian's face, he was shocked and instantly stood up.

"Your Majesty!"

"At ease, Prince Hector," Aldrian said with a smile. "I happened to see something interesting and wanted to ask you a few questions. I hope you can answer them."

"Of course, Your Majesty. I would gladly answer any of your questions," Hector replied, taking his seat again.

Aldrian nodded. "Alright then. Do you know the identity of the woman you just met? How did the two of you meet?"

Hector immediately understood who Aldrian was referring to, and he was slightly surprised that Aldrian seemed aware of their meeting. However, he didn't question it and answered instead.

"I met Miss Vera two days ago when I accidentally ran into her while traveling by carriage. As for her origin, she said she had just come down from the northern mountains after living in seclusion. After the recent changes across the continent, she said her master instructed her to come down and blend in with the populace."

"At the time, she seemed confused and lost, and nearly collided with my carriage. As an apology, I invited her to lunch today, since I couldn't spare time that day. That's why we had a private lunch, Your Majesty."

Aldrian nodded in understanding, but inwardly, he smiled.

"I don't think she accidentally crashed into your carriage," he thought.

That Vanessa must have already gathered information and learned Hector's route. He wasn't surprised, given her cultivation and abilities, it was entirely possible. She was clever enough to target someone like Prince Hector right away.

He didn't know what her exact goal was, but the slave seal hadn't reacted. That meant she wasn't acting with harmful intent and hadn't abused her power, since she had only used a charm technique, nothing more.

Even so, it made Aldrian uneasy. They could exploit this kind of loophole to bypass the rules of his slave seal. While Vanessa hadn't intended harm, this kind of situation could be used to plant influence among the locals.

The people of the continent were still vulnerable to the powerful techniques used by outsiders.

Seeing that Hector was still slightly affected by the charm technique, Aldrian decided to help. He used his sound laws and erased the effect with a single clap.

Clap!

The moment the sound echoed, Hector felt something shift within him. A refreshing sensation swept over him, and it felt as though he had just emerged from a clouded state of mind.

A look of confusion crossed his face.

"Be careful, Prince Hector. That woman is from outside the continent. She might try to take advantage of you, she used a charm technique on you."

Hearing this, Hector's eyes widened in shock.

"What?" he asked.

Aldrian then explained about the outsiders who had attempted to infiltrate the continent, and how he had caught them and turned them into slaves.

Hector was truly stunned to learn that someone like that had already blended in among their people. He slapped his forehead, feeling foolish for falling into the outsider's trap.

"Thank you for waking me up, Your Majesty. I'm truly ashamed that I fell for her trick. I deserve punishment for potentially endangering the empire's interests," he said, bowing deeply.

Aldrian waved his hand. "No, this was bound to happen. She's strong, and you wouldn't have noticed it. You don't need to apologize, Prince Hector. In fact, I should be thanking you. Because of this, I found a loophole I need to address in the future."

Hector straightened his posture and let out a sigh.

"But it's truly frightening, Your Majesty. We're vulnerable to this kind of influence," he said, and Aldrian nodded.

"Then what should I do? Or rather, what should we do, Your Majesty? Should we just let her go, or take action against her?" Hector asked.

"Just let her be, you can still communicate with her normally, let her know that you're aware of her identity. But you must be more careful, and you should inform your father so he can prepare. However, do not let the populace know about the existence of the outsiders yet. We don't want to cause any unrest with sudden news that they are already among us," Aldrian replied.

"Consider this experience as preparation for the future, when many more outsiders arrive on the continent. There may be others who try similar tricks on you or those close to you," he added, then clapped lightly.

"Anyway, I'm done here. I'll go first, there's something I need to take care of."

"Ah, yes, Your Majesty. Once again, thank you."

With that, Aldrian vanished.

Left alone, Hector let out a deep sigh as he processed everything he had just learned.

"Those outsiders are already moving, trying to infiltrate this continent. I need to inform Father right away."

He stood up and quickly left the private room.

After leaving the restaurant, Vanessa moved quickly to an inn and entered her room. But the moment she stepped inside, she froze in place.

Someone was already sitting in one of the chairs, calmly watching her.

It was Aldrian.

"Your Majesty." Vanessa dropped to her knees the instant she saw him.

Aldrian stared at her in silence for a moment before he finally spoke.

"What are you planning? You approached the first prince of this kingdom, and even used a charm technique on him."

The question sent a chill through her. She knew Aldrian was suspicious of her motives, even if the slave seal hadn't reacted.

"Replying to Your Majesty, I only wanted to build a connection with someone influential on this continent as quickly as possible. I also hoped to learn more detailed information about the continent. I swear, I had no other intentions beyond that," she said hastily, hoping to clear Aldrian's misunderstanding.

"Building a connection with someone influential, huh? Don't you already have me as your connection?" Aldrian said, which left Vanessa speechless.

She wanted to shout that this wasn't what she meant, but that remained only in her thoughts.

Still, she responded to Aldrian.

"Well, with all due respect, I can't trouble Your Majesty for information every time. And your connection is... special. It's not something I can openly reveal to the higher ups. Besides, I thought that forming ties with a local noble might bring some benefit to the Baverisk family in the future," she said, her tone slightly awkward, trying not to offend him.

"But please rest assured, Your Majesty, I have no intention of doing anything that would go against your interests."

Aldrian nodded, what she said was the truth. After a few moments of silence, which were heavy and tense for Vanessa, he finally spoke.

"You'd better not try any tricks in the future, Vanessa. I will know, even if you manage to fool the rules of the slave seal. I won't add new rules to your seal for now, but you must be careful when using your powers from this point on. If I find you doing anything suspicious, I'll adjust the rules to the point that you'll be no different from a mortal without cultivation. Is that clear?"

"I understand, Your Majesty!" she replied quickly, bowing her head.

Aldrian gave a final nod.

"Good."

Then, without another word, he vanished from the room.

Vanessa remained still for a moment, then dropped to the floor as soon as she was sure he was truly gone. She could no longer sense his presence.

"What a terrifying man... He feels like he knows everything and is always watching me," she thought.

She let out a long sigh of relief as sweat rolled down her beautiful face.

"I'd better be more careful from now on... I don't want to give him the wrong impression again."

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Chapter 652 - 652: Visiting the Academy

[1,550 words]

Aldrian reappeared in his palace's garden and continued walking toward Baek Jimin's location. From what he saw, she was in the middle of her cultivation.

After walking for a while, he finally saw her in a meditative position on the flat floor in one part of the garden. Because of the peaceful and safe conditions, along with the rich energy of this floating land, anyone could cultivate in any part of the place.

Many chose to cultivate in the garden because of its peaceful atmosphere and beautiful scenery, allowing them to focus more easily in the serenity.

Aldrian smiled warmly as he kept watching Baek Jimin cultivate. Since the change of the continent and because she always cultivated here, her progress had accelerated. She was now at the high Earl stage and steadily approaching the peak stage.

Looking at her development, he decided not to give her his cultivation technique, as her current one was already sufficient. Her technique, which came from the Heavenly Demon's wife, the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, was the most suitable for her. With the right environment like this place, its speed would not fall behind the technique he had created.

Well, she had another way to cultivate much faster, and that was to dual cultivate with him. It was the fastest method, and Sylphia was proof of it, she had truly left Baek Jimin in the dust because she had dual cultivated with him.

Aldrian put that thought aside for now. Sooner or later, he could help Baek Jimin as he had helped Sylphia.

As if Baek Jimin could sense his presence during her cultivation, she suddenly halted her session. The energy absorption stopped, and she slowly opened her eyes. She instantly turned her head toward him and showed a beautiful smile before standing up and pouncing on him.

Aldrian smiled warmly as he caught her, and she instantly embraced him in a tight hug. He returned the hug, but in a sudden motion, she kissed him on the lips, stunning him for a moment. That surprise lasted only a split second before he quickly reciprocated her kiss.

He felt Baek Jimin's lips grow bolder as they parted, her tongue attempting to enter his mouth. Noticing her boldness, Aldrian didn't want to lose. He accepted her challenge, opened his mouth, and their tongues met.

Their kiss grew deeper and more sensual as Baek Jimin grabbed the back of his head, while Aldrian wrapped his arms around her waist. Their tongues battled for dominance, but experience didn't lie, Aldrian quickly took control, pushing the battle into Baek Jimin's mouth. There was no way she could match the experience he had gained from "fighting" with Sylphia every chance they got..

Baek Jimin knew she had lost, but she let him be, letting him wreak havoc in her mouth and dominate her completely. Only after a minute did they finally separate, with her gasping for air. Her face was deeply flushed, but she quickly hid it by hugging him again.

Aldrian smiled warmly and stroked her smooth white hair. This had always happened with Baek Jimin over the past month whenever they were alone without anyone watching. Although she could act bold in front of others, she still felt a hint of shame when it came to showing her true affection.

But when they were alone, it was as if there was nothing to fear, she simply let her desires show. The kiss just now was something she would only do in private, and Aldrian's willingness to respond made her truly happy.

The only thing missing was the three words she had long been waiting to hear from him.

"Jimin, do you want to come with me to visit the Vindas Empire? I've been invited by my uncle to give a lecture at the Heavenly Path Academy. I thought you might be interested, so I asked if you'd like to accompany me."

Hearing that, Baek Jimin's eyes lit up with happiness as she looked into his eyes.

"Of course I'd like to. I'll accompany you, if you'll let me," she replied, which made Aldrian nod.

Yesterday, after the coronation, his uncle Luis had invited him to visit the Heavenly Path Academy. The purpose of the visit was to inspire the younger generation by giving a lecture at the most prestigious academy on the continent.

At this moment, Aldrian had become a role model for the younger generation. Though he was still young himself, he had already achieved much and was creating a legend of his own.

His visit would give those young souls renewed spirit and vigor to face the challenges ahead, especially with the arrival of outsiders on the continent in the future.

He thought it was a good idea, so he agreed and decided to make the visit today. The time was drawing near, with the sun almost at its highest point. He had asked Baek Jimin to come with him because he wanted to show everyone that she stood beside him too just like Sylphia as his woman. Until now, everyone had only seen him with Sylphia at most formal occasions, and they weren't surprised, since she was already known to be his fiancée.

However, many still doubted Baek Jimin's true status, and it seemed it was time to make things clear. Bringing her along on official matters was also a way of showing that her position was equal to Sylphia's.

"Wait, let me change into a more formal robe," Baek Jimin said as she ran into the palace.

Aldrian watched her with a smile, then looked down at his own attire. Thinking he should also dress more appropriately, he changed into his noble robes. Once both of them were ready, Aldrian teleported them to their destination—Heavenly Path Academy.

The Heavenly Path Academy, widely regarded as the most prestigious academy on the continent, was the place young cultivators across the land dreamed of studying at, even if only once in their lives.

Located in a special region in the southern part of the Vindas Empire, near the Eternal Sanctuary Forest, it offered the best environment for those seeking a deep education in cultivation.

Although the Heavenly Path Academy was located within the Vindas Empire, it was a special place where even the emperor himself had no right to interfere in its affairs. The academy was truly an autonomous region, focused solely on education and the cultivation of powerful individuals.

Many great cultivators still maintained ties to the academy, which was one of the key reasons it had been able to preserve its autonomy and remain free from outside

influence to this day. Even the major powers of the continent hesitated to impose their own agendas on it because of it.

As the most prestigious academy on the continent, the requirements to enter were difficult and demanding. That was why those who could enter were truly the best of the best.

At this moment, the disciples of the academy were in an uproar as news spread that the emperor would be visiting. The teachers had already gathered thousands of disciples in the grand auditorium, where it was said the emperor would personally give a lecture. In fact, it wasn't just the students, many teachers were just as eager for the event.

Because of that, the academy had adjusted everything to ensure the event would run smoothly.

The noise of thousands filled the auditorium as everyone waited for the emperor's arrival. The eagerness on the faces of the younger generation and even the teachers was plain to see.

"Ah, I can finally see His Majesty in person, this is truly my lucky day!" one of the female disciples said to her friend.

"Yes! I can finally see his handsome face directly. I've only ever seen him through a screen, and now His Majesty is even generous enough to give us a lecture in person," her friend replied.

Conversations like this, filled with admiration, could be heard throughout the auditorium, adding to the festive atmosphere.

Amid the disciples' enthusiasm, one lower-classman sat not far from the platform. A young man with brown hair and blue eyes, he too seemed excited, his gaze fixed on the stage with eyes full of anticipation. There was nothing particularly striking about him at first glance, his appearance was ordinary, and even his cultivation seemed lacking compared to those around him.

His expression of enthusiasm froze as someone beside him shoved him to the side. Standing next to him was a handsome blond-haired young man. Judging by his robe, he was in the same class, but his expression now turned mocking as he looked down at the brown-haired youth.

Behind him stood several of his friends, their faces showing the same disdain, as if the brown-haired boy's very presence was beneath them.

"You'd better move, weakling. I want this seat," the blond-haired young man said in a mocking tone, followed by the snickering of his friends.

The brown-haired student seemed like he wanted to respond, but in the end, he lowered his head and silently gave up his seat. Seeing him obey so easily only made the blond-haired student more smug, and sneered.

"Fucking commoner weakling."

The brown-haired student heard it, but chose to ignore it as he walked off to find another seat farther from the platform. He finally found a vacant one, though it was much further back than his original spot.

Not long after he sat down, a loud voice echoed from one side of the auditorium.

"His Majesty has arrived at the academy!"

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- Chapter 653 - 653: Unexpected Finding?

Chapter 653 - 653: Unexpected Finding?

[1,648 words]

The moment the shout echoed through the auditorium, the crowd grew louder and more spirited. At that moment, on the academy grounds, Aldrian and Baek Jimin were personally greeted by the academy's headmaster, the sword sage Wang Weijian.

Several other teachers stood behind him, all bowing to Aldrian.

"Welcome to the Heavenly Path Academy, Your Majesty, Your Highness. It is truly our honor to receive your grand selves at this humble place. My apologies for having you enter through the front gate without an escort. We truly did not know Your Majesty would appear so suddenly without notice," Headmaster Wang said in a respectful and slightly regretful tone.

He already regarded Baek Jimin as family to Aldrian, which made her slightly embarrassed, though she kept her composure. At this moment, she was here as his partner, and she could not afford to disgrace him.

Headmaster Wang had already gathered information about the people around Aldrian, naturally, that included Baek Jimin through his own network. He knew she was someone important to Aldrian, and he did not hesitate to regard her as part of Aldrian's family, both out of genuine respect and to present himself well in front of Aldrian.

"You don't have to apologize, Headmaster Wang. I simply prefer to travel in my own way, so there's no need to feel bad," Aldrian said, prompting Headmaster Wang to straighten his posture and nod respectfully.

"Even so, we are truly ashamed that we could not provide Your Majesty with a proper escort. An arrival like this was beyond our expectations," Headmaster Wang replied.

"Anyway, Your Majesty, before we proceed to the grand auditorium, allow me to introduce a few of the academy's instructors. This is Luis, whom Your Majesty already knows... He is an outstanding practical instructor at our academy," Headmaster Wang said, gesturing toward Luis as he spoke.

Luis smiled and gave a slight bow as a sign of respect. Although Aldrian was his nephew, he still had to follow proper hierarchy in front of others. Aldrian understood this and returned the gesture with a nod and a smile.

Over the next few moments, Headmaster Wang introduced several other teachers before they continued on toward the grand auditorium.

As they walked, Headmaster Wang explained the general details of the academy. While listening, Aldrian glanced around, observing the place where thousands of disciples received their education in cultivation.

The academy was truly expansive and supported by the rich energy of heaven and earth. Moreover, ever since the shift across the continent, the density of the energy had only increased.

He imagined that if he had been born an ordinary being on this continent, he might have tried to enter this academy, a place where he could gain deep knowledge of cultivation, where he could make many friends. He would have lived like any other member of the younger generation, without concerns for greater problems or complicated matters.

He smiled inwardly, knowing it was nothing more than a passing thought. Fate had long since ensured that he would not live a normal life. His very origin had made that impossible.

As he continued listening to the headmaster, he learned more about the academy. It had been founded by the younger brother of the first emperor of the Vindas Empire, another reason the academy had long enjoyed its own autonomy.

The purpose of the academy was to train and produce outstanding cultivators who could carry the academy's values into the world. Unlike sects, the academy did not require its disciples to remain loyal or stay permanently. Once they reached the Duke stage, they were required to graduate and move on.

The academy opened its doors to new disciples every five years, offering only one hundred spots. With thousands of applicants each time, the competition was truly fierce.

After walking for thirty minutes, with Aldrian receiving guidance and information directly from the headmaster, they finally arrived at the grand auditorium, a structure capable of holding tens of thousands of people at once.

Even before stepping inside, Aldrian could already hear the roar of the crowd echoing from within. He and Baek Jimin were guided to the backstage area, and just then, Aldrian heard a shout from the main hall.

"His Majesty the Emperor has arrived!"

The moment the shout echoed, the noise from the thousands in the auditorium gradually faded until the hall fell completely silent.

Aldrian had finally reached the backstage area, which connected to a high platform visible to all the waiting disciples. Aldrian and Baek Jimin remained behind for the moment, while Headmaster Wang stepped onto the stage to address the crowd.

After a few minutes of speaking, the headmaster concluded his speech and turned back to the disciples.

"Alright, without further delay, let us welcome our most esteemed guest, the great Emperor of our empire!"

As soon as Headmaster Wang finished speaking, Aldrian and Baek Jimin stepped onto the stage, prompting everyone in the auditorium to rise from their seats.

In unison, their voices rang out:

"To the brightest star and eternal light, we greet Your Majesty, the Great Emperor!"

Then, all of them bowed for a few moments before straightening their posture once more.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows at the greeting, clearly amused. Then he smiled, and that alone caused many of the women in the auditorium to blush. His handsomeness and charisma seemed to radiate even more in a moment like this, with his smile adding to his striking presence.

As for the men, they found themselves blushing at the sight of Baek Jimin's rare beauty. They couldn't help but follow her movements and gaze at her face. Though she wore an expressionless look, her natural beauty was captivating. Her white hair and red eyes gave her an otherworldly charm that made it difficult for them to look away.

Aldrian and Baek Jimin finally reached the center of the platform. Aldrian swept his gaze across the disciples, observing the young generation who had managed to earn a place in the most prestigious academy on the continent.

There were more than ten thousand disciples present, and all of them could be considered geniuses. Their ages ranged from decades to over a hundred years, with most of them having reached the earl stage.

Aldrian suddenly found it amusing. Technically, he was much younger than all of them, making him their junior. Yet, because his body had already matured and his strength far surpassed theirs, not to mention his absolute authority, they looked up to him like an idol, even a god. It seemed they had already forgotten that he was, in truth, far younger than them.

As his gaze swept over the crowd, he suddenly paused in one direction. What caught his attention was a brown-haired young man seated far in the back. His cultivation was noticeably lower than those around him.

He wondered why this disciple had such low cultivation, only at the High Viscount stage, while most of those around him had already reached the Earl stage. Feeling intrigued, he looked into the disciple's information and couldn't help but raise his eyebrows as he read it.

Zander Alvrich

Age: 68 years

Race: Human

Cultivation: High Viscount stage

Cultivation technique: The Unity of Sword's Realm Scripture

Attack techniques: Seven Move of the Valiant Sword, Meteorite Slash, Sun Flare

Defense technique: -

Movement technique: Chaotic Step

Supporting technique: Sword Unity

Note: This human possesses the Solar Sword's Body physique. This physique grants the cultivator exceptional affinity with swords, allowing them to manifest sword intent and sword will with greater ease. His cultivation is also closely linked to his

comprehension of the sword and the swords he wields. His power increases significantly during the day, though it is slightly diminished at night.

At 68 years old, he was still considered young for a cultivator. While his cultivation might seem lacking within this academy, it was actually quite impressive compared to the rest of the continent.

What truly caught Aldrian's attention, however, was the fact that he had just encountered something new in a person's information, something he had never seen before.

This was the first time he had seen someone with a special physique in this life. Of course, he knew what a physique was, a rare constitution that occasionally appeared in a being's body. Those born with such a trait usually possessed unique abilities or advantages in their cultivation path.

The Solar Sword's Body physique was something he recognized from his memories. He recalled that one of his followers had been a great swordsman who also possessed this very physique. Seeing another person with the same physique now sparked his interest.

Did this man gain the physique naturally or artificially?

How did he acquire it?

His cultivation technique might also originate from the higher heavens. There was even a strong possibility that it was the same technique used by that swordsman.

Still, he wondered why this young man had such a low cultivation level compared to the others here. Could it be related to his physique? Although Aldrian knew about the Solar Sword's Body, he couldn't recall whether it came with any setbacks.

Physiques could indeed be a blessing, but they often carried drawbacks that were not easily overcome. For example, there were physiques that required the cultivator to train in a specific environment in order to advance, while others demanded rare resources or strict conditions just to break through.

While Aldrian was lost in thought, the surrounding disciples began to glance at him with puzzled expressions. He appeared to be focusing on one specific direction for quite a while, which naturally drew their attention as well. Though they followed his gaze, none of them could tell who he was looking at.

As for the man—Zander—he felt Aldrian's gaze fall directly on him, leaving him momentarily stunned.

"Is His Majesty looking at me?"

But he quickly shook the thought from his mind. "No... I'm a nobody. There's no way someone like him would be looking at me."

But then, he saw Aldrian smile in his direction before looking elsewhere, and it made him freeze.

Aldrian, having decided to set the matter aside for now, opened his lips and spoke.

"Greetings to all the disciples of this extraordinary academy..."

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Chapter 654 - 654: Shocking Others

[1,509 words]

"Greetings to all the disciples of this extraordinary academy. It is truly my pleasure to visit this sacred place of education with my fiancée."

Hearing Aldrian's clear voice, those who heard it finally confirmed that Aldrian indeed had two women beside him.

It was no longer speculation, Aldrian had said it himself.

Baek Jimin felt deeply moved and seemed on the verge of tears from happiness, but she held it back. Instead, she only showed a slight blush that was hard to conceal, along with a small smile. The men who saw her subtle expression couldn't help but blush shyly as well, which made them want to slap themselves for being affected by the emperor's woman.

They tried to focus on Aldrian once more.

"To be honest, I've wanted to visit this place for a long time. I've always been curious about the place that has produced so many great cultivators. I also gave Instructor Luis my word long ago that I would visit when I had the time—and today is the perfect day for that visit," Aldrian continued his speech.

Baek Jimin was also guided by the instructor to her seat of honor, which was positioned slightly behind Aldrian. She sat there quietly while Aldrian delivered his speech, and his eyes swept over the disciples before him.

He wondered if he could find someone like Zander, someone with a special physique or body constitution, among these thousands of disciples.

But after a closer look, he didn't see anyone like Zander.

"I know you're all eager for the lecture session, so I won't keep you waiting any longer," Aldrian said, glancing slightly at Zander.

"Let's see if I can help you," he thought.

Everyone there had already closed their eyes in concentration, waiting for Aldrian to begin.

Aldrian finally started, preaching about cultivation and the dao. As time passed, however, his lecture gradually shifted to a more specific topic, the way of the sword. This was a lecture that would benefit sword cultivators the most.

Although all cultivators could still gain something from it, the ones who would benefit the most were the sword cultivators present, especially someone like Zander. Aldrian wanted to help him, as he felt Zander seemed to fall behind others despite having a special physique.

Moreover, that physique was the same as one of his past followers, which gave him a personal connection to it. He simply felt the need to do something for the one who had inherited that special physique.

As time passed, the effects of Aldrian's lecture could already be felt and seen. Some of the sword cultivators among the disciples had begun to enter an enlightenment state. Time continued to flow, and even the instructors began to enter enlightenment.

Aldrian continued preaching, occasionally glancing in Zander's direction.

He noticed that Zander had entered the enlightenment state much earlier than the others. In fact, he was the first to do so.

How much each person would benefit depended on themselves, it was tied to how deeply they could comprehend the lecture.

At this moment, those who had entered enlightenment were doing their best to comprehend as much of Aldrian's words as possible, and raising their comprehension.

Aldrian's voice continued to echo in their minds, as their consciousness had already been drawn into their own mindscapes.

After more than thirty minutes, the sword cultivators began to gain deeper comprehension of the sword. One by one, they experienced breakthroughs in their comprehension.

With these breakthroughs, their sword techniques would become more refined and far more powerful.

Aldrian, observing this, nodded inwardly. He was not surprised.

Beyond his lecture, the disciples' own talents also played a role in how easily they could absorb his words and comprehend them so quickly.

"As expected from the disciples of the Heavenly Path Academy," he thought.

Some of them were also nearing a breakthrough in their cultivation, especially the teachers at the King and Emperor stage, where comprehension was crucial.

Many had been stuck at their current stage for a long time due to a lack of comprehension, but at this moment, breakthroughs began to seem within reach.

A few moments later—

Whoosh!

The energy of heaven and earth surged toward a single direction as one of the teachers finally broke through, advancing from the high King stage to the peak King stage.

He was an instructor who specialized in the way of the sword and had been stuck in the same realm for hundreds of years.

As time passed, many of the sword cultivators had already come out of their enlightenment state. Only a few remained within it, and among them was the headmaster himself.

Then, a few minutes later, another wave of chaotic energy surged through the air as Headmaster Wang finally broke through to the high Emperor stage!

He had been trapped at the middle Emperor stage for thousands of years, yet now, he had finally advanced!

At last, Aldrian ended his lecture, and in that moment, everyone opened their eyes.

The moment they did, they could feel the changes within themselves, especially the sword cultivators.

A murmur quickly spread through the crowd of thousands, creating a rising wave of noise that echoed across the grand auditorium.

They spoke with excitement, their voices full of joy as they shared what they had felt. There was no doubt about it, they had grown stronger.

This was also the moment when many people began congratulating those who had achieved breakthroughs, especially the headmaster.

"Congratulations, Headmaster, on your breakthrough! With your rise in strength, the academy's future looks even brighter."

"Congratulations, Headmaster..."

One by one, the academy's teachers offered their words of congratulations to Headmaster Wang, and he responded to each of them with enthusiasm.

He felt refreshed and empowered by his advancement to a new realm. The surge in strength lifted his mood greatly.

But he hadn't forgotten the one who made it all possible.

His gaze turned toward Aldrian on the stage.

The others seemed to realize it as well, and a collective sense of gratitude filled the air. They all wanted to voice their thanks to Aldrian.

But before anyone could say a word, Aldrian raised his hand, signaling them to stay silent.

They paused, holding back what they were about to say, and then followed Aldrian's gaze as he gestured toward a particular spot.

What they saw left them astonished.

A lone disciple was still in an enlightenment state.

The headmaster and the teachers looked at him with surprise as they recognized the disciple—Zander.

His eyes remained closed, and the distinct flow of heaven and earth energy being drawn into his body made it clear that he was still deep in enlightenment.

With Zander still in an enlightenment state, didn't that mean he had gained a much deeper comprehension from Aldrian's lecture?

Even after the lecture had ended, he remained in that state.

However, in the eyes of the surrounding disciples, what they saw was very different from what the teachers perceived.

To them, Zander looked like a young man pretending to be in an enlightenment state, just to avoid embarrassing himself.

Though none of them voiced it openly due to the circumstances, quiet murmurs and mocking expressions spread among them.

Aldrian noticed it all.

He looked at Zander calmly, but he also clearly heard the whispered opinions circulating through the crowd:

A commoner who only entered the academy out of pity?

A weakling with slow cultivation?

An unworthy existence in this academy?

He frowned slightly, knowing full well that most of these people came from noble families. It was clear these brats were showing their disdain simply because of Zander's commoner origin. Although not all of the disciples were like this, many of them seemed to share the same attitude toward Zander.

It was the classic situation where nobles underestimated a commoner.

But then, Aldrian eased his expression.

These nobles might be geniuses with great talent, but in front of a special physique like the Solar Sword Body, they were nothing. If Zander could fully unleash his potential and take advantage of that unique constitution, there would be no one here who could compare to him.

Though surrounded by voices full of doubt and even mockery, Zander remained undisturbed, still deep in his enlightenment state.

He heard none of their whispers.

What echoed within him was not their scorn, but Aldrian's voice, repeating again and again in his mind.

Aldrian's words had a completely different effect. What he preached carried a depth of comprehension far beyond anything Zander had ever heard in the academy. It pulled him deeper into the enlightenment state.

Then, all of a sudden, many people in the auditorium felt something.

They instinctively looked down at the swords on their waists before their eyes widened in astonishment.

Their swords were trembling.

All across the auditorium, swords could be seen vibrating faintly, resonating with something unseen. Even Headmaster Wang and the instructors were visibly stunned. They immediately sensed what was happening and turned their eyes to Zander, their faces filled with shock.

From Zander's body, a powerful sword intent was slowly forming, strong and sharp.

This made the teachers' hearts tremble. Zander was already beginning to form his own sword intent at his current cultivation level!

And it was not just any sword intent, it was remarkably strong!

It was incredible!

Aldrian, watching it all unfold, gave a faint smile.

Zander had not disappointed him.

"As expected from the one who inherited the same physique as my past follower. He truly is extraordinary."

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Chapter 655 - 655: His Life as a Disciple

[1,687 words]

Sword intent was the ability of a sword cultivator to become one with the sword, manifesting the power of the sword into a force that amplified their strength.

It was an ability that every swordmaster had to possess, as it was directly tied to their comprehension. The deeper their understanding, the greater their unity with the sword. The deeper this unity, the stronger their sword intent became. The stronger the sword intent, the more powerful they became.

However, creating sword intent was not easy. Cultivators not only needed a profound comprehension of the sword, but also had to manifest that comprehension into a force known as sword intent. In addition, they required a rich flow of heaven and earth energy to support the creation process.

Normally, this phase could be achieved by a cultivator at the Marquess stage, as their comprehension would be deep enough to trigger sword intent. In some rare cases, there were geniuses at the Earl stage who could shape their own sword intent.

But for someone at the Viscount stage to create sword intent? Aside from a singularity like Aldrian, who had even formed his own sword will, there was no one.

That was why, the moment everyone witnessed Zander forming his own sword intent, they were truly shocked. And it was not just an ordinary sword intent, it was powerful enough to cause a phenomenon among the nearby swords, showing that all the swords around were resonating with the strength of his sword intent.

His sword intent grew clearer and clearer, causing the disciples near him to feel a piercing sensation that prompted them to move away. It even began physically affecting Zander's surroundings, as slash marks appeared on the nearby seats and floor.

This made many of them shudder, Zander's sword intent was strong enough to affect his surroundings physically.

But their shock didn't end there. Zander's cultivation suddenly rose as he broke through to the peak of the Viscount stage. Yet it didn't stop. The surrounding energy kept being absorbed into his body without him realizing it, and his cultivation continued to rise, nearing the Low Earl stage.

After more than twenty minutes, he finally had another breakthrough to the Low Earl stage!

At this moment, both the disciples and the teachers were already looking at him as if he were a monster. Something like this had never happened in their lives.

To have consecutive breakthroughs in such a short time, what kind of sorcery was this? But then they remembered someone like Aldrian existed and stopped thinking further. From their perspective, a new era had truly arrived. With Aldrian's appearance, situations like this might no longer be impossible, and in the future, more unbelievable things might happen.

After a few more minutes, Zander finally opened his eyes. A yellow hue flickered across them for a split second before vanishing. Once he fully opened his eyes, he was stunned to find himself alone on his seat. The surrounding disciples had all moved away, and they were looking at him as if he were some otherworldly being.

He felt confused, then was stunned once more when he saw the damage around him. Slash marks were scattered across the floor and nearby seats.

He widened his eyes. What was going on while he was in that strange state?

What he had just experienced was truly magnificent. It felt like entering a dream where he could perceive everything smoothly and effortlessly. He felt as if he were in a new body, and then, he finally sensed something within himself.

When he focused inward, he was utterly shocked to find that he had already reached the Low Earl stage. His senses had become sharper, and his body completely refreshed.

He genuinely wondered what had happened, prompting him to part his lips.

"Uhm, what is going on here?" he asked with slight hesitation.

But no one answered him immediately. Instead, Aldrian's voice resounded.

"What is your name?"

The moment Aldrian asked the question, Zander looked in his direction. Aldrian was smiling at him, but Zander was astonished. The emperor himself was speaking to him!

He didn't wait any longer and quickly bowed.

"Answering Your Majesty, my name is Zander Alvrich," he replied hurriedly.

Aldrian kept smiling, then turned to Headmaster Wang.

"Headmaster, it looks like I've found someone interesting," he said aloud, but after that, he sent a voice transmission to the headmaster.

"Headmaster Wang, tell me, how did Zander enter the academy, and what has his life here been like?"

Headmaster Wang let out a slight sigh and began telling Aldrian about Zander.

The young man had joined the academy fifteen years ago. At that time, he came as a genius from a commoner background, and even Headmaster Wang had been shocked by his cultivation talent.

His swordsmanship was also exceptional, and he passed the entrance test with flying colors, immediately earning a place as a disciple of the academy.

But as time went on, problems began to appear. Zander's cultivation progress gradually slowed. Those who had entered alongside him that once behind, caught up and eventually surpassed him. Worse still, juniors from later entrance batches began overtaking him as well.

This caused many rumors to spread, affecting his life as a disciple. Many began underestimating him, and with his commoner background, he became an easy target among the noble disciples. He couldn't avoid being scorned or looked down upon, and the academy had no real power to control the opinions of its students.

Although those disciples kept their hands tied in front of the teachers, the instructors were well aware that something must have been happening behind the scenes. Even so, they couldn't possibly guard Zander twenty-four hours a day, and whatever happened to him when they weren't watching gradually turned him into a more withdrawn and silent person.

The academy had actually considered expelling Zander before things got any worse. They didn't want anything to happen to him, and his performance had been lacking for years anyway, so it seemed like the most reasonable course of action.

But Zander was adamant. He requested one more chance, asking for time until next year to prove that he still deserved his place.

From the academy's understanding, he chose to stay because he wanted to graduate properly. He hoped to raise his family's status, which they found admirable.

Aldrian, after hearing the explanation, nodded in understanding. But then he spoke to Headmaster Wang through voice transmission.

"To be honest, after hearing his story, I'm quite disappointed with how the academy handled this situation. I expected more from the most prestigious academy. You need to be more decisive, headmaster Wang. These brats have grown arrogant and are exploiting the loopholes in the academy's rules."

"If this is meant to be one of the so-called lessons of the harsh cultivation world, then no. This is simply bullying."

Headmaster Wang knew that Aldrian was displeased. From his tone alone, it was clear he was truly disappointed. Without hesitation, Headmaster Wang bowed deeply to Aldrian, leaving the onlookers stunned.

They understood that the headmaster and the emperor were communicating through voice transmission, but none of them knew what had been said to make the headmaster bow so suddenly.

"My apologies, Your Majesty. I was not decisive enough, and I failed to handle this problem fairly and justly. I deserve to be punished for my negligence and lack of judgment," Headmaster Wang said. The happiness he had felt over the breakthrough was swept away by Aldrian's words.

The academy had clearly disappointed the emperor, and their mishandling of the situation had damaged the academy's image in his eyes.

"I'm not going so far as to punish you," Aldrian replied calmly, "but I hope there will never be a situation like this again. I imagine something similar may have happened before, with someone else."

"I understand, Your Majesty. It won't happen again," the headmaster responded immediately.

Aldrian nodded, then turned his gaze back to Zander.

"Zander, could you come with me for a moment?" he said with a smile.

Zander was stunned, but quickly bowed.

"Of course, Your Majesty."

The other disciples, seeing Zander personally invited by the emperor, could only feel envious, but they kept those feelings buried in their hearts. Some of those who had bullied him gritted their teeth. At this moment, they felt not only envy, but anger. After all the miserable years Zander had spent in the academy, it was him the emperor had noticed.

Zander followed Aldrian to the backstage area, where Aldrian requested a private room for the two of them to speak. Baek Jimin also followed, intending to hear what Aldrian wanted to discuss with Zander.

The private room, still located within a part of the grand auditorium, was quickly prepared. Aldrian sat face to face with Zander, who kept his head slightly lowered, his nervousness clearly showing.

How could he not be? He was now alone in a room with the emperor and his fiancée.

Aldrian smiled, trying to ease the tension, then began to speak.

"Zander, huh? I didn't expect to meet someone like you here. Do you know that you're special?"

Hearing those words, Zander froze. He lowered his head more, as if weighed down by shame.

"No, Your Majesty... I'm not someone great like that. I don't think I deserve to be called special," he replied, his voice filled with disappointment and sadness.

"Is that so?" Aldrian smiled. "Then how could someone not be special after achieving what you just did? Is a person who can break through twice in a short time, and comprehend sword intent not considered special?"

Zander's eyes widened. Sword intent? He had comprehended sword intent?

He suddenly remembered the sword marks around him, and how the other disciples had distanced themselves. In that moment, everything clicked, and his shock deepened.

"Anyway, Zander, I have a few questions for you. I hope you can answer them."

Zander quickly pushed aside his shock and nodded.

"Please ask, Your Majesty. I will gladly answer to the best of my ability."

"Alright. My first question, where did you get your cultivation technique? Was it passed down from your family, or did you find it elsewhere?" Aldrian asked.

"To be honest, I obtained my cultivation technique through a fortunate encounter, Your Majesty. I was actually trapped inside a secret realm in the Everlasting Silent Forest, and I found the technique there," Zander replied without hesitation.

His answer made Aldrian raise his eyebrows.

"A secret realm?"

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[1,699 words]

"A secret realm?" Aldrian thought.

He paused for a moment, then a thought occurred to him.

"Is it one of the secret realms belonging to one of the four guardian families?" That seemed the most likely explanation for where Zander could have found his cultivation technique.

"Could you explain more?" Aldrian asked, prompting a nod from Zander.

"At that time, I accidentally entered the Everlasting Silent Forest with a group of hunters from the Doria Empire. We were originally trying to escape from a group of bandits, and in our panic, we ended up entering it by mistake."

"I got lost in the forest, and worse, I ended up trapped inside the secret realm as my surroundings suddenly changed. While I was trying to find a way out of that place, I came across a kind of dilapidated building. Inside it, I found the book that contains my current cultivation manual."

"The cultivation manual was so strong and captivating that, without any hesitation, I decided to abandon my previous technique and switch to it. As expected, it was truly powerful. Once I started cultivating with it, I could immediately sense the difference in my cultivation speed and the strength I was able to wield."

"Since I couldn't find a way out of the secret realm, I decided to continue cultivating inside it. I was only able to leave a year later, when the forest underwent some sort of change. By that time, I had already made two breakthroughs, from the baron stage to the low viscount stage."

Zander then paused—he had finished explaining how he found the cultivation technique. Aldrian nodded in understanding, and his suspicion was likely confirmed. Zander had most likely been trapped inside one of the secret realms under the jurisdiction of one of the four guardian families.

However, Aldrian still had not figured out where Zander could have developed his special physique.

"Zander, do you know about special physiques or special constitutions?" Aldrian asked. Zander looked at him in confusion before shaking his head.

"My apologies, Your Majesty. Please enlighten me, as I don't know what that is."

Aldrian nodded and began explaining what a special physique was, which left Zander astonished. Aldrian also told him that he possessed one of these special physiques, which made him unique.

Hearing Aldrian's words, Zander was truly shocked. Him? A special physique? The Solar Sword's Body?

Looking at Zander, Aldrian could tell that he truly had no idea about his own physique. In fact, from the way Aldrian saw it, no one seemed to know that Zander possessed a special physique. Even Headmaster Wang was unaware, if he had known, he would have handled Zander's situation far more seriously.

"You've never felt anything that might be related to having a special physique? I mean, have you ever noticed anything unusual about your body, as far back as you can remember?" Aldrian asked.

Zander fell into thought, as if trying to recall anything that might be relevant, before answering.

"To be honest, the only thing I've noticed is that I can use a sword easily. I mean... how do I explain it... I've always felt like the sword was made for me. That's why I chose it as my weapon from the very start of my cultivation journey."

"Ah, yes—and when I found that cultivation technique in the secret realm and started using it, I felt more complete and more powerful than ever, just like I said earlier. It truly felt like I was being reborn with new power."

Hearing that, Aldrian couldn't help but sigh inwardly. This was truly fate. A fate that had led Zander to that cultivation technique, and a fate that had brought the two of them together at this moment.

From what Zander had described, it seemed he had already possessed a special physique long before entering the secret realm, even he was likely born with it.

Aldrian wasn't surprised. Special physiques could appear randomly as early as during the fetal stage, though they could also be created through artificial means. When they occurred by chance, it was like rolling dice, only the heavens knew who would be born with one.

Zander, who already had a special physique, then encountered a cultivation technique that suited him perfectly. A technique that truly supported his body's unique physique. One of the four guardian families had once been a sword cultivation family, which explain why they had chosen that cultivation technique from Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan.

Zander was essentially like Aldrian's past follower, but a different person.

"I see. You're truly fated, Zander, you know that? You have a special physique and a cultivation technique that fits you perfectly. That's why I've been wondering, why is your cultivation still so low, and why does it seem like you've made very little progress here, despite having those advantages? Did you notice any changes after coming here?" Aldrian asked.

"Well, actually, the change I felt happened after I came out of the secret realm. After I left the forest and returned to my family, my cultivation started to slow down. Even after entering the academy, I've only had two breakthroughs up until now," Zander answered, with a slightly ashamed expression.

He felt like he had wasted everything, that he wasn't talented enough, even after receiving such fortune.

But to Aldrian, something finally became clear. Zander's cultivation speed had slowed after leaving the forest? That likely pointed to the influence of his cultivation environment. It seemed that Zander required an environment similar to the forest, or even the secret realm itself, for his cultivation to be effective.

There was no other explanation. Based on the information he had read from the system, Zander's cultivation was also closely linked to his comprehension. As time passed, he would find it increasingly difficult to grasp deeper comprehension without proper guidance. Even though he could study the Dao of sword at the academy, it wasn't enough to deepen his comprehension.

That was why, the moment Zander listened to his lecture and entered enlightenment, his cultivation had advanced so dramatically. Still, to continue progressing, Zander needed to cultivate in an environment suited to him, like that secret realm.

Aldrian felt that Zander's talent was being wasted here. He had the potential to become like one of his past followers, to become a great swordmaster whose name would echo across the heavens.

"Zander, do you want to come with me?" Aldrian asked suddenly, causing Zander's eyes to widen in shock.

"I'm sorry—what do you mean, Your Majesty?" he blurted out. It was a natural reaction, driven by fear that he had misunderstood what Aldrian just said.

Aldrian smiled and repeated his words.

"Do you want to come with me? I'll make sure you can fully maximize your talent and special physique. I know how to make you much stronger."

Realizing he hadn't misheard, Zander's heart trembled. To follow the emperor and train under him?

It felt like a dream.

Who wouldn't want to follow the sole emperor of the continent? The man many regarded as a god. Even Zander himself saw the emperor as his role model, his hero, the one he aspired to be.

His life at the academy had been miserable anyway. If nothing changed, he would be expelled next year and he knew he hadn't made any real progress despite everything.

And now the emperor himself was offering to help him? He would be a fool not to accept.

"Of course, Your Majesty—no, I will follow Your Majesty! Please guide me so I can grow stronger. I don't want others to underestimate me. I want to bring pride to myself and my family," Zander said as he kowtowed before Aldrian.

Aldrian smiled as he gently controlled the surrounding energy, lifting Zander to his feet.

"Stand up. I'll speak with Headmaster Wang first. Once you begin following me, you'll no longer be a disciple of Heavenly Path Academy," he said, which immediately made Zander nervous.

He didn't know how the headmaster would take it, but his desire to follow Aldrian remained firm.

A few moments later, Headmaster Wang entered the room. Not long after, Aldrian explained his intentions regarding Zander, and the headmaster was visibly astonished. He feared Aldrian had come to this decision because he believed the academy was incompetent and had chosen to step in personally.

But Aldrian quickly clarified that it wasn't the case. Zander was simply a special case, someone who could only bloom under his guidance. Hearing that, the headmaster understood.

Inwardly, he was relieved. Zander had found someone like Aldrian to guide his growth, something even he, as the headmaster, hadn't been able to resolve.

After the miserable time Zander had endured at the academy, it finally felt like fortune had arrived. With someone like Emperor Aldrian guiding him, he was bound to shine in the future.

"It looks like his name will be known far and wide," the headmaster thought as he looked at Zander with a pleased expression.

"Zander, you must obey everything His Majesty says from now on. Although you haven't completed your education here, we will still consider you one of our graduated disciples," he said, causing Zander's eyes to widen.

"Headmaster, you mean...?"

Headmaster Wang nodded with a smile.

"As of this moment, you are no longer a disciple of Heavenly Path Academy."

Hearing the declaration, Zander's eyes trembled before he bowed deeply.

"Thank you, Headmaster," he said with gratitude, and receiving a quiet nod in response.

At the very least, for Headmaster Wang, Zander would now have a hopeful future—and Emperor Aldrian wouldn't mark down the academy because of him.

They spoke for a few more moments before Aldrian finally said that he would be leaving, and that Zander would be going with him.

In the end, under the watchful eyes of many, Aldrian, Baek Jimin, and Zander left the academy grounds. Their departure sparked a wave of discussion among the disciples and teachers alike, though none of them knew exactly what had been discussed in the private room. They would have to wait for the headmaster to reveal where the emperor was taking Zander.

Later that day, the entire academy finally learned that Zander was no longer a disciple of Heavenly Path Academy, he had been personally taken by the emperor to train under him.

News that immediately stirred a wave of envy, especially among those who had bullied him. They felt like tearing their hair out in frustration.

If only they had been the ones chosen by the emperor!

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Chapter 657 - 657: The Three Words

[1,563 words]

After departing from the academy, Aldrian brought Zander to his family first, as he needed to inform them of his circumstances. His family was located in the southern part of the Doria Empire, in a small town called Harmon Town.

Zander's family could be described as a typical commoner cultivation family. They were able to cultivate thanks to a fortunate opportunity their ancestor once encountered. That ancestor had come across a cultivation technique. Although the technique was not exceptionally powerful, it was sufficient for them.

Aldrian, Baek Jimin, and Zander appeared in the sky above the town as Zander showed them his home. He pointed to a simple house complex that was neither too large nor too small. Surrounded by a wall, the house was enough to accommodate his entire family.

Aldrian then sensed four people within the house's grounds. The strongest among them was only at the peak Earl stage, and that presence came from an old man. According to Zander's information, his family consisted of his parents, little sister, and grandparents.

Aldrian and his group then teleported in front of the wall's gate. Not long after, Aldrian knocked on the door.

After the knocks, the door opened to reveal a middle-aged woman. Based on Zander's explanation, this woman was his mother.

The woman saw Zander, which surprised her, and then her gaze fell on the two figures beside him. The moment her eyes landed on the man next to Zander, they trembled in recognition.

"Your majesty."

As if hearing the commotion at the front gate, three other people appeared, an old man, an old woman, and a young woman, much younger than Zander.

"What is—" the old man began to ask, but the moment he saw Aldrian, his eyes trembled. The others reacted the same. Without hesitation, all of them instantly prostrated before Aldrian.

"Your Majesty!"

He was the emperor! There was no way they could mistake him for someone else. His face was already known across the continent. That handsome face and striking red hair were unmistakable. And besides, no one would dare to impersonate the emperor, doing so would be suicide.

Moreover, the woman beside him could also be seen in all of the emperor's public appearances. Even on the day of his enthronement, she walked in the same line as his fiancée, who was widely known to be Princess Sylphia. It showed that this woman held the same status as Princess Sylphia.

Why would they be here?

"At ease, Lady Alvrich, elders, and young miss. My visit here has something to do with Zander," Aldrian said with a smile.

The moment they heard Aldrian mention Zander's name, all of them raised their heads and looked at him with worried expressions. They had already seen Zander standing beside the emperor, but why was he with him? Had Zander done something wrong?

"Your Majesty, what did our Zander do? Did he make a mistake? If he—"

"Ah, no, Lady Alvrich. Zander did not do anything wrong. In fact, I came here to bring good news. But before I say what it is, may I come in? I'm afraid I'm starting to attract attention," Aldrian said, cutting off Zander's mother gently. Lady Alvrich stopped speaking and quickly stood up.

"Ah, yes, yes! But my apologies, Your Majesty, Your Highness, our home is simple and may not be to your liking or comfort."

"No need to worry. I don't see any problem at all."

Aldrian, Baek Jimin, and Zander entered the house under the gaze of a few onlookers. Since a few passersby had already seen Aldrian's appearance, a small commotion had begun to stir outside.

After a short reunion between Zander and his family, Aldrian explained the purpose of his visit, leaving everyone in shock.

He was no longer a disciple of the Heavenly Path Academy?

Zander would now train under the emperor?

It felt like a dream. What could Zander have done to attract the emperor's attention?

"May I ask, where is Mister Alvrich? He doesn't seem to be here," Aldrian asked after finishing his explanation.

"Ah, he's still working outside. He works as an escort cultivator for an escort agency in this town. Usually, if there's no escort mission, he comes back before sunset," Lady Alvrich replied, prompting a nod from Aldrian.

"I see. Then, Lady Alvrich, please inform him of what we discussed once he returns," he said.

"Yes, Your Majesty," Zander's mother replied.

Aldrian glanced at Zander, who was sitting beside his little sister. The girl seemed especially close to her big brother. She had clung to him from the moment he returned. But when she looked at Aldrian, her expression turned nervous, which made him smile at her to ease her tension, and it worked as she blushed slightly and lowered her head.

After they conversed for another hour, the time finally came for Aldrian to leave.

"I think that's it, Lady Alvrich, elders, young miss. I will bring Zander with me now," Aldrian said as he stood up, followed by the others.

After saying their goodbyes, Aldrian teleported back to the palace and arranged for Zander to settle in first. This left Zander feeling overwhelmed, as he had stepped into the emperor's palace, a sacred place for the entire continent's populace.

"Could you show me the cultivation book you found in the secret realm? I would like to see it and analyze it. While I do that, you can try cultivating here and see if you can cultivate as effectively as you did in the secret realm," Aldrian said once they had settled, to which Zander responded with a nod. He then took out a cultivation book from his storage and handed it to Aldrian.

But just as Aldrian was about to leave, he noticed hesitation in Zander's eyes and couldn't help but ask,

"What is it? Is there something you want to say to me?"

After a brief pause, Zander finally gathered his courage.

"Your Majesty, um... what am I to you? Do I count as your disciple or something?"

Aldrian finally understood and smiled at him, then replied,

"I see. It looks like I missed something important. Then, what do you do in front of your master?"

Zander's eyes glimmered as a joyful expression spread across his face. Without hesitation, he kowtowed to Aldrian.

"Disciple Zander Alvrich greets Master!" he declared with spirit.

Aldrian smiled and nodded at him. "Good. Then, as I said, cultivate first, and I will come to check your progress after some time."

"Yes, Master!"

Aldrian then turned and walked away as Zander began to cultivate. He approached Baek Jimin, who had been watching them from not far away, smiling quietly as she observed the scene.

"Now you have a disciple, huh? This is truly unexpected. From the way I see it, you really care for Zander. Is it only because he has a special physique, or is it something else? Hmm?" she asked.

However, she didn't receive an answer. Instead, Aldrian wrapped an arm around her waist.

"Who knows? Maybe it's fate. Maybe I just felt the desire to take Zander under my wing," he replied vaguely with a smile, which made Baek Jimin pout.

Aldrian continued smiling, but then his gaze softened, turning truly warm as he looked at her. Baek Jimin, seeing the change in his expression, couldn't help but smile gently in return.

Then, she froze as the scenery around them shifted in an instant.

In the blink of an eye, they were surrounded by the tranquil beauty of a lush valley. The hills were blanketed with countless types of flowers and vibrant vegetation, painting the valley floor in green and color. The air was rich with a gentle, fragrant scent.

At the base of the valley, a clear river flowed steadily toward the horizon, with flowers blooming along both banks.

Baek Jimin's eyes widened. She knew this place.

It was the place she and Aldrian had visited in the past—the place where she had once hoped he would say those three words.

The Valley of the Promise.

She turned her gaze to him with a curious expression, but all she saw was the warmth in his eyes. She smiled in return and chose not to question why he brought her here. Whatever the reason, she would follow. Without another word, she hugged him tightly.

Silence settled between them as they held each other, taking in the serenity of the moment. Then, Aldrian's voice reached her ears.

"Jimin, from the moment we first met, it felt like fate led you to me. Since then, we've grown closer—first as acquaintances, then as friends, and now... something more."

"Your feelings for me, the effort you've shown, everything you've done has truly moved me. My heart that had limited space began to open, little by little, letting you in."

Baek Jimin's eyes trembled as she realized where Aldrian's words were leading.

"Maybe this sounds sudden," he continued, "but there's no way I could remain unmoved after everything you've done. In my heart, you've already become someone truly important—someone I couldn't possibly give up to anyone else. I can't even imagine you with someone else."

"You understand what I mean, don't you?" Aldrian asked, his voice steady yet gentle.

They met each other's gaze. Baek Jimin's eyes were already reddened, and seeing this, Aldrian's expression softened even more. He leaned closer, bringing his lips near her ear, and whispered something only she could hear.

Her tears finally fell.

Her lips quivered as she tried to speak, and after a moment of silence, she finally managed to say through her tears,

"Can you say that again? This time... clearly."

Aldrian smiled tenderly, his eyes never leaving hers. With a calm, unwavering voice, he said—

"I love you."

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Chapter 658 - 658: Knowing His Secret

[1,527 words]

Once those three words left Aldrian's lips, Baek Jimin's tears fell even harder. Her lips trembled as she spoke to him, maintaining eye contact.

"Could you repeat it again?"

"I love you."

"Again."

"I love you."

"Again."

"I love you."

"Again."

"I love—"

Aldrian's words were cut off as Baek Jimin suddenly kissed him, cupping his face in her hands. He could only reciprocate, and with each passing second, their kiss grew deeper and deeper. Their desire intensified as their tongues fought to dominate each other.

After a few minutes of kissing, they finally stopped. With their foreheads resting against each other, they closed their eyes. They stayed like that, savoring the serenity and their romantic moment.

"I love you, Aldrian Aster," Baek Jimin said after a long silence. Aldrian smiled warmly at her words.

"I love you too, Jimin," he replied, cupping her face and gently stroking her cheek. He opened his eyes to look at her beautiful face, their foreheads still touching.

"You are my woman," he said. Baek Jimin nodded, still shedding tears.

"I will be by your side in every situation you're in."

Baek Jimin nodded again.

"I will not leave you."

"I will keep loving you."

"I will not disappoint you."

With each words Aldrian made, Baek Jimin nodded. Then, she finally smiled at him.

"Is this your promise here?" she asked.

"This is not just my promise—it's my oath. Well, even though this place is called the Valley of Promise, I still think an oath carries more weight," Aldrian said with a light joking tone, which made Baek Jimin giggle before she opened her lips.

"Then you are my man."

"I will be by your side in every situation you're in."

"I will not leave you."

"I will keep loving you."

"I will not disappoint you."

"This is not just my promise, it's my oath," Baek Jimin said with certainty, without a trace of hesitation.

Aldrian smiled warmly, kissed her forehead, and wrapped his arms around her. Her fragrance, like that of a flower, refreshed him, and he wished he could breathe it in forever.

As they held each other, Baek Jimin spoke again.

"Could you stay with me here? I still want to enjoy the valley's scenery."

Aldrian smiled and nodded.

"Of course I can. I'll accompany you for as long as you want," he said. Then he took out a mat and spread it for them to sit and enjoy the view. Once everything was arranged, they sat side by side, Baek Jimin resting her head against his arm, both quietly taking in the vast scenery of the valley.

This place was truly a feast for the eyes, and Aldrian genuinely liked it, the vast greenery, the serene, calming atmosphere. The only sounds around them were the wind and the gentle rustling of leaves. They remained silent for a few minutes, simply enjoying the peace.

"Dear... there's something I've been wondering about for a long time," Baek Jimin finally broke the silence.

"What is it?"

"I know you carry a deep secret, something that shaped who you are today. When I spoke with Sylphia, it felt like she knew something too, but she seemed hesitant whenever we touched on that topic."

She lifted her head and looked into Aldrian's face.

"You've defied common sense ever since you were a child. But you accepted it all, like you already understood yourself, like you already knew your worth and simply embraced it."

She paused, studying the subtle changes in his expression.

"It's as if you're someone with a long lifespan and deep experience... living in the body of a young man."

"You have an unusual being's essence, something entirely different from others. It made me wonder about your true self. The real identity of Aldrian Aster, deep within your soul. Are you really just a young man in your teens? Is your soul truly that young?"

"Who are you?" she asked in a soft voice, her gaze filled with curiosity rather than confusion or suspicion.

She had never brought up this topic with him before. It always felt too presumptuous to discuss something he might be keeping hidden. Who was she to question something so sensitive?

Even though Aldrian had already shown his affection toward her, she still didn't have a confirmed place beside him, nothing solid enough to give her the right to ask about the deeper secrets he carried.

However, today he had already declared that she was his fiancée—and that he loved her. It gave her a boost of confidence and the courage to bring up this sensitive topic.

"He won't be offended by this... right?" Baek Jimin thought." This has always been the one question that left me with so many doubts about Aldrian. But if the question of who the 'real' Aldrian is gets answered, then all the mysteries surrounding him might finally make sense."

Hearing her question, Aldrian smiled as he turned his head and looked into her eyes. There was no fear or any negative emotion in her gaze, only curiosity and quiet confidence.

This woman truly held not a single trace of fear or suspicion about his secret or his origin, nothing that might cause her to avoid him.

It was as if, no matter what Aldrian truly was, she believed in him as he was. He would still be Aldrian, the one she knew.

"What do you think? If all this time I'm not actually the person you expected... would you intend to leave me?" Aldrian asked.

Baek Jimin held his gaze without wavering as she answered.

"Why would I leave you? No matter who you are, you're still Aldrian Aster, the man I love. I trust my intuition, and everything I've seen in you all this time is exactly who you are. Even if you carry a deep secret, your essence remains the same. Your character is real, not a lie. I've fallen in love with your entire being, that includes your soul and the essence of who you are."

Aldrian's smile grew warmer as he listened to her steady, confident voice. He could sense without doubt that there wasn't even a speck of hesitation in her heart. She truly believed in his character, that he was not a bad person and that everything he had shown her so far was genuine.

She wasn't concerned that the truth might not match her expectations. Her curiosity was simply about knowing his secret—nothing more, nothing less.

Even if he carried the soul of an old man, or something entirely different, it didn't matter to her. She loved him as he was, and she was ready to accept whatever truth he chose to share.

"I see." Aldrian turned his gaze forward, toward the vast, beautiful scenery. "To answer your question... I have to say that I'm in a special circumstance. Even now, I'm still searching for the truth about myself, the truth about the 'real' me, about my true origin. About who I really am."

Baek Jimin was momentarily confused by Aldrian's strange answer, but she caught the meaning behind his words. He truly did carry a deep secret, something tied to his true self, his origin. If he spoke of it that way, it had to be connected to his soul... to his being's essence.

Suddenly, pieces of a long-standing puzzle began falling into place in her mind. Slowly, the whole picture started to form.

A smile spread across her face, and she gently leaned her head against his arm again.

Now she understood, why he was different from anyone else she had ever known. Why he carried a maturity far beyond someone his age.

She finally understood why Aldrian was no ordinary young man.

One conclusion formed in her mind, one that also connected with her knowledge of her eye technique, the one that could see the truth. The truth of the soul and the being's essence of living beings.

"I see. So that's the case," she said softly. "I thought it was impossible, since there's nothing quite like this, but you are special."

She gently wrapped her arms around his left arm.

"To my knowledge, in some rare cases, the essence of a being can be connected to their past life. In other words, it can carry over into the cycle of reincarnation."

"In their next life, they're not meant to remember who they were in their previous one—and that's how it's supposed to be."

"Your unique being's essence must be a manifestation of who you were in your previous life."

"And you must remember your past life. That's what's driving you to search for answers... for the truth about who you really are."

"You want to know the truth, the truth about your origin. Your being's essence, that ball of light, like a lone star in the darkness—it's a clue," she said, turning to look at his face again.

After Baek Jimin shared her conclusion, a brief silence followed, but it didn't last long. Aldrian looked at her with a smile and gently pinched her chin. She allowed it, continuing to look at him with a soft smile that warmed him deeply.

"How am I supposed to deal with you being this smart?" he said. "I'm afraid there's nothing I can hide from you anymore."

His words made her blush slightly, and she shyly turned her head away.

"No... I'm not that great..." she murmured shyly, an expression Aldrian found utterly adorable.

He leaned in, brought his lips close to her ear, and whispered.

"Should I 'eat' you right here, right now... as a reward?"

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 659 - 659: The Bold Baek Jimin (R-18)

[1,553 words]

Baek Jimin blushed heavily at the sound of Aldrian's soft voice and the feeling of his hot breath as he suggested something like that.

"What are you talking about? What... eat? Here... right now?" Baek Jimin asked, stuttering, something that made Aldrian smile even more teasingly.

"What are you thinking?" he asked.

"I... I..."

Aldrian couldn't help but pull her into his embrace. He felt a little bad seeing her so shy. Although she acted much bolder when they were alone, she was clearly different from

Sylphia when faced with his sensual teasing. If it were Sylphia, she would have instantly shouted at him, her face red in embarrassment.

Baek Jimin seemed more reserved and 'innocent' than Sylphia, which only made him want to hug and protect her more.

"All right, all right, I'll stop," he said, stroking her hair. "I won't do anything to you until you're ready, so take your time."

Baek Jimin felt slightly relieved, but then a wave of uncertainty crept in. Her chest had felt like it was about to burst earlier when Aldrian said he wanted to 'eat' her. Even though she knew he had only been teasing, she couldn't shake the feeling that she hadn't committed enough to this relationship.

If Aldrian truly wanted to 'eat' her here and now... what would she do?

After thinking for a moment, her face still buried in his chest and glowing red, she spoke in a low voice.

"If... if you want it now, I don't mind. I'm ready."

Although her voice was small, Aldrian heard it clearly. His eyes widened slightly in astonishment, but then he smiled. He knew she was pushing herself again to show her commitment and effort. With a woman like this, how could his heart not melt? How could he not fall for her?

"No, no, I was just joking. You don't have to push yourself," he said gently. "Like I told you, if you're truly ready, I'll devour you completely."

Baek Jimin didn't move, but Aldrian continued stroking her head lovingly. He simply held her close, breathing in her scent, content in the quiet moment, until suddenly—

Touch.

His eyes flew open in shock.

Baek Jimin's hand had reached down and touched his crotch.

He hadn't expected her to make a move like that. He never imagined she would dare touch him that region!

He looked down at the woman in his arms.

"Jimin? What are you—?"

"You said I was pushing myself? No, I'm not," Baek Jimin said, cutting off his words. "I was just shocked when you said something like that here, it made me panic. But from the moment you spoke those words of love to me, I've been ready to be taken by you anytime."

She spoke without stuttering, her hand still resting on his crotch, sending heat through his body. The romantic atmosphere quickly shifted into something far more sensual, ignited by Baek Jimin's sudden boldness.

Moreover, the elegant robe she still wore from their visit to the academy looked especially sexy in his eyes. The fabric hugged her curves in all the right places, clearly showing off her stunning figure. With her beauty and body, it was no wonder any man would fall for her if they saw her like this.

Although Aldrian could still see the blush on her face as she spoke those words, there was no doubt, she meant every bit of it. She was serious. If he wanted to have sex here, she would do it.

Suddenly, something stirred in his mind... and it actually turned him on.

He imagined having sex with Baek Jimin right here, with nothing but a mat beneath them, their bodies exposed under the open sky. No walls. No covers. Just the two of them like wild animals, accompanied only by the breeze of nature. The thought alone was enough to excite him. He couldn't help it, his spear began to respond, slowly hardening.

Baek Jimin, whose hand still rested on his crotch, felt the change. She froze for a moment in surprise, then realized she had awakened the sleeping dragon.

And oddly enough, she felt proud of it.

She felt more confident and said to him,

"Also... you've never 'played outside' with Sylphia, right? Then you can experience it with me. At least that way, I'll have something to be proud of in front of her—as your fellow woman. I know you must be excited too—"

But before she could say more, Aldrian's voice echoed softly in her ear.

"You're playing with fire, you know? I'm afraid you'll get burned and regret it once you're engulfed by it."

His voice was low, heavy, and hot, like he was holding himself back, and in that moment, the last trace of hesitation within Baek Jimin vanished.

Actually, there was still a bit of hesitation deep in her heart about doing it in the open. She was worried that someone might see them.

But all of that faded.

She realized what her own effort had done to Aldrian. She had brought him to this point. She had made him like this, and she felt proud of it.

The legend of the Valley of Promise was well-known, especially among couples in love. But was there any rule against making love here, instead of just making a promise?

Right now, she knew exactly what she wanted to do. And she believed it was best to strike while the iron was still hot.

Her hand, still resting on his pants, began to move. She slowly stroked his crotch, making Aldrian feel even more stimulated.

"What do you think?" she asked, her voice low, her expression seductive.

And that was the final straw.

Aldrian suddenly pulled her into a deep kiss, his mouth claiming hers, his tongue pushing in as if trying to devour her completely. His hand began to trail down her body, and Baek Jimin felt her strength waver under his onslaught. But she didn't want to lose.

Her one hand continued stroking his crotch, while the other wrapped around his head, pulling him closer.

She could already feel how hard his spear had become, forming a clear tent against his pants. From the shape, she could roughly gauge its size. That alone made her heart race.

She kept stroking him, feeling his arousal grow even more, while one of Aldrian's hands found her breast. The moment he touched her there, a fresh wave of stimulation rushed through her body.

He played with her breast through the fabric of her robe, his fingers slowly focusing on a more sensitive spot—her nipple. He stroked it gently, sending a jolt through her body that felt like a small electric shock. Yet their deep kiss never broke.

Baek Jimin, still a beginner in matters like this and now being attacked on two fronts, felt like she was about to lose her mind.

But then she made up her mind, she wouldn't lose to Aldrian's touch. She would get bolder.

In many of their private conversations, Sylphia had occasionally, and somewhat playfully, hinted at her own experiences with Aldrian. Baek Jimin remembered one particular moment when Sylphia had told her,

"If you don't want to lose to Aldrian in this kind of 'war'... then the easiest way is to strike directly at his weakness. The most obvious one."

What was his most obvious weakness?

Baek Jimin's hand, still stroking his crotch, began to move, now trying to unfasten his pants, even as Aldrian continued his relentless assault on her. His mouth devoured hers, his hand never stopped playing with her breast.

He didn't stop her. In fact, he only deepened the kiss and his hand moved, slipping under the folds of her robe to expose her chest, seeking the warmth of her bare skin.

Skin against skin.

Her upper robe had already slipped out of place, revealing her dudou, the last garment covering her bare chest from his eyes.

Aldrian suddenly broke the kiss and began trailing his lips down to her neck.

"Ah~"

Baek Jimin let out a soft moan from the sudden attack.

She could feel his hand slipping beneath her dudou, reaching to finally grope her breast, all while his mouth continued to suck gently at her neck. The stimulation was overwhelming, making her body ache to surrender, to let him take complete control.

But her competitive side refused to give in so easily.

She held on through his onslaught, and just before he could touch her nipple with his bare hand, she reached his weakness first.

Touch.

A jolt shot through Aldrian's body as Baek Jimin's soft hand wrapped around his hardened dick without hesitation.

Baek Jimin was just as stunned, this was her first time touching a man's dick, but the moment she saw how much it affected him, how his actions faltered and his body stiffened, she decided to strike back.

She began stroking it.

A low groan escaped from Aldrian's lips, and his expression twisted with clear pleasure. Knowing her move had worked, Baek Jimin grew bolder and began to stroke him a little faster, eager to take the lead.

But who was Aldrian? He had already experienced this kind of attack from Sylphia, he wasn't about to lose to a newbie.

Suddenly, Baek Jimin saw something strange. Aldrian's figure seemed to blur for a split second. Then, a sudden chill brushed against her chest.

Before she could register what had happened, she realized in shock, her dudou was gone!

It had slipped off completely.

Her beautiful, bare breasts were fully exposed to Aldrian's eyes, making her instinctively move to cover herself. But she wasn't fast enough.

Aldrian had already leaned in and taken her right nipple into his mouth.

"Ah~"

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 660 - 660: Their Union (R-18)

[1,658 words]

"Ah~" Baek Jimin moaned loudly as Aldrian sucked her right nipple before she could cover herself. Even then, her other hand was already grasped by Aldrian's, keeping her from shielding her chest.

With one hand still stroking his dick, her ample breasts were now fully feasted upon by Aldrian as he devoured them to his heart's content.

Slurp! Slurp!

"Ah~"

She kept moaning as his tongue played with her right nipple. Sometimes he gave it a light bite, including her areola, as if marking it as his territory. After pampering her right nipple, he moved to the left and gave it the same treatment.

Baek Jimin could only let him suck her breasts as he pleased, unable to do anything but try to fight back by stroking his dick. However, with her breasts under his control, the rhythm of her hand faltered, making her unable to stroke him effectively.

With his experienced tongue, he could take Baek Jimin to the heavens even by playing with her breasts alone.

After a few minutes indulging himself in her ample breasts, he finally stopped and looked at his work. Her fair-skinned breasts were now marked with a few hickeys around the nipples. Aldrian nodded in satisfaction, but then hissed in pleasure as Baek Jimin continued stroking his dick.

At this moment, his pants already had a wet stain from pre-cum, but he ignored it and looked at Baek Jimin's face, which seemed like she had just returned from the heavens. She had truly felt pleasure when Aldrian played with her breasts, but she kept making him feel good by continuing to stroke his stick.

He decided it was enough, it was time to go all out. He kissed her again, and while their lips were still locked, he began to take off her robe completely. Her hand had to let go of his stick so she could remove her robe, but they managed not to break the kiss. Fortunately, the design of her robe allowed her to take it off without needing to pull it over her head.

Baek Jimin was actually really embarrassed, this would be her first time being fully naked in front of a man. But knowing it would be in front of the man she loved, she tried to calm herself. She didn't worry about anyone seeing her naked because she believed Aldrian would never let that happen.

After a while, she was finally fully naked, her robe set aside by Aldrian while he continued kissing her. Although the breeze touched her bare skin, her body still felt hot from the heat between them. After removing her robe, Aldrian began taking off his noble clothes with Baek Jimin helping him.

Moments later, both of them were completely naked, and all of it had been done without breaking their kiss. Because of that, they hadn't clearly seen each other's full naked form until now, as they had been too busy kissing to notice.

Their lips parted only after a few seconds, a thin string of saliva still connecting them, but Aldrian couldn't keep his mouth away from her skin for long. Almost instantly, he leaned in and began sucking on her neck.

"Ah~" Baek Jimin moaned as he not only sucked on her neck but also left another hickey. His hand grew bolder, roaming across her beautiful, naked body. First, he groped her breast and played with it for a moment, then his hand moved lower and lower until it nearly reached her slit.

Baek Jimin, feeling his hand approaching that spot, suddenly grew nervous. Aldrian, sensing it, smiled and pulled back from her neck before kissing her again.

"Don't be nervous. Relax... relax," he whispered softly before claiming her lips once more. She returned the kiss, trying to calm her heartbeat, which felt like it was about to burst as his hand crept closer and closer.

His other hand continued playing with her breast, both to stimulate her and to keep her distracted from her nervousness. A few moments later, his fingers finally reached her slit.

She felt a slight jolt and instinctively wanted to cross her legs to cover her slit. But their kiss and Aldrian's assuring hand made her relax, and not long after, she opened her legs again to let Aldrian's hand explore her crotch area.

"Nghh~" she moaned into his mouth as she felt his hand in her most private area.

For the first time, Aldrian was finally able to touch the entrance to her most sacred place, and for Baek Jimin, it meant her little sister had been touched by a man.

Aldrian could already feel the wetness, as it had stained her crotch area and even the mat beneath them.

Aldrian did not immediately insert his finger into her vagina. Instead, he stroked her slit first to stimulate her further. At this moment, Baek Jimin truly felt even more pleasure than when Aldrian had sucked her nipples earlier.

"Angh~ Nghh, Ah~" She kept moaning as his strokes grew faster and faster until suddenly—He entered.

His middle finger slid into her vagina, making her gasp as he released her lips.

"Angh~"

Aldrian then began fingering her as he returned to her neck, sucking on it while his fingers kept moving. Baek Jimin couldn't contain her moans, her voice spilled out endlessly as she wrapped her arms around his head, holding him close as he enjoyed her neck before shifting to her breasts.

With her breasts and vagina being pleased at the same time, it felt like she was already in heaven.

Her eyes watered from the overwhelming pleasure. It was the most intense feeling she had ever experienced, and she was truly enjoying it. But then, something began to well up deep in her lower abdomen. She felt like she couldn't hold it back any longer. She knew what was coming and tried to speak.

"Angh, dear... I can't hold it anymore, ah~"

"Let it out, my love. Just let it out," he whispered, his fingers moving faster and faster—and finally—

"Ah~"

Spurt! Spurt!

Baek Jimin finally came, and her juices spurted out. Her body trembled slightly as she continued to climax for several seconds before it gradually subsided. She gasped, taking deep breaths as she returned from her visit to the heavens and back to the mortal realm.

Her chest rose and fell as she tried to steady her breathing after the intense pleasure, and her body was already beginning to sweat. Aldrian allowed her to rest, knowing it was her first time, he didn't want her to be overwhelmed.

After a few moments of catching her breath, she looked at Aldrian again—and couldn't help but feel embarrassed. For the first time, she was fully seeing his naked body, along with his dick, already hard and ready for action. The moment her eyes landed on that piece of meat, a jolt of shock ran through her.

"So big! Will that even fit inside me? Is that the size that's wrecking Sylphia almost every night?" she thought, eyes wide.

Feeling she had rested enough, Aldrian positioned himself on top of her, keeping his gaze locked with hers. She knew what was coming next. Alongside the nervousness, there was excitement. She was finally about to become one with the man she loved most.

He guided his hard dick to her slit, and once he found the right angle, he pressed it gently against her entrance. Still holding eye contact, he spoke softly.

"Don't be afraid. Don't be nervous. There won't be any pain." His hand caressed her beautiful face.

"After this, there's no turning back. You'll be stuck with me forever."

He truly meant every word, once his dick entered her, their fates would be forever bound. She would become his woman completely, tied to him through the strong karma and thread of origin.

But for Baek Jimin, his words were simply romantic. Hearing them made her smile as she reached up and stroked his cheek.

"Then that's even better, we can be together forever," she said softly. Her hand moved to touch his dick, already positioned at her entrance.

"With this... it's also my sign that I'm yours. Entirely."

Her voice overflowed with love, and that made Aldrian smile. Then, slowly, he began to move, pushing his dick gently into her miss V.

She felt his stick slowly going deeper and deeper until it finally reached the barrier—her hymen. Aldrian had already coated his dick with his golden energy and gently spread it inside her, making sure she felt only comfort.

He paused when he touched her hymen, leaned in closer, and whispered against her lips.

"You are mine."

Then he kissed her—deep and full—just as he pushed his dick forward and finally broke through.

A jolt ran through her, but with her mouth sealed by his kiss, she could only moan into him, her voice reduced to soft, muffled sounds. Just as he had said, there was no pain. Unlike what she had heard from some stories, all she felt was pleasure—intense, overwhelming pleasure.

Aldrian kept pushing until his entire dick was buried inside her, reaching the deepest part of her vagina. He didn't move right away. Instead, he remained still, his dick fully sheathed, while continuing the deep kiss they shared.

Only after a few seconds did he finally begin to move his hips, slowly.

Pak... pak... pak...

His rhythm was gentle, but even at that pace, it brought Baek Jimin immense pleasure, far greater than anything she had felt earlier. The blood of her virginity, which was also known as her primal yin essence, could be seen flowing from the gap between her folds.

If Aldrian had been a normal cultivator using a dual cultivation technique, Baek Jimin's primal yin essence would have been incredibly valuable to him. For a male dual cultivator, primal yin essence provided a far greater boost to cultivation compared to regular yin essence.

That was why many dual cultivators sought virgins as partners, they offered the strongest boost to one's cultivation.

As time passed, Aldrian began to move his hips faster.

Pak! Pak! Pak!

"Ah, ah, ah~"

He released her lips, wanting to hear her moans clearly, moans filled with pure ecstasy.

Aldrian was determined to give Baek Jimin the best experience of her life.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 661 - 661: Intense Pleasure (R-18)

[1,547 words]

Pak! Pak! Pak!

Aldrian's thrusts grew faster and faster, his expression twisting in pleasure as he pounded Baek Jimin's pleasure hole. She felt incredibly tight inside, making him feel like he was about to burst, especially since he still hadn't ejaculated despite all the earlier stimulation.

The tightness might have been because this was her first time, but he was determined to shape her womb to fit his dick.

As he kept thrusting, he couldn't help but stare at her jiggling breasts that so tempting in his eyes. Without wasting any time, he leaned in and began sucking her left breast.

"Ah~"

Pak! Pak! Pak!

Baek Jimin no longer cared about her surroundings. The pleasure of being pounded alone was overwhelming, now, with him sucking on her tit, she felt like she might pass out. Yet the same pleasure kept jolting her awake, forcing her to endure this torturous ecstasy.

Her moans became uncontrollable, and with nothing to cover them, anyone passing by would see the erotic scene, two of them moving like animals.

But Aldrian had already made sure there was no one in this region who could see them like this. Otherwise, there was no way he would agree to have sex here. He would never show others himself having sex or expose his woman's naked body. He was not an exhibitionist, and she was not some plaything to be watched by others.

She was his.

Only he was allowed to see his woman's naked body.

Pak! Pak! Pak!

He kept thrusting, feeling his release approaching. He could tell Baek Jimin was about to cum again too, so he quickened his pace. Just moments before she burst, he released her nipple from his mouth and leaned toward her face, which was filled with pleasure.

"Receive my seed, my love," he said as he continued thrusting.

"Ah~ yes, yes, give all of your seed to me, ah~" she moaned between gasping breaths.

He kept thrusting and finally—

Spurt! Spurt!

He released his seed into her womb, and she climaxed at the same time. Her eyes rolled back from the intense pleasure. Their fluids mixed deep inside her, and with no room to escape, the liquid remained trapped within.

Aldrian kept ejaculating for nearly thirty seconds before he finally pulled his spear out of her hole. The moment he withdrew, the liquid flowed from her vagina and soaked the mat beneath them, which had already been stained from earlier.

Her body trembled slightly from the aftershocks of pleasure, but her eyes slowly regained clarity as she looked up at him. Her gaze, filled with love, showed how glad she was that they had finally done it.

Aldrian smiled and lay down beside her, wrapping his body around hers as he kissed her face lovingly. She needed to rest after such an intense battle. Although he didn't

need any rest, it was much different for Baek Jimin. This had been her first time. He wanted her to enjoy this moment as much as she could, not just the pleasure or exhaustion.

She smiled and snuggled into his embrace, seeking more of his warmth. Aldrian gently stroked her white hair as she continued to nestle against him.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"I've never felt so much pleasure in my life until just now. No wonder you and Sylphia like to do it almost every night. This is addicting... I might not be able to let go of it," she answered with a smile.

"Is that so? Then I will make you scream every day from pleasure, if that's what you want," he said, tightening his hold around her waist.

Baek Jimin blushed and lowered her head, but she said nothing. To Aldrian, that silence was answer enough—she would be waiting for it. The thought of having to satisfy both his women every day truly turned him on. His time for other matters might be reduced, but that did not matter. If they wanted him, he would make time for them.

His dick hardened again, ready for another round, but he held back. She needed to rest. Even so, Baek Jimin could already feel his hardened shaft pressing against her lower abdomen, and she was inwardly astonished.

"He's already hard again? I thought men needed rest after releasing their cum... or at least, that's what I've heard!" she thought.

But he did not do anything besides holding her, gently stroking her head and occasionally kissing her forehead. She soon realized that Aldrian was holding himself back for her, and the thought made a warm feeling rise in her chest.

She felt a little guilty for making him restrain himself, and she truly appreciated his patience, but...

She reached down and wrapped her hand around his dick, making Aldrian let out a low hiss. His gaze met Baek Jimin's seductive eyes as she whispered to him.

"My love, I'm ready. We can continue. I know your little brother here is already crying for more action."

As she stroked him slowly, Aldrian closed his eyes, savoring the sensation. He had wanted to hold himself back for her sake, but now, his willpower felt like it was starting to crumble.

"No... you—"

He wanted to say that she should not provoke him or push herself too hard, but her strokes felt far too good. Her naked body pressed against his, and her breasts, especially her nipples, kept brushing against his skin like a brush gliding over canvas. In the end, he could not hold back any longer.

In one swift motion, he flipped her over, surprising her, and entered her from behind.

"Ah~"

She moaned from the sudden pleasure, but Aldrian did not stop. He immediately began pounding her hard at a fast tempo.

Pak! Pak! Pak!

"Ah, ah, angh!"

He kept pounding her, letting her voice flow freely. He loved hearing her moans, each sound told him how much she was enjoying it, and that alone filled him with pride. Being able to satisfy his woman was something he took deeply to heart.

While continuing to thrust into her, he began to explore more of her body. He pulled one of her arms back toward him, lifting her body off the mat. With one hand, he held her wrist, and with the other, he reached around to fondle her breast while maintaining his rhythm.

But he didn't stop there. He leaned in and sucked on her neck, biting and playing with the sensitive skin as he attacked her on all fronts.

"You are mine. You are mine," he whispered while still sucking her neck.

She felt incredible pleasure from this position, his dick reaching even deeper into her womb. With him also playing with her breast and sucking her neck, the pleasure became indescribable. She could only let him dominate her completely, she was truly at his mercy, devoured by his passion.

But even as her body was being overwhelmed, she reached up with her free hand, trying to touch his face. Her fingers brushed his cheek as she turned her head toward him, despite the intense pleasure that made it difficult to move.

Aldrian understood what she wanted. He lifted his head from her neck and kissed her deeply. He continued pounding her as they held the kiss for several moments. When their lips finally parted, he whispered to her softly.

"I know you're ready to cum. Let it out, my love."

"Nggh..."

Even while still overwhelmed by his pounding, she could hear him clearly, but the pleasure was too much, and all she could do was grunt in response. After a few more thrusts, she finally came again. As her climax hit, Aldrian stopped his movements, letting her release everything without interruption.

He kept his dick buried deep inside her while she came, then slowly guided her body down onto the mat. He remained connected to her as her climax continued, her body trembling with each wave for nearly twenty seconds. He rested his weight on top of her, occasionally placing gentle kisses on her nape while she finished releasing.

When it was over, she gasped for breath, her body limp from the intense release. But Aldrian, who still had not come yet, wasn't finished. He decided to help her recover by channeling a bit of his golden energy to ease her fatigue, and as her body slowly responded to it, he began to move again.

"Angh..." she moaned weakly as he began to move again. As time passed, he gradually quickened his tempo. Still taking her from behind, he pounded her hard while playing with her breasts. His body pressed down on hers, making it impossible for her to move or escape the intense pleasure.

Pak! Pak! Pak!

After more than twenty minutes, he finally felt his release approaching, and then—

Spurt! Spurt! Spurt!

With an expression full of pleasure, he released his yang essence deep into her womb once again. He kept pushing his dick in as far as he could, as if trying to deliver his essence to the deepest part of her womb. After a few more moments, he finally finished and slowly pulled his dick out of her.

The mixed liquid began to flow from her hole, but she didn't care. She was completely spent after being pounded by Aldrian without pause, and all she had felt the entire time was overwhelming pleasure.

Aldrian kissed her nape before lying beside her, pulling her body close into his embrace.

The sun was already hanging above the western horizon, but it seemed the two lovers had no intention of leaving this place just yet.

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Chapter 662 - 662: Meeting With the Creator?

[1,616 words]

The sun had already set, and the stars had begun to appear in the night sky. Beneath their countless glimmer, Aldrian and Baek Jimin were enjoying their time together. After hours of intimacy, they finally decided to truly rest, simply cuddling in each other's arms.

Aldrian, still full of energy, smiled as he hugged her close, shielding her from anything that might cause discomfort, even the cold. They were still naked, with only a thin blanket covering them.

While Baek Jimin had fallen asleep just a few minutes earlier, Aldrian remained awake. He had finally decided that this was enough for now. She was already exhausted, and after hours of intense sex, it was better for her to rest.

He looked at her beautiful sleeping face, then up at the sky filled with stars. What more could he ask for?

The naked beauty in his embrace and the breathtaking view of the starry sky made this moment was perfect. Baek Jimin had fallen into a deep sleep almost immediately earlier when they decided to rest, which was no surprise. Aldrian had been like a beast. He had devoured her completely, and all she could do was surrender to his desires.

While Aldrian was still enjoying the serenity and the scenery, unbeknownst to him, Baek Jimin's consciousness being drawn to another place.

She looked around at her surroundings, seeing nothing but endless whiteness in every direction. When she glanced down, she found herself dressed in a plain white robe. She remembered being with Aldrian just a moment ago, falling asleep in his embrace after their intense sex.

"Is this a dream?" she wondered.

But then her gaze caught sight of a figure not far from her, someone she hadn't noticed before. It was as if the figure had appeared in this white realm only a split second ago.

The figure's back was to her, but it was clear that the figure was a woman, dressed in a plain white gown. Her long black hair reached down to her waist, adding to her quiet charm, even from behind. Although Baek Jimin couldn't see her face, she had a feeling this woman was truly beautiful.

What stirred inside her, however, wasn't just curiosity. She didn't know why, but something about this woman felt familiar. It was as if there was some kind of connection

between them. Yet she was certain there was no one in her life who resembled this woman, which only left her more confused.

Still, she didn't feel any danger. Her instincts remained calm, and her sense of caution wasn't triggered, even though she was sure she had never met this woman before.

To satisfy her curiosity, Baek Jimin decided to approach the woman. Her steps were slow, and she tilted her head slightly, trying to see what the woman was doing as she simply stood there.

Then Baek Jimin noticed a beautiful purple flower in front of the woman. The woman appeared to be quietly admiring it, as if appreciating its delicate beauty. A refreshing fragrance drifted through the air, and Baek Jimin wondered if it came from the flower.

As her gaze focused on it, the woman's voice reached her.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?"

Baek Jimin was slightly stunned by her unexpected question, but she still gave a small nod.

"Hmm, it's beautiful," she replied, "but may I ask, where is this? And who might you be? I don't know why, but you feel familiar to me, even though I don't think I've ever seen you before."

The woman then turned her head to face Baek Jimin, causing her eyes to widen slightly. As she had expected, the woman was truly beautiful, a kind of mature beauty that even stirred a hint of jealousy in her heart.

But the woman's warm smile, like that of a mother smiling at her child, gently soothed her.

The woman also had the same red irises as hers, which made her heart tremble slightly. The moment their eyes met, she felt an odd sensation, as if their gazes were resonating with one another.

"Well, let's just say this is a special place where we're able to meet," the woman answered.

Then she asked, still smiling, "But are you sure you've never seen me?"

Baek Jimin tilted her head in confusion. Did that mean they had met before? When?

Her mind began working rapidly as she tried to recall where she might have seen this woman before. But even after several moments, she remained certain she had never seen this face anywhere.

But then a memory surfaced. There had been one moment in her life when she felt this same sense of connection.

The moment she comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture. At that time, she had seen the silhouette of a woman.

Her eyes widened as she looked at the woman again.

"You... are you that silhouette?" Baek Jimin asked.

The woman gave a gentle nod.

"Then..." Baek Jimin's eyes trembled as she stared at her. She had several guesses about the woman's identity, but one thing was certain, this woman had a direct connection to the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

Her mind began working again as she tried to guess the woman's true identity. Who could appear in this place, meeting her, someone who had comprehended the scripture, and at the same time be a figure who possessed such a deep connection to it? The most likely answer struck her—

Its creator.

Realizing that, Baek Jimin immediately prostrated herself.

"Baek Jimin, disciple of the Thorny Flower Garden, pays her respects to the creator of the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture," she said firmly.

The woman continued to smile gently and asked, "How do you know I'm the creator of the scripture? Perhaps the Heavenly Demon himself created it, just like the Heavenly Demon's Scripture."

The question made Baek Jimin lift her head and meet the woman's gaze.

"That's because, as time passed and my comprehension deepened, I could sense that the scripture must have been written by a woman. And when I recalled the appearance of your esteemed silhouette during the moment I first comprehended the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture, I believed it had to mean something. I couldn't think of any other explanation—the silhouette had to be the one who created it," she answered.

The woman nodded.

"Truly perceptive. Yes, I am the one who created the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture—together with my husband."

Hearing the word husband, Baek Jimin froze before her eyes widened in shock. If she was the creator of the scripture, then her husband must be—

"The Heavenly Demon!"

Baek Jimin realized, and her heart trembled. She had never known that the Heavenly Demon had a wife!

Suddenly, she felt nervous in front of the woman, knowing she was the wife of the god whom demonic cultivators worshipped everywhere.

Sensing her nervousness, the woman only smiled softly as she spoke.

"Calm your heart, child. As the woman of the Absolute One, you don't have to be nervous in front of me."

Hearing the woman speak of the Absolute One, Baek Jimin narrowed her eyes as her nervousness suddenly faded. The Absolute One's woman? Aldrian? The Absolute One?

She couldn't help but part her lips and ask.

"Goddess—"

"Don't call me that," the woman interrupted gently. "You are the successor of my scripture. So you should know what that means, right?"

Baek Jimin was slightly stunned by the interruption, but she immediately understood what the woman meant.

"My apologies for my presumption, Master," Baek Jimin said with a respectful bow.

The woman nodded in satisfaction.

"Master, please enlighten me. What do you mean? Who is the Absolute One? I only have one man, and that is Aldrian. Is... is Aldrian the Absolute One?" Baek Jimin asked, confusion and eagerness both visible on her face as she looked at the woman.

She didn't even care how the woman knew about Aldrian, she just wanted to know the truth about him.

Would she finally learn his secret? Or at the very least, gain some understanding about the truth behind Aldrian's existence?

Hearing Baek Jimin's curiosity and eagerness, the woman looked quite amused. Out of everything, it was Aldrian that stirred the strongest reaction. Baek Jimin seemed more

eager to know about her man than about the wife of the Heavenly Demon or even the Heavenly Demon himself.

Her first question had gone straight to the secret of the Absolute One. And that alone showed how deeply Baek Jimin loved and cared for him—for Aldrian.

"To answer your question—yes. The man named Aldrian, your man, the one you love, is the one I called the Absolute One," the woman replied, making Baek Jimin nod in understanding.

"Then, Master... could you tell me more about him? About the Absolute One? What is his origin? Was he someone great in the past? With a title like that, he must be someone powerful... important enough for even you, the wife of the Heavenly Demon, to call him 'the Absolute One,'" she asked again, her voice filled with curiosity.

"Slow down, child," the woman said with a soft laugh. "From the way you speak, it seems you've already guessed a thing or two about the man you love. But all your questions... you will come to know the answers in the future."

She smiled gently before continuing, "As the woman of the Absolute One, you may very well be the first to hear the complete truth about him in the future—a truth that even I and my husband do not fully know."

Her answer left Baek Jimin astonished. Even the Heavenly Demon and his wife didn't fully understand Aldrian's true origin. Then what was Aldrian's past? Who was he, or what was he, really?

But the woman continued, her expression turning solemn.

"But regardless of his truth or his origin, there is one fact that will never change. He is a man of great destiny. A being even the heavens cannot contain. His presence will cause the entire cosmos to tremble—across countless spaces and times."

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Chapter 663 - 663: Her Love for Him

[1,610 words]

Baek Jimin raised her eyebrows upon hearing how her master described Aldrian.

He is that great?

But then she smiled and couldn't help but feel glad to learn a part of his secret. She had thought he was someone remarkable in his past life, but she hadn't expected that he was so extraordinary that even the Heavenly Demon and his wife couldn't fully grasp the extent of Aldrian's secret.

The woman smiled at Baek Jimin. She could feel that Baek Jimin truly loved the Absolute One for who he was. Baek Jimin felt happy to learn one of her man's secrets—not because he was someone great, but because it revealed more of the person she loved.

It showed that she did not care for status or power, but loved the person himself.

The woman nodded in approval. She was glad that her successor had this kind of character, and glad that Baek Jimin had gained the affection of the Absolute One.

If it had been in the past, when the Absolute One still ruled the cosmos, there was no way he would have taken any woman. He was someone who never formed romantic relationships with anyone, as he seemed to view everyone as his own child.

That was why Baek Jimin and that woman from the elven race were truly lucky to gain his affection. It also showed that the Absolute One still retained his mortal feelings, even after he began to regain the memories of his past life. With that sign, it could be said that one of the purposes of his journey had been fulfilled.

"I see," Baek Jimin nodded. "It couldn't be helped then. No wonder he said he still wasn't sure about his origin, about the truth of himself. He must be trying to remember that part of his past life as well."

The woman nodded with a smile.

"Anyway, child, the reason we could meet like this is because your karma with the Absolute One has grown truly strong. It allowed me to pull you into this place. I'm truly glad that you are the one who succeeded my script and gained the Absolute One's trust and affection."

"But we must end our conversation here. It would be dangerous if we spoke for too long."

Hearing that they would be separated, Baek Jimin suddenly felt a wave of sadness, which made the woman smile warmly.

"You don't have to be sad. There is a good chance we will meet again in the future—if you can pass the tribulation alongside the Absolute One. There will be many obstacles

on his journey to return to his worthy place, and you, as his woman, will also be affected by that journey because of your bond with him."

Baek Jimin remained silent, but she nodded in understanding.

"Are you not afraid of the problems that may come your way in the future because of your relationship with him? It might even cost you your life," the woman asked with a smile, despite the ominous nature of her question.

Baek Jimin smiled as she shook her head.

"No, Master. I already love him for who he is, and I will share his burden. This is the least I can do as his woman. With a background as grand as his, I have to support him the best I can, even if it means sacrificing myself for him," Baek Jimin said without the slightest hesitation or fear.

The moment she fell in love with Aldrian, she had already made up her mind to support him in whatever he chose to do. Knowing how extraordinary he was, she understood that his future would be filled with challenges, and as his woman, she would stand beside him.

That resolve hadn't changed even after learning how grand his background truly was. If his path was dangerous, then she was ready to give everything for him.

Hearing Baek Jimin's honest answer, the woman nodded in approval once again.

"Alright, child. It looks like it's time. Ah—and my message to you before we part is this, keep training hard. You're truly a genius, having comprehended so much of the script despite your current cultivation level. This will greatly support the Absolute One," the woman said as she gazed into Baek Jimin's red eyes.

The same eyes as hers, an effect of the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture.

"And this is my gift to you."

The woman touched Baek Jimin's forehead, stunning her as she felt something entering her body. Before she could say anything, a wave of heavy drowsiness washed over her, making it difficult even to speak.

Her vision grew blurry as darkness slowly consumed her sight, but before everything went black, Baek Jimin heard the woman's parting words.

"I hope you succeed in your journey, child. Send me and my husband's regards to the Absolute One."

Then Baek Jimin's vision faded completely into darkness.

In the real world, she was still in Aldrian's arms. He had not fallen fully asleep and remained partially awake, occasionally opening his eyes even though it was already midnight.

As he closed his eyes to enjoy the stillness around them, he suddenly sensed something from the woman in his embrace. His eyes snapped open, and what he sense surprised him.

Baek Jimin had already reached the peak Earl stage, thanks to the dual cultivation technique he had done with her. They didn't just have normal sex, afterward, they also engaged in proper dual cultivation to raise Baek Jimin's cultivation level.

However, at this moment—though she still appeared to be asleep, Aldrian could sense that her cultivation was slowly rising.

After a short while, she broke through to the Low Marquess stage. He was surprised and couldn't help but examine her body. She remained in a deep sleep, but the flow of energy within her clearly showed that she was cultivating.

In other words, she was cultivating in her sleep.

Aldrian narrowed his eyes. This kind of condition could be possible if her consciousness was no longer within her, yet still connected to her physical body and cultivating through it.

It was more or less similar to the enlightenment state, but with one crucial difference—the cultivator was asleep while it happened. That made it far more difficult than cultivating normally through conscious effort.

He wondered what was happening to Baek Jimin, but then he remembered Sylphia, specifically what happened after they had sex for the first time. At that time, Sylphia had gone through a great change after she met Seralis in her dream.

"Could Baek Jimin be experiencing the same thing as Sylphia?"

Aldrian kept observing her until he sensed her body stabilizing. The flow of energy within her gradually returned to normal. Her cultivation didn't rise any further and remained at the Low Marquess stage, but her aura felt more refined and powerful, a clear sign that her foundation had become much stronger.

There wasn't much change in her outward appearance, but Aldrian couldn't shake the feeling that something had changed. She seemed even more beautiful to him, as if her aura was subtly altering how he saw her.

He stroked her sleeping face, his gaze lingering on her for a few minutes before he watched her eyelids tremble and slowly open. Aldrian smiled as he finally saw those red

eyes of hers—the ones that always captivated him. But this time, he sensed something different in them.

Her eyes felt even more powerful in the way they captivated him. There was something more mysterious in them too, as if she had changed somehow. He wondered what she had experienced in her dreams, but set the thought aside for now as she smiled at him.

Then he asked softly,

"Have a good sleep?"

"Hmm," she murmured, hugging him tightly and rubbing her head against his chest.

"I love you. I really love you," she said softly.

He stroked her head with warmth, then asked with a slight smile,

"What were you dreaming about? Was it me?"

She kept rubbing her head against his body but still answered him.

"Who knows?"

He just smiled and continued watching the adorable act of his woman. Eventually, she stopped rubbing her head and looked into his eyes, smiling.

"I'm truly lucky and glad that I became your woman," she said, touching his cheek. "You know, I just had an amazing dream—one that's hard to believe."

"Oh? Tell me, dear, what kind of amazing dream did you just experience?" Aldrian asked, still smiling.

Baek Jimin then began telling him about her meeting with the creator of the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture and everything they had discussed. Aldrian listened quietly, and to be honest, he wasn't particularly surprised that Baek Jimin had encountered the Heavenly Demon's wife.

If Sylphia could meet with Selaris, the spirit of the Heavenly Tree of the World, then it wasn't strange for Baek Jimin to meet the creator of the Heavenly Demon's Flower Scripture—the very scripture she had comprehended.

After recounting the conversation with her master, Baek Jimin said softly,

"She also asked me to send both her and the Heavenly Demon's regards to you."

Aldrian nodded, though his eyes remained fixed on hers as she looked back at him.

"So, how do you feel after learning one of your man's secrets, and knowing I might face all kinds of challenges? Do you still want to be with me?" he said with a slight joking tone.

"Of course. Why wouldn't I?" she replied with a teasing smile. "I have someone as great as you, how could I possibly let you go? High risk, high reward."

"Is that so?" He leaned in slightly, his voice shifting to a sensual tone. "Then I have no choice but to reward you for your dedication and loyalty."

Baek Jimin suddenly felt something hard press against her lower abdomen. Her eyes widened slightly, and a blush spread across her cheeks. She already knew what was coming next.

The night was still long for the two lovers to enjoy.

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Chapter 664 - 664: Establishing His Cultivation Environment

[1,513 words]

When the sun rose, Aldrian and Baek Jimin were already dressed. Aldrian still looked refreshed, but Baek Jimin seemed like someone who hadn't slept all night, her face visibly tired.

She pouted as she looked at Aldrian, still full of energy despite them having sex until just an hour ago. He was truly like a sex machine, never tired of pounding. If Aldrian hadn't supported her with his energy, she would have passed out alone in the middle of their sex.

She tried to get up, but needed Aldrian's help, as her waist was aching from all the pounding and sex positions.

"It's all your fault!" she said, which made him feel both guilty and proud. He kissed her temple as he whispered to her,

"That means you truly enjoyed it to the fullest."

She blushed, but could feel Aldrian injecting his energy to erase her pain as he hugged her waist.

Aldrian teleported them back to the palace, and once they appeared in the garden, Baek Jimin instantly separated from him.

"I want to take a bath. I feel tired, sticky, and stinky, so I want to refresh myself. You can go on with your activities," she said with a smile, which Aldrian responded with nod.

Baek Jimin then walked away, intending to return to her room. But before she got far, she saw Sylphia approaching from the other direction.

Baek Jimin, seeing Sylphia approach, felt a slight panic. It was just an instinctive reaction because she had just slept with Aldrian, and he had left many traces on her body. She thought it might be impolite to face Sylphia like this, as if she were showing off that she had just had sex with him.

Baek Jimin wanted to hide, but that was already impossible, Sylphia had already spotted her and was walking in her direction. Running away would only make things seem even more impolite.

"My love, Jimin, I heard you guys—" Sylphia began to speak, but stopped as she sensed something strange between the two. She sniffed lightly, catching a faint, familiar scent lingering on their bodies.

It was the same smell that always lingered after she and Aldrian had sex, the mix of bodily fluids.

Sylphia's eyes widened as she realized what had happened between Aldrian and Baek Jimin. She glanced at Jimin, who looked exhausted, while Aldrian—well, still appeared fresh and energetic, as if nothing had happened.

She could only pity poor Baek Jimin, who must have looked like a rabbit caught by the wolf named Aldrian.

He must have completely devoured her last night, and Baek Jimin could only let herself be devoured!

Sylphia continued walking toward them, but headed straight for Baek Jimin first.

As soon as she reached her, Sylphia smiled and didn't hesitate to pull Baek Jimin into a hug.

Baek Jimin was slightly stunned, but her nervousness began to fade.

"Welcome to the family, Sister Jimin," Sylphia said in a soft voice.

Baek Jimin couldn't help but smile as her nervousness completely disappeared. She responded with a quiet "Hmm," and nodded.

She also returned the hug, and the sight of the two beauties embracing brought a warm smile to Aldrian's face.

The two women he loved were able to support each other and grow much closer. He felt blessed, and could only hope this harem would remain this peaceful forever.

He had heard many stories about harems falling into discord, even turning hostile as the women tried to harm one another for various reasons. A harem might symbolize a man's status and power, but it also came with serious consequences if not managed properly.

The destruction of one's own household was possible, and there were many such examples throughout history.

That was why a harmonious harem, where its members supported each other, was a true blessing for a man. And once they had it, they had to maintain it as best they could.

After a few seconds of hugging, the two ladies separated. Then Sylphia's gaze turned to him. Her eyes narrowed, and a teasing smile tugged at her lips.

"You'd better take care of Sister Jimin just like you take care of me. You've already made her completely yours, so don't you dare neglect her," she said.

"Of course I will. There is no way I would neglect her—or you. All of you deserve my pampering and affection. In fact, you'll be the ones screaming even more," Aldrian said with a smile, but the meaning behind his words was instantly understood by the two ladies.

Both of them blushed, and Sylphia quickly grabbed Baek Jimin's hand and pulled her away from Aldrian.

"Let's go, Sister Jimin. Let's leave this pervert alone. I know you had to serve this beast all by yourself since last night, you must be exhausted. Let me help you relax," Sylphia said as they walked away.

Aldrian just laughed at their reaction. Watching their retreating figures disappear into the palace, he smiled. He really did enjoy teasing them.

Not long after, he returned to his activities for the day. He read through and analyzed Zander's cultivation technique until he finally understood what Zander needed. This cultivation method was clearly designed for sword cultivators, and Aldrian could already envision the right and effective setup for Zander's cultivation environment.

A place rich in heaven and earth energy alone was not enough to fully maximize the potential of Zander's special physique. One more ingredient was needed to bring out its true potential.

Aldrian then called for Zander and brought him to a large, vacant room within the palace complex. It was one of many multipurpose rooms that could also be used for training.

"How is it? How is your cultivation?" Aldrian asked.

"It's much, much better than any place I've cultivated since I came out of the forest, Master. But I must apologize, I still feel it's slightly lacking compared to when I cultivated in the secret realm. Although the energy here is many times denser, something seems to be missing," Zander said with an apologetic expression.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. As he had expected, one ingredient was still missing to fully unlock the potential of Zander's physique.

Realizing exactly what was lacking, Aldrian suddenly unleashed his sword intent. Zander's eyes widened in shock, and he instinctively took a step back, afraid he might be injured by it. He could clearly sense the overwhelming power of Aldrian's sword intent.

His heart trembled under the pressure of the most powerful sword intent he had ever felt. But his shock and amazement did not end there. A moment later, he saw a vivid manifestation of Aldrian's sword intent. It was so powerful that it formed the illusion of a giant sword hovering behind Aldrian.

The surrounding area was already marked by thousands of sword slashes. Zander knew that if even one of those slashes touched his body, he would be instantly killed.

However, he realized the slashes were avoiding him entirely. It was clear that Aldrian had mastered his sword intent to such a degree that he could precisely control the direction and power of each manifested strike.

Once again, Zander was in awe of his master's ability. His admiration only deepened, and he found himself wanting to become more like him.

Unbeknownst to Zander, at that very moment, swords across the Eternal Sanctuary Forest began to tremble. Every sword cultivator in the region could sense the surge of sword intent coming from Aldrian's palace.

The populace immediately recognized the source, and many began to wonder, what was His Majesty doing to release such overwhelming sword intent?

Aldrian then retracted his sword intent, leaving behind traces of sword intent all across the room.

Sensing all of it, Zander couldn't help but feel something stir inside him. It felt like this was where he was meant to be.

What had been missing from his cultivation environment was, in fact, the environment of the sword, a place where he could feel the presence and power of the swords.

That was the ideal place for him to cultivate.

Aldrian then took out several swords at peak Heaven grade and placed them on the ground. The swords were of various types, such as broadswords, longswords, jian swords, dao swords, and several others. They were part of Aldrian's collection, obtained from the treasure vault beneath Valerin's main body.

"Now try to train and cultivate here. I will check on you two days later. You can also use these swords, and you may choose one to be your own sword," Aldrian said, causing Zander's eyes to widen.

He looked at the swords again and couldn't help but gulp. He had never imagined the day would come when he could choose a sword of this quality. The highest-grade sword he had ever wielded was only at high Earth grade.

Even the noble disciples at the academy did not yet have swords of this grade, but his master had given him one as though it were no big deal.

Zander looked at Aldrian again and immediately kowtowed.

"Thank you, Master. I will work hard and not disappoint you!"

Aldrian smiled, then turned to leave.

"Then don't disappoint me, Zander. Show me your power. Show me that you truly are special," Aldrian said before his figure disappeared from Zander's sight.

"Yes, Master!" Zander shouted.

He was determined to become a great swordmaster, one who would make his master proud!

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Chapter 665 - 665: His Next Course of Action

[1,594 words]

Two days had already passed since Aldrian and Baek Jimin "united" under the stars. Baek Jimin and Sylphia's relationship was now closer than ever. Baek Jimin no longer shied away from showing her affection in front of Sylphia, and Sylphia was genuinely glad to have Baek Jimin as her sister, sharing the same man.

Aldrian also had to spare more of his time to entertain his woman, which he did not mind. In fact, he actually enjoyed it. With two beauties who were head over heels for him, he would do anything in return for their love.

At this moment, Aldrian, Sylphia, and Baek Jimin were enjoying their time together in the garden. They sat on a long bench with Aldrian in the middle, Sylphia and Baek Jimin on either side, their heads leaning against his arms.

They talked about many things, with the ladies occasionally giggling at the jokes Aldrian threw in.

But in the middle of their peaceful moment, Aldrian suddenly felt a tug in his soul. He instantly knew what it was, and a split second later, a voice transmission came through.

"Test, test, is it working? Master?" a male voice echoed in Aldrian's mind. It was the voice of the leader of the outsiders.

"Clear. What is it, Vars?" Aldrian responded.

Vars, the leader in charge of the Barevisk family's infiltration mission on the continent, answered right away.

"It's time for us to report back to our family about this continent, Master. We've already collected plenty of information and would like to ask for your approval."

Aldrian then remembered that the outsiders were scheduled to report to their main family every week with the results of their infiltration by sharing information about the continent. Today was the day they had to report back.

"Alright, let's hear what all of you have gathered so far," Aldrian said.

Vars then began telling him everything they had gathered over the past week. Aldrian listened, occasionally interacting with Sylphia and Baek Jimin as the report continued.

When Vars finally finished, Aldrian knew there were no lies and nothing being hidden from him. What Vars had shared was indeed the full extent of their information.

From the report, it was clear that most of what they had gathered was general information about the continent. There were a few details, such as the power structure of each empire and several notable noble houses within them.

Aldrian also came to understand just how weak the Barisan Continent truly was, as the report included a comparison of its power scale with those of other continents in this world.

However, the report also emphasized his presence on the continent, perhaps an effort by these people to warn their family not to act recklessly. It was as if they were saying that although the continent was weak, it had someone like him at the helm.

Sensing that there was no issue with the report, Aldrian nodded inwardly.

"All right, there's no problem. You can send all of it," he said.

"Understood, Master. I will send the report to our family now," Vars replied before the transmission ended.

After their communication ended, Aldrian's mind began to turn as he thought about his next course of action and the plans for the future.

With the report about this continent sent out, he wondered what would happen next. Would problems come to him and the continent? Or would those people know their limits and leave him and this continent alone?

He was willing to wait, but his thoughts soon shifted to the gods who might have followers in this heaven. He had almost forgotten them, having always dealt with devils and Tarius as their god.

But what about the others?

Did they also have followers in this heaven?

From Zang Haoran's memory, there seemed to be an agreement among the gods regarding the distribution of the heavens, which limited each god from meddling in the affairs of other gods' areas of responsibility. But he still thought there was a chance that the followers of other gods might cause him trouble after what he did to Tarius.

He would need to be better prepared for the challenges ahead.

"It looks like I have to move as fast as possible to make this entire star my domain. One of my worries will cease if I can make this star entirely mine," Aldrian thought.

Since he could sense the general direction where the faith of the star's populace was gathering, it seemed he needed to begin his journey soon. He also needed to open the continent to those from outside who had been waiting for his permission.

It looked like his time for relaxation was finally coming to an end.

"Dear, what's wrong?" Sylphia's voice suddenly reached him, drawing his attention to his right. She looked at him with curiosity. In fact, both she and Baek Jimin had already noticed that Aldrian had been distracted for a while, he had not been focused on their conversation.

It felt as though he had been communicating with someone through voice transmission or lost in deep thought, which naturally made them curious.

Aldrian gave a slight sigh, knowing they had already noticed he was distracted from their moment together. He then explained to them about the outsiders' report and his plans for the future.

After hearing what Aldrian intended to do, Sylphia and Baek Jimin couldn't help but sigh.

"It looks like our time of relaxation is coming to an end. Things will get busy once this continent is opened to outsiders," Sylphia said.

"Hmm. I can already imagine some powers from outside making contact with the kingdoms here. The demonic cultivators from outside will approach the three great sects and ask about you before meeting you. This might cause some commotion for a while," Baek Jimin said with a sigh as she tightened her hold on his arm.

Aldrian nodded. It couldn't be helped, and he agreed with Baek Jimin. He predicted that those outsiders would not rush to meet him immediately, but would instead study the continent first. They would want to understand everything about this land, and about him before making their move.

"So, when are you going to depart for your journey? You have to be careful, there's still so much we don't know about this world," Sylphia asked.

Aldrian already told them a mix of truth and lie, that he would be traveling to a place outside the continent, where he had received a strange calling. He said he had to reach it, giving only a brief explanation that it was related to his power, without going into detail.

Sylphia and Baek Jimin, who already knew Aldrian was no ordinary man and carried a great secret and origin, did not press him further. They simply chose to trust him.

"Tomorrow. It's better to arrive at that place as soon as possible," Aldrian said, prompting the two women to sigh and show sad expressions.

Seeing their reaction, Aldrian smiled warmly, kissed each of their cheeks, and gently stroked their heads.

"I'm sorry that our peaceful days are coming to an end and that I have to leave you. But you don't need to be sad, we can still communicate using our special method. No matter how far apart we are, we'll always be able to talk."

"And I can return here whenever I want. That's one of my abilities, remember? No matter the distance, I can come back instantly. If you want me to return every day, I'll gladly do so," he said reassuringly.

Sylphia smiled, touched that Aldrian was still thinking about them. But then she looked at him and shook her head.

"No. Just focus on your journey. Do whatever you need to do. Let us take care of the continent in your absence. If the emperor is away, then let his empress help watch over the empire," she said.

"I'll only contact you if there's something truly important that I feel you need to decide or handle."

Aldrian smiled, knowing he could depend on Sylphia in this matter. She had already proven her skill in decision-making back when he was still the mayor of Caritas City. Every time he was absent, if something happened in the city, she could handle it on her own.

She was also skilled in politics, which didn't surprise him at all. As the beloved princess of the Ivory Kingdom, she had received a thorough education and many examples from her father, King Ladwin.

"I'll also help Sister Sylphia," Baek Jimin said. "Even though I'm not as good as her in certain aspects, I can still support her in my own way." She didn't want to be left behind or lose.

Aldrian's heart warmed at their words, and he couldn't help but kiss them both quickly on the lips. He felt truly lucky to have them and to see how harmonious they were with each other.

"Thank you," he said gratefully. "But still, if either of you ever truly needs something, just tell me. I'll appear right away."

The two women smiled and nodded, but then Sylphia's expression turned teasing.

"My love, I think tonight you should give Sister Jimin your full affection. It hasn't been long since she first experienced real pleasure, and now you're already planning to leave

on a journey. I think it's only fair that you satisfy her properly before you go," she said, causing Baek Jimin to freeze.

Her face quickly turned red.

"What are you talking about, Sister—"

"Good idea," Aldrian cut her off, grinning. "I should satisfy Jimin until she can't get out of bed."

"What are you two talking about?!" Baek Jimin shouted, her voice high with embarrassment, which only made Aldrian and Sylphia laugh.

The three of them continued enjoying their time together, knowing that moments like this would become much rarer in the days ahead.

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Chapter 666 - 666: Train Him Before Going

[1,617 words]

After spending time with Sylphia and Baek Jimin, Aldrian then visited Zander. The moment he entered the training room, he instantly saw him still cultivating in a meditative position. His eyes were closed, and his sword intent was active, causing the swords near him to tremble slightly.

Aldrian could immediately sense the change in Zander's cultivation and how effective his progress had become. It was not a mistake to create this kind of environment for Zander to cultivate, as it had truly brought out his full potential.

Aldrian then observed Zander's surroundings and noticed some new shallow slash marks on the floor. There were also several burn marks with traces of sword intent. This showed that Zander had also been training his sword techniques, and from the marks alone, Aldrian could tell that the strength behind them was powerful.

After a few minutes, the sword intent finally retracted, and a moment later, Zander opened his eyes. He took a deep breath before exhaling, but when he turned to the side and saw Aldrian, he froze.

He had not sensed that his master was already standing there at all!

He immediately got up and bowed deeply to Aldrian.

"Master," he said.

Aldrian nodded, truly satisfied with Zander's development.

"As expected of the special physique," he thought.

"I can see that you've grown much stronger in a short time. I suppose you can cultivate much more efficiently now?" he said to Zander.

Zander straightened his body.

"Yes, Master. My cultivation here is even faster than when I was in the secret realm. It's all thanks to you for providing me with this kind of place," he said with reverence and gratitude.

Aldrian nodded and looked at Zander's waist, where a jian sword was already hanging.

"It looks like you've already made your choice. Do you like that sword?" Aldrian asked, and Zander understood what he meant.

He glanced at the sword on his waist and smiled as he touched it.

"Yes, Master. I just feel that this sword fits me. I don't know if it's the model or the sword itself, but when I hold it, it just feels right," he said.

Aldrian nodded. If Zander said that, then this sword was truly the best for him. A sword that was compatible with its wielder could bring out far more strength than one chosen at random. Finding a sword that suits both you and your heart is not easy, and not all swordsmen can feel it.

Only someone who is truly sensitive to the sword can truly tell whether it fits them or not.

Aldrian then walked closer to Zander and picked up a broadsword before moving further to the opposite side of the room.

Zander watched his master, wondering what he intended to do, until he saw Aldrian looking in his direction.

"Show me everything you've got. Attack me with your full strength. Don't be afraid or hold back to use your most powerful techniques," Aldrian said.

Zander was stunned for a moment, but then his expression turned solemn. His master was finally going to train him personally. He wasn't offended by Aldrian's order to go all out.

He understood clearly that no matter how powerful he was right now, he wouldn't even be able to scratch Aldrian's clothes.

He wouldn't hold anything back. He would make the most of this lesson.

He then took a stance and unsheathed his sword.

"Then, excuse me, Master," he said, his eyes sharpening with focus. His mind worked quickly, searching for a way to land a hit on Aldrian, or at least cut a part of his clothes.

He analyzed Aldrian, who was wielding a broadsword. It was much heavier and longer than a jian sword.

Zander knew he was lacking in every way compared to Aldrian, but he saw this as a challenge to push beyond his limits.

"Then I'll try to use speed as my advantage," he thought.

Aldrian smiled as he watched Zander's focused expression.

A moment later, Zander moved. He launched his attack, combining it with his movement technique. He swung his sword toward Aldrian with impressive speed. For someone at his cultivation level, his movement was exceptionally fast. The movement technique called Chaotic Step, made his footwork unpredictable, as if there were no pattern at all.

However, in Aldrian's eyes, everything was clear and slow. The Chaotic Step, which seemed to lack any pattern, actually followed a specific rhythm with each step. Movement techniques among swordsmen were also meant to indicate when a sword cultivator was about to unleash an attack, as sword techniques were closely connected to footwork.

But for Chaotic Step, it concealed not only the next attack but also the swordsman's defensive movement. An opponent would not be able to predict the incoming strike by simply watching the footwork. And during an actual battle, there would be no time to analyze the hidden pattern or uncover the secret behind this technique.

Ting!

Aldrian blocked Zander's attack, parrying it with his sword. Zander immediately moved again, searching for an opening while continuing his assault. He used his movement technique, combining it skillfully with his swordsmanship to strike at various parts of Aldrian's body.

Thing! Tang! Thang!

Despite the relentless attacks, Aldrian stood still without moving an inch from his position. He used only the sword in his hand to block every strike, and he had been using just one hand the entire time. Even when Zander tried to attack from behind, Aldrian effortlessly redirected his sword to his back, blocking every blow with precise timing.

Despite wielding a broadsword, Aldrian could swing it effortlessly, as if it were a jian, light and easy to handle.

After more than twenty seconds of nonstop attacks, Zander had already aimed at every part of Aldrian's body. Yet not a single strike had landed, not even a touch on his master's clothes.

He had expected this outcome, but it still frustrated him. He could not even leave a small cut.

Determined, he decided to use one of his sword techniques. He leapt back, putting a slight distance between himself and Aldrian.

Meteorite Slash!

As Zander swung his sword, flames suddenly engulfed the blade and a blazing wave shot forward at high speed. The flames then shifted in form, taking the shape of several burning orbs, like meteorites crashing down from the sky.

Aldrian, who looked at this, nodded in praise of its power, which could injure even a peak Earl stage cultivator. But he simply swung his sword and instantly cut through the incoming flame, destroying it in an instant.

However, another attack was already upon him. A sudden burst of flame surged forward like a flare, fierce enough to fatally wound or even kill someone at the peak of the Earl stage.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows, impressed that Zander could unleash such consecutive attacks. He could not help but feel a bit amazed. With swift and precise movements, he swung his sword several times, cutting through the flare and destroying it completely.

Seeing that even his strongest consecutive attacks had failed, Zander gritted his teeth. His body was beginning to strain, and pain spread through his arm as though he had been training for hours. His breathing had grown uneven, and fatigue was quickly setting in.

Yet his master had not even used any energy. Aldrian relied only on the raw strength of his sword swings to destroy every technique and block every strike. The gap between them truly felt like between heaven and earth.

He wanted to move and attack again, but before he could make a move, Aldrian's voice stopped him.

"Alright, that's enough. I've already seen your current level, and I have to say, you actually surprised me."

Aldrian was not lying, nor was he trying to console Zander. He was genuinely surprised by the techniques Zander had displayed, especially the consecutive attacks using two different techniques. That was not something easy to do, as it required him to quickly shift the flow of energy into a different pattern.

This kind of trick placed a burden on the body and could waste energy in the process. That was why it often caused cultivators to tire more quickly, just as Zander was experiencing now. In addition, the second technique could lack power due to an imperfect release, caused by unstable or chaotic energy flow.

Only cultivators who were already accustomed to such trick and possessed strong bodies could perform them effectively. Yet from what Aldrian observed, Zander had not been using this trick for long, and he could already execute it with near perfection, without significantly weakening his second technique.

Beyond that, Zander's battle instincts were quite sharp, perhaps shaped by his past experiences adventuring with adventurers.

Zander let out a sigh as he heard Aldrian call an end to the sparring session, then sheathed his sword.

"You're truly skilled in your sword attacks," Aldrian said, "but pay attention to your gaze. Don't make it obvious which part you intend to strike. Every time you attack, your eyes are always fixed on your target. Instead, you should..." Aldrian continued, explaining what Zander lacked and what he needed to improve.

Zander listened carefully, mentally noting each of Aldrian's critiques and suggestions.

Once Aldrian had finished pointing out everything Zander needed to work on, Zander bowed respectfully.

"Thank you for your guidance, Master. I will work hard to correct my shortcomings and overcome my weaknesses," he said.

Aldrian responded with a nod.

"Good. Keep working hard, and I hope that the next time I visit, you'll have improved greatly compared to now," he said.

But hearing Aldrian's words left Zander confused.

"Master, are you going somewhere? It sounds like you're going on a long journey and won't return for quite some time," Zander asked.

Aldrian smiled.

"Well, it could be long or it could be short. It truly depends on the situation. That's why you should make the most of this opportunity while you can," he said as he walked toward the exit.

"Good luck, my disciple," he said one last time.

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Chapter 667 - 667: Starting His Journey and the Visit

[1,579 words]

On the next day, at this moment, Aldrian was already in space, outside the atmosphere of the Ancient Blue Gate world. After saying goodbye to his family, he had teleported to this place to once again sense the direction of the gathered faith of this star.

He looked in a certain direction, and after confirming it was correct, he decided to teleport that way. He was still in space, and Aldrian thought that being in space would make his journey much easier due to the lack of living beings or obstacles here.

That was not truly surprising. At the very least, only cultivators above the High Emperor stage could reach space. Those below the Peak Emperor stage would face extreme difficulty even close to impossible, when attempting to overcome the natural barrier that protected the star.

The invisible barrier caused those who tried to fly into space to feel an overwhelming pressure, to the point they could not resist it unless they were at the Peak Emperor stage or above. However, it was not impossible for those below that level to travel in space, and that was by using a transportation artifact, just like the one Aldrian was seeing right now.

There was a type of transportation called interstellar vessel, according to the information shown by his Eyes of the Heaven. It resembled a flying fortress but appeared to be designed for travel between stars. Aldrian could see several of them flying here and there in the distance, entering and leaving the Ancient Blue Gate World.

Aldrian continued to teleport in the direction of the gathered faith, but he had to stop a few minutes after leaving his domain of the Barisan Continent. He could no longer sense the direction of the faith. The distance from the source might have been too great, and the faith energy had become so faint and blurry that he could not sense it while outside his domain.

How to solve this problem?

Of course by creating his domain right there.

The moment his domain was formed, he could once again sense the clear direction of the faith energy and teleported toward it. However, he knew that using this method for the entire journey would take a long time, as he would have to stop too many times.

He then decided to make his journey more efficient. Instead of always stopping after he got out of his domain, he would reduce the number of stops and simply fly in the general direction of the faith energy. Occasionally, he would create his domain to ensure he had not strayed from the correct course.

That way, he would avoid the constant stops, which were too time-consuming.

While Aldrian was already on his journey, somewhere far away from him, there was a bustling city filled with many strong cultivators. The city was not much different from any of the grand cities found in the Ancient Blue Gate World, despite being located on a different star.

In the eastern part of the city, there was also a floating landmass, though it was neither as vast nor as high as Aldrian's floating land.

The average level of cultivation in this place was also not much different from that of other cities in the Ancient Blue Gate World—except, of course, for those in the Barisan Continent.

As the city's inhabitants continued their daily activities, they suddenly saw a large cruiser entering the city from the west. The symbol embedded on the front of the cruiser made their hearts tremble.

Seeing the symbol, murmurs began to spread among the people.

"Why is the Valroy family visiting this city? This isn't something that happens often," asked a man on the street to a stranger beside him.

"I don't know, but it's not surprising. Anything is possible when the Barevisk family is one of the Valroy family's affiliate families," the stranger replied.

"We common folk won't ever know what those big shots are doing anyway, so it's better not to think too much about it," he added, then continued walking, leaving the man behind as he watched the cruiser fly toward the floating land. After a moment, the man also resumed walking, deciding to ignore the affairs of those in high positions.

If something happened, word would naturally reach the populace.

On the floating land, where a giant manor stood, the cruiser landed on one section of the terrain. Near the landing site, a line of cultivators from the Barevisk family was already waiting, as if they were expecting an important figure. Among them stood a few elders, grand elders, and a black-haired middle-aged man with the strongest cultivation present.

This man was at the low Pseudo-Immortal stage, but despite his strength, his expression showed reverence toward the cruiser that had just landed nearby.

Moments after the cruiser touched down, a side hatch opened, revealing several people preparing to disembark. Leading them was another middle-aged man, this one with blonde hair. Like the black-haired man, he was also at the low Pseudo-Immortal stage.

As soon as he stepped out, the black-haired man greeted him with a wide smile.

"Welcome to the Barevisk Family Manor, Elder Crozz," the black-haired man said with a slight bow.

"Thank you for the greeting, Patriarch Barevisk. I thought you might be bored by my visit—after all, I was just here not long ago, hahaha," Elder Crozz replied.

"Of course not, Elder. There's no way I could be bored by your visit. Anyway, you must be tired after a long journey. This way, please. We can talk in a much more comfortable place," Patriarch Barevisk said, guiding the elder toward the large manor.

Patriarch Barevisk led Elder Crozz to a luxurious private room where they could converse freely without being disturbed. After the maids served their drinks, Elder Crozz finally brought up the topic he had come to discuss.

"Anyway, Patriarch Barevisk, you mentioned that the first report from the Barisan Continent of the Ancient Blue Gate World arrived yesterday, right? May I take a look at it now?"

Patriarch Barevisk then took out his information crystal, which was slightly different from those used in the Barisan Continent. This one was smaller, circular in shape, with a red crystal embedded in its center.

"My people managed to infiltrate undetected and gathered quite a lot of information. But the results they obtained... well, how should I put it... it left me confused. It's better if Elder sees it for himself," Patriarch Barevisk said, handing over the information crystal.

Elder Crozz was curious about what had caused the patriarch to speak that way. He took the crystal and began reviewing its contents. After a few minutes, he frowned and looked at the patriarch.

"Is this information legit?" he asked.

The patriarch responded with a nod.

"Yes, it is. They said they were just as confused and shocked when they stepped onto that continent. It's completely different from what we all assumed, especially with someone that strong living there," Patriarch Barevisk said.

Elder Crozz continued frowning as he looked at the information crystal again.

From what he had read in the report, the continent could be considered the weakest he had ever known. The number of cultivators who had reached the Immortal Transition Realm could be counted on one hand.

That made it even weaker than the weakest continent in Akares star, where even the least-developed continent had at least dozens at that level.

With the strongest individual only at the Pseudo-Immortal Establishment stage, this Barisan continent was, by all accounts, the most vulnerable continent in his knowledge.

And yet, one thing stood out, the existence of a single emperor who had united the continent under his rule. A figure regarded as a god in that land.

Aldrian the Great.

His strength at the low Pseudo-Immortal Establishment stage was indeed the highest on that continent, so it made sense that he could unite it. However, there was nothing remarkable about him when viewed on a stellar scale.

There were countless cultivators at that level, and Elder Crozz, as one of the Grand Elders of the Valroy family and also at the low Pseudo-Immortal stage, could kill such a man with a mere flick of his finger.

But the way the report described this Aldrian the Great was truly astonishing—even exaggerated. It portrayed him as an existence that even those at the Pseudo-Immortal stage could not afford to offend.

The report didn't mention anything directly about the mysterious figure who had fought the immortal. Yet, from the way it was written, it implicitly suggested that this Aldrian the Great was the one who had faced that immortal.

This didn't make any sense at all. There was no way someone at that level could fight a being that even Pseudo-Immortals had no chance against. He had already heard about the battle above the Barisan Continent from trustworthy sources, and it was true—Pseudo-Immortals were like ants before the power of that Immortal.

No matter how much of a genius this Aldrian the Great was, there was simply no way he could have faced such a being. If someone at the Pseudo-Immortal Establishment stage could fight an Immortal, it would overturn the current understanding of cultivation that had been established since ancient times.

He felt the report contained many strange contradictions, yet Patriarch Barevisk had claimed it was legitimate.

Elder Crozz didn't believe the patriarch would give him false information. He knew Patriarch Barevisk's character well, the man wasn't foolish enough to offend the family backing the Barevisk family, especially when his family, the Valroy family, was also the strongest in the Akares Star.

"We'll need to observe that place more carefully. Still, I have to inform the young master about this," Elder Crozz thought.

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Chapter 668 - 668: Visiting the Neighbouring Continent

[1,557 words]

Three days later, Aldrian was still on his journey, continuing to teleport. For the past three days, he had been following the direction of the faith energy without any problems or obstacles. The only thing that stopped him was the need to rest occasionally to replenish his energy and confirm the direction of the faith energy.

When he wanted to rest and restore his energy, he simply stopped in space and cultivated.

Although the heaven and earth energy in space was much sparser than within an atmosphere, he had his own domain, so he didn't have any difficulty replenishing his energy. He just needed to create his domain, and his energy would be restored in no time.

Throughout his journey, the scenery accompanying him was the star-filled space and various celestial objects, while beneath him stretched the vast ocean that separated the Barisan Continent from the others.

From his vantage point, he could already see the next continent in the distance.

The Barisan Continent truly resembled a lonely land, surrounded by a vast ocean and distanced from the rest of the world. He understood why people from outside regarded it as a mysterious continent.

It was not only unreachable due to the protective formation built by Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan, but also because of the sheer distance required to reach it.

The fact that even he, who traveled through teleportation technique, had to spend three days to reach the next continent not only showed how far the Barisan Continent was from the rest, but also how massive this star truly was.

Aldrian kept approaching the next continent and finally stopped once he arrived above the vast land, which was much larger than the Barisan Continent. He could see that interstellar activity here was far more prevalent, with many interstellar vessels coming and going from various parts of the continent.

He paused for a moment in thought before deciding to visit. He felt it would be worthwhile to understand the situation of another continent during his journey and to learn new things about this world.

The feeling reminded him of several years ago, when he had traveled across the Barisan Continent and learned so many new things. That same feeling returned to him now, bringing a smile to his face as his adventurous spirit ignited once again.

He teleported down toward the continent, descending until he entered the atmosphere again. Eventually, he reached a region where he could see a vast forest stretching below. However, he had no intention of going there, what he needed was a place of civilization to gather information.

His gaze swept into the distance, and he spotted a large city, prompting him to dash in that direction. After nearly a minute of teleportation, he finally arrived near the city and stopped atop a tall tree not far from it.

The city was surrounded by high walls, much like the cities on the Barisan Continent, built as a means of defense. He also sensed an invisible barrier covering the entire city in the shape of a dome. Aldrian guessed it might be a defensive or a detection formation, designed to prevent infiltration.

Anyone who wanted to enter the city would have to go through the gate if they didn't want to be treated as an intruder.

He could not help but feel amazed, as the barrier also had defensive properties against spatial laws, preventing anyone from infiltrating by using space-related techniques. In other words, anyone trying to enter the city through teleportation or any spatial method would still be detected.

From what he had seen from the sky, the city's size was roughly comparable to the capitals of the empires in the Barisan Continent.

He then turned his gaze toward the massive gate, where many guards were stationed, diligently checking everyone who wished to enter the city. The guards collected an entrance fee, asked each person about the purpose of their visit, and issued a permit for entry.

After thinking for a moment, Aldrian teleported again, this time to a spot near the city wall where no one was around and where he remained outside the barrier's range. He then created his domain there, which now stretched over six hundred kilometers with himself at the center, and then teleported into the city.

The barrier might detect any spatial disturbance, but there was no way it could sense his domain's teleportation ability.

He appeared beside a road near the wall, startling nearby people who were stunned by the sudden appearance of a figure. At this moment, Aldrian was wearing a black robe with the hood drawn up to conceal his features, so no one immediately noticed his handsome face or his conspicuous long red hair.

Ignoring the curious gazes, Aldrian walked aimlessly, letting his steps carry him as he began gathering information with his senses. The people, too, quickly lost interest, after all, robed travelers weren't rare here, and the fleeting sense of cultivation power they had caught for a split second was enough to send chills down their spines.

Someone at the Pseudo Immortal Establishment stage held a high status, so most people preferred to avoid Aldrian altogether to prevent trouble or risk offending him in any way.

Aldrian continued walking like an ordinary passerby, keeping his cultivation hidden to avoid drawing attention. The brief leak of his aura earlier had been a warning for others to ignore him and mind their own business.

He kept moving through the streets, gathering as much information as he could. After more than thirty minutes of walking, he finally understood the general situation of the city.

This city was called Avon City, located within the Dukedom of Hazerdolf, under the rule of the Martal Empire, the largest empire on this continent, known as the Orian Continent.

The moment he heard the name Martal Empire of the Orian continent, he immediately remembered that outsider who had introduced himself after Aldrian defeated Tarius.

Rozwald Avilandis, the Emperor of the Martal Empire.

To think he had landed right in that man's empire.

This was a large city and the closest one to the capital of the Hazerdolf Dukedom, which explained its grandeur and the presence of so many powerful cultivators. To be honest, he was genuinely impressed by the average cultivation level here. Once again, it made him realize just how weak the Barisan Continent truly was.

All throughout his walk, he had already seen many Emperor Stage cultivators. Compared to the cities on the Barisan Continent, the Emperor Stage here felt as common as the Duke Stage there.

He could sense a few at the Pseudo Immortal Foundation Stage inside certain buildings, though he had yet to find anyone above that level. He now also had a general understanding of what to do and what to avoid in this city, but he still needed much more detailed information about the continent itself.

This continent was the neighboring land to the Barisan Continent, and he wanted to learn more about its details.

He soon arrived at a tall building with a sign that read Information Center, which, from what he had heard, functioned similarly to the Information Guild in the Doria Empire. There was no better place than this for anyone looking to gather information.

After entering, he immediately took his queue number and was directed to one of the receptionists, who was still in the middle of assisting another person. While waiting, he glanced around, observing the bustling activity within the building while also spreading his senses throughout the area, which was still within the range of his domain.

The strongest cultivator in the building was a peak Pseudo Immortal Foundation Stage stationed on the top floor, a clear indication that this was no ordinary place or organization. The methods used here weren't much different from those of the Information Guild in the Doria Empire.

People could request general information for free, and the Information Center even generously provided information crystals containing that basic knowledge.

If someone wanted specific information, they had to pay a fee. And if it was something the Information Center didn't already have, they would investigate it, though that came with an additional cost.

This place was extremely popular for information gathering. Even people from other stars who visited the city would come here when they needed information, and such occurrences were not unusual.

For example, there were more than a dozen individuals from other stars in the hall right now.

Aldrian nodded to himself. He could take advantage of this kind of situation.

After waiting for a while, his turn finally came, and he walked over to the receptionist. A woman greeted him with a smile but paused slightly when she saw his handsome face. She blushed instantly and tried to suppress it.

Clearing her throat, she pushed aside her awkwardness and did her best to remain professional.

"Welcome to the Information Center of Avon City. What kind of information are you looking for? Depending on the level of the information, it may be free or require a certain amount of energy stones," she said politely, still trying to hide her blush.

"I want detailed information about this continent. Enough for me to understand key locations and know which families I should be aware of. A map with explanations would also be appreciated," Aldrian replied.

The woman kept smiling as she nodded.

"Alright, sir. Please wait for a moment," she said before walking to the back to retrieve something.

While Aldrian waited, he suddenly heard something interesting from one of the other receptionists, which made him glance in that direction.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 669 - 669: What Are They Trying to Do?

[1,436 words]

Aldrian glanced at the group of people gathered at one of the reception counters. All of them wore robes like his. What caught his interest was the information they were seeking. They were asking about the Barisan continent.

From what Aldrian could hear, these people seemed to be from another star.

A sudden thought came to his mind, and he continued to wait for the receptionist to return. After a few minutes, she finally came back, carrying an information crystal. But before she could say anything, Aldrian spoke.

"Ah, I also want to know about the Barisan continent—the one that's said to be a mysterious continent attracting attention lately. I want to know what the information center has on it, and I mean all of it."

The woman was stunned, but she nodded.

"Alright, please wait here for a moment. But you are truly lucky, sir, our information center received new information about the Barisan continent just yesterday. This information has already been confirmed by our trusted source," she said before leaving again.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows at this.

New information came yesterday?

He felt intrigued but said nothing and simply waited for the woman to return.

After a minute, she came back with another information crystal.

"These are the details you requested, sir. For the information about this continent, including its details and the families to take note of, the fee is five peak energy stones. As for the information about the Barisan continent, the fee is ten peak energy stones."

Aldrian nodded and handed over the energy stones.

"Sir, if I may ask, what star did you come from?" the woman asked suddenly, her expression slightly shy.

Aldrian wasn't surprised that the woman thought he was from another star. His behavior all this time had indeed resembled someone who had come from other star, and that

was exactly what he wanted. It was the identity he was trying to build. Let her imagination run.

Aldrian smiled, and that smile made the woman blush even more.

"Sorry, but I have my own circumstances, so I can't tell you where I'm from. I hope you understand, miss," Aldrian said with a smile before leaving.

The woman kept watching Aldrian's figure as if she couldn't take her eyes off his handsome face.

"I wonder where he came from," she thought.

"Hey, it's time to switch shifts. Hey, do you hear me? I've called you three times, but you seem completely out of it."

Her thoughts were cut off by another woman's voice, snapping her back to reality. She turned to see her friend looking at her with a puzzled expression.

"What's going on with you? You look like you were hypnotized or something. Who were you staring at?"

Her friend glanced in the direction she had been staring.

"It's not like our flower here to act that way," she added with a teasing smile.

"Nothing. I just met someone who completely blew me away," the woman replied, which only made her friend more curious. She looked at the crowd, trying to guess who could have affected her friend so strongly.

Her friend wasn't the type to be easily swayed or distracted—but to see her standing there blankly, staring at someone? There was no way she could just ignore that. She had to know more.

"I'll ask her after this."

As someone who worked at the information center, she had a natural curiosity for anything interesting or mysterious. And now, she wanted to find out who this person was that had such an effect on her friend.

After Aldrian left the information center, he continued walking along the street and sat on a vacant bench by the roadside. Then, he reviewed the contents of the two information crystals for the next few minutes before finishing.

He finally understood the general knowledge and some specific details about the Orian continent, and he found the information truly helpful. However, what caught his attention was the information about the Barisan continent.

Why did he think that? Because the information he found in the crystal was more or less the same as what the Barevisk family had obtained from his slave, though some parts were missing.

"Which only means the information was deliberately leaked by them," he thought.

He couldn't help but smile. What are they trying to do? He felt amused as he wondered what they were thinking, leaking this kind of information. He began to analyze what the Barevisk family hoped to gain by spreading it. From what he could tell, the information would have been far more advantageous if they had kept it to themselves—so why release it?

After a moment of thought, something came to mind.

They had revealed that the Barisan continent wasn't what people believed. Instead of a mysterious or powerful land filled with strong cultivators, it was described as much weaker than the other continents.

In the same information crystal, the details about his existence were deliberately made vague. It didn't explain his true status as the emperor or the danger he posed, only mentioning his achievements and how the people of the continent viewed him.

The information did not mention that the entire continent is unified under his rule.

From his perspective, the information seemed intended to undermine his presence, despite his feat of fighting an immortal. And now that his cultivation level had also been revealed, many would start questioning the truth behind his power, or the secret behind it.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. No matter how he looked at it, the Barevisk family was clearly executing a strategy. They were using Barisan as bait and letting those who wanted a challenge step forward.

He had no concrete proof, but he believed this was the situation. That family seemed to be pulling strings from the shadows, waiting in the dark to reap the benefits.

But then, Aldrian grew curious. Why would the Barevisk family do this? Why would they dare to provoke him, when they clearly knew how dangerous he was from the report Vars had given them? What were they trying to achieve by turning the Barisan continent into a target?

"Well, I guess I can only wait for now. Once I'm done creating my domain over this star, I think it's time I pay other star a visit," Aldrian thought.

He stood up and began walking again. He knew that with this information now out, the Barisan continent would be in a dangerous situation. His story and strength were enough to deter most people from entering, but he could not be sure about those bold or reckless enough to barge in or infiltrate.

He could already imagine that some madmen had begun moving toward the Barisan continent, daring to defy his authority. They believed the continent was weak, and that he, the mysterious figure behind it, would not notice their arrival.

Aldrian kept smiling. He would wait. He wanted to see who would try their luck and challenge his authority.

However, after learning this information, he realized that he needed to establish connections with the authorities of this place as soon as possible. With the right relationships, he could take advantage of them to ease the burden on the Barisan continent.

After walking for a while, he came across a tall, grand building. Above its large gate, the words Alchemist Association were embedded in majestic lettering. He stopped and smiled.

"Well, I know an easy way to attract the attention of those big shots."

It was, after all, his innate talent, to draw the eyes of the masses.

Later that day, news spread like wildfire and caused an uproar throughout Avon City. A mysterious alchemist had suddenly appeared, someone who had created a pill with a quality never seen before, a six stripes pill.

The revelation caused a sensation. For a moment, the city's attention shifted entirely to the Alchemist Association. Everyone wanted to see the six stripes pill, and even more so, the alchemist who had concocted it. However, the association remained silent and guarded the alchemist's identity closely.

But then, another uproar erupted the next day.

Rumble!

A heavenly tribulation descended upon the Blacksmith Association area. It was a clear sign, an artifact was attempting to ascend to divine grade.

Someone had successfully created a divine-grade artifact!

After the heavenly tribulation, people immediately rushed to the Blacksmith Association, eager to witness the artifact and even try to buy it. But the association refused to sell the item, which turned out to be a middle divine-grade sword.

Their refusal left many with deep regret.

They also wanted to meet the one who had forged the sword, but the Blacksmith Association remained silent, guarding the blacksmith's identity as well. This led many to wonder what exactly was happening in the city.

Two extraordinary events had occurred in just two days, yet both associations refused to reveal the people behind them.

And then, on the following day—

Rumble!

Another heavenly tribulation struck.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 670 - 670: Invitation

[1,583 words]

On the next day, inside the luxurious room of a large manor in the northern part of Avon City, a blonde-haired middle-aged man sat in his seat, reading a piece of paper that contained a report in his hand. He showed surprise several times, even shock, as he read through it.

After finishing, he placed the report on the table in front of him and put on a serious expression.

"Who is he? Able to concoct pills of the six-stripe grade? And he's also a blacksmith? Even forging a divine-grade artifact? All of it done with a 100% success rate." He thought in astonishment.

The report, of course, contained detailed information about Aldrian, who had done all of that to attract attention. However, the populace still did not know the identity of the

person responsible, or if the two extraordinary events actually came from the same individual.

He only received this report thanks to his informant inside the two organizations, which confirmed that both events were actually caused by the same person.

That individual had already concocted several six-stripe pills, causing an uproar within the Alchemist Association. This led the association to award him the Three Golden Star badge, a rank and certification held by only a few people across the continent. The Association Master himself had personally given that badge after coming in person upon hearing the news about the six stripes pills.

That same man had also created two divine-grade artifacts, prompting the Blacksmith Association to give him special treatment. They granted him the title of Grandmaster and even bestowed upon him the same status as the Vice Association Master.

Just like the Alchemist Association, the Association Master personally came in person and conferred the status after hearing the news of two consecutive divine-grade artifacts and both of them at the middle divine grade.

The blonde-haired man sat with blank expression... all of it had come from a single individual.

"Wearing a mask and black robe. Low pseudo-Immortal Establishment stage cultivation. His energy is also strange, described only as suppressive to others."

The more he read the description of this figure, the more it felt like something out of someone's imagination. Yet it was real, and that man had accomplished all of it. This was the first time he had ever known of someone like this, truly mysterious.

Even just one of his capabilities, whether concocting six-stripe pills or forging divine-grade artifacts would be enough for the imperial family to extend an invitation. And he was certain these events would reach their ears. But this man could do both, something unheard of in history.

There was no doubt. The imperial family would want him as a special guest or even try to bring him into their ranks, even if it meant offending someone powerful. This person was simply too valuable to ignore.

The man then took a communication artifact from his pocket.

"Yes, my lord," a voice answered from the other end.

"Invite that mysterious man. I would like to meet him. Don't push it if he's unwilling," the blonde-haired man said.

"Understood, my lord."

The connection cut off, and the man let out a sigh. Of course, he would not miss the chance to build a connection with someone like that. His city was fortunate to be visited by such a figure, and he intended to take full advantage of it.

On the other side of the city, the situation was truly bustling even chaotic, due to the two extraordinary events. Over the past three days, countless people had been visiting the two associations, hoping to catch a glimpse of the pills and artifacts created by the mysterious figure.

Even those from outside the city had already heard the news and begun their journey to Avon city. At this moment, Avon City had become a regional highlight, on a scale comparable to the major news from the Barisan Continent. Whether they were from the Ancient Blue Gate World or other stars, everyone wanted to see the pills and artifacts for themselves.

Because of this, the two associations were overwhelmed by the sheer number of visitors, including nobles from other territories. Many sought to meet the one who had created those remarkable items, but both associations seemed determined to keep the identity of the figure hidden.

Those people also did not dare to push too hard or force their way into uncovering the identity of the mysterious person, fearing they might offend the two associations. The Alchemist Association and the Blacksmith Association, both with branches spread across the Orian Continent, held immense influence.

With their respective specialties, no one wanted to risk provoking them, especially with the possibility of being banned from their services.

That would be a great disaster!

Even so, the excitement and determination of many people did not fade. They continued to come, hoping to try their luck.

As for the man responsible for all of this, Aldrian, at that very moment, he was enjoying a cup of tea inside a luxurious room. The past three days reminded him of the time he concocted six-stripe pills and successfully forged a divine-grade artifact in the Barisan Continent.

However, this time felt far more chaotic. There were more people, and the news had spread to a much wider region.

What he did in the past three days was basically the same as in the Barisan Continent. The difference was that he wore a white mask to hide his face, and this time, he intended to obtain certification as both an alchemist and a blacksmith in this continent.

In the Barisan Continent, he was a 10-star badge alchemist, but he knew that kind of badge held no power here. The Orian Continent had its own certification system to reflect one's professional status.

That was why he needed this continent's official certification as an alchemist. As usual, with how things worked for him, he caused an uproar, he was able to concoct six-stripe-grade pills, and he did so far more easily than in the past.

With his cultivation now much, much higher than in the past, his ability to concoct pills had increased as well. The same applied to the Blacksmith Association. He had never held any official certification as a blacksmith, but he certainly had the skill.

When he took the test, he simply forged a divine-grade sword using materials he bought on the spot at that time, which immediately sent the association's higher-ups into a frenzy. They then asked him to create another artifact, a shield, this time using materials provided by the association. And just like that, he created two divine-grade artifacts.

With that kind of success rate, there was no hesitation. They contacted the association headquarters in the empire's capital, and they did not hesitate to grant him the title of Grandmaster, along with the same status as the association's vice master.

Aldrian, of course, did not refuse any of the preferential treatment and privileges, including this grand mansion provided by the Alchemist Association. The only thing he asked of them was to keep his identity a secret. He still wanted to maintain his air of mystery, while drawing the kind of attention that would reach the high-ranking figures of this empire.

While he was still enjoying his tea, a knock suddenly came at the door, followed by a woman's voice.

"My lord, my apologies for disturbing you, but there is an envoy from the City Lord manor requesting an audience."

Aldrian nodded.

"All right, bring the guest to the guest room. I'll be there in a moment," he said.

He wasn't surprised that someone from the City Lord manor had found out where he lived, even though only a few people knew his location. The manor could have easily obtained the information through his informants inside of the associations in this city.

It wouldn't be a bad idea to build a connection with the City Lord before approaching the imperial family, he was, after all, in the man's city.

Aldrian then put on his black robe and white mask before leaving the room and walking toward the guest room. The only ones who had seen his face were a few maids in the mansion, all of whom were bound by contract not to reveal anything that happened within the estate.

After walking for a while, Aldrian finally arrived at the guest room. The moment he entered, he saw a middle-aged man with neatly kept brown hair and a mustache. The man wore knightly armor bearing the symbol of the City Lord manor.

The man immediately stood up upon seeing Aldrian and bowed.

"My apologies if my visit has disturbed your time, Your Excellency. I hope you don't take offense at my presence here."

Aldrian shook his head.

"No, of course not. In fact, I was already expecting a visit like this," Aldrian replied, which caused the man to raise his eyebrows slightly before nodding.

"I see. Then allow me to introduce myself. I am Bordin Vinalles, the City Lord's personal knight. You may call me Bordin, Your Excellency."

Aldrian gave a nod and took a seat in the master's chair.

"Your Excellency, I am here as a messenger from my lord to your esteemed self," Bordin said. "My lord wishes to invite Your Excellency to the City Lord manor as a sign of his personal respect and admiration for your achievements and capabilities. We hope to build a friendly relationship with Your Excellency."

"We sincerely hope that you might spare some time for the City Lord manor, even in the midst of your busy schedule," he added with a slight bow.

There was a brief pause before Aldrian responded.

"I see. That's very kind of the City Lord... Alright, I will come."

Bordin was slightly stunned. Just like that?

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 671 - 671: Knowing His Identity

[1,562 words]

Bordin was slightly stunned when Aldrian seemed to accept the invitation so easily. He had already prepared some plans to persuade this mysterious man if he showed no interest in coming to the city lord manor. However, it seemed that wouldn't be necessary, he was much easier to invite than expected.

"So, when is the right time for me to come to the city lord?" Aldrian suddenly asked, to which Bordin replied,

"If it's alright with Your Excellency, we could depart now. My lord truly wants to meet you and has already prepared himself."

Aldrian nodded and stood up.

"Alright, what are we waiting for? It's not good to make the city lord wait. Lead the way, Sir Bordin," he said, and Bordin obeyed.

Bordin then guided Aldrian to a carriage bearing the city lord manor's symbol, and not long after, they departed for the manor. The carriage flew throughout the journey, pulled by a northern winged horse, a species of flying horse native to the northern part of the continent, the region inside of the Martal Empire.

During the journey, Bordin, who was escorting Aldrian, occasionally glanced at him. Aldrian was truly much easier to talk to and to invite than expected. Bordin had already prepared himself for the possibility that this man would be arrogant or pompous because of his status or ability, just like many others in the associations.

He had encountered many such people from the Alchemist Association and the Blacksmith Association. Because they held immense influence and their services were essential for cultivators, they knew their worth well, even the city lord manor preferred to avoid trouble with them.

But this person simply agreed when the city lord manor invited him. Thinking about it again, it was as if—

"He was already waiting for this moment," Bordin thought.

If that was true, then he wondered what this person wanted from the city lord manor.

After more than ten minutes of travel, they finally arrived at the city lord manor, and the carriage landed right in front of the main entrance doors. A blonde-haired man was

already waiting there, having received the report that the mysterious person had accepted the invitation and was on his way.

Once the carriage landed and the doors opened, Aldrian finally came face to face with the blonde-haired man. The man was at the middle stage of pseudo-immortal establishment, and through the Eyes of the Heaven, Aldrian instantly knew who he was.

The man showed a smile and offered his handshake.

"Welcome to the city lord manor, Your Excellency. My name is Zuke Fars Hazerdolf, the current city lord of Avon City. It's truly an honor to meet your esteemed self. I sincerely thank you for sparing some of your time to visit this place."

Aldrian accepted the handshake and nodded.

"Likewise, Sir Zuke. It's a pleasure to meet you," he responded, which made City Lord Zuke nod in return.

"This way, let us move to a more comfortable place," he said, then guided Aldrian to the guest room where they were served tea.

Not long after they settled into the room, City Lord Zuke looked at Aldrian with a curious expression.

"My apologies if my question offends you, but do you always wear a mask and black robe when meeting others? I'm just curious, Your Excellency. If you don't wish to answer, then please forget I asked," he said.

"Oh, of course not. I only wear the mask for convenience. In fact, I could show you my face right now," Aldrian replied, which left the city lord stunned. He then watched as Aldrian removed his mask and pulled back his robe's hood, revealing his handsome face and red hair.

The moment City Lord Zuke saw Aldrian's face, he was truly astonished by how young he looked. He had expected to see a middle-aged man, or even an old one, as he hadn't believed Aldrian's voice reflected his real age.

With the mask, Aldrian's voice could have easily been altered to conceal his true identity. But to think that behind the mask was a handsome young man, Zuke truly hadn't expected it.

But then, he didn't know why Aldrian's face seemed familiar, until he remembered something.

"Wait... doesn't that mysterious man's giant avatar have a face like this young man?" he thought.

He had been among those who followed the continent's major powers on their journey to the Barisan Continent that day, and he had personally witnessed the battle between Aldrian and Tarius.

That battle was the most powerful one he had ever seen. He could still recall how that giant avatar destroyed the eye in the sky with a single sword slash. There was no way he could forget the details of that towering figure which was clearly visible even from a distance. And he was certain now... the avatar had the same face as this young man.

Suddenly, his heart trembled, and the way he looked at Aldrian changed.

"Don't tell me—?!"

"Oh, from the way your thoughts and the way you look at me have changed, it seems you already know who I am," Aldrian said with a smile, which made City Lord Zuke's eyes tremble. His body also couldn't help but tremble slightly.

He gulped before asking,

"Uh... Your Excellency, are you from the Barisan Continent?"

"I am."

Aldrian answered without hesitation, causing the city lord's heart to pound heavily. Even so, he braced himself and asked again.

"Are you that person, Your Excellency? I mean... the one who fought that thing, the terrifying eye in the sky on the Barisan Continent?"

"I am."

Plop!

City Lord Zuke dropped to the floor, even though he had already been sitting in his seat. The situation felt surreal. To think his guess was right... this man was the same one who fought the immortal that day!

He wanted to brush this off and tried to convince himself that this young man merely shared a similar face with the avatar, or that there was some other reason he wasn't the same mysterious figure. But deep down, he couldn't shake the feeling that the man in front of him was the real deal.

And he couldn't think of anyone who would benefit from pretending to be that man. The only thing awaiting anyone foolish enough to masquerade as the mysterious figure was the wrath of the real one once the Barisan Continent opened for visitors.

Aldrian calmly sipped his tea and put the cup back on the table.

"I just happened to pass by this place during my journey. It's my first time visiting this continent since the Barisan Continent opened to the world," he said.

City Lord Zuke still looked at Aldrian with a slightly blank expression, but he tried to move his lips and speak.

"Ah, uhm, Your Excellency... it's not that I don't believe you, but... uhh... could you give me some kind of proof that you're truly that same man?"

He knew how ridiculous and contradictory that sounded, but it reflected just how much disbelief he still felt. Was this truly the same man who had fought the immortal, the man who had become the subject of conversation among people across the continent, even on other stars?

Aldrian's gaze shifted, locking directly onto the city lord's eyes. Zuke froze as his surroundings suddenly changed.

He was no longer in the guest room. He now floated in the sky, surrounded by a chaotic atmosphere and engulfed in darkness, with destruction threatening to spread onto the land below. His heart trembled as he felt the sheer terror in the air. It was so real that it struck at his very soul.

Then, slowly, he looked upward, only to see that thing.

The eye.

That colossal eye staring directly at him.

His mental defenses nearly collapsed on the spot.

"ARGHH!" he shouted, but his surroundings shifted again, returning to the room, with Aldrian still sitting calmly, watching him with an calm expression. Then, Aldrian suddenly smiled and picked up his teacup once more.

"I hope that is enough for you to no longer have any doubts about me," Aldrian said before taking another sip.

City Lord Zuke was still gasping, sweat already rolling down his forehead. What he had just experienced must have been an illusion, yet the terror he felt was even greater than that day.

The day when he and the others saw the colossal eye in the sky... the despair they had felt then was unforgettable. Just looking at that eye had shaken their souls.

That sensation, that fear, it was not fake.

The experience just now was even more terrifying, because this time, he had been the main target of the eye. He couldn't imagine fighting, or even standing, in front of a being like that. But this young man...

City Lord Zuke instantly kowtowed before Aldrian.

"My sincerest apologies for even having the slightest doubt about you, Your Excellency," he said. "It is truly an honor to welcome you to this place."

After enduring just a few seconds of that terrifying illusion, there was no longer any doubt in his heart about Aldrian's identity.

"You don't have to be so dramatic, Sir Zuke," Aldrian replied. "Instead, why don't we talk about something else? Don't you want to build a relationship between us?"

"Ah, yes, ahaha... That's true, Your Excellency," he replied awkwardly.

City Lord Zuke straightened his body and sat back down, but his posture was now far more reverent, clearly showing that he saw himself as someone of lower status compared to Aldrian.

Aldrian continued smiling as he spoke.

"Anyway, after arriving in this place, I came across some interesting information. I hope Sir Zuke can give me an answer."

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Chapter 672 - 672: The Involvement of the Imperial Family?

[1,679 words]

"Of course, Your Excellency. I will answer it as best as I can," City Lord Zuke said.

Aldrian nodded. "Alright, then do you know who is really in control of the Information Center that spreads across the Martal Empire? I'm not talking about the head of the Information Center, but the one who truly supports this organization," he asked.

"I know that someone with great power is behind the Information Center, and I want to know who it is," he added.

This was something he had already learned in the Doria Empire in the past. An organization like the Information Guild would not last without strong backing, not with the nature of their work. They are an organization that holds many secrets, and many would see them as a threat.

Without someone with immense power backing them, they would have collapsed long ago because of the secrets they hold. The fact that they are still standing and even flourishing is a sign that someone with much greater power and influence is behind them.

Hearing Aldrian's question, the city lord understood that he could not lie. Aldrian seemed to know a thing or two about this matter, so he decided to answer him.

"This information is not known to the general populace, but it's already an open secret among the nobles. The Information Center or the Information Guild, is actually one of the tools used by the imperial family and spread across the empire. They are the ones who truly control it."

Aldrian was not surprised if the Information Guild was part of the imperial family. Even so, he still wondered whether the imperial family had any direct connection with the Barevisk family. Did they share the same intent as the Barevisk family? Or were they simply publishing whatever the Barevisk family passed on to them?

He still did not understand their true relationship, so he couldn't be certain.

"I see. Then, Sir Zuke, I believe you're already aware of the new information regarding the Barisan Continent. What do you think? Did you find it interesting?" Aldrian asked with a smile.

"Would you like to visit it once you've learned about it?"

His question made City Lord Zuke feel a chill in his chest. He knew this was no simple question. It was the kind of question that could determine how this young man would see him—or even decide his life or death.

He gulped. "To be honest, I was truly tempted to enter the Barisan Continent without waiting for your approval after learning about the information. I don't really know the source, but the Information Center would never release anything that hasn't been confirmed by their most trusted sources."

"But make no mistake, Your Excellency. Though I was tempted to go there as soon as possible, I had no harmful intent. I was simply curious about that place."

"Still, I chose not to give in to the temptation of the Barisan Continent's mystery. I still respect you. What you did at that time truly saved many lives. If not for your esteemed self, the world might have truly come to an end."

"To this day, I'm still waiting for your permission to enter the continent."

City Lord Zuke then fell silent, watching Aldrian, who was gazing at him calmly. He couldn't help but grow nervous under that look, as if he were awaiting judgment. Aldrian's eyes felt as though they could see everything, even his deepest secrets, which unsettled him.

After a few seconds of tense silence, Aldrian suddenly smiled and spoke.

"Relax, Sir Zuke. I know you're not lying. There's no need to be so tense. I just wanted to know what you thought about the information."

Hearing that, City Lord Zuke sighed in relief. But then Aldrian continued, and his next words sent a chill through him.

"However, I would have acted differently if you were lying or if you had any ill intent toward me or the Barisan Continent."

Though Aldrian said it casually, the meaning behind his words was clear. Sweat rolled down Zuke's forehead. In that moment, he truly thanked his parents a thousand times for raising him not to be a greedy man. He sighed in relief once again.

"Do you know the Barevisk family of the Akares Star?" Aldrian suddenly asked, causing City Lord Zuke to raise his eyebrows slightly. Why was this young man bringing up that family?

"Of course I know, Your Excellency. The Barevisk family is one of the strongest families on the Akares Star, and they have ties with the Martal Empire, as it is the most powerful empire on the Orian Continent," City Lord Zuke replied.

Aldrian nodded. "Then, what kind of relationship do they share with the imperial family? What sort of dynamic do they have? Are they supporting each other, or something else?"

"As far as I know, there's nothing particularly special about their relationship. It's just a normal connection between two powerful forces. The Martal Empire, being the strongest in the Orian Continent, naturally has many ties with other powers from different stars, and the Barevisk family is only one of them. I don't think there's anything special about their relationship," the city lord answered.

"That is, at least, to the extent of my knowledge, Your Excellency. If they do have some kind of special relationship, then the imperial family has done a very good job of hiding it from the other nobles."

Aldrian touched his chin in thought. It seemed he would not learn anything useful here about the relationship between the imperial family and the Barevisk family.

"Your Excellency, if I may ask, why are you inquiring about the Barevisk family? Did something happen between you and them?" City Lord Zuke asked. He knew Aldrian wouldn't bring up the Barevisk family without a reason. Does he have some kind of history with them?

Aldrian looked at City Lord Zuke and decided it was fine to reveal the source of the information. He then explained that the information about the Barisan Continent, which came from the Information Center, matched what had been obtained through infiltrators from the Barevisk family.

Naturally, Aldrian also explained the details of the Barevisk family's infiltration efforts.

When City Lord Zuke heard this, he was astonished. Now he understood why Aldrian had mentioned the Barevisk family. They actually dared to infiltrate the continent and defy someone who could easily wipe them out!

But the truly terrifying part was that this young man had enslaved the infiltrators without anyone knowing. The Barevisk family had no idea they were practically throwing their doors wide open for him, allowing him to learn everything about their movements.

They wouldn't realize it until it was too late!

"Did he mean to say that he would've enslaved me if I'd answered differently earlier?" Zuke wondered, shuddering inwardly.

Even if he hadn't been killed, he was certain he would have been enslaved, turned into this young man's eyes and ears within the empire.

But then, a new concern surfaced in his heart. He realized what kind of trouble the imperial family might face now that the information about the Barisan Continent had also come from the Information Center.

There was no way the imperial family hadn't known about it, yet they still allowed that kind of information to be released. They had to understand that releasing that kind of information about the Barisan Continent could invite danger not only to the Barisan continent itself, but to them as well.

By doing so, they had essentially made themselves one of this young man's targets.

"No wonder he asked about the relationship between the imperial family and the Barevisk family..." Zuke thought, finally understanding. "For the imperial family to approve the release of that information, just what did the Barevisk family offer them in return?"

This still didn't make any sense. The imperial family was much larger and more powerful than the Barevisk family, and as far as he knew, there was no special relationship between them. So why did the imperial family possess information that only the Barevisk family should have known, and then go on to spread it?

It felt as if the imperial family was either inviting trouble or helping the Barevisk family carry out whatever they intended.

This didn't align with the emperor he knew.

"There's no way the Barevisk family could have convinced the imperial family to do this... unless—"

His thoughts stopped at one possibility.

"So, what do you think after hearing all this, Sir Zuke? Do you have any new opinion about the situation?" Aldrian asked with a smile.

City Lord Zuke looked at Aldrian and sighed. It was better to share his thoughts, perhaps his guess would help this young man decide what to do about the imperial family. To be honest, he didn't want any trouble to fall upon the empire, but offering Aldrian a possible connection or clue might help uncover the truth behind the situation.

"The imperial family I know, especially His Majesty the Emperor would never make a move that would put them at risk like this. But with the information coming from the Information Center, there's no doubt they're involved in some way," City Lord Zuke said.

"And as far as I know, there's no special relationship between the imperial family and the Barevisk family that would justify all of this. But I do have one possibility in mind, it might be right, or it might not."

"The Barevisk family is close to the Valroy family. The Valroy family is the most powerful force on the Akares Star, their strength could rival even the imperial family."

Aldrian kept listening, curious about what this Valroy family had to do with the current situation.

"Back to the Barevisk family, their connection to the Valroy family is strong. In fact, it's said that the Barevisk family is one of the Valroy family's vassals. So, Your Excellency can already imagine how close their relationship is."

"Now, why did I bring up the Valroy family in this conversation? Because the one that has a special relationship with the imperial family isn't the Barevisk family, but the Valroy family."

Hearing that, Aldrian raised his eyebrows. He now understood what kind of guess the city lord had in mind, and he couldn't help but smile.

"Oh? Tell me more about their relationship, Sir Zuke," he said.

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Chapter 673 - 673: The Relationship Between Two Powers and the Reason

[1,617 words]

"Oh? Tell me more about their relationship, Sir Zuke," Aldrian said.

City Lord Zuke nodded.

"Almost everyone knows about this, since the news has already spread. His Highness, Crown Prince Ronwell Avilandis, is actually engaged to the young miss of the Valroy family," he said.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows. This was new information for him. The information crystal he had only showed the crown prince's name, picture, and what kind of man he was in the eyes of the people.

Something suddenly became clear in his mind. He couldn't help but smile.

"The relationship between the Barevisk family, the Valroy family, and the imperial family... I see, I see," he thought.

If the ones who could move the imperial family were the Valroy family, then now it all made sense. He now understood that his mind had been too preoccupied with the Barevisk family alone. He hadn't realized that there was another major player here—the Valroy family.

His thoughts then shifted to the possibility that the ones looking for trouble were not the Barevisk family, but the Valroy family. He believed so, because now everything started to make sense and fall into place.

He remembered when he saw Vars's memories, how even Vars was confused by the Barevisk family's patriarch choosing to infiltrate the Barisan continent. Vars had thought it was related to the arrival of someone important from the Valroy family, which prompted his patriarch to make that decision.

After the Barevisk family obtained information about the Barisan continent, they passed it on to the Valroy family, which then spread further to the imperial family. Now, everything connected, and he believed this was the most probable explanation.

The only thing he was still uncertain about was the position of the imperial family. Did they fully support the Valroy family or not? Aldrian still wanted to know what was in the emperor's mind.

From the information he had learned through the information crystal given by the information center, and from what City Lord Zuke said, the emperor was not someone likely to make such a reckless move.

Seeing that Aldrian seemed to be thinking deeply, the city lord continued.

"This news caused an uproar in the past. It had never happened before, I mean, a member of the imperial family forming a marital relationship with a family from a different star. Until now, they always chose someone from the noble families within the empire, which is why this news created such a sensation at the time."

"And it was with the Valroy family, the strongest family in the Akares Star. A union between the most powerful family in Akares and the most powerful empire on the Orian Continent, who wouldn't be shocked and eager to see what comes of that?" he added with a slight sigh.

"Is there any reason the imperial family would do that? I mean, to betroth the crown prince to the young miss of the Valroy family?" Aldrian asked.

"Now, this is something only known among the nobles, but the engagement was first proposed by the Valroy family. And as for why the emperor eventually accepted their proposal, this has something to do with the Northern Star Cluster, or as it's now called, the Fallen Star Cluster."

Seeing the confused expression on Aldrian's face, the city lord knew he needed to explain further.

"The Northern Star Cluster, now called the Fallen Star Cluster, is a group of stars that's considered 'fallen' because the devils have completely taken it over. In other words, those stars are now entirely under their control and serve as their base."

"This star cluster is close to ours, and we sometimes engage in skirmishes in space or wherever we encounter them. Their influence has even reached this continent a long time ago."

Hearing this, Aldrian was astonished. A cluster of stars had fallen into the hands of the devils? Just how many devils were there? Hundreds of billions? Trillions? He imagined that if a great war broke out, the scale of destruction would affect not just space but also surrounding stars.

"I didn't think Tarius's influence had grown this vast and severe," Aldrian thought.

And this was only one star cluster. What about the other regions of this heaven? He couldn't begin to imagine how far Tarius's reach had already spread. And this still didn't account for the influence of other invading gods.

Aldrian's thoughts grew heavy. It looked like a large-scale purge across the heavens would be inevitable. He needed to cleanse this heaven of every trace of the invaders' influence.

"Why does the Fallen Star Cluster have something to do with the betrothal? Because the Valroy family also proposed the alliance with the intent to support each other in case the devils decide to launch a large-scale war against our star cluster," City Lord Zuke continued.

"His Majesty might have seen it favorably, since our star is the closest target if the devils from the Fallen Star Cluster decide to attack."

"Did those devils really have plans to invade? Enough to make the emperor agree to this alliance?" Aldrian asked.

"From the signs, yes. They seem to have been preparing something big over the past decade, and it looks like they were waiting for the right moment to invade. The peak of the tension was when that thing—the one Your Excellency fought in the sky—appeared. The devils started making their move, but it seems they canceled it after you defeated that eye," City Lord Zuke answered.

"By the way, Your Excellency, thanks to you killing so many of the devils that day, their influence on the Ancient Blue Gate World has been greatly reduced. Some of their higher-ups even fled. Based on our estimates, they escaped to the Fallen Star Cluster. It seems they were truly afraid of Your Excellency's strength."

"Because of that, the devil territory on this continent has been shrinking. We took advantage of the situation and began launching attacks. Now, the devils or what's left of them are almost entirely under the control of this continent's cultivators," he added with a smile.

Aldrian nodded. He now understood the entire situation, his visit here had truly been fruitful, providing him with many important pieces of information. He smiled at City Lord Zuke.

"You seem to know many secrets and what happens behind the scenes, Sir Zuke. Judging from your name and status, I'd guess you hold a high position in the Hazerdolf family," he said.

"Yes, Your Excellency. I'm one of the grand elders of the Hazerdolf family, assigned by the patriarch, Duke Hazerdolf, to serve as the city lord of Avon City. Because of this city's importance, he appointed me—one of the three grand elders—to oversee it," City Lord Zuke said with pride in his tone.

Aldrian smiled as he picked up the tea and took a sip.

"Your Excellency, if I may," City Lord Zuke said carefully, "I have some questions regarding the Barisan Continent. I hope Your Excellency would be willing to satisfy my curiosity."

"You may ask, Sir Zuke. After all, you've already been helpful in providing me with so much useful information," Aldrian replied.

City Lord Zuke nodded and looked at Aldrian carefully.

"Your Excellency, are you truly only at the low Pseudo-Immortal Establishment Stage? I mean no offense, but according to the information I received from the information center, the strongest person on the Barisan Continent is only at that level, and that is just one person, and that person is you."

"This has sparked a lot of debate since yesterday, because that information sounds too absurd to be true."

Aldrian simply smiled before stretching out his hand. A golden energy surged from his palm, and City Lord Zuke's eyes trembled the moment he saw it. His very soul quivered, affected by the energy, and he instantly recalled the reports from members of the associations, the descriptions of a strange energy that could only be described as "suppressive to others."

Now he finally understood why.

His body and soul felt as though they wanted to prostrate before this energy. In the presence of that energy, he felt unworthy even to stand.

Aldrian then withdrew the energy.

"How is it?" he asked.

"I see... My mind and knowledge have truly been opened today. There are still many things I don't understand, and someone like Your Excellency is beyond my comprehension," City Lord Zuke replied, a tremor lingering in his heart.

Now he was certain, the reports from his informants and the information from the information center were true. What he had just sensed was unlike anything he had ever felt before. And yet, it was also true that Aldrian was only at the low Pseudo-Immortal Establishment Stage.

That strange golden energy... it was the first time he had seen anything like it. It made him wonder, how could someone like Aldrian have appeared in such an isolated continent?

Aldrian and the city lord continued their conversation, exchanging information and discussing the topics Aldrian wanted to know about. As for matters concerning the Barisan Continent, Aldrian also shared some knowledge, since what the city lord wanted was only general information.

These things would eventually become known anyway, once he permitted access to the continent. So he didn't mind sharing a few details that weren't included in the information center's records.

After speaking for another hour, Aldrian felt it was enough and decided to take his leave.

"It has truly been an honor to receive you here, Your Majesty," City Lord Zuke said as he escorted Aldrian to the carriage.

Now that he knew Aldrian's true status and that the Barisan Continent was under his rule, City Lord Zuke had changed how he addressed him.

"Still," he added through voice transmission, "I hope Your Majesty might show mercy to the imperial family... if they truly did deliberately involve themselves, and if they held any harmful intent toward you or the Barisan Continent."

Aldrian simply smiled as they approached the carriage.

"Well, that depends on them."

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Chapter 674 - 674: The Invitation He Had Been Waiting For

[1,477 words]

The next day, Aldrian was inside his mansion, receiving two special guests. He had already taken off his mask, revealing his real face. In front of him, two men in different attire sat as they enjoyed their tea.

One of them wore an alchemist's robe with a three-golden-star badge on his chest. He was an old man with white hair and cultivation at the middle pseudo-immortal stage.

The other wore formal, tight-fitting clothes that showed off his muscular body. He was a middle-aged, brown-haired man with a brown beard that covered his lips. Though shorter in height compared to the old man, his cultivation was the same. Anyone who saw this man would immediately recognize him as a dwarf.

These two were among the most influential figures in the empire and even across the Orian Continent. Their capabilities and creations were highly sought after each time they produced something.

They were the association masters of the Alchemist Association and the Blacksmith Association, Morgan Heinz and Mardoth Skyhammer.

At this moment, they happened to visit Aldrian at the same time by coincidence, which left both of them confused. At that point, neither of them knew that Aldrian was the same person capable of creating six-striped pills and divine-grade artifacts with a 100% success rate. They had also never seen his face before, as he always wore a mask and robe.

Moreover, each organization had kept Aldrian's identity and description hidden, which prevented them from realizing he was the one behind those feats.

Only after entering the mansion and meeting Aldrian face-to-face without his mask did they finally learn the truth. They had already been in his mansion for over an hour, speaking about various matters.

Just like everyone else, they were truly shocked that someone like Aldrian existed.

An alchemist and a blacksmith at the same time, with the greatest talent they had ever seen—both of them felt that the heavens had truly bestowed countless blessings upon Aldrian. His character was overwhelmingly exceptional, as if he were a hero prepared by the heavens themselves.

And now, after learning he was the one who had fought against an immortal, they began to believe that this man was truly the son of the heavens. There was no way to describe his abilities using common knowledge. Considering how young he was, the only conclusion they could reach was that Aldrian was a singularity, there was no one else like him.

With all of that in mind, they immediately understood just how significant Aldrian's presence would become once the Barisan Continent opened to the world. There was even a possibility that he might become a central figure not just within a star cluster or galaxy, but something even greater.

Because of this, the two powerhouses were determined to hold on to his thigh as tightly as they could.

At that moment, while they were still enjoying their discussion, a maid knocked on the door.

"My lord, I apologize for disturbing your time, but another special guest has arrived, this time, from the imperial family. They have sent an envoy led by His Majesty's personal butler himself."

Hearing that, the two association masters raised their eyebrows in astonishment. For the emperor to send his personal butler, a man known to be one of his most trusted aides to lead the envoy clearly showed just how important Aldrian was in the emperor's eyes.

However, already knowing that the imperial family had recently made moves that seemed to harm the Barisan Continent and even Aldrian's interests made them frown. They could not understand why the emperor would act that way. Still, it would be best if Aldrian went to the imperial family to ask for clarification.

After all, they too did not want the empire to fall into chaos by offending someone like Aldrian.

"Excuse me, gentlemen. It looks like our conversation has to end here. But I hope we can speak again in the future. In fact, I would like to invite you to my palace in the Barisan Continent once it is opened to the world," Aldrian said with a smile. He then put on his mask and robe once again.

"Ah, thank you for that, Your Majesty. It would be my pleasure and honor to fulfill your invitation. I will gladly visit in the future," said Association Master Morgan.

"I'm truly grateful for your invitation, Your Majesty. Of course, I would be happy to visit your palace someday," said Association Master Mardoth.

Aldrian then escorted the two association masters to their carriages. At that moment, they also saw the envoy from the imperial family. As expected of the imperial family, they arrived with a grand escort, accompanied by many guards.

The two masters quickly spotted the emperor's personal butler, a tall, black-haired, middle-aged man with neatly combed hair and white gloves, easily recognizable by his butler's attire adorned with the imperial insignia.

Even so, they showed no surprise or visible change in expression. As association masters with influence strong enough that even the imperial family preferred to avoid unnecessary trouble, they had little reason to be unsettled.

The emperor's personal butler saw the three figures emerge from the mansion. He wasn't surprised by the appearance of the two association masters, he had already noticed their carriages parked on the mansion grounds after all.

The imperial family also knew that this masked man was the one who had caused an uproar in the city over the past few days. A man with alchemy and blacksmithing abilities unlike anything they had seen before, of course the two association masters would come to visit him.

The butler then stepped forward and gave a slight bow. Though he was an envoy appointed directly by the emperor, he still needed to show humility. In the end, he was just a messenger. In front of figures like these, especially the masked man they hoped to invite, he had to demonstrate the imperial family's sincerity.

"It's truly surprising to see the two association masters here. I hope my visit hasn't disturbed any of your time," the butler said politely as he straightened his posture.

"Of course not, Butler Norris. We were just finishing up," Association Master Morgan replied. "But to think we would cross paths with Butler Norris... His Majesty must not be taking this lightly."

"Indeed. His Majesty is taking this very seriously," Butler Norris responded, then shifted his gaze toward the masked Aldrian.

"I see. Then we'll be leaving first. See you next time, Your Excellency. We'll talk more in the future, when the time is right," Morgan said as he offered a handshake to Aldrian, which Aldrian, of course, accepted. Association Master Mardoth did the same before both of them departed from the mansion grounds.

After the two association masters had left, leaving Butler Norris and Aldrian, the butler immediately gave a slight bow.

"My apologies if I've disturbed your time, Your Excellency. Allow me to introduce myself properly. I am the personal butler of His Majesty the Emperor. You may call me Butler Norris," he said before straightening his posture.

Aldrian nodded. "So, Butler Norris, what business brings you here on behalf of His Majesty? Is it perhaps related to the events of the past few days?" he asked, feigning ignorance, something the butler clearly noticed. There was no way Aldrian didn't know the purpose of his visit, but even so, Norris chose to play along.

"Yes, Your Excellency. His Majesty is truly in awe of your ability to concoct pills of a grade never seen before, as well as your creation of a divine-grade artifact. His Majesty sincerely hopes to meet you in person and build a good relationship. I hope Your Excellency might spare some time to meet with His Majesty," he said.

The butler's response clearly showed that the imperial family was the one in need of Aldrian. They had even lowered themselves by asking him to spare time for them, a gesture meant to demonstrate sincerity and goodwill, hoping Aldrian would accept their invitation, even if it meant they had to wait.

However, why should Aldrian wait? He needed to meet the imperial family anyway and there were things he needed to ask from the emperor himself. The opportunity had arrived, so of course, he would take it.

"Of course. For His Majesty, I can spare some of my time. Even if I already had a schedule, I would still clear it for him."

Hearing Aldrian's response, the butler was momentarily stunned. His expression resembled that of the city lord's personal knight when he had invited Aldrian, one that seemed to say, "That's it?"

Although there were still some doubts and questions in his mind, he knew he had to bring this masked man to the palace now that he had agreed. The emperor wanted to meet him as soon as possible anyway.

"I see. Thank you for sparing your time, Your Excellency. Please, enter the carriage. We will escort you to the imperial palace, His Majesty is already waiting."

Not long after, Aldrian was on his way to the imperial palace.

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Chapter 675 - 675: Meeting the Emperor

[1,550 words]

To reach the capital from his mansion, Aldrian had to take a carriage to the warp gates, which functioned similarly to teleportation stations on the Barisan continent. There was no significant difference compared to those stations, except that these warp gates did not have an internal space within the portal like the ones in Barisan.

Once a person stepped into the warp gate, they would appear on the other side at a different warp gate location.

The complex part was that, to connect each warp gate, they had to create a path that essentially bent the space between two distant places. This method actually had a weakness. If something happened along this path, it could trap the person traveling through it, even killing them because they would be unable to escape from the void.

Worse, it could cause a spatial storm, making the warp gates extremely dangerous if not properly maintained.

However, the advantage of the warp gate was that it could be made larger and used to transport far more people or goods. This was much more practical than teleportation stations, which had limited space and prevented people from bringing oversized or excessive amounts of cargo.

For example, an entourage using many carriages could enter the warp gate without breaking formation and appear on the other side together. In contrast, at a teleportation station, the portal's size and formation restricted the number of carriages allowed at once, forcing people to teleport in separate batches.

In the end, both methods of travel had their own advantages and disadvantages.

The imperial envoy's entourage passed through the warp gate under the awed gaze of the people who witnessed it. The populace also knew that this visit from the imperial family must be connected to the recent events that had caused an uproar over the past few days. They wondered whether the imperial family would succeed in inviting the alchemist and the blacksmith to the imperial palace.

The entourage walked through the warp gate as Aldrian sensed the space laws within it. He could feel the spatial concept of the warp and concluded that the warp gate was more dangerous than a teleportation portal. Even so, he could also tell that this spatial path was stable, which meant the journey would be safe.

He thought that cultivators above the Emperor stage must have helped shape the warp gates during their creation, making them this stable and safe to use.

After a slight sensation passed through his body, the entourage arrived in the capital. From his carriage, Aldrian could immediately see the grandeur of the capital city. In the distance, he saw the grand palace, situated on a floating land.

Although the floating land was neither as vast nor as high as his own floating land, it still showed that the imperial palace was a special place, even within the capital.

The carriages then took flight along with the rest of the entourage, watched by many eyes—people who recognized them as the imperial envoy.

"Your Excellency, welcome to Adroadin City, the capital of the Martal Empire," said Butler Norris with a smile.

Aldrian remained silent, his gaze fixed on the capital's scenery. He had to admit that this city was much grander, with taller buildings and a more expansive road system than any city on the Barisan continent. The average cultivation level here was also much higher than in Avon City, which made sense, after all, this was the capital, where the concentration of energy was far greater.

Butler Norris also observed Aldrian's reaction, but he couldn't discern anything, which led him to believe that Aldrian must have come from a place not inferior to the capital. Based on the information they had, this masked man appeared to be from outside the Ancient Blue Gate World, which left many possibilities open.

However, he still wondered about the true purpose behind this person's arrival on this star, specifically in Avon City. He had caused a great commotion to obtain certification as an alchemist and blacksmith. That, in itself, wasn't too surprising, as many outsiders from other stars occasionally came here to obtain the same certification.

This was because each star might have its own certification system. To conduct business or be recognized by the populace of a given star, an alchemist or blacksmith needed to have certification from that star.

The real issue was that someone like him had never appeared before. If this person had truly come from another star, then with his level of ability and talent, his name or at the very least, his description should have already been known. A person with talent that absurd wouldn't just be famous in nearby stars, but across the entire galaxy.

But there was no record of this person's name, title or description anywhere, even after the imperial family checked other stars. They had already searched through their connections, even into distant star clusters, and still found nothing about a man capable of concocting six stripes pills and forging divine-grade artifacts with a 100% success rate.

They had also reviewed the visitor records of Avon City, hoping to find someone who matched the masked man's profile, but found nothing.

It was as if this man had simply appeared out of nowhere in Avon City and stirred up all that commotion.

The journey continued in silence. Aldrian had no intention of speaking, and Butler Norris, sensing that Aldrian wouldn't initiate conversation, chose to remain quiet as well.

After ten minutes of silent travel, they finally arrived at the palace grounds and landed at the designated spot. Aldrian could already see lines of soldiers standing on both sides of the path leading to the imperial palace.

Once they landed, Butler Norris opened the carriage door and stepped out, waiting on the ground as Aldrian followed behind him.

"Welcome to the imperial palace, Your Excellency," Butler Norris said, also observing Aldrian's reaction.

What he saw was a composed posture, Aldrian didn't seem particularly impressed by the vast and grand imperial palace. Instead, he looked around calmly, as though simply observing a new place without the slightest trace of awe.

From what Norris could tell, this man was likely already accustomed to such scenery. It made sense. With talent and ability like his, he had probably been invited to other palaces before, perhaps even lived in one.

Unbeknownst to Butler Norris, Aldrian wasn't impressed by the palace or its surrounding scenery simply because it was nothing compared to his own palace. His palace, which had been created by Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan, who were both gods, was unlike any other. It was a replica of the palace from his past life, a symbol of the grandeur he had once possessed.

Having spent every day in such a place, there was no way a palace like this could amaze him. Perhaps before he had discovered and settled into his current palace, he might have been impressed by scenery like this, but not anymore.

He closed his eyes for a moment when he heard Butler Norris's voice.

"This way, Your Excellency. His Majesty is already waiting for you."

Norris began walking ahead to guide him into the palace. Aldrian opened his eyes and followed, but as he moved forward, he suddenly sense someone observing him, and he instantly knew who it was.

He simply smiled and continued walking into the palace.

They walked for fifteen minutes, passing through hallways that radiated luxury. Even some valuable artifacts were displayed along the way, as if they were mere decorations. Eventually, they arrived at the throne hall.

There, a middle-aged man with blond hair sat on his throne, dressed in regal robes and noble attire that clearly marked him as the highest authority in the empire. Although he wasn't deliberately releasing his aura, his presence alone was enough to intimidate anyone who looked at him directly.

Aldrian immediately recognized him. This was the first man who had spoken to him from above the sea after his battle with Tarius, the Emperor of the Martal Empire, Rozwald Avilandis.

Aldrian remained calm as he continued to look at the man, whose cultivation had reached the peak of the pseudo immortal stage. With just one more breakthrough, he would ascend to a higher heaven and become a true immortal.

Emperor Rozwald watched Aldrian with curiosity while he followed Butler Norris until they arrived at the foot of the stairs leading up to the throne.

Butler Norris bowed deeply, but Aldrian simply stood there without bowing, his gaze still fixed on Emperor Rozwald.

The emperor appeared unbothered by Aldrian's lack of courtesy, but his behavior drew displeasure from Butler Norris and several imperial guards who witnessed it. The guards were about to shout and reprimand Aldrian, but Emperor Rozwald raised his hand, signaling them to remain silent.

"Your Majesty, I have brought His Excellency as per your invitation," Butler Norris said, despite his displeasure. Emperor Rozwald responded with a nod before rising from his throne and walking toward Aldrian, a smile on his face.

Once he stood in front of Aldrian, he extended his hand in greeting.

"Welcome to the imperial palace, Your Excellency. It is truly a fortunate occasion for me to receive you, the greatest talent I have ever seen."

Aldrian accepted the handshake and replied, "It is my pleasure to be invited here by Your Majesty. After all, this is also an opportunity for us to speak directly and clarify many things."

Hearing Aldrian's response, Emperor Rozwald felt strange, as if there was something deeper hidden in his words.

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Chapter 676 - 676: Realizing Who He Is

[1,569 words]

Although Emperor Rozwald sensed that Aldrian's words implied something deeper, he brushed off the feeling and said to Aldrian,

"Then please follow me, Your Excellency. Let's move to a more private place, it will be more comfortable than here," Emperor Rozwald said as he began walking out of the throne hall. Aldrian and Butler Norris followed the emperor until they exited the hall.

They walked for another five minutes before Emperor Rozwald entered a room that served as his private guest room. Only selected individuals were allowed to enter this space, as it was reserved exclusively for his most important guests.

The room offered a view of the outer garden, with a large glass panel providing a wide view of the calming scenery. Uniquely, the glass was one-way, allowing those inside the room to see out, while preventing those outside from seeing in, ensuring privacy while still allowing them to enjoy the view.

After entering the room, the imperial maids served them herbal tea, while the emperor and Aldrian sat on sofas facing each other. Butler Norris stood to the side of the room, as if he were the emperor's personal guard.

"So, Your Excellency, let me introduce myself properly. Although you might already know my name in some way, I feel it is only courteous to introduce myself," Emperor Rozwald said.

"My name is Rozwald Avilandis, the current leader of the Avilandis family and the emperor of this empire. If I may ask, how should I address Your Excellency?"

Behind the mask, Aldrian smiled at the question, but he still answered the emperor.

"Your Majesty, before I answer your question, may I take off my mask? It would be better to show you my face while introducing myself," he said, causing Emperor Rozwald's eyes to widen slightly.

This mysterious man was willing to show his face so easily?

"Of course, Your Excellency. If that makes you more comfortable, then you may do so," the emperor replied. He was truly curious about the face behind that mask, the very

face that had caused such an uproar that even the other stars had come to try to meet him.

Butler Norris also looked at Aldrian with interest as they both watched him raise the hood of his robe, revealing his long red hair. Then, Aldrian removed his mask. The moment his face was revealed, both the emperor and his butler widened their eyes.

The young, handsome face behind the mask was not what they expected. They had assumed this person must be a middle-aged man—or even an old man. Yet they sensed no disguise technique, which led them to believe this was truly Aldrian's real face.

Aldrian said nothing. He simply set the mask beside him and looked directly at the emperor.

The emperor remained stunned, staring at Aldrian's face. Then, a split second later, something stirred in his memory. There was something familiar about that face.

"Wait, where have I seen this face before?" he thought for a moment, before his eyes widened. "Wait, that face—"

It was the day he saw the most terrifying thing in his life, and the day he saw a person who overturned everything he thought he knew. At that time, he and many other powers had attempted to reach the untouchable continent, seeking the cause behind the strange occurrences there, which they believed might be the work of devils.

But instead, they witnessed the greatest battle he had ever seen.

The battle that day, between the mysterious man and the immortal in the sky was something he would never forget. It was truly mind-blowing, a clash far beyond anything within his capabilities. That battle also determined the fate of the world, because he knew that if that eye had won, the devils would have easily conquered the Ancient Blue Gate World.

If the creature the devils had summoned had managed to defeat the mysterious man, then there would have been no hope for him or for anyone else other than evacuating to another star, which would have triggered a large-scale exodus.

Fortunately, the mysterious man won.

He could still vividly remember the giant avatar. Though not as large as the eye, it was able to match its strength head-on. That giant avatar was far greater than any avatar technique he had ever seen.

If he compared his own avatar technique to that one, then it was simply ridiculous. He believed that man's avatar would only need a flick to break his avatar.

Although he had not seen the man who controlled the avatar because of the distance, he had clearly seen the avatar's face. At the time, he had not thought much of it, since an avatar's appearance does not always reflect the cultivator's real body.

Many avatars manifest based on the nature of the cultivation technique, and they can appear either ominous or sacred.

However, looking at Aldrian's face now, he could not help but recall that avatar, the face of that giant avatar was the same as his. Though the avatar wore a crown and appeared far more regal, he was convinced: Aldrian's face was identical to that avatar's.

The moment he realized it, his eyes trembled and his heartbeat quickened. He kept staring into Aldrian's calm blue eyes, unable to look away. His body froze, then slowly began to tremble.

Butler Norris, seeing Emperor Rozwald acting strangely, frowned before turning a wary gaze toward Aldrian. He had not accompanied the emperor that day, having remained at the palace to manage affairs as usual, so he had not witnessed the battle directly. Although he had read the report about the battle, it had not included any details about the avatar's face.

It was only natural that he did not recognize Aldrian after seeing his face. Instead, he suspected that Aldrian might be doing something to the emperor. From what he could sense, his master's body was reacting as if he had seen something terrifying.

Seeing that something was clearly wrong, Butler Norris spoke to Aldrian in a hostile tone.

"What are you doing—"

"You seem to know who I am, Your Majesty, for you to react like that," Aldrian cut him off, making Norris frown even deeper.

His master knows this person?

Aldrian calmly picked up the teacup from the table and took a sip, enjoying the taste for a moment.

"Senior... is that really you?" Emperor Rozwald asked, finally speaking after his shock had somewhat settled.

Aldrian did not answer immediately. Instead, he smiled.

"Who do you think I am?" he asked, setting the cup back down on the table.

After a moment of silence, Emperor Rozwald opened his mouth again and suddenly bent his body toward Aldrian.

"Senior, please accept my respect and gratitude for what you've done for this world. Since that day, I've truly wished to meet you, and today seems to be my fortunate day. To meet you here, in my own palace, I feel deeply honored," he said.

Seeing the emperor bowing, Butler Norris widened his eyes in shock and looked at Aldrian again. Who is this man?! Why is my master acting like this?

Aldrian's expression had already returned to its usual calm as he silently watched the emperor bowing before him.

"Why do you think like that? I could be anyone, and you'd be bowing for nothing," he said.

"Just by saying that, Senior has already proven you are the real one, the one who fought the immortal that day. I am confident I haven't misidentified you," Emperor Rozwald said as he lifted his head and looked directly at Aldrian's face.

What the emperor meant was that for Aldrian to understand his words could only mean that Aldrian was the real one. Only the person who had fought the immortal himself would have known what those words truly meant.

Hearing what Emperor Rozwald had just said, Butler Norris widened his eyes and turned to look at Aldrian again. The person in front of them... is the one who fought the immortal? The one who has been the subject of endless talk ever since that day?

"Fair enough," Aldrian said.

With those words, there was no longer any doubt. He was indeed the same man who had fought the immortal that day. The emperor smiled in response, but that smile froze the very next moment as Aldrian spoke again.

"So, is spreading information about the Barisan Continent and undermining my name also how you show your respect and gratitude? Are you doing all of that thinking I wouldn't find out?"

The moment Aldrian said that, Emperor Rozwald realized something was wrong, and he couldn't help but frown.

"Senior, what do you—" he wanted to ask, but stopped mid-sentence as the meaning behind Aldrian's words finally hit him. His eyes widened, Aldrian must have been referring to the information spread by the Information Center!

He had no idea how Aldrian knew that the Information Center was one of the imperial family's organizations, but at this moment, he didn't care.

The emperor quickly bowed his head again, his voice hurried and anxious.

"Senior, please listen to me first. This was never my doing. I have an explanation for this situation."

Aldrian's expression didn't change. He simply continued to stare at the emperor in silence.

Taking that silence as permission to continue, Emperor Rozwald went on.

"Like I said, this situation wasn't my doing, but I have to admit, it happened because of my negligence. Senior must understand, I would never allow such information to spread, even if it were true. That would only bring harm to me and my interests, especially after you opened the Barisan Continent to the world in the future."

He let out a sigh.

"It's because of that girl..."

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Chapter 677 - 677: Emperor Rozwald's Explanation

[1,574 words]

"It's because of that girl..." Emperor Rozwald said. "Oh, before I explain further, although the damage has already been done, I ordered the information about the Barisan continent to be retracted two days ago, once I found out about this. So now, there's no such information available for people to buy anymore."

Aldrian's expression did not change, but the emperor continued.

"I know I can't do anything about the ones that have already spread, and this kind of situation was truly unexpected. It all happened because of that girl, my son's fiancée."

"The daughter from the Valroy family?" Aldrian asked.

The emperor responded with a nod.

"Yes, Verine Valroy. She's the one who caused the information about the Barisan continent to spread through the information center. It was also because of my lack of attention that she was able to take advantage of the situation and even ordered the release of that information."

"When it began spreading, I was in the middle of seclusion, which I had to break because I received news about someone's appearance. That person was you, Senior."

"However, not long after I came out of seclusion, I found out what had happened at the information center and eventually discovered who was behind it. The person who became the source and ordered the spread of that information was Verine."

"I was truly furious. I immediately ordered the information to be retracted and punished those who released it based solely on her words. The people at the information center assumed that, because of her status and the fact that she will become my daughter-in-law, it was acceptable to obey her in this matter—even though they themselves felt the information was questionable."

"I confronted her for using her status to manipulate an organization under the imperial family. But I could not do anything excessive to her because of her position as the young miss of the Valroy family. In the end, I could only file a complaint directly to the Valroy family about what she had done, but their response was to ask me to generously forgive her for her presumptuousness."

"They also tried to explain their reasoning, and I have to admit it was quite convincing. Even so, I still ordered the information to be retracted because it does not align with my interests," Emperor Rozwald said.

"What kind of reasoning did they give for you to say that it was quite convincing?" Aldrian asked.

"Well, their reasoning was that she was spreading information that had already been circulating in other stars. In other words, the information about the Barisan continent was not spread exclusively by the information center in this empire—other stars had already obtained the same information and distributed it through their own organizations," the emperor explained.

"And I have already confirmed it, Senior. The information about the Barisan continent has indeed spread to other stars. Even if we hadn't released it, others still would have learned of it, because it had already been spread from their own stars. So, that's the situation..."

Aldrian nodded in understanding. It was indeed convincing, and it meant the Barisan continent was in a much more dangerous position than he had anticipated. Now that the information was known outside, those from other stars would likely act upon it as well.

"After the Valroy family gave their response, I decided to postpone the wedding to an undefined date. I'm not in a rush anymore, so this was the least I could do."

"I see. So where is Verine?" Aldrian asked.

"She has already returned to her family. At the moment, my son is with her. We still have to maintain appearances for the outside world, so we cannot let it seem like there's a crack in our relationship. If she returned alone without my son, there would be too much speculation, and we don't want to attract unnecessary trouble because of it," Emperor Rozwald answered.

Aldrian was slightly disappointed. If that woman were still here, he could have used her the same way he used the infiltrators. As a young miss of the Valroy family, she likely knew things those infiltrators did not.

"Still, I can't help but think about the information regarding the Barisan continent. I just don't understand where this kind of information came from. Verine said she received it firsthand from the other stars and simply passed it on to the information center. Even I can't verify whether it's true or not," the emperor said, then looked at Aldrian carefully.

"Senior, if I may ask... is the information about the Barisan continent true? I mean, if it is, then the only explanation that makes sense is that someone infiltrated the Barisan continent and relayed the information from there."

"Well, not all of it is false, and of course, there are people who relayed the information because I already know who they are." Aldrian replied.

Both the emperor and Butler Norris widened their eyes at his words.

"Then—"

"Well, I already turned them into my slaves and had them act as my agents..." Aldrian replied, before explaining the infiltration attempt by the Barevisk family, and how those people ended up becoming his spies. He also gave a general overview of the Barisan continent.

Emperor Rozwald asked several questions, some about the true state of the Barisan continent, and others about Aldrian himself which Aldrian answered.

As time passed and more information was revealed, Emperor Rozwald and Butler Norris found themselves repeatedly shocked. They could no longer see Aldrian the same way. His existence was abnormal.

Like others who learned the truth about him for the first time, they felt he could not be understood through common sense.

Emperor Rozwald let out a long sigh, slumping back against the sofa as he rubbed his face a few times before sitting upright again. He knew it was better to set aside the absurdity of Aldrian for now, thinking too deeply about it would only drive him crazy.

"So, Seni— I mean, Your Excellency, from your story I can gather that the Valroy family is the one truly working behind the scenes. But I still don't understand why they're doing this. I mean, there's no benefit for them in any of it," he said, clearly confused.

This was something that puzzled Aldrian as well. The Valroy family seemed to have some intent to harm the Barisan continent. He tried to make sense of their actions, but without solid proof, many of his assumptions remained uncertain. He needed more clues to uncover their true intent and why they had done what they did.

"Well, I don't really know. But whatever the case, what they've done has already harmed the Barisan continent and gone against my interests," Aldrian said. "I will go to them and demand an explanation in the future."

Both Emperor Rozwald and Butler Norris felt a chill. If Aldrian chose to act personally, they had no idea what might happen to the Valroy family.

One thing was certain: they could not withstand this man's retaliation. There was no way that family could stand against someone who had fought an immortal. Emperor Rozwald already knew from that battle alone that Aldrian was unstoppable if he chose to move against any organization in this star cluster, or even in the entire galaxy and beyond.

This thought made him anxious for what lay ahead, especially with the devils still lurking in the Fallen Star Cluster.

After a few moments of silence, Aldrian turned his gaze toward the emperor.

"Are you going to stop me if I go to the Valroy family?" he asked.

Emperor Rozwald was stunned for a moment, but then he shook his head.

"No, I mean, our relationship wasn't particularly close to begin with, not until they proposed an alliance through marriage. So I don't want to meddle in Your Excellency's business. In fact, after the battle on the Barisan continent, I've been considering canceling the engagement. I no longer believe the alliance is necessary."

"Of course, that would cause backlash and damage our relationship with the Valroy family. But I believe it would be worth it in the long run, as the imperial family can still maintain its interests without interference from other stars in the future."

"After hearing Your Excellency's story, I've made my decision. I will cancel the engagement once my son returns from Akares Star," the emperor said with determination.

Aldrian nodded, then smiled.

"So you no longer care about the alliance because you think you don't need it anymore after seeing my battle that day, right? You must believe that, with that display of strength and my reputation, the devils in the Fallen Star Cluster won't dare to start a war. I heard the threat of a great war was the reason you agreed to the alliance in the first place," he said.

Emperor Rozwald nodded. There was no need to lie about it. If Aldrian already knew, then so be it.

"To be honest, yes. With Your Excellency's power and reputation, it should be enough to deter those devils from attacking this planet. That's why the news that smeared the Barisan continent and Your Excellency was completely against my interests." he answered.

"If I were the one spreading information through the information center, I would have done the opposite. I would have raised Your Excellency's reputation as high as possible, so that others, especially the devils, wouldn't dare to do anything foolish against the Ancient Blue Gate World," he added.

Aldrian understood that his reasoning made sense. He smiled as he picked up the cup and took a sip of tea.

After a moment, he looked at the emperor.

"Where is this Fallen Star Cluster?" he asked.

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Chapter 678 - 678: The Fallen Star Cluster

[1,574 words]

"The Fallen Star Cluster is located a month's journey away by warp, using an interstellar vessel," Emperor Rozwald said.

"However, since the devils have already taken control of that star cluster, we no longer set foot in that region," he added.

"How strong was the Fallen Star Cluster in the past? How could the devils suddenly take over it?" Aldrian asked.

"The Fallen Star Cluster, which was previously called the Northern Star Cluster, was quite strong, at least, that's what I knew. Even when I was a child, that star cluster was already under the devils' control. According to records, the devils came from outside our galaxy to this region of the galaxy around three million years ago," the emperor explained, prompting Aldrian to raise his eyebrows slightly.

"Three million years ago again. This must be the same time when the great war on the Barisan Continent happened," he thought.

Aldrian guessed that period was one of the times when Tarius launched a large-scale war using his followers. For what purpose? Perhaps he intended to engulf and bring this part of the heavens under his control as quickly as possible.

Their main targets were likely Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian, but the plan ultimately failed due to strong resistance, and the death of the previous apostle caused by Feng Xuanyan and Long Shentian's power.

It seemed they had tried to do the same when Tarius descended, but because Aldrian defeated him, the devils appeared to retract their plan and cancel the war they had intended to start.

Still, the fact that the devils managed to take control of an entire star cluster in the past was truly impressive. It showed just how strong they were.

"The Fallen Star Cluster has hundreds of stars of varied sizes. Although most of them are uninhabitable, there are ten main stars with civilization and habitable environments. That alone is enough to make any force hesitate to attack them. Approximately, there are a trillion devils there, with many among them truly powerful," the emperor said, which left Aldrian astonished.

A trillion? Then it was no wonder the devils could maintain their control there. To regain that region from them would require enormous sacrifices, something they could not afford unless they were united. It was the same situation as the Barisan Continent in the past, where all the powers remained divided because of their differences.

Only after he appeared, and only because the circumstances forced them, did they finally unite, eventually reaching the point where they willingly placed themselves under him, under one banner.

"Our star, the Ancient Blue Gate World, is the closest to the Fallen Star Cluster if they decide to attack. So, Your Excellency must understand why I preferred an alliance with Valroy family in the past. We can't rely on the power of our star alone if those devils come for us, so..." Emperor Rozwald paused, then picked up his teacup.

He took a sip, and Aldrian nodded in understanding as he lifted his own cup and drank.

"I see. Then how do I reach the Fallen Star Cluster?" Aldrian asked.

The question stunned both the emperor and Butler Norris. Why would he ask that?

"Well... no one wants to go there, and even if someone owns a private interstellar vessel, no one would lend it for such a destination unless they were truly forced by extraordinary circumstances. The only ones who usually go there are those who've decided to follow the devil path and join them," Emperor Rozwald replied.

He looked at Aldrian narrowly.

"If I may ask, Your Excellency... why are you asking that?"

"If I want to go there, would you mind lending me an interstellar vessel?" Rather than answering, Aldrian asked in return.

"Of course, I will, Your Excellency. But why do you want to go there?" the emperor replied.

"Well, in your opinion, why would I want to go there?" Aldrian asked again with a smile.

The emperor and Butler Norris widened their eyes as they realized what Aldrian meant and they couldn't help but feel a wave of shock. Their hearts pounded, and a sudden surge of anticipation rose within them.

Why would Aldrian, the one who had already thwarted the devils' plans, want to visit that star cluster?

The answer was simple.

Of course he was going to kill the devils.

How could they not be excited when the strongest person here was about to take action against the devils, who had been a persistent threat for so long? If Aldrian himself would move, then this was the best possible outcome for them!

"I see. If Your Excellency truly intends to make a move yourself, then this is the best outcome! I would even accompany you myself, if you set out for that place," Emperor Rozwald said with spirit.

Aldrian simply smiled and took another sip of his tea.

"Well, that's still in the future. I have business to take care of first. Maybe after I'm done with it, I'll depart for the Fallen Star Cluster," he said.

"Yes, Your Excellency. I will wait until you are ready."

After that, they continued their conversation for hours. As the emperor of the strongest empire on the Orian Continent, Rozwald knew much and could share many details with Aldrian. It was no surprise their discussion lasted so long. Aldrian also needed to learn more about the world and many other things beyond it.

In the end, Emperor Rozwald gave Aldrian an information crystal containing extensive knowledge about various topics. He also presented him with a luxury cruiser as a gift, which Aldrian accepted, of course.

Aldrian understood that the emperor was trying to leave a good impression and he didn't mind it.

After hours of conversation, they finally finished. The sky had already turned dark. Emperor Rozwald offered Aldrian a room to stay at the imperial palace for the night, but Aldrian declined. Rozwald didn't press the matter and even offered to escort Aldrian himself, but Aldrian refused again, preferring to return alone.

The emperor complied, but he was stunned when Aldrian suddenly disappeared. As a peak pseudo-immortal stage cultivator, he couldn't sense even the slightest spatial disturbance when Aldrian vanished. For him, that alone was proof that Aldrian's mastery of spatial laws was far beyond his own.

After Aldrian disappeared, Emperor Rozwald sighed and slumped onto the sofa behind him.

"What a terrifying individual. How can someone like him even exist? What truly happened within the Barisan Continent during all that time for someone like him to be born?" he said in a tired manner.

"Well, we could say he is the prophesied one, Your Majesty. The past prophecy spoke of something that would happen in the Barisan Continent. And as we already know, that young man is the one who resolved it. I truly believe he is what they call the son of the heavens, and I mean that literally," Butler Norris said with a joking tone.

The emperor sighed again, but then he smiled and stood up.

"This meeting is truly a blessing for me. We've managed to build a connection with him much earlier than any other major power. In fact, I think we've formed a closer relationship thanks to our long conversation and the way His Excellency seemed willing to share so much information with us," he said as he began walking out of the room.

"We will be the ones to gain the most benefit from it," he added before stepping outside.

Aldrian returned to his large mansion in Avon City using his domain's teleportation. Today, he had gained many valuable knowledge that would greatly help his journey. What he lacked most now was information about the outside world, and today, he had truly learned many things.

Not long after, he changed into more casual attire. But as he did, something reached his senses or more precisely, his domain's senses on the Barisan Continent. Ever since learning that information about the continent had spread, he had kept a close watch through his domain over the continent.

Now that something had entered his domain on the Barisan Continent, he immediately used his Eyes of Heaven to see what it was. According to his estimation, it was about an hour past midnight there. He wondered who else would try their luck by entering the continent at such a time.

Through his Eyes of Heaven, Aldrian finally saw clearly four cruisers were flying at high speed, approaching the continent.

He could see dozens of people aboard them. Their cultivation levels varied, but the group was undeniably strong, many were at the peak of the Emperor stage, and the strongest among them had already reached the middle stage of pseudo-immortal establishment.

As Aldrian focused his senses further, he was able to hear their conversation.

"We're almost there! After this, we can establish our new hideout," said one of the men. From the scars on his face, it was clear he had seen many battles.

"With this continent's level of power, nothing can stop us. We just need to be cautious of that mysterious man. As long as we avoid him, we're fine. There's no way he could know everything happening across the entire continent," he added.

"With us hiding here, I don't think those fools will ever find out. This could become our new main basecamp, we could stay here for a long time. We might even discover many unknown treasures," said another man wearing a bandana.

"A weak continent filled with mysteries. This place is perfect for us," he added.

Hearing this, Aldrian couldn't help but feel that these people were more like bandits on the run, searching for a place to hide.

He smiled.

The first wave of fools had arrived.

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Chapter 679 - 679: The Unfortunate Bandits

[1,584 words]

As the cruisers drew closer and closer to the continent, the man with a face full of scars grew increasingly pleased. He is a leader of the bandit group known as the Red Mist from Arantes Star, the star near the Ancient Blue Gate World. They had already become one of the most wanted bandit groups because of their notorious deeds.

They seemed to have no fear, thanks to their powerful group, which even included members at the pseudo-immortal establishment stage. The average member was also strong enough to wage war against a small noble family, which showed just how powerful this bandit group was.

They would rob, pillage, and commit all kinds of notorious acts, no matter who the victims were. Whether commoners or nobles, it made no difference to them, truly bold bandits.

Because of how sleekly they always escaped and hid, constantly changing positions after committing their deeds, they were never captured by any cultivator families. And because of how strong they were, not many families dared to face them recklessly.

Because of all that, their name became widely known across their home star and even in nearby stars.

This group, upon receiving information about the Barisan Continent, was instantly tempted to use it as their new hiding place. They traveled easily to the Ancient Blue Gate World since they had their own means of transportation, and now they were nearing the continent.

How could they not be tempted by the description of the Barisan Continent? It was said to be so weak that their group alone could rule over it, if not for that mysterious man. The only reason they still hesitated was his reputation and the stories that had spread even to other stars.

Although they leaned toward not believing those absurd stories, the fact that many great powers took them seriously was enough to keep them from recklessly facing that mysterious man.

Still, no matter how absurd his strength and reputation were, that mysterious man was in the end, just a human. Compared to the entire continent, he was a small presence. If a single bandit group wanted to infiltrate and hide, there was no way that man would know, unless—

Unless they were unlucky enough to encounter him the moment they entered the continent.

As they neared the shore, the bandits suddenly saw a young man appear in midair not far from their boat. They couldn't sense any cultivation from him, but they didn't care. They continued forward, even intending to crush him with their cruisers.

The man with the scarred face only sneered at the sight of the lone young man.

"Bad luck for you, son. For you—"

He paused his thought as he suddenly saw the young man release crackling lightning. A moment later...

Rumble! Rumble!

Heavenly lightning roared across the region. Its deafening rumble echoed through the silent night, and its blinding light lit up the coastline. The strike carried pseudo-immortal strength, and the moment the bandits sensed it, a chill ran through them. There was only a split second before the strands of lightning instantly struck the cruisers.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Rumble!

Boom! Boom!

The cruisers were instantly struck by the heavenly lightning. Although they had their own defensive shields, meant to protect them from powerful attacks, Aldrian's lightning had reached the level of a pseudo-immortal stage attack and was far beyond what those defenses could withstand.

The shields shattered on impact, and the lightning tore through the vessels. The cruisers exploded, and due to their high speed, the momentum of their fall was immense. Since they were already close to the beach, some of the wreckage slammed into the shore, while the rest crashed into the water.

As for the bandits, every one of them, except one, was instantly obliterated by the lightning. The attack was too fast for them to react. It didn't give them the slightest chance to escape. They didn't even have time to scream. All they could feel was a chill running through their bodies

And then, death.

The only survivor was already in the young man's grasp as he choked him. The survivor was the leader of the group, while the young man was none other than Aldrian. At the moment he struck the cruisers with his heavenly lightning, Aldrian had teleported the leader into his grasp and instantly destroyed his cultivation.

The leader's face had gone pale, with blood flowing from his lips and nose. He did not even know what had happened, only that he suddenly found himself in Aldrian's grip, his cultivation already crippled.

Before he could say a word, Aldrian looked into his memories, causing the leader's body to tremble.

His body spasmed as Aldrian forcefully looked through his memories, and after a few moments, it was done. Aldrian did not release his grip. Instead, he turned his gaze toward the direction from which the cruisers had come.

In the next instant, his body vanished, leaving behind only the shattered remains of the cruisers, that some of them engulfed in flames.

After thirty minutes of teleportation, Aldrian stopped above the ocean, where he spotted a lone interstellar vessel floating on the water. From the leader's memories, he knew this was the group's vessel, and acquired with the wealth they had stolen.

This vessel was one of the main reasons they were so difficult to capture. With it, they could escape to another star whenever necessary.

According to the memories, after arriving in this star, they had left part of their group in the vessel, waiting for a signal. If the situation on the continent proved safe, the ship would be brought in and hidden as quickly as possible.

Besides the vessel itself being a valuable asset, it also carried many of the group's treasures. These items held great value to them, and with their intention to make the Barisan Continent their new hiding place, they had brought much of their wealth along.

This interstellar vessel was not as large as some others, but it was almost as big as a standard flying fortress.

Aldrian then teleported beside the interstellar vessel and drew a sword from his storage ring. With a few slashes, he created a path through the hull. The vessel's composite armor was no match for his slashes, and without much effort he stepped inside, still holding the leader in his other hand.

Upon entering the vessel, he encountered several bandits. He killed them instantly using illusions, showing no hesitation. He stored his sword and began dragging the leader's body through the corridors.

The interior of the vessel resembled that of a ship, but on a much grander scale. As he moved deeper inside, he continued to encounter bandits.

Each time, he killed them without a word.

Only the sound of short screams and gurgles could be heard each time a bandit crossed paths with Aldrian before dropping dead.

After fifteen minutes of silent slaughter, Aldrian reached a section of the vessel filled with large boxes and cages. The boxes held valuable treasures, while the cages contained humans, elves, and other races.

These were the victims the Red Mist group had kidnapped, captured with the intent to sell as slaves. Aldrian swept his gaze across the cages and spoke calmly to them.

"You will be free after this. I have already killed the bandits. For now, please stay here until I call for help from outside."

The prisoners stared at him with trembling eyes. They also astonished to see the group's leader in such a pitiful state in Aldrian's grasp. They watched as Aldrian dragged his body away like a sack of rice, disappearing from view.

Whispers began to spread among them. Who had that bastard bandit offended to end up like that?

Not long after Aldrian finished clearing the vessel of bandits, he took out a communication artifact, the one given to him by Emperor Rozwald for direct contact.

A moment after he activated it, the emperor's voice came through.

"Ah, Your Excellency, I didn't expect you to contact me so soon. Is there something you need?" Emperor Rozwald asked.

Aldrian then explained what had just happened. Once he finished, the emperor's astonished voice resounded.

"The Red Mist bandits? To think they actually dared to try infiltrating the Barisan Continent. Don't worry, Your Excellency. I will dispatch my troops immediately to—"

"No," Aldrian interrupted calmly. "Emperor Rozwald, there is no need to send anyone. I will send this interstellar vessel along with everything inside it directly to you. Don't be shocked when it appears on the palace grounds."

The emperor fell silent, stunned by Aldrian's words.

"Your Excellency, what are you—"

"You will see soon enough, and again, don't be shocked when an interstellar vessel suddenly appears on the palace grounds," Aldrian cut him off once more.

"I will leave the rest to you, Emperor Rozwald." He added.

He closed his eyes for a moment before opening them again. Then he looked at the unconscious bandit leader in his grasp and tossed him aside without much attention. He stepped out of the vessel, and a moment later, the interstellar vessel vanished. A few seconds after that, Aldrian disappeared as well.

While Aldrian returned to his mansion in Avon City, the imperial palace of the Martal Empire fell into chaos due to the sudden appearance of an interstellar vessel on the palace grounds.

It did not take long for them to realize that the vessel belonged to the infamous Red Mist bandits. Inside, they found the bodies of many dead bandits and their leader, though still breathing was left in a pitiful state.

The emperor, upon seeing this, truly could not comprehend how Aldrian had managed to send all of it here without any sign, as if it had appeared out of thin air.

How did he do it?

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Chapter 680 - 680: Continuing the Journey

[1,483 words]

The next day, Aldrian had already prepared himself to continue his journey. After the infiltration attempt by the bandits last night, he suddenly had an idea of how to stop all the fools who wanted to test his limits by entering the continent.

He could use the Red Mist Bandits as proof and a warning to anyone who still remained stubborn. He asked Emperor Rozwald for help to spread the information through the information center, slightly exaggerating the event from last night.

The information that would be spread was: anyone who tried to enter the continent without the mysterious man's permission would end up like the Red Mist Bandits. They would be struck by powerful heavenly lightning.

The imperial family supported this by announcing that they had captured the sole survivor of the Red Mist Bandits, who had tried to enter the Barisan Continent last night. They displayed the leader of the bandits before the crowd in his pitiful state.

This shocked many, as that large and powerful bandit group had been reduced to a single survivor.

That was why, since morning, many had been talking about it. The information spreading was that the Red Mist Bandits, after being struck by heavenly lightning, were reduced to a single survivor along with their broken interstellar vessel. The Imperial family found the wreckage and the bandit leader, then brought them back to the empire.

This caused a stir, as it was yet another piece of absurd news. Heavenly lightning? Why would heavenly lightning appear out of nowhere? As far as common knowledge went, heavenly lightning only appeared during heavenly tribulation, nothing else.

So why would it strike just because someone tried to enter the continent without the mysterious man's permission? Could that man control heavenly lightning? Was he truly capable of summoning something like that? This was what sparked heated discussions, was it really possible that he could command heavenly lightning? And if so, how could any man control such a thing?

Then what about the earlier information? That kind of detail wouldn't have been known unless someone had provided it from within that place. Many believed someone had infiltrated the continent and survived.

So how did they survive? Or was it someone from the continent itself who revealed the information?

Many questions and debates arose throughout the day, but one thing remained certain, the Red Mist Bandits got what they deserved, and it happened in a place no one had expected.

Because of this news, the powers of the Arantes Star came to the imperial family, requesting that the bandit leader be brought back to Arantes—the star where the Red Mist Bandits originated to receive punishment there.

This was something that also truly pleased Emperor Rozwald. He could build a good relationship with the powers of the Arantes Star and even bargain with them. He was genuinely thankful to Aldrian for making this happen. However, when he heard that Aldrian wanted to continue his journey, he felt a sense of regret as he couldn't visit him until his business was done.

He could only wait for Aldrian to finish his matters before they could meet again.

Aldrian had already said goodbye to those he needed to, and he continued his journey. With the information he had received from Emperor Rozwald, he had a clearer idea of what might lie ahead between his current path and the Place of Gathering Faith, which made his journey easier.

As for the Barisan Continent problem, with the spread of the new warning, he guessed it would make anyone hesitate to enter. However, if even after the warning there were still those who refused to bury their intent, then he would no longer hold back, he would kill with a single move.

They would have no one to blame but themselves for ignoring his warning.

It would not be like with the Red Mist Bandits, when he had appeared to get rid of them. He would now instantly obliterate anyone who entered the domain of his Barisan Continent by sending down heavenly lightning.

No more listening. No more watching. Only striking.

Aldrian finally continued his journey, teleporting into space once again and moving forward, following the direction of the faith energy flow.

As Aldrian continued his journey, elsewhere, in another place, on another star, the Akares Star where the Valroy family resided, a handsome blond-haired man sat inside a luxurious room with a glass of wine in his hand. He seemed to be enjoying the view outside the window, which overlooked the lush greenery of the garden.

His face was calm, but his mind was occupied with the current situation. He, Ronwell Avilandis, the crown prince of the Martal Empire, had to be in this place merely to maintain the public image of both his imperial family and the Valroy family.

To be honest, he did not like it at all. He knew that his engagement to the young miss of the Valroy family would eventually cause problems. In truth, he disliked the engagement in the name of alliance, because he believed that by marrying into the Valroy family, his imperial family would become bound to them in a way he did not like.

If his family had their own interests that went against the Valroy family, they could no longer act as freely as they had in the past, which was something he deeply disliked.

However, he understood his father's reasoning, and he also understood the threat posed by the devils from the Fallen Star Cluster. That was the only reason he tried to accept the engagement with a bit more sincerity.

But ever since the appearance of that mysterious man in the Barisan Continent, both he and his father shared the same opinion. They felt that the alliance was no longer necessary, as they now had a wild card powerful enough to deter the devils from attacking Ancient Blue Gate World.

However, because the engagement had been known publicly for years, they couldn't simply cancel it without a reason. Doing so would damage the imperial family's reputation, making them appear as a party that could cancel agreements at will.

To break off the engagement, they needed a strong reason, one that the public could understand and accept. The need for such justification irritated him deeply. He wanted nothing more than to cancel the engagement and end the whole drama.

The current drama was just one example of why he disliked forming engagements with powers from outside stars.

His fiancée had done something beyond her authority by using one of the imperial family's organizations. She had acted against his family's interests and potentially jeopardized their future plans.

Still, that could not be used as grounds to cancel the engagement. It wasn't something that could be explained to the public. Doing so would mean revealing secrets, for example, that the information center was, in fact, one of the imperial family's organizations.

Although they knew the fault lay with his fiancée, he still couldn't use it as justification, which infuriated him even more. On top of that, he had to be here to maintain the image of both families, further adding to his displeasure.

He truly hoped all of this would end soon.

While he was still thinking about the matter, a knock came at the door. Moments later, a man in noble attire entered the room and bowed.

"Excuse me, Your Highness. My apologies for disturbing your time, but there is news from the imperial palace," he said.

Ronwell turned his head and looked at the newcomer, smiling, a smile that could captivate any woman who saw it.

"What is it, Victor?" he asked.

"His Majesty has ordered us to return. He said we no longer need to worry about the Valroy family or our image. We can leave the young miss of the Valroy family," the man named Victor replied.

Ronwell was stunned, but a second later, he smiled.

This was the order he had been waiting for, though it was still unexpected. It made him truly curious, what had given his father the confidence to make such a bold move? Had something happened in the Ancient Blue Gate World?

"Did Father say anything else?" Ronwell asked.

"No, but His Majesty said that anything Your Highness wishes to ask will be answered once we return to the empire," Victor replied, prompting Ronwell to pause for a moment before nodding.

"Alright. We'll return now. Prepare to leave," he said, standing up and setting the wine glass on the table. His mood was truly lifted, he could finally get out of this place.

He could finally end this drama with the Valroy family.

While Ronwell received his piece of news, in another location, someone else was receiving his own.

Randolf Valroy, the young master of the Valroy family, was in the middle of cultivation inside his private cultivation room when he sensed his butler approaching. The butler waited patiently for him to finish, and only after Randolf opened his eyes and stopped his cultivation did the man bow respectfully.

"My apologies for the disturbance, Young Master, but we've received news from the Ancient Blue Gate World."

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Chapter 681 - 681: The Act In Front of Each Other

[1,569 words]

"My apologies for the disturbance, Young Master, but we've received news from the Ancient Blue Gate World," the butler said.

"What is it?" Randolf asked.

The butler then took out a piece of paper from his storage ring and gave it to Randolph. He took the paper and read its content for a few moments, raising his eyebrows as time passed before he finished reading.

"Young Master, it seems the Avilandis imperial family is helping the Barisan continent to ease their burden. With the capture of the Red Mist bandits and the way the consequences are spreading, I think it will be much more difficult to persuade anyone to enter that continent," the butler said.

"Yes, that's true, but I'm not surprised by the Avilandis family's move, as we already harmed their interests by taking advantage of their information center. I think this is their way of salvaging the situation," Randolph said.

"Young Master, after reading the report, I suddenly felt something strange about the situation, and a question arose from it. If that mysterious man could truly prevent anyone from entering the continent, then how could the continent have been infiltrated in the first place? How could the people from the Barevisk family enter and even report anything from that place?" the butler asked in confusion.

"And now, I even question the authenticity of the report from that place. Is the continent really as the report suggests? Or is it the opposite of what is described?"

Randolf stayed silent as he began to think about this as well. After a few moments of consideration, he opened his lips.

"There are some possibilities. They might truly have been able to infiltrate that place and send their information. Another possibility is..." Randolph paused for a moment before continuing. "Something happened to the infiltrators, and the Barevisk family simply gave us false information."

The butler frowned. "Would they really dare to give us false information? Why would they do that? They would gain nothing from it except our hostility, something they do not want."

Randolf stayed silent, as he also, to be honest, felt that something was missing here. After a few moments of thinking, he shrugged.

"Whatever. No matter the case, the information has already spread. Until the Barisan continent opens to the world, many will still be curious about it. Even with a warning, it is too early for them to be persuaded by just one report. There are still many reckless people who will try their luck by entering that place," he said.

He then got up from his meditation position and walked outside of the cultivation room. Not long after leaving, he came upon a beautiful woman approaching him from the opposite direction in the hallway.

Her long black hair was tied in a ponytail, and she wore an elegant white-and-blue long dress. Her unblemished face was like porcelain, as if it were too valuable to be dirtied. At this moment, that beautiful face showed a smile toward Randolph, which he returned with his own.

"Big brother, have you already finished your cultivation?" she asked.

She was the only daughter of the Valroy patriarch and Randolph's little sister, Verine Valroy.

"Yes, I have something to do, so I ended my cultivation for now," Randolph answered.

Verine nodded.

"Big brother, I heard about what happened in the Ancient Blue Gate World. Doesn't that mean what we did is for nothing at this point? We didn't gain anything from it other than the hostility of the Avilandis family," she asked.

"Well, at least with that information spread, that place will still be a hotspot for many to try entering for some time. A single warning is not enough to stop people from trying their luck. Only after some time will many begin to hesitate to enter, assuming, of course, the story told by them is true," Randolph said as he walked.

Verine followed and nodded.

"But what about my engagement with Ronwell? I already guessed that they must want to end this engagement as soon as possible. Although I would be glad, didn't you say that this engagement was also a way to spread our influence to the Avilandis family? Their desperation would allow us to do that," she asked.

"Well, actually, all of that changed the moment that mysterious man from the Barisan continent appeared. This engagement is no longer interesting in the eyes of Emperor Rozwald, and he must also want to cancel it. You are not the only one who wants to end this engagement, little sister," Randolph said with a smile.

"I already predicted that Emperor Rozwald would likely cancel the engagement, but he does not have any strong justification to end it without damaging the imperial family's reputation. But whatever he does, we are the ones who will gain the benefit. If he cancels from his side, he will damage his family's reputation. If he does not cancel as soon as possible, we can still spread our influence in the Ancient Blue Gate World,"

"Still, I don't think he will make any drastic moves in the short term," he added.

As they continued their conversation, they saw a maid approaching from the opposite direction. She bowed to Randolph and Verine once she was close and hurriedly said to Randolph,

"Young Master, His Highness Prince Ronwell wants to meet you and is already waiting for you in your private room."

Randolf raised his eyebrows but then nodded.

"Alright, I will be there."

After the maid left, Verine looked at Randolf.

"Why would Ronwell want to meet you at this time?" she asked.

"I don't know, so let's find out."

Not long after, they arrived at his private room, which could also function as a place for him to receive his own guests. The moment he stepped in, he instantly saw Ronwell sitting on the sofa, with his guardian knight already in armor standing behind him.

Ronwell smiled when he saw Randolf enter and stood up.

"Brother Ronwell, I heard that you were waiting for me, so I came here right away. I'm sorry if I kept you waiting, as I did not expect you to meet me at this time," Randolf said with a smile.

"It's okay, Brother Randolf. I know you are busy with your schedule, so I understand," Ronwell replied, then looked at Verine.

"You too, Verine. I did not expect you to be with Brother Randolf at this time," he added, which was met with a smile from Verine.

"Brother Ronwell," she said.

Ronwell then looked back at Randolf.

"Once again, I'm sorry to disturb your busy schedule, but I have to trouble you for a moment because I received news from my family."

Randolf looked at Ronwell with curiosity, and Ronwell continued his words.

"Because something happened in my empire, I just received my father's order to return, and I am already prepared to leave now. So, Brother Randolf, Verine, I want to say goodbye for now."

Randolf and Verine were stunned upon hearing Ronwell's words. He wanted to leave because of Emperor Rozwald's order? For Randolf, he had not expected the emperor to make his decision this quickly, and with such a bold move.

To order Prince Ronwell to return immediately was basically, Emperor Rozwald showing the Valroy family that he did not care about their opinion. He no longer hesitated to display his displeasure.

Moreover, after what had happened last night, the imperial family was already trying to solve the problem of the Barisan continent.

Now, this move by the emperor was like adding to their stance toward the Valroy family, making it clear they truly disliked the matter of the Barisan continent's information being leaked through the information center under Verine's orders.

But then Randolph inwardly smiled. He wanted to see how far the emperor's boldness would go in the future. Would he choose to sacrifice his family's reputation, or would he swallow his pride and maintain the outward appearance that the imperial family and the Valroy family were still in good relationship and harmony?

As long as there was no strong reason, he would not cancel the engagement.

"Thank you for all of your family's service while I've stayed here," Ronwell said as he stood up.

"And Verine, take care. Oh, you don't have to escort me outside, as I already know the way, and my interstellar vessel is already waiting," Ronwell said before walking out of the room, followed by his guardian knight.

Randolf and Verine said nothing, only watching as Ronwell left without hesitation, not even waiting for Randolph to respond. Randolph then smiled as he looked at Verine.

"He really did not hesitate to show his displeasure and impatience. He just left the moment his father ordered him back," he said.

"Well, what do you expect, brother? We already harmed his family's interests, and for a long time, he has disliked this engagement. I don't think he would want to keep this drama going if he could avoid it," she answered with a smile.

"But then, that is the only thing he can do to show his displeasure. I don't think there will be any drastic changes from the imperial family's side in the short term either, just like you said," she added.

"You are right, at least in the short term," Randolph said as he stood up.

"Anyway, I have something to do for now. With this new development from the Ancient Blue Gate World, I think I have to speed up my plan," he added.

However, two days later, another unexpected piece of news reached him, and it would shock many people.

The news came from the Avilandis imperial family that they had annulled the engagement of the crown prince.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 682 - 682: Strange Resonance

[1,729 words]

A week later, Aldrian arrived at the other end of the Orian continent, where he could see the ocean beyond. For the past week, he had not stopped like he had in the Martal Empire. He had already gathered plenty of information, so it was better to finish his business first before doing anything else.

During that week, he had also killed some of the people who still tried to enter the Barisan continent. Just as he had promised himself, there would be no warning, no listening, and no seeing. He would simply strike to kill.

From his position, he sent heavenly lightning attacks after creating his domain. Those stubborn people would not even realize what had hit them before they were instantly obliterated by the heavenly lightning strike.

There was even someone at the pseudo-immortal stage who tried to enter, but that person also perished under the lightning.

Unbeknown to him, those who did not attempt to enter but witnessed the heavenly lightning obliterating many people spread the news, adding stories that the continent was truly off-limits. Everyone who tried to enter would be instantly killed, which greatly deterred those who had not yet made the attempt.

As time passed, the number of people trying to enter decreased, giving Aldrian peace of mind.

At this moment, he was still in space, looking at the vast ocean beyond the Orian continent. From where he floated, he could see another land in the distance along the curved horizon of the Ancient Blue Gate World.

From the information he had received from Emperor Rozwald, that land was a continent inhabited mostly by humans or more specifically demonic cultivators—the Central Continent.

Why was it called the Central Continent?

Legend said it was the first continent to take shape before the others appeared.

Aldrian could sense faith energy flowing toward that direction. He did not know why, but he felt it might be gathering somewhere on that continent. With the legend and the name of the continent, he felt it was possible.

He wondered what kind of things might be waiting for him there, so he continued to teleport.

For the next few hours, he kept teleporting until he was already above the vast ocean, though it was not as wide as the one separating the Barisan continent from the others. He continued approaching the Central Continent when he suddenly sensed something approaching him from behind.

When he spread his senses, he discovered that the thing approaching him was actually an interstellar vessel. Its massive hull was closing in from the distance, but he did not stop. He even slightly changed his path so that he would not have to meet with the vessel.

However, after he changed his path, he sensed that the vessel seemed to be following him. This made him stop his movement to confirm it. Floating in place, he waited to see whether the vessel would pass or approach him directly. After a short while, the vessel also came to a stop not far from him.

That confirmed it was indeed pursuing him. Without delay, he formed his domain just in case.

Before long, a side hatch of the vessel opened, revealing a middle-aged man wearing robes typically seen in the demon territory. His long brown hair was tied in a ponytail, and a divine-grade sword hung at his waist. This man had cultivation at the middle pseudo-immortal stage, giving the impression that he was the leader of a large organization.

The man looked at Aldrian with a confused expression, while Aldrian regarded him in quiet curiosity. Through the system, he could see the man's information, but he said nothing. One detail in that information suddenly reminded Aldrian of someone from the Barisan continent.

Aldrian was still wearing his mask and robe to conceal his features. Since the mask was an artifact, the man's senses could not discern the face or features hidden behind it.

Aldrian's gaze then swept over the many windows on the vessel, where several people were watching him in wonder. His eyes returned to the man.

He waited for the man to speak first, and after a moment of silence, the man finally did.

"Who are you?"

Aldrian felt puzzled by the question. Why was the man asking that when he had been the one to approach? Shouldn't he be the one asking for the man's identity instead?

"You are the one who approached me, and you are asking that?" Aldrian replied, his tone carrying confusion.

Silence returned. Aldrian was genuinely perplexed by the man's behavior, which also seemed tinged with confusion. Extending his senses toward the man's heart and mind, Aldrian found that the man was bewildered by his very existence. He did not understand why the man felt or thought this way, but he could tell there was no ill intent.

After a few moments, the man released a sigh and looked at Aldrian again. He cupped his hands as a sign of respect.

"My apologies for my abrupt question. I truly did not expect to sense something that made me doubt my own perception. But let me introduce myself first. I am Shin Ryongsuk, vice master of the Piercing Heaven Sect of the Central Continent," he said.

"I just returned from my business in Arantes Star and, by coincidence, sensed something from you that truly intrigued me. How should I address you?"

Aldrian finally understood why this man possessed the same cultivation technique as someone from the Barisan continent. What caught his attention was that this man used the exact same cultivation technique as Sect Master Ryu of the Piercing Heaven Sect in the Barisan continent.

If this man was the vice master of the Piercing Heaven Sect of the Central Continent then it meant the Piercing Heaven Sect here was the origin of the one in the Barisan continent, which was already under his rule.

To think that he would meet someone from the main sect of the Piercing Heaven Sect while on his journey to the Central Continent—he felt as if fate had truly directed this man to cross his path now. Still, he did not know what the vice master meant by sensing something from him that had sparked such intrigue.

"You can just call me Aldrian," Aldrian said calmly, which left Vice Master Shin momentarily stunned.

Aldrian?

The name Aldrian had recently become a hot topic due to the information about the Barisan continent spreading everywhere. Although there could be many others with the

same name across different places, this was the first time Shin had met someone who bore it.

"So, what exactly did the vice master of the Piercing Heaven Sect sense from me, for me to have the honor of being approached by you?" Aldrian asked.

"I felt some resonance with your body, and it was quite strong. This is the first time I have ever experienced something like this. How should I describe it? I simply felt that something inside your body drew me toward you," Vice Master Shin replied.

But there was something he did not say—the feeling of reverence and worship he sensed toward Aldrian. Earlier, he, along with several people inside the vessel, had felt the same sensation, something they had never experienced before. They sensed a resonance with something nearby, and then detected something moving at great speed, teleporting repeatedly.

That feeling grew even stronger the moment they saw Aldrian, prompting them to follow him and decide to greet him in hopes of uncovering the cause of this phenomenon.

At first, the one meant to greet Aldrian was not the vice master, as they did not know whether Aldrian was dangerous or not. However, he insisted on facing Aldrian directly because he felt strong pull toward him. He wanted to find out for himself what this was about.

"Are you the demonic cultivator Aldrian?" Vice Master Shin asked.

"Well, not entirely, but I could be one if wanted to," Aldrian replied, which made Vice Master Shin frown.

"What does that mean?" he asked, his tone carrying slight irritation. Aldrian's answer felt more like a mockery than a proper response.

"I could say that I'm special. And if I show you why, you will be in shock," Aldrian answered.

His answer still did not satisfy the vice master, who continued to frown. But then he took a deep breath and let it out, as if trying to keep himself from getting angry.

"Where are you going, Aldrian?" he asked.

"I just want to visit the Central Continent. I have business there."

The vice master raised his eyebrows before smiling.

"It is such a coincidence that I am also on my way to my sect. How about you follow us to the Central Continent? It will save much of your energy, right?" he suggested.

"I can see that you are using a teleportation technique to try to reach the Central Continent. Compared to exhausting your energy later, it is much better to use transportation."

Aldrian remained silent for a moment. This was not a bad idea. He was curious about what the vice master had said regarding something inside him that created a resonance. He also saw no harm in following this man from the main Piercing Heaven Sect, as he could learn much more about the Central Continent from him or his sect.

Aldrian thought that the main branch of the Piercing Heaven Sect must also be one of the most powerful sects in the Central Continent, with roots tracing directly back to the Heavenly Demon. The three great sects that had a direct connection to the Heavenly Demon and his wife were in no way small or weak in any place.

"Aldrian, please don't worry about me having any ill intent or anything like that. I am simply curious about the strangeness surrounding you, and I would like to have a conversation with you. Do you need me to swear in the name of the Heavenly Demon for you to trust me?" Vice Master Shin said.

Aldrian smiled behind his mask and looked directly at the vice master.

"No, you don't have to," he replied. "Alright, I will follow you. I am also curious about what you would like to say and what this is about."

Vice Master Shin smiled.

"Great. Then let's go. We will continue our talk after we arrive at the Central Continent, not long from now," he said, stepping aside and gesturing for Aldrian to enter the vessel first.

Aldrian floated calmly toward the vessel. As he drew near, his gaze happened to pass over one of its windows, and in that moment, he noticed a beautiful woman gazing in his direction.

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Chapter 683 - 683: To the Main Branch of the Sect

[1,582 words]

Aldrian's blue eyes looked directly at the woman's face, which was turned in his direction with a calm expression. Her beauty was not inferior to any he had already seen, like Sylphia, but still, he continued walking until he entered the vessel.

As for the woman, she seemed to follow Aldrian with her gaze until his figure disappeared into her blind spot.

Many people would recognize this woman if she walked on the normal streets, because she was one of the most famous figures among many stars in this star cluster. A woman with her special sword, and from the biggest sect in her home star, the Arantes Star.

"I wonder who he is, that even made Vice Master Shin come to him personally," her friend—a woman beside her suddenly said, as she also looked outside before returning to her seat after Aldrian was out of sight.

The woman did not answer, but the woman beside her did not mind, as she was already used to her icy personality. Still, she could not help but smile as she looked at the woman who seemed to be following Aldrian's figure with her eyes.

"It's so rare for our sword maiden to take interest in something. Do you sense anything special from him?" her friend said.

The woman called the sword maiden finally opened her lips.

"He is strong."

Hearing the sword maiden say that, the woman was stunned. If her friend said that figure was strong, then that meant he truly was strong—and the strength here must have something to do with his swordsmanship.

Her friend, the sword maiden, had a special ability thanks to her unique physique, allowing her to sense any sword cultivator's level of power. Her standard was extremely high because of her talent and strength, so the moment she said the masked figure was strong, it meant that he was someone with great swordsmanship.

Suddenly, she grew curious about that figure. Who was he, really?

After entering the interstellar vessel, Aldrian was guided by Vice Master Shin to one of the cabins. For Aldrian, this was not just a cabin but more like a luxury room inside a mansion than a moving vessel.

The vessel continued its journey, slowly making its way toward the Central Continent.

Aldrian sat on the sofa in the middle, while Vice Master Shin sat across from him, looking at him curiously.

"May I ask where you came from, Aldrian?" he asked.

"Orion Continent," Aldrian answered. He was not lying when he said that, as he had just come from that place, and he did not need to explain his true origin.

"Have you ever visited the Central Continent, or are you a regular visitor there?" the vice master asked again.

"No, this is my first time visiting. I have to go to the Central Continent because there is something that makes me have to visit it right now."

Vice Master Shin nodded, but he continued to look at him with curiosity.

"Earlier, when you said you could be a demon cultivator if you wanted, what did you mean by that?"

"Well, just like I said, I could be a demon cultivator if I wanted," Aldrian answered, which made Vice Master Shin frown and take a deep breath. If not for this man's strangeness, he would have killed him right then and there because of his mocking answer.

The only thing that prevented him from doing so was the strange resonance he felt—not just from his soul, but from his entire being—toward this person. It felt as if this masked figure possessed a high authority that demanded his respect, which truly made him feel ridiculous.

Why could this man trigger such a feeling?

Aldrian smiled behind his mask as he sensed the vice master's irritation. He had been teasing him since earlier, but he decided it was enough. He did not want to create further misunderstandings or worsen his relationship with a member of the Piercing Heaven Sect.

After thinking for a moment, he began to realize what it was within him that had attracted Vice Master Shin since earlier.

Without saying anything, he stretched out his hand, making Vice Master Shin wonder what he was about to do. Suddenly, from Aldrian's palm, an energy emerged.

The moment this energy appeared, Vice Master Shin's eyes widened in shock. His gaze trembled as he stared at the greyish energy, and his very soul felt the urge to prostrate before it.

It was an innate feeling within his heart—that he must bow before this energy. It was without a doubt demonic energy, yet he had never felt demonic energy as pure or as strong as this one.

"What... what kind of demonic energy is this?" he could not help but blurt out.

Aldrian then withdrew the energy and looked at the vice master.

"This is the thing that attracted you, right?" he said. The only thing that could attract the vice master of the Piercing Heaven Sect and cause such resonance between them was the Heavenly Demon Energy—or at least, that was the only explanation Aldrian could think of.

He had not thought his golden energy would cause such an effect on Vice Master Shin, and the only thing he could think of was that the resonance came from the Heavenly Demon Energy he had comprehended and stored within his golden energy in his dantian.

However, a question arose in his mind.

Why could his Heavenly Demon Energy have such a strong effect on the vice master, or on someone here? As far as he knew, demonic cultivators like Sect Master Ryu in the Barisan Continent did not seem affected by it unless he revealed his Heavenly Demon Energy outwardly.

Yet this vice master claimed he could sense resonance with him even though he had not released any Heavenly Demon Energy.

After thinking for a moment, he shrugged. Perhaps it had to do with the vice master and a few others here who possessed high cultivation, which made them truly sensitive to the existence of Heavenly Demon Energy.

"So you are really a demon cultivator, but what is that energy? How come you have an energy like that?" Vice Master Shin asked.

"Well, I comprehended a demon cultivation technique, of course. Where does vice master Shin think I got something like this?" Aldrian answered, which made Vice Master Shin fall silent and frown at him.

He truly did not know what to do with this person. Logically, this stranger could be a danger, as he had no idea what kind of man he was dealing with. However, the energy this person possessed made him forget his logical reasoning, which only made him more wary.

This masked man's origin was unknown, and with that kind of energy, even the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect would be affected by him.

He narrowed his eyes, thinking for a moment, before standing up and walking farther away from Aldrian. He left the cabin, while Aldrian simply let him go and smiled under his mask.

"Preparing for land, preparing for land. We have arrived at our destination," an announcement suddenly resounded in his cabin, also echoing across the interstellar vessel.

It seemed he had already arrived at the Central Continent.

A moment later, Vice Master Shin returned and looked at Aldrian.

"Aldrian, would you come with me to the Piercing Heaven Sect? There is someone who wants to meet you," he said.

Aldrian felt there was no harm in visiting the main branch of the Piercing Heaven Sect, and he already knew who wanted to meet him after he eavesdropped on the vice master. After all, he had just contacted someone using a communication artifact.

"Well, if Vice Master Shin invites me to the sect, I would truly feel bad if I refused. I am also curious about who wants to see me, and about the Piercing Heaven Sect itself. I can push my business back slightly," Aldrian answered.

Vice Master Shin sighed and nodded.

"Alright. Thank you, and you don't have to worry, we won't do anything bad. You have my word."

Not long after, the vessel finally landed and all of the passengers began to disembark. While Aldrian and the vice master were on their way out, they encountered the woman from earlier. Aldrian glanced at her for a moment, and the woman also looked at him.

She, who could see the blue eyes behind that mask, suddenly felt unsettled. It was as if those eyes could see everything, even the deepest secrets when they looked directly at her, which made her turn her head slightly to evade his gaze.

"Welcome to the Piercing Heaven Sect, Miss Meilan. My apologies, but I cannot escort you directly because an urgent matter has come up. There is no need to worry, as a grand elder will guide you through the sect grounds and to your accommodation. Please enjoy your stay, and if you need anything, just ask," Vice Master Shin said before walking ahead.

Aldrian followed him, but behind the mask he smiled. He had unexpectedly found someone interesting during his journey here.

The woman called Miss Meilan looked at Aldrian's back as he continued walking behind the vice master, and her friend beside her could not help but comment.

"Who is that guy, really? To think that Vice Master Shin would suddenly place such importance on that person."

Meilan did not answer. Instead, she began walking as well to leave the vessel.

Outside the vessel, Aldrian stepped out from the hatch and onto the wide field designed for interstellar vessels to land. In front of him stretched a beautiful scenery of towering mountain ranges that pierced the clouds, surrounded by lush greenery.

"Welcome to the Piercing Heaven Sect, Aldrian," the vice master said with a smile.

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Chapter 684 - 684: Greeting the Successor of Heavenly Demon

[1,512 words]

Aldrian looked at the scenery in front of him, and he couldn't help but remember the Piercing Heaven Sect in the Barisan Continent. They had the same kind of environment and scenery surrounding their sect, which made him wonder if the Piercing Heaven Sect preferred this kind of environment when building their sect.

The difference was that this place was much vaster and more bustling, with more people in it.

A high mountain pierced the clouds, with sect buildings located along its slope. The harmony between nature and the man-made structures did not damage the beauty of the mountain range.

Instead, it gave a soothing feeling to anyone who stepped into this place, making them want to stay longer.

The vessel landed in a vast open field that could contain two large interstellar vessels at the same time. It was located on high ground, on an artificially flattened mountain slope.

As the passengers got off the vessel, Aldrian saw that they were guided by some elders of the sect to another part of the sect. Some of them glanced at Aldrian, who stood beside Vice Master Shin, wondering about his identity.

"This way, Aldrian. I will guide you to meet someone," Vice Master Shin said.

He then walked further into the sect grounds, and Aldrian followed him. But before he could go much farther, he felt the Sword Maiden's gaze on him from behind.

He was truly curious about what she saw in him, because since earlier she seemed to always pay attention to him. He was also curious about her, as she had something rare within her that made him want to learn more about her.

But that could wait, as he still needed to meet someone first.

Vice Master Shin guided him through the sect, and after walking for more than fifteen minutes, he led him to a lonely mountaintop where a lone pavilion stood. Under the pavilion, a single table and a few chairs were already prepared, with a lone figure seated on one of them.

The figure was an old man, seemingly in the middle of enjoying a cup of tea. His long white hair and beard clearly showed the effects of the vicissitudes of time, yet at this moment his face appeared serene, as if it had become one with the surrounding nature.

However, although he appeared old, he was not to be underestimated, for his cultivation was enough to make him the strongest cultivator of the sect. This old man was at the peak of the pseudo-immortal stage, and Aldrian could tell he was nearing his ascension to the immortal realm.

Aldrian and Vice Master Shin finally arrived at the pavilion, and the vice master spoke to the old man.

"Sect Master, I have brought him here."

The old man, who was in fact the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect, looked at Aldrian intently. Aldrian could sense the old man observing him, and the old man seemed surprised, which made him let out a sigh.

"Truly, it is fate that someone like you exists in my time. I am truly glad you have come at this moment. Sir Aldrian, is that correct? Please, have a seat and make yourself comfortable," the sect master said.

Aldrian sat on one of the vacant chairs as the sect master poured herbal tea into the cup in front of him.

"I know you have some questions, but let me introduce myself. I am the current sect master of the main branch of the Piercing Heaven Sect, Han Jinho," the sect master said after pouring the tea.

The vice master, upon hearing the mention of the main branch, felt confused as to why the sect master needed to explain that part. Aldrian, however, smiled under his mask. It seemed the sect master had already learned a thing or two about him after observing at him just now.

"So, Sir Aldrian, would you show me your demonic energy? I just want to make sure that what I sensed is true," Sect Master Han said.

Aldrian, who had remained silent until now in front of the sect master, simply raised his palm and released his Heavenly Demon energy.

Sect Master Han's eyes trembled, his heartbeat quickened, and his excitement surged.

"This is it... this is what it should be," he said with a slight tremble in his voice. At that moment, he felt deeply moved in his heart to see the person before him within his lifetime.

Aldrian, thinking this was enough, retracted his energy and placed his hand on the table. Sect Master Han sighed again as he looked at Aldrian differently, his eyes now showing reverence. Then, all of a sudden, he stood up and bowed toward Aldrian, causing Vice Master Shin's eyes to widen in shock.

"Sect Master—"

"I greet the arrival of the successor of the Heavenly Demon. My apologies for my presumptuous request just now, as I only wished to confirm what I had sensed," Sect Master Han said.

Hearing the sect master's words, Vice Master Shin trembled as he turned to look at Aldrian again. This man is the successor of the Heavenly Demon? How could that be? But if the sect master was already certain that Aldrian was indeed the successor of the Heavenly Demon, then it had to be true.

Although he still did not understand the entire situation, he also bowed toward Aldrian.

"I greet the arrival of the successor of the Heavenly Demon." the vice master said.

"Sect Master Han, why do you think I'm someone that great? Is my energy enough for you to act this way?" Aldrian asked.

Sect Master Han straightened his body and looked at Aldrian.

"That energy is exactly as described in the ancient records of the Heavenly Demon. The records speak of it as the highest level of demonic energy, one that demands the reverence and obedience of all demonic cultivators. Once this energy appears, all demonic cultivators must obey the one who possesses it," he answered.

The vice master, upon hearing this, looked slightly confused and turned to Sect Master Han.

"But Sect Master, there has been no sign from the ancestral hall that a new successor of the Heavenly Demon has appeared. Isn't it said that when someone becomes the Heavenly Demon's successor, there will be a sign in the ancestral hall?" he asked.

"Well, I do not know the reason," Sect Master Han replied, "but Sir Aldrian's kind of demonic energy could only be exuded by the successor of the Heavenly Demon."

"If I may guess, Lord Aldrian is from the Barisan Continent, correct?" he added with a smile.

Aldrian nodded.

"Correct, Sect Master Han. I'm from the Barisan Continent, and I happen to have come to the Central Continent as I have business here," he said.

He was not surprised that Sect Master Han knew he was from the Barisan Continent. As the sect master of the main branch of the Piercing Heaven Sect, he would know that the Heavenly Demon Scripture was brought there in ancient times.

The successor of the Heavenly Demon could only appear there, as comprehending the scripture was the only way to become the successor of the Heavenly Demon.

Sect Master Han wanted to ask Aldrian more, but stopped himself when he saw Aldrian open his robe's hood and then remove his mask. The moment his face was revealed to them, their eyes widened in shock, though for different reasons.

The vice master was shocked by how young Aldrian was, while Sect Master Han was shocked because he had already seen that face in the past. He had been among the many powers near the Barisan Continent when Aldrian fought Tarius, which allowed him to clearly see the giant avatar's face, the same face as this young man.

Suddenly, everything clicked in his mind. The Barisan Continent, a man named Aldrian... this man was the one who had fought an immortal that day! But what confused him was that he was certain Aldrian had not been a demon cultivator during that battle, so why did he now have Heavenly Demon energy?

"Are you really the one who fought that immortal that day?" Sect Master Han suddenly asked.

"Yes, I am, Sect Master," Aldrian replied, giving an answer that left Vice Master Shin astonished.

This young man is the one who fought the immortal that day?

It was natural for him not to know about Aldrian's avatar, as he had stayed at the sect to hold the fort and had not witnessed the battle directly.

"But how? I thought you—"

Before Sect Master Han could speak further, Aldrian stretched out both of his hands and released his golden energy and Heavenly Demon energy at the same time, one from each palm. This caused another wave of shock for the two men, as what they saw this time was utterly ridiculous.

Aldrian could wield different energies inside his dantian!

Finally, something clicked in Vice Master Shin's mind after seeing this.

"That's why he said he could be a demon cultivator if he wanted to! This man wields two different energies inside his dantian!"

Aldrian then retracted his energy, picked up his cup of tea, and took a sip. He enjoyed it for a moment before setting it down again.

"So, Sect Master, does that answer your question?" he asked with a smile.

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- Chapter 685 - 685: The Strange Place

Chapter 685 - 685: The Strange Place

[1,548 words]

Sect Master Han sighed and sat down again.

"Yes, although I'm truly shocked by it, how could young master—wait, could I call you that?"

"You can call me however you are comfortable," Aldrian answered.

Sect Master Han nodded. "How could young master do that? I mean, how could you have two different energies inside your dantian? My apologies if my question touches on your secret, but this truly blows my mind, as this is the first time I've seen something like this in my life."

"Well, there is no problem with your question, because there is no secret in it. I was just born able to do it. Basically, the heavens gave me the blessing of a body that could do something like that," Aldrian replied, lying about it.

The sect master would be shocked to death if he knew that Aldrian's golden energy could change into any energy, as it encompassed all energies. But Aldrian would not tell them that, as he felt it would not benefit him to explain the properties of his golden energy to these people.

"I see. Truly, the man fated to be the successor of the Heavenly Demon will not be ordinary. It's no wonder that young master could fight an immortal," Sect Master Han said.

"Young master, may I know what kind of business brings you to the Central Continent at this time? Maybe, if there is something that we of the Piercing Heaven Sect could help with, as the strongest sect, we would be extremely helpful to you," he added.

"Well, I just want to visit a place, but I still do not know exactly where it is, and I don't even know what kind of place I will be visiting. However, the direction of my destination points toward the Central Continent," Aldrian answered, which left the sect master confused.

"To which direction, young master? Maybe I could guess the place that might be your destination," the sect master asked again. Aldrian closed his eyes for a moment before opening them and looking toward one direction.

"There."

Sect Master Han and the vice sect master looked in the direction Aldrian was pointing—east. They narrowed their eyes and exchanged glances. Was this what they thought it was, or just a coincidence?

"From your reaction, it seems there is a place that makes both of you think the same," Aldrian said, which made Sect Master Han look at him again.

"Well, the direction you pointed at is toward the central part of the Central Continent. At the central part, there is an area under the management of the three great sects. I know it will sound strange, but in that area, there is a place that even I cannot enter—a dungeon. That is the only place that comes to our mind when young master pointed in that direction," he said.

"A dungeon?" Aldrian asked curiously.

Sect Master Han nodded. "Well, that's what it appears to be for everyone, including me, as I have never entered it. I don't know if it truly is a dungeon or not, but all the people of the Central Continent call that place a dungeon."

"A dungeon sealed with a strong door and a seal formation that even I, a peak pseudo-immortal stage cultivator, cannot break. Many believe that place might contain unimaginable treasures, as even a peak pseudo-immortal cannot open it."

"Because no one has ever been able to break the seal, that place has remained a mystery since ancient times until today. People eventually gave up trying to enter it, so in the end, it was abandoned and became just a kind of story for cultivators of the Central Continent," Sect Master Han said, then paused for a moment.

"But recently, there has been movement from that dungeon for the first time, and it caused the three great sects to be in an uproar even until now. That place has become bustling again, with many people trying their luck to open it once more."

"In fact, many of the people who were in the same interstellar vessel as young master earlier from Arantes Star also want to visit that place. Those people have close relationships with the powers of the Central Continent, so they want to see it and try to open the dungeon as well."

Aldrian thought for a moment and looked at the sect master.

"The sign that appeared from the dungeon, when was it?" he asked.

"From Vice Master Shin's report at that time, the cultivators stationed there saw the dungeon show a kind of sign on the same day young master fought that immortal. More precisely, when there was an aurora phenomenon in the sky, the dungeon reacted. The entire region suddenly trembled, and the seal seemed to blink at that moment," Sect Master Han answered, which made Aldrian nod.

"Maybe that is the place... well, it's not harmful to visit it," he thought.

"Well, it's just my guess, but if young master's destination is somewhere else, we would gladly guide you there as well," Sect Master Han added.

Aldrian smiled and sipped his tea.

"I'm actually interested in this place. Could you bring me there later?" he asked after sipping his tea.

"Of course, young master. How could we not? In fact, with your arrival, the other two great sects will also be thrilled," Sect Master Han answered.

"We plan to depart for the central region tomorrow, so young master could stay the night here in the sect. Moreover, I want to discuss many things with young master. Would young master spare some time for this old man?" he added, which made Aldrian smile.

"Of course, Sect Master Han. I would also like to talk about many things, as there is much I need to learn about this continent," he answered.

They then discussed many matters, with Vice Master Shin leaving them alone after some time. Their conversation continued without them noticing how quickly time passed, and before long, hours had gone by. The sun was already on the western horizon when they decided to end their discussion.

Aldrian was then guided to his accommodation for the night, a lone pavilion atop one of the mountain peaks. This was a special place prepared for a select few to stay overnight. Usually, if a sect master from another great sect visited and wished to spend the night, this would be the place arranged for them.

After Aldrian settled in the pavilion, he wanted to stand on one side of the mountain and enjoy the scenery of the sunset. But once he arrived at the side of the mountain atop a high cliff, ready to take in the beauty of the view and the serenity of the atmosphere, he suddenly sensed a sword intent not far from him.

He was actually impressed by the power of this sword intent, which made him turn his head. His gaze shifted toward a much lower mountain, where he could see another pavilion.

From his location, it seemed there was an illusion formation meant to make him perceive the pavilion as empty. However, he easily saw through it, as the entire area was already within his domain. What he saw was a beautiful woman meditating on the pavilion's ground. She wore a white robe that accentuated the curves of her body, and in front of her was a sword.

Her eyes were closed, and the sword in front of her, which was actually a low divine grade sword, floated slightly as if reacting to her sword intent. Thanks to the barrier protecting the pavilion, which also blocked anything happening within its grounds, her sword intent did not affect the outside.

Aldrian kept looking at her. She was the sword maiden, the woman who had caught his interest because she possessed a special physique called the Sword Incarnate Constitution, which allowed her to be highly sensitive to the existence of swords or anything connected to them.

With this special physique, she could easily comprehend and utilize any sword. She could even sense the strength of other people's swordsmanship based on what she saw and what she felt.

Aldrian did not know who was stronger between her and Zander with his Solar Sword Body if they were in the same cultivation realm, but these two would undoubtedly possess powerful swordsmanship. He kept looking at her when she suddenly unleashed her sword will, which Aldrian could clearly sense from his position.

"The sword will that could pierce anything, slash anything, he thought, nodding to himself. As expected of the possessor of a special physique."

He was curious about her physique, but he was not in a rush to approach her and ask about it. He decided to let things take their course, and if the chance arose, then he could ask her. Turning his head forward again, he looked at the sunset. For him, this was also a form of meditation to soothe his heart and mind, allowing himself to rest instead of constantly dwelling on worldly matters.

He stayed like that until the sun finally sank beneath the western horizon, giving way to the moon and stars—his most favorite scenery.

But not long after the sky turned dark, he sensed the sword maiden leaving her pavilion. At first, he did not care, assuming she was simply going somewhere. However, as she moved, she did so discreetly, and the direction she was heading was toward his pavilion.

This caused him to raise his eyebrows in wonder.

What does this woman want to do?

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Chapter 686 - 686: Her Intent

[1,572 words]

Aldrian saw the sword maiden, already wearing her veil, keep coming closer to his pavilion, which made him wonder about her intention. He decided to hide himself to see what this woman was going to do.

The sword maiden, with her discreet movements, entered his pavilion grounds and hid behind the lush darkness and trees. As she kept nearing Aldrian's pavilion, her movements slowed before she stood under the cover of darkness, where she saw the building where Aldrian was supposed to stay.

She looked at her surroundings as if she wanted to make sure there was no one watching her or following her, before focusing her senses on the building.

'Where is he? I can't detect his presence here,' she thought.

After a moment of thought, she slowly moved toward the building, but before she could get closer, she suddenly unsheathed her sword and swung it backward. However, she then felt her sword hit something hard, which made it stop before it could meet its target, the neck of someone who was standing right behind her.

Her eyes were slightly stunned, and she wanted to kick backward, but the figure had already disappeared and reappeared in front of her. She wanted to attack with her sword, but her wrist was already caught by the figure. She intended to follow up with another attack, but then she stopped as she finally saw the figure.

The masked figure of Aldrian, with his blue eyes, could be seen looking at her with a calm gaze.

"What is the esteemed sword maiden doing in the night while moving discreetly like a thief in my pavilion?" Aldrian asked curiously as he released her wrist.

The sword maiden sheathed her sword and rubbed her wrist as she looked at Aldrian intently. His eyes were truly captivating, with a blue color like the sea's surface, slightly shining under the darkness of the night. However, she still felt an unsettled feeling, as if those eyes could see her most secret.

As if she were truly naked in front of those eyes.

Still, that did not stop her from coming here, because she wanted to learn more about this figure, or rather, about his strength.

"Fight me in a sword duel," she suddenly said, which made Aldrian slightly stunned.

A duel?

Aldrian truly wondered what she saw in him for her to ask something like this. He felt curious about this strange woman who seemed to have an ice-like personality.

"I'm sorry, Miss Meilan. Well, could I call you that? Anyway, did you enter this place with the sole intent of fighting me?" Aldrian asked.

Meilan nodded her head and once again repeated her words. "Fight me in a sword duel."

Aldrian smiled under his mask. "Why would I do that? Is there a reason for me to fight you? We have never met before today, and suddenly you ask me to fight. I just don't understand your thinking, or what you saw in me."

"You have strong sword intent and sword will, and I would like to fight you. Even your sword intent and sword will are much stronger than my master's."

"You can sense the power of sword intent and sword will just from seeing a person?" Aldrian asked in surprise. Meilan responded with a nod. This was truly an eye-opener for him, as even he could not do that. Logically, a person could measure how powerful sword intent or sword will was only when their opponent unleashed them.

But this woman could do it just by looking at someone?

Aldrian was amazed by this ability, as it was quite useful for measuring the real power of an enemy if they were a sword cultivator. With this, she could know how much stronger her opponent was and plan her decisions or her fight accordingly. A sword cultivator could not hide from her sense.

Aldrian looked at the woman known by the nickname Sword Maiden. She seemed like a typical sword cultivator who pursued the way of the sword and challenged strong opponents to keep learning and sharpening her blade. She did not hesitate or shy away from asking even a stranger to fight, as long as she could experience strong swordsmanship.

"I see," Aldrian said with a nod. "But still, why would I need to agree to duel you? You just came and asked me, a stranger you only met today to duel, and I gain nothing from it. Don't you find that impolite?"

Meilan seemed to agree with Aldrian, as she thought for a moment before taking something out from her storage ring. She revealed a golden badge with her sect's symbol on it and extended it toward him with the intent to give it to him.

"I will lend you a golden token—my token which will be useful if you visit my sect, the Celestial Lotus Sect, or meet anyone affiliated with it. If you show this token to them, you will receive preferential treatment, just as they would treat me," she said, which made Aldrian raise his eyebrows.

He felt amused by this woman. "Are you truly willing to give something as valuable as this token to a person you have not known for long? What if I am a bad person and abuse this token's authority? You would be in big trouble, Miss."

Meilan did not change her stance and kept stretching her hand toward him.

"I don't think you will do that. If the time comes for you to use this token, I believe you will use it wisely," she said with certainty, which made Aldrian find this woman truly

reckless. Yet he did not dislike it, as she must have her own way of assessing people. There was no way she was this naïve and innocent, especially after what he had heard about her from Sect Master Han.

The sword maiden who had fought many battles against devils and countless bad people could not possibly be naïve or innocent.

Thinking that he gain something from it, Aldrian took the token with a smile under his mask.

"Alright," he said as he stored the token, his other hand stretching to the side. He closed his eyes for almost a minute, making Meilan look at him in wonder, unsure what he was doing, until she saw his hand move in a slashing motion.

Suddenly, a spatial crack appeared, leaving her stunned.

"If we want to duel, let's do it in a place where we can battle without leaving any traces. I have already created a secret realm that is large enough for us to duel freely, so let's go," Aldrian said before stepping into the spatial crack.

However, Meilan just stood there, shocked by what she had heard. He created a secret realm just for them to fight? He could do that so quickly? The way he spoke made it sound as if creating a secret realm was no big deal, as though it were a one-use thing he could simply discard afterward.

She looked at the spatial crack for a moment before stepping into it. The moment she entered, she felt a slight spatial distortion which was normal before appearing in a different environment. She found herself standing on top of a solid expanse of ground, but above her there was only a blank white scenery, as if Aldrian had not bothered to create a sky for the secret realm.

The realm also had its own heaven and earth energy density, which truly surprised her. She then looked toward Aldrian, who was already standing not far away, as if waiting for her. She was truly amazed that he could create all of this in just a minute, but she put aside her amazement as she approached him and stopped five hundred meters away.

She saw him take out a low divine sword, which she assumed to be his main weapon. Unfortunately for her, the sword Aldrian took out was only one among the many in his treasure vault.

"Now, Miss Sword Maiden, you may duel to the best of your ability, as I have made sure this secret realm can withstand your strength. If you want to learn a thing or two, it is much better if you show me your best," Aldrian said.

Hearing his words, she could not help but feel challenged, and her competitive heart stirred. She knew this masked man was strong, far stronger than her, but she intended to try and fight him.

Her calm eyes sharpened with focus, and her aura, at the peak of the pseudo-immortal foundation stage, began to leak slowly. She unsheathed her sword, a jian sword and pointed it toward him before unleashing her sword intent.

The space around her was affected as it became slightly distorted, and even the ground trembled faintly.

Her pressure grew stronger and stronger, eventually matching that of the low pseudo-immortal establishment stage.

Without another word, her figure suddenly disappeared as she shot toward Aldrian with incredible speed. In that split second, Aldrian saw her form seem to vanish even from his sight before suddenly reappearing in front of him, thrusting her sword.

Ting!

He blocked the strike that had almost pierced his chest and smiled behind his mask.

From the information he read through his system, she could use some elements and incorporate them into her sword techniques. He understood what had just happened, and it truly amazed him.

One of her elements was ice, and what she had done was basically freeze time for a split second. That was why, even from his perspective, it felt as if she had simply vanished and appeared again.

'This will be an interesting duel,' he thought.

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Chapter 687 - 687: The Duel Against Sword Maiden

[1,594 words]

Meilan, seeing that her attack had not worked, disappeared again and once more froze time for a split second, making her vanish from Aldrian's sight. Even so, Aldrian managed to block her next attack that came from behind him.

Aldrian swung his sword backward and blocked another strike as she continued using her time-freezing ability. Her sword was also imbued with ice energy, making it far more dangerous if touched. If he touched it, he knew it would freeze part of his body. Even the part of his sword that he used to block her strike was already frozen.

Aldrian smiled under his mask as he kept blocking her attacks. He also had to move from his position because her strikes began to vary, targeting places it would be impossible for him to defend unless he moved.

Her ability to freeze time must have been extremely energy-consuming, as this was not a normal ability or technique. It also showed that she had comprehended time laws to a certain degree, which was truly amazing. Time laws were even more difficult to comprehend, and to find someone here who had comprehended them, especially a sword cultivator genuinely amazed him.

However, unfortunately for Meilan, Aldrian had also comprehended time laws, which allowed him to instantly recognize her trick and how to counter it. His higher cultivation and deeper understanding of time laws made her attack patterns slowly become visible to him.

She kept attacking, and each time, Aldrian blocked it. Meilan knew she could not always rely on the same tricks, and in a split second, she suddenly changed her attack style.

She created a slight distance from Aldrian and slashed a few times toward him. Aldrian, watching closely, suddenly swung to his right and behind him, as if something were approaching from that direction.

Ting! Tang! Ting!

And it was exactly that—his sword struck something invisible, producing the sound of clashing steel. He could see that she continued doing this from a distance, and he instantly understood what she was doing as he blocked all of her invisible attacks.

'Now she's using space laws.'

Her slashes were hidden within the space void, appearing around him in ways that could have caught him off guard.

'Well, too bad that space laws are one of the laws I always use and have a deeper comprehension of,' he thought before slashing once in the midst of blocking her attacks.

Meilan saw Aldrian swing his sword to the side as if to block her spatial attack, but then her eyes widened slightly, and she immediately swung her sword behind her.

Ting!

Something struck her blade, forcing her back a few steps. He had used the same trick as hers! In that moment, her attacking momentum was broken, and her back was left vulnerable to Aldrian.

Meilan sensed that Aldrian was right behind her, seeming ready to touch her back as a sign of her defeat. But before his hand could reach her, she leapt with her flexible body, slipping past his hand and body. Her grip on her sword remained firm, and she did not forget to swing it straight toward his face.

She wanted to see the face behind that mask as proof of her victory!

Aldrian, seeing the incoming sword so close to his face, perceived it in slowed time for just a second. He tilted his head to the side, allowing his mask to narrowly avoid being slashed. The blade passed his mask by a small margin before he saw her step back, breathing slightly heavier.

He had already guessed as much. From the start, what she had shown him was high-level swordsmanship that incorporated both ice laws, time laws and space laws. She used them as if she possessed unlimited energy which meant she had been pushing herself from the very beginning.

She understood that if she did not push from the start, she would not win this duel. She looked at Aldrian with gasping breaths, knowing she had already depleted 25% of her energy quickly. Those techniques were not ones she usually used so early in a duel due to their obvious energy consumption. However, she had still done it because she wanted to see just how proficient Aldrian's swordplay truly was.

As expected, he was truly strong, and even her freezing time and spatial sword ability did not put much pressure on him. Although he had mostly been blocking since the start, the fact that he could see each of her attacks meant he had instantly seen through her tricks.

She took a deep breath and pointed her sword at Aldrian. Suddenly, her sword intent grew stronger, carving slash marks into the ground. Aldrian could even see a manifestation of her sword intent above her. Although it was only the silhouette of a sword, it showed just how powerful her sword intent was for it to manifest visibly to anyone.

She suddenly made a circling motion in front of her with her sword, creating many sword's afterimages. There were more than fifteen of them, and all of the afterimages abruptly pointed toward Aldrian. They became real as her sword energy infused them, turning the afterimages into solid objects.

"Go," she said, and instantly all of those swords shot toward Aldrian at incredible speed. She dashed after them, following close behind.

Aldrian, seeing the incoming attack, decided to face it head-on. The moment his sword met the first flying blade—

Crack!

Ice spread across his weapon, freezing it even more, but Aldrian did not care. He kept blocking the incoming flying swords until the entire blade of his weapon was encased in ice. The weight slowed him slightly, and the final attack came as she suddenly threw her sword toward his mask.

He tilted his head, letting the blade fly past him. She, now without a sword, coated her hand in sword intent and tried to slash at his mask. In an instant, she was right in front of him, her hand nearly reaching his face.

Aldrian prepared to evade, but instead suddenly leapt backward—dodging both her hand and the sword that came flying toward him from behind!

The weapon she had thrown earlier had actually returned to her hand. Now that she had her sword back, her presence grew sharper, her focus entirely on Aldrian, who was still in midair. This was her chance.

Aldrian, still in midair after evading her attacks, knew exactly what had happened.

'Telekinesis... and now she's unleashing her sword will.'

While still in midair, he seemed like an ideal target, and he knew she must be thinking the same—intent on ending this duel right now. But he smiled, and suddenly unleashed his own sword intent, making Meilan's eyes widen in shock at the sudden burst of power.

Because of the intense fight, she had forgotten that Aldrian had not used his sword intent at all until now!

His overwhelming sword intent broke her focus, and her sword will wavered. That brief moment of weakness was all Aldrian needed. He landed on the ground and dashed toward her. She, still affected by his overwhelming presence, quickly regained herself and prepared to block whatever he threw at her.

His distance was already too close for her to unleash another attack, so she shifted to defense. But—

"It's over."

Aldrian's voice rang out. Her eyes widened as she suddenly felt something at her neck. She glanced to the side and saw Aldrian already behind her, his sword at her throat and his other hand touching her back.

She looked forward again and saw the figure she had thought was Aldrian vanish. In that moment, she finally understood what had happened.

'An illusion,' she thought before letting out a sigh.

"That was quite a good duel, Miss Meilan. As expected from the woman titled Sword Maiden, I am truly amazed by your proficiency in the sword," Aldrian said as he released her and stepped back. He sheathed his sword while she sighed in disappointment.

Although she had prepared herself to lose, knowing he was much stronger, it still left her feeling disappointed in herself.

However, she did not dwell on it and instead asked, "How could you have such strong sword intent? Do you have any special constitution?"

Aldrian shook his head.

"No, I don't have anything like that. But how can I say it? I just comprehend things easily, and swordsmanship is one of my fortes," he said, which made her nod in understanding. She also knew the feeling of easily comprehending things because of her own talent, especially in swordsmanship, thanks to her physique.

But that was still nothing compared to what this masked man possessed. The sword intent he had released just moments ago was enough to give her goosebumps. She understood that her sword intent—no, not even her master could compare to this man's sword intent.

She sensed his cultivation was at the low pseudo-immortal establishment stage, which was much, much weaker than her master's, yet his sword intent already surpassed him.

'He is truly special,' she thought. This was the first time she had met someone like Aldrian.

"Anyway, let's go back. Fortunately, we fought here, if not, we would have already destroyed the pavilion and part of the mountain," Aldrian said as he looked around their surroundings.

Their clash had actually caused destruction all around them. The area within ten kilometers was covered with sword marks and shattered ground. Although the duel had not seemed too chaotic, the aftereffects had caused significant damage.

This is how battles in the immortal ascension realm are. Even a single sword swing could cause wide destruction, and it was even worse when they used their full techniques.

They then exited the secret realm as it began to crumble, signaling the end of the secret realm now that it had served its purpose.

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Chapter 688 - 688: To the Dungeon

[1,494 words]

After Aldrian and Meilan came out of the secret realm, Aldrian couldn't help but ask her.

"Miss Meilan, do you always challenge every sword cultivator who is much stronger than you, or what?"

Meilan shook her head.

"Of course not. I only challenge those I feel are worthy. Worthy not only in strength, but also in having a good sword path," she answered in a calm voice. However, her gaze lingered on Aldrian, as if sensing something even he did not realize about himself. In her eyes, she could see something he could not see.

What she saw was a strong golden light shining in his heart, his sword path backed by an equally strong determination. She did not know what his determination was for, but to her, Aldrian was not only strong, his strength was unshaken and uncorrupted by any negative force.

His sword path was firm and not merely meant to kill. It had a purpose, something he needed to hold on to or achieve. If Aldrian had been strong yet reeked of negative energy or force, if he wielded his sword only to kill as if following his own desire, she would not have asked him to duel, as she did not want to sully her sword path by learning from a corrupted sword cultivator.

Aldrian nodded. "I see. Well, that's good. Although you are strong, I'm glad you are not satisfied too quickly and still want to learn. This is the way of a good sword cultivator," he said.

Meilan fell silent for a moment before she slightly bowed to him.

"Thank you for dueling with me. This was truly a battle that gave me valuable experience," she said before straightening her body.

"No problem. You already gave me your token anyway, I'm just doing my part," he said while waving his hand.

But then there was a moment of silence as Meilan continued to look at Aldrian's figure. Aldrian could feel that there was something she wanted to say but was reluctant to voice.

"Is there anything else you want to say to me, Miss Meilan?" he asked.

After a brief pause, she finally spoke.

"May I ask for another duel in the future? May I know where you came from? Or how I should call you?"

Aldrian smiled behind his mask.

"You will know in the future," he said before walking away. "I think you should go back, Miss. I can sense that your friend seems panicked by your sudden disappearance from your pavilion. I'm afraid she might recklessly cause chaos in the sect," he added.

She kept looking at his figure as he continued walking toward the main pavilion's building. But then she froze as her surroundings suddenly changed. She now stood on her own pavilion's grounds again, which truly shocked her!

She looked toward the mountain where Aldrian resided, her expression filled with astonishment.

How could he do that? She had been unable to resist or do anything as he simply teleported her back to this place! She understood now that he was much, much stronger than she had initially thought. Although their duel had not revealed everything about them, it was enough to show their disparity. For him to teleport her here without her detecting anything or resisting...

That man was truly mysterious!

"Meilan, there you are! Where were you just now? You suddenly disappeared without telling me, your friend, anything!" her friend's voice suddenly came from behind her. She ran toward Meilan, her face full of worry.

Her voice carried grievance, which made Meilan smile slightly. Her face, which was usually expressionless, only showed a smile in front of a few people and this friend was one of them.

"I'm sorry, I just took a walk for a moment without telling you anything," she said, but her friend narrowed her eyes. She looked at Meilan's figure as if inspecting her before finally meeting her gaze.

"You... are you just doing heavy exercise? Or were you fighting someone?" she asked suspiciously.

Meilan did not answer. Instead, she walked toward the main building of their pavilion.

"I want to take a bath," Meilan said, leaving her friend stunned.

"Hey, I'm asking you!" her friend shouted, but Meilan did not respond as her friend followed after her.

The next day, when the sun was already quite high in the sky, the time for Aldrian to depart to the central region of the continent arrived. However, before he could leave his pavilion, two figures came to visit him, a man and a woman came to visit him, escorted by a grand elder.

Both of them had long red hair, although it was slightly lighter than his, with the man tying his in a ponytail. When they arrived in front of Aldrian, he could tell that they looked at him with reverent gazes.

"Young Master Ryong, Young Miss Rin, this is the esteemed guest that the sect master mentioned," the grand elder said to them before turning to Aldrian.

"Good morning, my lord. My apologies for disturbing you, but these two are the direct disciples of the sect master of the Celestial Demon Sect of the Azure Moon Star, disciple Ryong and disciple Rin. They arrived last night and wished to meet your excellency after hearing about you from the sect master," he added.

Aldrian looked at the two siblings as they suddenly bowed.

"Disciple Ryong Daeho greets the successor of the Heavenly Demon."

"Disciple Rin Seoyeon greets the successor of the Heavenly Demon."

Both of them spoke in turn.

Aldrian understood that the Celestial Demon Sect was another demonic cultivator sect from Azure Moon Star, also located near the Ancient Blue Gate World. They had a close connection with the Piercing Heaven Sect, as history recorded that the Celestial Demon Sect was founded by some of the direct followers of the Heavenly Demon.

It was no wonder the two sects had a close relationship, much like the three great sects shared among themselves.

"At ease. You don't have to bow to me later, as I don't want to draw attention yet. Do not let it be known to others that the successor of the Heavenly Demon has appeared," Aldrian said calmly.

"As you wish, my lord. Uhm... how should we address you, my lord?" Ryong asked.

"Just call me Young Master. That will be enough," Aldrian answered, then looked at the grand elder. "You too."

"As you wish, Young Master," they replied.

"Anyway, when are we going to depart for the central region? Is everything ready?" Aldrian asked.

"Ah, we will depart after this, Young Master. I also came here to inform you that the time is near, and I will guide you to the warp gate," the grand elder replied, to which Aldrian responded with a nod.

"Alright, let's go. Let's not waste any time."

Not long after, Aldrian was guided to another part of the sect where there was a warp gate reserved for the private use of the sect's members. By the time Aldrian arrived, many people were already there. They were the same ones from Arantes Star who had boarded the interstellar vessel yesterday.

Aldrian saw the Sword Maiden and her friend. She looked in his direction, and many others did the same. They had already wondered about his identity yesterday, and now, seeing him close with the "two red stars," their curiosity only grew. However, they could only discuss it quietly among themselves, unwilling to risk attracting possible trouble.

Sect Master Han stood in front of the warp gate, looking over the crowd.

"Alright, the warp gate is ready. Let's depart!" he shouted before stepping into the warp gate. The others followed, with Aldrian entering not long after. He felt the slight, familiar sensation of the warp gate for a brief moment before stepping out into another place.

In his sight was a bustling city, with many of its populace turning their attention toward his entourage. There was no way they could avoid attracting notice, not with so many famous figures present, the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect, the Sword Maiden, and the two red-haired siblings following Aldrian, all well-known to the people here.

Above the warp gate, a massive cruiser was already waiting for them.

"This is Blue Rose City, the nearest city near to dungeon. From here, we will continue our journey using the cruiser," the grand elder guiding Aldrian explained.

All of them flew toward the cruiser. Since the group consisted of cultivators no weaker than the Emperor Stage, they could all fly with ease. Once every passenger had settled inside the cruiser, it finally began to move.

Aldrian, along with some others, chose to stand on the cruiser's deck rather than inside one of its cabins. For Aldrian, he wanted to see the journey more clearly, so he chose to remain there.

However, he couldn't help but sigh inwardly, beside him stood the two red-haired siblings, as well as the Sword Maiden with her confused friend, who seemed not to understand why the Sword Maiden chose to stay near him. She also seemed content to simply stand there, as if all she needed was to be close to Aldrian

Truly, he had never stepped out of the spotlight all this time!

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Chapter 689 - 689: An Ambush?

[1,619 words]

As the cruiser flew at cruising speed, Aldrian initially intended to enjoy the journey while attracting as little attention as possible. However, that intention could only be buried, as several figures kept following him as if he were a mother hen and they were baby chicks.

The two red-haired figures, along with a woman carrying a sword and her friend that kept looking at him with curiosity. This composition alone was enough to attract more attention from others, since he seemed to be at the center of these famous persons.

He tried moving to another part of the deck to find a lonelier place, but they always followed him. Aldrian sighed as he looked at the two red-haired siblings.

"You don't have to always follow me. If you need to do something, then you could do so," he said.

"No, young master. There is nothing I need to do here. Besides, this place is a good place to enjoy the journey," Ryong said.

"I'm the same, young master. We usually also stay on the open deck like this when we take a journey on a cruiser," his sister Rin said.

Aldrian then looked at the beautiful veiled woman who was watching him with an expressionless face. Though she did not say anything, he already knew she seemed intent on staying near him. He then looked at her friend, another beautiful woman who regarded him with curiosity but did not say anything.

Aldrian sighed again and decided to ignore them, turning his gaze toward the passing scenery.

"By the way, Sword Maiden, why are you standing here? I don't think you stay here just to converse, right?" Ryong suddenly asked as he looked at the Sword Maiden.

The Sword Maiden did not answer immediately, her gaze remaining fixed on Aldrian. Ryong seemed not to mind this kind of behavior, and only a few seconds later did the Sword Maiden open her lips.

"Well, I just like to be here," she said.

Her friend knew that was nonsense. The Sword Maiden she knew never did this, as she always preferred lonely places. She must be here because of this man she claimed to be a strong person. Her friend was curious about what she saw in him that attracted her enough to be the one to approach him.

Her answer made the two siblings look at the Sword Maiden with narrowed eyes. Had she found something about Aldrian that interested her? For them, they liked being near Aldrian because he was the successor of the Heavenly Demon, and they were fanatics about it. Simply being near him made them feel truly honored. Even now, they felt a strong resonance that made them want to prostrate before him.

Unbeknown to them, the Sword Maiden had chosen to stay close to Aldrian after sensing a difference following their duel last night. She realized that although Aldrian's eyes unsettled her for some unknown reason, being near him also helped her comprehension of the sword.

His very being was like the embodiment of a walking sword, with his strong sword intent and sword will. She thought that Aldrian might have already reached a higher realm of swordsmanship known as the Perfect Sword Heart, something that only a few people in legends had attained.

The Sword Heart itself was already difficult to achieve, and the Perfect Sword Heart was far more so. The Sword Heart was a state where a person became one with the sword through their comprehension, their body became the sword, their mind and soul became the sword.

However, not all Sword Hearts were the same, as they depended on the cultivator's comprehension of the sword, which came from their comprehension of sword intent and sword will.

Some Sword Hearts could be far stronger than others, but all of them would be rarely reach another level that remained the dream of sword cultivators, and that was the Perfect Sword Heart.

In this realm, their heart and body were the purest a swordsman could attain. They became one with the sword, with no doubt that they themselves were the sword. Their heart and soul were strong and unwavering in the path of the sword, and they finally reached enlightenment to attain the Perfect Sword Heart.

At this stage, every movement of the swordmaster was like the movement of the sword itself.

The Sword Maiden had read all of that in the records, and as far as she knew, there was no one in this star cluster or even in the entire galaxy who had attained the Perfect Sword Heart. That was why she wondered if Aldrian might have already reached that state, which made her feel different when near him, and even allowed her to gain benefits simply by being close.

However, what she did not know was that Aldrian did not always use his sword and not pure sword cultivator. He could also wield other artifacts, such as a bow, at a mastery level.

If she knew about this, she would probably have to reassess her knowledge of the sword, which might even affect her own sword path.

Hearing the Sword Maiden's answer, Ryong did not dwell on it further and simply stood near Aldrian. The journey would take about a day, and they would have to pass through a vast forest area before reaching their destination.

For hours, there was minimal conversation between them until suddenly a commotion broke out on the deck. The cruiser shook violently, and its defensive measures activated.

Someone had attacked the cruiser!

It began to slow down rapidly as, in front of them, a red transparent shield suddenly appeared. In fact, the red shield had trapped the cruiser inside, forming a dome around it.

"What the hell happened?!" one of the passengers asked, confused by this sudden development. Was someone attacking them right now? Who would dare to do that when their group consisted of many powerful people, especially the sect master of the Piercing Heaven Sect?

Sect Master Han emerged from the cabin and stepped onto the deck to observe the situation. He instantly understood what was happening and spread his sense to the

maximum. At that moment, he detected thousands of hidden cultivators in the forest below, outside the red dome. From their positions, they seemed to be the ones maintaining the dome.

He instantly knew who they were and couldn't help but smirk.

"This is a devil's sacrificial formation! They are devils!" someone among the passengers shouted, recognizing what had happened to them.

"We have to get out of here as fast as possible before this formation sucks all of our beings into it. This is a formation the devils usually use to quickly increase their kin's cultivation by sacrificing others," he added.

Someone then tried to attack the red dome with his lightning element. He was at the pseudo-immortal foundation stage, but his strike did not leave a single mark on the dome.

"This formation is strong!" he said, and one after another began their attacks. Even the elders who were part of the entourage joined in, but at most, the formation only trembled before standing firm once more.

"Give up! None of you will get out of here alive." Suddenly, a voice resounded from outside the dome. A figure, already in his devil form and possessing middle pseudo-immortal stage cultivation, appeared and floated near them outside of the dome.

The moment he appeared, hundreds of other devils also began to reveal themselves. Seeing this, everyone on the cruiser realized that this was a planned ambush. However, many were confused, how could these devils have known their path? Unless there was a traitor among them.

"Ulasis, you're still alive, huh? I thought you had already died a dog's death somewhere after running with your tail between your legs when we obliterated the devils in your own territory," Sect Master Han said mockingly as he looked at the devil.

"Han Jinho, you bastard, even if you're here, there's no escape. We've been planning this for weeks, and with thousands of us maintaining this formation, even if you're at the peak pseudo-immortal stage, you'll be dead before you can break it," the devil named Ulasis replied in an angry tone.

Aldrian watched all of this with a calm expression before being approached by the earlier grand elder.

"They are the remnants of the devils from the central continent who were forced into hiding after young master defeated the immortal on the Barisan Continent," he said through voice transmission after nearing Aldrian.

"After young master defeated the immortal, these devils fell into turmoil. At that time, the three great sects took advantage of the chaos and attacked them, causing them to lose all their territory, with many escaping," he added.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. The formation had already begun its work, and he could feel his energy being drained into it. Everyone inside the formation felt the same. This energy would later be converted into devil energy within the formation before being absorbed by the devils to aid their cultivation.

As time passed, the absorption rate would increase, placing everyone here in a dangerous situation.

Despite all of this, Sect Master Han only looked at Ulasis with a gaze full of disdain.

"Is that so?" the sect master asked in a mocking tone. Suddenly, he drew a sword from his storage ring, instantly drawing the attention of many. Its power surged outward, causing others to widen their eyes in shock as they recognized it as a high divine-grade weapon.

Ulasis, watching Sect Master Han draw the sword, also widened his eyes in shock.

'The Heaven Shattering Sword! He brought his sect's legacy artifact with him?!' he screamed in his head.

Legacy artifacts rarely left their sect's headquarters unless under certain circumstances. But to think this old man had brought it with him now!

He knew things would turn ugly and decisively tried to escape.

"Too late," Sect Master Han said coldly before swinging his sword.

Swoosh!

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Chapter 690 - 690: Arriving at the Dungeon

[1,494 words]

Swoosh!

Sect Master Han swung his sword toward Ulasis, and the dome that trapped the cruiser was instantly slashed apart. The strike immediately killed many devils floating near Ulasis. They had no time to escape, as Sect Master Han did not give them a chance. His slash was fast, powerful, and precise.

The attack also opened a massive, long spatial crack that appeared outside the dome. The effect did not stop there. From above the atmosphere, one could see clouds swept away for thousands of kilometres by the slash. Even the air itself was drawn into space.

Looking at the aftereffects of the attack, the hearts of the people on the cruiser trembled.

So strong, too strong!

Truly terrifying! Was this the power of the Sect Master of the Piercing Heaven Sect?

Sect Master Han looked at the aftereffects of his sword strike and frowned.

'Tch, it looks like he escaped from that strike. That rat truly has many cards up his sleeve to get away,' he thought.

He could not sense Ulasis's remnants, but he had felt his figure vanish a split second before the sword strike could reach him. This irritated Sect Master Han, as that man was truly as slippery as an eel.

Still, there was work to be done after Ulasis's disappearance. Sect Master Han shouted,

"Kill all of them! Don't let any of them escape!"

The moment he spoke, some of the elders and grand elders dashed in different directions. At this point, the dome had already collapsed. Some of the devils had already fled the moment after Sect Master Han unleashed his sword strike.

However, many still remained, injured when the shattered formation's backlash struck them. They were the ones maintaining the formation, so when it collapsed, it damaged their physical bodies. The pain kept them from escaping, and that sealed their fate here.

The elders began killing many devils in their weakened state. Although the number of killers was far fewer than the prey, in their condition, the devils were like fish on a chopping board. The killers also possessed far stronger cultivation, turning this moment into nothing more than a slaughter.

"Uagh!"

"Akh!"

The devils tried to flee in every direction, but the elders of the Piercing Heaven Sect did not allow it, cutting them down one by one with speed. Even Sect Master Han joined the slaughter. Floating above the cruiser, he created many swords out of thin air a moment later.

The red swords, formed from his energy, each contained immense power. They shot off in every direction at such speed that even a pseudo-immortal establishment cultivator could not escape them. As if they possessed minds of their own, the swords locked onto different devils.

Any devil pierced by them died instantly, and the swords did not stop. They continued to roam the killing zone, relentlessly seeking new targets.

Many who saw it were amazed by Sect Master Han's technique and his control over it. Even the Sword Maiden, who witnessed it, was deeply impressed that Sect Master Han could execute such a technique flawlessly. Controlling that many swords shaped from pure energy required full concentration and immense energy, something she herself could not yet do.

In less than a minute, thousands of devils had already been sent into the reincarnation cycle, a task that was effortless for the Piercing Heaven Sect elders, along with some passengers who had decided to help.

Aldrian watched it all unfold and nodded in approval. This was as expected of Sect Master Han and the strength of his sect. They could resolve the situation with ease, but still he had not expected Sect Master Han to bring the sect's legacy artifact. That attack alone was more than enough to destroy half of a big city.

And that was still only one swing. If Sect Master Han unleashed a far more powerful technique, then with a single strike of that sword, he could wipe out an entire city.

"My apologies, young master, for the disturbance just now. I already knew about the ambush and allowed the devils to act because I wanted to eliminate their remaining forces," a voice transmission suddenly came from Sect Master Han to Aldrian.

"It's okay, Sect Master. But then, you already knew about the traitor?" he asked.

"Of course. I let him go free for this very moment. He is a useful idiot, after all, and I took advantage of his ignorance. I have known him to be a traitor for a long time without him knowing it."

What Sect Master Han did not say was that he also used this chance to display his strength to impress Aldrian. He had already learned about the ambush a few days before Aldrian arrived, but once Aldrian arrived, yesterday he decided to turn the situation into an opportunity to show off.

That was also why he decided to bring the sect's legacy artifact, something even the traitor would never have anticipated.

After ensuring no devils remained, the cruiser continued its journey. Fortunately, for the rest of the trip, there were no further disturbances, and they finally arrived at their destination the next day.

Aldrian saw a flat expanse of land where not a single tree stood, despite being surrounded by dense forest. In the middle of the flat land was a large entrance leading downward, resembling the entrance of a dungeon.

"We flattened the entire area as a marker for the dungeon. In the past, the dungeon was hidden deep within the dense forest, protected by a powerful illusion formation that made approaching it extremely difficult. Through the united effort of the past ancestors of the three great sects, we broke the formation and leveled the land," the grand elder explained to him.

Aldrian could see that there are already many people that in that place. They are the people that also want to try to uncover the mystery of the dungeon since the last month and many that also just come to also try their luck.

The treasures or anything from this mysterious place, which even peak pseudo-immortals had failed to uncover, drew them all here. They wanted to see it for themselves.

As the cruiser landed near the dungeon, the crowd gave way, knowing that the Piercing Heaven Sect had arrived. With their arrival, the three great sects were now fully gathered.

Sect Master Han disembarked first, followed by the others. He was immediately greeted by members of the Piercing Heaven Sect who were stationed here.

After that, two other figures approached him. One was a black-haired man with a bulky build. His muscles radiated explosive power, and his presence was truly intimidating. Seeing him, Aldrian could not help but remember the Sect Master of the Black Dragon Pavilion, Sect Master Kang.

The other was a beautiful veiled woman with a voluptuous figure. Her long purple hair reached her waist, and her amethyst-colored eyes possessed a charm that could draw in anyone who looked directly into them.

Glancing at their information through his system, Aldrian instantly understood the identities of these two figures.

"Is what you said two days ago true?" the bulky black-haired man asked Sect Master Han.

"Well, you must already sense that I'm not lying," Sect Master Han replied, giving a subtle glance toward Aldrian. The black-haired man and the veiled woman then turned to look in Aldrian's direction. They, too, felt a strange resonance with him, and it made their hearts tremble.

They seemed ready to approach Aldrian, and he could clearly see their intent. However, they stopped when Sect Master Han sent them a voice transmission. After hearing his message, they decided not to come closer, but Aldrian then received two separate voice transmissions from them.

"The Sect Master of the Black Dragon Pavilion, Jang Taedong, greets the successor of the Heavenly Demon."

"The Sect Master of the Thorny Flower Garden, Baek Sujin, greets the successor of the Heavenly Demon."

Aldrian nodded, which they understood before returning to their sect's entourage. It seemed Sect Master Han had told them not to draw more attention to him, something he truly appreciated. If those two sect masters had approached him or worse, openly shown their respect, news of it would undoubtedly spread.

Someone who was respected by the sect masters of the three great sects would instantly draw immense attention, making him the center of focus.

After a brief exchange, the three sect masters decided to enter first, and the others naturally followed. The dungeon's path had already been cleared of the crowd earlier due to their arrival, so their path was not crowded.

Before entering, Aldrian paused to observe the entrance for a moment. There was nothing particularly special about the entrance itself, but what excited him was the flow of faith energy he could sense entering the dungeon. That meant this was the right destination for him.

He could also feel something calling to him from deep within, a sign that something connected to him was inside this place.

Aldrian looked at the stairs leading downward, the path illuminated by illumination crystals embedded on both sides of the dungeon's walls.

After finishing his observation, he finally stepped onto the stairs.

He wondered what mysteries awaited him within this dungeon.

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Chapter 691 - 691: Inside of the Dungeon

[1,594 words]

Aldrian entered the dungeon with the others, while the grand elder who came with him said,

"There is nothing strange along this path, and the sealed doors are located at the end of it, which is not far from us. However, the doors themselves are strange because they actually exude many kinds of energy. It is as if the doors themselves are an object of treasure that contains many laws and energies."

Hearing that, Aldrian could not help becoming more curious about the doors, and from the description, he tried to guess the material they were made of.

As Aldrian kept walking with the others, he saw that the path curved to the left, preventing him from seeing its end, yet he could sense that the calling also came from that direction. They continued walking without any disturbance until they arrived at the giant double doors.

The moment Aldrian looked at the doors, his guess was finally confirmed, and he understood why these doors could not be breached, even with the strength of a peak pseudo-immortal cultivator.

That was because these double doors were made from divine iron!

The same divine iron that became the material of the Sword of the End and one of the rarest materials in the universe. Forget about the pseudo-immortal stage, even gods would have difficulty destroying these doors.

To think that someone used such a huge quantity of divine iron merely to make doors here was truly a waste of material in his opinion.

But because of that, he became even more curious. What could be behind these doors for them to be made from divine iron? If even the doors were created from such a precious material, then something truly valuable must be inside, right? The calling also came from behind the doors.

Because divine iron is a heavy material, the doors could not be opened by simply pushing them. Even a peak pseudo-immortal cultivator could not do that. The only way to open them was either by unlocking the formation or breaking it through brute force.

However, he had already been told by Sect Master Han that even he could not forcefully break the sealing formation. Even the most proficient formation masters could not break or solve it because of its complexity. They had never seen this kind of sealing formation before, and Aldrian could see just how intricate it was.

He instantly knew that this formation was something that only existed in the higher heavens, which made it natural for no one in this world to understand it. However, for him, he had already seen this kind of formation on the Barisan Continent, specifically on the front doors of his own palace.

The first time he opened his palace, there had been a seal on the doors, the very same type of seal as this one, and there was only one thing that could open it.

"This is the door. Since we have never succeeded in opening it, we already tried to enter whatever is behind it from above directly, but that did not work, as our techniques dispersed or our control over energy was lost the moment it reached the depths of this place," the grand elder said, making Aldrian sigh inwardly.

Of course, none of them could do that, because the creator of this place must have already prepared many preventive measures. There was no way that whoever created this place would overlook such a detail, especially with this kind of door guarding it.

Aldrian then stepped forward, and the grand elder, understanding his intent, made way for him by parting the crowd ahead. He was still followed by the two red-haired siblings, along with the sword maiden and her friend.

The three sect masters, who had examined these doors many times throughout their lives, sensed Aldrian approaching. They did not know if he could help them open the doors, but they hoped he could.

After all, he possessed something they did not as the successor of the Heavenly Demon.

"Young master, do you know how to open this place?" Sect Master Han asked through voice transmission.

"Let me try," Aldrian replied.

He stepped forward until he stood directly before the doors, while the others gave him space. The onlookers began to guess that he might be a formation master, which would explain the special treatment he received from even these famous figures. But this double door was something that even the greatest formation masters of the past could not solve. What would be different this time?

Had the Piercing Heaven Sect invited this masked man because they believed he could open it?

Aldrian observed the doors for a moment before placing one palm against them. There was a point in the formation that seemed meant for a palm to touch, and the moment he did so, he injected his golden energy. He knew this was the only thing that could open these doors.

The moment his golden energy entered the formation, many widened their eyes, for they had never sensed this kind of energy before. The golden energy exuded a mighty presence that made them want to prostrate before Aldrian, the demonic cultivators were no exception.

For the three sect masters of the great sects, they had already seen this energy before, along with the immense concentration of it, during the battle between Aldrian and Tarius. This energy, which even from afar exuded might and a feeling of obedience, was unlike anything they had experienced at that time.

It felt different from the resonance they sensed from Aldrian as the successor of the Heavenly Demon. They could not describe it, but this golden energy seemed to demand worship toward its bearer, as if such a reaction were entirely natural.

The three sect masters truly did not know where Aldrian could have obtained this kind of energy, nor how he could contain two different kinds of energy inside his dantian. To them, Aldrian's existence was already beyond the knowledge that had been established since ancient times.

After a few moments of Aldrian injecting his golden energy into the seal formation—

Click!

Everyone present heard the sharp sound, followed by a series of mechanical noises. Their eyes widened in shock, thinking that Aldrian had succeeded. This was the first time the doors had ever reacted to anything, and the sound of the mechanisms moving filled them with excitement.

'He truly succeeded!' Sect Master Han thought, his heart trembling.

Since ancient times, this place had never budged no matter what they tried, yet at this moment, the doors were reacting to Aldrian's energy. He could not help but think that it was truly fate for Aldrian to come here at this time, and for him to be the one who brought him.

A moment later, the ground trembled slightly as the doors began to slowly open to both sides, revealing what lay beyond. Every eye strained to glimpse inside, even before the doors had fully opened.

A few seconds later, the doors finally opened fully, revealing the room behind them. Aldrian was the first to step inside, prompting Sect Master Han to blurt out,

"Young master, be careful. We don't know if this place is dangerous or not, let us check first."

The others paid no attention to how Sect Master Han addressed Aldrian, as their focus was entirely on what lay before them. They saw a circular hall with a stone pillar standing at its center.

"It's okay, Sect Master Han. This place is safe. There are no traps or anything of the sort here," Aldrian said as he looked toward the stone pillar. At the base of the pillar, he noticed some writings, which drew him closer.

Seeing how confident Aldrian appeared and how little attention he gave to his surroundings, Sect Master Han decided to follow him, which made the others enter the hall as well. They observed the space, finding it to be an empty hall without any treasures in sight. The only notable features were the stone pillar in the center and the murals decorating the walls.

The people began to spread out to observe the hall, unwilling to believe that this was all the room had to offer after being sealed since ancient times. There was no way that such doors and such a seal existed merely to protect an empty room.

They first inspected the murals, which seemed to depict many people looking in one direction, toward the far end of the hall, where a symbol could be seen. If Aldrian had looked at this symbol instead of focusing on the stone pillar, he would have recognized it, for the engraved symbol was the symbol of the Absolute Ruler.

Many tried to guess the meaning of the mural.

Meanwhile, others, including the three sect masters, examined the stone pillar where Aldrian now stood directly in front of it. He appeared to be reading the writing on its base, which they also began to read.

To the lone star that shone over all the universe, may your journey always be followed with glory.

The three sect masters did not understand what it meant, but then they saw Aldrian close his eyes and touch the stone pillar. A moment later, a bright light from the pillar illuminated the entire hall, shocking everyone present.

Aldrian, who still had his eyes closed, slowly opened them when he found himself in a different environment. He understood that his consciousness had been brought here, just like in his past experiences, and he was already used to it.

Now, he stood in the middle of a white realm, with nothing else in sight except an endless expanse of white, a scenery he was already familiar with.

"Your Majesty." A voice suddenly called from behind him, prompting him to turn his head.

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Chapter 692 - 692: Their Son

[1,637 words]

"Your Majesty." A voice suddenly called from behind Aldrian, prompting him to turn his head.

What Aldrian saw was a long black-haired man with his hair tied in a ponytail. He bowed to him, and when he straightened his body to look at him directly, Aldrian could finally see the man clearly—a handsome young man with red eyes, wearing a clean black-and-white robe in the style of a demon cultivator.

His face was truly unblemished, and his red eyes, which looked directly at him, made Aldrian remember Baek Jimin and the wife of the Heavenly Demon. But then he felt confused, because he had never seen this face in either his visions or his memories. Still, Aldrian couldn't help but feel that the young man's face was somehow familiar.

"I'm sorry, I might not remember you yet, but who are you?" Aldrian finally asked. "I don't recall ever seeing your face in my visions. Also, you must have comprehended the Heavenly Demon Flower's scripture for you to possess the Heavenly Demon Eyes of Truth."

The young man smiled. "I have these eyes because of my mother's genes, Your Majesty, and it's natural that Your Majesty has never seen me, because I was born after your majesty entered the reincarnation cycle."

Hearing the man's answer, Aldrian widened his eyes.

"You...? So doesn't that mean you...?" he asked in astonishment. There was only one possibility for this man to inherit the eyes of his mother without having to comprehend the Heavenly Demon Flower's scripture. It could only happen in "their" bloodline, because they were a special case and the source of those powers.

The man responded with a nod.

"My father is the Heavenly Demon, and my mother is the Celestial Red Rose," the man answered.

Aldrian truly did not expect this. To think that the Heavenly Demon and his wife already had a child.

"Please allow me to introduce myself properly this time. It is truly my honor to finally see Your Majesty in person after hearing all your legends as the true sovereign of the entire cosmos from my parents. My name is Kim Seungjin, the sole child of the Heavenly Demon and the Celestial Red Rose," the young man said, bowing once again.

Aldrian couldn't help but sigh. One of the people closest to him had already had a child after his death in the past. No wonder he felt familiar with this man's face, it was a blend of the Heavenly Demon's and his wife's features. His face shape was just like his father's, while the shape of his eyes, and the eyes themselves, clearly followed his mother.

"I see. So, Seungjin, I know we don't have much time, but are you still alive?" Aldrian asked.

"I'm fine, Your Majesty. You don't have to worry. I can still feel the connection with my real body. Moreover, the sign of your majesty's return have already been seen across the universe. My real body and the others in the higher heavens must have already begun preparing for Your Majesty's ascension back to the higher heavens. Those invaders must be confused ever since Your Majesty's sign of return appeared."

Aldrian sighed in relief. He was truly glad that this man was still alive. He already felt close to the young man, as he was the Heavenly Demon's son.

"Seungjin, are you the one who built the dungeon?" Aldrian asked.

"Yes, Your Majesty, I'm the one who built it in the past. This was also to prepare for your return. That's why I am establishing my own sect here, as planned by my father."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows. "Your sect... wait, are you referring to the Piercing Heaven Sect?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Aldrian finally understood something. The Piercing Heaven Sect in the records was said to have been established by the sole disciple of the Heavenly Demon, or at least that is what the records claimed. There was nothing in the records explaining the disciple's fate, whether he had died or something else, making that part mysterious.

That disciple was the only one who could comprehend the Heavenly Demon's scripture, and no one after him could do so.

But the records seemed not to reveal the whole fact. The fact that the disciple was actually the Heavenly Demon's son himself. It was no wonder that Seungjin was the only one capable of comprehending the Heavenly Demon's scripture.

Aldrian couldn't help but find the situation funny.

"So, what am I? Because of my unique existence, I have already comprehended the Heavenly Demon's scripture while you are still out there. The demonic cultivators here already regard me as your father's successor. If you're still alive, doesn't that mean I snatched that title from you in the First Heaven?" he asked in a joking tone.

Seungjin kept his smile. "I would not dare compete with Your Majesty for the title. If you wish to be the successor of the Heavenly Demon, I have no objection to giving that title to you."

Aldrian waved his hand. "I'm just joking. You are the true successor of the Heavenly Demon—you are his son, after all. I just happen to have comprehended the Heavenly Demon's scripture. I have my own path to walk, and the Heavenly Demon is not the path I follow."

Aldrian then looked at his surroundings. "Anyway, is there anything I should know from here on? I mean, is there anything you want to tell me in this meeting?" he asked.

Seungjin nodded. "Yes, Your Majesty. First, I want to explain the underground place. The underground area you entered is actually a location I specially built to gather the faith energy from this star."

"Your Majesty must already know that even the smallest domain has its own place where faith energy is gathered. For example, a city gathers faith in the place where the people put their faith the most, like the city lord's manor. This underground place was specially created to gather the entire faith energy of the whole star, or world, in one spot. This is to ease and accelerate your journey to the higher heavens. In fact, across the heavens, there are places like this in many worlds."

"Those were built by many of Your Majesty's followers across the heavens ever since the invaders came to this universe, although I do not know if those places are still intact or not."

Aldrian nodded in understanding. He truly could not help but feel thankful once again for the efforts of those who had worked to ensure he could return as quickly as possible. He was also not surprised that Seungjin knew about his search for places where faith energy gathered.

His father already knew about his system and how his abilities worked, so the Heavenly Demon or Tianlian must also have prepared this kind of assistance.

"I see. Then what if there is a place where no such gathering point exists? Where would the faith energy of the star go?" Aldrian asked.

"That depends, Your Majesty. The thing is, each world must have a place where all faith energy gathers, no matter where it is. In fact, before any world had such a constructed place, they naturally had their own location where faith energy converged. Once a place like this is created, the faith gathering is redirected here, making it easier for Your Majesty to reach it."

Aldrian nodded.

"Also, Your Majesty, after your consciousness returns, another path in the hall will open. It will lead to the treasure vault and a teleportation gate that will take you near the central region of the heaven," Seungjin added, which made Aldrian confused.

"Central region of the heaven?"

Seeing Aldrian's confusion, Seungjin knew he had to explain further. "Yes, Your Majesty. As its name suggests, it is the central region of each heaven, and the teleportation gate here will lead you there—where the faith energy of the entire heaven is gathered."

Hearing that, Aldrian's eyes widened in shock. He could not help but feel excited, this was exactly what he needed!

He knew that, given time, he could eventually find the place where the entire First Heaven's faith energy gathered, but this would shorten the process greatly. There would be no need for him to search blindly for that place in the vast heaven.

"However, Your Majesty, there is a warning," Seungjin said, stopping Aldrian's excitement from surging and causing him to frown.

"What is it?" Aldrian asked.

"Your Majesty can activate the teleportation gate, but I do not know the situation on the other side. If something has happened to the other gate, it could make the teleportation dangerous for you. For example, if the gate on the other side is damaged or even destroyed, Your Majesty could be trapped in the void of space or thrown into some region. You might even encounter a spatial storm strong enough to kill an immortal."

"Now, why do I give you this warning? Because I do not know the state of the other gate, it has been a long time since I last confirmed it. With the invaders' influence growing deeper and deeper in the First Heaven, I fear the central region may already be under their control. They might have found the other teleportation gate and could have even destroyed it."

"The central region of the heaven is the point where the followers of those invaders can descend from the higher heavens, after all, and it would not be surprising if that region has already fallen."

"However, this is still only my guess, Your Majesty. They might not yet have fully taken control of the central region, and even if they have, they might not have found the other side of the teleportation gate."

"Still, the decision on how Your Majesty will depart for that place is in Your Majesty's hands. At the very least, your majesty now know where to go in the future."

Seungjin then paused, making Aldrian fall into thought. This was truly something he needed to consider carefully, for it might be dangerous even for him.

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Chapter 693 - 693: Taking Some Treasures

[1,604 words]

"From my opinion, Your Majesty should take the journey normally without depending on the teleportation gate. The safety of the teleportation gate is not guaranteed, so if it were me, it would be much better to take a longer journey than to gamble my life for a quick one," Seungjin said.

"However, the setback from the longer journey is that once you reach the central region of the heaven, I expect those invading gods will have already sent many more of their followers from the higher heavens to descend. Your news must have already reached them, and they will send more people to try to stop you in this heaven. They will not hesitate to sacrifice as many people as they can, so expect a bloodbath, Your Majesty."

Aldrian nodded.

"Well, let me contemplate it later. Thank you for telling me all of this," he said, which was responded to with a nod from Seungjin. His gaze slowly turned toward one direction.

"I think it's time for me to go, Your Majesty. It will be dangerous if we talk any longer," Seungjin said.

"Your Majesty could do anything with the treasure in the treasure vault, but if possible, Your Majesty, could you give some of the treasures in the vault to the three sects? By giving them the treasures, it will raise their loyalty to you and prevent corrupted hearts from growing among their people," he added.

Aldrian smiled.

"It seems you still have some attachment to the sect you and some of your colleagues built."

"I will not deny it, Your Majesty, but still, it is just my humble request. You could ignore my request if you want to take all of the treasures," Seungjin said.

"No, I will give them some, so do not worry. It is not good if I just take all of the treasures when they seem to have been trying to enter the dungeon for a long time. If they do not get anything after seeing the treasures, like you said, I am afraid there is a chance that corrupted hearts could arise among them, even if they consider me the successor of the Heavenly Demon," Aldrian said.

Seungjin smiled and nodded. "Thank you, Your Majesty." His figure then slowly disappeared into particles of light.

"I am truly waiting for the day when we could meet in person, Your Majesty. When I was a child, my father and mother always told me your story, and even in this recent era, your Majesty's followers who survived still speak about you. I have always been amazed by your figure from their stories. I hope Your Majesty could tell me more of your story in the future," he said.

Aldrian nodded.

"I will tell you more in the future. And if your real body can receive this message, then send my regards to your father and mother if you meet them out there."

Seungjin nodded.

"I will, Your Majesty." But before he completely disappeared, he said to Aldrian,

"See you in the future, Your Majesty. May the Great Emperor of All Heavens keep reigning sovereign."

His figure then entirely disappeared. The white realm had already begun to crumble, revealing the void behind it until it engulfed Aldrian's consciousness.

When his consciousness returned to his physical body, Aldrian felt a refreshing sensation and a surge of power, and he knew what had happened.

He had just built his domain here, which in the end made the entire star his domain!

He never tired of this feeling, and it made him happy, but his happiness quickly toned down when he discovered one fact.

'As expected, even after making a territory as big as the Ancient Blue Gate World my domain, my cultivation level did not rise and only increased my cultivation speed slightly. Truly, entering the Immortal Ascension Realm changes the requirements for my cultivation development,' he thought.

The size of stars varied, and the Ancient Blue Gate World was a giant star, even the biggest star in the central star cluster, which was the name of their star cluster. For it to be unable to raise his cultivation level meant he needed a much, much larger territory to be his domain.

Even he did not know how large that would need to be to raise his cultivation again. Would the size of a star cluster where tens of millions of stars gather be enough? Or even a galaxy? He felt that the requirement had truly spiked greatly.

But he did not dwell on it or feel sad. For now, even with only his current cultivation, he could still fight anything or anyone that came to the First Heaven, as long as they were not a real god.

With the laws of causality, those from the higher heavens would have to lower their cultivation here, and that was enough for him.

Moreover, he already knew the place where he could make the entire First Heaven his domain. There was no need to worry about the future.

Aldrian released a deep breath before opening his eyes. But the moment he did, he was stunned to see that the people in the hall had already collapsed unconscious. He turned his head, looking around, and saw that no one here was still conscious, which left him puzzled.

What happened?

He did not have time to check on them, as a sudden sound came from one part of the hall's wall. Aldrian looked in that direction, beneath the symbol of the Absolute Ruler where he finally saw the symbol clearly. He also noticed a giant hidden door slowly opening to reveal a new path.

He thought that this must be the path mentioned by Seungjin, so he decided to check it out first.

These unconscious people would make the situation easier for him, since there would be no chaos. He could explore the place ahead before these greedy people started taking treasures as they pleased.

Aldrian then walked toward the giant hidden path, which was already illuminated by crystal lights all the way to its end, visible from where he stood. After a few moments of walking, he finally arrived at another hall, this one far larger than the circular hall.

This place truly stored many treasures such as peak-level energy stones, artifacts, pills and even divine stones of various sizes, although none as large as the ones he had seen on the Barisan Continent. Most of them were simply placed on the floor, as if they were not worth anything, even though they were valuable treasures.

He absolutely had to take the divine stones, some of the artifacts, and many energy stones. Although he already had countless peak-level energy stones, he might need more to help the Barisan Continent develop. This was his investment, and he wanted to grow his empire as quickly as possible.

After making a note of what he wanted to take, he turned his gaze toward the teleportation gate in the middle of the hall, a large circular platform with two pillars that, when activated, would create a gate to the other side.

From the name, it seemed to combine the advantages of a teleportation with those of a warp gate, resulting in this teleportation gate. He walked closer to it and inspected the platform. He could tell that this one was far more complex than any kind of teleportation method he had seen before.

Beneath his feet, on the gate's platform, a massive formation was engraved, the key that made the teleportation possible. Its pattern was far more intricate than the teleportation formations in the teleportation stations on the Barisan Continent.

Aldrian looked at one part of the formation where he could pour in energy to activate the gate. To be honest, he was truly tempted to activate it and reach the central region of the heaven as soon as possible, so he could make the entire First Heaven his domain.

However, Seungjin's warning made him stop his reckless thoughts. He had to think carefully, because if something happened to him, it would endanger many of the people he was protecting. Without his presence, he knew that his empire might not last long, especially with all those powers still wanting to enter the continent in the future.

'First, I have to make sure that my empire is entirely safe in my absence, and for that, I have to clear any hidden danger,' he thought. At this moment, the threats he could think of were the devils, the Barevisk family, and the Valroy family.

'It looks like I have to create an example again, this time much more clearly, to make the people in this star cluster abandon any ill intent toward my empire.'

Aldrian nodded to himself as he decided on his next move. He then began taking the treasures he needed, collecting all the divine stones, many artifacts, and a large number of energy stones, and stored them inside his spare storage ring, which could hold them all.

In total, he took roughly forty percent of the treasures here, leaving the rest for the three great sects.

As for the others who wanted a slice of the pie? Well, they could try their luck themselves. Still, he believed the three great sects would likely allow some of them to take a portion as well, since there were powers from other stars present and it would not be wise to take everything for themselves.

Once he felt he had enough, he walked out and returned to the circular hall. He was truly satisfied with this journey, as he had gained many things. He also had a clear path for the future and knew exactly where he had to go. That alone was enough.

He saw that the people here were still unconscious, and after a moment of thought, he decided to wake a few of them first.

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Chapter 694 - 694: The Central Region of Heaven's Situation

[1,766 words]

Aldrian first woke up Sect Master Han by injecting him with his golden energy. A few moments later, Sect Master Han's eyes trembled before he regained consciousness. He instantly opened his eyes and gasped as he quickly sat up while taking a deep breath. He looked at his surrounding and at Aldrian beside him, who was smiling at him.

"How do you feel, Sect Master Han?" he asked.

"Did I just pass out?" Sect Master Han asked, to which Aldrian responded with a nod. Sect Master Han sighed before Aldrian asked again,

"So what happened to you all for falling unconscious like this? I didn't sense anyone entering or anything suspicious."

Sect Master Han looked at Aldrian strangely.

"Well, we passed out because of you, young master," he answered after a brief pause, which left Aldrian stunned.

"After young master touched the stone pillar, a blinding light shone from it, making us unable to see anything. At that moment, I sensed a sudden strong pressure that even shook my soul. It was so sudden that I was not prepared, which immediately knocked me out. Did young master not feel anything at all?" Sect Master Han explained.

Aldrian sighed as he finally understood the cause. He thought that perhaps the moment his domain was created, covering the entire star, it caused the people near him to be unable to resist the sudden burst of power from him that appeared for a moment. That sudden burst was his domain that now covered the entire star and had truly knocked all of these people out.

"No, I did not," Aldrian said, then stood up. "Anyway, I will wake up the other two sect masters first, as I need to discuss something after this."

Aldrian then moved to the other sect masters while Sect Master Han looked at his surroundings once again and finally saw a new hidden path had opened. He felt curious about it and stood up before he peeked into the path. After Aldrian woke the other two sect masters all of them finally followed him to the treasure vault and the moment they arrived there they could not hide their shock.

Many valuable treasures were stored here and from their quantity and quality alone this place contained far more treasures than their sect's treasure vault. There were even many divine grade artifacts and rare pills that could be useful for their cultivation.

"Alright, for the sect masters here you can discuss how to divide the treasures because I already took my part but you must be quick before the others regain their consciousness," Aldrian said which left them stunned.

They looked around again and felt curious about what Aldrian had taken because in their eyes there were still too many treasures. They thought that Aldrian had simply picked the best and had not taken much in quantity.

However, they felt that whatever Aldrian took should be for him because he was the one who opened this place. Without him they would not have entered here now or even in this lifetime anyway.

Unbeknown to them what remained was only sixty percent after Aldrian had taken the rest, but Aldrian did not tell them that. They then decided to divide the treasures so that each sect would take thirty percent while the rest would be taken by the others. The ten percent was already enough for those lucky enough to get it.

Aldrian also explained about the teleportation gate, which shocked the three sect masters.

"This teleportation gate reaches the central region of Heaven?" Sect Master Han asked in shock as he looked at the platform.

Aldrian nodded. "It does. Well, is there any problem with it being connected to the central region?" he asked.

Sect Master Han looked at Aldrian. "Well, there is no current knowledge of a teleportation or warp gate that could reach directly to the central region. To reach that place we could only use an interstellar vessel and we would need two years to get there. We are fortunate that our star cluster is much closer to the central region so it only takes us that much time."

"But if we have this teleportation gate then we could arrive at that place almost instantly." Sect Master Han sighed as he looked at the teleportation gate with a regretful expression. This left Aldrian confused as to why he had that expression.

"If only we could have had this thing across Heaven in the past then we might not have lost that place," Sect Master Jang said, which made Aldrian turn to him.

"What do you mean, Sect Master Jang?" he asked.

"Well, the central region has already fallen under the devils since a long time ago. From the records of the ancient war the strong devils and many unknown cultivators suddenly appeared from nowhere and attacked that region. A huge war broke out which was won by those invaders, placing that region under their occupation," Sect Master Jang explained.

"When the reinforcements from across Heaven finally arrived it was already too late, as the region had already fallen. The enemies had incredible defenses, so if we had possessed this kind of thing in the past then maybe history would have been different," he added, which made Aldrian frown.

What Seungjin had worried about had actually happened. That place truly was already under the occupation of those invaders. This raised the danger of using the teleportation gate, and now he had a fifty-fifty chance that the other side of the gate had already been found by them or even destroyed.

Still, he was not certain whether those invaders could find the other side of the gate or if the gate had been destroyed. Logically, if those invaders had found the other side of the teleportation gate, would it not make more sense to simply use it to teleport here? That is, if they had found it.

Or perhaps they had already found it but could not use it for some reason. There were many possibilities, but it was a fact now that the journey through the teleportation gate did not guarantee his safety as long as he did not understand the situation on the other side.

"Sometimes we also send someone near that region to observe the situation. After all, we cannot leave that place where many enemies have gathered, so we need eyes there," Sect Master Han said.

Aldrian sighed and nodded.

"I see. Well, let's forget about that for now. Sect masters, please start to choose and divide which treasures you would like to take," Aldrian said.

The sect masters then began to pick their treasures. This took quite some time because of how many treasures there were. As time passed and they were still picking and dividing, the others also began waking up one by one, starting with those who had the strongest cultivation.

They also entered the treasure vault, which left them shocked. Luckily, most of those who woke up first were still the elders of the three great sects, so they helped their sect masters pick their chosen treasures. The other powers joined later, and they also began discussing with the three great sects how to divide the rest.

Because this place was under the management of the three great sects, those who wanted to take treasures obviously had to ask permission from them. Moreover, the one who opened this place, which had remained sealed since ancient times was a figure invited by the Piercing Heaven Sect.

The three great sects allowed the others to pick treasures according to what they had already agreed upon, as the sects had already chosen the treasures they wanted for themselves. This was also a good opportunity for the three great sects to deepen their relationships with other powers not only from the Ancient Blue Gate World but also from other stars.

The others found no problem with this arrangement, as there were still many treasures left for them to take. Even after the three great sects took most of the treasures, there were still enough for many people to claim, even if it was "just" peak-level energy stones.

This truly made the three sect masters wonder who had built this place and gathered so many treasures. These treasures were so rare that some were things they had never seen before, such as unknown pills.

They had already asked Aldrian who had created this place and gathered these treasures, but he only said he did not know. In truth, Aldrian simply did not want to explain to these people that the Heavenly Demon had a wife and a son.

It would create much confusion that he would have difficulty explaining, and he did not want that bother, so he decided to feign ignorance about the creator of the dungeon.

Still, he also thought about how many treasures Seungjin or his followers from the higher heavens had brought to this world.

The quantity and quality of treasures they had brought here were truly immense, and throughout his journey he had already been given so many of them that it made him think as if they had taken everything from the higher heavens.

He could not help but imagine that while they were being pushed back by those invaders, they had also taken whatever treasures they could find to the lower heavens so the invaders would neither have them nor be able to use them.

Later, Aldrian also decided to seal the teleportation gate so no one could touch it, fearing that someone might damage it. There was no way to know if someone might try something like that in the future, so this was Aldrian's preventive measure.

Even though the entire Ancient Blue Gate World had already become his domain, he did not want to take a chance that someone might damage it. Although there was danger in using the gate, he might want to use it in the future. For now, he still had not decided how he would go to the central region.

While Aldrian had just succeeded in what he needed to do in the Ancient Blue Gate World, there was another movement in space quite far from his star.

A dozen large interstellar vessels suddenly appeared near the fallen star cluster after completing their warp. Those vessels then began moving toward the largest star there.

Inside the foremost vessel sat a pale-skinned young man with black hair, wearing casual white attire, as he gazed at the space scenery before him. His face was quite handsome, with pointy ears like an elf's, and he had two sharp teeth visible from his upper lip, showing he was not entirely human.

Still, the strong devil aura around him would make any cultivator avoid him.

At that moment, his expression turned into a smirk as he thought to himself,

'Finally arrived.'

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Chapter 695 - 695: Possibility of Another Great War?

[1,537 words]

On the Orian continent, Emperor Rozwald was still in his working room, reading the documents in his hand. Recent days had truly been full of commotion for his family, as the Avilandis family unilaterally broke the engagement between the crown prince and the young miss of the Valroy family.

This caused an uproar within the empire, and even other powers were shocked by this development. They never expected that he would be bold enough to break the engagement with a power that held the same standing as theirs without giving a clear reason.

The Avilandis family merely stated that there was a disagreement between them and the Valroy family, which led to the engagement being broken. They also seemed to give subtle hints that the Valroy family was to blame for forcing them to end the arrangement.

However, the Valroy family gave their own response, stating that they felt aggrieved by the imperial family's unilateral decision to break the engagement. They claimed that the Avilandis imperial family had acted as they pleased and had not adhered to the agreement between their families.

They also demanded compensation, as the decision tarnished the reputation of the young miss of the Valroy family.

There were many opinions regarding this situation, but one thing was certain, many believed something might have happened behind the scenes. The powers from the Ancient Blue Gate World did not comment too much, but it was different for the powers from the Akares star.

The populace of that star condemned the Avilandis family for their actions, causing the family's image in the Akares Empire to plummet. Even those who had business dealings with the Avilandis family from that star began to be affected by the shift in public opinion.

However, despite all the commotion, the imperial family seemed not to care too much. At this moment, Emperor Rozwald was checking a document containing a letter from some of their connections in the Akares star, stating that they had been affected by the public sentiment there.

Another document on his desk was a demand from the Valroy family for compensation due to the broken engagement. The list was not long, but some of the demands were

extremely expensive and even outrageous. For example, the Valroy family requested two divine-grade artifacts.

Emperor Rozwald only snorted at their demands and intended to keep ignoring them. So what if he did not want to answer? Would they seek confrontation? Bring it on.

He was not afraid, as it was far better than maintaining a relationship with a family that had already become one of Aldrian's targets. He would be insane to keep any connection with those people. There were far more benefits standing behind Aldrian, and Rozwald would not hesitate to stand against the Valroys if he had to.

Knock, knock.

While he was deep in thought, he suddenly heard a knock at the door.

"Come in," he said without looking up, still reading the documents in front of him. A moment later, a handsome young man in noble robes entered the room. He stopped a short distance from the emperor's desk before bowing.

"Father," he said.

Emperor Rozwald then looked at his son, Crown Prince Ronwell Avilandis.

"What is it?" he asked, placing the documents on the table. Ronwell, seeing what the documents were about, chose not to comment on them and instead looked directly at his father.

"Father, it seems the Valroy family truly intends to make this situation much worse. Since you did not answer their demand for three days, they seem to be trying to instigate other powers, even from other stars, to condemn us," he said.

Emperor Rozwald only smiled at this. "They can try all they want, and I still will not care. As long as Aldrian the Great has hostile intent toward them, we will stand behind him. They can try many things, but in the face of absolute power, all their barking will be useless, and in the end, they will only keep barking."

Ronwell nodded. Of course, he already knew about Aldrian, as his father had told him after returning from the Akares star. Since he had never liked the engagement, he fully supported the decision to cancel it, moreover after hearing the factor that made his father bold enough to act.

"I also think the same, Father. But I believe we must prepare for a long battle of intrigue until Aldrian the Great deals with them. After all, we do not know when he will make his move," Ronwell said.

"Well, that's true," the emperor replied.

Knock, knock.

The knocking sounded again, and the emperor granted permission to enter. A middle-aged man in knight's armor stepped into the room. He was the commander of the imperial guard and one of Emperor Rozwald's most trusted men. The knight immediately knelt a short distance from the emperor.

"Your Majesty, I have come to bring a new report from the Fallen Star Cluster," he said.

Hearing the knight's words, Emperor Rozwald and Ronwell frowned. There was never anything good about receiving a report from that place.

"What is it?" the emperor asked.

"Our spies in the nearby Fallen Star Cluster detected the arrival of a dozen giant interstellar vessels about fifteen minutes ago. We do not know where those vessels came from, but judging from their course toward the largest star in the Fallen Star Cluster, we suspect they are devils from elsewhere," the knight replied.

"Given the size of the vessels, our spies believe there could be hundreds of thousands of devils aboard, their strength unknown. They may even be powerful devils from outside our galaxy," he added.

This caused both members of the imperial family to turn solemn. It truly sounded a bad news. Such a development had never occurred before.

A dozen giant interstellar vessels carrying hundreds of thousands of devils of unknown level and origin was an undesirable factor to appear at this time—especially not when their family was already in a cold war with a powerhouse from another star.

The arrival of such an armada in the Fallen Star Cluster felt more like a sign that something significant would happen in the near future.

"Is there any movement from the devils since the convoy arrived?" the emperor asked.

"As far as the report states, there has been none, Your Majesty," the knight answered.

Emperor Rozwald thought for a moment before looking at the knight.

"Alright, thank you for informing me, Nolan. You may return to your post," he said. The knight bowed in response before leaving the room.

Once the knight was gone, leaving Emperor Rozwald and Ronwell alone, Ronwell looked at his father.

"Father, I have a feeling that those unknown devils from outside are the same ones we received information about a few months ago. Two years ago, a dozen interstellar vessels from the central region of the Heaven departed for an unknown destination. Now that something like this has happened, it could be certain those vessels are the same ones that left the central region," he said.

"Because there has been no report of any other movement from that place, I am truly certain of it," he added.

Emperor Rozwald thought for a moment. "Yes, I think so too. But for that many devils to come from the central region, it looks more like a reinforcement to me," he said.

"The devils must have been planning this reinforcement for more than two years. If my guess is correct, then they would have already attacked this star or the central star cluster, and at this moment our star would already be in the middle of a war. I can imagine those reinforcements joining the war later."

"However, before the reinforcement from the central region of the Heaven could arrive, the immortal was defeated by Aldrian the Great, and the devils from the Fallen Star Cluster canceled their attack plan." The emperor paused after giving his analysis.

Ronwell nodded. "That could be true, Father. Those reinforcements must not know about the news that the immortal was defeated and are still coming. I can only imagine their expressions when they realize their plan is in shambles because of Aldrian the Great," he said with a smile.

The emperor, however, did not smile. He remained frowning, which made Ronwell look at him in confusion.

"What is it, Father? Do you think there will be more problems with those devils in the future?" he asked.

Emperor Rozwald sighed and nodded.

"I think so. We must not forget what those incoming devils might be thinking, Ronwell. What if, after hearing what happened to their plan, they still persist in attacking us? We do not know how they will react, but I lean toward the possibility that they will recklessly attack this star, undeterred by the news that their immortal was defeated."

"If those outsiders decide to attack, then there is a possibility the other devils will follow them. This could lead to another great war."

Hearing that, Ronwell's face turned into a frown. What his father said was true, this could lead to another great war unless—

Ronwell's expression eased.

"Well, if that happens, then those devils will receive a harsh wake up for their arrogance and foolishness," he said, which made Emperor Rozwald sigh and nod.

As long as Aldrian the Great was in this star, those devils would have to prepare for a surprise they had never seen before, a surprise that would bring a harsh reality to their faces.

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Chapter 696 - 696: The Newcomers

[1,586 words]

On the other side, in the fallen star cluster, the devils received the visit of other devils from outside their star cluster there, something they had already expected. A dozen giant interstellar vessels had already entered the atmosphere of the largest star in the cluster, and below them, a massive city could be seen, if it could still be called a city.

It was a place of civilization that looked more like a place of destruction, with countless ruined structures standing as remnants of a once-thriving past. The red-hued atmosphere, unique to this place, was thick with negative energy, adding to the deadly and gloomy scenery that resembled the domain of death.

This place could be considered far worse than the devil territory of the Barisan continent in the past. Only devils and particularly strong ones that could endure such an environment, for even Marquess-stage devils would find themselves driven toward madness in conditions like these.

However, despite the destroyed city and the terrifying, gloomy scenery, the devils chose to use these buildings as their place of residence. They did not care if the structures were in ruins, as long as they provided some protection from the weather outside.

Aside from the terrifying atmosphere, there was another thing equally dreadful about this star—the weather. Due to the contaminated atmosphere filled with thick negative energy, the weather here had truly deadly effects on anything below.

For example, the rain which was supposed to give life, brought death instead. It could carry corrosive and poisonous properties strong enough to injure even cultivators at the Viscount stage. For those below that level, death from rain was not uncommon.

This was also one of the reasons only the chosen and the strong devils could survive on such a star. Still, this did not stop those in pursuit of power from coming here to cultivate their devil side, those who had already fallen to the temptation of the devils.

Eleven interstellar vessels landed outside the broken city, while a lone vessel continued flying toward what appeared to be a partly destroyed giant palace. Near the palace, many devils were already on standby.

After the vessel landed beside the palace, a pale-skinned middle-aged man stepped forward. His skin was so pale it seemed as though no blood flowed through his veins, and his features made it clear he was not entirely human. His pointed ears resembled those of an elf, yet it was obvious he was no elf. Another striking trait was the pair of sharp teeth protruding from his upper lip like two fangs.

The hatch of the vessel opened, revealing a young man followed by several others who shared the same features. Every one of them radiated a truly terrifying aura.

The young man himself exuded the low pseudo-immortal establishment stage aura, while all those behind him were at the pseudo-immortal stage!

This was truly a formidable force, enough to make anyone tremble, for such strength could even be used to invade a small world.

For the middle-aged man, this should have been an exciting scene with so many strong devils coming to this place. However, at this moment, he felt no joy. There was a huge problem, and even the young man seemed to walk toward him with a frown.

"Welcome to the Red Mist Star, Your Highness Rulleus, it is truly an hono—"

"Enough with the pleasantries, Xarz. Tell me what happened with the plan. Why have you not attacked that star cluster? You had better give me a good explanation," the young man called Rulleus said, his tone carrying slight irritation.

"Or do you intend to rebel against the Devil God right now?" he added, his eyes gleaming with a glowing red light.

Hearing the young man's words, the man named Xarz felt sweat drip from his forehead. Although he was a peak pseudo-immortal stage cultivator and the leader of this star, in front of this young man, he did not dare act recklessly. Rulleus was the son of one of the most powerful figures in the First Heaven—and also Xarz's lord.

This young man's father was from the vampire race, just like all of them. He was a high noble vampire and the most powerful vampire in the First Heaven. He was none other than Virusius van Reinfer, the Vampire King of the First Heaven.

Xarz also knew why the young man seemed irritated. Rulleus had arrived expecting to witness a great war and to join the battle with his troops. Instead, what greeted him was a peaceful atmosphere with nothing notable in sight. Xarz had already informed Rulleus, the moment his vessel emerged from the wormhole, that there was a problem, one that had led them to decide against launching the attack.

That was why the young man's mood, which had been good upon entering this star cluster, had quickly turned sour.

"Of course not, Your Highness. Well, let us go inside so I can explain everything to you. This will be quite a surprising story, one Your Highness might find hard to believe. It is something that caused the change in our plans, and Your Highness will find it plausible," Xarz said as he bowed to Rulleus.

Rulleus simply walked past him, followed by his men.

"It had better be, because if not, I will punish you," he said, which made Xarz's heart tremble. He did not say anything, only followed Rulleus and guided him toward the palace. Although the exterior of the palace was damaged in some parts, overall it was still worthy of being inhabited.

Rulleus was then guided to the guest room, and only after they had settled did Xarz begin to explain what had happened with the plan. He started by recounting the events in the Barisan continent, based on the information he knew, the story of someone who could fight an "immortal" though they themselves knew that thing was not an immortal.

What they had summoned was literally a god, a detail that made the story even more unbelievable from their perspective. As Rulleus listened, he felt as if he were hearing nonsense from someone trying to hide his incompetence or cowardice.

Once Xarz had finished recounting everything that had happened over the past months, he suddenly saw Rulleus giggling before the young man burst into laughter.

"Ahahaha..."

Xarz knew that this little king still found it hard to believe, but there was nothing he could do. Even he had not believed it at first, which was why he had gone to check personally, taking a small team to infiltrate the central star cluster. What he found was a peaceful atmosphere, yet he could still sense the lingering traces of something terrifying in the space.

The remnant aura of the unknown giant heavenly tribulation had spread even beyond the Ancient Blue Gate World. He then met with the devils who had survived and witnessed the battle on the Barisan continent, one of them being the leader of the devils in the Orian continent, and their testimonies truly shocked him.

He did not know how such a thing could be possible, but he decided to return, fearing that someone might discover them. He left behind a small group to gather more information and to contact other devils within the Ancient Blue Gate World for further situation.

Whatever the results of the investigation, one fact remained, their god had not descended as planned by the god's apostle that said to be in the Barisan continent. This entire plan had been created by that figure, who could communicate with the devils outside, though the apostle seemed unable to freely use his means of communication.

Even so, that was enough for them to understand their role. The apostle was someone they had to obey, and even someone like the Vampire King had to follow his orders. Thus, they could only proceed according to the plan. Xarz himself had thought the plan would ultimately succeed.

But an unknown factor had appeared, one that caused the entire plan to fail, someone who still made him furious, to the point that he wanted to strangle that person to death.

However, the information about this mysterious figure, said to be capable of defeating their god, left him uncertain about what to do.

While Xarz was still cursing the situation he found himself in, he suddenly felt his head yanked forward and slammed onto the table in front of him.

Bam! Crack!

His head instantly shattered the table, but he did not react, even as Rulleus forced his head down to the ground. There was no injury despite the impact, thanks to his powerful body, and even if there had been, it would have healed quickly.

"Do you think I'll just believe that reasoning, Xarz? Are you expecting me to swallow that like a fool?!" he shouted, his aura flaring so fiercely that the entire space trembled.

"I think you've grown tired of living, haven't you? If that's the case, then I'll gladly grant you death!" he added, his cold gaze fixed on Xarz.

Hearing that, Xarz hurriedly spoke.

"Wait, Your Highness! I swear upon my name that what I told you is the truth. Even if you kill me right now, it is still a fact that you will find the same information everywhere! Your Highness can see for yourself, and you will find that everything I've said is no exaggeration!"

Rulleus did not release his grip, still staring coldly at him. After a few moments of heavy silence, he suddenly yanked Xarz's head upward, forcing him to meet his eyes.

"Is that so? Then you will take us to that star! I want to see it for myself!" he said with a cold smile.

Hearing that, Xarz's eyes widened.

'What?'

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Chapter 697 - 697: Slowly Returning Like in the Past

[1,582 words]

In the central continent of the Ancient Blue Gate World, the mysterious dungeon was still packed with many people. After taking the treasure in that place, some people started leaving one by one, except for those who still wanted to observe the dungeon. If there were still some who did not get the treasure, then it could only be blamed on their bad luck.

As for the ones who arrived late, they would find no treasure, all of them had already been taken by Aldrian, the three great sects, and many others. Still, many continued searching to see if there was more hidden inside the dungeon, hoping that it still contained treasures.

However, it was unfortunate for them, since Aldrian already knew that there was nothing more in the dungeon that could be explored. This place truly consisted only of two halls, one for the stone pillar and the other, a treasure vault with a teleportation gate.

After he made the entire star his domain, he also understood why this place could gather faith energy from across the star. The stone pillar was a medium that attracted the faith energy. That stone pillar contained deep karma laws, which attracted every faith energy of any being in this star, and that was why it could gather the faith energy here.

Aldrian was truly amazed, and he knew that this was something that could only be done by someone with deep comprehension of karma laws, and they had to be divine beings. The domain of faith energy was a plaything of divine beings after all, and to manipulate the flow of faith energy of the entire populace of a star was something only gods could achieve.

The stone pillar itself was actually a great treasure itself for anyone who could comprehend karma laws, although Aldrian was not sure if they could comprehend anything from it. This was something far too deep for mortals to grasp, as it already belonged to the domain of divine comprehension.

Even he could only understand how complex and profound the karma laws within the stone pillar were after he made the entire star his domain. It was also because of his special existence that he was able to comprehend a portion of it.

Aldrian had already walked outside the dungeon, followed by the three great sect masters, the red-haired siblings, the sword maiden, and her friend. He had already said that the purpose of his journey had been achieved.

"Young master, do you already want to leave? I think it would be much better to stay in the central continent for a while. There are many things here that could entertain you. You don't have to rush to go," Sect Master Han said.

"Well, I would like to, but maybe in the future. I would also like to bring my family here to enjoy the scenery. For now, I think I would prefer to explore other places," Aldrian replied, which made Sect Master Han's eyes gleam as he smiled inwardly.

Aldrian would bring his family? This was his chance to make Aldrian feel closer to his sect. The same thought was also in the minds of the other three sect masters.

"I see. Then I can only wait for young master to come. I will make sure that you and your family will have the best experience here," Sect Master Han said.

Aldrian nodded. "Thank you for Sect Master Han's generosity in bringing me here. It truly made my journey easier," he said.

"It is my honor to help you, young master. It is my duty to serve you as best as I can."

Although Sect Master Han was curious about Aldrian's connection to the dungeon, he did not ask. For him, Aldrian being the successor of the Heavenly Demon was already enough reason for him to possess abilities or connections beyond his knowledge.

"Ah, right, before I go..." Aldrian suddenly closed his eyes. The others, seeing this, wondered what he was doing as they waited for about twenty seconds. Then they saw Aldrian's hand stretch forward, as if he wanted to grip something. A moment later, a figure suddenly appeared, already caught in Aldrian's grasp.

"Uwokh!"

Aldrian choked the figure, who still seemed not to understand the situation, before sending his lightning energy directly into the figure's soul.

The others who saw the figure suddenly appear in Aldrian's grasp widened their eyes in shock. None of them had expected that such a figure would be caught so easily. The figure was none other than Ulasis, the devil leader who had ambushed the Piercing Heaven Sect's cruiser.

"I'll give him to you," Aldrian said, before tossing Ulasis to the side as if he were nothing more than trash. Ulasis had already fainted after his soul was directly attacked by Aldrian's lightning energy.

The others did not answer, they were speechless. They simply could not comprehend how Aldrian had done it. He had only stood there, without revealing the slightest sign of power, and then suddenly, boom! Ulasis was already in his grasp.

The man who had caused them endless headaches, always escaping from their pursuit, had now fallen into Aldrian's hands as if it required no effort at all.

And in fact, their thoughts were not wrong. After making the entire star his domain, Aldrian had scanned the central continent for Ulasis's existence. With his cultivation, strong soul, and immense power, he was able to process everything swiftly. It did not take long for him to locate Ulasis in a hidden part of the continent, where no one else would have noticed him.

"And I would like to tell you all that not long after this, there will be many sightings of heavenly lightning. But you don't have to worry about that, as it will be good for the future's peace," Aldrian said.

The others did not understand what he meant, but they did not ask, as they were still speechless.

Aldrian then began to walk away, but stopped when the sword maiden's voice came from beside him.

"Will we meet again?"

Aldrian smiled behind his mask and looked directly at her. Although his eyes still carried a mysterious feeling, she had already grown used to it and no longer felt the same repulsion as in the past.

"I think we will. And I think it will be sooner than you expect," he answered in a vague tone. "Anyway, it has truly been a pleasure making your acquaintance, Miss Meilan. I will take my leave now. Have a good day."

After saying that, Aldrian instantly disappeared, leaving Meilan stunned. Her friend beside her frowned as he stared at the spot where Aldrian had vanished, then turned to look at Meilan.

"Did you two meet somewhere behind my back? It seems you are quite close with him—" she suddenly stopped before nodding in understanding.

"I see, you must have fought that man back then. Well, he is truly mysterious and strong, but still, that man is really rude for not answering your question clearly. How could he treat a beautiful lady like you so rudely?"

Meilan stayed silent at her friend's words, but her thoughts lingered on Aldrian's reply, making her wonder what he truly meant. She sighed softly behind her veil, which left her friend stunned before breaking into a grin.

"What is this? Our ice flower is sighing? Are you already missing him, or what?" she teased jokingly.

Meilan flicked her forehead before walking away. Her friend quickly covered her forehead in pain, yet continued grinning.

"Come on, tell me..." she kept nagging as she followed after Meilan, who now seemed to show more emotion.

Aldrian was already in another place, appearing high above the Ancient Blue Gate World. He looked down at the giant star below him with a calm gaze. This star was now under his domain, and in this place he was invisible.

Closing his eyes, Aldrian used his domain's sense to feel everything within the Ancient Blue Gate World. Nothing could stop him, and nothing could hide from him. The sensation of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience completely embraced him in this moment.

With his will, he move the energy of the entire region. With his will, he could make the most barren land of this star fertile, overflowing with life and energy. With his will, he could also bring destruction upon an entire land. He clearly felt that if he wished for a continent on this star to sink beneath the sea or be consumed by disaster, he could make it so.

He could know the mind and intent of any being if he wished to. He knew every hidden place and every mystery that not even the people of this star had discovered yet.

His lone figure floating above the star was truly like that of a god, observing the world below.

Aldrian opened his eyes, the feeling of power he had once seen in his visions slowly returning to him. He smiled, truly glad that the journey he thought would be long had turned out to be much shorter than expected. He was deeply thankful to Sect Master

Han for bringing him to the dungeon, and he intended to reward him once the sect master visited his palace.

His gaze then turned to the vast space before him, where countless stars stretched across his sight. Among them were stars of civilization.

He already had his next target, the next place he would visit in the future. The moment he established his domain there, everything within his sight here would become part of his domain.

He would be a god in the First Heaven.

That would be the first great step in retaking this universe from those invaders.

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Chapter 698 - 698: Clearing the Entire World

[1,493 words]

Aldrian closed his eyes once again as he concentrated on what he was about to do. His domain's sense spread once more across the star, and then his focus shifted to the central continent. After almost ten minutes of silence, strands and crackling arcs of heavenly lightning appeared on his body.

Because the sound of heavenly lightning propagated through the medium of heaven and earth energy, the rumble could be heard even in space.

At first, it was only a small strand of lightning, but it grew larger and stronger. With his control over space, he created many spatial cracks and sent the heavenly lightning into each of them. He did not stop there. After sending lightning into the cracks, he created another new batch of spatial cracks and repeated the same, releasing more lightning into them.

From afar, people would find his behavior peculiar, as if he were merely releasing lightning and "feeding" it into spatial cracks without achieving anything. It was normal for anyone to think like that if they saw him at this moment. Yet unknown to them, in other places, many living beings had already received his judgment.

On the Central Continent, the populace went about their activities as usual, with nothing noteworthy occurring. However, their peaceful day was suddenly shaken by the sudden

appearance of heavenly lightning strikes accompanied by deafening rumbles. Those who had not expected such a sudden disturbance, combined with its overwhelming pressure, immediately thought that someone was invading them.

Moreover, the lightning appeared in many places almost at the same time, as if it were a coordinated attack. Anyone flying high above would see that, at this moment, many spatial cracks had appeared in the skies of several locations, and heavenly lightning was descending through them. It looked far more like a coordinated assault than natural heavenly lightning.

Yet the populace was left stunned when they saw the lightning strike only once before everything returned to normal. Many witnessed the lightning targeting specific individuals, killing them instantly and nothing more. A few of these deaths even occurred in the middle of bustling streets, surrounded by crowds of people.

The sight of someone turning to ashes right before their eyes made scalps go numb, and people instantly keeping their distance from where the lightning had struck.

Many were left confused, thinking, what the hell is going on?

Scenes like this could be witnessed all across the continent, throwing the populace into major confusion. Even the three sect masters of the three great sects saw some of the lightning strikes in the horizon. They were still within the dungeon area, preparing to return to their respective sects.

But they stopped as their gazes fixed on the horizon. The sight made them wonder if this was what Aldrian had meant by the appearance of heavenly lightning. A moment later, many reports reached them, shocking them even further.

The heavenly lightning appeared across the continent, striking down specific individuals each time it manifested. This caused widespread confusion and unrest, as no one could understand the sudden uncertainty surrounding the lightning. How could heavenly lightning appear in such a coordinated manner?

The three sect masters could only glance at one another, silently questioning with their expressions. Is this Aldrian's doing? Is this why he warned us earlier? The thought alone made their skin crawl, the idea that Aldrian could truly command such power.

Yet if Aldrian was the one behind it, they could not help but wonder, why was he doing this? Who exactly were the ones being killed?

Sect Master Han paused for a moment, his gaze falling upon the unconscious Ulasis lying on the ground beside him. His eyes trembled as a possibility surfaced in his mind.

'Don't tell me...?!'

After more than a minute of cleansing the Central Continent from the devils, claiming tens of thousands of lives, Aldrian shifted his focus to another land. The next target was the Orian Continent.

He repeated the process, scanning the entire continent before unleashing another batch of heavenly lightning strikes. Each strike was fatal, capable of killing even those at the pseudo-immortal stage.

There was no devil that could escape him. Even those hiding deep underground were discovered by his domain's sense. If they were beneath the ground, then the spatial cracks simply opened there instead, their fate remained unchanged.

All of them perished without even realizing how they had died, their bodies reduced to ashes.

Yet, with Aldrian's precise control, he ensured that his strikes did not harm anyone nearby, even when the devils tried to blend among common folk. This was something no one else in this heaven could replicate, for the burden on both mind and soul would be unbearable.

To control thousands of lightning strands and direct them toward specific targets, a cultivator would need a mind and soul strong enough to withstand such a burden. Added to that was the sheer scale of the area Aldrian had to cover, which was an entire continent. This made it something even a peak pseudo-immortal would find impossible to accomplish.

Even for Aldrian, his strikes did not truly land at the exact same time across every region. He deliberately left a split second interval between them to ease the burden.

Aldrian continued repeating this process on every continent of the Ancient Blue Gate World. Once he was finished with the land, he turned his attention to the oceans. From the surface to the deepest seafloor, he left nothing unchecked.

After more than an hour of his cleansing operation, Aldrian finally stopped when he no longer detected any devils within the Ancient Blue Gate World, aside from Ulasis who remained in the custody of Sect Master Han.

He had given Ulasis to the sect master because through him, Sect Master Han would understand what had happened to the devils across the world without Aldrian needing to explain it himself.

Aldrian exhaled softly as he gazed calmly at the Ancient Blue Gate World. At this moment, he could confidently say that this star was free from any invaders' influence.

Although there were still some individuals who might have connections to the devils, with the devils now gone, those traitors had lost one of their greatest supports.

He did not intend to dwell on the matter of rooting out those traitors, for that was the responsibility of the leaders of each territory, so long as they were not corrupt.

After making sure that nothing unusual remained, his figure disappeared and reappeared in the skies above one of the continents. This continent intrigued him because its populace was made up mostly of beast races.

The Beast Continent, a land where many kinds of spiritual beasts resided, including the mighty dragons and phoenixes. He could not help but want to see for himself those races that were the descendants of Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan.

This would be the first time he had seen their race in this life. Until now, all he had encountered were the visions of his memories and the skeletons of Long Shentian and Feng Xuanyan within his palace.

He then descended to a much lower height, entering the atmosphere, and appeared above a vast mountain range. He was already using his stealth technique, rendering him undetected and invisible to others. Within the range stood one peak far higher than the rest, and when he had scanned this continent earlier, he had sensed the strongest being residing in this very region.

From the information he had, this place was the Dragon Kingdom, one of the most powerful factions in the Ancient Blue Gate World.

Then he finally saw them—the living dragons in this life. Their enormous bodies were truly intimidating, and combined with the overwhelming aura they exuded, there was no way other beings would not feel suppressed before them.

As a race, dragons were already considered the most powerful beings in this world. With their mighty bodies and souls, mastery over heaven and earth energy, control over nature, and lifespans rivaling that of elves, they were truly one of the races blessed by the heavens.

Aldrian's gaze followed several of the massive dragons soaring through the skies. There were also many in their human form, each retaining unique features of their dragon lineage. He could see many different types of dragons here, and he knew that each carried its own distinct properties.

There were dragons that could control the sea, dragons that commanded fire, and even some with unique innate abilities to control space.

As Aldrian continued to observe their movements, he suddenly sensed a human figure emerging from the highest mountain peak. He immediately knew that this figure was the strongest dragon here.

It was a young-looking man with long red hair, dressed in regal robes. With his cultivation at the peak pseudo-immortal stage, he could be considered one of the strongest beings in the First Heaven. When Aldrian read his information through the system, he instantly recognized the figure's identity.

But then he was stunned when he sensed that the man was actually looking in his direction!

He closed the system screen and fixed his gaze on the dragon with interest.

'Did he see me?'

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Chapter 699 - 699: The Dragon King

[1,616 words]

Aldrian could see that the man was looking in his direction. He did not know if this was only a coincidence or not, so he tried to teleport to another location where he could still observe the man. However, the man's gaze remained fixed on the place where Aldrian had initially floated, which made Aldrian think that it was really just a coincidence.

Maybe he just happened to be looking at the sky in that direction?

But then Aldrian was stunned when the man suddenly turned his head toward him again! At this moment, Aldrian finally confirmed that this dragon indeed could sense him. This was truly surprising, even for him, as it was the first time someone had been able to sense his existence while he used his stealth technique, which relied on the manipulation of light laws.

With his stronger cultivation and deeper comprehension now, he had already combined it with his space laws, which made his presence actually covered by a thin layer of spatial barrier. This barrier caused any sense that swept over him to pass without obstruction. Basically, any spiritual sense from outside that touched the thin barrier would feel as though there was nothing there and continue moving forward.

This was the concept of spatial distortion, which would throw the sense behind Aldrian once it swept over him.

Now he was truly interested in this strongest dragon in the Ancient Blue Gate world, who seemed capable of sensing his position. Aldrian could still see that there was a slight delay for this dragon to sense him, which meant the dragon did not instantly know his movements or exact location.

'Shen Longwei, the Dragon King of the Dragon Kingdom, one of the strongest beings in this heaven because of his dragon lineage. Many even consider him the most powerful existence in the Ancient Blue Gate World in terms of raw strength. Without the support of an artifact, it is almost impossible to defeat him,' Aldrian thought.

This man already had his own legend about his strength, which was truly worthy of his name and race as a true dragon. Moreover, he was actually the result of a union between a void dragon and a fire dragon, an extremely rare case where two dragons of different attributes managed to have a child.

His father was a void dragon, while his mother was a fire dragon, which was an incredibly powerful combination. As an illustration, even dragons of the same kind already had great difficulty producing descendants. What more, then, when two different kinds of dragons were involved? For them, conceiving a child was nearly impossible.

Because of this, Shen Longwei, who was already strong by virtue of being of the dragon race, possessed an even more extraordinary ability due to his mixed bloodline. The offspring of such a union between two powerful dragon kinds resulted in a dragon who could control both space and fire as if they were mere playthings.

All in all, Shen Longwei was truly the strongest among the strongest.

It could be said that because of his presence, the Beast Continent had almost no devils when Aldrian scanned this continent earlier.

All of that information was already well-known about Shen Longwei, something most people were aware of. But now that Shen Longwei seemed able to detect his presence, Aldrian was truly intrigued by the Dragon King. From the information shown in the system, although this dragon was impressive and possessed many abilities, Aldrian still did not see how he was able to detect him now.

While Aldrian continued to observe Shen Longwei and contemplate about him, he suddenly saw the Dragon King float and fly in his direction. There was no longer any doubt that this dragon could indeed see or sense him. Despite Shen Longwei approaching, Aldrian did not move, for he wanted to know what the dragon intended to do.

The other dragons, who appeared to be his guards, also seemed ready to follow, but Shen Longwei stopped them and flew toward Aldrian's direction alone.

After waiting for a few moments, Shen Longwei finally reached Aldrian's height and floated not far from him. His gaze lingered in Aldrian's direction for a while, and Aldrian also tried to read his mind, since he had not sensed any ill intent from him all this time.

The moment Aldrian managed to read Shen Longwei's thoughts and glimpse the deep intent within his heart, he was stunned to find that this dragon actually felt reverence toward him.

Aldrian was still confused when Shen Longwei suddenly cupped his hands toward him.

"I know that Your Excellency is here. My apologies if I was able to sense your presence even from afar, but I welcome Your Excellency to my kingdom," he said in a respectful manner.

Aldrian did not immediately respond to the greeting, but Shen Longwei seemed not to mind and maintained his respectful posture.

After a brief silence, Aldrian finally decided to reveal himself, which left the other dragons stunned at the sudden appearance of a figure. They had not detected anything at all, which was why they had found their king's behavior peculiar earlier. Now it looked as though their king had truly been greeting this figure.

Who was this figure?

The masked Aldrian smiled as he spoke to Shen Longwei.

"As expected of the Dragon King, truly a living legend among all beings of the Ancient Blue Gate World. How could you sense me? This is the first time anyone has been able to detect me," Aldrian said.

"I would not dare call myself a legend in front of Your Excellency. As for your question, I can only explain that my very being feels connected to Your Excellency," Shen Longwei replied, which made Aldrian raise his eyebrows.

What he said was essentially the same reason why the specific demon cultivators of the three great sects could resonate with him. Aldrian had already discovered why only some of them were able to resonate, it was because of their close connection with the Heavenly Demon.

Their cultivation technique had been created by the son of the Heavenly Demon. Their karma was strongly connected to the Heavenly Demon, which in the end allowed them to feel the resonance within their souls at a certain point in cultivation—in this case,

when they reached the Immortal Ascension Realm, starting from the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Stage.

That was why the reaction of the demon cultivators of the three great sects in the Barisan Continent was not as extreme as those in the Central Continent. They could only sense the resonance once they reached the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Stage.

He did not know the reason why they could only feel the resonance after reaching the Pseudo-Immortal Foundation Stage, but it was what it was.

Now this dragon also seemed to have a kind of connection with him, which made Aldrian wonder about the dragon's origin. It did not seem like he had anything similar to the three great sects, right?

"I see. Then do you know who I am, Your Majesty, the Dragon King, Shen Longwei?" Aldrian asked, curious.

"I do not know you personally, but I am aware of Your Excellency. I saw your battle with the Immortal at that time, and I also felt this connection. I realized it was you the moment I felt it just now, as only Your Excellency could evoke this feeling within me. All I can say is that my being is special and has some kind of connection with Your Excellency," Shen Longwei answered.

Aldrian nodded. It seemed this dragon possessed something he did not yet know, which was the reason for the connection between them.

"Anyway, I would like to invite Your Excellency to visit my humble palace. Although it might not be to your liking, I will make sure Your Excellency has a magnificent experience here," Shen Longwei said, which made Aldrian smile.

"Alright. I am actually curious about the Dragon Kingdom; there are many things I would like to know," Aldrian replied.

After that, the Dragon King guided Aldrian to the highest mountain where he resided. The other dragons, who had been observing their king's interactions with this figure from earlier, were truly shocked. Although they had not tried to eavesdrop on the conversation, they could tell from the movements alone that their king held great respect for this figure.

Moreover, they could sense that this figure was human, and they knew their king had never shown such respect to a human before. Who was this figure to earn the king's personal respect and even have him guide him like this?

All they could see was their king personally escorting the figure to the highest mountain where he himself resided.

Aldrian was guided to one side of the mountain, where a vast, artificially flattened platform had been built on the slope. Looking at it, he couldn't help but be reminded of one of the Piercing Heaven Sect's place, which had a special area for interstellar landings. A few dragons in human form were stationed at the edges of the platform, acting as guards.

Not far from the platform, right at the mountain's cliff, stood a beautifully carved palace. The palace had been constructed inside the mountain, and its size seemed perfectly suited to accommodate human-sized guests.

Upon entering, Aldrian greeted by the luxurious interior. It was no different from other imperial palaces, and as he observed the surroundings, he noticed that some of the royal maids were actually human.

This was truly an eye-opener for Aldrian, and the Dragon King seemed to sense his amazement, smiling to himself as he continued guiding him toward a more private area.

A few moments later, they arrived at a luxurious private room where they could converse more freely. After the maids served two cups of warm herbal drink, the Dragon King asked Aldrian with a satisfied expression,

"How is it, Your Excellency?"

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Chapter 700 - 700: The Conversation With Dragon King

[1,587 words]

"To be honest, I did not expect to find that the dragon palace is not different from any other imperial palace. Maybe it's just my expectation of the prideful dragons, but instead what I see is a dragon adapting to human life," Aldrian answered Shen Longwei.

That was what he felt after he discovered this kind of place when he scanned it earlier. Although in other parts of the mountains there were many places that accommodated the true size of dragons, a place like this within dragon territory was something new for him.

Even in his memories, Long Shentian and the other dragons who lived in their own realm in the past seemed to live in their own way without having to adapt to the human

style of life. They did not need to build a luxurious palace that accommodated human-sized comfort. They only acted according to their own race's interests and comfort, which was normal, as they were prideful in nature.

"But still, wasn't what you did outside too exaggerated? What would your followers think if they knew that you showed respect to a human?" Aldrian asked in wonder.

The dragon king kept his smile. "Well, that's okay. I just did what I was supposed to do, and those dragons would not understand what I felt at that moment anyway."

Aldrian kept looking at Shen Longwei for a few moments before he decided to take off his mask and the hood of his robe, showing the dragon king his real face. Shen Longwei was stunned, and when he saw Aldrian's face, he could not help but nod and comment.

"Well, there is not a single doubt from me that Your Excellency is truly the one who fought the immortal. Your Excellency's face gives it away, as it is the same face as that giant avatar. In fact, everyone who directly witnessed the battle that day would recognize Your Excellency the moment they saw your face. There is no way they would forget that fateful day unless their memories had been erased."

Aldrian smiled as he took a sip of the herbal drink, which was made from a mix of various spiritual plants. It could nurture and even heal the soul of those who drank it, a truly amazing effect. For the dragons to possess this kind of drink showed how wealthy they were, and they did not hesitate to offer the best treatment.

"To be honest, King Shen, I'm really curious about your true origin and your connection with me. I don't think the other dragons are like you, since you can feel our connection. Why do you seem to be the only one here who has that kind of feeling?" Aldrian asked after enjoying his herbal drink.

"Well, actually I also don't truly understand why I could have a special connection with you, Your Excellency. Many already know about my past, about my father and mother, and that is all. So I don't really know the exact reason for me to have this kind of feeling," Shen Longwei answered.

"Maybe it has something to do with my existence itself, as the mixed blood of a void dragon and a fire dragon. The void dragon was said to possess one of the purest bloodlines among the descendants of the ancient dragon god, while the fire dragon is one of the most powerful dragon kinds. And I, as their descendant, may have unknowingly carried something that allows me to have this connection to Your Excellency," he added.

Aldrian, who heard the term ancient dragon god, knew that Shen Longwei must have been referring to Long Shentian. From the information he had gathered, the term ancient dragon god was used to describe the ancestor of the first dragon, who, according to legend, was the very first dragon in existence.

Aldrian could not help but think that maybe this was the reason Shen Longwei had a special connection to him. Perhaps his unique existence as a rare case of mixed blood was triggering something deep within his soul. Moreover, his father was a void dragon and, just as he had said, one whose bloodline purity was close to that of Long Shentian.

"Anyway, the only thing I am certain of is that my heart and soul keep telling me to follow you. Your Excellency is the light that could lead us the dragons to our greatest glory if I choose to follow you. That is also something the Spirit Ancestor told me and the Phoenix Queen at that time," Shen Longwei said, causing Aldrian to raise his eyebrows.

Told by the Spirit Ancestor? Is this another prophecy or something?

"A Spirit Ancestor? Do you mean the spirit that resides on the northern side of the Beast Continent?" Aldrian asked.

He knew from the information he had gathered that on the northern side of the Beast Continent, there were several spirit races residing there. Earlier, when he scanned the continent, he had already sensed them, and among them was one powerful spirit that he believed it must be the Spirit Ancestor.

Many said that the Spirit Ancestor was a respected figure in the Beast Continent. Even the Dragon King and the Phoenix Queen held that figure in reverence. Every word spoken by the Spirit Ancestor was considered wisdom by the beings of this continent.

Shen Longwei nodded.

"Yes. It seems Your Excellency already knows some information regarding the Beast Continent, so it will be easier then. The Spirit Ancestor told me and the Phoenix Queen that the light would appear in the Barisan Continent. If we follow that light, then we could walk the path of glory," he said.

"At first we did not really understand what the Spirit Ancestor meant, but the moment I saw Your Excellency's battle with that immortal, I was certain that Your Excellency was the light the Spirit Ancestor spoke of."

"My sense of connection to Your Excellency, and your figure that shone with blinding light, left no more doubt. At that time, I truly wanted to visit Your Excellency, but since you had closed the Barisan Continent, I could only wait until you opened it again."

"Now that Your Excellency has personally come to this place, it is truly an honor for me," he said, then paused.

Aldrian nodded. "You said that the Phoenix Queen also received the same words from the Spirit Ancestor, right? So did she feel the same as you when she saw me at that time?" he asked.

"Well, yes. She was the same as me, as she spoke about it then. And I do not know if this is just coincidence, but her very existence is also unique like mine, Your Excellency. Do you already know of her uniqueness?" Shen Longwei said.

Aldrian nodded. "From what I heard, she was a mutation type of phoenix, an unknown kind of phoenix that was extremely powerful."

Shen Longwei nodded. "Yes, that's correct. I do not know what kind of phoenix she is. The mutation of a beast is an extremely rare case, and all of them always end up either becoming truly powerful or turning into an abomination or cursed. Fortunately, the Phoenix Queen became the first."

"Her mutated bloodline is said to be the first ever recorded in the history of the phoenix. There has never been another phoenix like her, and in that aspect, she is the same as me."

Aldrian thought for a moment before speaking to Shen Longwei.

"It looks like I will have to visit the Phoenix Queen after this. I am truly intrigued about her now."

"Ah, if you wish to do that, there is no need. Let me bring her to you now."

Shen Longwei suddenly stood up, leaving Aldrian stunned. Without waiting for him to say anything, Shen Longwei stretched out his hand and made a slashing motion. Instantly, a spatial crack appeared right beside him.

He then stepped into the spatial crack before Aldrian could say anything, which made Aldrian sigh. He could sense the space laws within the crack and instantly realized that this spatial crack worked on the same concept as the trick he often used. It was a passage connected to another location.

In essence, it was a kind of wormhole to shorten the user's journey. For others, this method of travel could actually be much faster than teleporting repeatedly, as he normally did. However, there was a drawback. They could never be certain of the situation on the other side of the wormhole, which could be fatal in some cases.

What if one emerged in an undesired location, such as a deadly environment?

For Aldrian, repeated teleportation was still faster, since he could quickly replenish his energy.

He often used a similar trick with spatial cracks when attacking enemies, just as he had done not long ago when he unleashed thousands of heavenly lightning strikes through spatial cracks at the surviving devils in this world.

The spatial crack closed after Shen Longwei entered, so Aldrian simply looked around, observing the room while waiting for his return.

After almost thirty minutes, the spatial crack opened again, and Shen Longwei stepped out, followed by another figure. It was a woman, her hair the same color as his, though streaked with yellow in some places.

She was a type of fiery beauty, with her red-golden robe accentuating the curves of her body. Her sharp, beautiful eyes gave the impression that a single glance from her could burn someone where they stood. Looking at this kind of beauty, Aldrian could not help but be reminded of Feng Xuanyan.

After she stepped out from the spatial crack, he read her information through the system, and what he found made him raise his eyebrows.

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